Kincade Fire: From Bishop Vasa

The events of the last several days in Sonoma County have been both stressful and at times fearful. Fortunately, there were only two injuries and no ‘civilian’ casualties or injuries. I take this opportunity to commend the various agencies and individuals who either engaged the fires or provided support services to evacuees. The effort in fighting this latest fire and assuring the safety of the general public involved thousands of firefighters, law enforcement personnel, National Guard, Catholic Charities, various Christian Churches, Red Cross, dispatch and certainly radio communicators. To all of these, I extend on behalf of the entire Catholic Community my ardent and sincere thank you. May God abundantly bless you and keep you safe in your service.

While more than 100 homes were lost in this latest fire event, thousands more were saved. We offer condolence to those who have suffered loss and call upon the entire community to continue to be mindful that there are in our midst those who have suffered great loss over the past few days. The fact that many homes were saved is not necessarily a source of consolation for those whose homes were lost.

(see Kincade Fire, page 4)

Thanksgiving Day Invites A Generous Attitude Of Blessing

By Msgr. M. Francis Mannion - Viewpoint

Some time ago, I came across a book entitled, “The Book of Irish Curses.” The book was intended to be light-hearted and tongue-in-cheek—and in many ways it was. But as one read through the colorful variety of curses, one came to see something negative and destructive at work. Even if one does not believe in the magical power of curses, one can still recognize that curses intend to destroy and tear down, to sow dissension and ruin in the human environment.

The opposite of cursing is blessing. In 1989, the Church produced “A Book of Blessings,” and, in 2007, a book of “Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers.” As one reads through their contents, one senses their creative, edifying, and ennobling character.

It has long been recognized that the ability to give thanks is the mark of the truly religious person. Without the sense of thanksgiving, we fail to have openness to the events of the last several days in Sonoma County.

(see Thanksgiving Day, page 8)

Analysis: Why ‘Pachamama’ Took a Dip

By JD Flynn

Vatican City, Oct 26 (CNA) - Last week, Vatican Media interviewed Fr. Paulo Suess, a German priest who has served for decades among the indigenous peoples of the Amazon. Fr. Suess is in Rome as an official of the Synod of Bishops on the Amazon, and is regarded there as an expert on the region.

The priest was asked about a ceremony held in St. Peter’s Basilica Oct. 7, which seemed to use both traditional Christian symbols and unexplained symbols of indigenous Amazonian culture.

It is definitely the case that there is a noticeable sentiment against the synod on the part of certain media here…Someone wrote that it was a pagan rite, Fr. Suess responded.

“So what?” the priest asked.

“Even if that had been a pagan rite, what took place was still a worship service. A rite always has something to do with worship. Paganism cannot be dismissed as nothing. What is pagan? In our big cities we are no less pagan than in the jungle. That’s something to think about,” he said.

Vatican Media eventually removed those comments.

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We are very much aware that New Year’s Day falls on January 1 every year, regardless of the day of the week. In addition to this “Calendar Year” method of marking time we are also aware that financial records are often based on a “Fiscal Year”. That year begins, usually, on July 1 of each year and ends on June 30, again regardless of the day of the week.

The Church has Her own special calendar as well. This is known as the “Liturgical Year” Calendar. The Liturgical Year does not start or end on a particular date but rather on designated Sundays. This year, to make matters a little confusing, the Liturgical Year begins on December 1. The Liturgical Year does not start on December 1 because it is the first day of December but rather because December 1 happens to be the First Sunday of Advent. It is the First Sunday of Advent, regardless of the specific date, which always marks the beginning of the Liturgical Year.

The acknowledgement of the beginning of the new Liturgical Year means the end of the present Liturgical Year which began, yes on the First Sunday of Advent. That Year ends on November 30, 2019, the Liturgical Year which began, yes on the First Sunday of Advent. The major Liturgical action, marking the last week of the Liturgical Year, is The Solemnity of Christ the King (Sunday, November 24). That Sunday, coming up in a few weeks, anticipates the Second Coming of Christ at the end of the world and serves as a reminder to us that the world, as we know it, is passing away and that there is an unseen reality beyond the one which we presently see and experience.

People will often say in a rather flippanter manner that the only two certainties in this life are death and taxes. Taxes are tied to the Fiscal Year. Death is tied to the Calendar Year and to the Liturgical Year. Despite the fact that death is recognized as an ultimate certainty, many live as if death was not a future possibility at all. The fact that the date and day of our death is not known opens for us the very real possibility of forgetting that death is a definitive and certain part of our future. The end of the calendar year serves as a secular reminder of this fact but the Liturgical Year not only reminds us of the certainty of death, it also reminds us of the certainty of “life everlasting”.

In the weeks between now and the end of the Liturgical Year the Readings at Mass are more and more directed at the need to consider the reality that our life in this material world will most certainly end. One Gospel, read recently at a weekday Mass, has the Lord, in a parable about the accumulation of wealth, asking: “To whom will all this piled up wealth of yours go?” (Luke 12:20) It is a type of warning, an admonition, about the need to consider our final end or, to put it another way, to ask the question, “And then what?” This is a simple question which we can readily apply to our own lives at every stage. We may set a goal of graduation from High School and College and we need to ask: And then what? Perhaps the answer is marriage or priesthood or Religious Life and we need to ask: And then what? We must acknowledge that we will face old age and at that point we need to ask: And then what? Finally, every person must admit, and then we die. At this point the same question must be asked: And then what?

And then what? This question is important throughout the Liturgical Year but it reaches a decisive point as we near the end of the Liturgical Year. In this last month of the Liturgical Year we are increasingly called upon to consider more seriously the importance of having a suitable answer to the reality presented by the statement and the question: And then you die. And then what? The “world, the flesh and the devil” would have us believe that it ends with: And then you die. We know with faith, however, that this is not the end.

The Liturgical Year is an invaluable aid to assist us in making sure that we never neglect, throughout the entire Year, but especially as we near its end to ask: And then what? 

The Date of Ultimate Certainty
Vatican Cardinals Linked to Missing Millions and Financial Scandal

By Ed Condon

Vatican City, Oct 29, 2019 / 02:03 pm (CNA) - An Italian dermatology hospital and two senior cardinals are at the center of a burgeoning financial scandal involving a Vatican bank, the U.S.-based Papal Foundation, and millions of euros from misallocated government grants.

The events concern the financial collapse of the Istituto Dermopatico dell’Immacolata (IDI), an Italian hospital.

According to media reports and new sources, Cardinal Angelo Becciu and Cardinal Giuseppe Versaldi have been key players in a complicated series of transactions that financed the Vatican Secretariat of State’s 2015 acquisition of the hospital, which had collapsed under large-scale acts of theft and money laundering that led to the imprisonment of its president.

Multiple sources in the United States and in Rome have confirmed to CNA that then-Archbishop Becciu was responsible for organizing a concerted effort by other Vatican officials and American cardinals—including then-Cardinal Theodore McCarrick—to pressure the board of the U.S.-based Papal Foundation to approve a grant of $25 million in 2017.

Although American donors were told the money was to ease a temporary cash shortage at the IDI hospital, sources in the Administration for the Patrimony of the Apostolic See (APSA) and the Papal Foundation told CNA that the true purpose of the loan was to help remove a 50 million euro debt from APSA’s books.

The debt was the result of an APSA loan to a non-profit partnership between the Vatican’s Secretariat of State and an Italian religious order, which borrowed the money to purchase the IDI. The hospital, in bankruptcy at the time it was purchased, was unable to repay the debt, and because the loan violated European banking agreements, it stood to put APSA under strict regulatory oversight.

Becciu, who was then the second-ranking figure at the Secretariat of State, reportedly spurred on by Becciu, asked Cardinal Donald Wuerl to request the grant from the Papal Foundation in 2017.

“Of course it was [Cardinal Becciu] who was behind the grant request,” one senior figure at APSA told CNA. “He was very personally concerned that the IDI deal was sanctioned and would pose no further scandals.”

Becciu disputed that account, telling CNA Oct. 28 that he was not involved in securing the Papal Foundation grant.

“Cardinal Parolin assumed the office of Secretary of State [in 2013] and I no longer concerned myself with IDI,” Becciu told CNA.

‘Saving’ the IDI

The IDI’s administration collapsed in 2012 under debts of more than 800 million euros, when several members of its administration were prosecuted on charges of fraud and embezzlement. The hospital had been owned by a province of the Congregation of the Sons of the Immaculate Conception, which was declared insolvent by an Italian court in 2013.

After the hospital fell into administration, the Sons of the Immaculate Conception convinced the Vatican Secretariat of State to form a non-profit partnership, the Fondazione Luigi Maria Monti, which purchased the hospital in 2015.

The foundation reportedly paid 131 million euros for the IDI.

Approximately 50 million of the purchase was offset by the foundation’s agreement to absorb some of the IDI’s outstanding debts, covered by a mortgage on the hospital’s real estate.

The additional 80 million was provided in cash by the Vatican.

Fifty million euros came in the form of the loan from the Administration for the Patrimony of the Apostolic See, even though that loan likely breached the bank’s operational policies, and left it open to scrutiny from European banking regulators.

Eventually that loan went bad, because hospital income could not pay it back.

Earlier this week, APSA’s head conceded that the Vatican central bank was forced to write off 30 million euros of the loan, after attempts to secure a $25 million grant from the U.S.-based Papal Foundation collapsed.

Officials at the Secretariat of State and APSA, reportedly spurred on by Becciu, asked Cardinal Donald Wuerl to request the grant from the Papal Foundation in 2017.

Trustees and donors expressed skepticism about the amount, which was far larger than its normal disbursements. Although Wuerl told the Papal Foundation board that the funds were intended to save the IDI from closure, lay board members raised questions about whether the cash was really intended to meet an operating shortfall at the hospital, or to cover the bad debt at APSA.

Despite those objections, the grant was ultimately approved by the Papal Foundation board in a secret ballot—sources inside the foundation told CNA that board members believe all but one of the bishop members voted for it, while all but one of the lay members voted against approving the grant.

Dispersal of the money stalled after the board continued to ask questions about the final destination of the funds.

Two initial installments were sent to Rome in late 2017 and early 2018, totaling $13 million. After internal disagreements about the grant went public, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican Secretary of State wrote to the board saying the $13 million would be reclassified as a loan, rather than a grant, and would be repaid.

Two sources within the Papal Foundation told CNA that the Vatican has proposed the loan be repaid through “discounts” applied each year to the list of grants requested of the Papal Foundation by Vatican offices and Catholic apostolates.

“The poor will end up paying the debt;” a source close to the Papal Foundation told CNA.

Cardinal Versaldi

After the loan from APSA, the remaining 30 million euros the Vatican used to fund the purchase of IDI out of bankruptcy was, according to court-ordered wiretaps published in the Italian media, arranged by Cardinal Giuseppe Versaldi, who was placed in charge of the Fondazione Luigi Maria Monti.

While he was leading the partnership to buy the IDI, Versaldi was also serving as the president of the Prefecture for the Economic Affairs of the Holy See and was the Vatican’s delegate to oversee the Italian (see Financial Scandal, page 8)
On Oct. 21, five statues were taken, apparently quite early in the morning, from the Carmelite Church of Santa Maria in Traspontina, four blocks from St. Peter’s basilica. They were thrown off a nearby bridge into the Tiber River.

On Friday the pope announced that they had been recovered, apologized to anyone offended by their submersion in the Tiber’s waters, and said they might have been placed in the Tiber River, should think carefully about Fr. Suess’s reaction in his front yard, and it was evident they were temporarily displaced deepens our gratitude for the many graces and blessings we are privileged to enjoy. I further pray that this temporary disruption of life is an impetus for us to take a type of spiritual inventory wherein we discern more clearly what is truly of value and what is truly important. May it also deepen our compassion for all those who are not only temporarily displaced but who find themselves, especially as colder weather encroaches, in need of permanent shelter and adequate housing.

Thank you and God bless all who have worked so cooperatively in keeping us as safe as possible during these past few difficult days!

*(Kincade Fire, cont. from page 1)*

Lost. We assure you of our prayers for you in your time of genuine grief.

While the losses to the actual fire are light in comparison to the 2017 Tubbs Fire the extent of the evacuation was much greater. Thus, the disruption of life for many thousands was felt throughout Sonoma County and into Lake, Napa and Mendocino Counties as well. Our Churches were also disrupted. More than 15 Catholic Parishes or Missions were included in the Evacuation order of Saturday evening and Sunday morning. Undoubtedly, there were hundreds of other Religious entities who found their Saturday or Sunday services disrupted or cancelled as a result of being in Mandatory Evacuation Zones. We are reminded most strongly that we are a Pilgrim People whose true home, where uninterupted peace and tranquility will reign, comes only after this world. I pray that the experience of being temporarily displaced deepens our gratitude for the many graces and blessings we are privileged to enjoy. I further pray that this temporary disruption of life is an impetus for us to take a type of spiritual inventory wherein we discern more clearly what is truly of value and what is truly important. May it also deepen our compassion for all those who are not only temporarily displaced but who find themselves, especially as colder weather encroaches, in need of permanent shelter and adequate housing.

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*(Pachamama, cont. from page 1)*

bolts of the Blessed Virgin, the Andean pagan idol Pachamama, and ambiguous symbols of “life.”

At the synod, they are symbols of controversy.

Figures used prominently in unexplained and unfamiliar rituals or spiritual expressions, even with persons prostrating themselves in front of the statues, led journalists to ask what connections the figures have to indigenous religious rituals. In short, to ask whether they have a pagan provenance, and, if so, what it means for them to be used in a Catholic context, and in the sacred space of a church.

The Church’s long-considered and nuanced views on cultural intransigence are complex, and the Gospel is always expressed in the context of some culture. Missionaries, dating back to St. Paul himself, have taken up the symbols of particular cultures to proclaim the Incarnation, Passion, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. In other words, there might have been clear and reasonable answers to the questions that surfaced as soon as the tree-planting ceremony was concluded.

But at least three times, Vatican officials or synod participants were asked about the statues, and the events in which they were involved. Questions went mostly unanswered. Vatican officials pointed to organizers of synod events, who pointed back to Vatican officials. The few nebulous answers that were offered made clear that, although the statues were present at official synod events, the Vatican seemed to have no idea what they were, and little interest in finding out.

While the statues were the subject of almost no discussion inside the press room, they went instantly viral on social media. They were featured prominently in memes, were the subject of fierce social media debate among Catholics, and from their first appearance, speculation about their significance ran rampant.

Some of that speculation was uninformed and reactionary.

Ultraconservative commentators insisted that the figures were specific pagan idols, with very little evidence. Some went so far as to accuse the pope himself of a kind of paganism, to support their broad narrative of aliness of criticism of the pope.

With the same enthusiasm, ultramontane writers claimed first that the statues were definitively the Blessed Virgin Mary. When that viewpoint was dismissed by Vatican officials, the same commentators began to claim that the figures were indigenous symbols about which asking questions was somehow an expression of prejudice, or even racism.

Even in the Vatican press room, one journalist said during a press conference that other reporters, presumably those who had asked questions about the statues, had committed lamentable acts of racism against indigenous persons. Vatican officials did not refute that charge.

The truth is that no one has provided a definitive answer about the statues’ provenance, and few seem able to do so.

But in the absence of information, the figures became totemic rallying cries for all parties in the fraught debate over the present and future of the Catholic Church.

For their part, Vatican officials seemed not to understand just how seriously the entire affair was being taken by many Catholics, or not to take seriously the Catholics themselves who were concerned about it.

For many Catholics, concern about the statue was borne of genuine concern to understand how unfamiliar figures and rituals fit into the proclamation of the faith, and what they might mean about the Church’s vision of evangelization. Such concerns can hardly be called irrational.

Still, one synod participant told CNN that behind closed doors, some Vatican officials dismissed concerns as either propaganda from “anti-Francis Americans” or overt racism.

That concern about statues and rituals might be borne of genuine religious conviction has not been acknowledged by Vatican and synod spokesmen.

With no intervention, and no official explanation of the symbols and rituals in question, the debate rolled, and then boiled over completely on Oct. 21, when the statues were taken from the Church and thrown into the river.

Whether it was right or wrong to take the statues is beyond the scope of this analysis. But the factors that led to the act are worth considering, as is what the entire incident might portend for the next years in the future of the Church.

It seems there are three things that led to the point at which “Pachamama” swam the Tiber.

The first is the failure of Vatican officials to take seriously the concerns of Catholics and journalists about the religious rituals and symbols surrounding the synod. Even veteran Vatican journalist Sandro Magister was missed curiously Oct. 25 when he presented basic facts—facts available for review on video—in the Vatican press office.

Failure to understand, or take seriously, why Catholics were asking questions seemed to have prevented spokesmen from providing reasonable answers when first the issue surfaced. As the situation heated up, the questions compounded, but answers were not forthcoming.

Of course, it is possible that officials didn’t answer questions because they didn’t know the answers. Had spokesmen said that Oct. 4, and actually followed through on finding out the answers, at least some of the scandal likely would have been quieter. Instead, journalists who asked questions were sent from one spokesperson to another, with each person pointing the finger in a different direction.

The second factor is the silence of Pope Francis on the matter. Whatever the pope thought of the events transpiring around the synod, they were transpiring in his front yard, and it was evident they were becoming a source of controversy. But the pope did not speak until Oct. 25, when the statues had been recovered from the river, and then he gave a very short statement.

At that time, Pope Francis referred to the statues as "Pachamama," which, predictably, has intensified debate about their provenance. He apologized to those offended that they had been tossed into the river, and noted that they had been placed in the Church without “idolatravous intentions.”

Even that statement was apparently not intended to be public. It was given before the bishops participating in the synod, and only became publicly known when some journalists heard the pope’s remarks as they were being ushered from the room. The Vatican only provided a transcript of the pope’s remarks after they had been widely reported.

The synod’s working document proclaims that “Jesus was a person of dialogue and encounter.” Indeed, the document mentions dialogue 68 times, (see Pachamama, page 5)
pointing to dialogue as “the method that must always be applied to achieve the good life.”

But on this issue, which became important to a notable number of Catholics, dialogue was forthcoming from neither the pope nor his communications staff.

The third factor, which ought not be ignored, is the hyper-escalating tendency of a culture in which social media battles and YouTube commentaries have a considerable effect on the faith lives of a sizable number of practicing Catholics.

A media figure raised in the era of cable news said recently to CNA that “Twitter isn’t real life.” In fact, Twitter, YouTube, Reddit, et al are influential aspects of real life for an entire generation. President Donald Trump understood that well enough to get elected through the social media personality he built for himself. Other political figures have followed suit.

But social media is the Wild West, for better or worse. There are real benefits to the wide-open space of social media, especially for the Church. But the culture is one in which there are no rules about decorum, in which incendiary figures can build a following quickly, in which personal conflict escalates easily into partisan flamethrowing, and in which the most sensational account is usually the most likely to gain traction.

The Amazon synod, with all its conflicts and deficiencies, is taking place in the era of the “hot take.” During the Amazon synod, figures from both the left and the right intensified and escalated the debate by their online comportment. An example, again, is how quickly some figures diluted attempts at reasonable conversation with identity politics and unremitting accusations of racism.

Questions and concerns about the statues are valid and fair. But the speed and vitriol with which debate about them became entrenched has had a polarizing effect, and made a less dramatic conclusion to the affair far less likely.

The effects of the debate should demonstrate that even if only a small number of actually practicing Catholics occupy space in the world of “Catholic Twitter,” that number has an outszie influence on how some events in the Church will unfold.

Until a more humane online culture emerges, if that is even possible, and especially until Church leaders begin to understand how quickly online narratives can bleed into “IRL” action, division in the Church will be amplified and hastened by the culture of social media. Whether Vatican officials will consider that a lesson worth learning is yet to be determined.

The Amazon synod has been billed as a sign of the Church’s closeness to real people. There may be ways in which it is that. But it is also evidence of the widening gap in understanding between Church leaders and a large cadre of practicing Catholics, on a broad range of issues.

“The opposite of dialogue is the lack of listening and the imposition that prevent us from meeting, communicating and, therefore, living together,” the synod’s Instrumentum laboris says.

“The Pachamama” splash heard ‘round the world is evidence that among some Vatican leaders, a commitment to ‘dialogue’ is still needed, far beyond the pan-Amazonian region.

Senate Bill Could Blacklist Pro-Life Groups for Aid Funding

By Matt Hadro

Washington D.C., Oct 31 (CNA) - A pro-life group is warning Senators that a proposed government funding bill could “blacklist” pro-life groups while funding promoters of abortion.

In an Oct. 30 letter to senators, March for Life Action warned that language in a mini omnibus (minibus) funding bill, H.R. 2740, “would prop up the abortion industry and overseas promoting of abortion with federal funds” and would set up a “vehicle to harass pro-life recipients” of U.S. foreign assistance.

The bill is under consideration in the Senate as Congress has until Nov. 21 to pass appropriations bills funding government agencies for the 2020 fiscal year. The bill was pulled from a vote on Thursday, but may be reintroduced in the coming weeks.

Tom McClusky, president of March for Life Action, said in an interview with CNA, that the bill contains language targeting pro-life groups and benefitting organizations that support abortion.

An amendment that Sen. Jeanne Shaheen (D-N.H.) successfully inserted into the bill would increase family planning funding that could go to abortion promoters, would reinstating funding of the UN’s Population Fund (UNFPA), and would provide a mechanism to enforce an Obama-era non-discrimination rule that could essentially “blacklist” pro-life groups from being eligible for U.S. foreign assistance.

Shaheen had previously tried to overturn the Mexico City Policy in an appropriations bill in September, but was unsuccessful.

The Mexico City Policy bars U.S. funding of foreign NGOs that promote or perform abortions as a method of family planning. The Trump administration reinstated this policy and expanded upon it, applying the funding prohibition not just to family planning funding, but to $8.8 billion of global health assistance.

While not outright repealing the policy, Shaheen was still able to secure passage of an amendment out of the Senate Appropriations Committee that could undercut it. Her proposed increase in family planning funding could also benefit certain domestic groups which promote abortion.

Pro-abortion groups including Pathfinder International, Population Council, Engender Health, and PATH already receive family planning funding. As they are domestic groups, they are not bound by the Mexico City Policy prohibitions, and thus can still promote abortions, March for Life Action said.

Shaheen’s amendment would also set up an enforcement mechanism of the 2016 Obama administration “Non-Discrimination Against End-Users of Supplies or Services” rule. This rule essentially required contractors with USAID not to “discriminate” against aid beneficiaries on the basis of sex, “including gender identity, sexual orientation, and pregnancy.”

The enforcement mechanism for the rule targets pro-life and Christian groups in that it would limit review of USAID contract awards “only to the current administration,” March for Life Action’s letter said, thus revealing the “real target”: it would review the contract awards given to pro-life groups.

Thus, certain religious and pro-life organizations could have to clarify their positions on life, marriage, or gender issues in order to receive U.S. foreign assistance, McClusky said.

“Pro-lifers do not have a ton of friends” at USAID and the State Department, McClusky said, and those agencies would be deciding which organizations would receive U.S. foreign assistance.

As the November 21 deadline nears to pass funding bills, the status quo—a short-term extension of funding, or a “CR”—would be the best-case scenario for pro-lifers, McClusky said, in that no new problems could be added to the legislation.

The larger and more complex the funding bill, the greater the chance pro-abortion language could be passed without popular knowledge, he said.

“If I think everything were to be a CR, I think that would be a good thing, because once you start getting into these minibuses and omnibuses, you don’t always know what’s inside them until it’s too late,” McClusky said.
Stay Focused

By Chris Lyford

Welcome to Holiday Season 2019!

Let’s make a personal commitment to keep our eyes on Jesus Christ for our Thanksgiving, Advent, Christmas, and New Year season. The idea is to keep in mind the face of Jesus as we speak to each and every person; those who are our loved ones, those who disagree with us, those who cause us to stumble, and those whom providence brings our way. The fires in Northern California have created a sensitivity in many people such that the atmosphere is markedly different when out in public. More often we will be running into our neighbors who exhibit post-traumatic stress in one way or another. Concern for other loved ones, concern for the community, and indeed concern for the world are reflected in the gaze of many. The ‘thousand mile stare’ is an indication that someone is grappling with concerns, and fears, rational and irrational. If we have the face of Jesus in front of us in our mind we will reflect the peace and trust that comes from allowing the Lord to see us in our vulnerability. And when they come out of the thousand mile stare, our peace fill eyes will greet them. Jesus sees us in our vulnerability regardless of whether we chose to open our hearts to Him, but respects our free will in that we have to choose to open ourselves up to him. He can be trusted. The world will jump and yell and shout and cajole us into listening to the foam-like logic kicked up like waves of a stormy ocean crashing together. The truth is that there is no substance or structure to foam, it doesn’t help us in the important things like being a sign of hope and peace to all, and a channel of God’s Mercy. Let us be attentive, yet undisturbed by the grumbling, and complaining of those who speak out of their fears. This is our challenge in political discussions, as well as all other interactions.

This time of year, our Lord is so generous to us with the graces that are poured out. The “Holiday Season” brings a softness of heart in even the most scrooge like, so let’s take advantage of that for the sake of the reason for the season, Jesus Christ, in the little sphere of our own world; in the relationships with the real people we interact with and have in our lives. I’m not talking about social media interactions by the way. Look for a new look and a new voice to the North Coast Catholic in the coming months! ❖

Chris Lyford is the Communications Director for the Diocese of Santa Rosa, California

Why Does Celibacy Matter In The End?

By Andrea Gagliarducci, A Vatican Observer

According to the French writer Jean Mercier, who passed away in 2018, the Church of the future will be a Church of small communities in the diaspora. For this reason, there will be a need for more “apostle priests,” able to move. In this context, “priestly celibacy fits better to the current times.”

Jean Mercier’s points in favor of the priestly celibacy were published on the Vatican newspaper L’Osservatore Romano on Dec. 14, 2014. The article was a commentary to the Mercier’s book “Celibat des prêtres” (Priestly celibacy). The book investigated reasons and odds of priestly celibacy.

It is worth recalling the Jean Mercier’s article at the eve of the Special Synod of the Pan-Amazonian region. While the discussion on the ordination of viri probati (married men of proven faith) seems to become one of the cores of the Synod, Jean Mercier, already in 2014, labeled the issue as a “false good idea.”

In the article, Mercier noted that priestly celibacy is “now under accusation,” considered “responsible for a certain number of sexual deviations among priests and the main cause of the lack of priests.”

It is, he denounced, “a trial systematically instructed by media,” especially when there are scandals or when a priest renounces to the priesthood to marry. Mercier emphasized that even practicing Catholic ignore or do not understand the “theological challenges for the celibacy of their priests,” as they consider scandalous that “a celibate priest cannot marry a woman if he is in love, but has to leave the ministry, especially in times of lack of priests.”

However, Mercier noted that “the Church does not consider possible to withdraw” from the promise of celibacy of the future priests. So, the other way is that of the possible ordination of married priests. The possible ordination of married people can count on some arguments in favor: it has an ancient tradition and sometimes the Church of Latin rite accepts married ministries that convert from other Christian confessions where “uxoriate priesthood” is consented (see the Anglicans after the motu proprio ‘Anglicanorum Coetibus’).

However, “the ordination of married priests can be a false good idea if it creates new problems, more complex than the previous ones, as the divorce.”

This is the reason why, the issue of viri probati needs “infinite discernment,” even though “the priestly celibacy is one of the foundation of the Catholic tradition, that goes beyond a simple disciplinary or juridical issue.”

A possible path could be that “keeping the obligation to celibacy, with wider possibilities of an exception than the existent ones, that limited to former Anglican or Protestant ministry.”

To Mercier, it is instead “a dangerous idea” thinking about married priests able to enter in the seminary as the celibate priests, and the solution of the viri probati is “in the end a false good idea.”

Mercier noted that the viri probati issue “corresponds to a Church’s mindset inherited from the 1950s and the 1960s, when people were Catholic by the majority, and it was a priority to keep the fabric of society.”

“This Church does not exist anymore,” said Mercier. Mercier also noted that, in the Internet age, the process of affiliation to the Church is not necessarily bound to the territory.

The future Church will be a Church of “small communities in the diaspora, built around Eucharistic poles,” and so, Mercier underscored, there will be more need of “mobile priests,” like the apostles.

For this reason, “celibacy is more fit to these times.” The candidates of the priesthood are nowadays more motivated by missionary action than by the possibility of being a parish priest—official that reigns over one well delimited geographic parish” (State-clerics, Pope Francis would say).

Mercier maintained that “celibacy has not had its last say yet,” but it is instead garnering more traction as “a force to re-position the Catholicism as an anti-system resistance” against the “ultraliberal model.” Celibacy makes of the Church a counter-cultural space, able to “inspire a generation again,” said Mercier.

He added that “young priests and young Catholic generation do not want a ‘petty bourgeois’ evolution of the priesthood,” while “young parish priests have no wish to gather laypeople that cannot always give to prayer its right place.”

In the end, the world of today sees “the return of missionary, itinerant characters, like the Jesuit missionaries in South America.”

Mercier noted that “marriage and celibacy are two parallel vocations.” Facing the denigration of the conjugal act, St. John Paul II re-sacralized marriage, and (see Celibacy, page 9)
I write this article feeling absolute thankfulness. I was one of the thousands that was evacuated this last week. This morning, I listened to the Mayor of my town talk about how the fire did exactly what it was predicted to do, came roaring down from the hills, fueled by high winds, ready to devour every home in my town on its way to the ocean. It was saved by the hundreds and thousands of firefighters who stood in its path and successfully fought it back. I am so grateful. More, I am so grateful to God. I know the firefighters did the work, but I am certain it was the prayers of so many, residents of Sonoma County and our friends and families across the country, that sent God’s grace flowing into those brave men and women, giving them the strength to keep going, keep fighting and save my town.

When the Tubbs fire broke out two years ago, my daughter and I had just landed in London. My panic, as I worried for my sons still here, my friends, my ‘stuff’ was nowhere near what those of you who lived it experienced. Mine was more removed, but still helpless—trying to get in touch with my sons, to know it experienced. I experienced the trauma second hand, from listening to stories, to the grief of loss that others experienced. This time, because it was more organized, and not as chaotic, it seemed like the trauma was less—still there but not as terrifying. Definitely scary, for sure. I don’t know if that is true for everyone, but it’s the way it seemed to me.

What I worried and prayed for while we were evacuated were those people who lived it two years ago and lost everything. I prayed especially for the children. I wondered what could be done to help those children heal, to recover from this latest trauma.

**Trauma can be defined as:**
*An emotional response to an intense event that threatens or causes harm.*

We as parents can protect our children from trauma—or at least we can try. Sometimes, however, it is completely out of our control. When it happens to your child—counselling for you and your family is an excellent place to start. Another place is to build resilience.

**Resilience can be defined as:**
*The ability to adapt or cope in a positive way to adversity, including trauma, tragedy, threats, and significant stress. It involves behaviors, thoughts, and actions that can be learned over time and nurtured through positive relationships with parents, caregivers, and other adults.*

Both of these definitions come from the website [www.childwelfare.gov](http://www.childwelfare.gov). Teaching our children coping strategies, ways to handle trauma and tragedy, and the inevitable stress, is an important tool for their future lives.

*So how do you build resilience? I took these ideas straight from the same childwelfare.gov website.*

**You can help your children develop resilience by taking the following steps:**

- **Model a positive outlook.** Children will learn from your ability to bounce back from difficulties. When faced with a challenge yourself, model an “I can do it” attitude. Remind yourself and your child that the current problem is temporary and “things will get better.”
- **Build confidence.** Comment frequently on what your child does well. Point out when he demonstrates qualities such as kindness, persistence, and integrity.
- **Build connections.** Create a strong, loving family and encourage your child to make good friends. This will help ensure that she has plenty of support in times of trouble.
- **Encourage goal-setting.** Teach children to set realistic goals and work toward them one step at a time. Even small steps can build confidence and resilience.
- **See challenges as learning opportunities.** Tough times are often when we learn the most. Resist the urge to solve your child’s problem for him—this can send a message that you don’t believe he can handle it. Instead offer love and support, and show faith in his ability to cope. Remind him of times when he has solved problems successfully in the past.
- **Teach self-care.** Many challenges are easier to face when we eat well and get enough exercise and rest. Self-care can also mean taking a break from worrying to relax or have some fun.
- **Help others.** Empower your child by giving her opportunities to help out at home or do age-appropriate volunteer work for her school, neighborhood, or place of worship.

One more thing, a critical thing for any Christian family, is to build a solid foundation of faith and trust in God and His promises. Romans 8:28 is one of my favorites:

*All things work together for good for those who love God and are called according to His purpose.*

This can help with the why did God allow this question. Who knows that answer? But teaching our children that we are all called by God, and that He is working things out in His way, in His time, for His purpose is critical. Teaching them to know that and trust that—that’s what faith is all about. ✧

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**Statement from Andy Rivas, executive director of the California Catholic Conference of Bishops, on Governor Newsom Signing AB 218**

California Catholic Conference October 14, 2019

“Today Governor Newsom signed Assembly Bill 218 (Gonzalez, D-San Diego), a bill that opens a window for three years to allow decades-old lawsuits to be brought against public and private institutions.

“The Catholic Church has confronted this issue of child sexual abuse for more than two decades now. It is a legacy of shame for all of us in the Church, and we are aware that nothing can undo the violence done to victim-survivors or restore the innocence and trust that was taken from them.

“Out of our past failures, the Church has made important reforms and put in place effective systems for the protection of children. As a result, new cases of abuse are rare today in the Church in California. In addition, dioceses throughout the state have devoted hundreds of millions of dollars to providing therapy and other services to those abused by members of the Church.

“The Church cooperated with then-Governor Gray Davis and the legislature during the opening of the statute of limitations in 2003. The Church paid more than $1.2 billion to settle claims filed by hundreds of victim-survivors. Since then, dioceses in the

(see Governor Newsom, page 11)
God, to others, to our own personal histories, and to the goodness of life itself.

That is why blessing and cursing are more than a matter of words. Both invoke whole attitudes toward life. It does not take much reflection to realize that there is a close relationship between the way we think, the way we speak, and the way we act.

Many people curse themselves without even knowing it when they think, speak about, and evaluate their own lives in negative and pessimistic terms. To say that our personal history has been disastrous and meaningless is to curse it. Whenever we say that the present is pointless and valueless, we have effectively cursed ourselves. Whenever we are hopeless and cynical about the future, we are cursing it in advance—hence already destroying it.

The attitude of blessing and of thanksgiving represents quite a different stance toward life. To have an attitude of blessing is to be able to look at our past and to recognize it as good and fruitful—despite the difficulties and failures. It is to be able to look to the present and, without overlooking the shadow side, to recognize it as worthwhile and creative. To bless is to be able to look to the future and, despite our worries about it, to have an attitude of hope and expectancy.

In the authentic attitudes of blessing and thanksgiving, there is not for a moment any hint of escapism. To bless and give thanks is never a matter of denying the negative sides of life. Far from it: thanksgiving and blessing have great depth to them precisely to the extent that they are often made in the midst of pain and adversity.

Catholics attending Mass on Thanksgiving Day cannot forget that it is precisely to give thanks and to bless that we gather. The very word “eucharist” means literally “thanksgiving.” Nor can we fail to recognize that we give joyful thanks in terms of the Lord’s suffering, death, and resurrection. Thus, on Thanksgiving Day we are invited to avoid an escapist attitude toward the darker side of life, but to have what Lutheran scripture scholar Walter Brueggemann calls “paschal joy”—a joy forged in the crucible of suffering.

To be a people of blessing and thanksgiving—in attitude, word, and, deed—is one description of being a Christian—indeed, of being a religious person of any persuasion. And it is this attitude that we invoke and celebrate on Thanksgiving Day.

(province of the Sons of the Immaculate Conception, which had been dragged into insolvency along with the IDI. According to the wiretaps, in 2014 Versaldi arranged for 30 million euros to be diverted from the Bambino Gesu Hospital toward the non-profit he oversaw. That money came from a grant of 80 million euros the hospital received from the Italian government.

The wiretaps recorded Versaldi discussing the plan with Giuseppe Profiti, the president of Bambino Gesu, with the two agreeing to conceal the misdirection of the funds from Pope Francis.

Versaldi and Profiti both denied any wrongdoing, with the cardinal claiming he only wanted to spare the pope the technical details of the efforts to save the IDI. Sources close to the efforts to fund the IDI purchase told CNA that Italian government officials declined to pursue the matter because of the involvement of high-ranking Vatican officials and because the funds were still going to be used for a hospital.

Cardinal Becciu and Fr. Decaminada

Although Becciu told CNA he had lost interest in the project by the time of the Papal Foundation grant, the cardinal’s connection to the IDI deal dates back at least to his 2011 appointment as the sostituto, the second ranking official, at the Secretariat of State.

Shortly after Becciu began working in that role, Fr. Franco Decaminada approached him for support on a proposal that the Vatican supply the IDI with 200 million euros, ostensibly to help it take over another hospital in Milan. The IDI was already teetering on insolvency by then.

Decaminada was then a senior member of the Sons of the Immaculate Conception, the order that then owned and oversaw the IDI. The priest served as the IDI’s president until its collapse.

In 2014, an Italian newspaper published details of a letter from Decaminada to Becciu, dated July 8, 2011.

But Becciu told CNA this week that he did not remember the proposal.

“In July of 2011 I had just taken up the position of Substitute and I don’t remember if Fr Decaminada wrote me, but I never dealt with this question.”

In September 2011, Decaminada hired Becciu’s niece Maria Piera Becciu, as his personal secretary.

CNA asked Cardinal Becciu if he or his position at the Secretariat of State had played any role in the hiring of his niece. He told CNA simply that “she applied for the position and was hired.”

Earlier that same year, Decaminada was involved in the creation of a company called Ibos II, with offices in Luxembourg, Kinshasa, and in Rome, where the office was located in the same building as the IDI. The company was set up to attract investments for oil and mineral prospecting along the border region of the Democratic Republic of Congo and Angola.

Before he returned to Rome in May 2011, Becciu had been apostolic nuncio to Cuba for two years; before that he was the Vatican’s ambassador in Angola for nearly a decade. In 2012, Becciu was involved in the Secretariat of State’s consideration of a reported $200 million investment in a different oil company in the Angolan region, Falcon Oil.

Becciu told CNA that he was not aware of the connection between Ibos II and IDI, and had never had any contact with the company.

Decaminada, who had a reputation for leaving the IDI’s offices near the Vatican with shoeboxes full of cash, was arrested in 2013. He was sent to prison for his part in the massive fraud and corruption around IDI’s collapse, and eventually laicized.

Ongoing scrutiny

In 2015, Pope Francis abolished the Prefecture for the Economic Affairs of the Holy See and appointed Versaldi to lead the Congregation for Catholic Education.

Profiti was later removed and convicted by a Vatican court following a scandal in which he abused his office at the hospital to launder funds for the renovation of an apartment for Cardinal Tracisio Bertone, the Vatican Secretary of State from 2006-2013.

In 2016, shortly after the IDI was bought out of administration, Archbishop Becciu was responsible for the cancellation of a planned external audit of all Vatican finances by the firm PriceWaterhouseCoopers.

The following year, he was at the center of a complicated series of events concerning the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, in which the Secretariat of State was accused of siphoning off more than 30 million euros from a Swiss-based trust bequeathed to the Order.

The situation was resolved when the Order’s Grand Master, Matthew Festing, was forced to resign, and the pope named Becciu as a special delegate to oversee the Order.

Also in 2017, Becciu forced the resignation of the Vatican’s first-ever Auditor General, threatening him with prosecution for “sponging” on the private financial dealings of senior Vatican figures, including Becciu himself.

In 2018, Pope Francis made Becciu a cardinal and appointed him to lead the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints.

In recent weeks, his time at the Secretariat of State has come under increasing scrutiny, following reports of his use of a Luxembourg-based investment fund to direct more than $200 million into a property development scheme in London, and he is believed to be at the center of a still-going internal Vatican financial investigation.

To have an attitude of blessing is to be able to look at our past and to recognize it as good and fruitful—despite the difficulties and failures.
Dear Diocese of Santa Rosa Family;

We hope you have had a chance to practice doing "nothing" with your family after reading last month’s article. Doing “nothing” should be a chance to rest and rejuvenate, to reconnect with ourselves and family, things we all need to do.

This month, November, is the month when we remember and pray for our dead (All Souls’ Day, November 2nd), hoping that they are resting and being rejuvenated in the peace of Christ. We personally experienced five funerals of close friends in the first four months of 2019. Each of them left us with valuable lessons of love and gratitude for a life lived in communion with Christ.

At the end of November we, as a nation, celebrate Thanksgiving Day, a holiday to reflect on the many gifts we have in living in our great country. In 1863 President Lincoln proclaimed the last Thursday of the month to be Thanksgiving Day. In 1939 President Franklin Roosevelt changed the day to the fourth Thursday of November. This year it is both the last and the fourth Thursday, November 28, 2019. It is a secular holiday, meaning there is no “religious” practice attached to this holiday, though the very first Thanksgiving Day was celebrated in 1621 by the Pilgrims who came to America for religious freedom. We are sure they thanked God for surviving and having a good harvest!

At each and every Mass we celebrate the Eucharist (Greek for thanksgiving) in remembrance of Jesus’ sacrifice for us. So being thankful is very much a part of who we are in our Catholic faith.

Thanksgiving is a time to focus on gratitude, being thankful for all the little and big things that have an impact on each of us. One Thanksgiving we put a small basket on the dinner table with small squares of blank paper and pens. Before dinner each guest, children included, were asked to write something for which they were thankful. Then during dinner we passed the basket around and everyone randomly picked out one of the squares of paper and read it aloud to the group. It was wonderful to hear everyone’s experience of gratitude and thanksgiving.

It’s not only being grateful for people in your life, it is being thankful for life itself. I, Carlin, am grateful for days that begin with sunshine, full moons at night, a neighbor’s hello, the friendly clerk at the grocery store, for my loving husband, for healing of broken bones, for generous friends, and for having God in my life.

Deacon Dave, am grateful for my Catholic faith, a loving wife (41 years!), the joy of our granddaughters, home-made chocolate chip cookies (with walnuts), being out in nature, and digging in the garden.

So what are you grateful for in your life? Taking the time this Thanksgiving Day would be a good opportunity to reflect on that question and to also throw that question onto your dinner table after you say grace and begin to pass around the turkey and pumpkin pie.

And don’t forget: “And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” (Colossians 3:17).

This month’s “Ask FLO”

Dear Carlin; What’s this I hear about your breaking your leg?! —A Concerned NCC Reader

Dear Concerned; Yes, I did break my leg – pretty hard to hide that fact since I am hobbling around with a purple cast on my left leg! The accident happened on our recent vacation, but in a most adventurous way. Deacon Dave and I were with a group of 15 people going down the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon on small, wooden dories. On day 8 of our planned 15 day trip, we were hiking up a side canyon to a delightful, small waterfall with a crystal clear pool of water. On the way back to the boats, I slipped on the trail and injured my left leg above the ankle. The dory guides helped get me to the boat and we continued down river for a few miles through some rapids and then we camped overnight on a sand bar along the river. In the morning I still could not stand on my left leg so through the use of a satellite phone, the leader of the trip called in the Park Service helicopter to evacuate us out of the bottom of the Grand Canyon and to medical care, where x-rays revealed that I had in fact broken my left leg right above the ankle. I had surgery in Santa Rosa to repair the broken bones and am now in the healing process. Hence, I am thankful for healing broken bones!

Blessings to you all and Happy Thanksgiving!

—Pax Christi,

Carlin and Deacon Dave, Co-Directors
Marriage and Family Life Office

(Celibacy, cont. from page 6)

now marriage has “a prophetic, chivalric function” in front of the hyper-sexualization of society and the praise for adultery in the media.

Priests, on the other hand, decide for celibacy and renounce to sexuality “not for issues of ascetic or deprivation,” but as “the choice for different happiness.”

If both the vocations are total, it is tough to live both of the vocations at the same time, especially if “both the sacraments are conceived as two nuptial marches toward sanctity that involve different spiritual and theological scopes.”

Mercier then faced the issue of the lack of priests. “Priests, he wrote, are at the limit burn out, often submerged by organizational and administrative tasks, not only priestly tasks.”

Christians, however, are not aware of the fact that the number of priests will significantly decrease in the next years, and “still wonder that the Church can keep on offering them a sort of public service in the religious area without they are called to commit themselves in the Church.”

Mercier’s conclusions were definitive: “The Church must convert or disappear. It will be always more difficult to be Christian in a society with the option that distance from the Gospel, and so the Catholics will have to face the truth of their relationship with the person of Christ, with their care of keeping the relationship with prayer and sacraments.”

Communities will, in the end, understand that “it is not the priest that must go to them, but that they have to make an effort, for example, to receive the Body of Christ.”

This is “hard to accept, as Communion was trivialized during the last forty years,” Mercier concedes. But in the end, a renewed commitment. Catholics will become aware that “they must encourage the vocations to priesthood among their sons, in their parishes, in their schools and Catholic Universities. Otherwise, nothing will change.”

Blessings to you all and Happy Thanksgiving!

—Pax Christi,

Carlin and Deacon Dave, Co-Directors
Marriage and Family Life Office

November 11: St. Martin of Tours

Blessings to you all and Happy Thanksgiving!

—Pax Christi,
After Two Major Philippines Quakes, Catholic Bishops Call for Prayers and Aid

Manila, Philippines, Oct 31 (CNA) - Catholic bishops have appealed for prayers and aid for earthquake victims after two strong earthquakes hit the Philippines in the last week, causing some deaths and damage.

"Please, again, let us show our spirit of charity and solidarity," Archbishop Romulo Valles of Davao, who is president of the Catholic bishops' conference of the Philippines, said Oct. 31, according to CBCP News.

On Thursday an earthquake struck the large southern island of Mindanao about 25 miles southwest of the regional capital of Davao City, a city of about 1.6 million people, the New York Times reports. The U.S. Geological Survey said the quake was about 6.5 in magnitude.

At least five people were killed, including a village elder in Batasan, a seven-year-old crushed by falling debris, and two adults buried in a landslide, the New York Times reports. Hundreds more were injured.

More than 12,700 people from nearly 60 villages had fled to evacuation centers after an earthquake the previous Tuesday.

That earthquake, which struck on Tuesday, measured 6.6 in magnitude and was centered in Tulunan, Cotabato province about 60 miles southwest of Davao. At least two people were killed and hundreds were injured. The quake destroyed schools, homes and other buildings on Mindanao.

School was cancelled for many students and power has been cut in large parts of the affected regions.

In Mindanao's Cotabato province, some parishes in the Diocese of Kidapawan reported damage, particularly the parishes of Makilala and Magpet. The diocese has established an emergency rapid response team and has launched relief efforts for those affected, CBCP News reports.

Bishop Jose Colin Bagaforo of Kidapawan said that residents ran out of their homes and were afraid to return for fear of aftershocks. He reported an “up and down and sideways” motion in the structures, CBCP News said.

Laminated tents and mats are needed for those sleeping outside of evacuation centers. Other needed supplies are water or water containers, mosquito nets, food packets and blankets. Medical needs include medicine for hypertension and coughs as well as anti-tetanus shots.

Archbishop Valles called for prayers, “especially for people grieving for loved ones who lost their lives in these recent earthquakes.”

“Let us pray for the eternal repose of those who died. And let us pray that we continue to be caring and watchful for the safety of everyone,” he said.

He said more information could result in another appeal for aid.

After the first major earthquake, Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle of Manila offered prayers for those affected. On Radio Veritas, he asked for the public to assist victims of the earthquake and to rebuild damaged structures, including churches.

“If the dioceses and parishes in those areas appeal for help, I hope that you will be open to respond,” he said Oct 29.

Controversial President Rodrigo Duterte is a former mayor of Davao and was in the city during Thursday's earthquake. A crack appeared on his bedroom wall but an aide told the New York Times he was safe and there was no need for him to evacuate. His daughter Sara Duterte-Carpio is the current mayor of Davao. ♦
As Fires Sweep Through California, Catholics Offer Prayers and Support

Sacramento, Calif., Oct 31 (CNA) - In the face of ongoing fires throughout California, Catholic organizations have responded with prayers, shelter, and food.

Bishop Frank Dewane of Venice, chairman of the U.S. bishops’ committee on domestic justice and human development, offered prayers for the victims of numerous fires in California.

“I join in the heartfelt prayers offered by the bishops in the state of California in response to the terrible wildfires that have affected approximately thirty counties in that state,” he said Oct. 30.

The most destructive fire is currently the Kincade fire, which began in Marin County Oct. 23 and has so far burned over 75,000 acres. Although the fire is about 60% contained, it has damaged 47 structures and destroyed 266 more. The fire has also injured four people.

The Easy Fire initiated Oct. 30 near Simi Valley. It has claimed over 1,700 acres and destroyed 2 structures. It is five percent contained. The Getty Fire began Oct. 28 near Los Angeles, scorching 745 acres, destroying 12 homes, and damaging five more. This fire is 39 percent contained.

The Hillside Fire began in San Bernardino in the early hours of Oct. 31. It has claimed over 200 acres and forced more than 1,300 residents to evacuate. The fire is 80 percent contained.

A couple of hours after Hillside began, the 46 Fire started in Jurupa Valley. The fire is the result of a car crash involving a police chase and a stolen vehicle, according to the Riverside County Sheriff’s Department. The fire is five percent contained.

According to CBS News about 206,000 homes throughout California are still facing a power outage. The power had been cut to prevent fires from spreading.

Dewane encouraged Catholics to pray for the victims and provide monetary support for people seeking to recover.

“It is in solidarity with our brother bishops in California, who have voiced their desire for prompt relief, that I encourage all appropriate public parties and the faithful to be generous in their financial support of these recovery efforts. Let us all pray for the safety of those affected and their property.”

We cooked with gas and served about 700 meals a day so about 50% more than the usual [amount],” she said.

“You have drilled to be able to prepare for that number of meals without power or without water. So we had all the materials that we needed and we had our staff trained so we weren’t guessing our way through it, nobody panicked,” she further added.

During the past three years, California has witnessed its two worst fires on record. Paquette said these natural disasters are a new normal and there must be safety measures in place. She said victims of fires are already anxious and need to be given an organized and safe location.

“During these fires and evacuations, people are absolutely at their most vulnerable. They are afraid, they don’t have their things with them, whether it’s their car or their clothes. People are really only fleeing with just themselves and hopefully their loved ones.”

“It’s really important to have an instant, compassionate, organized response. I think, in the past, when things aren’t as organized, it’s really hard on the victims because they are already very anxious and it makes a big difference to have a calming community response.”

(Governor Newson, cont. from page 7) state continue to provide pastoral care and financial support for victim-survivors, no matter when that abuse occurred.

“Because we understand that many victim-survivors are reluctant to come to the Church for assistance and that many will never take their claims to court, on September 16, six dioceses in the state began participating in a new private independent program to provide compensation to any person who has been sexually abused as a minor by a diocesan priest, no matter when that abuse occurred. We encourage those who have been abused by diocesan priests in the dioceses of Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, San Diego, Fresno and Sacramento, to seek assistance at https://www.californiadioce sescomp.org.

“Sadly, the author choose to deny any remedy to the sexual abuse victims in State institutions and hide the perpetrators employed by the State. Unfortunately, the Governor did not insist with the author and legislative leadership that all sexual abuse victims deserve to be heard and healed.

“Ultimately, our hope is that all victim-survivors of childhood sexual abuse in all institutional settings will be able to have their pain and suffering addressed and resolved and so our prayers are that AB 218 will be a step forward in that direction. All the dioceses and bishops in California remain committed to this and we remain committed to the working so that abuse is prevented and children are protected in our parishes, schools and ministries.”
Kentucky Shirtmaker Wins Discrimination Case Over LGBT Festival

By Matt Hadro

Frankfort, Ky., Nov 1 (CNA) - The Kentucky state Supreme Court on Thursday ruled in favor of a Christian business owner who declined to serve an LGBT pride festival, and who was punished by a local government for discrimination.

"Today's decision makes clear that this case never should have happened," said Jim Campbell, senior counsel with the group Alliance Defending Freedom who argued the case of print shop owner Blaine Adamson before the Kentucky Supreme Court.

"The First Amendment protects Blaine's right to continue serving all people while declining to print messages that violate his faith," Campbell said.

The case of Lexington-Fayette Urban County Human Rights Commission v. Hands On Originals dates back to 2012, the print shop Hands On Originals—owned by Blaine Adamson—was asked by the Gay and Lesbian Services Organization to print shirts promoting the Lexington, Kentucky, Pride Festival.

Adamson declined, saying that to print shirts promoting such a festival would violate his Christian beliefs. He referred the organization to other vendors who could serve them.

"I will work with any person, no matter who they are, and no matter what their belief systems are," Adamson told reporters after oral arguments in his case before the Kentucky Supreme Court, on Aug. 23. "But when I'm presented with a message that conflicts with my faith, that's just something I cannot print."

In 2014, the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Human Rights Commission ruled that Adamson had violated the city's anti-discrimination ordinance. The commission required him to receive diversity training.

Adamson challenged the decision and won in a Kentucky court in 2017. The case was appealed to the state supreme court, which ruled in Adamson's favor on Thursday.

The city's human rights commission "lacked statutory standing" to make a discrimination claim against Hands On Originals, the court's opinion by Justice Laurance VanMeter stated, as the complaint was brought by an organization and not an individual.

Furthermore, the court found that no individual claimed Hands On had discriminated, the court's opinion said.

The city ordinance in question bars discrimination against individuals, the court said, yet "in this case, because an 'individual' did not file the claim, but rather an organization did, we would have to determine whether the organization is a member of the protected class, which we find impossible to ascertain."

A concurring opinion by Justice David Buckingham, however went further in saying that the city's human rights commission actively tried to "compel" Hands On Originals "to engage in expression with which it disagreed."

"Hands On was in good faith objecting to the message it was being asked to disseminate," Buckingham wrote. Citing the Supreme Court's decision Janus v. AFSCME, he wrote that "[w]hen speech is compelled…, individuals are coerced into betraying their convictions. Forcing free and independent individuals to endorse ideas they find objectionable is always demeaning."

Adamson's case is one of a number of religious freedom cases where business owners have been sued for refusing to violate their religious beliefs and provide a service they deem objectionable.

Washington state florist Barronelle Stutzman has appealed to the Supreme Court after she was sued for declining to serve a same-sex wedding, and lost her case at the state's supreme court. Colorado cake artist Jack Phillips has once again been sued for conscientiously declining to make a cake; in the most recent case, he was asked to make a cake celebrating a gender transition. ✤
Biden Communion Denial Was Required by Diocesan Policy

By JD Flynn and Matt Hadro

Washington D.C., Oct 30 (CNA) - A policy in the Diocese of Charleston, South Carolina requires priests to withhold the Eucharist from politicians and political candidates who support legal protection for abortion.

"Catholic public officials who consistently support abortion on demand are cooperating with evil in a public manner. By supporting pro-abortion legislation they participate in manifest grave sin, a condition which excludes them from admission to Holy Communion as long as they persist in the pro-abortion stance," says a 2004 decree signed jointly by the bishops of Atlanta, Charleston, and Charlotte.

"We declare that Catholics serving in public life espousing positions contrary to the teaching of the Church on the sanctity and inviolability of human life, especially those running for or elected to public office, are not to be admitted to Holy Communion in any Catholic church within our jurisdictions: the Archdiocese of Atlanta, the Dioceses of Charleston and Charlotte.

"We undertake this action to safeguard the sacred dignity of the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar, to reassure the faithful, and to save sinners," the decree adds.

A 2004 Charleston policy says that "Catholics in Political Life and the Reception of Holy Communion signifies we are one with God, each other and the Church. Our actions should reflect that," he stated.

"Any public figure who advocates for abortion places himself or herself outside of Church teaching," the priest added.

The 2004 Charleston policy says that "Catholics in political life have the responsibility to exemplify in their public service this teaching of the Church, and to work for the protection of all innocent life. There can be no contradiction between the values bestowed by Baptism and the Catholic Faith, and the public expression of those values."

"A manifest lack of proper disposition for Holy Communion is found to be present in those who consistently support pro-abortion legislation. Because support for pro-abortion legislation is gravely sinful, such persons should not be admitted to Holy Communion," the decree continues.

Biden's home diocese of Wilmington, Delaware issued a statement on Tuesday saying that Bishop W. Francis Malooly "has consistently refrained from politicizing the Eucharist, and will continue to do so."

"The Church's teachings on the protection of human life from the moment of conception is clear and well-known," the statement said, adding that the bishop's "preference" is "to interact with politicians individually who disagree with significant church teachings."

In 2008, Malooly made largely the same point in response to Biden's public support for abortion as he was campaigning on the ticket with then-presidential candidate Barack Obama.

Malooly said in the Sept. 4, 2008 edition of the diocesan newspaper The Dialog, that he did not "intend to politicize the Eucharist as a way of communicating Catholic Church teachings, but would rather get a lot more mileage out of a conversation trying to change the mind and heart than I would out of a public confrontation."

Biden, one of the leading 2020 Democratic presidential candidates, is a Catholic who represented Delaware in the U.S. Senate from 1973 until 2009, and served as vice president from 2009 to 2017. In April of 2019, he announced his candidacy for president.

While Biden served in the Senate, he largely supported the Supreme Court's 1973 decision that found a legal right to abortion, Roe v. Wade. He called his position "middle-of-the-road," saying that he supported Roe but opposed late-term abortions and federal funding of abortions.

Since then, he has supported taxpayer funding of abortions via the repeal of the Hyde Amendment and Mexico City Policy, in his 2020 platform.

Biden's 2020 campaign platform calls for the codification of Roe v. Wade as federal law. It also would ensure, as part of a health care "public option," coverage of "a woman's constitutional right to choose. Biden also favors reinstating taxpayer funding for Planned Parenthood, the nation's largest abortion provider.

Debate over the application of the Code of Canon Law's canon 915 to pro-choice politicians is not a new one. The canonical norm states that those "obstinately persevering in manifest grave sin are not to be admitted to holy communion."

During the 2004 election, the U.S. bishops issued a statement "Catholics in Political Life" that left the decision to withhold Holy Communion to pro-abortion politicians to individual bishops.

Meanwhile, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, had sent a letter to Theodore McCarrick, then-Archbishop of Washington, with the expectation that it be read to fellow bishops.

The letter said that pro-abortion politicians—after first being admonished by their pastor on Church teaching and warning them against presenting themselves for Communion—"are not to be admitted to holy communion."

The law’s definition of “manifest” participation in “grave sin” applies “in the case of a Catholic politician, as his consistently campaigning and voting for permissive abortion and euthanasia laws,” Ratzinger said.

McCarrick read some but not all of the letter to his fellow bishops at their summer meeting, omitting key parts and saying that Ratzinger had agreed with the bishops’ decision to leave the judgement about withholding Holy Communion up to each individual bishop. Ratzinger’s entire letter was reported to the public afterward.

It was in August 2004, shortly after that letter was read, that the Archbishop of Atlanta, then-Archbishop John Donoghue, along with Bishop Peter Jurgis of Charlotte and Bishop Robert Baker of Charleston jointly set policy for their dioceses.

A law “which legitimizes the direct killing of innocent human beings through abortion is intrinsically unjust, since it is directly opposed to the natural law, to God’s revealed commandments, and to the consequent right of every individual to possess life, from the moment of conception to the moment of natural death,” the bishops wrote. ✶
North Ireland Bishops: Hold Politicians Responsible for Abortion Law

Belfast, Northern Ireland, Oct 29 (CNA) - Voters must hold politicians responsible for failing to stop the British Parliament's radical expansion of legal abortion in Northern Ireland, the region's Catholic bishops have said.

“This is a tragic day for the unborn children who will now never bless our world with their unique and precious lives. It is also a sad day for our local democracy,” the Catholic bishops of Northern Ireland said Oct. 22.

“The unavoidable truth is that our locally elected representatives had the time and the power to prevent this draconian Westminster abortion legislation being introduced over the heads of local citizens but chose not to do so. It is the duty of citizens to hold their elected representatives accountable for the decisions they have made.”

“Abortion is a brutal violation of the precious gift of life,” the bishops continued.

“The right to life is not given to us by any law or government. Any human law that removes the right to life is an unjust law and must be resisted by every person, every voter, every political representative. For Catholic politicians this is not only a matter of protecting the human right to life but also a fundamental matter of Catholic faith.”

Extremely permissive abortion legislation and the legal recognition of same-sex “marriage” became law in Northern Ireland on Oct. 21 under the legislation the British Parliament passed in July. The legal changes will take effect next year.

The Catholic bishops also voiced concern at the redifinition of marriage, saying it “effectively places the union of two men, or two women, on a par with the marriage relationship between a husband and wife which is open to the procreation of children.”

Previously, Northern Ireland’s laws only permitted abortion in cases where a woman’s life is at risk, or where there is a permanent or serious risk to her mental or physical health. Backers of the law said it had saved over 100,000 lives by avoiding the permissive law that took effect in other parts of the United Kingdom in 1967.

The new law means no explicit legal protections for unborn children up to 28 weeks into pregnancy, compared to legal abortion up to 24 weeks in other parts of the U.K. Pressure to legalize abortion in Northern Ireland increased after a 2018 referendum legalized abortion in the Republic of Ireland.

Critics of the British Parliament’s law incorporated matters of special importance to the region. They said the law violated agreements about the devolution of important decisions to Northern Ireland, agreements enshrined in the Good Friday Agreement that helped bring peace to the violent struggles between nationalists and unionists.

The parties of the Northern Ireland Assembly could not reach any agreement due to a dispute between the two leading governing parties, the Democratic Unionist Party and the second-largest party, Sinn Fein.

The DUP is traditionally strongly Protestant and anti-Catholic, but also opposes abortion and same-sex marriage. The nationalist parties including Sinn Fein and the Social Democratic Labor Party traditionally draw support from Northern Ireland’s Catholics.

The Catholic bishops and leaders in the Church of Ireland, Methodist Church in Ireland, Presbyterian Church in Ireland, and the Irish Council of Churches had previously called on the Northern Ireland Assembly to reconvene to block the legislation.

The Northern Ireland Assembly has been suspended for almost two years due to a dispute between the two major governing parties. It was not able to do business by Oct. 21. The nationalist Social Democratic Labour Party walked out of the final critical meeting. Sinn Fein, did not participate in the meeting, nor did the Green Party and the People Before Profit party.

Sinn Fein, which also backs abortion rights and same-sex “marriage,” has said that it will not participate in the formation of a Northern Irish government without an Irish Language Act, which would give Irish equal status to English in the region.

Other nationalist parties back such an act, while unionist parties oppose it.

Jim Wells, a Member of the Legislative Assembly in Northern Ireland and a member of the Democratic Unionist Party, has called for a referendum to address the new changes.

“I and many others strongly believe that both issues should be made the subject of referenda which will give the people of Northern Ireland the opportunity to have their say,” Wells said, according to the Belfast Telegraph.

“There is huge concern in the community about the total lack of consultation prior to these changes and a sense of anger that they were unable to have their views considered in advance of October 21,” he continued. “They were forced through late at night by others who had little or no understanding of the values of the people of this part of the United Kingdom.

The Democratic Unionist Party is part of the Conservative coalition U.K. government now headed by Prime Minister Boris Johnson. At the time the legislation passed, Theresa May was Prime Minister.

Wells’ comments drew criticism from pro-abortion rights campaigners such as Naomi Connor, co-convener of Alliance for Choice. She said a referendum would not be legally binding on the grounds that there is no written constitution and it would constitute a plebiscite.

Connor claimed that legal abortion is a matter of human rights.

“Human rights are not an a la carte menu that Mr Wells can pick and choose from and these matters should not be decided by referenda,” she said, according to the Belfast Telegraph.

She said that successive Northern Ireland government’s “failed women and pregnant people repeatedly by refusing to legislate for abortion provision.” She said his stand forced women to travel to the U.K. for abortions “in stigma and shame.”

Connor said it was “highly insensitive” for Wells to make comments near the anniversary of the October 2012 death of Savita Halappanavar, who died of an infection after reportedly asking for an abortion at University Hospital Galway. Doctors refused an abortion because the baby still had a heartbeat. Halappanavar later died of a severe antibiotic-resistant infection.

Pro-abortion rights campaigners have charged she was wrongly denied an abortion that they say would have saved her life.

Connor said it was “highly insensitive” for Wells to make comments near the anniversary of the October 2012 death of Savita Halappanavar, who died of an infection after reportedly asking for an abortion at University Hospital Galway. Doctors refused an abortion because the baby still had a heartbeat. Halappanavar later died of a severe antibiotic-resistant infection.

An inquest found multiple communications failures during her treatment while also recommending changes in guidelines for doctors to save the life of the mother.
Pope Francis prays for stability in Iraq amid deadly protests

By Hannah Brockhaus

Vatican City, Oct 30 (CNA) - Pope Francis prayed Wednesday for Iraq, where 18 more people were killed and hundreds wounded Oct. 29 during political protests in Karbala.

"My thoughts turn to beloved Iraq, where protests during this month have caused numerous deaths and injuries," the pope said during the general audience Oct. 30.

"I pray that those battered people will find peace and stability after so many years of war and violence, where they have suffered so much."

There have been numerous anti-government protests across Iraq this month, with the last wave beginning Oct. 25. Since the beginning of the protests, government forces have used tear gas and bullets against protesters.

At least 88 protesters have been killed in the last five days and around 149 protesters died earlier this month, according to AP.

Protests are largely in response to government corruption and a lack of economic growth and proper public services. Protesters are calling for reform and for the resignation of the Iraqi government.

At his audience in St. Peter's Square Oct. 30, Pope Francis expressed his condolences for the wounded, for all those who have died and for their families, adding that he invites the Iraqi authorities "to listen to the cry of the population that asks for a dignified and peaceful life."

"I urge all Iraqis, with the support of the international community, to pursue the path of dialogue and reconciliation and to seek the right solutions to the challenges and problems of the country," he said.

In his message for the audience, the pope reflected on the Acts of the Apostles chapter 16, when St. Paul experiences a vision in which a Macedonian begs him to "come over to Macedonia and help us."

"The Apostle has no hesitations, he leaves for Macedonia, sure that it is God himself who sends him, "to come over to Macedonia and help us."

"As long as the awareness of the close link between the Latin language and the languages that descended from it persisted, there was no need to explain or even justify this title of Archivum Secretum," he explained.

But, he added, "with the progressive semantic changes that have occurred in modern languages and in the cultures and social sensitivities of different nations, to a greater or lesser extent, the term Secretum, linked to the Vatican Archive, began to be misunderstood, to be colored with ambiguous shades, even negative."

Francis said he decided to change the name, because "the true meaning of the term secretum has been lost, and there is a growing instinctive association 'with the concept expressed by the modern word 'secret,' in some areas and environments."

"Historical experience teaches that every human institution, having arisen even with the best protections and with vigorous and well-founded hopes of progress, touched fatally by time, in order precisely to remain faithful to itself and to the ideal aims of its nature, perceives the need, not to change its appearance, but to transpose in the various ages and cultures its own inspiring values and to make those updates that are convenient and sometimes necessary," he wrote.

National

US bishops’ conference to vote on president, action items at fall meeting

Baltimore, Md., Oct 27 (CNA) - The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) will be electing a new president, vice president, and commit-tee chairs, and will vote on seven action items during the upcoming Fall General Assembly.

A total of 10 archbishops and bishops are listed on the presidential ballot: Archbishop Timothy Broglio of the Military Services, Bishop Frank Caggiano of Bridgeport, Archbishop Paul Coakley of Oklaho-

After the president is elected with a simple minority, the remaining nine candidates will be eligible for vice president. Typically, the current vice president is voted as the next president. That position is presently held by Archbishop Jose Gomez of Los Angeles.

In addition to the presidential and vice-presidential elections, the bishops will also elect new chairmen for six of the conference’s committees: Canonical Affairs and Church Governance; Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs; Evangelization and Catechesis; International Justice and Peace; Protection of Children and Young People; and Religious Liberty.

Those who are elected to a position of leadership will serve a three-year term. For all of the committees except Religious Liberty, the newly-elected chairman will serve for one year as chairman-elect and will officially become the new chairman at next year’s Fall General Assembly. Those who are selected to lead the Religious Liberty committee will immediately become chairman as the position is currently vacant due to Archbishop Joseph Kurtz’s battle with cancer.

The Board of Directors for Catholic Relief Services will also be elected at the General Assembly.

During the meeting, the bishops will vote to approve the sixth edition of the Program of Priestly Formation, which will be used throughout the United States. They will also vote on whether to approve a letter and five video scripts that will accompany the teaching document “Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship,” which advises American Catholics about how to be a responsible citizen when it comes to voting.

Bishops will also vote to approve the Revised Strategic Priorities for the upcoming Strategic Plan cycle, which lasts from 2021-2024, and will vote to approve the proposed budget for 2020.

Latin Church bishops and archbishops will vote on approving two new English translations that were written by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy. If approved, the new translation of the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults and a new translation of Hymns of the Liturgy of the Hours will be used across the United States.

Additionally, the Subcommittee on Hispanic Affairs will seek the authorization of the bishops to start the translation of Hymns of the Liturgy of the Hours will be used across the United States.

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis released a statement that the school’s decision was protected by the Constitution fully protects the Church’s efforts to do so,” the Archdiocese said. “We invite anyone seeking a Christ-centered, student-focused learning environment where young people are supported in being the best versions of themselves to check out one or more of the 67 Catholic schools in central and southern Indiana.”

Archdiocese Faces Third Discrimination Complaint Over Same-Sex Marriage Policy

By Mary Farrow

Indianapolis, Ind., Oct 29 (CNA) - The Archdiocese of Indianapolis on Wednesday defended its decision not to renew the contract of a school employee who publicly defended the same-sex marriages of two former colleagues.

Kelley Fisher, who had worked as a social worker at Roncalli High School for 15 years, lost her job last spring after she publicly defended guidance counselors Shelly Fitzgerald and Lynn Starkey, two former guidance counselors who were both dismissed last academic year for being in same-sex marriages, the Indianapolis Star reported.

Fisher, who has said she identifies as straight, was an employee of Catholic Charities of Indianapolis, an entity that is also overseen by the Archdiocese. Fisher was contracted as a social worker by the school through Catholic Charities and reportedly received multiple warnings from the school before her contract was not renewed.

In a statement made following the filing of Fisher’s complaint and provided to CNA, the Archdiocese of Indianapolis defended its decision to not renew Fisher's contract.

“Despite the challenges, the Archdiocese reported that “staff retention at Roncalli High School was 88 percent this past year, which is Roncalli’s highest staff retention rate in the past five years.”

“The Archdiocese of Indianapolis remains committed to providing high quality, holistic Catholic education and formation so that young people recognize the many gifts with which they have been blessed, and in turn strive to make God known, loved, and served,” the statement added.

“We invite anyone seeking a Christ-centered, student-focused learning environment where young people are supported in being the best versions of themselves to check out one or more of the 67 Catholic schools in central and southern Indiana.”

Alabama Abortion Ban Blocked in Federal Court

Montgomery, Ala., Oct 29 (CNA) - A federal judge on Tuesday blocked an Alabama law banning most abortions, which passed in May, from going into effect on the planned date of Nov. 15.

The “Human Life Protection Act,” which Alabama Governor Kay Ivey signed into law May 14, would have made attempting or performing an abortion a felony offense for medical professionals.

Despite the judge’s ruling, an Alabama lawmaker who helped sponsor the legislation is welcoming the legal challenge, in the hopes that the Supreme Court will ultimately review the law.

“Today’s ruling is both expected and welcomed. Our law was designed to overturn Roe v. Wade at the Supreme Court level, and today’s ruling is merely the first of many steps on that legal journey,” said Rep. Terri Collins as quoted by AL.com.

“I remain confident that our mission will be successful and appreciate the support of millions of citizens who support our effort to preserve unborn life,” (see News Briefs, page 17)
Chinese Catholics Barricade Themselves in Church to Prevent Demolition

Beijing, China, Nov 1 (CNA) - Priests and parishioners have barricaded themselves in a Catholic church in the Chinese province of Hebei. According to reports, the Catholics are attempting to prevent the Chinese government from tearing down the Church.

The protest began at 6am Thursday morning at the church in Wu Gao Zhang, part of the Guantao district of Hebei, on the coast of northern China. Officials have ordered that the church be destroyed even though it is fully recognized and approved by the government. According to the website AsiaNews, local authorities have said the building lacks appropriate permits.

In September 2017, China enacted strict new regulations concerning religion. Since then, authorities have been vigilant in enforcing permitting requirements. Churches that are not found to be in compliance are destroyed.

According to AsiaNews, many Chinese Catholics say that last September’s Sino-Vatican Agreement has served to embolden the government to take punitive action against Catholics who did not belong to state-approved churches.

Officials have reportedly claimed that “the Vatican supports us” and have ordered an additional 40 churches be destroyed.

For decades, the Church in China was split between the “Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association,” a state-run Church under the control of Chinese Communist Party, and the underground Church that was in full communion with the Holy See. The 2018 agreement, the details of which have not been released, was intended to unify the two ecclesiastical communities, although multiple reports out of China have indicated that priests and laity who refuse to worship at

(see Chinese Catholics, page 21)

Reports indicate that those who have refused to remove any or all of the Ten Commandments have been imprisoned, with leaders and worshippers harassed even in churches that complied with the instruction.

(News Briefs, cont. from page 16)

Collins said.

AL.com reports that District Judge Myron Thompson issued a ruling blocking the law from taking effect while a legal challenge, brought by the American Civil Liberties Union of Alabama and Planned Parenthood Southeast Advocates, makes its way through the court system.

Under the Alabama legislation, doctors who perform an abortion could be charged with a Class A felony and could face between 10 years and life in prison.

The law includes an exception for “cases where abortion is necessary in order to prevent a serious health risk to the unborn child’s mother,” and includes no exceptions for cases of rape or incest.

The penalty would apply only to doctors, not to mothers, who, according to the law’s sponsors, would not face criminal penalties for seeking or undergoing abortions.

The sponsors, including Rep. Collins, have said that the law is designed to be a direct challenge to Roe v. Wade, the 1973 Supreme Court decision that found a constitutional right to abortion.

Ohio, Georgia, Iowa, North Dakota, Kentucky and Mississippi have all passed various restrictions on abortion designed to challenge Roe v. Wade, many of which have also been blocked by courts.

Missouri passed a near-total ban on abortion in May designed to stand up to judicial scrutiny, but in August a federal judge issued a preliminary injunction against the new law, preventing it going into force.

Bishop Robert Baker of Birmingham, Alabama said in April that the state’s legislation reflects “the strong commitment that the people of Alabama have to life.”

In an April 3 statement, the bishop praised the lawmakers’ efforts.

“I strongly support these bills and stand behind the efforts of these legislators to promote life and to, hopefully in the near future, eliminate this evil we know as abortion from within the boundaries of the State of Alabama; and, eventually, to make the killing of unborn children in our country something that is no longer viewed as anything but the horrendous and inhumane killing of the most innocent among us that it is,” he said.

There are currently three abortion clinics operating in Alabama.

USCCB To Give Dioceses $10 Million For Local Mission Projects

Washington D.C., Oct 29 (CNA) - The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) announced on Monday that it has allocated $9.9 million in grants for evangelization in the United States in the year 2020.

The grants will go to 77 dioceses and eparchies, chosen in September by the USCCB’s Subcommittee on Catholic Home Missions. The subcommittee met in El Paso, one of the recipient dioceses. All the dioceses picked to receive grants “face significant challenges to their evangelization efforts due to geography, low populations, and poverty,” an Oct. 29 statement from the conference explained.

Money for these grants was raised through the Catholic Home Missions Appeal, a national collection taken up each year in April. A “home mission” refers to a diocese or parish in the United States or its territories that is unable to provide basic pastoral services, such as access to the sacraments, religious education, or ministry training, without outside assistance.

Selected grant recipients include the Diocese of Kalamazoo, which will use the money to support its migrant ministry outreach program. That program, now in its 20th year, reaches more than 15,000 migrant farmworkers in the diocese, and provides Mass, sacramental preparation, catechism instruction and other services.

Other dioceses will use the grant money to fund faith formation programs for youth and young adult Catholics, or to reach people in extremely remote parts of the diocese. The Diocese of Juneau, Alaska, which includes many isolated communities, will use the funds for this purpose.

Bishop Shawn Mc Knight of Jefferson City, who leads the committee on Catholic Home Missions, said in a statement that the grants are vitally important to the mission to spread the Gospel in the United States.

“These dioceses otherwise might not be able to engage as robustly in the evangelization and outreach programs that foster the community and fraternity needed to enrich the faithful who long to grow closer to Christ,” said Mc Knight.

“The Diocese of El Paso, along with many other dioceses throughout the United States struggle to meet the basic pastoral needs of the faithful,” said McKnight. “Thanks to the generosity of Catholics throughout the United States, dioceses in need can apply for grants that will help them with evangelization and pastoral ministry efforts.”

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La Fecha de la Certeza Definitiva

Somos muy conscientes de que el Año Nuevo es el 1 de Enero de cada año, independientemente del día de la semana. Además de este método de “Calendario Anual” de marcar el tiempo, también somos conscientes de que los registros financieros a menudo se basan en un “Año fiscal”. Ese año comienza, por lo general, el 1 de Julio de cada año y termina el 30 de Junio, de nuevo independientemente del día de la semana. La Iglesia también tiene su propio calendario especial. Esto se conoce como el calendario del “Año Litúrgico”. El Año Litúrgico no comienza ni termina en una fecha determinada, sino más bien por los Domingos designados. Este año, para hacer las cosas un poco menos confusas, el Año Litúrgico comienza el 1 de Diciembre. El Año Litúrgico no comienza el 1 de Diciembre por ser el primer día de Diciembre, sino porque el 1 de Diciembre es el primer domingo de Adviento. Es el primer domingo de Adviento, independientemente de la fecha específica, que siempre marca el comienzo del Año Litúrgico.

El reconocimiento del inicio del nuevo Año Litúrgico significa el fin del presente Año Litúrgico que comenzó, si en el Primer Domingo de Adviento en 2018, pero que tuvo lugar el 2 de Diciembre de 2018. Ese año termina el 30 de Noviembre de 2019, el Sábado antes del primer Domingo de Adviento. La mayor acción litúrgica, que marca la última semana del Año Litúrgico, es La Solemnidad de Cristo Rey (Domingo 24 de Noviembre). Ese domingo, que se acerca en unas semanas, anticipa la segunda venida de Cristo en el fin del mundo y nos sirve como recordatorio de que el mundo, tal como lo conocemos, está desapareciendo y que hay una realidad inédita más allá de la que actualmente vemos y experimentamos.

La gente a menudo dirá de una manera bastante insensiblemente que las únicas dos certezas en esta vida son la muerte y los impuestos. Los impuestos están vinculados al Año fiscal. La muerte está ligada al Calendario del Año Civil y al Año Litúrgico. A pesar del hecho de que la muerte es reconocida como una certeza final, muchos viven como si la muerte no fuera en absoluto una posibilidad futura. El hecho de que la fecha y el día de nuestra muerte no se conozca abre para nosotros la posibilidad muy real de olvidar que la muerte es una parte definitiva y segura de nuestro futuro. El final del año civil sirve como un recordatorio secular de este hecho, pero el Año Litúrgico no sólo nos recuerda la certeza de la muerte, sino que también nos recuerda la certeza de la “vida eterna”.

En las semanas entre ahora y el final del Año Litúrgico, las lecturas en Misa están cada vez más dirigidas a la necesidad de considerar la realidad de que nuestra vida en este mundo material seguramente terminará. Un pasaje del Evangelio, leído recientemente en una Misa de semana, tiene al Señor, en una parábola sobre la acumulación de riquezas, preguntando: “¿A quién irá toda tu riqueza acumulada?” (Lucas 12:20) Es un tipo de advertencia, una amonestación, sobre la necesidad de considerar nuestro final o, para decirlo de otra manera, hacer la pregunta: “¿Y después qué?” Esta es una pregunta simple que podemos aplicar fácilmente en cada etapa de nuestra propia vida. Podríamos fijarnos una meta de graduación de secundaria y la universidad y tenemos que preguntar: ¿Y después qué? Tal vez la respuesta es el matrimonio, el sacerdocio o la vida religiosa y tenemos que preguntar: ¿Y después qué? Finalmente, cada persona debe admitirlo, luego morimos. En este punto, la misma pregunta debe hacerse: ¿Y después qué?

¿Y después qué? Esta pregunta es importante a lo largo del Año Litúrgico, pero llega a un punto decisivo cuando nos acercamos al final del Año Litúrgico. En este último mes del Año Litúrgico estamos cada vez más llamados a considerar seriamente la importancia de tener una respuesta adecuada a la realidad presentada por esta afirmación y pregunta: Y luego mueres. ¿Y después qué? El “mundo, la carne y el diablo” nos harán creer que termina con: Y luego mueres. Sabemos con fe, sin embargo, que este no es el fin. El Año Litúrgico es una ayuda inestimable para ayudarnos a asegurarnos de que nunca descuidemos, durante todo el Año, pero sobre todo cuando nos acercamos a su fin para preguntarnos: ¿Y después qué?

The Saints Show That Real People Can Be Holy, Pope Francis Says

By Hannah Brockhaus

Vatican City, Nov 1 (CNA) - The saints were real people whose strength to face daily challenges came from the grace of Jesus Christ, showing that everyone can be holy, Pope Francis said Friday on the Feast of All Saints Day.

“The saints of all times, which we all celebrate today, are not simply symbols, distant human beings, unreachable,” he said Nov. 1.

“On the contrary, they are people who have lived with their feet on the ground,” he said. “They have experienced the daily toil of existence with its successes and its failures, finding in the Lord the strength to always get up and continue the journey.”

The saints demonstrate that holiness is not achieved alone, he said, but is “the fruit of the grace of God and of our free response to it.”

Pope Francis spoke about holiness in a message before the Angelus, which he led in honor of the Solemnity of All Saints. He stated that holiness is not only a gift from God, it is the “common vocation of the disciples of Christ.”

Holiness, the pope said, “is the path of fullness that every Christian is called to follow in the faith, proceeding towards the final goal: the definitive communion with God in eternal life.”

He explained that responding to God’s call to be holy, and accepting the gift of his grace, means taking “a serious and daily commitment to sanctification in the conditions, duties and circumstances of our life, trying to live everything with love and with charity.”

The Church, he said, has many examples of how to live with charity, both in the canonized saints in heaven as well as those who live in one’s community and are witnesses of holiness “next door.”

Holiness, the pope said, “is the path of fullness that every Christian is called to follow in the faith, proceeding towards the final goal: the definitive communion with God in eternal life.”

He said part of holiness is becoming more and more aware of being “grafted onto Christ” and the union of vine and branches. “Then, holiness is living in full communion with God, already now, during this earthly pilgrimage.”

Pope Francis also thanked parishes and communities for promoting special prayer initiatives on the Feast of All Saints and the Feast of All Souls, which is Nov. 2.

“These two Christian holidays remind us of the bond that exists between the Church of the earth (see Real People Can be Holy, page 20)
Noticias en Español

Noticias

Planificación Natural de la Familia
Para Parejas Casadas o Comprometidas
Becker Center, Catedral de St. Eugene, 2323 Montgomery Drive, Santa Rosa
Sábados en 2020: 8 de Febrero, 7 de Marzo, 18 de Abril 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Hay cuidado para niños y bocadillo
Para registrar, llama a Maria Sanchez, 542-6984 x0
Favor de invitar personalmente a parejas de su parroquia y anunciar en misa. Hemos invitado a unos instructores de Alameda a venir para darnos la oportunidad de tener clases in español. Es un gran oportunidad para crecimiento espiritual en el sacramento matrimonial.

Sacerdote Polaco Pide a San Juan Pablo II Interceder por Argentina
(ACI Prensa) - El rector de la Misión Polaca en Argentina, P. Jorge Twarog, pidió la intercesión del Papa San Juan Pablo II para que el país alcance el amor y la amistad.
El P. Twarog que trabaja hace más de 20 años en Argentina, confesó que pidió la mediación del “Papa de la paz” para que seIK, ya sabía lo que podía pasar en América del Sur, el conflicto armado con Gran Bretaña por las Islas Malvinas. También se encuentra el convento de los franciscanos; la escuela polaca; un hogar de ancianos y la iglesia Reina de Polonia que custodia la capilla que usó el Papa Juan Pablo II en la última Misa que celebró, un relicario con gotas de su sangre y pañuelos de cálix que usaba en su capilla privada.

Conoce El Grupo De Oración de Madres Que Se Reúne para Orar Por Sus Hijos
MADRID (ACI Prensa) - Mavi Allende es la responsable en España del grupo de oración Mother’s Prayers, (Oración de las madres); según contó a ACI Prensa, ella conoció esta iniciativa gracias a una amiga francesa que la invitó en Madrid a una charla de la fundadora Verónica Williams.
Yo fui con una amiga y nos encantó, al día siguiente, nos convertimos a hacer la oración de madres y así estuvimos dos años y medio. Después volvió Verónica a España y yo organizé una reunión con ella en mi casa. Allí pregunté si alguien quería hacerse cargo de esta iniciativa en España, y como nadie respondió, yo dije que sí”, explicó a ACI Prensa.
Mother’s Prayers es una iniciativa extendida por todo el mundo y cuyo objetivo es simplemente el de rezar específicamente por los hijos de cada una de las mujeres que integran el grupo. Aunque también se reza por los maridos y los nietos y, además, cada integrante “adopta” a un sacerdote para sostenerlo con la oración.

Consecuenciada con Mavi, esta iniciativa nació en 1995 de la mano de Verónica Williams en Inglaterra, que estaba muy preocupada por sus hijos.

Durante un mes rezó con una amiga meditando especialmente en el misterio de la Encarnación, pidiendo al Espíritu Santo que le hiciera ver qué podía hacer por ellos. Después se unieron dos o tres madres más y tras unos días de oración Verónica sintió la necesidad de escribir, así que tomó la Biblia pidiendo ayuda al Señor y la abrió y salió una oración de Jeremías que dice: ‘Deja de llorar, enjuágate las lágrimas, todo lo que has hecho por tus hijos te será recompensado, volverán de la tierra del enemigo, hay esperanza en tu porvenir, tus hijos volverán al hogar, te lo digo yo que soy el Señor’.

Verónica escribió una serie de oraciones que ahora constituyen un libro que utilizan en las reuniones del grupo Oración de las Madres. Según explicó Mavi Allende, este grupo de oración se forma con un mínimo de dos madres y un máximo de ocho. “Los grupos nos reunimos en casa, capillas o parroquias, ahora hay muchos párocos que nos piden ir a sus parroquias. Es impresionante ver cómo ha crecido la obra del Señor”, aseguró.

En estas oraciones, que realizan una vez a la semana, hay algunos elementos que debe haber como son la cruz, “para recordar a Nuestro Señor Redentor”, una vela “porque el Señor es la luz del mundo”, una Biblia porque “es la palabra viva” y un cestito que simbolizan “las manos de Dios” y donde depositan unos papelitos rojos donde cada madre escribe el nombre de sus hijos para rezar por ellos, también si están casados escriben el nombre del cónyuge y de sus nietos si es que los tienen.

Esos papelitos rojos simbolizan “que el amor de una madre no tiene ni principio ni fin.”
En ese momento de oración se rezan nueve oraciones en las que se invoca al Espíritu Santo, se le pide protección a Dios, se pide perdón y se realiza una lectura de la biblia, entre otras.

Después en un momento determinado cada madre, de pie o de rodillas, rezan ante el Señor por cada uno de sus hijos en voz alta o de manera personal “como ella prefiera”. Además cada madre del grupo reza por su hijo “en el nombre del Señor y por su deleite” y si alguna ha perdido un hijo “también pone un peto con el nombre que le habría dado y rezá por él. Esto es algo que les consuela mucho”.

También hay dos reglas obligatorias: “La primera es no dar consejos porque es el señor el que tiene que hablar a cada una y nosotros solo estamos para apoyar con la oración; y la segunda es la total confidencialidad de la oración que se realice allí, para que cada madre se sienta libre, sí quiere, de hacer la oración en voz alta por sus hijos”.

En España Mother’s Prayers está presente en casi todas las provincias del país incluyendo Baleares y Canarias. “Sólo nos falta por estar en Palencia, Zamora, Teruel, Cuenca y Albacete. En todas las demás ciudades tenemos grupos de madres”, ase- gura.

Este grupo de oración está abierto a todas las crístianas que lo deseen. Según explicó Mavi, “cuando en los inicios en Inglaterra, madres de otras confesiones cristianas quisieron unirse para rezar, Verónica lo llevó a la oración y sintió que el Señor le decía que este grupo era para cualquier mujer cristiana con corazón de madre. Quizás el Señor quiere que a través de la oración de las madres se produzca la unidad de los cristianos”.

Actualmente Mother’s Prayers, o la oración de las madres, está presente en 126 países en el mundo. Más información sobre Mother’s Prayers, La oración de las Madres AQUÍ: https://www.mothersprayers.org/index.php/es/

EEUU: Niegan Eucaristía A Precandidato Presidente
Por su Postura a Favor del Aborto
Washington D.C. (ACI Prensa) - Un sacerdote católico de Carolina del Sur, en Estados Unidos, negó la eucaristía al precandidato presidencial Joe Biden, debido a su postura en favor del aborto legal. Biden ha sido vicepresidente de Estados Unidos durante los dos mandatos de Barack Obama, y actualmente en uno de los precandidatos favoritos en el Partido Demócrata para que enfrente a Donald Trump. Fue el P. Robert Morey, párroco de St. Anthony Catholic Church en la Diócesis de Charleston (Caro-
(vea Noticias en Español, pagina 20)
Buffalo Diocese Investigation Ends, Dimarzio Will Send Report to Vatican

Buffalo, N.Y., Oct 31, 2019 / 11:48 am (CNA) - Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio has completed his Apostolic Visitation of the Diocese of Buffalo.

A statement released by DiMarzio's own Diocese of Brooklyn on Thursday confirmed that the visita- tion had concluded and he will submit a report to the Holy See.

The bishop offered no comment on his findings in the scandal-hit Buffalo diocese.

The visitation, a canonical inspection and fact-finding mission, was ordered by Cardinal Marc Ouellet of the Congregation of Bishops in Rome, the Vatican department responsible for overseeing the personal and administrative conduct of bishops.

The visitation was announced Oct. 3, after nearly a year of controversy in the northern New York state diocese. The Diocese of Brooklyn confirmed that DiMarzio had made a total of three trips, spending a week in Buffalo as he conducted nearly a series of in-person interviews.

“He met with and interviewed close to 80 individu- als; both clergy and laypeople,” the statement from the Brooklyn diocese said, “including members of the Presbyteral Council, Diocesan Consultants, Diocesan Finance Council, Diocesan Pastoral Council, Territorial Vicars, and Senior Priests. He also spoke with representatives of outside groups such as the Movement to Restore Trust, college presidents, and other interested parties.”

“Now that Bishop DiMarzio has finished his inter- views, he will compile the information and prepare a report which will be submitted to the Holy See,” the statement concluded.

In its announcement earlier this month, the apostolic nunciature to the United States said that the process in Buffalo is “non-judicial and non-admin- istrative,” meaning that no formal charges are being considered against the scandal-plagued Bishop Rich- ard Malone, leader of the Buffalo diocese.

DiMarzio has previously said that he would approach the situation in Buffalo with “an open mind.”

“This is a difficult period in the life of the Church in Buffalo,” DiMarzio said when he accepted the assignment earlier this month.

“I will keep an open mind throughout the process and do my best to learn the facts and gain a thorough understanding of the situation in order to fulfill the mandate of this Apostolic Visitations.”

Although he has faced media criticism for more than a year, Malone said earlier this month that he was “committed to cooperate fully” with the investiga- tion, and that he welcomed the visitation which, he said would “improve the local Church’s ability to minister to the people it serves.”

In November 2018, a former Buffalo chancery employee leaked confidential diocesan documents related to the handling of claims of clerical sexual abuse.

In August, a RICO lawsuit was filed against the diocese and the bishop, alleging that the response of the diocese was comparable to an organized crime syndicate.

Recordings of private conversations released in early September appeared to show that Malone believed sexual harassment accusations made against a diocesan priest months before the bishop removed the priest from ministry.

The contents of recordings of conversations between Malone and Fr. Ryszard Biernat, his secretary and diocesan vice chancellor, were reported in early September by WKBW in Buffalo.

In the conversations, Malone seems to acknowledge the legitimacy of accusations of harassment and a violation of the seal of confession made against a diocesan priest, Fr. Jeffrey Nowak, by a seminarian, months before the diocese removed Nowak from active ministry.

In an Aug. 2 conversation, Malone can reportedly be heard saying, “We are in a true crisis situation. True crisis. And everyone in the office is convinced this could be the end for me as bishop.”

The bishop is also heard to say that if the media reported on the Nowak situation, “It could force me to resign.”

Malone, 73, has led the Buffalo diocese since 2012. He was ordained a priest of Boston in 1972, and became an auxiliary bishop in that diocese in 2000, two years before a national sexual abuse scan- dal emerged in the United States, centered on the Archbishop of Boston.

Malone was Mainie’s bishop from 2004 until 2012.

(Real People Can be Holy, cont. from page 18)

Buffalo Diocese Investigation Ends, Dimarzio Will Send Report to Vatican

(Noticias en Español, cont. de pagina 19)
After Communion Denial, What Does Joe Biden Think About Abortion?

By Matt Hadro

Washington D.C., Oct 30 (CNA) - Presidential candidate Joe Biden's denial of reception of Holy Communion in South Carolina on Sunday has renewed candidate Joe Biden's denial of reception of Holy Communion to former Vice President Joe Biden, "Morey explained in a statement sent to CNA.

"Holy Communion signifies we are one with God, each other and the Church. Our actions should reflect that," he stated.

"Any public figure who advocates for abortion places himself or herself outside of Church teaching," the priest added.

The Catholic Church teaches that life begins at the moment of conception, and that every act of abortion is the wilful taking of innocent human life. In the 2008 "Meet the Press" interview, Biden was asked "as a Roman Catholic" when he thought life began.

He said that he was "prepared as a matter of faith to accept that life begins at the moment of conception," but added that to impose that belief upon others through the application of law would be "inappropriate in a pluralistic society."

There is a debate in our church, as Cardinal Egan explained in a statement sent to CNA.

"There is a debate in our church, as Cardinal Egan would acknowledge, that's existed. Back in 'Summa Theologia,' when Thomas Aquinas wrote 'Summa Theologia,' he said there was no—it didn't occur until quickening, 40 days after conception. How am I going out and tell you, if you or anyone else that you must insist upon my view that is based on a matter of faith? And that's the reason I haven't," Biden said.

In his 1995 encyclical Evangelium vitae, Pope St. John Paul II warned of a political mentality where "the original and inalienable right to life is questioned or denied on the basis of a parliamentary vote or the will of one part of the people—even if it is the majority."

"This is the sinister result of a relativism which reigns unopposed: the 'right' ceases to be such, because it is no longer firmly founded on the inviolable dignity of the person, but is made subject to the will of the stronger part," he wrote.

"To claim the right to abortion, infanticide and euthanasia, and to recognize that right in law, means to place woman's freedom in a perverse and evil significance: that of an absolute power over others and against others."

Biden, a Democrat, originally from Scranton, Pennsylvania, was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1972 representing the state of Delaware. He served in that role until 2009, when he was elected Vice President as the running mate of President Barack Obama.

In Biden's 36 years in the Senate and eight years as vice president to President Barack Obama, he has reverse himself a number of times on the issue of abortion.

While he largely supported the Supreme Court's 1973 decision that found a legal right to abortion, Roe v. Wade, Biden said in 1974 he believed the decision "went too far."

In 1981, he voted for a constitutional amendment allowing states to overturn Roe v. Wade; but the next year he voted against such an amendment.

In a 2012 vice presidential debate, Biden warned that the opposing ticket would appoint judges who would outlaw abortion, and promised that a Democratic administration would not do that.

In the 2008 vice presidential debate, he bragged about spearheading "the fight against Judge Bork," a Supreme Court judicial nominee in 1987, warning that Bork would have changed Roe v. Wade if he were confirmed to the Court.

In a 2008 interview with NBC's "Meet the Press," Biden said Roe is "as close to a consensus that can exist in a society as heterogeneous as ours" in that it left decisions on life to the mother in the first trimester of pregnancy, allowed the states some intervention in the second trimester, and that "the weight of the government's input" in the third trimester is that the pregnancy is carried to term.

Biden's 2020 campaign platform calls for the codification of Roe v. Wade as federal law. It also would ensure, as part of a health care "public option," coverage of "a woman's constitutional right to choose."

In 1984 then-Senator Biden supported the Mexico City Policy, which bars taxpayer funding of foreign NGOs that promote or perform abortion as a method of family planning. He was also for years a supporter of the Hyde Amendment, which bars taxpayer funding of elective abortions in the U.S.

Shortly after announcing his candidacy for president in April this year, Biden reversed his support for Hyde after Democrats highlighted his long-time stance, prompting a backlash from other candidates and the progressive wing of the party. He also abandoned his support for the Mexico City Policy, promising to overturn the rule if elected.

Biden also favors reinstating taxpayer funding of Planned Parenthood, the nation's largest abortion provider.

In 1995 and again in 1997, Biden voted to ban partial-birth abortion, but was vocally critical of the Supreme Court's decision that upheld a partial-birth abortion ban, saying that it could open the door for the repeal of Roe v. Wade.

A point of consistency for Biden has been his opposition to parental notification laws and laws barring minors from seeking abortions out-of-state, both of which he has spoken against. His 2020 campaign platform calls for ending state "TRAP" laws on abortion, or laws restricting abortion access such as requiring parental notification or mandatory waiting periods.

In the provinces of Jiangxi and Fujian in eastern China, priests who refused to sign agreements binding them to regulations government have been forced out of their homes, and their churches have been closed. The Chinese government has forbidden non-compliant priests from traveling, and many have been forced to go into hiding.

In July and August, at least five Catholic churches in the Yuyjiang diocese were forcibly shut down by the government, due to their refusal to join the CPCA. In mid-August, government officials threatened to arrest an underground priest and revoke basic government subsidies to all Catholics in the city of Yuytang after their parish refused to join the state-sponsored Church.

"The government places spies in CPCA churches to specialize monitor what priests say in their sermons and what activities they hold," a priest from Yuyiang reported to the magazine Bitter Winter. The Chinese government monitors the everyday activity of CPCA priests, their travel.

"Basically, the state knows everything about the priests," he added.

Chinese persecution of religious minorities has been the focus of sustained international scrutiny. The country is estimated to have imprisoned millions of Uighur Muslims, and is leading human rights groups have reported to the United Nation that political dissenters and imprisoned religious minorities have been subjected to organ harvesting for use in the country's organ trade.

In September, reports emerged that churches belonging to the Chinese state-run "Three-Self Patriotic Movement" Protestant denomination have been ordered to replace displays of the Ten Commandments with sayings of Chinese president Xi Jinping.

The directive reportedly came after Three-Self churches were initially told to remove the First Commandment, "You shall have no gods before me," as Jinping disagreed with it.

Reports indicate that those who have refused to remove any or all of the Ten Commandments have been imprisoned, with leaders and worshippers harassed even in churches that complied with the instruction.

(Chinese Catholics, cont. from page 17) government-run churches are have faced increased persecution.

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hay cuidado para niños y bocadillo

Abril 11 a.m. 2 p.m.

Sabados en 2020:  8 de Febrero, 7 de Marzo, 18 de

Montgomery Drive, Santa Rosa

from Alameda to provide our diocese with NFP

classes in Spanish.  This is a great opportunity for

spiritual growth in the Sacramento of Matrimonial.

Maris Stella Institute's Adult Catechism Classes

Second Saturday of the Month (October 2019

through July 2020, except Holy Saturday, April 11,

2020), 9:30 am - 3:30 pm

Want to deepen your relationship with God? Register

with the Maris Stella Institute (MSI): Your Catechism

Training Institute.  MSI offers adult and young adult

formation classes in the “Catechism of the Catholic

Church.” Both English and Spanish programs are

available. Classes are scheduled each 2nd Saturday

of the month, both in person (at Kolbe Academy &

Trinity Prep Catholic School in Napa) and live online.

A Catechetical Diploma or Advanced Catechetical

Diploma with a specialization in the “Catechism of

the Catholic Church” is offered at the end of the year

for each of our graduating students. Registrations

are year-round, so come to one class, a few classes, or

commit to the entire year, whatever fits your schedule

and interest best. Change your life by experiencing

our awesome formation grounded in Sacred Scripture,

fidelity to the Magisterium, devotion to Our Lady, the

Star of the Sea, and most importantly, centered on

Jesus’ real presence in the Holy Eucharist. Don’t delay;

register today at www.marisstellainstitute.org.

Youth and Young Adults

Catholic Young Adults (18-38ish) check out:  www.
catholicya.org and join our regular meetings at the

Chancery (1st Monday of the Month) or at Sonoma

State Catholic Newman Center hosted by the Young

Adult community “The Father’s Glory” (event details

at www.transformingfire.org).  Meetings are a great

place to ask questions, expand prayer life, and form

friendships.

Stay current on Youth and Young Adult ministry events in


Humboldt State Newman Center events: Regina -

rfosnaugh1@hotmail.com

http://www.hsnewmancenter.com

To have your calendar event listed

please email us!

Srdioce1@gmail.com

Kathryn Eardley Catholic Extension

According to a recent Gallup Poll, church attendance

in the United States is at an all-time low. But in east-

ern Tennessee, the Catholic population is growing.

When Father Tom Charters arrived eight years ago,

no Catholic church existed in the county. The local

newspaper ran an announcement for the first call-out

meeting for Catholics in the area and started to reach

to people around town.

"Unless you take what you’ve heard by the Word of God,

unless you take Jesus who you’ve received in the Eucharist

and go forth and carry it to others, it’s not worth it,” he said.

The first meeting was a BYOC -Bring Your Own Chair. 42 people showed up.

Since 2011, Father Tom and four other Glenmary Home Missioners have grown the Catholic popula-
tion in the town of Erwin from a few dozen people to a few hundred.

So how did they do it?

In the beginning, the small but dedicated group had

many questions for their new priest: What would the

parish name be? Where will we meet?

Father Tom had a simple answer: Start with the

mission first.

Whether the group was meeting in the basement of

a home or the local Elks Club, he told them that the

most important element of their worship space was

simple but unexpected: the exit sign.

So how did they do it?

As so they did. The small group gathered, they

worshipped, and they reached out to their neighbors.

Soon people began to take notice.

As so they did. The small group gathered, they

worshipped, and they reached out to their neighbors.

Soon people began to take notice.

(see Churches in America, page 23)
Some of the poorest areas of the United States. ❖

An organization that helps the Catholic Church grow in the United States. It caught fire in the hearts of the people and spread throughout the world. “Because He is light for the world.”

Little Alejandro responded,“because He is light for the world.”

While recent statistics may show a bleak outlook for the church, a spark of faith has kindled in the hearts of many. And we look forward to watching it continue to grow.

Kathryn Eardley is the digital communications coordinator for Catholic Extension, a nonprofit fundraising organization that helps the Catholic Church grow in some of the poorest areas of the United States.

WHO MAY ENTER?
Any student in Sonoma County in grades 3 to 12.

Entries will be judged separately by age group as follows:

- Grades 3-5: First Prize, $50, Second Prize, $25
- Grades 6-8: First Prize, $75, Second Prize, $50
- Grades 9-12: First Prize, $100, Second Prize, $75

CASH PRIZES!!!

Essays may be submitted by mail or electronically. Mail submissions should be typed, double spaced, and written on one side of the paper only. On a SEPARATE PAGE, contestants must supply their name, grade in school, address, phone number, and email address. Please send to SCPL, P.O. Box 4035, Santa Rosa CA 95402.

Electronic submissions should be submitted by e-mail to SonomaProLife@zoho.com

Please submit essay AND contestant’s name, grade in school, address, phone number and e-mail address in the body of the e-mail (not on an attachment).

To insure impartiality, before an essay is judged we will separate personal contact information from the essay itself.

Entries must be received by November 21, 2019. Winners will be notified on December 14, and announced on the Sonoma County Pro-Life Website on December 15, and publicly at the Sonoma County Pro-Life Annual Pro-Life Rally on January 26, 2020.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES:

All entries will be judged on the basis of clarity of expression, factual accuracy, and originality. Minor deviations from the suggested length will not be penalized, but entrants are expected to work within the guidelines suggested. Essay topics and length for each age group are as follows:

**Grades 3-5.** Write an essay of 200-250 words on one of the following topics:

1. What can you and your parents do to show that you love babies, and to help their mothers take care of them?
2. Do you have grandparents, aunts or uncles, or older family friends? What can you and your family do to include older people in your life so that they won’t feel forgotten?

**Grades 6-8.** Write an essay of 300 to 400 words on either of the following topics:

1. Everyone on earth begins life in his or her mother’s womb. Being pro-life means supporting the right of each person to grow, thrive, and experience many good things. Why is it important for people to be pro-life?
2. As people get old they may not be able to take care of themselves. They may feel their lives don’t matter, and may consider killing themselves. How can you help these people to feel their lives are still worth living?

**Grades 9-12.** Write an essay of 400-500 words on one of the following topics:

1. Why are you pro-life? If you wish, share a personal story relating either to the life of the unborn or to the life of someone who is old and/or ill.
2. Many people today are confused about what it means to be pro-life. How can you respectfully share your belief that the life of the unborn should be protected by law?
Buttigieg’s Comments On Restricting Religious Freedom Prompt Calls For Clarification

By Matt Hadro

Washington D.C., Nov 4 (CNA) - Democratic primary candidate Pete Buttigieg has said that religious freedom must be curbed if it is used to “harm,” prompting calls for clarification about what the presidential hopeful considers grounds for restricting religious practice.

Adam Wren, a reporter for Indianapolis Monthly, tweeted on Sunday that he asked Buttigieg “how he would approach religious freedom broadly.”

Buttigieg, the former mayor of South Bend, Indiana, and candidate for the 2020 Democratic nomination for president, responded that “[t]he touchstone has to be the idea that religious freedom like any other freedom is constrained when it becomes a rationale for doing harm.”

“You know the original doctrines and federal legislative law go back to, I think, substances in rituals among Native Americans says about freedom to undertake a religious practice,” Buttigieg said.

Buttigieg continued that when religious freedom is invoked to practice “hiring discrimination,” that would make the issue “touchy, and sticky.”

The matter of “constraining” religious freedom when it is invoked to do harm “would move us further than we’ve moved so far,” Buttigieg said.

“In terms of enforcing for example anti-discrimination expectation, even on private organizations, and I think that bar goes even higher when we’re talking about anybody seeking federal funds,” he said.

Luke Goodrich, senior counsel at Becket, a law firm that defends religious freedom, said that Buttigieg’s comments were “vague” and demanded clarification on just what situations he would see as justifying limitations on religious freedom.

“I still see it as it’s a vague and popular talking point right now,” Goodrich said of the concept of religious freedom being invoked to do harm. He added that “the devil really is in the details, and the candidates need to clarify precisely what kinds of harm they would seek to punish.”

The Supreme Court has already ruled that religious organizations “can hire people who agree with their religious practices even when it ‘harm[s] people who don’t get hired.’” Goodrich noted, referring to Supreme Court decisions in 2012 and 1987 in Hosanna-Tabor v. EEOC and Corp. of Presiding Bishop v. Amos, respectively.

In Hosanna-Tabor, the Court ruled unanimously that the federal government cannot intervene in the hiring or firing of religious ministers. In Amos, the Court ruled that religious organizations could make hiring decisions for non-religious positions based on religious beliefs.

In response to a request for comment, the Buttigieg campaign said his words “speak for themselves.”

The concept of religious freedom being invoked to “do harm,” which Buttigieg referenced, is behind the Do No Harm Act, a bill introduced in Congress in 2017 and again in 2019 to limit the application of current federal religious freedom law.

The 1993 Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA)—which passed the House unanimously and the Senate by a vote of 97 to 3, and was signed into law by President Bill Clinton—created a test for when a federal law infringes upon a person’s free exercise of religion.

The law was enacted in response to a 1990 Supreme Court decision, Employment Division v. Smith, where two Native Americans who lost their jobs due to a failed employment drug test said they had used the drug peyote as part of a Native American religious ritual. The Court ruled against the two Native Americans and sided with the government in the case.

Under RFRA, the government cannot “substantially burden a person’s exercise of religion” unless it provides proof of a “compelling interest” and that its action is the least-restrictive means of furthering that compelling interest.

The proposed Do No Harm Act lists whole areas of law where RFRA would no longer apply, including provision of health care items or services and government contracts.

The recent comments from Buttigieg are the latest in a series of statements calling for the restriction of religious freedom, particularly in matters of sexual orientation and gender identity.

According to a June 13 report by Wren in Indianapolis Monthly, Buttigieg praised the bipartisan outcry over Indiana’s Religious Freedom Restoration Act in 2015, calling the act “social extremism.” The law originally signed by then-Governor Mike Pence mirrored the federal RFRA, but a coalition of politicians, celebrities, and businesses rallied against it.

In response, the state legislature passed, and Gov. Pence signed, a “fix” to the law that mostly exempted sexual orientation and gender identity anti-discrimination protections from the law’s application. Religious freedom advocate Ryan Anderson called the change a “wholesale repeal” of the original law.

And the business Republicans revolted right alongside us progressives,” Buttigieg said of the backlash against the original law. “So that shows me that there is a belief in just decency that really does stand against that kind of social extremism.”

Buttigieg did oppose the idea of stripping churches of their tax exempt status for not supporting same-sex marriage, in an interview on CNN’s “State of the Union” on Oct. 13, but he added that schools and other non-profit organizations should be held accountable for their views on marriage.

“So if we want to talk about anti-discrimination law for a school or an organization, absolutely,” he said. “They should not be able to discriminate.”

Buttigieg supports the Equality Act, a bill passed by the House that would make sexual orientation and gender identity protected classes in federal anti-discrimination law.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) opposed the bill for conflating a person’s actions with their identity and human dignity. The bill would threaten religious free speech, conscience, and the exercise of religion, the bishops said.

Buttigieg’s website also says he would “give the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Partnerships a mandate to work with faith and community leaders who support LGBTQ+ people.”

The candidate says he would also “examine existing religious exemption policies” in the federal government, including “offices that were put in place to enable discrimination.”

In recent years, the Trump administration created a new conscience and religious freedom division at the Department of Health and Human Services, to support conscience rights of health care professionals in matters such as opting out of performing or assisting with abortions or gender transition surgeries. ✩