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Top - Down Turned Around: Child Protection Goes Global From The Ground Up

By Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS)

-- Some parts of the world see swift attention paid to victims of sexual abuse and others still experience delays or a mishandling of allegations.

This imbalance, one Jesuit expert has said, reflects how years of papal pleas and Vatican mandates have not been received or implemented consistently everywhere.

Because the church's typical top-down approach in getting the message out may not be enough, Jesuit Father Hans Zollner is spearheading a complementary course: a global alliance built and grown from the ground up by individual priests, religious and laity along with Catholic universities, religious orders and bishops' conferences.

Father Zollner, president of the Center for Child Protection at Rome's Pontifical Gregorian University, told Catholic News Service in late December of the center's plan to launch the new alliance in the coming months.

The center offers a specialized e-learning program and an on-site diploma course in safeguarding minors. What makes



CNS Photo/Paul Haring

CENTER FOR CHILD PROTECTION: Jesuit Father Hans Zollner, president of the Center for Child Protection, speaks in early February 2016 at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome during a news conference officially launching the Center for Child Protection in Rome. At right is Cardinal Sean P. O'Malley of Boston, who heads the Pontifical Commission for Child Protection.

the program's graduates unique is they then use their new skills and local knowledge to train and educate others "back home" on a local, diocesan and even national level.

"It's snowballing," the Jesuit priest said, in a way that the church doesn't normally work.

While "the church has this unique system of flow of information" that trickles "from the top down to the grass-roots level," the church sometimes "doesn't take advantage sufficiently of the potential benefit" of all the expertise, access and sheer numbers of people "on the ground."

The Center for Child Protection-Global Alliance, he said, would be a network of organizations -- starting with some of the pontifical and Catholic universities that have already partnered with the center with its e-learning programs -- committed to working with local experts and

exchanging valuable and concrete information.

"Until now, almost, almost every single country had to learn its own lesson the hard way because they did not look to their neighbor" when it was caught off guard, he said. For example, he said, when scandal struck the church in the U.S., Ireland and Germany, neighboring nations did not see it as a warning sign for what may be happening in their own backyard.

He said he hoped the creation of this global alliance could help show how efforts and information become more effective when spread by experts across the front lines.

Father Zollner said he has been impressed with the skills, commitment and enthusiasm at the seminars he has helped lead through the center and as a member of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors. The commission, which was established in 2014 to provide resources, guidelines and best practices, has more than a dozen members who raise awareness and advocate firm action around the world.

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CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS MASS: Fifteen children from Queen of Archangels Parish in Clarence/Snow Shoe, participated in Christmas Eve Mass, Saturday, December 24, 2016. The children enacted the nativity story, ministered as altar servers, lectors and ushers. They are pictured with Father Michael Wolfe, administrator.

High Schools

Student Philanthropy

Ebensburg: In the holiday spirit of giving, Bishop Carroll students participated in a number of service projects to support members of the local community in December.

Principal Lorie Ratchford says these service projects are prime examples of Bishop Carroll's focus on service and how students are putting their Catholic faith into practice.

Caroling at Local Nursing Homes: Every year, Student Council members visit residents at local nursing homes and

adults with disabilities at Skills of Central PA a few days before Christmas. In addition to caroling, the students chat and make Christmas ornaments with the residents who may otherwise not have many visitors.

Adopt-A-Family Program: For more than 30 years, Bishop Carroll students have taken part in Catholic Charities' Adopt-a-Family program during Christmas.

Each year, homerooms receive the first names of a family from the Central/Northern Cambria County area. Students pool their money, with each donating \$10, and then shop for gifts for the family. The gifts are wrapped and labeled, and then



SPREAD HOLIDAY CHEER: Bishop Carroll Catholic High School students Kiona Diviney and Grace Hoffman made Christmas ornaments at Senior Life in Ebensburg.

picked up by Catholic Charities staff members and distributed for families who can't afford to purchase them.

"For many of the students it is very gratifying to participate in this program," says Barbara Condor, Religion Teacher and Campus Ministry Coordinator, who serves as the leader of this program. "In the past, we have even gotten thank you notes from the families."

Visiting Local Grade Schools: On Tuesday, December 20, 2016, the Student Ambassadors, and instructor Mr. Nagy, visited the five grade schools in the Prince Gallitzin quadrant: All Saints, Holy Name, North-

ern Cambria Catholic, Saint Benedict, and Saint Michael Schools.

As the student representatives to the grade schools, the Student Ambassadors occasionally spend part of a day with the younger students. Tuesday's visit was to spread some Christmas cheer and deliver some presents and treats to the children.

The Bishop Carroll Husky (Senior Timothy Morris) also attended to represent Bishop Carroll and entertain the younger students.

This visit was enriching for all those involved, strengthening the relationships between students of all ages.

"The day was well worth it because of the many smiles on the faces of the young students," said Senior Ambassador Isaac Freidhof said of the experience.

"It is truly heartwarming to visit these children and to take along some of the best students at Bishop Carroll," said Mr. Nagy. "I also enjoy conversing with the grade school teachers and principals and working together to ensure the strength of

Catholic education in Northern Cambria County."

Pro - Life

Thirtieth Annual March

Tyrone: The Thirtieth Annual Respect Life March sponsored by the Saint Gregory Council #1218 of the Knights of Columbus will be held Sunday, January 15, beginning at noon.

The event begins with a prayer service at Saint Matthew Church, followed by the 1.25 mile March to Oak Grove Cemetery and a prayer service at the grave of Baby Agnes Doe. A hot luncheon will be served in the parish hall following the March.

Participants are encouraged to bring signs. Those unable to walk are invited to drive at the end of the procession.

(Continued On Page 3.)

By Father Anthony Petracca
The Altoona-Johnstown Diocese

Father Anthony will give a talk, followed by a book signing, on Wednesday evening, at St. John Church in Lakemont, following the 6:00 Mass.

Available for \$16.99 from Amazon; Google Books; Barnes & Noble (order in-store or on-line).

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In The Alleghenies



WILMORE CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION: Religious Education students at Saint Bartholomew Parish, Wilmore, held a Christmas celebration on Sunday, December 18, 2016. The celebration began with packing fruit baskets for the elderly, followed by a pizza party, a nativity play, and concluded with a visit from Santa. Father Joseph Nale is pastor, and Diana Frantz is director of religious education.



CHRISTMAS GATHERING: Bishop Mark L. Bartchak hosted his annual Christmas gathering for seminarians, prospective seminarians, and their pastors on Monday, December 19 at Garvey Manor Nursing Home/Our Lady of the Alleghenies Residence in Hollidaysburg. The event included Evening Prayer in the chapel and a social and dinner in Carmel Hall. Front row (left to right): Deacon Jonathan Dickson; Father Matthew Reese, Diocesan Director of Vocations; and Deacon Peter Crowe. Back row: Seminarians Devin Crouse and Michael Pleva; Bishop Mark; and Seminarians Mark Groeger and Sean Gibson. The Bishop will ordain Deacon Dickson and Deacon Crowe to the Diocesan Priesthood on Saturday, May 27, the first priestly ordination in the Diocese since 2011.

(Continued From Page 2.)

Schools

Donation

State College: Our Lady of Victory Preschool and Our

Lady of Victory School have received a donation of \$10,000.00 from BB&T. The donation is part of \$607,750.00 received by 82 scholarship and pre - kindergarten scholarship organizations throughout Pennsylvania from BB&T in December 2016.

BB&T made the contributions through Pennsylvania's Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program.

"BB&T is committed to helping the communities we serve in impactful ways, such as supporting solid education

for our neighbors," said BB&T Northern Pennsylvania Regional President David Kennedy. "BB&T is proud to join these organizations in helping to build stronger communities."

The EITC program, which is administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, provides tax credits to eligible companies that do business in the state when they contribute to scholarship organizations, educational improvement organi-

zations, and/or pre - kindergarten scholarship organizations. The tax credits may be applied against the tax liability of a company for the year when the donation was made.

BB&T, based on Winston - Salem NC, is one of the largest financial services holding companies in the United States, with \$222.6 billion in assets and market capitalization of \$30.6 billion. It operates 2,200 financial centers in 15 states and the District of Columbia.

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Point Of View

It is estimated the new National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington has 33,000 objects, 3,500 of which are presently on display.

Visitors to the museum can view the glass-topped casket used to display the body of 14-year-old Emmett Till, murdered in Mississippi, a murder that sparked the 1950s and '60s African-American civil rights movement.

The dress of Rosa Parks, who refused to give up her bus seat to a white man in Montgomery, Alabama, is exhibited, as is the dress of actress and singer Pearl Bailey.

A sign that says "Colored" is attached to a segregated drinking fountain from the Jim Crow era, indicating use for blacks only.

The trumpet of jazz musician Louis Armstrong is one among numerous musical instruments of famous African-American musicians.



For The Journey

By Father Eugene Hemrick
Cherishing A Rich Culture

Sports fans can view the boxing gloves of Muhammad Ali, a striking portrait of the boxer Joe Louis, the tennis racket of Althea Gibson and beautiful life-size bronze statues of Jackie Robinson sliding into base and Michael Jordan sinking one of his famous winning baskets.

Also on display are handcuffs used by police in Cambridge, Massachusetts, to arrest African-American Harvard University professor Henry Louis Gates Jr. in 2009. And one can view the presidential campaign office of Barack Obama

during his 2008 run for president.

As I walked through the museum, I thought, "If a person wanted a degree in African-American history and culture studies, this museum is an excellent place to start."

As awe-inspiring as is its architecture and contents, what struck me most were the visitors, many of whom were African-American families with their children.

What caught my attention was listening to elders passing on their history to children on what it was like being African-American in their day. It dawned on me, "This is the same method of storytelling used to teach about Christ, the history of the church and its traditions."

In the play "Fiddler on the Roof," Tevye sings, "How do we keep our balance? That I can tell you in one word! Tradition! ... Because of our traditions, every one of us knows who he is and what God expects him to do."

The new African-American museum is spellbinding, but most mesmerizing it is like being in a temple in which African-Americans are learning more fully who they are and the richness of their culture.



Another Perspective

By Monsignor Timothy P. Stein
It's All So Ordinary

Whenever Christmas and New Year's Day fall on a Sunday, the Christmas Season is shortened; we would normally celebrate the Baptism of the Lord on the Sunday following the feast of the Epiphany, but this year, that intervening week is not granted to us. We celebrate the Baptism of the Lord today, Monday, January 9, and with that celebration, bring the Christmas Season to a close, and usher in two months of the season known as "Ordinary Time."

I think it's fitting that the calendar should have worked out as it did this year. There's a sort of pleasing symmetry in having the Christmas Season end and Ordinary Time resume on a Monday, perhaps the most "Ordinary" day of the week. Monday is the day when most of us "ordinarily" return to work. Monday is a good day for taking stock and getting back on track. Monday reminds us that life isn't all about feasts and festivals; most of the time, ordinarily, it's about being at work, striving to keep body and soul together. And how fitting it is, too, that this year, this Monday, we should be keeping the feast of the Baptism of the Lord, since the most "ordinary" thing that any Christian does at any time of the year, is live out the commitment made on the day of Baptism - - to renounce sin and Satan, to put on the armor of Christ, and to live and die united to Him, living every day in the light of His love.

Baptism is at the very core of who we are and what we are. It's the sacrament that sets us on course for all the days that will follow. Baptism builds bonds between the baptized, uniting us like links in a chain. I wrote in my last column about the baptism of my little great - niece. My own godmother was present at Eleanor's baptism. As a two - year - old I was present when my sister, Eleanor's grandmother, was baptized. I am godfather to Eleanor's mother, my niece, Laura. I baptized Eleanor's godmother, my niece, Emily. Emily's godfather, her Uncle Tom, was present at Eleanor's baptism. We were all there not just because we're members of an extended biological family, but because we are all believers - - we are members of God's family, a family of faith. How wonderful a thing that is!

At funeral Masses, I like to reflect on the fact that the signs and symbols employed at that liturgy are the same as those used on the day of baptism; holy water is sprinkled on the coffin just as it is poured over the head of the newly - baptized. On the day of baptism we are clothed in white, or receive a white garment. At the funeral Mass, the coffin is covered in a white pall. And at the baptismal ceremony, the paschal candle is lit, just as it is lit at the funeral Mass. I always say that our life is lived within the light of that flame. The funeral Mass is the baptismal liturgy amplified and writ large! It reminds us, yet again, that this is what we are all about. It is the most ordinary of ordinary things.

Most folks, unless they attend daily, morning Mass, will not take note of the fact that today is the celebration of the Baptism of the Lord. Only when it occurs on a Sunday does this day stand out and we take note of it. Today, it sort of gets lost in the shuffle. We'll all be so busy being ordinary that we won't take time to reflect on the great privilege that is ours.

So, gentle reader, here's your reminder of what today is, and of what you are called to be: an ordinary follower of Jesus, living an ordinary life over the course of ordinary minutes, hours and days, each of them infused by extraordinary love.



Vatican Updates Guidelines For Educating Priests

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- The Catholic Church needs holy, healthy and humble priests and that requires prayers for vocations and the careful selection and training of candidates, said the Congregation for Clergy.

Updating 1985 guidelines for preparing men for the Latin-rite priesthood and ensuring their continuing education, training and support, the Congregation for Clergy Dec. 7 released "The Gift of the Priestly Vocation," a detailed set of guidelines and norms for priestly formation.

The updated document draws heavily on St. John Paul II's 1992 apostolic exhortation on priestly formation, as well as on the teaching of and norms issued by now-retired Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis and by Vatican offices over the past three decades.

It reaffirms an instruction approved by Pope Benedict in 2005, which said, "the church, while profoundly respecting the persons in question, cannot admit to the seminary or to holy orders those who practice homosexuality, present deep-seated homosexual tendencies or support the so-called 'gay culture.'"

The document insists that through courses in pastoral theology, the example of priests and practical experience, candidates for the priesthood learn that priestly ministry involves -- as Pope Francis says -- being "shepherds 'with the smell of the sheep,' who live in their midst to bring the mercy of God to them."

Highlighting lessons learned over the past 30 years from the clerical sexual abuse scandal, the new guidelines state, "The greatest attention must be given to the theme of the protection of minors and vulnerable adults, being vigilant lest those who seek admission to a seminary or to a house of formation, or who are already petitioning to receive holy orders have not been involved in any way with any crime or problematic behavior in this area."

Seminars and courses on the protection of children and vulnerable adults must be part of both seminary education and the continuing education of priests, it says. And bishops must be very cautious about accepting candidates for the priesthood who have been dismissed from other seminaries.

In the end, each bishop is responsible for determining which candidate for priesthood he will ordain, but

the guidelines strongly encourage bishops to accept the judgment of seminary rectors and staff who determine a certain candidate is unsuitable.

"Experience has shown that when ordinaries (bishops) have not accepted the negative judgment of the community of formators, it has been the cause of great suffering in many cases, both for the candidates themselves and for the local churches," the document says.

Reaffirming the requirement that seminarians study Catholic social teaching, the document says the education must include a study of climate change and other environmental threats.

"Protecting the environment and caring for our common home -- the Earth -- belong fully to the Christian outlook on man and reality," the document says. Catholic priests must be "promoters of an appropriate care for everything connected to the protection of creation."

Seminarians should be encouraged to use social media to build relationships and for evangelization, the guidelines say, but seminary personnel will need to help the students use the media wisely and in a way that is healthy.

Support For Survivors

Support for survivors of sexual abuse is available throughout the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown. Survivors are encouraged to seek help through any of the following agencies.

Bedford County

Your Safe Haven Inc.
<http://www.yoursafehaven.org/>
(800) 555-5671

We are a comprehensive crime victims center and respond to victims of all crime whether it be through our office, the court system, the hospital, or police agency.

Blair County

Family Services Inc.
<https://www.familyservicesinc.net/>
(814) 944-3585

Crisis intervention and counseling, therapeutic counseling, legal and medical advocacy and accompaniment, information and referrals, safety planning, transportation, other supportive services.

Cambria/Somerset Counties

Victim Services Inc.
<http://victimservicesinc.org/>
(814)288-4961 and (800) 755-1983
24-Hour Hotline (1-800-755-1983) and Crisis Intervention; Counseling (Bachelors level, highly trained and experienced staff); Therapy (Master's level/licensed, highly trained and experienced staff, EMDR); Support Groups for Survivors of Sexual Abuse, Families of Homicide Victims, and others as requested/needed in the community; "Safe and Unsafe Touches" Individual Education Program for Children; Accompaniment to Medical, Police, and Justice System Proceedings; Court Preparation / Orientation to the Criminal Justice System; Assistance with Victims Compensation Claims; Victim Notification; Referrals to Other Resources; Prevention Education

Programs for schools/colleges; Professional Trainings on trauma, sexual abuse, victim-centered response, etc. (can be developed to meet your needs); Certified Mandated Reporter training (2 certified trainers on staff).

Centre County

Centre County Women's Resource Center, Inc.
<http://ccwrc.org/>
(814) 234-5050

Crisis counseling, 24 hour hotline, legal & medical advocacy, information and referral, civil legal representation, emergency shelter, transitional housing, primary prevention programs, safe custody exchange/supervised visitation, support groups.

Clinton County

Clinton County Women's Center
<http://www.ccwcsafe.org/>
(570) 748-9509

24 hour hotline service; Sexual Assault Protection Orders; advocacy and options counseling, support groups; medical advocacy; Prevention and outreach education; Safe shelter for victims of domestic violence, legal advocacy; PFA assistance; screening for TBI; referrals for community services; and children's advocacy.

Franklin/Fulton Counties

Women In Need/Victim Services
<http://www.winservices.org/home.aspx>
(717) 264-4444

Direct services for dv/sa victims-ind. counseling, group counseling, legal advocacy including accompaniment, medical advocacy, hotline, prevention education, shelter, VCAP assistance, Sexual assault response team.

Huntingdon/Mifflin/Juniata Counties

The Abuse Network
<http://www.abusenetwork.org/>
(717) 242-2444

Trauma-informed Empowerment Counseling, Support Groups, 24-Hour Hotline Counseling, Legal Advocacy and Accompaniment, Medical Advocacy and Accompaniment, Prevention and Awareness Educational Programs, Services are Free and Confidential.

Reporting Child Abuse

Bishop Mark L. Barchak and the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown are firmly committed to protecting children and young people. If you have any information concerning suspected sexual or other abuse of minors, you are urged to report it immediately to:

- PA Child Line 1 - 800- 932 - 0313 (intake is available 24/7)
- Pennsylvania Attorney General Hotline (888) 538 - 8541
- Pennsylvania State Police Headquarters (717) 783 - 5599 or your local Pennsylvania State Police Station
- Your local police department

If there is an indication of imminent danger, you should call 911 immediately.

The Diocese reports all information regarding sexual abuse of minors to law enforcement. You are urged to do the same. Anyone may and should report suspected child sexual abuse.

To report to the Diocese any suspected abuse of a minor, please call Jean Johnstone at (814) 944 - 9388.

Pope Expresses Hopes For New Year

(Continued From Page 16.)

The pope also presided over an evening prayer service with eucharistic adoration and the singing of a special hymn of thanksgiving to God Dec. 31 in St. Peter's Basilica.

As the year ends, he said in his homily, he asked people to reflect on how God has been present in their lives and to thank the Lord for all signs of his generosity, "seen in countless way through the witness of those people who quietly took a risk."

Gazing upon the manger, we remember how Jesus "wanted to be close to all those who felt lost, demeaned, hurt, discouraged, inconsolable and frightened. Close to all those who in their bodies carry the burden of separation and loneliness, so that sin, shame, hurt, despair and exclusion would not have the final word in the lives of his sons and daughters."

His sacrifice and love challenges people "not to give up on anything or anyone," and to find the strength to forge ahead "without complaining or being resentful, without closing in on



CNS Photo/Paul Haring

GREETES PEOPLE: Pope Francis greets people in St. Peter's Square after leading vespers on New Year's Eve at the Vatican Saturday, December 31, 2016

ourselves or seeking a means of escape, looking for shortcuts in our own interest."

"Looking at the manger means recognizing that the times ahead call for bold and hope-filled initiatives, as well as the renunciation of vain self-promotion and endless concern with appearances."

He urged everyone to help "make room" for young people,

who are often marginalized and forced to migrate or beg for undignified jobs. Everyone has a duty to help them grow and fulfill "the dreams of their ancestors" in their own nation and community.

After the prayer service, the pope walked into St. Peter's Square instead of using the popemobile. He walked the entire periphery of the square, stopping to shake hands, receive cards and notes, offer happy New Year's greetings, bless babies and chat with people lining the barricades.

In the center of the square, the pope prayed silently before the Vatican Nativity scene. He also stood before the twisted and crumbled spire from the St. Benedict Basilica in Norcia, which was damaged in a series of earthquakes in central Italy.

New Direction Noted In Child Protection Efforts

(Continued From Page 1.)

For example, Father Zollner, Archbishop Charles J. Scicluna of Malta, and Cardinal Sean P. O'Malley of Boston spoke in Mexico City at a congress on child protection in November attended by more than 400 people representing 60 dioceses, 40 religious congregations and more.

The three men offered their insight and experience frankly and directly, he said. "You can be sure it wasn't light to take, this is heavy stuff," he said.

Archbishop Scicluna spent years at the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, handling accusations of clerical sex abuse. He long has insisted that church officials respond to allegations clearly and without creating "a culture of silence or repression."

The center also will host a congress on minors and online abuse, titled "Child Dignity in the Digital World," Oct. 3-6, 2017. Father Zollner said he met with Pope Francis Dec. 21 to tell him about the congress and got "his approval and support."

The pope was "moved and shaken" by estimates the priest provided that in India alone it is expected 500 million more people will go online next year and at least half of them will be minors, "exposing them to all kinds of risks we can hardly imagine."

The organizers are inviting software companies, representatives from government and law enforcement, science experts and policymakers to share ideas on protecting minors from abuse online including looking at how young people abuse the internet and each other, for example, through "sextortion" or extorting others with their sexual information or images.

He said he also presented the pope with a proposal that the 2018 Synod of Bishops on youth include the topic of safeguarding children from abuse.

Despite so much progress, Father Zollner told CNS, one

lingering obstacle is "to break the silence."

There's a continued reluctance "to verbalize and intervene" in some places when it comes to abuse, he said. In part, people avoid talking about it, he said, because it's such an "uncomfortable topic" and "so repugnant."

However, sometimes the silence also is the fruit of negligence, he said, such as when "I protect my institution first of all and the rest is secondary. I don't listen to the victim. I put the legal adviser and financial interests first" before the human person in need.

The Center will host a congress on minors and online abuse, titled "Child Dignity in the Digital World," October 3 - 6, 2017. Father Zollner said he met with Pope Francis December 21 to tell him about the congress and got "his approval and support."

While such a response would be wrong everywhere, it especially should not exist for the church, he said.

The other major obstacle, he said, is getting people to realize what is at stake: the lives and future of children and young people who are meant to grow up "having opportunities, be educated, to play, to cry, to be joyful," and not scarred by the trauma of abuse.

So even if abuse, prevention and correction are talked about, the talk risks just being "lip service" if it's not taken seriously or "not really followed up" with concrete help and effort on every church level, like youth programs, pastoral planning, the selection of priests and so on, he said.

It's there that Father Zollner hopes their global alliance will make its impact -- getting the church's talented and dedicated members on the ground to work

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- Father Raniero Cantalamessa, Preacher to the Papal Household

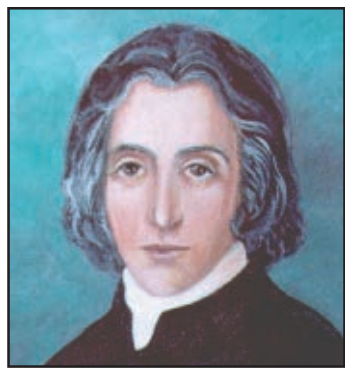
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Tolton Cause Advances As Priest's Remains Exhumed

By Joyce Duriga
Catholic News Service

QUINCY, Ill. (CNS) -- On the morning of Dec. 10 in a cemetery in Quincy, Father Augustus Tolton's cause for canonization took one step further as his remains were exhumed and verified.

Father Tolton, a former slave, is the first recognized American diocesan priest of African descent. In 2011, the Archdiocese of Chicago officially opened his cause for sainthood.

While digging up Father Tolton's grave may seem like a macabre undertaking and the antithesis of the prayer "may they rest in peace," it is actually a reverent and well thought out

part of church law regarding the remains of holy people.

"This goes back to a very ancient tradition in the church for a number of reasons. One was to document that the person really existed and wasn't a figment of someone's imagination or some group's imagination. Finding their grave was the tell-tale sign that the person lived, breathed and walked this earth," said Chicago Auxiliary Bishop Joseph N. Perry, who is postulator of the priest's cause and one of the nation's African-American Catholic bishops.

"It's basically out of our theology, our tradition that our bodies are made holy in baptism and the reception of the Eucharist and eventually they rise to glory. So while we're treating everyone with dignity in life, even their remains are to be given a kind of a reverential handling," said Bishop Perry.

While Father Tolton died in Chicago in 1897, he requested to be buried in Quincy, which is in the Diocese of Springfield. He and his family had fled there after escaping slavery in nearby Missouri and it's where he returned to minister after being ordained in Rome. He is buried in St. Peter's Cemetery in a plot with another Quincy priest. Today that cemetery is sandwiched in between KFC and Wendy's restaurants and located along a commercial shopping thoroughfare.

The day before the exhumation, cemetery crews from the Archdiocese of Chicago and the Diocese of Springfield dug 6 feet down into the clay-based



CNS Photo/Karen Callaway, Catholic New World

VESTMENTS: Priestly vestments are placed on the skeletal remains of Father Augustine Tolton, Saturday, December 10.

soil to about 4 inches above Father Tolton's grave. They removed dirt from a 6-foot-by-11-foot space. Using sonar, they had already verified the grave's location.

A white tent covered the remains and sheltered the small area from the elements. At 7:30 a.m. Dec. 10 crews and diocesan officials gathered for an opening prayer service at the grave site led by Springfield Bishop Thomas J. Paprocki.

The Catholic Church through the Vatican Congregation for Saints' Causes is very specific about how the process must go.

"There is a canon law that they have to follow that lays out exactly what has to be done and how it's done to the point that they called the workers together to swear an oath to diligence and professionalism," said Roman Szabelski, executive director of Catholic Cemeteries of the Archdiocese of Chicago.

Canon law also requires that dioceses employ a forensic anthropologist, a medical examiner and archaeologist in the process. Those three men worked on removing the remainder of the soil and uncovered Father Tolton's body. It didn't take long to find the skeletal remains.

In addition to the skeletal remains, the crews found other items such as metal handles and wood from the coffin, the corpus from a crucifix buried with him, the corpus from his rosary and a portion of his Roman collar.

"The intent of all of this is preserving the remains we have of a possible saint. We want to make sure that anything that we find is preserved so it will go into a sealed casket and from the sealed casket into a sealed vault," said Szabelski told the **Catholic New World**, Chicago's archdiocesan newspaper.

In addition to the skull, they found Father Tolton's femurs, rib bones, vertebrae, collarbones, pelvis, portions of the arm bones and other smaller bones.

The forensic pathologist verified by the skull that the remains were of a black person. By the shape and thickness of bones in the pelvic area he was able to determine that the remains were from a male in his early 40s.

Once all of the remains and artifacts were collected, the process to reinter Father Tolton began. Priests from Springfield vested the remains with a white Roman chasuble and maniple, amice and cincture. They were then placed in a new casket bearing a plate that identified him as "Servant of God Augustus Tolton," along with his dates of birth, ordination and death. A document was placed on top of the remains attesting to the work done that day.

Then they wrapped a red ribbon around the casket and sealed it with a wax seal of the Diocese of Springfield. The coffin was in turn placed in a burial vault with another inscription. A closing prayer service wrapped up the solemn process.

Prayer For Father Gallitzin's Intercession

O God, light of the faithful and shepherd of souls, who sent Servant of God Demetrius Gallitzin to serve God's people in the Allegheny Mountains, feeding your sheep by his words and forming them by his example, pour out your Spirit to sow seeds of truth in people's hearts and to awaken in them obedience to the faith.

May the Gospel continue to be preached and the Sacraments bring power and grace to the faithful. By the example of this man of faith, Demetrius Gallitzin, may your people advance in the path of salvation and love.

Confident of your faithfulness to us, we humbly ask you, our God, to grant us the favor of (name your intention).

May Christ's saving work continue to the end of the ages, and may we feel a more urgent call to work for the salvation of every creature. We pray this, as did your priest Demetrius Gallitzin, through our Lord Jesus Christ your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

+ + +

Kindly send information about favors granted to:

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Word of Life



The Pope Teaches

By Pope Francis

Even Complaining To God Is A Form Of Prayer

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- To complain to God in moments of doubt and fear like Abraham did is not something bad but rather is a form of prayer that requires the courage to hope beyond all hope, Pope Francis said.

While in life there may be times of frustration and darkness, "hope is still there and it moves us forward," the pope said Dec. 28 during his weekly general audience.

"I won't say that Abraham loses patience, but he complains to the Lord. This is what we learn from our father Abraham: complaining to the Lord is a form of prayer. Sometimes I hear confessions where people say, 'I complained to the Lord.' But no. (Continue) to complain; he is a father and this is a form of prayer. Complain to the Lord, this is good," he said.

Entering the Paul VI audience hall, the pope greeted thousands of pilgrims from all over the world. Among those present was a group of performers from Italy's Golden Circus, who performed several acrobatic feats and entertaining performances at the end of the general audience.

The pope even participated in one of the performances. As he and an illusionist grabbed the ends of a tablecloth, they seemingly made a small nightstand levitate to the amazement and applause of the pilgrims.

During the audience, the pope continued his series of talks on Christian hope and reflected on the life of Abraham who, along with his wife, Sarah, left his homeland with hope in God's promise of a son.

This hope, he said, gave Abraham the ability to "go beyond human reason, and worldly wisdom and prudence" to believe in the impossible.

"Hope opens new horizons; it makes us able to dream that which isn't imaginable. Hope makes us enter into the darkness of an uncertain future to walk in the light," the pope said.

However, this path is not without its difficulties, even for Abraham, who, after months of travel, began to doubt God's promise of a son borne by his wife, Sarah.

It is in this moment, the pope said, that Abraham prays to God in the dark of night, a darkness that mirrored his "disappointment, discouragement and the difficulty of continuing to hope in something impossible."

Faith is not just silent acceptance or a "certainty that secures us from doubt and perplexity," but it also means "to argue with God and show him our bitterness without 'pious pretenses.'"

"I became angry with God, I told him this, this, and that.' But he is a father and he understands you; go in peace. You must have this courage. This is hope," the pope said.

It is in the darkness of night and in the darkness of his own doubts that Abraham once again receives, believes and hopes in God's promise of descendants as numerous as the stars, Pope Francis said.

"To believe, it is necessary to know how to see with the eyes of faith; we all may (look up and) only see stars, but for Abraham, they become a sign of God's faithfulness," the pope said. "Hope never disappoints."



ONE MORE TIME: Third Order Regular Franciscan Brothers serving at Saint Francis Seminary, Loretto, in 1966, included (left to right) Brothers Gerald Conway, Joel Porter, Dominic Barkovich, Christopher Lemme and Mark Lilly.

Christmas cards abound with the picture of Mary holding the Christ child. It is one of the most endearing images seen repeatedly during the Christmas season. Some of the most famous paintings of Mary with the baby Jesus are presented in the 2017 calendar issued by the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington.

On January 1, we celebrated Mary's divine motherhood. A beautiful rendition of Mary with her child, painted by Giuseppe Chiara (1654-1727) is depicted in that calendar, alongside a lovely prayer entitled, "Entrusting the Church to Mary, Mother of God." Implied is the theme that Mary is not only the mother of Jesus Christ, but also the mother of his church.

This title, "Mother of God," has often been challenged down through the ages, and the church has always answered these critics with clarity. One of the earliest objections came from the gnostics. Gnosticism is an early heresy that claimed that "matter is evil," an idea borrowed from certain Greek philosophers.

The gnostics contradicted Genesis 1:31, "God looked at everything he had made, and found it very good." They also denied the doctrine of the incarnation, claiming that Christ only appeared to be a man. Since matter is evil, they conjectured, his humanity was merely an illusion.

Another heretical view came in the fifth century from Bishop Nestorius of Constantinople. He denied Mary's title: "Theotokos" (God-bearer),



Spirituality For Today

By Father John Catoir

Mary, The Mother Of God



Photo By Monsignor Timothy P. Stein

claiming that Mary only carried Christ's human nature in her womb. His theory divided Christ into two separate persons: one human and one divine.

The church rejected this heresy, declaring that Mary is the Mother of God, not in the sense that she is older than God or that she is the source of God, but rather, in the sense that the person she gave birth to was in fact God incarnate. The second person of the Trinity assumed a human nature from her body. The divine person, Jesus Christ, is truly human because he is bone of her bone, and flesh of her flesh.

These attacks on Mary's divine maternity were all based on Christological heresies. The Catholic Church defined the divinity of Christ in A.D. 325 at the First Council of Nicaea,

which produced the first version of the Nicene Creed. We recite this creed at Mass every Sunday: "I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages, God from God, Light from Light. ... He came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary."

Since Mary is the mother of Jesus, she is also the mother of his mystical body on earth. Membership in Christ's mystical body extends beyond the Catholic community. The word "mystical" refers to the mystery that underlies this doctrine. The term "body" when referring to the church, derives its meaning from an analogy used by St. Paul, who speaking to the Christians at Corinth said: "Now you are Christ's body, and individually parts of it" (1 Cor 12:27).

Mary is the mother of the divine person, Jesus Christ. We have a strong devotion to Mary as our spiritual mother. It is not difficult for people of faith to make the leap of seeing Mary as the mother of Our Lord, to her also being a spiritual mother to all of us. Even though it boggles the mind, we know that God revealed this truth, and we accept it joyfully.

Question Corner

By Father Kenneth Doyle
**Can A Woman
 Give The Homily?**

Q. At Mass, after the Gospel has been read by a priest, can the female parish life director give the homily? With six priests sitting down? At one of our local parishes, this happens regularly.

I have been to this church on occasion, and I feel guilty for being there to witness it -- but sometimes this is my only option. (I'm afraid to talk to my own parish priest about this, because he might think that I am being critical or judgmental.) (Upstate New York)

A. The current guidelines of the Catholic Church on this matter are quite clear. The Code of Canon Law says: "Among the forms of preaching, the homily, which is part of the liturgy itself and is reserved to a priest or deacon, is pre-eminent" (No. 767).

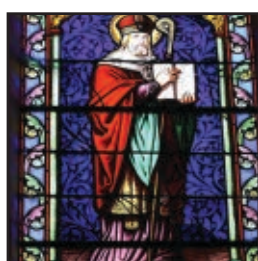
Similarly, the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, which serves as the church's liturgical "rulebook," says, "The homily should ordinarily

be given by the priest celebrant himself or be entrusted by him to a concelebrating priest, or from time to time and, if appropriate, to the deacon, but never to a layperson" (No. 66).

(I should note that in August 2016, Pope Francis appointed a commission of six men and six women to study the issue of women deacons, with a particular focus on their ministry in the early church.)

In certain areas of the U.S. where priests are not available to celebrate the Eucharist every Sunday, services are guided by a Vatican document called "Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest." In such settings, a layperson can be delegated by the local bishop to offer an explanation and reflection on the biblical readings for the service.

I n t e r e s t i n g l y , *L'Osservatore Romano* (the semi-official Vatican newspaper) published in March 2016 a series of essays that advocated that women be permitted to preach from the pulpit at Mass



Sulpice
 Died c. 647
 Feast - January 17

Also called Sulpicius and Pius, Sulpice was born to wealthy parents in France and began aiding the poor in his youth. When he became bishop of Bourges in Aquitaine in 624, he defended the rights of his people against the tyrannical Merovingian kings. Known for his austerity and holiness, Sulpice was beloved in Bourges for his generosity and was said to have converted everyone there to Christianity through his personal witness. He attended the Council of Clichy in 627, and resigned as bishop of Bourges late in life to serve the poor. The enormous Church of Saint-Sulpice, near the Luxembourg gardens in Paris, and a famous French seminary are named for this holy bishop.

and noted that this was a regular practice during the first thousand years of Christianity.

Q. I am a Catholic woman who is planning to marry a Jewish man. He is uncomfortable with having a Catholic priest preside at the wedding, and he says this would be awkward for his family as well. Are there ways to have a "neutral" presider celebrate the service and still have the marriage recognized by the Catholic Church?

(I have told my husband-to-be that my only "requirement" is that the wedding be seen as valid in the church's eyes.) Is this possible, and what would I need to do to make it happen? (Cleveland)

A. Yes, in a situation like this a diocese is able to give permission ahead of time for a marriage ceremony to take place in a nonsectarian setting, witnessed by a civil official, and have that marriage be recognized by the Catholic Church. You and your fiancé should speak with a local priest to see that the proper paperwork is completed.

But how about, instead, doing a joint religious ceremony that would highlight the role of God in a marriage and seek the Lord's blessings? I have several times done such a wedding service together with a rabbi.

Only one -- either the rabbi or the priest -- would be designated as the responsible civil official to receive a couple's vows, but both the rabbi and the priest could offer prayers from their own traditions and appropriate blessings. (Two or three times, we have even used the chuppah, the traditional canopy under which Jewish couples pronounce their wedding vows accompanied by both sets of parents.)

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



For The Journey

By Effie Caldarola
Hell For 75 Cents

When I was a young woman, I went to the grocery store with my mom in the farm town where I grew up.

It was before the days of computerized cash registers that automatically revealed the amount of change due. You needed some rudimentary math skills back then to work at a store.

My mom was a bookkeeper for a lumber company and adding and subtracting were second nature. So when the clerk gave her the change, she noted she'd been given 75 cents too much and handed back the extra.

I don't remember what I said as we walked to the car, but I probably remarked on her honesty.

"Well," said my mom, "I don't want to go to hell for 75 cents."

That stopped me in my tracks.

"Do you believe God would send you to hell for 75 cents?" I asked.

She replied that she did, but I had a sense that my question had given her pause. Did she really believe in a God of such vengeance? A God waiting to punish brutally for a small infraction? I don't think she really did, and my question probably stirred some reflection in her on just who her God was.

That question -- who is God for me? -- is probably our life's primary question.

Recently, I worked with a journal that asked me to describe the God of my childhood and youth. Then, I was to describe God as I see him as an adult.

Not surprisingly, the God of my childhood reflected my upbringing's view of a judgmental, punishing God. This is often how God was presented in catechesis a few decades ago. "Judge," "stern taskmaster," -- those were some of the words I wrote in the journal.

As an adult, I use the word "mystery" to describe God. In theology classes I've taken, I've heard it repeated: Our spirituality is how we walk with mystery.

To veer too far from accepting God's mystery is to create my own image of God, to hang onto something I've come to think of as a "God in a box" mentality, full of my own certainties. A writer remarked recently, only half-jokingly, that we know we've created God in our own image when God hates the same people we do.

In my adult reflection, I described God with words like "inclusive," "expansive," "harder to pin down and define than when I was a child." Well, I certainly hope I haven't tried to pin God down lately. Instead, I use words like invitation and grace. I long to be ready to be surprised by grace and intimacy with the One who invites me.

As Pope Francis has told us, God's name is mercy. And as Scripture defines God: God is love.

My mother taught me most of what I know about love, and I believe that deep down love is how she experienced God.

But back then, we too often saw God, like St. Peter at heaven's gate, holding an all-important ledger with figures as rigid and unbending as those my mother kept in her ledger at the lumber company.

Nevertheless, I remain challenged by her comment. It reminded me of the Jewish phrase that was used to describe Oskar Schindler, the man who saved more than 1,000 Jewish workers from extermination during World War II.

"He who saves one life saves the world entire," goes the maxim.

We all know that one who can be trusted in small things is the one who can be trusted in large. Perhaps she who is honest in small sums saves the world's integrity, piece by piece.

2016: Looking Back At A Year Of Mercy . . .



A group of young people from the Penn State Catholic Campus Ministry at Penn State's University Park campus attended the Thursday, January 21 Pro - Life Prayer Service at the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament in Altoona. They were accompanied by Benedictine Father Matthew T. Laffey, director of campus ministry at Penn State, and were greeted by Bishop Mark L. Bartchak following the service.



Terry and John Carnicella represented Saint Mary Parish, Altoona, and received the Holy Oils, at the Monday, March 21 celebration of the Chrism Mass.



As a sign of penance for the sin of the sexual abuse of children, Bishop Mark L. Bartchak lay prostrate before the altar of the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament Tuesday, May 17, during the second of three diocesan services of Prayer for Victims and Survivors of Sexual Abuse. Approximately 90 people attended the Altoona service. As the Bishop lay prostrate, the service opened with the chanting of a Litany of Penance.



Gathered at the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament on Ordination Day, Saturday, May 14 were (left to right) Father Matthew Reese (director of vocations), Deacon Peter Crowe, Deacon Jonathan Dickson, Bishop Mark L. Bartchak, Deacon Donald Gibboney and Deacon Michael Russo (director of diaconal formation). Deacon Gibboney was ordained a permanent deacon, and Deacons Crowe and Dickson were ordained transitional deacons.



The Tornatore family of Saint Joseph Parish, Bellwood, enjoyed a good meal and lots of family fun at the Diocese's annual Faith Day celebration Sunday, June 26 at DelGrosso's Amusement Park in Tipton. Pictured left to right are Andrew, Darin, Miranda and Dana.



Students and staff constructed their own set of Holy Doors Of Mercy at Saint Peter School, Somerset.



As they renewed their wedding vows at the annual Mass Honoring Married Couples celebrated Sunday, July 17 at the Shrine of Our Lady of the Alleghenies in Loretto, Caroline and Paul Cook of Saint Mary Parish, Nanty Glo, shared a loving look with one another.



Bishop Mark L. Bartchak presents a prayerful gift -- a one decade rosary -- to a young man attending the annual Mass for Young People Going To College, Military or Work. The Mass was celebrated Sunday, August 7 at the Shrine of Our Lady of the Alleghenies.



For the 16 pilgrims taking part in The Catholic Register Holy Year Of Mercy Pilgrimage to Rome, the opportunity to see Pope Francis and to receive a blessing from him, at his Wednesday, September 7 general audience, was a cherished moment.



Marine Private First Class Nicholas J. Cancilla was honored by Marine Corps comrades at a funeral Mass celebrated Monday, November 7 at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church in Altoona. The remains of the teenaged Marine, who died in battle 73 years ago, were found on a Japanese island and returned to his hometown for burial.



Bishop Mark L. Bartchak celebrated Mass for diocesan pilgrims in the Crypt Church of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington DC, Saturday, November 12.



A "Family Advent Gathering" was held by the Religious Education program at Saint John the Evangelist Parish, Lakemont, Altoona. Participants crafted live Advent Wreaths for display in their homes. The wreaths were blessed by Monsignor Michael A. Becker, pastor.

Time Of Mercy: Holy Doors Have Closed, But Mission Of Mercy Continues



By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- The Year of Mercy brought more than 20 million pilgrims to Rome, but for Pope Francis, the idea always was that the celebration of God's mercy would be local: have people experience God's love in their parishes and send them out into the world to commit random acts of mercy.

While concrete works of mercy have a social impact, Pope Francis' idea was deeply connected to evangelization, which is why Rome jubilee events were organized by the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization. The pope had said he wanted the Holy Year to be "a new step on the church's journey in her mission to bring the Gospel of mercy to each person."

The pope's constant refrain during the Year of Mercy, which began Dec. 8, 2015, was that no one is excluded from the mercy of God, who has shown his love for each person by sacrificing his son for the salvation of all. All can be forgiven, the pope taught over and over again. And once a person experiences just how loving and merciful God has been, the obligation is to reach out to others with that same love and mercy.

Pope Francis made no claim to having invented a church focus on divine mercy. The evangelical trend was already clearly present in when St. John Paul II wrote an encyclical letter on mercy in 1980 and when he beatified and then canonized Sister Faustina Kowalska, known as the "Apostle of Divine Mercy."

"I believe this is the time of mercy," Pope Francis told reporters traveling with him to Brazil in 2013 on his first foreign trip as pope. "The church is mother. She must go out and heal wounds with mercy."

For Pope Francis -- personally and for all Catholics --

that healing is expressed most powerfully in the confessional where one is honest about one's sins and where God's forgiveness and mercy are expressed through sacramental absolution.

The pope formally commissioned more than 1,100 priests from around the world as "missionaries of mercy" on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 10, giving them special faculties to grant absolution even in cases that usually must be referred to the local bishop or even the Vatican.

Along with processions to the Holy Door in St. Peter's Basilica and a meeting with Pope Francis, all of the major jubilee events in Rome included extended hours for confession. It was part of all the large jubilee events, including those for children, for people in mourning, for deacons, priests, the sick, youths, catechists, prisoners and for papal nuncios -- the pope's ambassadors around the world.

As he has done before, ignoring the cameras, Pope Francis himself went to confession during a special Lenten penance service in St. Peter's Basilica and again in August in Assisi when he celebrated the traditional "Pardon of Assisi."

Setting an example did not stop at the church doors, though. One Friday each month throughout the Year of Mercy, Pope Francis quietly left the Vatican -- without informing the media -- and spent the late afternoon and early evening making visits reflecting the traditional corporal works of mercy.

The visits took him, among other places, to a community for persons recovering from addiction, a hospice, a hospital neonatal care unit and to an apartment on the outskirts of Rome where he met with men who have left the priesthood to marry and have children.

(Continued On Page 13.)

CLOSES THE HOLY DOOR: (Above and Opposite Page) Pope Francis closes the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica to mark the conclusion of the jubilee Year of Mercy at the Vatican November 20, 2016.

CNS Photo/L'Osservatore Romano



CNS Photo/L'Osservatore Romano

(Continued From Page 12.)

A highlight of the year was the canonization of Mother Teresa of Kolkata, an event that brought some 120,000 people to St. Peter's Square in September. In his homily, Pope Fran-

cis said, "God is pleased by every act of mercy because in the brother or sister that we assist, we recognize the face of God which no one can see."

"Each time we bend down to the needs of our brothers and

sisters," he said, "we give Jesus something to eat and drink; we clothe, we help and we visit the Son of God."

Preaching God's mercy has been a central focus of Pope Francis' ministry since his elec-

tion in March 2013, and the closing of the Holy Door in St. Peter's Basilica Nov. 20 will not end that focus.

Celebrating a jubilee Mass Nov. 13 with the homeless and other people in precarious situ-

ations, Pope Francis prayed that as the Holy Doors in some 10,000 cathedrals, shrines and churches around the world were closed, God would open people's eyes and hearts to the needs of others.



LETTER: Pope Francis presents his apostolic letter, "Misericordia et Misera," (Mercy and Misery) to family members from the United States at the conclusion of the closing Mass of the jubilee Year of Mercy in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican Nov. 20. In the letter the pope called for several special initiatives begun during the Year of Mercy to continue on a permanent basis.

CNS Photo/Paul Haring



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Now Showing

Powerful, Complex 'Silence' Best - Suited To The Serious - Minded

By John Mulderig
Catholic News Service

NEW YORK (CNS) -- Directed and co-written (with Jay Cocks) by Martin Scorsese, "Silence" (Paramount) is a dramatically powerful but theologically complex work best suited to viewers who come to the multiplex prepared to engage with serious issues.

Those willing to make such an intellectual investment, however, will find themselves richly rewarded.

In adapting Catholic author Shusaku Endo's 1966 fact-based

historical novel, a project in the works since the late 1980s, Scorsese finds himself in what might be called Graham Greene territory. As fans of that British novelist know, he had a fondness for stretching and twisting fundamental issues of faith and morality, and Endo's plot shows the same tendency. So this is also not a film for the poorly catechized.

The movie's primary setting is 17th-century Japan, where persecution is raging against the previously tolerated Christian community.

Shocked by rumors that Christavao Ferreira (Liam Neeson), their mentor in the priest-



CNS Photo/Paramount

SILENCE: Liam Neeson stars in a scene from the movie "Silence." The Catholic News Service classification is L -- limited adult audience, films whose problematic content many adults would find troubling. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is R -- restricted. Under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian.

hood, has renounced the faith under torture, two of his fellow Jesuits, Sebastian Rodrigues (Andrew Garfield) and Francisco Garrpe (Adam Driver), volunteer to leave the safety of Europe for the perils of the Land of the Rising Sun. Their twin goals are to find their role model and to minister to the underground Japanese church.

What follows is a long, sometimes harrowing battle between doubt and human frailty on the one hand and fidelity on the other. Earthly compassion is set against faithfulness and an eternal perspective, with both divine and human silence contributing to the appropriateness of the title.

Scorsese has crafted an often visually striking drama that's also deeply thought-provoking and emotionally gripping. And the performances are remarkable all around. But the paradoxes of the narrative demand careful sifting by mature moviegoers well-grounded in their beliefs.

Those lacking such a foundation could be led astray, drawing the conclusion that mercy toward the suffering of others can sometimes justify sin. While Catholics who are blessed with the freedom to practice their faith in peace are hardly in a position to judge those facing martyrdom, the principle that circumstances can mitigate guilt but not transform wrong into right remains universally valid.

In the end, "Silence" movingly vindicates a certain form

of constancy. That may, in a roundabout way, match the historical record: There is edifying, though inconclusive, evidence that the real person behind one of the three main characters in the picture not only rejected his previous apostasy, but ultimately surrendered his life for the faith.

The film contains religious themes requiring mature discernment, much violence, including scenes of gruesome torture and a brutal, gory execution, as well as rear and partial nudity. The Catholic News Service classification is L -- limited adult audience, films whose problematic content many adults would find troubling. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is R -- restricted. Under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian.

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Coming Up On 'Proclaim!'

Upcoming guests on "Keeping The Faith," Bishop Mark L. Bartchak's segment of "Proclaim!" will include:

January 15 - - As we salute Saint Benedict School in Carrolltown as our January School of the Month, the Farabaugh family joins the Bishop to talk about their passion for the school.

January 22 - - Tom Forr of Citizens Concerned for Human Life looks ahead to the upcoming March for Life in Washington, D.C., and local efforts to promote the sanctity of human life.

May
They Rest
In Peace



Nun Was Media Literacy Leader

By Catholic News Service

Sister Barbara Sandor
C.S.J.

Sister Barbara Sandor, 83, died Wednesday, December 21, 2016 in the 65th year of her religious life as a Sister of Saint Joseph of Baden.

The daughter of the late Michael and Anna (Semens) Sandor, Sister Barbara, formerly known as Sister Michael, served from 1955 through 1978, as a teacher in the Dioceses of Altoona - Johnstown, Greensburg and Pittsburgh. She served locally at Saint John Gualbert School, Johnstown, from 1960 - 1962.

Following her teaching ministry, Sister Barbara held several secretarial positions, including at the Diocese of Pittsburgh Religious Education Learning Media Center, Good Samaritan, Annunciation, Duquesne University and Mercy Hospital. From 2006-2012, she served as a volunteer visitor at Villa Saint Joseph, Baden, where she resided for the past four years, participating in the Villa Voices, Bell Choir, and Pets with Heart therapy.

Sister Barbara is survived by a sister, Helen Sandor; a brother, Joseph Sandor; nieces, nephews, grandnieces and grandnephews; the Associates and the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Baden.

The Funeral Mass for Sister Barbara Sandor was celebrated Wednesday, December 28 in the chapel of Saint Joseph Convent, Baden. Committal was in the Sisters' Cemetery on the Motherhouse grounds.

Donations in the name of Sister Barbara may be sent to the Sisters of Saint Joseph Memorial Fund, Saint Joseph Convent, Development Office, 1020 State St., Baden PA 15005.

May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

JOHNSTON, Iowa (CNS)

-- Sister Elizabeth Thoman, a member of the Congregation of the Humility of Mary and a longtime media literacy leader, died Dec. 22, 2016 at Bishop Drumm Retirement Center in Johnston. She was 73.

A funeral Mass was celebrated Dec. 28 at the retirement center's Our Lady of Peace Chapel followed by burial at Mount Calvary Cemetery in Dubuque.

Sister Thoman was born in June 18, 1943, in Chattanooga, Tennessee, to John and Gertrude Thoman. She grew up in Nashville, Tennessee. She entered the Congregation of the Humility of Mary in 1964 and professed her final vows in 1966. She earned a bachelor's degree from Marycrest College in Davenport, Iowa. The now-closed school was operated by her religious congregation.

She earned master's degrees from the University of Southern California's Annenberg School of Communications in Los Angeles and from the now-closed Immaculate Heart College, also in L.A.

She spent three decades advocating for media literacy education, starting with her initial work teaching high school English in Marshalltown, Iowa, from 1967-1969. There she developed an interest in communication education. From 1970-1975, she worked as staff photographer for the Franciscan Communications Center where she helped make short films designed to promote classroom discussion in religious education.

Sister Thoman founded and led the National Sisters Communications Service in Los Angeles, which provided professional communication resources for communities of women religious nationwide. Through this work she met Norman Lear, a television producer who created "All in the Family," who sought her advice on a television show that would feature the changing



SISTER ELIZABETH THOMAN

roles of Catholic women religious.

In 1977, she founded **Media & Values** magazine, which examined war, gender stereotypes and racism in the media; media regulation; children and media; and more. As circulation reached 10,000, in 1989 she created the Center for Media Literacy for creating curriculum materials designed to help students of all ages develop critical thinking skills in response to violence in media and other issues.

Known as an articulate and passionate speaker, Sister Thoman testified before Congress and was one of 50 media and educational leaders in the U.S. invited by President Bill Clinton to a White House summit on children's television in 1996. She was a keynote speaker on media issues for several conferences and received a number of awards and recognition for her leading role in media literacy education.

When she retired, she continued to develop her skills as a professional photographer by establishing Healing Petals, a collection of unique photographs to stimulate meditation, reflection and prayer. In 2010, St. Thomas Hospital in Nashville commissioned a collection of her photographs to be installed in each of nearly 300 patient rooms.

In a 2006 interview just before retiring, Sister Thoman said her work developed from analyzing media to providing teaching tools about it and then developing more inquiry.

Not that long ago, she said, people had relatively few sources for research on the media.

"Now you've got the whole world (for) an inquiry," she added. "You hit a button and you've got the Internet. It's all there. The inquiry can be deeper and richer because of technology."

Sister Thoman is survived by brothers James, Lawrence and John Jr., sisters Patricia Young and Mary Lynn Thoman, as well as nieces, nephews and members of her religious community. She was preceded in death by her parents.

Jesuit, 96, Was Noted Scriptural Scholar

By Catholic News Service

PHILADELPHIA (CNS)

-- Jesuit Father Joseph Fitzmyer, a leading Catholic biblical scholar, died Dec. 24, 2016 at Manresa Hall, a Jesuit infirmary in Philadelphia. He was 96.

The priest, who was born in Philadelphia in 1920 and was ordained a Jesuit priest in 1951, was well known for his contributions to the Anchor Bible Series and for co-editing **The Jerome Biblical Commentary**.

He earned a doctorate in Semitics from Johns Hopkins University in 1956 and a licentiate in sacred Scripture a year later from the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome.

Father Fitzmyer was a member of the Pontifical Biblical Commission and also served as president of the U.S. Catholic Biblical Association.

An expert in the Aramaic language spoken by Christ and by many first-century Jews and Christians, the priest was noted for his work on the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Gospel of Luke. He did some of the initial work in the 1950s to prepare a concordance to the scrolls and was one of the first Americans to have direct access to the documents.

Father Fitzmyer also worked on the Catholic-Lutheran Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification signed by the two churches in October 1999 after extensive dialogue.

He founded the Institute on Sacred Scripture at Georgetown University; the institute is

named for him. The priest also taught at a number of schools including the now-closed Woodstock Theological Center at Georgetown University, the University of Chicago, Fordham University, Boston College and The Catholic University of America.



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New Year Calls For Courage And Hope; No More Hatred And Selfishness, Pope Says

By Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS)

-- Whether the new year will be good or not depends on us choosing to do good each day, Pope Francis said.

"That is how one builds peace, saying 'no' to hatred and violence -- with action -- and 'yes' to fraternity and reconciliation," he said Jan. 1, which the church marks as the feast of Mary, Mother of God and as World Peace Day.

Speaking to the some 50,000 pilgrims gathered in St. Peter's Square for the first noon Angelus of 2017, the pope referred to his peace day message in which he asked people to adopt the "style" of nonviolence for building a politics for peace.

Lamenting the brutal act of terrorism that struck during a night of "well-wishes and hope" in Istanbul, the pope offered his prayers for the entire nation of Turkey as well as those hurt and killed. A gunman opened fire during a New Year's Eve celebration at a popular nightclub early Jan. 1, killing at least 39 people and wounding at least 70 more.

"I ask the Lord to support all people of good will who courageously roll up their sleeves in order to confront the scourge of terrorism and this bloodstain



CNS Photo/Paul Haring

VISITS NATIVITY: Pope Francis visits the Nativity scene in St. Peter's Square after leading vespers on New Year's Eve at the Vatican Saturday, December 31, 2016.

that is enveloping the world with the shadow of fear and confusion," he said.

Earlier in the day, the pope spoke of how maternal tenderness, hope and self-sacrifice were the "strongest antidote" to the selfishness, indifference and "lack of openness" in the world today.

Celebrating Mass in St. Peter's Basilica, which was decorated with bright red anthuriums, evergreen boughs, white flowers and pinecones brushed

with gold paint, the pope said that a community without mothers would be cold and heartless with "room only for calculation and speculation."

The pope said he learned so much about unconditional love, hope and belonging from seeing mothers who never stop embracing, supporting and fighting for what is best for their children incarcerated in prisons, ill in hospitals, enslaved by drugs or suffering from war.

"Where there is a mother,

there is unity, there is belonging, belonging as children," he said.

Just like all mothers of the world, Mary, Mother of God, "protects us from the corrosive disease of being 'spiritual orphans,'" that is when the soul feels "motherless and lacking the tenderness of God, when the sense of belonging to a family, a people, a land, to our God, grows dim."

"This attitude of spiritual orphanhood is a cancer that silently eats away at and debases

the soul," which soon "forgets that life is a gift we have received -- and owe to others -- a gift we are called to share in this common home," he said.

A "fragmented and divided culture" makes things worse, he said, leading to feelings of emptiness and loneliness.

"The lack of physical and not virtual contact is cauterizing our hearts and making us lose the capacity for tenderness and wonder, for pity and compassion," he said, as well as making us "forget the importance of playing, of singing, of a smile, of rest, of gratitude."

Remembering that Jesus handed his mother over to us "makes us smile once more as we realize that we are a people, that we belong" and can grow, that we are not just mere objects to "consume and be consumed," that we are not "merchandise" to be exchanged or inert receptacles for information. "We are children, we are family, we are God's people."

Mary shows that humility and tenderness aren't virtues of the weak, but of the strong, and that we don't have to mistreat others in order to feel important, he said.

(Continued On Page 6.)

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