Assisted suicide bill SHOT DOWN

Colorado rejects the latest ‘right-to-die’ law, but more states are pressing for legislation similar to ones that have already passed in some states, Canada and Europe.

› NEWS ANALYSIS, PAGE 4A

Romero to be beatified

After years of debate on his cause, the Vatican announces that Salvadoran Archbishop Oscar Romero, who was shot and killed in 1980, was murdered out of hatred for the Faith.

› NEWS ANALYSIS, PAGE 9A

CATHOLIC COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Chaplains play unique role on campus

The role of priests and religious serving Catholic colleges and universities across the country vary by day, but whether they are acting as spiritual directors or celebrating Mass on a mountain, chaplains play a critical role in students’ lives.

› SPECIAL SECTION B

Drawing inspiration from megachurches

Catholic parishes and dioceses are looking to the success of some large Protestant communities for inspiration as they try to get lapsed members of the Faith back into the pews.

› NEWS ANALYSIS, PAGE 5A
Clouds in the Carolina blue sky: On the loss of Dean Smith

The Carolina blue sky that seems to perpetually hover over Chapel Hill, North Carolina, clouded up in early February with the announcement of the passing of the legendary basketball coach Dean Smith.

I felt more than a small pang myself at the loss of this man who so well, and with such integrity, represented my University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill alma mater for so many years.

When looking back on Smith’s life, there are, of course, the numbers. Dean Smith coached the Tar Heels for more than 36 years, during which he became the winningest coach in the NCAA by the time of his retirement in 1997. He coached his way to 17 regular-season Atlantic Coast Conference titles, appeared in 11 Final Fours and won two national championships.

But the numbers just tell one side of the story, as the multitude of tributes lauded on Smith in the days following his death prove. More than a skilled coach, Smith was a leader and a teacher to countless teenage boys as they entered the demanding world of college sports — and the inevitable national stage — for the first time.

To them, Coach Smith modeled integrity, humility and the values of honesty and hard work — no small lessons for young men or, for that matter, the rest of us.

Smith also valued education, and his team’s high graduation rate reflected this priority. He expected greatness, and greatness is what he received.

A quiet man, Smith preferred to let his actions speak for themselves — perhaps never more so than when he signed Charlie Scott to the Tar Heels, the first African-American ballplayer at a major Southern university.

He had a calling, and he answered it. Like the rest of us, he was a flawed human being. But he was committed to God, and he was committed to doing his best, and he was committed to bringing out the best in others.

Smith’s legacy is one of a prominent figure in society who lived his life guided by a moral compass. And, I hardly need add in today’s Miley Cyrus world, thank God for it.

Dean Smith influenced more than a generation of young people on and off the court — and he taught us so much more than basketball.

Because of this, his great legacy will live on for years to come.

Thoughts? feedback@osv.com.

Walking with Jesus

Christians have been recognizing Jesus’ passion for generations by praying the Way of the Cross. As we visit, in our hearts and imaginations, the stops on the way to Calvary, we can be inspired to grow closer to our Lord as we walk with him and carry our own crosses with patience and humility.

In mission lands, many carry the heavy crosses of poverty, ignorance and injustice. The PIME Missionaries are priests and brothers who work among non-Christians in 17 countries, alleviating the sufferings of many while living lives of service that proclaim the Gospel.

All Christians are called to lend a hand when others’ crosses become too heavy for them to bear.

This Lent, please help us lift the burdens of those in the missions. Your gift will make a difference.
Pope Francis to address Congress Sept. 24
On Feb. 5, House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, announced that Pope Francis will address a joint meeting of Congress on Sept. 24. The pontiff’s “historic visit” would make him the “first leader of the Holy See to address a joint meeting of Congress,” Boehner said in a statement, adding that he was “truly grateful that Pope Francis has accepted our invitation.” A statement from the Archdiocese of Washington called it “a great honor and tremendous joy to welcome our Holy Father, Pope Francis, to the Archdiocese of Washington during his proposed pastoral visit to the United States in September.”

Protection of minors
Cardinal Sean P. O’Malley, president of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, on Feb. 7 said that bishops who do not comply with the child protection norms adopted must face real consequences. The commission, which met Feb. 6-8, has a working group drawing up recommendations for Pope Francis, said Cardinal O’Malley, who also noted that the proposed new norms “would allow the Church to respond in an expeditious way when a bishop has not fulfilled his obligations.”

Marriage ruling
Same-sex couples began marrying Feb. 9 in Alabama after the U.S. Supreme Court refused a request from the state’s attorney general to prevent such marriages from taking place until the high court rules later this year on the constitutionality of state bans on same-sex marriage. Alabama became the 37th state to allow same-sex couples to marry. “No court decision can change the truth” about marriage, Mobile Archbishop Thomas J. Rodi said in a statement.

HHS mandate
In the ongoing fight against the Affordable Care Act’s contraceptive mandate, attorneys for the Atlanta Archdiocese, Catholic Education of North Georgia Inc. and the Savannah Diocese joined those representing media group EWTN on Feb. 4 in back-to-back court cases before a three-judge panel of the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta to argue against their requirement to provide contraceptives to their employees.

Religious freedom
A Feb. 5 letter signed by several national and local groups, including the USCCB, the Archdiocese of Washington and The Catholic University of America, urged Congress to protect religious freedom in Washington, D.C., by disapproving two new laws passed by the District of Columbia Council: the Reproductive Health Non-Discrimination Amendment Act of 2014 and the Human Rights Amendment Act of 2014.

Teacher contracts
The Archdiocese of San Francisco is proposing three new clauses to contracts for teachers in archdiocesan Catholic high schools to further clarify that Catholic schools — as the first clause states — “exist to affirm and proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ as held and taught by his Catholic Church.” San Francisco Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone said in a February letter that “the intention … is not to target for dismissal from our schools any teachers, singly or collectively.”

“I am a disaster with machines. I don’t know how to deal with a computer. It’s embarrassing, isn’t it?”
— Pope Francis, in a Jan. 5 Google Hangout video chat with youth from around the world.

“They are encouraged by knowing other people care — that they are not alone.”
— Jo Quiambao, secretary general for the anti-trafficking group Gabriela DC, following the International Day of Prayer and Awareness Against Human Trafficking on Feb. 8.

“It’s going to be unlike any State of the Union address we’ve ever seen.”
— Mark Shields, a syndicated columnist, on Feb. 8 regarding Pope Francis’ announcement that he will address a joint session of Congress on Sept. 24.

“We have the technology to control pain, and we have the ability to overcome loneliness and despair.”
— Archbishop J. Michael Miller of Vancouver, British Columbia, on the Feb. 6 decision of Congress to allow doctor-assisted suicide.
Colorado rejects assisted suicide bill — for now

By Anna Maria Basquez

Legislation that looks to make doctor-assisted suicide legal is crossing the desks of lawmakers all across the country. One such bill before the Colorado’s House of Representatives, HB 1135, was defeated in committee on Feb. 6 by an 8-5 vote after 11 hours of testimony and 125 witnesses.

Some tearful legislators said in closing remarks that they attributed their “no” votes to personal experience with terminal decisions, either made on their behalf or that of family members.

“There is absolute dignity in fighting (for life),” said Rep. Kathleen Conti, R-Littleton, after the vote. “It shows bravery; it shows heart ... For people to say there’s no dignity in it, I just don’t know how they can say that.”

Conti was among legislators who questioned the bill and voted “no,” saying her own sister fought for her life to the end. Similar legislation is up for consideration in at least 14 other states, lawmakers said.

The bill was much inspired by a letter to a Denver Post columnist from a reader who wrote about a loved one’s suffering near the end of their life. It was also backed by the organization Compassion and Care, which is attempting to get similar legislation passed in many other states after Brittany Maynard’s high-profile decision to end her life in Oregon in November via doctor-assisted suicide.

A shift in focus

Physician-assisted suicide is fast becoming a major moral issue of our time. Already rampantly available in Europe, a “right to die” bill was unanimously approved by Canada’s high court in early February.

Wesley J. Smith, a lawyer and lecturer who was named in 2008 by the Human Life Foundation as a “Great Defender of Life,” in his work against assisted suicide, spoke Feb. 4 at the University of Colorado-Boulder during its Eighth Annual Great Debate, “The End of Suffering: A Debate on Assisted Suicide,” during which he debated with Michel Tooley of the university’s School of Philosophy.

He noted that he doesn’t bring religion into his debate against doctor-assisted suicide.

“I don’t think it is a religious issue,” he told Our Sunday Visitor. “It is a public policy issue. Indeed, the disability rights community, which is overwhelmingly secular, are the nation’s best opponents of legalizing assisted suicide, as members of that community’s testimony ... in the Colorado Legislature demonstrated.”

Smith, who has worked against assisted suicide and euthanasia since 1994, said the discussion is about different value systems. “We are turning into a nation and to a society of the Western culture that is moving away ... from the primary good being the protection of all human life, from the primary good being the equality of all human life — something we’ve been struggling for in the West for hundreds of years — to the primary purpose of society (being) to prevent and eliminate suffering, Smith said. “And of course, you can’t eliminate suffering. ... But if the purpose of society is to eliminate suffering as we see tonight, that quickly morphs into eliminating the sufferer. If you eliminate the sufferer, that isn’t only what happens. The concept of what constitutes suffering also becomes very elastic. Society has to decide which value system it’s going to pursue.”

Other states

Doctor-assisted suicide is legal in Washington, Oregon and Vermont and pending in court cases in Montana and New Mexico, according to Jennifer Kraska, executive director of Colorado Catholic Conference. The State of Washington’s legislation on physician-assisted suicide passed via ballot initiative. It’s something officials from the Archdiocese of Seattle said has been nothing but a nightmare of uncertainty.

"The systems being proposed are seriously flawed," said Greg Magnoni, director of communications for the Seattle diocese. "There’s actually no way of knowing whether abuses occur because the reporting is so inadequate.

"In our experience of this here in Washington State, there’s no requirement for mental health evaluations, it doesn’t require family notification and doctors are prohibited from listing assisted-suicide as a cause of death,” Magnoni added. "It is a huge concern. It’s one that people considering assisted suicide should take very seriously. You don’t have to hold our teaching or our faith in order to consider that. A person of faith or no faith should be very careful about legalizing a law that passes assisted-suicide.

The most cited information at the Colorado’s House committee hearing was Oregon’s passage of the law.

Smith highlighted that in Oregon, where assisted-suicide has been legal since 1997, Medicaid in 2008 would not pay for cancer patients’ chemotherapy, "but they assured these two people that they would pay for their assisted suicides.”

Consequences

Smith said the push to legalize assisted suicide is worse in Europe, opening a Pandora’s Box.

"In Belgium, they’re now euthanizing elderly couples who don’t want to be living," Smith said. "In the Netherlands, the psychiatrists are now euthanizing mentally ill people. Why would that be?

Because it’s not about terminal illness. If the idea is to eliminate suffering, and killing is an acceptable way to eliminate suffering, then how do you limit it to the terminally ill? That’s the logic of assisted suicide.”

Dr. Bill Bolthouse, a physician in Colorado, testified before the committee in Denver. “We are judged as a society on how we respond to the needs of the weakest among us,” Bohlhouse said in his testimony. "In this debate, the fences are the ethical boundaries we have erected over the centuries, and especially in the latest decades as medical technology continues to advance. This bill opens a breach in those fences into a vast ethical wasteland that says, ‘not every life is worth living.’ While some say that statement honors the principle of autonomy, it does so at great cost ..."

"Physician-prescribed suicide is expedient: It is quick, and it is cheap," Bohlhouse added. “Do we want a society where the hard work of caring for the dying is tempted by what is expedient?”

Anna Maria Basquez writes from Colorado.
Can we learn from Protestant ‘megachurches’?

Successes of some evangelical efforts give insights for Catholic parishes looking to keep members

By Joseph R. LaPlante

It’s no secret that Mass attendance has diminished by more than half in the last 50 years. According to the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University, 55 percent of Catholics regularly attended Mass in 1965, that number has fallen to 24 percent in 2014. But where exactly are they going?

According to the Pew Research Center, many lapsed Catholics become unaffiliated with religion. But many end up joining Protestant churches — in particular, evangelical congregations known as “megachurches” — because they prefer the style of worship. In fact, some 80 percent of former Catholics surveyed by Pew responded that they enjoyed the religious services more at Protestant churches than at Catholic ones.

Luring Catholics away

Take Dallas. The Diocese of Dallas is among the fastest growing in the nation, jumping from 200,000 Catholics to 1.2 million over the past 25 years. The growth is fueled by a surge in immigration from Mexico and Latin America as well as an infusion of young U.S. Catholics who have moved to Texas, said Annette Gonzales Taylor, director of communications for the diocese.

Despite its burgeoning population, the diocese is losing some Catholics who are choosing to attend any of the several Protestant or Pentecostal mega-churches in the area.

Taylor and Sister Theresa Khirallah, the director of ministries for the Diocese of Dallas, said they have no way to determine the number of lapsed Catholics, but they contend it is significant.

Sister Theresa, a member of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, told Our Sunday Visitor that she understands the appeal of multimedia shows and rock music to those Catholics peering over the fence at the non-denominational megachurches. “We are not competing for a Grammy Award with bands and singers,” she said. That being said, Catholic churches can find insight into how to engage worshippers by looking at — and incorporating — the models offered by Protestants.

New business model

Father Michael White, a Maryland pastor who was assigned to a declining parish outside Baltimore in the late 1990s, tried without much success to reinvigorate the Church of the Nativity in Timonium. Father White, with the help of youth leader Tom Corcoran, began turning around their parish five years into the effort when they looked to the Protestant megachurches that were drawing large crowds.

Corcoran and Father White have literally written the book on how to prevent the flock from jumping the fence.

Their how-to manual, “Rebuilt: The Story of a Catholic Parish — Awakening the Faithful, Reaching the Lost, Making Church Matter” (Ave Maria Press, $17.95), tells the story of how they learned from mega-churches and adopted business principles to build a church that drew people into it.

They adopted the “purpose-driven” church philosophy of evangelical pastor Rick Warren, founder and senior pastor of Saddleback Church, an evangelical megachurch in Lake Forest, California.

“The purpose of Nativity (church) is to reach lost people to help them become disciples, and then to help disciples become growing disciples,” wrote the authors, who have since published a second book, “Tools for Rebuilding: 75 Really, Really Practical Ways to Make Your Parish Better” (Ave Maria Press, $16.95). “When evangelization is front and center, the community and the congregation are better served.”

Know the market

Taking another page out of the Protestant church playbook, it can also be helpful for Catholic churches to identify and tap into their particular markets.

For example, in the Diocese of San Bernardino, California, the population of self-identified Catholics in the diocese has grown 600 percent since its founding in 1978. As in Dallas, it’s primarily Spanish-speaking Catholics who are driving that growth.

“With Hispanic and English speaking parishioners, there is a dynamic,” Timothy Matovina, the executive director of the Institute for Latino Studies and History of Christianity at the University of Notre Dame, told Our Sunday Visitor. In two words, this dynamic can be identified as “charismatic Catholics.”

Matovina, who is also a consultant to the diocese, credited San Bernardino Bishop Gerald R. Barnes with recognizing and embracing this group of Catholics who belong to the movement marked by a close sense of community, openness to spontaneity, and emotional expressiveness in worship and community prayer.

Charismatic Catholics are noted to be open to the charisms of the Holy Spirit, such as prophecy, speaking in tongues and healing. While Matovina said some bishops are “leery” of this movement, Bishop Barnes is not.

John Andrews, director for communications for the diocese, told OSV that Bishop Barnes even has gone so far as to engage the Office of Charismatic Renewal in recognition that some Hispanic Catholics prefer a more charismatic worship more in tune with some of the thriving Pentecostal churches in the area.

And the diocese’s outreach is not just limited to Hispanics, but also includes Oceanic and

Continued on Page 6
You can’t keep the faith unless you give it away.

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“An excellent, well-written, and comprehensive look at the new evangelization. Lots of good information, inspiration and formation! Indeed, a very useful manual for the new evangelization.” — Ralph Martin, theologian, author, and president of Renewal Ministries.

Continued from Page 5

Asian Catholics, including Filipinos, who are gaining in numbers, Andrews said.

Capitalize on seasonal opportunity

It could be argued that the Catholic Church shines brighter than any others during the penitential seasons of Advent and Lent — times when Catholics naturally feel called to their faith-based roots. As a result, there’s perhaps no better time to reach out to fallen-away Catholics.

Back in the Diocese of Dallas, Sister Theresa, who has led efforts during the past five years to invite lapsed Catholics back to the Church, said that she is responding to the call of Dallas Bishop Kevin Farrell for “a grassroots, welcoming, hospitable approach to open our doors” — especially during the penitential and highly visible seasons of Advent and Lent — when “people are thinking about their faith and receiving the sacraments.”

To remind them of the season, Sister Theresa, with help from The Knights of Columbus and the Council of Catholic Women, purchased space on billboards beside highways throughout the diocese to announce to motorists: “Come Home! The Catholic Church Welcomes You!”

“We have banners in front of churches with the same message,” Sister Theresa said. “We know during (Advent and Lent) is when people are thinking about the good things in their life. We hope they feel good about their memories receiving the sacraments.”

Faith formation and empowerment of the laity

It may sound simple, but teaching the Faith and empowering the laity already invested in serving the Church can be an effective way to evangelize and retain Catholics who may otherwise drift away.

“Things like evangelism for adults and faith formation are critical to a church,” Andrews said. “You need to renew your relationship with Jesus Christ every day.”

The diocese has developed evangelical and adult faith formation groups as well as a pastoral juvenile ministry, which, through a partnership with the national fundraising organization Catholic Extension, is funding a staff position in the diocese for outreach to young Hispanic adults. The leadership programs in the San Bernardino diocese are producing catechists, youth ministers, directors of religious education and coordinators of sacramists, Andrews said.

The people who come to the classes are very committed to their faith and they infect others with their curiosity about their faith,” Matovina added.

“The Diocese of San Bernardino is blessed with so many people who strive to live their Catholic faith more deeply, to grow their knowledge and understanding of it, and to build their skills in ministry leadership for the good of the Church,” Bishop Barnes said in a statement to OSV. “We have worked through our many catechetical and formation programs to give our lay Catholics the tools they need to become leaders in their parish community. The more opportunities you give someone to serve their Church, the more alive and vibrant it will become. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, we have experienced this in our diocese.”

What they can find nowhere else

Finally, when it comes to winning fallen-away Catholics back from Protestant churches, there’s nothing more basic and more effective than relying simply on the beauty, richness and truth of the Faith.

Catholics who perhaps have drifted away “come back because they miss what the Catholic Church has — the sacramental aspect of our Church,” Sister Theresa said.

Because of this, Sister Theresa added that the “grass is always greener” mentality that lures Catholics away doesn’t always have staying power. “We oftentimes see people who leave the Catholic Church for a while and go to an evangelical church come back,” she added.

Once they’re back, though, the key is to get them to stay. This is where programs like the Landings International ministry comes into play. Run by the Paulist Fathers, and available at many Catholic parishes around the country and the world, Landings provides a “safe harbor” for inactive Catholics to re-explore the Faith from which they have drifted away.

In this setting, with the help of parish leadership, they can be reminded of the sacraments, the tenets of the Catholic Faith and the way that it leads to Christ and eternal life.

Joseph R. LaPlante writes from Rhode Island.
From Planned Parenthood to Zealous Pro-life Leader

“A riveting story! Offers important insights on the fight for life in the modern age.”
—Jennifer Fulwiler, Author, Something Other Than God

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—Donna-Marie Cooper O’Boyle, EWTN TV Host

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By Ramona Treviño with Roxane Salonen

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Ramona Treviño is a devoted wife and mother who, after her exodus from Planned Parenthood, became an international public speaker and prolife advocate, defending the sanctity of life. Roxane Salonen has worked in professional communications for over twenty years as an award-winning columnist, reporter, children’s author, and freelance writer.

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Vatican affirms the outspoken critic of El Salvador’s government was killed out of hatred for the Faith

By Barry Hudock

Bringing an end to one of the most vexing saint-related debates of the past half-century, Pope Francis formally has recognized the martyrdom of Archbishop Oscar Romero and set the stage for the slain archbishop’s beatification.

A date for the beatification has not been set, but it will take place in San Salvador, the capital of El Salvador, where Romero served as archbishop before his death.

Making the announcement at a Feb. 4 Vatican news conference, Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, postulator of Archbishop Romero’s cause, called him “a pastor who gave his life for his people” and said his beatification would be “an extraordinary gift for the entire Church.”

Paglia also announced, unexpectedly, the formal opening of the beatification cause of another Salvadoran priest, Father Rutilio Grande, who was a key figure in Romero’s own story.

Elevation to archbishop

Archbishop Oscar Romero was shot dead while celebrating Mass on March 24, 1980, by a right-wing death squad reportedly commissioned by the Salvadoran military. His death brought to an end his role in a dramatic and complex story that included strong elements of faith, social unrest and politics. But the bloody Salvadoran civil war that followed would not end for another 12 years.

When Romero was named archbishop of San Salvador in 1977, his country was already in turmoil. Salvadoran society was dominated by a small group of wealthy families who controlled almost all of the useful farmland, while most other citizens lived in grinding poverty. Efforts by peasants to promote land reform had been met with violent opposition by the government’s military regime.

Catholic priests and catechists who taught the common people about human dignity and God’s love for the poor were perceived as radical and subversive. Some were being kidnapped and killed by death squads supported by the military regime.

When Romero was named archbishop of San Salvador, many saw the move as favorable to the ruling class. He was studious and even-handed, maintaining good relations with many business leaders. But he also had a strong track record of caring for the poor among his flock. Whatever his stance at his installation, it certainly developed dramatically a month later, with the assassination of Father Grande, a priest of the archdiocese and longtime friend of Archbishop Romero.

Any reticence he might have had about speaking in defense of the poor and criticizing those who wielded control of Salvadoran society disappeared. The change has sometimes been called “Rutilio’s miracle.”

Speaking out

Father Grande was a pastor who helped form local communities of “laypeople” who met regularly to pray, read the Bible, celebrate Mass and discuss justice issues. He vocally challenged the repression of the poor by the nation’s elite. On March 12, 1977, he was assassinated by gunmen who fired upon a car he was driving, carrying several other people. Two of his passengers were also killed.

Father Grande’s death moved Archbishop Romero intensely.

Over the following three years, he preached frequently about the injustices that marked Salvadoran society. In homilies that were broadcast live and listened to attentively by huge numbers of people, he called the rich to conversion, reported human rights abuses and atrocities that happened week after week, and spoke of the presence of Jesus in the suffering of the Salvadoran people. In a personal letter, he asked President Jimmy Carter to end American support of the Salvadoran military.

Many saw in his words the influence of liberation theology, a controversial brand of theology. But there was no single version of liberation theology; some of it was perfectly consistent with Church teaching while other approaches were more problematic.

Archbishop Romero received death threats and, as his personal journal entries indicate, feared for his own life. But he refused to take what some thought would have been a more prudent approach. His killing came the day after a homily, also broadcast live, in which he spoke directly to the members of the Salvadoran military, insisting in the name of God that they refuse to follow orders that were against God’s law (see sidebar).

Path toward beatification

Many viewed Archbishop Romero as a martyr and venerated his memory from the moment of his death. But others, including some Vatican officials, were more hesitant about offering such recognition.

The reasons for this are complex and not always clear. Msgr. Rafael Urrutia, chancellor of the Archdiocese of San Salvador, told Our Sunday Visitor that officials were hesitant to beatify Archbishop Romero while those who had criticized were still alive and unwilling to offer any encouragement to supporters of liberation theology, which was under close Vatican scrutiny throughout the 1980s.

At the Feb. 4 news conference, Archbishop Paglia suggested that negative reports about Archbishop Romero the Vatican had received, some of which accused him of doctrinal errors, also hindered the beatification cause.

Still, Pope John Paul II, during a 1983 pastoral visit to El Salvador, insisted, against the will of the national government, on visiting Archbishop Romero’s grave at San Salvador’s cathedral, waiting outside for someone to unlock the door when he showed up. Pope Benedict XVI said publicly in 2007 that he thought Archbishop Romero was “worthy of beatification.” And in the Vatican news conference, Archbishop Paglia revealed that Pope Benedict had taken steps to move Archbishop Romero’s cause forward just prior to his resignation from the papacy in 2013.

Following the election of Pope Francis in March 2013, the progress of Archbishop Romero’s cause picked up steam. Hours after a meeting with the pope a month after his election, Archbishop Paglia commented in a homily, “Today ... the cause for the beatification of Archbishop Romero was unblocked.”

On Jan. 8, a theological commission of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints voted unanimously that Archbishop Romero’s killing had been carried out “in odium fidei,” that is, out of hatred for the Faith, a key element for official recognition by the Church as a martyr. Pope Francis approved the recognition Feb. 3, and the news conference came the following day.

“Romero was a sort of proto-martyr, a first martyr among the new martyrs of our time,” Paglia said at the briefing. “Romero obviously chose to live the Faith of the Church as it flowed from Vatican II, attending to peace and justice and the truth of the Gospel.”

Paglia also noted the consistency of Archbishop Romero’s witness with Pope Francis’ insistence for “a Church that is poor and for the poor.” With his coming beatification, Archbishop Romero will stand as a more prominent example of what it can mean to respond to such a call.

Barry Hudock is the author of “Struggle, Condemnation, Vindication: John Courtney Murray’s Journey toward Vatican II” (Liturgical Press, $19.95).
The role of secularism in society, the Church

Philosopher Charles Taylor poses the question: How can we live together in the most human way?

By Michael Swan

Fifty years after the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church still has some heavy thinking to do. Not surprisingly, Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi is eager to do it. The polymath president of the Pontifical Council for Culture has organized a conference at the Pontifical Gregorian University with participation of the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, to discuss secularism. The conference has the grand title, "Renewing the Church In a Secular Age: Holistic Dialogue and Kenotic Vision." Among the Catholic intellectuals participating is the Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor of McGill University. Taylor is the author of "The Secular Age," winner of the Kyoto Prize and the Templeton Prize and a member of the Order of Canada. Taylor spoke with Our Sunday Visitor in January, just days after the Charlie Hebdo massacre in Paris.

Our Sunday Visitor: Europe has been shaken by the recent events in Paris. Freedom of speech, the obligations of citizenship and more are being debated in the wake of the Charlie Hebdo murders. What does Charlie Hebdo teach us about secularism?

Charles Taylor: I have to preface this by saying I have always been strongly critical of Charlie Hebdo for, for instance, reproducing the Danish cartoons years ago, and so on. The question is why? There are two reasons we have to think about here. Number one is a human consideration of the predicament of minorities who are dumped on in their societies — dumped on, excluded and so on.

The Danish (cartoons of Muhammad) case is absurd. The 100,000 very much marginalized Muslims (in Holland) felt terrible when they were given this kind of treatment. This is not to say there should be a law forbidding it. That gets us into all sorts of problems. I'm just saying that you're justified in saying to people who published those Danish cartoons, "that was a bad move."

The other consideration is prudential. If you are going to contribute to the sense of marginalization of these people (Europe's Muslim minority), you're going to contribute to a situation that could produce what happened (in Paris). This kind of marginalization is one in which young kids growing up feel very strongly. Then somebody comes along from one of these terrible organizations saying "You've got to stand up, and it is the only thing a real person, a real man, can do." The terrible organizations are going to have some success.

I would not say this in Paris today, but Charlie Hebdo helped contribute to a situation — not the cause of it, but they were part of the situation — where this kind of recruitment of the kind of people who came in and did that shooting becomes easier. I don't think the excuse that, "Well, we caricature the pope and we caricature that," really cuts it.

OSV: Doesn't the secular state, the modern project of secularism, depend on a neutral public space where our outrage and self-defense and our opinions, offensive or otherwise, are confined to talking?

Taylor: It does presuppose public space, but that's all it presupposes. Logically, it presupposes neutral public space. But you always have to think in politics of what the conditions are in which something can actually be a success. To have a neutral public space where people are snarling at each other, wondering how they can get the better of each other — if you have that kind of public space, you may have something that logically fulfills the requirements of secularism, but you know it's headed for the wrecking yard if those are the conditions of your society.

OSV: When you're writing about secularism, you say it is built upon a sense of individualism, that of a sense of who we are as individuals that really arose with the modern era. You say that in modern society, we work out who we are for ourselves. I wonder whether the violence and extremism we have seen in the Muslim world that is reacting against Western secularism, is that really a rejection of this kind of individualism?

Taylor: Just what are people like bin Laden reacting to? What do they deny? There is a complex discourse here. What they're saying is that, "There is this alien mode of living — which is called democracy, liberalism, whatever — which is being foisted on us. They (the West) are trying to make us over to be like them. We have to fight back against this."

That is a very identity-centered argument. They're really saying, "Our identity is being attacked."

On another level, of course, they claim their identity connects with some objective truth about the universe, about God and so on. The really powerful rhetoric is the claim that they believe in God as portrayed in the Quran, etc. But the really operative mobilization is an idea very much like any nationalistic mobilization. It's very powerful. (It says) "We are being screwed over by these awful people who are trying to make us over, and we have to fight back. It's gotten so bad that we have to fight back with these extreme means."

If you look at the history of the Arab world, it makes you think. This feeling of being attacked and colonized and controlled by the West was first of all taken up in a purely nationalistic way by Arab nationalists under (Gamal Abdel) Nasser, the Baath Parties and so on. Their failure, or perceived failure, to get their societies moving led to a shift where the already existing Muslim Brotherhood movements began to take on more and more importance. In the case of Syria, it was savagely persecuted by the older (Hafez) al-Assad and so on. In the case of Israel, you could very easily see how the Palestine Liberation Organization lost ground for a while to Hamas. And Hamas was originally a branch of the Muslim Brotherhood. So you have a dynamic here which is an identity dynamic, capable of being coded in different ways (either religiously or in nationalist politics).

The whole phenomenon is not centrally about people objectively reading the Quran. There's something else going on here — something else that violates one of the basic conditions of secularism. I'm talking about political conditions now, and existential conditions, meaning respect for the other, and real knowledge about the other, and an ability to open up and learn about other people something you didn't already know. That of course is totally rejected. As long as that is rejected, you don't have a clear path to a democratic society.

OSV: It wasn't so long ago that the French ideal of secular, democratic society — what the French call laïcité — was seen by the Church as the worst threat to Christian life there could be. And now we have, in Pope Benedict XVI's final statement out of the extraordinary synod on the Middle East, this endorsement of democracy and secularism as the one thing that can save us — the only way to guarantee Christian survival in the Middle East. What has happened in Catholicism that we now are holding a conference in Rome to talk about secularism and what we might contribute to a secular state?

Taylor: The world has very deeply changed, whether you take as your baseline as 1800, or 1869 and the Syllabus of Errors, or you take as your baseline the 1930s, or even almost yesterday. The world has changed.

There is this de facto plurality of spiritual positions or antispirtual positions or the whole mix of them. We have to ask the question, "How can we live together in the most human way?" That is a question that someone who is moved by the Gospel really has very powerful motivations to ask.

What really is necessary, I think, is breaking out of what I want to call the Christendom mode. That is, we the people from Latin Christendom, which includes Europe and derived peoples — Protestant, Catholic and so on — we all emerged from the centuries-long development of Christendom. That is a whole civilization, a society with art and culture and political forms, which are seen to be derived from the Gospel — supposedly, right? The idea that this is the way one has to go if one is Christian, and that the move toward fulfilling the kingdom of God is extending this more and more through the missions and so on, has been really badly damaged by the growth of our very plural society. Pluralism is seemingly unstoppable.

We have to rethink the whole position of the Church in our time. We have to think of it more in analogy of what it is like in India and Africa and China, where there isn't the remotest possibility of these societies being made over on the model of Constantine.

The voice of Church has to be one voice, de facto one voice, among many. It has to live with others in a way that is consistent with the Gospel, which I think does not include taking over at gunpoint and forcing people into positions they can't accept and so on.

We have to rethink also from the Church's point of view what
it means to live in a world where there's something like this notion of authenticity, where broadly people are seeking to have intuitions of the spiritual life that speak to them. Those kinds of people have to also have their place in the Church if they have the sense that “Yes, something speaks to me in the Gospel” and they want to develop this. They ought to have their place in the Church as well.

In other words, the Church can't simply be an ideologial bastion where a whole set of decisions have already been made about what human life is about, and unless you accept those, you're not really part of us. That has got to change. The penny has dropped about this in various parts of the Vatican. Of course, Francis helps tremendously.

OSV: There are plenty of Catholics who say, “Wait a minute, I like Christendom. Christendom was good for me. It confirmed my sense of a Church that was real in the world, that had something real to say, where there were real boundaries and a sense of who we are.” Are these people who wish for the reassertion of an old identity, are they totally deluded? Do they know nothing?

Taylor: No. There’s a real value in that. Look at what it is to be a Christian at any time in the world. We’re all very powerfully inspired by some elements of our past. Great saints like Francis of Assisi or moments when the Christian community has really been at its best, or moments when, for instance, we campaigned against slavery, which was really very much a Christian and mainly Protestant-dominated campaign back there in the UK. We’re all inspired by the long past. But it may not simply be the past in our own civilization. I’m also very inspired by reading the Syrian Fathers. I’m inspired, frankly, by certain Eastern Orthodox thinkers. We all have that. There are some fine, great moments in the Christendom story that can’t be denied.

The only thing I’m saying is that it can’t be the model for today. I have a great deal of sympathy for people who really are living on in this sense of inspiration from the past. The really big challenge is how people who have that kind of inspiration and people who I’m calling the seekers today can live together without attacking each other, condemning each other, blaming each other and so on.

I don’t have a formula. But it can only come about through real exchange, where people bring up what they find very moving in the images they have of the Church, where we talk about it. It’s very hard to see how, but the aim of being able to live together is clearly an aim we’ve got to have.

OSV: This aim of living together, both as a Church and as a society, does it require us to make common cause with secularism?

Taylor: In some respects it does. We want to nourish the kinds of relations I was talking about earlier that actually sustain secularism, as against simply thinking about principles. We can only get there if we have a kind of exchange across the boundary of believers and unbelievers — a dialogue in which we nourish a sense of respect and understanding for what is admirable in the other’s position, even if we reject certain of its elements. Developing that culture of exchange and openness is an interest we have in common with our secular or atheist compatriots. Just like within the Church, we both have an interest in encouraging this kind of culture of exchange between these two tendencies. There’s a very strong common interest here.

OSV: Cardinal Ravasi, in his title for this conference, inserts the word “kenotic.” He speaks of the “kenotic vision.” Of course by kenosis we mean Christ’s self-emptying. It’s been held up through history as an ideal for the Christian life, that we must empty ourselves. Does that self-emptying teach us something about how to live in a plural society?

Taylor: I mean yes, definitely. One of the things people of Christian faith can contribute to our (society) is this kenotic orientation, which can foster ways of being, of reaching out, that really will disarm hatred and distrust and deeply impress other people. Again, Francis is the example.

OSV: Does the Church need to pronounce itself on secularism? Or can we just sit back and let society work it out for itself?

Taylor: No. If we feel that the proper Gospel-inspired way of living with our compatriots is this kind of regime we’re talking about, where no particular position owns the government and where we are also not living in ghettos but are trying to understand each other, then no. We ought to say what we believe.

OSV: To get back to the events in Paris, can violence simply derail all that? Can it make it really impossible to talk about a tolerant, pluralist society if people are shooting each other?

Taylor: Yes. It makes it impossible to realize it, because what I said about Charlie Hebdo contributing to the kind of climate where this kind of thing happens is true in shades of the reaction. Because now, after everybody saying “Je Suis Charlie” and so on, they’ve become martyrs in a way. And I understand why. It’s terrible what happened to them. Absolutely terrible. Nobody deserves that. On the other hand, unless really big work is done by political leadership and spiritual leadership here, it could lead to more targeting of Muslims.

OSV: At the conference in Rome, what do you expect? What do you hope comes out of that?

Taylor: I just hope that we can get a better understanding of each other. The group that’s going is a very impressive group of Catholic intellectuals.

OSV: Is this conference really just going to reiterate things saying for the last half-century? We’re just going to reiterate things that? On the other hand, unless leadership here, it could lead to more targeting of Muslims.

Taylor: We need something more than this. This whole agenda — bringing the two tendencies together, helping them to live together — is something that has to be a major goal of the magisterium. It’s not just a few Catholic intellectuals. So if we could help that to come about in some way, that would be a very great forward step. But of course, it’s not the only one.

OSV: There was this whole battle in Europe about the constitution of the European Union not mentioning Christianity. That debate was waged on a very high level, with Pope Benedict XVI taking a strong stand.

Is there a legitimate role for a set of thoughts that says excessive secularism, secularism that rejects God, that rejects religious thought, is an encroachment? Is it legitimate to be worried by secularism that rejects religion?

Taylor: Only if that kind of secularism makes a bid to take over the state, or the running of society. That is a kind of laïcité that is just as unacceptable as the established Church would be.

OSV: I think many of the people who write letters to the editor decrying secularism, they’re reacting against intellectuals who have dominated public debate and can tell them what is acceptable thought and what is not. They complain about elites. Are those people legitimately worried about people like you?

Taylor: They probably are worried about people like me. I don’t see the legitimacy. We are actually gradually winning that kind of debate in the general public.

You know, 20 years ago, 30 years ago, there was a secularization thesis. It said that modernity naturally and inevitably brought about unbelief and the decline of religion. And now just about nobody believes that. People still believe. Some are very unhappy about that, so you have the angry reaction of people like (Richard) Dawkins because they confidently expected that to happen. They’re understandably very put out that it didn’t.

The idea that religion is all a thing of the past and so on, you hear that less and less.

OSV: Our readers are not philosophy professors. Is there a way of translating this conference that talks about holistic dialogue and kenotic vision and brings in all of these full professors from universities around the world? Is there a way of making this matter to ordinary Catholics?

Taylor: I think there is. I think Francis is doing that.
Interfaith small groups strengthen marriage

Grassroots CanaVox movement brings advocates of traditional marriage together for education, support

By Susan Klemond

Looking for a way to build a strong marriage culture, in 2013 eight moms created a forum for discussion on marriage and related topics that has people talking — and taking action — all over the country. CanaVox seeks to educate people on what marriage between a man and woman is and how it works. It fosters small groups nationwide that read and discuss articles on topics including marriage and same-sex attraction, cohabitation, pornography and third-party reproduction. Participants in 14 states are sharing what they’re learning with their friends, families and communities.

The organization got its name from combining Cana, (as in, the biblical wedding feast) and vox, the Latin word for voice. “We’re hoping to resuscitate and revive people who already believe in marriage and give them something to do,” said Alana Newman, a CanaVox leader who lives in Lake Charles, Louisiana, with her family and hosts a reading group. “We’re not trying to talk the opposing team into changing their mind. We’re trying to build community around people who already know what marriage is but maybe they’re just feeling a little timid and beat down. We’re trying to put new oxygen into them and get them off their couches perhaps once a month.”

Save haven

Leaders say the groups are a safe place to share views now unpopular in the broader culture. CanaVox is a grassroots movement for those who might be too introverted to attend a public marriage event, said David Hunsaker, a Mormon who lives with his family in Salt Lake City and helps start CanaVox groups in western states. “A lot of people who are shy and would not come to a rally will come to a meeting and they’ll listen, their hearts will be changed and they’ll choose to get involved in their own way because they have a safe environment to talk about these complex issues.”

CanaVox gives participants a chance to talk about marriage topics with people they trust where it’s safe for their arguments to be heard, Newman said. “We want to make people feel safe when they’re discussing topics like sex, and pornography is one of the topics,” she said. “We want people to feel safe when they’re discussing it, and sometimes when you have a group of people, there’s conflict with that, there’s tension and discomfort.”

The goal is to open doors for conversation, said Ellen Connolly, a leader who is Catholic and lives with her family in Falls Church, Virginia. “A lot of people don’t have a venue in which they can talk freely about these issues.”

Marriage is key

CanaVox focuses on marriage because it’s the Lynchpin for everything, Connolly said. Marriage affects many issues, agreed Katy Faust, a leader who hosts a small group in her Seattle home. “The reason why I’m such a huge marriage advocate is because I care about homelessness, child trafficking, early sexual activity, poverty and high incarceration rates. Marriage is sort of the silver bullet that, if you can strengthen the marriage culture, you are going to take such a huge bite out of all these other social ills.”

Intrinsic to CanaVox’s mission are the rights of children who should not be treated as commodities, said Faust, who is Baptist. “We have looked at this from a religious liberty standpoint in the past, but the piece to me that gets lost sometimes in the debate is the rights of children.”

CanaVox appeals to many people, including moms who can’t work full-time but want to contribute on these issues, Newman said. “You have a network in your community so that when something comes up, like a piece of legislation, you’ve got 20 people who are willing to do something right then and right there.” Connolly said one reason she wants to understand CanaVox topics is so she can then help form her children’s character. “I want my kids to be fluent in each of these languages, these topics, so their character is formed not in running from these issues but being fully engaged in them so they’re well versed in what it takes to be a good person and member of society.”

Diverse leaders

With natural law regarding marriage and family as their common denominator, CanaVox leaders are Catholic, Protestant, Mormon and Muslim.

CanaVox leaders’ diversity contributes to finding more of the truth, said Newman, a Catholic who started the website AnonymousUs.org, which features the stories of people who have experiences of third-party reproduction. “In finding the truth, diversity is key because ... we’ll only succeed about finding the truth about our common humanity when we source from diverse group of people.”

It’s a delightful surprise, to come together on core truth, said Charles Steffes, a Mormon who said his faith is one reason he is leading a small group. “It’s exciting to see people of different faiths coming together on an issue as critical as the family.”

CanaVox “lets us share some of the ideas and evidences and support of marriage,” said Steffes, who leads a group in Holladay, Utah. “It helps us review how to share those evidences with our friends and family that may not have the same viewpoint on marriage.”

It’s important to give people tools to talk about marriage, Hunsaker said. “We had a lot of friends who believed in marriage but did not have the tools to defend it, and so a lot of them were starting to question their beliefs on marriage and their stance on the issue of man—woman marriage.”

Secular arguments

Small group participants learn about evidence for marriage by reading academic articles paired with related personal stories, Connolly said. “Having gone through or read personal testimonies, it just puts a beating heart to it,” she said. “So it’s not just this black-and-white statistic or study; you know how to engage and lovingly communicate with people who, whether you know it or not, are going through or have gone through these issues.”

CanaVox leaders and participants are also finding secular arguments to defend marriage and other topics. “Because God said so is not so effective,” Faust said. “Whether or not you serve God and love him, this is a statistical and biological reality that kids come from a man and woman and do best when they’re raised by a man and woman.”

Many millennials haven’t heard arguments on marriage, and Hunsaker, a millennial, is glad to have scientific explanations to share with friends. “We are constantly bombarded by messages from the other side, particularly that marriage is only a religious institution and there’s no way to defend marriage outside of a religious conversation. For my generation to hear that there actually are secular, scientific, philosophical answers to the reason behind marriage, it’s really exciting, and it finally gives us a way to talk with our friends.”

One friendship and in-depth discussion at a time, CanaVox leaders hope to reach hearts and minds on key marriage and family issues. “If we can help people establish a successful marriage, then we’ve been successful,” Hunsaker said. “Even if the law doesn’t change, we can help individuals change their own attitudes about marriage, and then we’ve been successful.”

Susan Klemond writes from Minnesota.
In song, we pray from the heart

Throughout the centuries, singing has been a cherished way to raise up God’s glory to heaven

By Donald DeMarco

“Singing lightens weariness in solitary tasks,” wrote St. Isidore in his Etymologies. This very human activity seems to be as natural and rejuvenating as breathing. This is evident in children who happily go about singing long before they know a song to sing or any lyrics to accompany it. “The only thing better than singing,” said songstress Ella Fitzgerald, “is more singing.” For Andrea Bocelli, “Singing provides a true sense of lightheartedness. If I sing alone, I feel wonderful. It’s freedom.” And, as someone once said, “Singing is the celebration of oxygen.”

“I sing of arms and the man,” (’arma virumque cano,” in Latin) is how Virgil opened “The Aeneid, Book I.” Many public events have opened with Samuel Francis Smith’s immortal words, “My country ‘tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing.” In 1932, George Gershwin’s “Of Thee I Sing” was the celebration of oxygen. Someone once said, “Singing is prayer. And if Thomas Day’s book, “Why Catholics Can’t Sing,” is anywhere close to the mark, Catholics could do a better job of melding their prayers to song. Psalm 95:1-2 states, “Come, let us sing joyfully to the Lord ... Let us come before him with a song of praise, joyfully sing our psalms.” Psalm 98:1 reads, “Sing a new song to the Lord, for he has done marvelous deeds.”

A phrase attributed to St. Augustine — “He who sings prays twice” — has taken on the status of a timeless adage. The Latin has an internal rhyme that lends it a certain musical charm: “Qui bene cantat bis orat.” The bishop of Hippo may have said this, but it is nowhere to be found in his written words that have come down to us. He did, nonetheless, link prayer to singing. “Singing belongs to one who loves,” he wrote. In addition, he stated that “He who sings praise, does not only praise, but also praises joyfully; he who sings praise, not only sings, but also loves him whom he is singing.”

Christmas carols would be comparatively flat if they were merely recited and not sung. When people speak, they usually speak one person at a time. When they sing, they can sing in multitudes. We might say, “He who sings in a choir, sings thrice.” The human heart bears a mystery that is greater than its possessor. When speech is elevated to song, more of our heart is involved, and that expression can have a special affinity with prayer. Music arises from the depths of the human heart. It is our answer to God’s benevolence, our joyful and loving response to the Good News.

We sing because our hearts are bursting with joy, and mere speech cannot do justice to what we feel. We raise our voices in song to God in thanks for all he has given us.

But we may also sing because we need to rise above the difficulties of life. In this regard, St. Augustine gives us some practical advice about singing, in one of his sermons. “Let us sing alleluia here on earth, while we are still anxious and worrying, so that we may one day be able to sing it in heaven, without any worry or care” (Sermo 256). Bach, Handel and Mozart took this advice to heart. We sing because we need to allay our fears; we sing because we need to rehearse our role in the heavenly choir.

Donald DeMarco is a Senior Fellow of Human Life International.
OPENING THE WORD | CARL OLSON

The joy of Lent

As we prepare for Christ’s ultimate sacrifice on the cross, let us have an ‘attitude of thanksgiving’

“D”uring the season of Lent,” Pope Francis said on Ash Wednesday last year, “the Church issues two important invitations: to have a greater awareness of the redemptive work of Christ; and to live out one’s baptism with deeper commitment.” Contemplating the gift of salvation, the Holy Father explained, requires “an attitude of thanksgiving to God for all that he has given us…”

We are often tempted — and I use that word on purpose — to approach Lent with an attitude of dread, resignation and a sort of sour piety. On the surface, this makes sense, as Lent is a sort of spiritual boot camp in which we break from our usual routine, distance ourselves from the world in certain ways and seek to restore spiritual rigor. But if we do not approach Lent with joy, rooted in our baptism, the season will not yield nearly as much fruit as it should.

“The Church welcomes the Lenten spring with a spirit of exultation,” declared Orthodox theologian Father Thomas Hopko in “The Lenten Spring” (St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1998). “She greets the time of repentance, distance ourselves from the world in certain ways and seek to restore spiritual rigor. But if we do not approach Lent with joy, rooted in our baptism, the season will not yield nearly as much fruit as it should.

Lent,” Pope Francis during the season of Lent, “is the time of the desert. Jesus prayed and fasted; that is, he communed with the Father in the wilderness, as he did throughout his public ministry (Mk 1:35). He abstained from earthly food so he might focus on heavenly food. And that food, as Jesus told the disciples after he had spoken to the Samaritan woman, “is to do the will of the one who sent me and to finish his work” (Jn 4:34).

Noah was saved through the flood because he trusted in God’s promise, choosing holiness over earthly pleasures. Jesus brought salvation by choosing the Father’s will over the devil’s lies. He suffered for sins, St. Peter taught, that he might lead us to God. Noah was “saved through water,” Peter writes, “This prefigured baptism, which saves you now.” The waters of baptism wash away sin and also purify us through the power of the Holy Spirit. The desert of Lent challenges our attachment to this world and also provides us true food, preparing us for the life to come. That is cause for joy and exultation!

Carl E. Olson is the editor of Catholic World Report.

VOCATION

The gift of single Catholics

Unmarried members of the Church often feel their vocation is overlooked — but they have much to offer as they live out their faith

By Marge Fenelon

After giving a homily on vocations, Father Jeffrey Kirby, vicar of vocations for the Diocese of Charleston, South Carolina, was approached by a member of the congregation. The woman was grateful for Father Kirby’s inspiration but was disappointed by one thing. “Father, you missed my vocation,” she told him. She was single.

Father Kirby took the woman’s words to heart and made certain never to omit the single vocation again in one of his talks. In fact, he began using the phrase “single for the Lord” in his reference to single Catholics, and that term has caught on and spread to other dioceses.

“There are men and women (who are) called to a particular mission in the single state,” he said. “They answer the universal call to holiness just as much as the other states of life. It’s a misconception that if there are no vows, there’s no vocation.”

**Transient and permanent**

Although being a single Catholic is nothing new to the Church, Father Kirby points out that the rise of the ecclesial movements in the years since the Second Vatican Council has in turn given rise to a greater presence of Catholics who make a promise to Christ to remain single and serve the Church in that capacity.

“When we talk about single Catholics, we must distinguish between transient and permanent single Catholics,” Father Kirby said. “Transient single Catholics are those who are single because they are still searching for their spouse or are discerning the religious life or ordination. Permanent single Catholics are those who are single by choice, and this can include those of same-sex attraction living chastely.”

Although distinguishing between transient and permanent singles is helpful, Emily Burds, director of youth and young adult ministries at the Basilica of St. Josephat in Milwaukee, cautions against labeling or pigeonholing them into stereotypes. “I think it’s very important to recognize that we are all human beings, living, loving and journeying through this life together, regardless of the vocation we’ve chosen,” she said. “Those who are Catholic and single are immensely valuable. What’s beautiful is that a person who is single can bring their discernment, their seeking, their longings into the Church.”

**Valuable members**

While their state of life often allows them more time and energy to contribute to parish life, their availability and experience offer much more. Single Catholics are a rich resource for leadership, ideas and community building. Their work experience and interests give them expertise in areas that are valuable to the entire parish.

“They may have a specialty or craft that they are an expert at that can be of benefit to the parish or diocese,” said Jennifer Brown, coordinator of evangelization and discipleship for Immaculate Heart of Mary parish in Lansing, Michigan. “That can be anything from being a lawyer to woodworking or speaking on topics of faith or training others in public speaking.”

Additionally, Brown cites Catholic singles’ contagious excitement for the Faith as an asset. “Their energy and excitement for the Faith, especially if they are on the younger side, is valuable. They want to grow, and they want to love what the Church loves and they want to learn how to bring it to others!”

Single Catholics have many gifts for the Church, but one capacity in which they excel is building community.

Pete Burak, director of the young adult ministry “i.d.9:16,” which stands for Intentional Disciples (1 Corinthians) 9:16, sees this on a
The focus for singles seems to be on religious vocations, and if that isn’t a possibility, there seems to be little else (of) use for us,” said Katrina Ebersole, a real estate leasing agent from Charlotte, North Carolina. “There are single groups, but they are targeted toward younger, college-aged kids who are vocation-picking. For the older singles, there’s nothing. Everyone assumes we’re married or divorced, which, in that case, we are (treated as) contagious.”

Melissa Guerrero, a novelist from Los Angeles, feels similarly. “I think it’s wonderful that the Church shows us the beauty of vocations such as religious life and marriage, but not all of us fall into either of those categories all the time,” she said. “There are some people who will become consecrated singles and some who have discerned vocations and feel called to marriage but have yet to meet their future spouse. For this group of people, which I fall into, I feel like there’s not much done to help us continually grow in our spiritual lives. I would even venture to say that we’re amongst one of the most unintentionally neglected groups.”

Because of this, singles can be hesitant to reach out to others in the parish.

“We can often think the solution is making singles feel more welcome when they come, but the main issue is going out to them and inviting them to come,” said Washington, D.C.-based Legionaire Father Matthew Schneider. “The Church needs to go out to singles instead of waiting for them to come to the Church. I think that the way that parishes can make singles who do come feel welcome is by welcoming them. This goes beyond saying ‘hello’ at the front door to actually inviting them to take part and having something for them to do — either with other singles or with other parishioners.”

**Take action**

Part of the reason singles might feel left out is that, for centuries, the Church’s focus has been on families, according to Dave Cervini, president and founder of New York Social Network, which organizes events for singles in New York City.

“Today there are more single people in the Church because people are waiting longer to get married or have been divorced,” he said. “Naturally, they may feel like an outsider because they feel like mostly families or couples are doing things with the Church’s already established programs.”

Cervini pointed out that single Catholics who feel isolated should search for parish programs that have established programs for singles or are open to starting something themselves.

“The biggest way that a single person can serve the Church is to find ways to bring together other Catholic singles who feel the way they do so that in years to come the single community will be just as established as the culture that already exists,” he said.

Mary Rose Verret, director of marriage and family life for St. Joseph Parish in Cecilia, Louisiana, is married with three children. But she remembers what it was like to be a Catholic single looking for the best way to serve the Church.

“God gave me so many amazing opportunities to serve him in others while I was single,” she said.

“Too often I was focused on the future, overlooking the needs of the people around me. The times I felt most fulfilled as a single person were the times that I forgot about myself, my plans, my future, my needs, my dreams, and placed myself at the service of others.”

Single Catholics who do feel overlooked should be bold and approach their pastor about their needs. This alerts the pastor to the fact that they don’t feel valued so the parish can look harder at how to correct the situation.

Father Kirby cites the example of a single woman who approached him after his homily on vocations.

“Step up,” said Father Kirby. “Be bold and take action. Be vocal. Tell your pastor, ‘This is what we need as single Catholics,’ and then offer your help to make that happen.”

_Marge Fenelon writes from Wisconsin._
Wanted: ‘Fifty Shades’ of shame

Since the release of E.L. James’ “Fifty Shades of Grey” in 2011, Catholic writers, organizations and newspapers, including this one, have been speaking out against the dangers of the wildly popular franchise, especially when it comes to normalizing — and even celebrating — sadomasochistic behavior.

Wrote OSV columnist Teresa Tomeo in 2012: “I don’t know what’s worse, the fact that the desensitization in our culture is so strong that we can’t recognize pure unadulterated porn when we see it, or the fact that so many Christians … are among those going ga-ga over the books.

According to the studio, the film has 20 minutes of sex, and one presumes the bondage and violence are included within the count. Government officials in Malaysia have opted to ban the film, citing it as more pornography than feature film.

Yet in the United States, before the movie was released on Valentine’s Day weekend (an irony in itself), presales were reported at being through the roof, with the highest numbers coming from the conservative South. The movie trailer alone has been viewed more than 51 million times on YouTube.

And so we ask: Where is our shame? Millions of people are lining up to watch a depiction of sexual bondage and violence that once could only be viewed by slinking into a XXX video store. Now it’s celebrated. Encouraged. Made into an outing for group viewing. Where is our shame?

In 2013, Pope Francis called shame a “true Christian virtue.” What a shame that more of us can’t embrace it.

We are well into Lent. Yet there is a house just a few streets away where the lighted tree still winks proudly from the living room window at night, like the leg lamp from Jean Shepherd’s “A Christmas Story.” You got to admit people who won’t give up the ghost.

That said, we are at the point in southwestern Pennsylvania where we have lost all sense of humor about winter even when grateful to have been spared the big New England Blizzard(s). There is no more celebration of the season here, no oohing over pristine snow-whitened fields, no chestnuts roasting on an open fire. Just a string of unending gray days, moist with a sullen snow or sleet-cold drizzle. Frosty is dead and gone.

The last month of winter is suited for Lent, just as early spring belongs to Easter. It reminds us how the liturgical year and the seasons weave together. They are common to each other. It is the miracle of creation, the unity of faith and nature. It is a reminder, too, of how the forced secularism of our time is so jarring to that nature. It is not our world. It is not who we are.

In the wake of the Charlie Hebdo tragedy and the terrorist attacks that left 17 dead, France is duty responding with — what else? — one of its periodic secularization campaigns. According to a New York Times report, the French government is planning to spend the equivalent of $250 million over the next three years on new measures in French schools aimed at reinforcing secularism.

“The teachers are to receive new training” in secularism, the Times reported. All they need is Bogie and Bergman.

The current French socialist government is particularly insensitive to the century-old heritage of “laïcité.” Since legislated in 1905 during France’s Third Republic, “laïcité” excludes religion — in spirit, if not always in letter or judicial interpretation — from any active role in French public life.

The purpose of “laïcité” in France when aggressively pursued is to relegate religion to a purely private affair, never mentioned or referred to in the established secular state and culture. Historically centered on the Catholic Church, in recent years this aggressive secularization has been aimed primarily at the Muslim immigrant community that now makes up roughly 10 percent of the French population.

About two-thirds of the French population is identified as Catholic, though it is estimated that fewer than one in 10 practice the Faith outside of baptisms, weddings and funerals. Fully 40 percent of the population claims no faith at all.

So the “laïcité” propaganda campaign has had its successes in France over the years. And there are not a few in the United States that would want to import French “laïcité” to our shores. With a vengeance.

Their faith is in secularism, and they wouldn’t mind imposing their religion on the rest of us — everything from declaring the traditional definition of marriage illegal to banning public religious imagery and exciting religious speech from the schoolhouse.

But secularism still has a tough time gaining traction here outside of court mandates. Because it is contrary to what comes naturally to us. All things of nature are sacred and holy in faith.

“Cold and chill, bless the Lord; / praise and exalt him above all forever … / Frost and chill, bless the Lord; / praise and exalt him above all forever. / Hoarfrost and snow, bless the Lord; / praise and exalt him above all forever” (Dn 3:67, 69-70).

When all is said and done, winter isn’t so bad.
Atrocities at Auschwitz

Memories of visiting the German concentration camp are still haunting — and still quite relevant

Sometimes something inside you tells you not to do this or that. I had this feeling a while ago when I visited Auschwitz, the infamous German concentration camp outside Krakow, Poland.

This feeling came upon me when the guide led me into what had been the administration building. In this building, among other things, the authorities dealt with prisoners accused of some infraction or another. The guide showed me the rooms that had been used to interrogate prisoners, usually with torture involved.

And then he showed me the steps to the basement. There I really hesitated, but anyway, I went down the steps. On the landing, my reluctance was confirmed. A man was sitting on the steps weeping.

The basement was the place where incorrigible prisoners were kept, and where executions by starvation occurred. In one room, St. Maximilian Kolbe, of course, was a Polish Catholic. The overwhelming majority of victims, however, were Jews.

I always tell people who downplay the horror of the Holocaust that reports are not at all exaggerated. Few that I have seen truly succeed in capturing the unbelievable inhumanity, the utter mercilessness, that were underway.

Citing other atrocities, calling to mind the terrors brought upon other ethnic groups, such as the Poles, and even noting the millions of abortions, have value in exposing how diabolical human actions can be, but they cannot diminish the depravity of the onslaught against the Jews that was all across Europe 70 years ago.

Remember, also, Auschwitz was only one part of an entire network of similar operations, and the camps, of course, were merely the most atrocious examples of the persecution of Jews at that period.

Precisely because of that period, but also because of the long history of outrages being visited upon Jews, the incident at the kosher grocery in Paris recently has to be seen not as isolated but a fearful repetition of evil. Anti-Semitism lives.

I have returned to Auschwitz several times since that first horrible visit. I go back to learn and to think and to pray. Never again, I hope.

Mgr. Owen F. Campion is OSV’s associate publisher.

Parental guidance
Re: “Celebrating National Catholic Schools Week” (Letters to the Editor, Feb. 8).

In response to those who praise the excellence of Catholic education, I surely agree, being a product of it for 18 years. The most influential people in my life are two parish priests, a Jesuit priest and a Sister of Providence nun, for whom I continually thank God.

However, the primary source of transmitting the Faith to me is unequivocally my parents, neither of whom had a high school diploma nor any formal Catholic education. They transmitted the Faith by manifesting in their lives the fruits of the Holy Spirit, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

As good as Catholic schools are, they should be a supplement to, not a substitute for, the transmittal of the Faith by parents. It is much easier for children, or anyone, to understand and accept the truth of our Faith when they have experienced its beauty and goodness in Christianity, preferably their parents.

— Otto M. Bonahoom
via email

Perception of Islam
Re: “The nature of Islam: Peace or violence” (News Analysis, Feb. 1).

I am dismayed by the article’s shallowness, giving space to such un-Christ-like opinions as the most extreme example in the second to last paragraph by Robert Spernec.

Did Christ ever say God was “reasonnable” by human standards? Did he ever suggest we “act in whatever possible way to defend our threatened brethren”? Isn’t that what Christianity was doing in the Inquisition, in much of the colonization of non-Europe, in the gas chambers of WWII? If we were called to empty our pockets for our brethren instead of send our soldiers, would we do it? If we were to cease “gaining from oppression” by buying cheap material goods from countries that don’t deal fairly with their people, we might see hope, truth.

I’m disappointed in Our Sunday Visitor for giving voice to the lie and hate already too rampant in the American media.

— Valerie Sifleet
via email

Religious freedom
Re: “Getting battle ready” (Catholic Journal, Feb. 8).

There is much written in Scripture about coming persecution; perhaps those times are at hand.

Maybe it’s true for the Christian community to consider a solidarity against the evil of apathy and indifference, and may God forbid that we have to ever make the choice of pledging allegiance to America or following Jesus Christ.

Warning signs on cigarette packs has not deterred smoking; desegregation has not cured racism; and forbidding our God from government will not stop him from blessing America, no matter what. You see, faithful citizens, he still loves us in spite of our weaknesses!

— Les Johnson
Akron, Ohio

Our Sunday Visitor


OSV CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS
1 “None of us lives for oneself, and no one ____ for oneself” (Rom 14:7)
5 Orchestra section
10 Great quantity
14 Hebrew month
15 Enthusiastic
16 Book containing calendar of Masses
17 3-year-old salmon
18 August 15
20 Like Paine or Emerson
22 ____ Pence
24 In abundance
25 Baby fly
26 A Roman close?
28 Beguile
31 Wife of Jacob
32 Noah’s grandson
34 The Archdioceses of Tokyo
35 Haiti’s capital
36 Rip-off
37 Big rabbit features
38 Ricky, in real life
39 One without benefits, probably
40 Help out on a job
42 Town name ending
43 Sacristy
45 Whatsoever
46 A bit before the hour
47 Grind
52 Fleming and McKellen
53 Summer drinks
54 Matthew, for one
55 Al Capp adjective
56 ____ to Emmaus
57 Covered in gold (var.)
58 Equestrian
59 Patron saint of Canada
60 Chance for a musician to shine
61 Cunningly
62 Clutter

DOWN
1 Notre ____
2 Marriage vows
3 Big rabbit features
4 Span. lass
5 Saint for sore throats
6 Charlotte’s dessert?
7 Aide (abbr.)
8 Alphabet string
9 Affinity
10 ____ voice
11 Medieval town’s news source
12 Worship
13 Puts on
15 Enthusiastic
16 Book containing calendar of Masses
17 3-year-old salmon
18 August 15
20 Like Paine or Emerson
22 ____ Pence
24 In abundance
25 Baby fly
26 A Roman close?
28 Beguile
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43 Sacristy
45 Whatsoever
46 A bit before the hour
47 Grind
52 Fleming and McKellen
53 Summer drinks
54 Matthew, for one
55 Al Capp adjective

SOLUTION FROM LAST WEEK

Brazilian soccer great
Liturgical ____
What Goliath was
The ____ Supper
A Roman close?
Printer’s purchase
Godess of tillage
He tricked Jacob
First place
Grandson of 31D
The Archdioceses of Tokyo and Mandalay are here
Grind
Insurance underwriter
Regard
Town name ending
Sacristy
Dominic who is patron saint of choirboys
Whatsoever
A bit before the hour
Artist’s stand
Party staples
Well-kept
Biblical name for Syria
Puts on
Catholic

Obama’s prayer

You may or may not know that during his Feb. 5 National Prayer Breakfast speech, President Barack Obama praised Pope Francis and said he was looking forward to his U.S. visit. He also condemned religious and sectarian violence around the world, including in the Middle East, India and Nigeria. And, as widely reported, he addressed the violence by radical Islamists now threatening the Muslim world: “As we speak, around the world, we see faith inspiring people to lift up one another…” he said. “But we also see faith being twisted and distorted, used as a weapon — or, worse, sometimes used as a weapon. From a school in Pakistan to the streets of Paris, we have seen violence and terror perpetrated by those who profess to stand up for faith, their faith, professed to stand up for Islam, but, in fact, are betraying it. We see ISIL, a brutal, vicious death cult that, in the name of religion, carries out unspeakable acts of barbarism — terrorizing religious minorities like the Yazidis, subjecting women to rape as a weapon of war, and claiming the mantle of religious authority for such actions.”

President Obama’s ‘Crusades’ analogy would have been much more effective if he’d cited the Thirty Years’ War instead.

Obama sought to remove from ISIL (also known as ISIS) the veil of religiosity in which it seeks to clothe its barbarity, identifying it not as a religion but as a “death cult.” But it is very much a religion — one of twisted extremism that finds pleasure in massacring its own people. Despite the dangerous anti-Western, anti-Christian and anti-Semitic violence that typifies Islamic extremism, the tragedy occurring in the Middle East is less a war on the West than a war on Islam itself, a terrible fratricide in which the vast majority of the victims are fellow Muslims. How else to describe its willingness to burn a fellow Muslim alive in a cage?

Next, President Obama took it upon himself to play the role of religious historian and equated the Crusades and the Inquisition with the so-called Islamic State’s modern-day Middle Eastern butcher shop. “And lest we get on our high horse and think this is unique to some other place,” Obama said, “remember that during the Crusades and the Inquisition, people committed terrible deeds in the name of Christ.”

No two events are used more often to club the Catholic Church as the Crusades and the Inquisition. Choosing those two examples not only fed into the “black legends” Protestants told about the Catholic Church, but also tapped into one of the propaganda tropes of the Muslim extremists: That U.S. military intervention in the region is another attack by infidel Crusaders. While there is no space here to do historical justice to either event, his analogy would have been much more effective, and much less offensive, if President Obama had used as his analogy the Thirty Years’ War, because it mirrors in several ways the ongoing tragedy in the Middle East today.

The Thirty Years’ War was often described as a religious war between Catholics and Protestants, but in truth it was an amalgam of religion, geopolitical conflicts, the decline of the Holy Roman Empire and the rise of the modern nation state. Fought primarily on German soil, it is estimated that 20 percent of the German people were killed in the struggle, a war marked by shocking barbarity and slaughter.

Presidents of all stripes get terribly generic when talking about religion, often using broad generalizations and abundant clichés. It is unfortunate in this case that our president was not a little more general or a little less clichéd.

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College and university chaplains, with their wisdom, faith leadership and listening ears, are an indispensable part of life on a Catholic campus.

As these retired priests know, chaplaincy is not just for the young, but for the young at heart.

Singer-songwriter chaplain brings Christ to students in the heart of Music City, USA.

The role of chaplains are many and varied — and no day is ever the same.
Chaplains on college or university campuses have seen and heard it all: Devout young Catholics who are eager to grow more deeply in the Faith. Teens away from home for the first time who are tempted to begin skipping Mass. Students who eagerly jump into social ministries with a sincere heart to live out the Gospel, and students who might simply think that a service trip merely will look good on a résumé.

They are the Catholics of today, and they are the Catholics of the future, and university and college chaplains are there for them on their ever-evolving spiritual journeys. No matter the stage of a student’s spiritual development, chaplains can provide leadership in the Faith, spiritual direction, virtuous examples, and often simply a listening and understanding heart.

The following stories, profiles and testimonials take a closer look at the difference these holy men make year after year by dedicating their time and energy to working with students on college and university campuses.

ON THE COVER: Father Thomas Cebula, chaplain at Walsh University, talks with Brandi Barkhurst. Courtesy photo

For chaplains, no day is ever the same

Whether hiking in the mountains or celebrating Mass in a residence hall, chaplains play a critical role in the lives of students on Catholic campuses

By Maryann Gogniat Eidemiller

Wanted: A priest who can wear countless hats at a Catholic college or university. He must coordinate the liturgical life on campus, administer the sacraments, plan and execute numerous faith-building projects, oversee evangelization and ensure that the school’s Catholic identity is developed and maintained.

He will have an open door for the students, staff and administration who seek spiritual direction or personal counseling, and he will be available for prayer services, emergencies, visiting the sick, and advising those who are interested in instructions in the Catholic Faith. He will be aware of social justice issues on campus and in the surrounding and broader community and call people to awareness and action.

He will be sensitive and open to people of other faith traditions, or who have no faith at all, and will make everyone feel welcome. He will be on alert for those who need him but don’t know how or what to ask, and he will listen to anything and everything without raising an eyebrow, because he’s already heard it all. Nothing should surprise him.

He is expected to be a moral compass without being judgmental, an inspiration by what he does and not what he says, and tireless in his dedication. His homilies should be inspiring and relevant, and he has to be flexible because after Mass, someone may want to talk to him or ask him for prayers.

He may have to sit on committees, attend meetings, speak publicly, live in a residence hall with students, attend football games and student theater so that he’s supportive and visible, and he should keep up with what young people are interested in. As the semesters roll by, he’ll surprise himself with how many students he actually knows by name.

These are some of the job requirements for chaplains on Catholic college or university campuses, and if he isn’t doing all of these things, he will be doing something else or more.

Chaplain adventurers

If he’s the chaplain at Wyoming Catholic College in Lander, he’ll also be asked to sleep in a snow cave and celebrate Mass on an altar made of ice, or on a rock on top of a mountain. It’s a chaplaincy like no other.

The promise of outdoor adventures is one of the things
that drew their chaplains, Father Robert A. Frederick Jr. and Dominican Father Christopher M. Saliga. The college, sponsored by the Diocese of Cheyenne, opened its doors in 2007 and currently has 120 students from freshmen to seniors.

“We make no bones about our intentions that in addition to forming students academically, we are also forming the students’ mind, body and spirit,” Jonathan Tonkowich, vice president of external affairs, told Our Sunday Visitor. “Our intention is for every student who wants it to be able to have spiritual direction, confession, Mass that’s offered twice a day, adoration every noon, and strong emphasis on having priestly guidance available to every student at all times. If the students don’t have interaction with the priests on a daily basis, it would be much harder for us to accomplish those goals.”

That means that when students take a wilderness trip to challenge themselves, build teamwork and seek prayerful solitude, the chaplains go with them. Daily Mass? It might take place on a rock against the backdrop of the magnificent Grand Teton Mountains. Or on ice. When six teams of freshmen experienced a survival weekend in January, the chaplains skied with them, built snow caves to sleep in, cooked over fires in the snow and celebrated Mass at altars that each team built from

Continued on Page 4B

A CHAPLAIN’S PRIORITIES

According to the National Study of Campus Ministry, published in 2014 as an initiative of the Council of Independent Colleges, the following rank as top goals of chaplains at Catholic institutions:

- Facilitate spiritual formation of students
- Provide worship or sacraments
- Foster a commitment to social justice
- Help students integrate faith and learning
- Create community that appreciates diversity
- Help students discern their vocations
- Bring students to Christ
Father Frederick, 48, called the outdoor leadership program “taking advantage of God’s first book of creation” while sharing talents, supporting and caring for each other, building community and pulling away from the world to be still and know God. A priest in the Archdiocese of Atlanta, he was looking for an opportunity in a more focused ministry with young adults and came to Wyoming Catholic College a year-and-a-half ago.

“Working with each other and accomplishing goals parallels in the mystical body of Christ,” he said. “Our student body is so small that we get to know every student by name. We can certainly have really good quality one-on-one conversations with every one of them. When you are in the midst of their experiences, like if you’re going on a 10-mile summer hike with them and you’re suffering with them and accomplishing a summit with them, that kind of shared experience creates a great sense of family, community and trust. It can put them in a different mindset to being more open to a witness talk or asking questions and sharing reflections.”

The experience, he added, has helped him to see the bigger picture in the balance of life and to appreciate the importance of reaching young people in a different environment.

Father Saliga, 48, who came to the college in July, had a military career serving as a medic and paratrooper, and later pursued nursing and a vocation with the Dominicans. He was ordained in 2005.

“Something just struck me when I heard about the position at Wyoming College,” he said. “It seemed like such an amazing concept to have students studying the great books of Western Civilization and striving to integrate that with a spiritual leadership and outdoors program.”

The chaplains work closely with Rob Meeker, assistant director of the outdoor adventures program, and Thomas Zimmer, assistant professor of leadership, who accompany the students. “Rob had the idea to construct ice altars,” Father Saliga said. “We had six teams, and we went around the camps to celebrate Mass at each one. The wine was about to freeze when we got to the 8 a.m. Mass, and when I consumed the Precious Blood, it was half frozen. All of this ties into the sense of the divine presence in nature and with one another.”

At Mount St. Mary’s University in Emmitsburg, Maryland, Father Brian Nolan, 44, is both the chaplain and the director of campus ministry. Father Jim Donohue, the chair of theology, and seminary priests also help with the Masses.

“I have a staff of 10, and I...” Continued on Page 6B

“Love and ever more love,” Dorothy said, “is the only solution to every problem that comes up.”

Dorothy’s reflections—written on the fly over five hectic years—reveal not only the beginnings of the Catholic Worker Movement, but the mind of a heroic woman as she responded to the demands of faith.

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The Mercy University of New Jersey
Father Chris Saliga celebrates Mass on a snow altar built by students in Grand Teton National Park in January. Courtesy photo

Continued from Page 4B

live in a basement apartment in the senior dorms,” Father Nolan said. “So at the same time, I’m seeing the bigger picture and collaborating with others. Day to day can be a mixture of everything. There are over 20 campus ministries, 10 annual retreats, and Bible study groups. There are meetings with people, spiritual direction, confessions, celebrating Mass and being available for students’ needs as they face challenges with relationships, home life, anxieties during finals, just a little bit of everything.”

He might be stopped by students on his way back from evening prayers in the chapel, and those encounters are different than when they come into his office, he said.

Students overall seek spiritual direction and are concerned about discerning their future or their relationships.

“They want to know, ‘What is God asking of me?’” Father Nolan said. “There can be questions about understanding Church teachings, too. This is a time in their life to really ask questions, and at first they may be hesitant about asking, but this is a time to be deepening their faith and their understanding of their faith.”

Mount St. Mary’s is the oldest Catholic university in the United States, and about 70 percent of its 1,700 students are Catholic.

“It is part of our brand and one of the instruments of our formation to have a chaplain who really sees himself as a critical part of our educational endeavor here,” Thomas H. Powell, university president, told OSV. “He brings a great deal of enthusiasm and acceptance not only to our Catholic students, but also to students of other faiths. We are blessed with Father Nolan, who recognizes that his ministry is to reach out to young people who are struggling with their faith journey. And most important, that the chaplain is not just formal, but that he also gives informal instruction and guidance to students, that he is having dinner with them in the cafeteria, going to student activities. It’s important that he is present in their lives.”

The chaplain plays a critical role to the extended family of staff and administration, too, and guides the whole campus community through tragedies as well as its celebrations.

“What gives me great joy is when alumni return and tell me that they didn’t think religion was meaningful in their lives until they came here,” Powell said. “That’s a sign of success, and the campus chaplain is going to set the tone and atmosphere with how we approach our faith.”

The blessings are a two-way street, and Father Nolan’s life has been enriched as well. “They inspire me on a regular basis. I love being the chaplain and the director of campus ministry. It’s a beautiful role and it makes me love being a priest.”

Maryann Gogniat Eidemiller writes from Pennsylvania.
Empowered by the Spirit

Document from U.S. bishops outlines priorities of professional campus ministers, including chaplains

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the release of the bishops’ Pastoral Letter on Campus Ministry. The following excerpt from the letter’s section on Professional Campus Ministers — both religious and lay, and at both public and private schools — looks at the challenges faced by these men and women.

Some members of the Church on campus are called to lead the faith community. Ideally, these men and women are professionally trained and exercise the kind of leadership that serves and empowers others. As officially appointed campus ministers, they are sent to form the faith community so that it can be a genuine sign and instrument of the kingdom. Their task is to identify, call forth and coordinate the diverse gifts of the Spirit possessed by all the members of the faith community. Their challenge is to educate all the baptized to appreciate their own calls to service and to create a climate where initiative is encouraged and contributions are appreciated. One of the most important functions of campus ministers is to provide a vision and a sense of overall direction that will encourage and guide the other members to contribute to the well-being of the academic community and the Church on campus. If they understand their own family relationships in a faith perspective, they will be able to help others who are trying to improve the quality of their family lives. Setting up programs that embody this vision is a concrete way of encouraging others and of demonstrating what can be done with cooperative efforts.

The goal of this style of leadership is to multiply the centers of activity and to unleash the creative power of the Spirit so that the community of faith can be an authentic sign and instrument of the kingdom.

... There are certain general challenges faced by all campus ministers. To be effective, ministers must attend to their own spiritual development. Campus ministers who are serious about their prayer life and can speak openly about their relationship to God will be able to direct others. Ministers who have wrestled with the great questions of meaning, purpose and identity can offer helpful guidance to other genuine seekers. Those who have appropriated the Faith and mined the riches of the Catholic heritage will be in a better position to invite others to join the faith community. If they ... care about the weak and oppressed, they will inspire others to work for social justice.

Finally, campus ministers who have achieved an integration of faith and culture will naturally serve as role models for students and faculty members who are trying to achieve a similar synthesis. In summation, the leaders of the faith community must be perceived as persons who know the struggles of life and who are working to develop themselves spiritually.

Campus ministers are also called to empower the faith community and its individual members in the task of helping their colleges or universities to reach their full potential. Ministers who have a genuine respect for academic life and for institutions of higher education will see clearly the importance of this work and find creative ways to respond. A healthy self-confidence will enable them to relate openly with faculty members and administrators and to empathize with students who are struggling with their personal growth. By gaining the respect and confidence of the various members of the academic community, they will find many ways to get involved on campus and promote human values in the institution.

Campus ministers with solid training and good credentials will have more opportunities to enter into the mainstream of academic life on campus. Today, it is clear that campus ministers must not remain on the margins of the academic community but must accept the call to bring the light of the Gospel to the very center of that world.

To prepare for meeting all these challenges, we encourage campus ministers to take responsibility for their own personal and professional development. Clear contractual arrangements that include carefully defined expectations and procedures for accountability and evaluation help to set a proper framework for their personal enrichment. Membership in appropriate professional organizations, participation in activities on diocesan, regional and national levels, involvement in support groups with other campus ministers and regular interaction with a spiritual director can provide motivation and direction for improving their performance. If campus ministers are to remain flexible in response to the rapidly changing needs of the campus community, they need to study contemporary developments in Scripture and theology while deepening their knowledge of the Christian tradition. ... Today, skills in counseling and spiritual direction, as well as knowledge of family systems and life cycles, group dynamics and adult education are especially valuable for leaders of the faith community. An understanding of the nature and dynamics of the academic world enables campus ministers to apply Christian teachings and values more effectively.

... Professional campus ministers are crucial to the work of the Church on campus. They bear the heavy responsibility of guiding the faith community and empowering others to assist in the task of helping higher education reach its full potential. The extent and intensity of these demands remind them that they must gather others to assist them. They should expect support and guidance from the diocesan director of campus ministry. ... The director can help facilitate their personal growth, call for a proper accountability, and possible diocese-wide programming. As the diocesan bishop’s representative, the director encourages the interaction among campus ministers in the diocese who serve on public, Catholic, and other private campuses. They recognize our responsibility as bishops to offer all campus ministers moral support, to provide financial assistance to the degree this is needed and possible, and to help them achieve the competency they need to be effective witnesses of the Gospel.
Father John P. Fogliasso has three assignments at Newman University in Wichita, Kansas. He's the chaplain, campus minister and assistant professor of theology. All of those positions keep him in the midst of the Catholic spirit and identity of the university and, he said, “It's certainly been a pleasure being allowed to minister to college students.”

Father Fogliasso, 31, is known as “Father Fog” on campus. He has been a priest in the Diocese of Wichita for the past three-and-a-half years, three of those years serving as associate pastor in a parish. In June, Bishop Carl A. Kemme assigned him to the chaplaincy at the university where nearly 2,800 undergraduates are enrolled. About 42 percent identify as Catholics.

He celebrates daily Mass and the Sacrament of Reconciliation, Eucharistic adoration on Wednesdays and, when the semester started, outdoor adoration with live music.

“When the students want to talk, I’m here to listen,” Father Fogliasso said. “There are students who whole-heartedly embrace the Faith, and for sure, some others are questioning the Faith. One of the challenges that I see is that a lot of young people are making that transition from ‘the faith chosen by my parents.’ They are looking for answers, and they are claiming the Faith as their own. So my goal is to hopefully offer positive guidance as they make that transition.”

Father Fogliasso accompanies the students on mission outreaches and works alongside them. They recently went to San Benito, Texas, to assist the Sisters of Divine Providence at La Posada Providencia, an emergency shelter for indigent immigrants, asylees and asylum seekers from many different nations. “We were there for three days, teaching them the English language and American culture on a one-on-one basis,” he said. “We shared meals with them and played sports. We learned from them, and they learned from our students. In January, we went to the March For Life. The students make great friendships and strong connections on these service trips. They are willing to put forth the time and financial arrangements that it takes to attend, and that’s an important witness to their faith and values.”

Today’s young Catholics, he noted, strongly embrace their faith and want to share it with their family and friends. “The future of the Church looks extremely bright,” he said. Since he’s part of that generation, Father Fogliasso understands their experiences. “I think that the similarity in age helps me to relate to some of the challenges they are going through, and we speak the same language,” he said.

Maryann Gogniat Eidemiller writes from Pennsylvania.
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Chaplains find ‘second wind’ on campus

The generation gap doesn’t bother these priests who have come out of retirement to serve students

By Maryann Gogniat Eidemiller

In 2014, the graduating class of Walsh University in North Canton, Ohio, voted Benedictine Father Anselm Zupka the Terrance Portis Mentor of the Year Award for his guidance, education outside the classroom and significant contributions to their college experience.

It was an honor for him and his work as campus chaplain, but for everything he does for the students, he said, “I get back 100 times.”

A stimulating atmosphere

Father Zupka, 74, came to Walsh in 2011 after teaching in Catholic high schools in Cleveland for 48 years. His part-time associate, Father Thomas Cebula from the Diocese of Youngstown, is 73 and primarily works in campus ministry for spiritual development. Both live on campus.

“Rather than simply retiring somewhere off in a corner, I’m delighted to be able to live my vocation in such a stimulating, vibrant atmosphere,” Father Cebula told Our Sunday Visitor. “It’s been a wonderful blessing in my age and time of life. I’m an old recycled priest who found his second wind.”

Despite a 50-plus-years age gap with the students, Father Zupka and Father Cebula fit in well with the campus community and have found their own lives rejuvenated by the students. “I don’t feel like a 74-year-old,” Father Zupka told OSV. “I feel like I’m one of the students, and I’m very comfortable with them, and I think they are comfortable with me. I eat all my meals in the dining hall and I sit at different tables to talk to different students. I try to keep healthy and stay active, and try to get to as many academic and athletic events as I can. Wherever the students are, I try to support whatever they do.”

Both priests work closely with the campus ministry that’s headed by Michael Chavez. His twin brother, P.J. Chavez, is sacristan and director of liturgical music, and also part of the team.

“I am impressed by so many of the students in regard to their trying to live their faith and understand it,” Father Cebula said. “I am doing some spiritual direction and counseling and am really impressed by the sincerity and the goodness of the young people here. From my perspective, I see them looking for meaning for a true understanding of spirituality and authenticity. They are searching for the truth, and they are looking for authentic relationships. So many of them come from broken homes and have family issues, but they have such great hearts and an eagerness to serve and to truly develop their potential.”

There was more respect for authority and students were less self-centered when Father Zupka taught decades ago, he said. But this generation has a lot of concerns for social issues, and they are eager to follow Pope Francis’ call to serve those in need. He saw that when 130 students put in 1,000 hours of volunteer service on Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

“Our kids want to be involved,” Father Cebula said. “And I think there is a hunger for college students to find themselves and to find their relationship with others and to find their relationship with God. They are anxious to find out more.”

Chaplains wear so many hats, but sometimes students have told Father Zupka that his presence is what’s important. “Jesus in the Gospel says, ‘You are my hands, you are my feet,’” he said. “This is what I try to do at Walsh. I want to be the presence of Jesus to young people today.”

Father Cebula considers his late-life ministry an unfolding adventure that strengthens his faith.

“Sometimes I feel like Abra-
ham,” he said. “I walk by faith. This has made me more per-
ceptive in trying to do God’s will and being open to signs that indicate where providence is leading me. I have come to a different understanding of what it means to be open.”

Generational differences
At Clarke University in Dubuque, Iowa, Father Rich-
ard Ament, 74, and Father John Paisley, 79, came out of retire-
ment to share chaplaincy duties on campus. Both live off-site.
“I was a campus minister many years ago, and it’s interest-
ing how similar the young people are today to what they were 30 years ago,” Father Ament told OSV. “Today they are more sophisticated, but nonetheless, like they were in the mid-1980s, they are search-
ing. They are inquisitive about the Church, about the Lord and where they want to go with their life, what they want to do with their lives, and whether the Church and religion have any part in that.”
“Not every student has that inquiry; some do, and those that do connect with the cam-

Continued on Page 21B

Robinson, 20
Walsh University, North Canton, Ohio

dus ministry office, and I think that a lot of good happens. I

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Chaplains help bring Catholic identity back to Kansas

Pilgrimages, monks’ spiritual direction play key role in revitalizing identity of Benedictine College

By Jim Graves

Andy Swafford recalls the tremendous benefit of receiving spiritual direction from Father Bruce Swift while an undergraduate at Benedictine College in Atchison, Kansas. The priest offered wise counsel during Swafford’s “pivotal years of decision-making” and was an experienced spiritual guide who gave him someone whom he could “bounce off movements of the Holy Spirit.”

“But I think the most important thing was the availability of the Sacrament of Confession,” Swafford said. “The campus chaplains fostered and emphasized it.”

Swafford graduated with the Class of 2004 and is today an assistant professor of theology at his alma mater. Father Swift died on Christmas Day, two months ago, and is now fondly remembered by the campus community.

Benedictine is a Catholic liberal arts college served by the monks of St. Benedict’s Abbey. Two Benedictines founded it as a boarding school in 1858; in 1971, it merged with Mount St. Scholastica College and became Benedictine College.

While the Catholic character of the college is strong today, it was not always the case. According to a blog post for the school’s Gregorian Institute by Father Brendan Rolling, the school’s head chaplain, the college was listed as one of Playboy magazine’s top-10 party schools in the 1980s. Students were pushing for coed dorms and few attended daily Mass.

A variety of measures led to a Catholic renaissance on campus, such as the introduction of perpetual adoration and Pope St. John Paul II’s Theology of the Body. It began to make an impact when Swafford was a student more than a decade ago as more students began attending daily Mass, Holy Hours, Bible studies and participating in spiritual direction. “We saw many students coming to the campus and having a conversion experience,” he said.

Benedictines’ role

Five Benedictine monks teach at the school and help offer spiritual direction to its more than 1,800 students. They also encourage Catholic life on campus, offering daily Mass and assisting with a variety of devotions.

Father Jay Kythe, who professed his vows to the order in December, teaches theology to freshmen and serves as a chaplain. He has 20 students to whom he currently gives direction, and with “constant requests” from others seeking it, he expects to add 20 more. “The young people with whom I meet want to understand God’s will for their lives, including whether they have a religious or married vocation,” Father Kythe said.

Many want to learn to pray better, too. Father Kythe helps them to grow in prayer and introduces them to the Benedictines’ lectio divina, a method of prayer using Scripture. “Our students have a desire to grow in holiness,” he said. “Helping them to do so is part of the work of evangelization.”

Father Kythe was raised in New Orleans. His family is Indian, and he grew up a Hindu. He was attracted to the Catholic Church through a variety of factors, he said, including a desire to receive the holy Eucharist. “When I came to discover and understand the Eucharist, I was drawn to the Catholic Church,” he said.

Father Kythe converted in 1990 and was ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis in 2002. He joined the Benedictine community, he said, because “I was im-
pressed by the way the Benedictines lived their lives with great sincerity and devotion. The abbey is a place of beauty and stability in a world of instability.

The monks wear a traditional habit and live under the Rule of St. Benedict (see sidebar). They have a communal, structured life of prayer and work, which begins with a 6 a.m. vigil and ends with compline (night prayer) at 7:30 p.m. Forty monks live in the abbey, which is adjacent to the college, with others in various parts of the world performing mission work. “It’s a way of life that nourishes and sustains me,” Father Kythe said.

Pilgrimage trips
Prominent Catholic speakers regularly come to the campus, and dorm chapels promote an environment of prayer. Mission trips are encouraged; in 2014, 900 students participated in mission trips, or about half of the student body.

The pro-life cause is strong on campus, too. In January, 300 students rode by bus to Washington, D.C., to participate in the annual March for Life.

Among the popular devotional activities has been the school’s pilgrimage trips to the Holy Land and Rome. Daniel Musso, executive director of the school’s Center for International Education, helped launch the pilgrimages in 2010. Musso lived in Israel for 10 years and wanted to share his experiences with students. Quoting Pope Benedict XVI, he said, “I wanted them ‘to see, to touch and to savor in prayer and contemplation the places blessed by the physical presence of our Savior, his Blessed Mother, the Apostles and the first disciples who saw him risen from the dead.’”

A Benedictine chaplain accompanies the group on the eight-day Holy Land trip to celebrate Mass at key sites related to the life of Christ. Swafford participated with Musso and Father Brendan Rolling, head campus chaplain, in 2013.

“I’d seen many Holy Land photographs and maps and studied its geography, but there’s nothing like seeing, hearing, smelling and experiencing the Holy Land firsthand,” Swafford said. “It makes it come to life in a new way.”

While the tour guide related historical facts, Swafford’s job as theologian was to “talk about its meaning for us as Catholics.” The trips are an excellent aid to students studying theology, saying, “Theology is wonderful, but there’s always the danger of it becoming merely an idea rather than an encounter with Christ. God came down in time and space and walked around in real places.”

The role of the chaplain is key, Swafford said. He celebrates daily Mass at the various pilgrimage sites, leads meditations and makes the Sacrament of Confession available. The chaplain “builds upon” the history and theology presented, saying, “giving the trip a firm pilgrimage feel and ensuring that it was not just an academic exercise.”

The pilgrimage to Rome takes participants to major sites in the Eternal City. Musso led a group of 43 students to Rome earlier this month, a highlight of which was attending a general audience with Pope Francis on Feb. 4. A new pilgrimage recently took students to India to meet Mother Teresa’s Sisters of Charity.

The word is getting out to faithful Catholic families, Swafford said, as the school has doubled in size in the past decade.

Benedictine may have had a party-school reputation in the 1980s, added Father Kythe, “but we’re 180 degrees in the other direction now. Most of our students come here because of our Catholic identity.”

Jim Graves writes from California.
By Eddie O’Neill

When Father Kevin McGoldrick entered St. Charles Borromeo Seminary in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, the talented guitar player thought he would have to leave his worldly music career behind.

He couldn’t have been further from the truth.

The 40-something-year-old priest is now wrapping up an ambitious recording project in Nashville. It was paid for by crowdfunding — the practice of funding a project or venture by raising small amounts of money from a large number of people, typically via the Internet.

In Father McGoldrick’s case, in less than six weeks, close to 200 people contributed to his upcoming CD, “Square Peg Round Hole.” His goal was to raise $12,000; he received $13,200 in support of his project.

“Crowdfunding gave me the opportunity to use the tools of the day,” Father McGoldrick told Our Sunday Visitor. “It gave family and friends a chance to help me out. It was a real blessing.”

The idea of priesthood had been with Father McGoldrick since he was a kid. However, it took a back seat in high school and when he was in college at Temple University. Music and theater were more interesting.

“(Growing up) I never stopped going to Mass, but I certainly wasn’t really living the Faith,” he said.

That was until he attended a retreat during his junior year of college.

“That’s when my real conversion came, and in the fall of 1995, I entered the seminary.”

Eight years later, he was ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

For close to two years now,...
he has served as the chaplain for Aquinas College in Nashville.

"I got connected with the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia Congregation, [popularly known as the Nashville Dominicans]," he explained. "I received permission from the archdiocese to come down here."

A home at Aquinas

Music and Nashville have been a perfect match for Father McGoldrick; add his chaplaincy for Aquinas College and he couldn't be happier.

"The first night I got down here, there were young people getting together and singing songs," he recalled. "They asked me to join right in and play some of my music."

The four-year college, located less than 20 miles from downtown, has a student population of just under 500. According to its 2014 college report, U.S. News and World Report ranked Aquinas in their top 15 best colleges in the southern region.

"I love it here," Father McGoldrick said. "Besides celebrating Mass, (hearing) confessions and helping out on college retreats, it is important for me to be with the students. So, I spend a lot of time in the student lounge and playing pool. Our students are looking for God and want to grow in their faith."

The music scene on campus isn't too bad either.

"We have nights of worship with music, and about once a semester, we do a 'coffee house' which is basically an open-mic night."

Music City, USA

Off campus, the priest can't get enough of the city's cultural scene.

"Nashville is a cosmopolitan city with a southern, hometown feel," he said. "As a guitar player, I thought I was pretty good, but I was quickly put in my place. I thought I was pretty good, but I was quickly put in my place. I like to compare it to being the star quarterback at your high school, and then when you get to college you're a dime a dozen."

Upon arrival, the priest was told by the locals to make sure he tipped his waitress well because she's probably a better songwriter than him.

He added, "As well, they told me to make sure you're friendly with your barista because he is probably a better guitar player than you. There is that sense of respect in the music scene here for all types of players who want to use their God-given talents to make music."

In a town where Catholics are less than 8 percent of the population, Father McGoldrick has had his fair share of good "priest rocker" stories.

He described his band of studio musicians, with whom he's been working since last summer, as a "great bunch of Christian men."

"They have been very supportive to me as a priest," he said. "Square Peg Round Hole," he added, is a fitting title for him.

"I've always felt that I've been somewhat of a square peg in a round hole, and my music on this album is all over the place. There's blues, worship music, and I even rap about coffee," Father McGoldrick said.

Engaging the culture

Father McGoldrick said that if you would have told him 10 years ago that he would be recording a CD in Nashville with some of Nashville's top studio musicians, he wouldn't have believed it.

"I never even envisioned visiting this place," he related. "I didn't come down here to record a CD; one door after another just seemed to open, and people kept telling me to look into it."

He noted that in the last few years, he has come to appreciate secular music more and more. From John Mayer to Vivaldi, he said that music plays a vital role in our culture.

"Few know that Vivaldi was a priest. His most famous work was an instrumental work called 'The Four Seasons.' It is not directly singing the praises of God like chant would, but he sought to express beauty, and beauty reflects God."

He added that music touches the soul in very deep and emotional ways.

"It can go where sermons cannot," Father McGoldrick said. "It speaks to our culture in such deep ways. So I'm hoping to speak in a way that people can understand. Whether the song is about coffee or Jesus."

Equally inspiring is the message of Pope Francis when it comes to being in the world and not of it.

"The pope is all about engaging the culture; don't be afraid," said Father McGoldrick. "I see myself out there throwing seeds and seeing what happens."

Eddie O'Neill writes from Missouri.

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The significance of a ministry of presence

When it comes to faith, Loyola University chaplain tries to model Christ, meet students where they are

By Maryann Gogniat Eidemiller

One of Jesuit Father Gregg Grovenburg’s favorite times of day is early morning in the residence hall when he sees a light on and joins a student for some quiet reading or conversation. It’s a good opportunity for the young men to talk about how their lives are going and how they’re keeping their world balanced and focused.

If he doesn’t catch them then, they can leave messages on the whiteboard on the door to his quarters in the residence hall, and he’ll make time to see them.

“I’m always in conversations with them about classes, what’s going on around campus, what they can become involved in, and I’m sacramentally available for them, too,” Father Grovenburg told Our Sunday Visitor.

“Sometimes they come to me for more serious matters.”

Father Grovenburg, 56, has been a Jesuit for 38 years, a priest for 26 years and has served most of his vocation working in some way with young people, first teaching in a Catholic high school and later in campus ministry.

For the past four years, he has been associate chaplain for faith and sacramental life at Loyola University of New Orleans (5,000 students, 57 percent Catholic).

In addition to his one-on-one interaction with students, he supports residence hall directors, is chaplain of the men’s basketball team and oversees the RCIA program. He visits students who are in the hospital and keeps their parents informed, and has spoken on behalf of students appearing before a disciplinary board.

Students have many opportunities on campus for spiritually enriching activities that keep them grounded in their faith throughout the demands of higher education.

“Young people today are surrounded by more stress and expectations than I was ever surrounded with,” Father Grovenburg said. “That pushes some to a deeper faith, a realization that ‘I can’t do this on my own.’ They find support and guidance from others in a faith community. For others, those experiences are more of a challenge to their faith, and that’s not a bad thing. They will ultimately ask some of the questions where they will eventually find their way back to what’s really important.

“That can bring about a deeper level in their relationship with God and help some of them to clarify and even claim

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on a deeper level something that they might have taken for granted,” he added. “Sometimes when faith is tested, they ultimately benefit more.”

Parents have questions, too. Will their children keep attending Mass once they’re away from home, and do they still have faith at all?

“I assure parents that their children’s faith is strong and foundational, that it will always be a part of them, and that it’s ultimately their gift to their children,” Father Grovenburg said.

He remains open, supportive, loving and nonjudgmental to students who are rejecting their faith. He meets them where they are.

“I find myself saying, ‘You are not alone. You have great people around you, and look to them,’” he said. “I really believe that students come back to the Faith when they see something in others that they want for themselves. They have to make that connection when they see that it’s worth doing.”

Maryann Gogniat Eidemiller writes from Pennsylvania.

I was baptized Catholic, but my faith was based on the spirituality that my grandmother instilled in me since I was a child, which is in and of itself a great gift. But I was never taken to church or really given the opportunity to expand my faith in a religious setting.

When I came to Loyola in the fall of 2013, I expressed interest to Father Gregg Grovenburg, one of the chaplains in my residential hall, that I was looking into possibly taking my first Communion and confirmation.

Father Grovenburg and Kurt Bindewald (director of university ministry and resident chaplain), never missed a chance to encourage me to move forward on my instinct. They talked to me for a semester until I finally had the courage to make that decision to begin the journey to the Sacrament of Confirmation. I appreciated the opportunity to decide on my own when it was time for the next step in my faith. It meant a lot more to me than it would have otherwise, and it was a truly beautiful experience.

It was very helpful to have priests available to talk to. Father Grovenburg was an incredible source of support, advice and wisdom. He taught my confirmation classes and officiated the sacrament on April 27, 2014. He is someone who can always make you feel like there is hope. I have come to him in some of the most difficult times in my faith, and he has always been able to calm my mind and make me feel as if I have a light to find and ignite once more, and always once more.

I have interacted with quite a few priests at Loyola, but Father Grovenburg and Father Edward Vacek have had the most prominent impact on me. I learned a lot from them. The sisters at Loyola have also played an important role in my development of faith, particularly Sister Terri Bednarz (assistant professor of New Testament studies). She has given me advice and affirmations that have brought me closer to God in the most beautiful ways.

Most young adults struggle with the same issues that pertain to their faith — the lows and the understanding that every journey has its struggles.

University ministry does a wonderful job of addressing our needs as students, and they make themselves available to us with as much care as possible. They do an incredible job with building a community of support and faith on campus.

— Edwin Unzalu, 19
Loyola University of New Orleans
‘There are differences being made’

At Gannon University, the chaplain encourages students to grow in self-knowledge, to get out of themselves and to be self-giving

By Maryann Gogniat Eidemiller

Father Michael T. Kesicki, 53, came to teach part-time at Gannon University in Erie, Pennsylvania, 18 years ago, and in 2012 he was appointed campus chaplain and associate vice president of mission and ministry. In the administrative position, he oversees the Center for Social Concerns and also the campus ministry headed by Deacon Stephen Washeck. As the chaplain, his door is open for students and staff who want to talk.

So what’s on their minds?

“The major spiritual needs are around family joys, family difficulties and a sense of growing up,” Father Kesicki said. “There’s a sense of coming into their own identity. And very often, they’re just stressed out. They’re anxious about what to do about summer jobs or what to do after graduation. Or there may be a particular challenge, like a group of students might have experienced someone who has died, and we figure ways to get together and pray together in faith.”

Some students have an interest in certain texts or parts of the Bible. Their faith may not have taken hold, and they want to explore it.

“Part of that’s because they’re coming to the university out of high school, and, in a sense, they’re coming into their own and claiming their faith — not just what their parents gave them,” he said.

During orientation, campus ministers who are present in residence halls are led to not just offer available services but to get a sense and heart for students’ spiritual well-being. For one thing, they encourage the students to discover, practice and learn to cultivate and appreciate solitude.

“This is one of the most positive aspects, to send students through silent prayer and to reflect on that silence,” Father Kesicki said. “If you just tell someone that silence is important, that doesn’t mean that they’re going to do it.”

Gannon University offers its more than 4,000 students many opportunities of learning for service, which is not the same as academic service learning.

“Students are encouraged to live for others and to make relationships with others in need,” he said. “We are proud of our alternative break service trips to places like Detroit and Washington, D.C., and international trips to Mexico, Guatemala or Haiti. It’s always done through the framework of Catholic social teaching, inspired and animated by the Church’s understanding of the love of God and love of neighbor.”

Father Kesicki and the campus ministry team challenge students to grow in self-knowledge, get out of themselves and be self-giving.

“Part of the conversation is to help them understand that solitude and service make life meaningful,” he said. “Are we reaching them? I don’t know if the students can articulate that they have learned this. But yes, at the same time, we see the fruits of this. We do get feedback. There are some differences being made.”

Maryann Gogniat Eidemiller writes from Pennsylvania.
I have always been active in my faith, youth groups and retreats in my Erie diocese, and at Gannon. I wanted to deepen my faith and discover opportunities for new challenges. Through faith-sharing groups, service trips, classes and personal relationships with faculty and staff, my faith has developed in ways I am still learning to articulate. My faith was strong when I came here, but it was not a mature faith because faith is a relationship with God that’s constantly evolving and changing.

I have been fortunate to have personal relationships with some of the priests here, and my faith life has been greatly influenced by knowing that I can show up at their office or stop them on campus to simply say hello or share in a more serious conversation.

Our chaplain, Father Michael Kesicki, impacted my faith journey in many ways. On a service trip to Guatemala last spring break, our group had so much fun seeing another side of him. One day we built stoves in two homes, and during lunch we played with kids who were making a mess with confetti. Father Kesicki was so completely engaged with them that he was covered in confetti.

Also on that trip, we found an adoration chapel where the Eucharist was exposed. I went in to pray, and he joined me. I had an incredible realization that we were nowhere near Erie, yet we were worshipping the same God. The concept of universal Church was so evident throughout our trip and has become embedded in my heart, and I owe a lot of that to Father Kesicki.

Those who wish to grow in their faith have ample opportunities at Gannon. I have seen many students grow in a multitude of ways. A good friend went through RCIA, and that changed so many things for her life. Another went on his first service trip, and it opened his eyes and heart in ways that cannot be put to words. Others are challenged by the diverse speakers and events on campus.

We are all thirsting for something we can’t express and aching for a love that we cannot convey. We have been searching for something for so long that we have gotten lost on the journey and have forgotten our destination. Our thirst can become so consuming that we become immune to it and think we are no longer thirsty. That’s why a majority of our faith opportunities are less attended. But when someone new comes to Mass, retreat or service experience, that thirst becomes so evident to them once more that they realize they have found what they had forgotten they were longing for. I have witnessed that many times at Gannon.

The mission and ministry offices and theology department are the heart and soul of everything Gannon does. My time here has given me confidence that no matter what shakes my foundation, I will find my way.

— Patrice Swick, 22
Gannon University, Erie, Pennsylvania
‘I just try to love them’

In his quiet way, Father Wordekemper is sowing seeds for the Gospel

By Maryann Gogniat Eidemiller

Students at Mount Marty College in Yankton, South Dakota, see Benedictine Father Thomas Wordekemper at athletic and cultural events, singing with the college choir or backstage painting and setting up props for theater productions. In the summer, he tends the flower beds and does painting around campus.

“I like to work and make contributions on campus,” he said. “I think it’s good for faculty, staff and students to see priests not just as someone who sits behind a desk or wears vestments and celebrates Mass. I do all these other things because it helps to make the students comfortable, and it helps me to be human with them. I’m kind of a quiet presence.”

Father Wordekemper, 58, is a member of Assumption Abbey in Richardson, North Dakota. He’s been a monk for 30 years, a priest for 21 years and the college’s chaplain for nearly seven years. There are about 900 students at Mount Marty, 400 are in residence, and 55 percent are Catholic. Many are committed to their faith, but others aren’t.

“They leave home and now there’s no one to tell them that they have to go to church,” he said. “How do you help them see that there’s something worthwhile in their spiritual life that makes a difference?”

Students at Mount Marty are taught the Benedictine core values that infiltrate their studies and guide who they are. Father Wordekemper sees them becoming more committed to their spiritual life and in participating with the opportunities to grow in their faith.

“As they become more engrossed in their major and in graduating, and in seeing that they are going to be leaving this environment, they realize that they are going to need to be taking some of these values with them,” he said. “It’s good to see that maturity happening.”

There are challenges in that journey. “Some think ‘I can do whatever I want and people should respect me,’ even when it doesn’t fit into the Christian or even civil life,” he said. “Even young people who are committed to their faith are sometimes without a rudder to guide them. I think those from my generation have done a good job of teaching kids about the gray areas of theology and morality, but we have not done a good job of teaching them the black and white that allows for the gray. I think there’s a general desire to know the black and white, and that’s what they are seeking.”

During his first year as chaplain, he wondered if he was meeting any difference. Then one day the Gospel was about sowing the seeds. “It hit me like a ton of bricks,” he said. “I am not in charge of the harvest. All I have to do is sow the word.”

I decided to go to Mount Marty College because I wanted to mature in my faith journey. I was blessed to attend Bishop Garrigan Catholic Schools for 13 years where I had ample opportunities to be active in my faith life. When I was growing up, everything was laid out with opportunities for me to participate, but I never really sat and thought about my faith life. Here on campus, it is very important to me to know there is a priest available.

Father Thomas Wordekemper has been an excellent influence on my collegiate career just by being present. I love getting the chance to visit with him and to learn from him. At the end of Mass, he always says, “I am praying for you, what do you have to do?” and the students answer, “Cooperate!” I like this outlook a lot. I know that Father Thomas genuinely wants us to succeed and to be the best people we can be. I try to remember to “cooperate” the best I can.

― Anna Kollasch, 21
Mount Marty College, Yankton South Dakota

Father Wordekemper at Mount Marty College. Courtesy photo

I love them. I may be the only doors, and I don’t approve. But I love them. I may be the only Jesus they see, so what impression do I want to give them? It’s good to see that maturity happening.”

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Father Wordekemper at Mount Marty College. Courtesy photo

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And love them.

“One of the old monks asked me, ‘What’s your secret?’” Father Wordekemper said. “I just try to love them. I know what they are doing behind closed doors, and I don’t approve. But I love them. I may be the only Jesus they see, so what impression do I want to give them? Not something judgmental. The impression I want to give them is ‘I love you.’”

Maryann Gogniat Eidemiller writes from Pennsylvania.
Continued from Page 11B

find that to be as true as much today as I did 30 years ago.”

He is often “so amazed” at the deep faith and spirituality that students have.

“It’s rock-bottom solid and, of course, we try to help them build on that,” Father Ament said. “A lot of people say that the younger generation is pretty self-centered and a kind of ‘me’ generation, but I don’t think they are unique in that regard. I think that’s kind of true across the board with people, period. There’s a tendency in all of us to focus on ‘me,’ so I don’t think it’s any worse in them than it is in anyone else.

“I certainly have never de-spaired of young people, and I hear a lot of that negative junk floating around here,” Father Ament added to OSV. “I know that there’s some trouble. But I know that the people of my generation were trouble, too. It’s not unique at all. To be real honest, it’s a matter of trying to see that other dimension that’s a part of our human makeup — the desire for community, the desire to serve, and the desire for enrichment in spirit in their lives.”

Father John Paisley of Clarke University poses with a group during the school’s beginning of the year retreat. Courtesy photo

Father Paisley noted that to-day’s students are more flexible in how they approach life and how they approach their own faith.

“They are young adults and therefore they are searching for deeper understanding of them-selves as well as a deeper understand-ing of the world in which they live,” he said. “What they most need from us is availability, time for prayer, time for ser-vice in terms of opportunities, as well as other activities on and off campus.”

The future Church

Twice a year, Clarke University has an “Into the Streets” day when hundreds of students volunteer at nursing homes, re-treat centers and other places in the community.

Father Paisley accompanies them and sees their faith in ac-tion.

“They are the future of the Church,” he said. “They are open to the opportunities for their own spiritual development, as well as for some of the service within the faith community.”

For these four priests, a half-century-plus in age and a three-generation gap could conceiv-ably separate them from the students, but it doesn’t. Rather, the older chaplains bring a presence of wisdom and experi-ence, and their generation and the new have a lot in common after all.

“Everyone, whether they are 18 to 20 or 70 to 74, search ... and every so often the light goes on and the Lord gives us grace,” Father Ament said. “That’s just astounding.”

And besides, he added, “They put up with us old guys pretty well.”

Maryann Gogniat Eidemiller writes from Pennsylvania.

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Fax: (574) 239-8323
Website: www.hcc-nd.edu
E-mail: admissions@hcc-nd.edu
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Website: www.marian.edu
Marian University is a Catholic university dedicated to providing an education that profoundly transforms lives, society, and the world through the Franciscan and liberal arts tradition. Our understanding of the Franciscan values of dignity of the individual, peace and justice, reconciliation, and responsible stewardship is informed by reflection on the life of Jesus Christ and prayer.

University of Saint Francis
2500 California Plaza
Indianapolis, IN 46222
Phone: (800) 282-6000
Contact: Patrick Givens, Director of Enrollment Operations
University of Saint Francis combines personal mentorship, community service, and career preparation within a warmly welcoming, spectaculrly beautiful campus. Open to students of all faiths, USF offers multiple undergraduate and graduate degrees, an honors program, and Division II athletics for women and men.

NEW Jersey

Georgian Court University
900 Lakewood Avenue
Lakewood, NJ 08701
Phone: (732) 987-2700
Website: ExploreGCU.com
E-mail: admissions@gcu.edu
Contact: Patrick Givens, Director of Enrollment Operations
Grounded in the core values of the Sisters of Mercy, GCU combines personal mentorship, community service, and career preparation within a warmly welcoming, spectacularly beautiful campus. Open to students of all faiths, GCU offers multiple undergraduate and graduate degrees, an honors program, and Division II athletics for women and men.

NEW YORK

St. John's University
8000 Utopia Parkway
Queens, NY 11439
Phone: (718) 990-2000
Website: sjuhs.edu/red Catholic and Vincentian, St. John’s combines quality academics with dynamic study abroad opportunities, course-related service activities, and BIG EAST athletics. Students from 47 states and 115 countries pursue undergraduate and graduate degrees at campuses in New York; Rome, Italy; and Paris, France, along with international locations around the world.

North Dakota

University of Mary
7500 University Drive
Bismarck, ND 58504
Phone: (701) 355-8030 or (800) 288-6279
Website: www.cometormary.com
Email: admissions@umary.edu
Providing an affordable, serious, Catholic and Bene-
dictine education with an emphasis on personal attention since 1959, University of Mary offers nearly 60 majors, 14 master’s and three doctorate programs, Catholic Studies, campuses in Rome and Peru, and free room and board for eligible Catholic high school graduates enrolling as first-time freshman.

OHIO
Franciscan University of Steubenville
1245 University Blvd., Steubenville, OH, 43952
Phone: (800) 783-6220
Website: www.franciscan.edu
Contact: Margaret Weber, Director of Admissions
Franciscan University integrates strong academics and a lively faith environment, forming men and women to be a transforming presence in the Church and the world. This attractive combination draws over 2,500 students from all 50 states who choose from 48 majors. A highlight for many students is the study abroad program in Austria.

OKLAHOMA
St. Gregory’s University
1900 W. MacArthur Street
Shawnee, OK 74804
Phone: 1-844-BE EXTRA
Fax: (405) 878-5447
Website: www.stgregorys.edu
Email: admissions@stgregorys.edu
Contact: Sean Brown, CAS Director of Admissions
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Pennsylvania
Carlow University
3333 5th Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213
Phone: (412) 578-6059 or (800) 333-2275
Website: www.carlow.edu
E-mail: admissions@carlow.edu
Contact: Carol Descak, Vice President for Enrollment Management
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Saint Francis University
117 Evergreen Drive
Loretto, PA 15940
Phone: (814) 472-3000
Website: www.sfrancis.edu
E-mail: admissions@sfrancis.edu
Contact: Robert Beener, Assistant Dean, Enrollment Management
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Saint Vincent College
300 Fraser Purchase Rd., Latrobe, PA 15650-2690
Phone: (724) 537-4540
Fax: (724) 532-5069
Website: www.stvincent.edu
E-mail: admission@stvincent.edu
Contact: Dave Collins

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Seton Hill University
Seton Hill Drive
Greensburg, PA 15601
Phone: (724) 838-4281 or (800) 826-6234
Fax: (724) 830-1294
Website: www.setonhill.edu
E-mail: admit@setonhill.edu
Seton Hill’s hilltop campus in Greensburg, PA, provides an inspirational setting for a distinctive Catholic, liberal arts education. The university’s 95% career/graduate school placement rate is a result of Seton Hill’s commitment to graduating students with an understanding of where they are headed (and why), and with the knowledge, contacts and resources to get them there.

Tennessee
Aquinas College
4210 Harding Road
Nashville, TN 37205
Phone: (615) 297-7545
Website: www.aquinascollege.edu
Located in Nashville, TN, Aquinas College draws from 800 years of Dominican tradition, proven to deliver an exceptional and comprehensive education, preparing the whole person for success, in this life and the next. Offering degrees in Education, Nursing, Business and Liberal Arts, Aquinas College is both affordable and price-less.

Vermont
Saint Michael’s College
One Winooski Park,
Colchester, VT 05449
Phone: (802) 654-2000
Website: www.smccvt.edu
Founded in 1904, by the Society of Saint Edmund, we are a top liberal arts college with a passion for social justice rooted in the Edmundite tradition of service, hospitality and education. At Saint Michael’s College our students love to learn, explore and achieve with more than 30 majors available, each grounded in the liberal studies curriculum.

Virginia
Christendom College
134 Christendom Dr., Front Royal, VA 22630
Phone: (800) 877-5456
Fax: (540) 636-1655
Website: www.christendom.edu
E-mail: admissions@christendom.edu
Contact: Sam Phillips, Director of Admissions
Ranked as one of the top ten colleges in the nation, Christendom College invites you to discover rigorous and personal academics, along with an unparalleled spiritual and cultural formation. This is an affordable education that will prepare you to excel in any career and thrive as the person that God has called you to be.

Washington DC
Pontifical John Paul II Institute
620 Michigan Ave. NE
Washington, DC 20064
Phone: (202) 526-3799
Website: www.johnpaulii.edu
E-mail: information@johnpaulii.edu
Founded by St. John Paul II, the Institute is devoted to the study of the human person in all of its dimensions: philosophical, theological, anthropological, and scientific. The mission of the Institute is to engage the question of the nature of the human person in light of the issues surrounding the person that are particularly relevant in our modern society.

Wisconsin
Alverno College
3400 S.MLK Drive
Milwaukee, WI 53219
Phone: (414) 382-6100 or (800) 933-3401
Fax: (414) 382-6055
Website: www.alverno.edu
E-mail: admissions@alverno.edu
Alverno College is a four-year, liberal arts, independent, all-women’s college chartered in 1887 by the School Sisters of St. Francis. World-renowned for its ground-breaking curriculum, Alverno teaches Eight Core Abilities (all essential to both professional and personal success) within every course. A wide variety of majors and minors is available.

Cardinal Stritch University
6801 N. Yates Road
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Phone: (414) 410-4040
Website: www.stritch.edu
E-mail: admissions@stritch.edu
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Viterbo University
900 Viterbo Drive
La Crosse, WI 54601
Phone: 1-800-VITERBO
Website: www.viterbo.edu
E-mail: admission@viterbo.edu
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