Cardinal Francis George of Chicago dies of cancer at 78

CHICAGO, IL (CNA/EWTN News). Cardinal Francis George, the Emeritus Archbishop of Chicago, passed away Friday morning, April 17, after a long battle with cancer.

Archbishop Blase Cupich, who currently heads the archdiocese, remembered Cardinal George as “a man of peace, tenacity and courage.”

At an April 17 press conference, Archbishop Cupich lauded the cardinal for his bravery in overcoming challenges, which included a battle with polio as a teenager that left his legs permanently weak.

“Cardinal George was a respected leader among the bishops of the United States,” Archbishop Cupich said, particularly pointing to his work to fight the clerical sex abuse scandal: “He stood strong among his fellow bishops and insisted that zero tolerance was the only course consistent with our beliefs.”

The 78-year-old cardinal had been fighting cancer for several years. He was first diagnosed with bladder cancer in 2006 and underwent a five-hour surgery to remove his bladder and other parts of his body affected by cancer. In 2012, his doctors discovered that the cancer had returned, this time to his kidney and liver.

In an effort to battle the returning cancer, Cardinal George took part in a cancer drug clinical trial last year, which experimented with helping the body recognize cancerous cells through the immune system. After it was determined that his trial was proving to be ineffective, he halted the treatment in January.

The first Chicago native to become the city’s archbishop, Cardinal George retired in 2014 amid his battle with cancer and was succeeded by Archbishop Cupich. He had shepherded the archdiocese since 1997.

Last year, he said that the cancer would likely be the cause of his death.

HHS mandate loses again: SCOTUS order protects PA Catholic groups

WASHINGTON, DC (CNA/EWTN News). The U.S. Supreme Court has continued its trend of decisions stopping enforcement of a federal contraception mandate against religious employers with moral objections.

On April 15, Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito issued an order barring the federal government from enforcing the contraception mandate against the Little Sisters of the Poor and other challengers of the mandate.

On April 24, the Supreme Court is expected to consider a similar case involving the Nashville, TN-based Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia, and several Catholic charities in Tennessee and Michigan.

Windham noted that the court has sided with plaintiffs against the HHS mandate in four previous cases. Other plaintiffs which have prevailed against the mandate include institutions and businesses such as the Little Sisters of the Poor, Wheaton College, the University of Notre Dame and Hobby Lobby.

“The federal bureaucracy has lots of options for distributing contraceptives — they don’t need to coerce nuns and priests to do it for them,” said Windham, whose organization has represented the Little Sisters of the Poor and other challengers of the mandate.

On April 24, the Supreme Court is expected to consider a similar case involving the Nashville, TN-based Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia, and several Catholic charities in Tennessee and Michigan.
Pray this St. Francis novena for our new Bishop-elect

KAREN ROOD

Prayer is important. Prayer can change lives. The “Catechism of the Catholic Church” tells us that prayer is “the raising of one’s mind and heart to God”, and results in a vital and personal relationship with the living and true God. Jesus prayed to his Father. He also taught his disciples to pray with a purified heart, with lively and persevering faith, and with a boldness that comes from being one of God’s children.

On May 5, Father John Stowe will be ordained and installed as the Third Bishop of Lexington. We must pray without ceasing during this time: for Fr. John and this tremendous new ministry as a bishop; for the growth of our diocese as it begins to be shepherded by our new bishop; for ourselves that we may humbly accept the challenges that will be asked of us. To that end, Fr. John Stowe has written a novena to St. Francis, and we are asking the entire diocese to pray this novena the nine days before his ordination and installation.

A novena is a series of prayers that are said for nine straight days. The nine days recall the nine days that the Apostles and the Blessed Virgin Mary spent in prayer between Ascension Thursday and Pentecost Sunday. At the end of the nine days, we will be changed, and we trust that our loving God will pour forth the Holy Spirit upon us, upon Bishop-elect Stowe, and grace all of our efforts to be the hands and feet of Christ in the world under the guidance of our new shepherd.

BEGIN EACH DAY WITH THE FOLLOWING:

(Make the Sign of the Cross)

O holy Saint Francis, early in your life you enjoyed material wealth and pleasures but soon discovered that these would not bring you happiness. As you were seeking direction in your life, our Lord revealed himself to you in prayer and you responded with your whole heart. Help us to respond to the promptings of God’s grace in our lives and intercede for those who are seeking a direction for their life. Help us to see God’s action in our lives and respond each day.

Day One (Monday, April 27)

O holy Saint Francis, early in your life you enjoyed material wealth and pleasures but soon discovered that these would not bring you happiness. As you were seeking direction in your life, our Lord revealed himself to you in prayer and you responded with your whole heart. Help us to respond to the promptings of God’s grace in our lives and intercede for those who are seeking a direction for their life. Help us to see God’s action in our lives and respond each day.

Day Two (Tuesday, April 28)

O holy Saint Francis, at one time you wished to become a knight and be distinguished in war. Soon you learned that war and violence are not glorified and you became a lover of peace. Help us to root out those attitudes in our hearts that can lead to hatred and violence and to seek the peace that comes from Christ our Lord. Help our troubled world to work for reconciliation and peace.

Day Three (Wednesday, April 29)

O holy Saint Francis, you were always generous with material goods. Before your conversion, the sight of lepers disgusted you. But once you were prompted by grace to draw close and embrace a leper, the encounter transformed your life. Help us to overcome our fear of the outcast and our prejudices against categories of people different than ourselves. Help us to be compassionate like Christ and reach out to those in need. When we reach out to the stranger, we are blessed by the encounter. Help us to overcome our fears and help those in need.

Day Four (Thursday, April 30)

O holy Saint Francis, you sought enlightenment from God by praying in quiet places and abandoned churches. In the church of San Damiano, you heard the voice of Christ on the cross tell you to rebuild His church. You responded with stones and mortar, but later discovered that by living the Gospel you were contributing to a renewal of the Church. Help us to contribute to the renewal of the Church in our time, give us a true dedication to the Gospel and a desire to draw all people to Christ. May those who have wandered away or those who have been hurt by the church discover again Christ’s presence among us. Help us to live the grace of our baptism and contribute to the building up of God’s reign.

Day Five (Friday, May 1)

O holy Saint Francis, once you began to live the Gospel simply and rejected earthly comforts, many people were drawn to you. You accepted brothers and sisters as a gift from God and tried to guide them to preach penance by example and by their words. Help us to see our brothers and sisters as gifts from God, even when their views and thoughts are different than our own. Help us to embrace simplicity of life and a loving relationship with everyone that God places in our lives.

Day Six (Saturday, May 2)

O holy Saint Francis, there are many stories about your special relationship with all of God’s creatures. The birds responded to your preaching. You reconciled a wolf and villagers terrified of that wolf by teaching them to respond to each other’s needs. You celebrated God’s goodness in the beauty of all creation and even treated the natural elements as brothers and sisters. Help us to appreciate nature as a sign of the Creator’s presence. Help us to preserve the beauty of our planet and try not to exploit creation but to use it carefully. Help us to treat all living creatures as gifts from God which reflect His glory.

Day Seven (Sunday, May 3)

O holy Saint Francis, when you looked for direction in your life, you did not hesitate to consult the Gospels. Simply opening the Word of God you accepted the direction which came from His Word. You made every effort to imitate Jesus in everyday life and people saw in you a great resemblance to the Savior. Help us to appreciate the power of God’s Word. Help us to live as Jesus would live and to recognize that we are the members of His body. May God’s Word give direction to our thoughts and actions as it did for you.

Day Eight (Monday, May 4)

O holy Saint Francis, when Christians were fighting against Muslims to regain the Holy Land of Jesus, you sought a better way and fearlessly walked among the Muslim people. You taught your followers to live the Gospel courageously and give an example to others before speaking and preaching. Your encounter with the Sultan led to his respect of the Christian faith. In our troubled world, help us to appreciate the need for dialogue and for understanding those of other faiths even as we cherish our faith in Jesus Christ. May we learn to evangelize by the example we give and the way we treat all people with dignity and respect.

Day Nine (Tuesday, May 5)

O holy Saint Francis, throughout your life you accepted suffering and you were moved by compassion for the sufferings of others. You embraced Christ in the poor and the lepers and you allowed yourself to become more and more like Christ. When you were marked with the wounds of Christ’s passion you exemplified Christ even more clearly. Help us to accept the crosses of our lives and to allow Christ to transform them by the power of His cross. Help us to become more compassionate and work to relieve the sufferings of others and offer them the hope that comes from Christ’s victory over sin and death.

Liturgies Corner
After vision of Christ, Nigerian bishop says rosary will vanquish Boko Haram

Alan Holdren

ROME, ITALY (CNA/EWTN News) A Nigerian bishop says that he has seen Christ in a vision and now knows that the rosary is the key to ridding the country of the Islamist terrorist organization Boko Haram.

Bishop Oliver Dashe Doeme says he is being driven by a God-given mandate to lead others in praying the rosary until the extremist group disappears.

“Towards the end of last year I was in my chapel before the Blessed Sacrament… praying the rosary, and then suddenly the Lord appeared,” Bishop Dashe told CNA April 18.

In the vision, the prelate said, Jesus didn’t say anything at first, but extended a sword toward him, and he in turn reached out for it.

“At first I thought he was going to strike me, but then I turned, saw him and the sword, and I knew he was not going to strike me, as the Church is already loosed from the prison of sin,” the bishop said.

In the vision, the prelate said, Jesus didn’t say anything at first, but extended a sword toward him, and he in turn reached out for it.

“Jesus then told him three times: ‘Boko Haram is gone.’”

“I didn’t need any prophet to give me the explanation,” he said. “It was clear that with the rosary we would be able to expel Boko Haram.”

“The bishop said he didn’t want to tell anyone, but “felt that the Holy Spirit was pushing him to do so.”

He started with the priests of his diocese, and then told participants in the April 17-19 Synod of Bishops that the rosary will vanquish Boko Haram.

“Maybe that’s why he did it,” said the bishop, referring to Jesus in his vision.

“The event is being sponsored by the Spanish Catholic sister groups hazeteor.org and CitizenGo to gather ideas on how to preserve the Christian presence in nations where they are most persecuted.

Bishop Dashe leads the Diocese of Maiduguri, in northeastern Nigeria’s Borno State. In 2009, there were around 125,000 Catholics under his guidance. After a surge in violence from the Islamist extremist group called Boko Haram, today “there are only 50 to 60 thousand left,” he said.

Most of those who fled sought safer areas in other parts of Nigeria, he said. Some of the same families are now returning home as armed forces from Nigeria, Chad and Cameroon liberate their homes.

In 2014, Boko Haram became known worldwide when members kidnapped nearly 300 girls from a school in Borno State. On March 7, 2015, five suicide bombers killed 54 and wounded nearly three times as many in the capital city of Maidaguri, where the bishop lives and works.

The group has killed 1,000 people across Nigeria in the first three months of 2015, according to Human Rights Watch, which reports that more than 6,000 have died in Boko Haram-led violence since 2009.

Just last month, the group pledged its allegiance to ISIS—also known as the Islamic State—which launched a bloody campaign in Iraq and Syria last summer.

Meanwhile, Bishop Dashe has just completed a “consolation tour” to communities in his diocese, promoting forgiveness and continued faith. He believes he was asked by Jesus to spread devotion to the rosary in order to aid them as they do so.

“Maybe that’s why he did it,” said the bishop, referring to Jesus in his vision.

Bishop Dashe said he has a strong devotion to Christ’s mother, and that “I never joke with ‘Mamma Mary.’ I know she is here with us.”

And he is not the only Nigerian bishop putting the future of the country in the hands of the rosary.
Because He promised . . .

“Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.” (MT 5:4)

The burial and care of the deceased is a matter of deep spiritual significance and a corporal work of mercy. In addition to that, there are only two places set aside by Canon Law as sacred: your church for divine worship and your final resting place for eternal peace.

Your Catholic cemetery is committed to conscientiously performing a ministry of service to all the faithful departed, as well as those they left behind. Jesus promised comfort for those who mourn. And through Him, we at Calvary Cemetery will do our part to see that you get it.

OFFICE HOURS
9 AM - 4 PM weekdays
Call Fran Borders for an appointment

GATE HOURS
8 AM - 5 PM everyday, year-round

Everyone is invited to Solemn Evening Prayer on the evening before the ordination & installation of Reverend John Stowe, OFM, Conv.

Monday, May 4, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. • Cathedral of Christ the King

Presider:
Bishop Ronald W. Gainer
Bishop of Harrisburg, PA & former Bishop of Lexington

Homilist:
Bishop-Elect John Stowe

Reception following in Hehman Hall

This is a great opportunity to meet our new Bishop-Elect and to reconnect with Bishop Gainer.

reallife

Installation Coverage OF BISHOP ELECT JOHN STOWE

VESPER SERVICE: MAY 4TH AT 7PM | INSTALLATION MASS: MAY 5TH AT 2PM
To hear both in to 1380AM/94.9 FM, stream via www.realiferadio.com or listen via the NEW Real Life Radio App.

FIND DETAILS AT: WWW.REALLIFERADIO.COM
Boko Haram

Continued from Page 3

hands of Mary. The nation’s bishops’ conference has consecrated the country to her twice in recent years.

Bishop Dashe believes that one day his diocese will completely recover and grow thanks to her intercession.

“These terrorists… think that by burning our churches, burning our structures, they will destroy Christianity. Never,” Bishop Dashe told several hundred people from the dais of the #WeAreN2015 congress.

“It may take a few months or a few years … but ‘Boko Haram is gone.’”

He later told CNA that “prayer, particularly the prayer of the rosary, is (what) will deliver us from the claws of this demon, the demon of terrorism. And of course, it is working.”

Pope Francis: ‘Don’t mess with children’

Elise Harris
ROME, ITALY (CNA/ewtn News). Pope Francis said April 8 that children are never a mistake, and called adults out for building faulty systems that leave children exploited and abandoned, rather than treated as the blessings they are.

“Brothers and sisters, think about this well: you don’t mess with children,” the pope told pilgrims in his general audience.

He spoke in reference to the difficult circumstances many children are unfortunately forced live in due to societal and familial problems.

“We think about the children who are not wanted or abandoned, the children on the streets, without education or health care, children who are abused, who are robbed of their youth and childhood,” he said.

Some try to “justify themselves,” saying that it’s a mistake to bring these children into the world due to the poverty, hunger and fragility they suffer, the pope continued.

For a child to experience these things “is shameful,” he noted, but quipped, “let’s not offload our sins onto children.”

A child, he said, “can never be considered a mistake. The mistake is the world of adults, the system that we have built, which generates pockets of poverty and violence, in which the weakest are hit the hardest.”

Francis’ focus on the suffering of children fits into his ongoing catechesis on the family, which he began last fall in preparation for October’s Ordinary Synod of Bishops on the Family.

He continued, saying that each child who begs for money on the street and is denied medical care and education is “a painful cry that goes directly to the heart of the Father, and accuses the system that we adults have built.”

Far too often these children become the prey of criminals who exploit them for either commerce or violence, the pope said, noting that even children in wealthy countries frequently live “heavy dramas.”

“In every case, their childhood is violated in body and soul,” he said, explaining that social stability, the promotion of the family, the lack of crime, and the possibility of decent work all contribute to assuring children of a good home.

Francis said, no child is forgotten by their Father in heaven, and “none of their tears are lost, just as our responsibility is not lost.”

Children are the responsibility not just of their parents, but of everyone, he explained.

“The Church, for her part, has always transmitted the blessing of the Lord to children and to families,” he said, and prayed that families would always care for their children and not worry about “counting the cost.”

It’s necessary for children to see this, he said, “so that they may never believe themselves to be mistakes, but always know their infinite worth.”

ProCatholic Tours

Elite tours planned just for you...

Specializing in trips to the Holy Land, Italy, Lourdes, Fatima, Ireland, Scandinavia, and Custom Tours to all of Europe.

Exclusive 5-star accommodations and services.

Maximum group size 24 people. Airfare and all-inclusive prices.

Kami LeVern,
General Manager
PO Box 626
Ridgeland, MS 39158
769-220-2702

Tony LeVern
769-233-6515
www.procatholic tours.com

Senninger Plumbing Co., Inc.
Lexington office now hiring plumbers & plumbers helpers.
Excellent pay and full benefit package available.
Drug test required. EEOC.
cindylanham@iglou.com or (502) 239-3264 x115
Catholic Men Servant Leaders held their 2nd annual Men’s Conference on Saturday, Mar. 21 at Lexington Catholic High School. The theme for the day was “For the Sake of His Name.” The event opened with adoration and benediction, followed by remarks from Father Bob Nieberding, diocesan administrator. Guest speakers were George Weigel (center), columnist, analyst and author of “The End and the Beginning; John Paul II,” and Dr. Marcellino D’Ambrosio (right, with Fr. Norman Fischer), producer of EWTN’s “Early Church Fathers” series, frequent guest on a variety of Catholic programs and NY Times best-selling author. The event included the sacrament of Reconciliation and concluded with Mass. About 350 people attended.

Family, friends, and former parishioners gathered April 18 at Pax Christi Parish, Lexington, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Father Larry Hehman’s ordination to the priesthood. Fr. Hehman was the founding pastor of Pax Christi, guiding it from celebrating Mass in a bingo parlor to a storefront parish to the large, modern church the parish presently occupies. He also served as rector of the Cathedral of Christ the King, Lexington, and pastor of Holy Spirit Parish/UK Newman Center.

Bishop-elect John Stowe met with the diocesan deacons and those in formation on Saturday, April 11 at Hehman Hall at the Cathedral of Christ the King. After an introduction by Dr. Jim Paris, director of the Permanent Diaconate, the Bishop-elect spoke briefly and opened the floor for questions and friendly dialogue. At the following reception, Fr. John was presented with a cake that featured two Central Kentucky staples: basketball and bourbon. Afterwards, Fr. John celebrated the 5 p.m. Mass at the Cathedral.

What's going on in your parish?
Send us your photos & a brief description (who, what, when & where) and we’ll publish them in Cross Roads! solson@cdlex.org
Another Easter has come and gone. And like all good holiday celebrations these days, the decorations are quickly taken down and put away. There is, of course, only one problem—Easter is not over.

LENT: A RETROSPECTIVE

In the Bible, any time period that consists of the number 40 is significant. Periods of 40 typically begin with great acts of faith and involve numerous trials and tribulations, but they end with God's transformation. While examples abound in the Scriptures, a few prominent stories will help illustrate the transformative power inherent in these periods.

Our first example takes us back to Noah. It was a time when God began to regret having created humanity. Wickedness was everywhere, so God decided to put an end to all life on earth. The one exception was Noah. Noah believed God and acted on God's command to build an ark, despite the ridicule of his peers. Then the rain began to fall. For 40 days and 40 nights, the water poured down from the heavens flooding the earth and wiping out all living creatures. Only Noah and those on the ark survived the great flood and lived to re-inhabit the renewed and transformed earth.

Later in the Old Testament, Moses was commanded by God to climb Mt. Sinai. Moses spent 40 days and 40 nights on Mt. Sinai, before descending with the stone tablets on which God had written the commandments intended for the people's instruction. These tablets were later destroyed by Moses, when he saw that the Israelites had turned away from God toward a golden calf in his absence. However, God called Moses back to Mt. Sinai for another 40 days and 40 nights of fasting, while God redelivered the Law to Moses and transformed a lawless people into a covenantal people.

As we turn to the New Testament, we learn that Jesus was led by the Spirit, after his baptism by John and before he began his public ministry, into the wilderness where he fasted for 40 days and 40 nights. It was during this time that Jesus was tempted to be self-sufficient, to manipulate God, and to worship the devil instead of God. However, the Incarnate Word of God transformed this darkness into light by not only entering into our weakness, but by giving us an antidote—faithful obedience to and total dependence on God alone.

Finally, Jesus appeared to his disciples for 40 days, after he had suffered, died, and rose from the dead, before he ascended into heaven. Jesus had faithfully and obediently submitted to the ultimate trial and through it transformed death into life. He had overcome the cross through the resurrection showing a wounded humanity the eternal destiny that awaits those who love God.

Again, periods of 40 precede and prepare for God's transformative action in the world. This is the great lesson of Lent: transformation is preceded by the demands of prayer, penance, fasting, and self-denial. The resurrection follows the cross. And the great gift that we have been given with the season of Lent is an invitation to participate in this history of God's transformative power.

THE EASTER LIGHT

Now, of course, we bask in the warmth and glow of the Easter Light that has shattered the darkness and its power forever. On Easter Sunday, we again celebrated the beginning of "the new age of the Resurrection." But, as we said before, Easter is not simply a day. It is not, as the "Catechism of the Catholic Church" states, "simply one feast among others, but the 'Feast of feasts,' the 'Solemnity of solemnities.'"

In fact, Easter is most properly understood as a season, the longest of the church's year. Eastertide, or the Easter Season, spans the 50 days from Easter Sunday to Pentecost Sunday. The period is celebrated as a single, joyful feast with each Sunday of the season being a Sunday of Easter.

ON THE EIGHTH DAY…

The significance of the Easter Season to the church can be illuminated by a consideration of the number eight. To the Hebrews, the number seven signaled completion or perfection. The Sabbath in fact represents the seventh day, a day of rest mirroring God's resting on the seventh day after having completed creation. The number eight then represented something over and above this perfect completion. The eighth day would convey the notion of super abundance and, just as significantly, the beginning of a new series or new order.

For Christianity, the Resurrection of Christ is this eighth day. According to the Catechism, "the day of Christ's Resurrection is both the first day of the week, the memorial of the first day of creation, and the 'eighth day,' on which Christ after his 'rest' on the great Sabbath inaugurates the 'day that the Lord has made,' the 'day that knows no evening.'"

And this eighth day continues with the first eight days of the Easter Season, beginning with Resurrection Sunday and concluding with Divine Mercy Sunday. Together, these constitute the Octave of Easter and all are celebrated as solemnities of the Lord, or liturgically as one single day. If this were not enough to express the importance of the Easter celebration, the "great Sunday" of the Easter Season begins with the day of Christ's resurrection and continues through eight Sundays to Pentecost, an octave of Sundays, a "week of weeks."

ALREADY AND NOT YET

The Easter Season celebrates in a very special way the outpouring of God's super abundant love for the world. Again, the Catechism captures the spirit of this season when it says, "Beginning with the Easter Triduum as its source of light, the new age of the Resurrection fills the whole liturgical year with its brilliance…The economy of salvation is at work within the framework of time, but since in fulfillment in the Passover of Jesus and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the culmination of history is anticipated 'as a foretaste,' and the kingdom of God enters into our time."

And this sense that the kingdom of God is "already and not yet" is the tension that all Christians are called to live out and celebrate in their daily lives. It is in fact the reason for the joy of this season. Though the "life" we see often seems to go on as usual, we know that the Easter event has transformed everything definitively. It is by this faith that we walk and have our being. Ultimately, the Easter Season represents an invitation to adjust our "vision," in order to see the world as God sees it and celebrate its destiny—that is, eternal life in communion with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
Cardinal George

Continued from Page 1
dearth, but that he was counting on prayers so that he “might be of service to the Lord and His Church in the time left.”

Cardinal George leaves behind a robust legacy as a leader among the American bishops and an influential figure in the global church.

He worked with the U.S. bishops and Vatican to fight clerical sex abuse, prominently speaking in favor of a “zero tolerance” policy.

He was also a religious freedom advocate, strongly opposing regulations under the Obama administration that would require Catholic organizations to cooperate with providing abortion and contraception.

A long-time commenter on the state of culture, Cardinal George is known for once saying that he believed he would die in bed, his successor would die in prison, and his successor will die a martyr in the public square, but that the following successor would pick up the fragments of society and help to rebuild civilization.

Born Jan. 16, 1937, Francis Eugene George joined the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate and was ordained a priest in 1963. He obtained a master’s degree in philosophy at The Catholic University of America and a doctorate in American philosophy at Tulane University in New Orleans. He later studied at the Pontifical Urban University in Rome, where he earned Doctorate of Sacred Theology.

Pope John Paul II appointed him Bishop of Yakima in 1990. He became Archbishop of Portland, Oregon, in 1997 and was appointed the following year to be the Archbishop of Chicago.

Elevated to the College of Cardinals in 1998, Cardinal George was appointed to numerous Vatican councils and congregations, including the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, the Pontifical Council for Culture, the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and for Societies of Apostolic Life, and the Pontifical Council “Cor Unum.”

Cardinal George was a papal appointee to the Synod of Bishops on Consecrated Life in 1994 and served as a delegate to the synod of bishops on several other occasions.

The cardinal served as president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops from 2007-2010. He was a member and advisor for numerous other committees at the U.S. bishops’ conference, including those dealing with doctrine, missions, evangelization and catechesis, pro-life activities, divine worship, African American Catholics and religious liberty.

He was a board member for numerous organizations, including The Catholic University of America, the National Catholic Bioethics Center, the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception and the National Catholic Office for Persons with Disabilities.

During his time as archbishop of Chicago, Cardinal George wrote pastoral letters on evangelization and the problem of racism. He also wrote two books reflecting on faith in relation to culture and the common good.

Archbishop Cupich recalled Cardinal George as a man who was close to the diocese that he led, “always choosing the Church over his own comfort and the people over his own needs.”

He praised the cardinal for his example throughout his life, including his final battle with cancer.

“Let us heed his example and be a little more brave, a little more steadfast, and a lot more loving,” the archbishop said. ■
“A true Christian...isn’t afraid of getting their hands dirty.”

~Pope Francis, morning homily, Nov. 6, 2014

Join us. We’ll bring the soap.

It’s through your generous involvement that together we, as those chosen and called, can meet the temporal and spiritual needs of all who must rely on our diocesan ministries and programs. Each and every gift - no matter how modest - ensures the healing, teaching, and sanctifying presence of our Lord in the 50 counties of central and eastern Kentucky that comprise the Diocese of Lexington. Let’s put our hands together and get them really dirty!

Here are just some of the ways your donations will help:

Be involved ... with your gift of time, money or both at www.cdlex.org/annualappeal
“Will you take me as I am?”

MIKE ALLEN

“Will you take me as I am?” asks the young woman of the Prince toward the end of Disney’s new non-animated Cinderella. Directed by the acclaimed Kenneth Branagh, this excellent film has received both criticism and praise for hewing fairly straight to the original tale, extolling the virtues of kindness and courage without irony, cynicism, or deconstruction.

Ordinarily, a “spoiler alert” would be courteous, but this is Cinderella. You already know that the boy gets the girl, and vice versa. But to understand the weight of the question, “Will you take me as I am?” involves exploring who and what makes her who she is in the film.

Unlike the more two-dimensional animated version, this edition takes time to present the title character’s early years. Raised in much happiness by doting parents, Ella’s adolescent world is darkened by tragedy and disappointment, first in her mother’s early death, and then her fathers’ hasty marriage to a self-absorbed and vindictive widow with two spoiled daughters of her own.

During her father’s business travels, Ella (her birth name) is treated scombrily by her stepfamily, a plight that would only worsen after her father dies. Soon, she is a slave in her own house, with heavy chores by day and sleeping in an attic tower by night. Even so, she strives to fulfill her mother’s dying request, to always “have courage and be kind.”

One cold winter night, Ella curls up by the fireplace’s dying embers, and awakens the next day with her face blotched with soot, prompting the derisive “Cinder-Ella” nickname that would stay with her in the coming years. Yet she maintains hope, because of her mother’s instruction to see the world “not as it is but as it should be.”

Father Robert Baron recently commented on the Christian overtones in the Cinderella story, with its familiar biblical pattern of creation, fall, and redemption. Reflecting in the glory of Ella’s childhood, the “fallen-ness” of her tragedy and abuse (which leaves her original glory still present but marred with soot), and her redemption at the hand of her beloved.

At her reunion with the Prince, who was searching the kingdom to find the foot that would fit the glass slipper, Ella asks, “Will you take me as I am?” To which he replies, “Who are you?”

This is where we want her to say, “I am Ella,” rejecting the mockery she’d received from her persecutors and reclaiming the identity they had stolen. “I am Ella!” would be an appropriate refutation of the injustice that has overshadowed the beauty of her birthright. But the film’s brilliant screenplay (written by Chris Weitz) has the young woman declare, “I am Cinderella.”

The young woman’s acceptance of her identity as Cinderella tells us at least two things. First of all, whereas faith calls us to “see the world not as it is but as it should be,” this has to be properly understood. The suffering we endure, whether at the hands of others, the result of disease or disaster, or by our own poor choices, is not something extrinsic to our own identity that only mars our glory with negativity and is better for-gotten, denied, or suppressed.

Rather, the mystery of God’s saving grace is that redemption happens precisely through suffering, ultimately in the paschal mystery of Christ’s death and resurrection (in which his saving scars remain) but also in our own experiences that find redemptive meaning when united with Christ’s, both in our own lives and in the lives of others. The world that “should be” is recreated precisely from the world “as it is,” with grace perfecting nature.

Secondly, this cinematic question, “Will you take me as I am?” reveals the unconditional nature of marital love, in which we are called to take each other “as we are,” period. The “two becoming one” of marriage is not limited to the joining of each person’s strengths, victories, and gifts, but also the uniting of each spouse’s weaknesses, failures, and wounds.

Thus, a question for spouses (and potential spouses) to ask themselves is, “Do I love my spouse as he/she is, or do I love who I wish he/she would be?” If it’s the latter, good luck with that, as they say. If it’s the former, such love is a mature expression of the love of Christ, who thankfully loves us “as we are,” soot-faced and all. If your marital love is somewhere between those two poles, don’t lose heart; the perfecting of love is precisely what marriage is for. And thanks to Disney’s Cinderella for the reminder.

Good secretaries: Vital to the parish & pastoral team

FATHER PAUL PRABELL

I understand that you recently offered a day of renewal for parish secretaries. What was that like?

A This day of renewal emerged from three directions: 1) St. Meinrad’s retreat center annually offers a week-long retreat for parish secretaries. This retreat is very good, but the cost and time involved make it difficult for many of the secretaries in our diocesan parishes to attend. 2) Recently in our parish in Morehead, we hosted a morning meeting for the secretaries of several downtown churches, where they met one another for the first time, compared the extent of their ministries, and discussed with a social worker the best way to work together in responding to people who call or come to their church office expressing the need for financial or food assistance. 3) In a meeting of the Diocesan Peace and Justice Office’s Education Committee, Debbie Goonan of Catholic Charities offered to be a resource person as a social worker for a day of renewal for parish secretaries. So about 6 weeks ago, Debbie and I teamed up to offer a day of renewal for secretaries from parishes throughout our diocese. We located the day of renewal at St. Paul’s Parish in Lexington and are very grateful for their hospitality.

The day highlighted the ministry of parish secretaries, their desire to fuel their own spirituality, and offered the opportunity for them to share with one another experiences from their parish offices. The title of the day was the classic line of the newscaster, Rosanne, Rosannadanna of “Saturday Night Live” fame: “It’s always something.”

The parishes in our diocese vary in size and so do the responsibilities of parish secretaries. Beyond the typical job descriptions of bulletin publisher, receptionist, and bookkeeper, secretaries in our parishes are often the on-site technology consultants, a confidant to both staff and parishioners, a filter of what is private and community information, an evaluator of pastoral decisions, and the organizer of birthday parties and other pastoral staff celebrations.

A strong focus of our day of renewal was on the role of the secretary as the first person often met by new parishioners, by visitors, and by people who say they are in need of assistance.

Debbie Goonan guided the sessions on the secretaries’ responses to people in need. She highlighted the importance of kindness and respect if a referral is made, or even if there is nothing to be given and there is a feeling that the person is trying to take advantage of the church and is not telling the truth. Debbie also reminded us that no one can be perfect in these situations. We often choose to be prudent and responsible rather than harsh. But we do need to say “no” at times. And if we are judgmental or negative, we need to forgive ourselves and do everything we can to be on the high road of treating people with respect and compassion.

The secretaries from our parishes frequently gather for business meetings to stay up to date on diocesan policies and procedures. A day of renewal invites them to relate to one another on a more personal level. Many secretaries have been surprised by the varied aspects of their positions, and the ways that parish life can be intense in ways that are life-giving but also in ways that are draining.

Parish secretaries find their positions to be much more than a job. Many put in extra time on special projects and approach their work as part of the parish’s ministry. Most pastors will echo my belief that a good parish secretary is indispensable for the vitality of the parish and the parish pastoral team.

If you or someone you know has been the victim of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct by church personnel, contact the Diocese of Lexington’s Victim Advocate, Nelda Jackson 859-253-1993, xt 214 or njackson@cdlex.org
Response: Gratitude, proclamation, and love

MSGR. JOSEPH G. PRIOR
4TH SUNDAY OF EASTER • APRIL 26, 2015

Mary had a serious disease and needed a blood transfusion. The donor would have to be someone who also had had the disease. Her brother Johnny fit the bill, for two years earlier he had recovered from the same disease. The doctor approached Johnny to see if he was willing to give his blood for his sister. Johnny hesitated, then he said: “Yes, for my sister.”

The children were wheeled into the sterile room. Mary was pale and thin due to the disease. Johnny was healthy and strong. The needles were inserted first into Mary then into Johnny. As he watched the blood starting to flow, the smile faded from his face. When the transfusion was almost complete Johnny asked: “Doctor, when am I going to die?”

It was only then that the doctor realized why Johnny had hesitated, when he had first asked him—Johnny thought that giving his blood meant giving his life. The doctor told Johnny he would live, but then stood in awe, realizing that this young child was willing to give his life for someone he loved.

Continuing our celebration of Easter, we are again reminded of God’s immense love. The First Letter of John speaks of us as God’s children. We are God’s children through union with his Son, Jesus Christ. Through baptism we are united with Christ in his death and promised a like share in his resurrection. Jesus speaks of the great love God has for us, when he calls himself the “Good Shepherd.” We find comfort in the image. At the same time we are moved to profound awe when we hear Jesus say: “I am the Good Shepherd….and I will lay down my life for the sheep.” No ordinary shepherd will offer himself for his sheep. Jesus is no ordinary shepherd. His love for his sheep is beyond calculation. He willingly offers himself on their behalf. In his love the Father sends his Son to lay down his life in love. Jesus willingly accepts this mission in love and we have life through this love.

Reflecting on this love we are filled with awed silence. Our response manifests itself in three ways: gratitude, proclamation, and love.

Psalm 118 helps us articulate our gratitude. Through it we express our appreciation for the love God has for us. We acknowledge that he is our “refuge,” our “trust,” and our “savior.”

The Acts of the Apostles recall the response of the apostles and early discples to the resurrection of Jesus—they proclaim. Today’s reading is a good example. Peter proclaims to the leaders of the people, “Peter proclaims to the leaders of the people, Just previous to this he had been in the Temple with John. There was a man there “crippled from birth.” Seeing Peter and John enter he had asked for alms. Peter took his hand raised him. Peter begins a speech in praise of Jesus. The captain of the Temple Guard and the Sadducees confront him and arrest him. This is where today’s passage picks up. Peter proclaims that it is in the name of Jesus that the cripple man now walks. Peter says Jesus is “the stone rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. There is no salvation through anyone else, nor is there any other name under heaven given to the human race by which we are to be saved.” Empowered by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, Peter boldly proclaims Jesus. We too have live in the life Christ gives us. We too have the gift of the Spirit. We too have shared in the love of Christ and can offer this life to others through the proclamation of that love.

The third way we respond to this great gift of God’s love is to love as he loved. You may recall the passage in John where Jesus speaks of the greatest love. In response to Jesus’ love, we are to keep his commands—the greatest of these is the command to love. The way we live a “good” life is to live a life of love. Laying down our lives in service, care, and concern for each other is our response to the love Jesus has for us.

Johnny did not have to die for Mary, but Jesus did die for us, so that we might live. In his resurrection we rise with him to life. May we grow ever stronger in our response to his love through gratitude, proclamation, and love.

Judgment, anger of Donatists became their undoing

ROD STEARN

Hello Diocese of Lexington! Cross Roads has asked me to write a few catechetical pieces based on church history. This is the first. If you have suggestions for others, please contact me at rstearn@cdlex.org.

I often find inspiration in the stories of the early martyrs. Conforming themselves to Christ’s passion, these men and women calmly responded to the world’s anger and hate with love, prayer, and forgiveness. Other early Catholics took inspiration from them as well. Then as now, however, Christians were human. When persecution came some were overcome by fear, and denied Christ. This was hard for their fellow Catholics, especially when the fallen-away were priests. Although many such priests were later reconciled to the church, some believed that was not enough. These Christians believed no reconciliation was possible for such a betrayal, and that such priests were permanently unable to offer the sacraments. In North Africa, a group of these Christians, separated from the Catholic Church. They became known as the Donatists.

The separation changed them. The Donatists now believed that the Catholic Church’s sacraments had been invalidated, that Catholic priests were not holy. In doing so, the Donatists judged not only the sins of other Christians, but their souls also. This judgment set up a division: the good “us” against the bad “them.” The difference was purity; “we” remained true, “they” did not. Rather than focus on their own sins and the virtues of others, the Donatists focused on their own virtues and others’ sins. Judgment led to judgment, and soon the most militant wing of the Donatists took the next step. These were the Circumcellions: the wandering, violent equivalent of monks. They began to attack Catholic churches and priests, beating, blinding them, even killing them.

It was St. Augustine who ended this bitter conflict. He tried everything to bring the Donatists back: writing, preaching, even debating. He taught people the truth: the efficacy of the sacraments had never depended on the holiness of priests. No one could be holy enough to effect sacraments on their own; it is Christ who does so through the priest. What matters is the holiness of Christ, not that of the priest. But the Donatists had clever arguments, and Augustine couldn’t be everywhere. He wanted to give people something concrete to cling to, something that wouldn’t depend on study or argument. Augustine realized a scriptural truth that was later summed up at the Second Vatican Council: “All pastors should remember too that by their daily conduct and concern they are revealing the face of the Church to the world, and men will judge the power and truth of the Christian message thereby.” He knew that most people judge the power and truth of the Christian message thereby. He knew that most people through the witness of his followers. So Augustine created some of the first seminaries, and taught his priests and religious to live in simplicity and charity. He taught them poverty and abstinence, to build their monasteries in the cities and to care for the poor.

His pupils brought Christ’s love to the people. Their lives were a powerful example of humility. The Christian love and forgiveness they taught stood in stark contrast to the Donatists’ anger and judgment. Augustine’s preaching highlighted this contrast: when the Donatists attack you with argument, he said, you don’t need to argue back. Let the comparison speak for itself. The difference between the violent, judgmental Circumcellions and the poor, humble, altruistic Catholic priests and religious had its effect: Donatism was practically finished by the time of Augustine’s death.

There are many lessons in this story; the consequences of judgment and self-inflation, the power of humility and charity. Probably the one I need to hear the most is about example. None of us is an island: salvation is a team sport. My spiritual life and relationship with Christ is not a private matter. Ours will be more open to Christ and his church if my witness is authentic. The story of the Donatists teaches us not to judge those who stumble along the way, and it teaches us that judgment begets division. But it also teaches us that a Christian life fully lived is an instrument of catechesis, evangelization, and unity. I believe we all need to hear this from time to time. I certainly do.
The Future has Arrived

Kentucky’s one and only revolutionary CT scanner is here. Saint Joseph Hospital, a leader in neurology care, is one of only ten institutions in the country with the technology to perform real-time CT scans. Finally, surgeons have the ability to control surgical results with intraoperative imaging. Give your patients the very best in neurological and spinal treatment at Saint Joseph Hospital – Where the future has arrived.

Visit KentuckyOneHealth.org/NeuroCT