



Nepal Nightmare

Church Extends Relief After Massive Earthquake April 25

BY ANTO AKKARA
REGISTER CORRESPONDENT

KATHMANDU, Nepal — Though the Catholic Church in Nepal itself suffered few casualties and no major devastation from the powerful earthquake that rocked Nepal on April 25, Church workers struggle to extend relief to the victims in remote areas of the Himalayan nation.

"We are really worried. The way things are progressing is not satisfactory at all," Bishop Paul Simick of Nepal told the Register May 4 on his way back to Kathmandu, after visiting the quake-devastated Gorkha

district, only 80 miles northeast of Kathmandu but five hours of mountain driving from the capital city.

"I saw along the [main] road [to Gorkha] people waiting for food and relief material," added Bishop Simick. "Many have come down from the mountains, walking miles."

The National Emergency Operation Center on May 3 estimated the death toll from the devastating earthquake, which measured 7.9 on the Richter scale, at more than 7,000 people, including 54 foreigners trekking in the Himalayas, who perished in avalanches triggered by the quake.

However, the casualty figures are likely to mount, as thousands have gone missing, with estimates suggesting up to 25,000 people may have died.

In the worst-affected Sindhu-palchowk district north of Kathmandu, where more than 2,000 dead bodies had been picked up as of press time, district officials have declared that at least 3,000 more are still unaccounted for.

On the day the earthquake struck, Bishop Simick was in Okhaldunga village in Ramechhap district, 125 miles southeast of Kathmandu, for the ordination of Jesuit Deacon Tek Raj Paudel.

The bishop recounted that,

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RECOVERY. Nepalese villagers take cover during an aid-dropping operation by an Indian helicopter on May 6 in Lampuk, Nepal. David Ramos/Getty Images



ARGUING FOR MARRIAGE. This artist's rendering shows Tennessee Associate Solicitor General Joseph Whalen making his case for states' rights against same-sex 'marriage' before the Supreme Court on April 28. Justices (from left) are Sonia Sotomayor, Stephen Breyer, Clarence Thomas, Antonin Scalia, Chief Justice John Roberts, Anthony Kennedy, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Samuel Alito Jr. and Elena Kagan. AP photo/Dana Verkouteren

High Court Mulls Marriage

Justices Hear Oral Arguments for and Against Its Redefinition

BY JOAN FRAWLEY DESMOND
SENIOR EDITOR

WASHINGTON — In oral arguments April 28 for Case No. 14-556, *Obergefell v. Hodges*, the U.S. Supreme Court weighed the constitutionality of state laws that bar same-sex couples from legal marriage or do not recognize the marriages of such couples legally wed in other states.

Marked by often-intense exchanges between the justices and advocates representing the same-sex couples and states involved in four related cases, the oral arguments addressed the meaning and purpose of marriage, the states' right to enact marriage laws and the religious liberty of clergy who oppose changes in marriage laws.

"THIS DEFINITION HAS BEEN WITH US FOR MILLENNIA. IT'S VERY DIFFICULT FOR THE COURT TO SAY, 'OH, WELL, WE KNOW BETTER.'"

— SUPREME COURT JUSTICE ANTHONY KENNEDY

While many legal experts have predicted that the high court will overturn state laws barring same-sex couples from legal marriage, scholars and activists were startled by Justice Anthony Kennedy's cautious response to changing the nation's marriage laws.

"The word that keeps coming back to me is 'millennia,'" said Kennedy, the perennial swing vote on the divided court, in a reference to marriage defined as a union of one man and one woman.

"This definition has been with us for millennia. It's very difficult for the court to say, 'Oh, well, we know better.'"

Ryan Anderson, an author and leading authority on marriage issues at the Heritage Foundation, said it was hard to forecast the court's decision.

"Clearly, the justices were conflicted over this issue," said Anderson, who attended the oral arguments.

"The first question out of Justice Kennedy

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Living Well at L'Arche

Disabled Residents and Their Assistants Share Homes

BY SOPHIA MASON FEINGOLD
REGISTER CORRESPONDENT

WASHINGTON — Walking through Washington's Adams Morgan neighborhood, it's easy to miss the house on Ontario Road or the one on Euclid Street.

Outside, they look like ordinary brownstones. Inside, the TV plays. Photographs of family members top the mantel, and colorful, hand-painted canvases adorn the walls. A "March Madness"-style board shows saints being voted through the "brackets" for a championship win.

But this building doesn't house a family or a group of budget-bound Millennials.

It's a home for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, one of four houses belonging to L'Arche in D.C. (LArche-gwdc.org).

The disabled residents or "core people" live side-by-side with assistants who help them meet their daily needs — everything from assistance in the bathroom and taking medications to tying shoes.

In turn, the core people help the assistants grow in patience, understanding and faith.



SLIDE ZONE. Sarah Ruszkowski and Eileen Schofield delight in going down a slide together at Cox Farm. Dale Iglesia

Residents apply through the D.C. or Arlington, Va., government (L'Arche has a link online). Entry presupposes that the disabled person has already been identified as such for legal purposes, etc. Since this is essentially a life choice,

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IN BRIEF

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"If you're right with God, everything else is fine; if you're not right with God, everything else is out of place. Being connected with God is the most important thing there is."

— Alejandro Villanueva, Army veteran and NFL player, *In Person* interview

Marriage and Sainthood

A look at holy lives, including the Martins, the parents of St. Thérèse of Lisieux. Culture of Life, page B2

Our Lady of Walsingham

England's beloved shrine is getting an update. Travel, page B5

NFL Soldier Stands Tall in Church

IN PERSON

When the annual NFL Draft took place April 30-May 2, many former and current professional players could look back and remember in which round they were chosen. Some players, however, were never drafted, but persevered and found their way onto the active roster of a team.

Alejandro Villanueva is hoping to be one of these men by building on his practice-squad experi-



PITTSBURGH STEELERS/KARL ROSER

ence with the Philadelphia Eagles and Pittsburgh Steelers. At 6 feet 9 inches tall, the 330-pound offensive lineman and tight end wants to be a

part of the 2015 Steelers' 53-man roster and plans to use his experience in the Army to make this happen.

Villanueva, whose father is a Spanish naval officer who worked for NATO, was born at Naval Air Station Meridian in Mississippi in 1988. After spending most of his childhood in Spain, Villanueva returned with his parents and three younger siblings to the United States in 2001.

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Connecticut Three-Peat

Assisted Suicide Shut Down Again

BY BRIAN FRAGA
REGISTER CORRESPONDENT

HARTFORD, Conn. — As the pro-assisted-suicide lobby sets its sights on more than a dozen states, an unlikely coalition of socially conservative pro-lifers and liberal activists for the elderly and disabled in Connecticut has shown how to defeat the effort to legalize assisted suicide.

For the third consecutive year, a bill that would have made it legal for doctors to prescribe lethal doses of medication to terminally ill patients failed to make it out of a Connecticut legislative committee without a vote. By coordinating effective testimony in public hearings with letter-writing campaigns, press conferences and other awareness-raising efforts, the left-right coalition successfully framed assisted suicide as bad public policy, with dangerous ramifications for the vulnerable in society.

"The more people understand the meaning and the specifics of legislation regarding assisted sui-



JAM SESSION. Opponents of assisted suicide celebrate their recent victory at the Connecticut State Capitol in Hartford. Family Institute of Connecticut

cide, the more they dislike it," said Michael Culhane, executive director of the Connecticut Catholic Conference.

Culhane told the Register that defeating the physician-assisted suicide bill, H.B. 7015, was the conference's top legislative priority in 2015, as it was in the two previous years, when similar legislation was pushed by Compassion & Choices, an organization previously known as the Hemlock Society that is the driving force behind the effort to legalize assisted suicide across the country.

"A great deal of work and coordination went into the demise of this assisted-suicide legislation," said Culhane, adding that the Con-

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Nepal

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while he was coming down a steep hill with his driver after the ordination, "I heard a sound like that of a helicopter." He added, "The earth was trembling. Houses were falling like packs of cards, and stones were rolling down."

Later, they crossed a river and drove up to Maithili, where the road had been blocked due to massive landslides. After the path was cleared for walking the next day, they trekked to a church center, from which a vehicle was arranged to drive the bishop to Kathmandu three days later.

Kathmandu

On April 30, this correspondent accompanied the bishop during his two-hour drive from the bishop's house at Lalitpur district, south of the capital district, through Kathmandu to reach Banyatar parish, perched on a hilltop overlooking the city.

Moved by the devastation in the congested commercial heart of Kathmandu, Bishop Simick disembarked at several places. At Balaju, security forces were keeping hundreds of people at bay while international rescue teams, equipped with life-detection sensors, were scouring the debris seeking to rescue those trapped under collapsed high hotels and apartments five days after the quake.

A couple of hours later, rescue workers pulled out a 15-year-old youth alive from the rubble of a collapsed guesthouse. A 4-month-old baby was also rescued — after 22 hours buried in rubble.

"This is really shocking," remarked Bishop Simick as he drew near to a four-story concrete complex that had collapsed, leaving 17 Pentecostal Christians dead and many more injured in a rented commercial complex in Swayambu.

Upon reaching Banyatar parish, after traversing a slushy pathway on foot, Bishop Simick received the sad news of the first death of a Catholic from the quake: Michele Ghale, a 9-year-old parishioner, who died when her house collapsed.

Despite the sad news, the minuscule Catholic Church in Nepal, numbering less than 10,000 in a nation of more than 28 million people, has mostly escaped the death and devastation wrecked on the Himalayan nation's vibrant evangelical churches.

Indeed, several hundred Christians are known to have perished in church collapses across Nepal, partly due to an idiosyncrasy with the nation's local calendar. Although Nepal's centuries-old Hindu monarchy was overthrown by a people's uprising in 2006, it has yet to change its weekly holiday from Saturday, so thousands of evangelical Christians were gathered inside churches for their weekly worship services when the killer earthquake rocked Nepal at noon on April 25.

As many as 29 worshippers died when the three-story El Shaddai



AID ON THE WAY. A man takes a rest from clearing rubble from his home, watched on by his daughter and granddaughter in Jalkini on May 5 in Kathmandu, Nepal. Chris McGrath/Getty Images

Church collapsed in Kapan, a Kathmandu suburb. Among the 36 rescued from the debris was Pastor Lal Bahadur Lumbu, who is presently under treatment with serious neck injuries, police officer Balaji Ramajhi told the Register April 28, while keeping onlookers away from the site of the giant concrete skeleton of the structure, which was being broken down by an earthmover.

"It is really sad that many died while at prayer," Kala Bahadur Rokaya, general secretary of the National Council of Churches of Nepal, told the Register.

However, he pointed out "it is impossible now to get the actual number of Christian casualties. Many areas are cut off and the churches scattered."

Logistical Problems

Despite escaping the fury of the earthquake with hardly any major damage, except to a couple of schools, the Church's relief workers are anguished over the difficulty in delivering assistance.

"Things are moving too slow. We are facing several obstacles," said Father Pius Perumana, Caritas Nepal's director.

Explaining the logistical problems, he noted, "Our only airport [in Kathmandu] is too small and is congested. Roads have been blocked by landslides. We are also facing lack of coordination from the government."

Some aircraft carrying relief workers and materials have been forced to circle around Kathmandu for hours due to lack of parking space at the airport, while others had to land in airports in India while awaiting landing slots.

A shortage of ground transport is another problem.

"The international support has been pouring in. But we are short of vehicles and drivers," Father Perumana explained. Hundreds of drivers from rural areas have returned to the villages flattened

by the earthquake to check on their dear ones and their houses.

Despite rushing to Nepal, Catholic Relief Services' personnel are among the relief workers whose efforts have been hampered by the bottlenecks. But progress is being made.

"The relief materials we ordered have started coming in from India and other places, and we are dispatching them to far-off places," John Shumlansky, CRS deputy director for Southeast Asia, told the Register May 4.

Four trucks of relief, including emergency supplies, have reached Gorkha and are being distributed now, Shumlansky said.

To overcome the obstacles and speed up church relief work, a dozen Catholic charities, led by Caritas Nepal, have set up a coordination network.

"We are procuring materials from wherever we can — relief supplies from India, tents from Pakistan and Dubai and medicine from Europe," elaborated Albert Grasse Hokamp, coordinator of Caritas Germany for East Asia, who has worked in Nepal for four years.

Helping Hands

After witnessing the death and devastation, even tourists who were in Nepal on vacation joined the relief effort.

In fact, three dozen Western tourists volunteered at Assumption Church in Lalitpur, where food items for families were being packed for distribution by Caritas Nepal.

While filling small packets with lentils on April 30 for distribution in remote areas, Alexander Gawlitza from Mainz, Germany, told the Register, "It is better to do something good for the suffering people than sitting in the hotel awaiting a flight back home."

Anto Akkara filed this report from Nepal.

Conn.

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necticut Catholic Conference helped launch a campaign entitled "Don't Jump" that featured a website where people could learn about the risks of assisted suicide and the merits of palliative care.

"The website just contained a great deal of information to highlight, to educate and to inform, not only the Catholic population in Connecticut, but also the general population of the state," Cushman said.

Family Institute

Meanwhile, the Family Institute of Connecticut also marshaled its resources against the euthanasia bill. The institute hosted the East Coast Conference Against Assisted Suicide last November and helped organize an effective public hearing before the Connecticut Judiciary Committee in March that featured compelling testimony from disability-rights activists and terminally ill people who all urged lawmakers to vote against the legislation.

"We successfully stopped it at the earliest stage. We've fought them three years in a row. Contrary to their claims of momentum, Compassion & Choices has been losing ground here," said Peter Wolfgang, executive director of the Family Institute of Connecticut.

Wolfgang said the co-chairmen of the Judiciary Committee pulled the bill at the request of the pro-assisted-suicide lobby because, as Compassion & Choices' state campaign manager admitted in an interview with WNPR, a defeat would have set the assisted suicide cause back several years.

"They've really stepped up the pressure for assisted suicide ever since the Brittany Maynard campaign," said Wolfgang, referring to the 29-year-old California woman with terminal brain cancer who moved to Oregon last year to take advantage of that state's assisted-suicide law. Maynard, who took her own life on Nov. 1, 2014, with medication, became an advocate for assisted suicide, and Compassion & Choices has used her story to further its cause.

Failed Assisted-Suicide Bills

More than a dozen states, including the District of Columbia, are considering physician-assisted suicide bills this year. Similar legislation has recently been introduced in New York and Delaware. In early April, the California Senate Judiciary Committee voted 4-2 to approve an assisted-suicide bill and send it to another committee before it is considered by the full state senate.

With the exceptions of Vermont, Washington and Oregon — the only three states that have enacted statutes providing for assisted suicide — bills to legalize



'ASSIST HOPE, NOT SUICIDE.' Connecticut citizens line up to lobby their legislators against assisted suicide at the State Capitol in Hartford. Family Institute of Connecticut

assisted suicide have consistently been defeated in legislatures and referendums. More than 140 similar proposals in 27 states have failed since 1994, according to the Patients Rights Council.

In New Mexico and Montana, the assisted-suicide lobby has obtained court decisions allowing for physician-assisted suicide.

Besides Vermont, the assisted-suicide lobby has had little success in politically left-of-center New England. In March 2014, the New Hampshire Legislature overwhelmingly rejected an assisted-suicide measure. Massachusetts voters also rejected a November 2012 ballot referendum to legalize assisted suicide.

In Connecticut, the assisted-suicide lobby and some media outlets have blamed the Church for defeating assisted suicide, said Wolfgang, who added that Compassion & Choices has tried to frame assisted suicide as another "pro-choice" issue in the culture wars.

"It's a false narrative on so many levels," Wolfgang said. "Yes, the Church was involved, but it was not only the Church. This involved people from every walk of life who were united around a common understanding that this would be very bad for a society that should care for the least among us."

People With Disabilities

Stephen Mendelsohn, a leader with Second Thoughts Connecticut, a coalition of people with disabilities opposed to legalizing assisted suicide, also dismissed the assisted-suicide lobby's contention that the opposition to assisted suicide is mainly driven by religious reasons.

"Like it or not, religious and pro-life arguments do not work with socially liberal legislators. We need to make the secular social-justice, civil-rights case against assisted suicide, focusing

on issues of elder abuse, misdiagnosis and incorrect prognosis, the deadly mix with medical cost-cutting steering people toward suicide, suicide contagion and disability discrimination in suicide prevention," Mendelsohn, who is on the autism spectrum, told the Register.

Mendelsohn testified before the Judiciary Committee, as did other individuals with disabilities, including Maggie Karner, a woman diagnosed with glioblastoma, the same form of terminal brain cancer that Maynard had.

Karner, a Bristol, Conn., resident, spoke out against assisted suicide alongside people wearing blue stickers that said, "Got Second Thoughts?" and "Assist Hope, Not Suicide." They vastly outnumbered the bill's supporters.

"I think this is an important lesson for California, where we need to get more of our people to the public hearings so that legislators are not awed by Compassion & Choices' theatrics," said Mendelsohn, who added, "The secret of coalition building is to have disability voices front and center, while social and religious conservatives rally their base and educate themselves in the disability arguments."

A common concern raised by opponents of the bill was that the "right to die" would eventually morph into an "obligation to die" for the elderly, sick and disabled who would be seen as a burden to others and society.

"For those of us in the disability community, opposition to assisted suicide is an issue of justice and civil rights," said Mendelsohn, adding that assisted suicide "enshrines lethal disability discrimination into our law."

Mutual Respect

Wolfgang, of the Family Institute of Connecticut, said his organization and disability-rights activists, some of whom differ on social issues, have been meeting regularly in recent years to plot strategies to defeat assisted suicide.

"We did so always from the position of mutual respect and the understanding that we have differences on other issues," Wolfgang said. "But faced with this emergency situation, the possibility of legal suicide in Connecticut, the most effective way to beat it was to do this together."

On April 13, the day the Connecticut assisted-suicide measure died in committee, disability-rights activists and staff members from the Family Institute of Connecticut met at the Connecticut State Capitol to celebrate and perform a song. Together, they sang *Not Dead Yet*.

"The level of harmony, I thought, was really fascinating," Wolfgang said, "And, hopefully, it's a way forward on a lot of other issues."

Brian Fraga writes from Fall River, Massachusetts.

In Person

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Graduation from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 2010 was followed by three tours of duty in Afghanistan. During his first tour, Villanueva aided wounded soldiers amid enemy fire, a heroic deed that was later recognized by his being awarded a Bronze Star for valor.

With Register correspondent Trent Beattie, Villanueva spoke of his military adventures and professional football hopes through the perspective of his Catholic faith, in time for Memorial Day, on May 25.

The NFL Draft was recently held in Chicago. What do you think of this year's picks, and what do you think of the draft in general?

It's always tough to say how well college players are going to do in the NFL, regardless of which round they're chosen in. You can be a first-rounder with lots of expectations and lots of money, but those two things might work against you. You can be taken in later rounds (or not even drafted at all, as in my case) with little expectations and little money, but those can work for you. You're never really sure how guys will do until they're actually playing against other professionals.

I used to think of the draft as having a mystical quality about it — that if you were chosen in the first round, it meant infallibly that you

would be a great player in the NFL. Since I've been around pro-football players for a while now, I've come to realize that things aren't that simple. The people who decide which players to choose are just as capable of making mistakes as a player is on the field. We all mess up at times, and choosing which guys are best for your team is no different.

You're currently part of the practice squad for the Pittsburgh Steelers. Are you planning on making the 53-man roster for next season?

That's the goal. Being on the practice squad basically means you're one of 10 guys who increase the number of players on the practice field and at the same time get a chance to develop your own skills. This is done with the hope of presenting yourself to the coaches as a possible option for players on the 53-man roster who get injured.

Being part of the 53-man roster can seem like an impenetrable barrier at times, but a key to getting over the barrier is to think in terms of being there already. You think of what's required of someone on the 53-man roster, and you live out that role before it actually happens. That means you put yourself in a position to succeed.

Did you learn anything in the Army that you use in football?

The No. 1 thing I learned from the Army was how to deal with different people — how to read their emotions and understand where

they're coming from; how to work together with them; how to lead in important undertakings; and how to forgive. The Army provided me with a very diverse set of experiences that challenged me and helped me to learn and grow as a man and a citizen of the United States. These things can be used in football and in any other area of life.

What do you think civilians need to know about soldiers before observing the upcoming Memorial Day holiday?

Civilians need to understand — which I think they are, in growing numbers — that the military is there to serve them. In the military, we work for the people of the United States. Our actions are not just part of the agenda of individuals or even of the military as a whole. What drives us is our interest in the good of the country. The entire purpose of the U.S. military is to protect the American people.

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) has become an increasingly popular topic of discussion. What are your thoughts on it?

There are two extremes in this topic. One is when someone who hasn't seen active duty says he's suffering from PTSD whenever he hears the hum of a helicopter. He claims this in order to get insurance or other benefits. The other extreme is when someone really does have a serious problem dealing with the horrors of war, which he actually

was a part of, up close.

I think most people, including myself, fall between these two extremes: We have encountered awful things in war, to be sure, but we work through them and — by the grace of God — overcome them.

How has Catholicism helped you to overcome the horrors of war?

Even though I was born in Mississippi, I spent most of my childhood in Spain, a mostly Catholic country. Religious beliefs permeate the culture there in many ways, even to the point that you don't really appreciate them; you simply take them for granted. That's what I did as a child, and that mindset continued when my family came back to the U.S. in 2001.

However, when you're shipped off to war (as I first was in 2011), you have to find a way to deal with the inevitable fear that comes into your heart. There are so many uncertainties about what lies ahead that you have to get support from somewhere, and the best place to find that support is in the Catholic Church.

What do you find most comforting about the Church?

Religion is a deeply personal relationship with God, so that's what I find the most comfort in. Despite all the other things that may be going on outside of you, what goes to the very core of your being is what you do in terms of religion. If you're right with God,

everything else is fine; if you're not right with God, everything else is out of place. Being connected with God is the most important thing there is.

Even though the community aspect of church is a good thing, if you aren't praying and keeping the Ten Commandments, your neighbor becomes a means of distraction and covering up your lack of connection to God. I believe this so much that I even enjoy attending weekday Mass more than Sunday Mass, because weekday Mass is more conducive to prayer.

It's sad to say, but there can be so many things about Sunday Mass that distract you from praying. There can be loud music, people talking like they're in a restaurant or dressed like they're going to the beach. Weekday Mass is much quieter, which makes prayer so much easier. Then you see what is wrong with your soul, and you're motivated to do something about — namely, go to confession.

Do you find comfort in confession as well?

Yes, confession is an important part of religion — or our relationship with God. When we pray, we see how we've fallen short of what God wants from us, and the next step is to ask to be forgiven. This is what plays out in the sacrament of confession: It's the Prodigal Son returning to his loving Father, who knows his weakness and is more than ready to

welcome him back home.

This brings up another favorite aspect of the Catholic Church: its purity of doctrine. We have the teachings and sacraments that Jesus gave us. We have preserved them and passed them down through the generations so that, even today, the Church is essentially the same as it was in St. Peter's time. St. Peter and the other apostles preached the Good News, baptized, celebrated the Eucharist and confession — basically living out Jesus' command in Matthew 28, which shows how Jesus is with us today as much as he was 2,000 years ago.

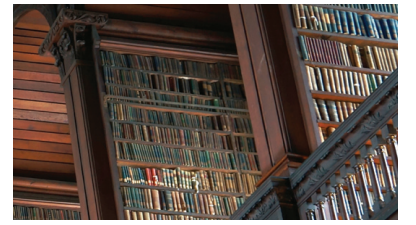
I also like how the Church has done so many charitable things over the years, such as founding schools, hospitals, orphanages and homeless shelters. All of these things initially arose from religious motives, but the Church has had such an influence, even on secular cultures, that many of its institutions are seen as a matter of course for any civilized society.

People forget, or maybe never knew, that the Catholic Church is a great help to mankind, even from a material point of view. Reading [Thomas Woods'] *How the Catholic Church Built Western Civilization* or other books that portray the history of the Church accurately would help us to keep this in mind. Then we can stand tall and build on the great things already in our Church, which will then renew society.

Trent Beattie writes from Seattle.



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Illinois vs. ACLU Over Conscience Rights

Bishops and Pro-Life Groups Differ on Protocols

BY PETER JESSERER SMITH
WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. — A battle is under way over conscience rights and health care in the Illinois Legislature that has pro-life groups on one side, the American Civil Liberties Union and Planned Parenthood on the other, and the Illinois Catholic Conference standing neutral on the sidelines.



The ACLU of Illinois has proposed a change to Illinois' broad legal protections for the conscience rights of health-care workers with S.B. 1564, which has already passed the state senate but whose defeat the pro-life groups are urging in the state house.

If health-care facilities or personnel decline to provide services for reasons of conscience — such as abortions or sterilizations — the bill's protocols would require them either to make referrals for such services or to provide information about other places where they are likely to be available.

"This is simply an intrusion on people of faith, people of conviction and the right of conscience," said state Rep. Ron Sandack, R-Downers Grove, at a May 5 media conference held by an umbrella of state pro-life groups known as the Illinois Women's Health and Life Alliance at the Illinois State Capitol. The lawmaker described the bill as "unnecessary" and "a solution seeking a problem."

Dr. Mary Keen, president of the Chicago guild of the Catholic Medical Association, also said the bill would force her and other medical professionals "to go against our best professional and medical judgment, compelling us to provide information [on abortion] that is not in our patients' best interests."

"This bill would force me and others like me to violate our patients' trust and recommend a procedure that is both harmful to

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'Miracle of the Ordination'

Nepal Village Spared From Earthquake

BY ANTO AKKARA
REGISTER CORRESPONDENT

KATHMANDU, Nepal — The Hindus of Tarkerabari village in the nation's Okhaldunga district are rejoicing over the April 25 ordination of Jesuit Deacon Tek Raj Paudel from their village.

The ordination is credited with sparing the village from calamitous casualties from the massive quake that struck immediately after the ordination ceremony.

"They are still excited with what had happened. They continue to share their joy with me," the newly ordained Father Paudel told the Register on May 8 from his village of Tarkerabari. The village is 125 miles northeast of Kathmandu, near the epicenter of the earthquake that rocked the Himalayan country on April 25.

HOLY ORDERS. Jesuit Father Tek Raj Paudel with his parents, Indra Bahadur Paudel and Ultra Kumari, during his April 25 ordination Mass in the Nepalese village of Tarkerabari. Courtesy of the Society of Jesus/Sunny D'Costa

The disaster that claimed more than 8,000 lives occurred around noon, 30 minutes after the two-hour ordination ceremony, which was led by Bishop Paul Simick of Nepal and attended by hundreds of the Hindu villagers.

Had they not been there, loss of life would have been steep amid the quake: Even though 93 houses in the village collapsed and 359 others suffered severe damage in the 7.8-magnitude temblor, the 42-year-old Jesuit priest — the only Christian from the village — pointed out, "Nobody [except one girl] was injured, as almost all of them were out to attend my ordination and the celebrations."

While dozens of people died in the neighboring villages, he said that the escape of the entire village is hailed by the Hindu community as "a blessing due to the ordination."

"I heard even the MP, Ram Hari Khathiwoda [the Nepalese member of parliament from the area], thanking the Christians for holding the ordination in the village," Augustine Lepcha told the Register. Lepcha is a Catholic relief worker who returned to Kathmandu on May 6 after taking relief supplies to the village, where most families are living under tents.

"All the people there are only speaking of the miracle," added Lepcha.

'God Has Protected Us'

St. Joseph of Cluny Sister Angelica reached the village two days before the ordination, along with a dozen other Catholics, to prepare the altar decorations for the ordination.

"The soil under my feet was throwing up

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Reparative Therapy Attacked

Homosexual Lobby Opposes Treatment

BY BRIAN FRAGA
REGISTER CORRESPONDENT

RIVERSIDE, Calif. — Thomas Schmierer thought he was just a normal marriage and family therapist "flying under the radar" in Riverside, Calif.

But Schmierer's work with clients who seek him out for therapy for their unwanted same-sex attraction landed him in the crosshairs of homosexual-rights groups.

The Human Rights Campaign, which lobbies for same-sex "marriage" and homosexual causes, wrote a letter to *Psychology Today* in February demanding that the magazine remove Schmierer from its professional referral service. The magazine complied, and it no longer accepts advertising from Schmierer, who says the listing is essential for his private practice, Vatican Values Counseling, to be competitive.

"Of course, there are financial consequences for me that I fear, but it's more than just the money," Schmierer told the Register. "What's really sad is what can happen to the clients who need help. How horrible it is to have something you consider to be a sickness or illness, and you can't receive healing."

Schmierer said he asked himself, "Why is this happening to me?" But he is hardly alone. The homosexual lobby is aggressively attacking therapy for same-sex attraction, with the argument that such therapy harms people who identify them-

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IN PERSON

Refuting Transgender 'Delusion'

WALT HEYER lived for eight years as a woman named Laura Jensen.

Having suffered from gender-identity disorder since he was a child, Heyer was a married, successful businessman when he underwent cosmetic surgery to alter his sex at age 42.



WALTHEYER.COM

However, Heyer said surgery and hormone treatment failed to address his underlying psychological issues. After undergoing therapy, attaining sobriety and turning his life to Christ, Heyer says he was able to accept his biology and return to living as a man.

Heyer, now 74 and married to his second wife for 18 years, is an author and public speaker who devotes his life to helping others who regret their choice to undergo what is known as "gender-reassignment surgery."

A nondenominational Christian, Heyer has told his story in the novel *Kid Dakota and the Secret at Grandma's House* and in his autobiography, *A Transgender's Faith*. He also spreads awareness through his blog, *WaltHeyer.com*, and website, *Sex-ChangeRegret.com*.

Heyer discussed his journey in a recent interview with Register correspondent Brian Fraga. Heyer also

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Does the US Want (or Need) Hillary for President?

Clinton Opens Bid For Oval Office

NEWS ANALYSIS

BY JOAN FRAWLEY DESMOND
SENIOR EDITOR

NEW YORK — Shortly after she confirmed her bid to secure her party's nomination for president of the United States, Hillary Rodham Clinton signaled that advocacy for women's rights would form the centerpiece of her campaign.

"The full participation of women and girls in society is the unfinished business of the 21st century," said Clinton, 67, in a keynote address at the 2015 Women in the World Summit in April.

The former secretary of state, who also served as a U.S. senator from New York from 2001 to 2009, presented herself as a crusader for equality between the sexes, in the developing world and in the United States.

"Equal pay for equal work," "paid family leave" and "a path to citizenship" for women who are undocumented immigrants were among her priorities identified in the speech.

But Clinton also brought up job security for "gay and transgen-



SCOTT OLSON / GETTY IMAGES

dered women" and took a swipe at the U.S. Supreme Court's 2014 ruling in favor of Hobby Lobby, the craft-store chain that challenged the Health and Human Services' contraceptive mandate.

These talking points are expected to be part of a broader crusade for stronger economic rights for women and solutions for middle-class Americans who are losing ground.

Her first campaign video introduced the candidate as an advocate for middle-class Americans but downplayed hot-button issues.

"[E]veryday Americans need a champion. I want to be that champion," she said in the video.

Though Clinton has yet to present any concrete economic proposals, she is expected to call for investments in bridges and high-

ways, an increase in the minimum wage and reduced taxes for the middle class. Clinton has also endorsed President Obama's executive action that would help an estimated 5 million undocumented immigrants avoid deportation and remain legally in the U.S., and she has vowed to promote legislation that would help many secure a path to citizenship.

Will It Appeal to Voters?

Will her message and accompanying policy proposals help Clinton win her place in history as the first woman to be elected president of the United States?

For now, she has clearly benefited from the fact that the second declared competitor in the Democratic primary — Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont, a self-described socialist — is unlikely to pose a threat.

Yet Sanders' candidacy also highlights the drift of the party's base since Bill Clinton was president. Commentators say that Hillary will be under pressure to take a stand on economic and social issues that will mobilize activists but could turn off Independents and moderate Democrats.

Stephen Schneck, the director of the Institute for Policy Research

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IN BRIEF

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"What the world offers us will never satisfy your heart; when you recognize this, do all that you can to run to Jesus, to truth, to authentic love — and bring others with you."

— Kate Capato of *The Culture Project*, page B1 story

Ordinations and Religion

A look at new priests and commentary on Pew study that indicates that the faithful count is down. *Nation*, page 3

Rome Marches for Life

Recap of recent outpouring of support for the unborn and the vulnerable at all stages. *Vatican*, page 6

Mother Teresa Canonization?

Vatican spokesman Father Federico Lombardi said that the blessed nun's possible canonization during the Jubilee of Mercy is "a working hypothesis." *Vatican*, page 6

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Corporal Works of Mercy In the Himalayas

Missionaries of Charity Aid Nepal Relief Effort

BY ANTO AKKARA
REGISTER CORRESPONDENT

KHANI DHANDA, Nepal — As news came out of Rome on May 19 that the Holy See is considering canonizing Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta in September 2016, during the Year of Mercy, the good works performed by the congregation she founded provide tangible evidence that her legacy is alive and well.

This reporter on May 16 accompanied half a dozen religious sisters and eight religious brothers from the Missionaries of Charity on a trip to distribute relief materials to the populace in mountainous Nepal, which was rocked by a devastating earthquake on April 25.

Early in the morning, the team left Kathmandu for Khani Dhanda, with three truckloads of food and shelter materials.

"We had problem with looters on our earlier trips. That's why police have come to accompany us," explained Sister Claire as the team prepared to make their fifth trip in as many days to serve Nepal's neediest.

Once the Missionaries' convoy crossed the Mitra Park police station limits, a new police team took charge of the motorcade. Soon after, senior civic officials stopped the convoy and insisted that they needed an official permit for the relief work.

The police officers politely told the Missionary brothers and sisters that the government had given strict orders that aid groups should be asked to leave the materials with them, so that the government can distribute them "evenly, without duplication or neglect of some areas."

All five vehicles, including two vans carrying the 14 missionaries and half-dozen volunteers, were escorted



LENDING A HAND. Missionaries of Charity sisters hand out food and supplies to Nepalese villagers May 18. Anto Akkara photo

by the police to Lalitpur District headquarters. Then, the sisters sprang into action: They began praying a Rosary.

Upon reaching the district office, courteous junior officials helped the nuns prepare relief items — rice, lentils, sugar, salt, woolen blankets and tarps — while waiting for government permission.

As Saturday is a public holiday in Nepal, they had to wait for the official green light.

"I am also a government official. Why should you waste our time like this? You know what kind of service these sisters are doing for the poor," said Shree Ram Phokarel, a Hindu and a senior government official accompanying the Missionaries of Charity team as a volunteer.

As time ticked away, some of the nuns could be seen praying a Rosary with a couple of the consecrated brothers.

Bishop Simick Intervenes

Bishop Paul Simick of Nepal, alerted to the situation, promptly contacted top government officials. Yadav Prasad Koirala, the chief district officer of Lalitpur, reached the office in an hour and met the missionaries team.

Koirala politely told them that it

was dangerous for them to take relief material to remote places and that the government could do it if the relief material was entrusted to them. The government, he explained, is eager to ensure that relief distribution is "equal and covers all places."

But the sisters politely told the official that they are "used to taking troubles to serve the least" and that they wanted to take relief materials to remote areas where others had not yet gone.

The sisters also reminded the top district officials that they had distributed coupons for food and shelter to more than 200 deserving families in the Khani Dhanda mountaintop — two hours of mountainous travel — and had promised to deliver supplies on that day.

Finally, the officer relented and asked his staff to prepare the formal permission certificate. With permit in hand and as the convoy started moving, the nuns began singing a hymn of thanksgiving. As the convoy headed up a winding mountain path of dust and rocks, the Missionaries of Charity worried about the waiting victims.

After a delay due to hazardous road conditions, the convoy reached

the mountaintop. After saying a prayer of thanksgiving, the team ventured out to greet the villagers who had gathered.

Soon, the Missionary brothers, who traveled to Nepal from India to assist in the relief effort, doled out the food and supplies.

The distribution of relief kits to 140 families at Khani Dhanda was smooth and efficient. Though hardly any one of those on the mountaintop knew who the nuns in white, blue-striped cotton habits were, they were overjoyed to receive aid from the Missionaries — who, along with a group of Buddhist monks, were the only ones to bring relief there in the three weeks after the quake.

With the mission complete, the convoy started the climb down the dusty mountain path. It was time for more thanksgiving prayers.

'Unforgettable Experience'

Shanti Rai, a young Catholic woman who had accompanied the Missionaries of Charity sisters twice to Khani Dhanda, told the Register that following the sisters in their relief work was "an unforgettable experience."

Her first visit to the mountains with the nuns was on May 9, after the weekly Mass at her Godavari parish — 10 miles from Kathmandu.

"The sisters invited us to join them to visit the affected families, and four of us accompanied them," recounted Rai, who is working with an international social-action group.

All through the trek to the mountain, Rai pointed out, the nuns led them in praying the Rosary and praying for the people suffering due to the earthquake.

"When we finished, the sisters said a special thanksgiving prayer," added Rai. "We had walked eight hours that day. But we never realized this. It was not social work, but a deeply spiritual experience."

Anto Akkara is based in Bangalore, India.



NEW PRIEST. Father Tek Raj Paudel at Assumption Church in Kathmandu. Anto Akkara

Spared

CONTINUING PAGE ONE STORY

Only when people started screaming and running, I realized it was an earthquake," recalled Sister Angelica, who was packing altar decorations when the quake struck.

"But it was surprising that the temporary hall [built with iron rods] did not fall on the people. We had to redo the decorations, as the hall and stage had been damaged during a hailstorm on the eve [of the quake]. It was incredible that no harm happened after such a powerful earthquake," the nun said.

The nun and many of the 150 Catholics from Kathmandu, including several Jesuits who had gone to the remote village for the ordination, were rushing back to reach their vehicles to return to Kathmandu. The villagers were saying, "Because of the ordination here, we were saved," Sister Angelica said. "A miracle has happened here."

Similarly, Jesuit Father Casper "Cap" Miller, who hails from Ohio but has been based in Nepal for 57 years, told the Register that he heard local women saying, "Because of the [ordination] ceremony here, we were saved. God has protected us."

Father Paudel's Conversion

Father Paudel, the ninth of 10 children in a Hindu family, came to Kathmandu in 1988 for his college studies.

"Curiosity to read the Bible changed my life," the Jesuit priest said during an interview with the Register on April 30, after returning to Kathmandu. "After I heard about the Bible during English classes in the government college, I went to find out more about the Bible."

"I visited several churches and finally landed at St. Xavier's School (of Jesuits) in 1990," he added. After four years of catechism, he was baptized in 1994.

Though he wanted to join the Jesuits immediately, they told him to wait for six years — the mandatory norm for a convert to join the order. Meanwhile, Paudel graduated and enrolled for a degree in law.

"After my [law degree] in 2002, I joined the congregation. I am happy to be a priest now," said the newly minted priest, standing at Assumption Church in Kathmandu, the largest Catholic church in Nepal, where Catholics account for less than 10,000 in a nation of more than 28 million people.

"I was keen to have my ordination in the village, as the entire village belongs to my clan. I am happy that the superiors obliged my request," Father Paudel said. "Now it has become a blessing to my whole village."

He added, "Many of them are now very eager to know about the Church and are planning to visit Kathmandu and the churches."

Anto Akkara is based in Bangalore, India.

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Dan Burke
Executive Director

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