I receive the daily Gospel reflections from Bishop Barron, and he said this today - Fat Tuesday

“St. Augustine was right: "Lord, you have made us for yourself; therefore, our heart is restless until it rests in thee." We are all wired for God. There is a hunger in us that nothing in this world can possibly satisfy. And that's why we must be determined to follow Jesus, because only he can lead us to the heavenly banquet.”

How many times have you held that restless heart in your loving embrace? Or how many time has someone held your restless heart? It is such a gift a privilege for me to watch all of you as you do this each day in your ministry.

I love the way he says we are “all wired for God” and that there is nothing in this world that can satisfy us but to follow him.

As we enter this Lenten season let us not forget we are the hands of Christ in this broken world. And remember we are human and need to take care of ourselves in order to do His work on this earth.

Be assured of my prayers this Lenten season and remember the office is here to serve you. Please do not hesitate to give us a call if you need anything at all.

Blessings
Jim
MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
FOR LENT 2017

"The Word is a gift. Other persons are a gift"

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Lent is a new beginning, a path leading to the certain goal of Easter, Christ’s victory over death. This season urgently calls us to conversion. Christians are asked to return to God “with all their hearts” (Joel 2:12), to refuse to settle for mediocrity and to grow in friendship with the Lord. Jesus is the faithful friend who never abandons us. Even when we sin, he patiently awaits our return; by that patient expectation, he shows us his readiness to forgive (cf. Homily, 8 January 2016).

Lent is a favourable season for deepening our spiritual life through the means of sanctification offered us by the Church: fasting, prayer and almsgiving. At the basis of everything is the word of God, which during this season we are invited to hear and ponder more deeply. I would now like to consider the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (cf. Lk 16:19-31). Let us find inspiration in this meaningful story, for it provides a key to understanding what we need to do in order to attain true happiness and eternal life. It exhorts us to sincere conversion.

1. The other person is a gift

The parable begins by presenting its two main characters. The poor man is described in greater detail: he is wretched and lacks the strength even to stand. Lying before the door of the rich man, he fed on the crumbs falling from his table. His body is full of sores and dogs come to lick his wounds (cf. vv. 20-21). The picture is one of great misery; it portrays a man disgraced and pitiful.

The scene is even more dramatic if we consider that the poor man is called Lazarus: a name full of promise, which literally means God helps. This character is not anonymous. His features are clearly delineated and he appears as an individual with his own story. While practically invisible to the rich man, we see and know him as someone familiar. He becomes a face, and as such, a gift, a priceless treasure, a human being whom God loves and cares for, despite his concrete condition as an outcast (cf. Homily, 8 January 2016).

Lazarus teaches us that other persons are a gift. A right relationship with people consists in gratefully recognizing their value. Even the poor person at the door of the rich is not a nuisance, but a summons to conversion and to change. The parable first invites us to open the doors of our heart to others because each person is a gift, whether it be our neighbour or an anonymous pauper. Lent is a favourable season for opening the doors to all those in need and recognizing in them the face of Christ. Each of us meets people like this every day. Each life that we encounter is a gift deserving acceptance, respect and love. The word of God helps us to open our eyes to welcome and love life, especially when it is weak and vulnerable. But in order to do this, we have to take seriously what the Gospel tells us about the rich man.

Continued on next page
2. Sin blinds us

The parable is unsparing in its description of the contradictions associated with the rich man (cf. v. 19). Unlike poor Lazarus, he does not have a name; he is simply called “a rich man”. His opulence was seen in his extravagant and expensive robes. Purple cloth was even more precious than silver and gold, and was thus reserved to divinities (cf. Jer 10:9) and kings (cf. Jg 8:26), while fine linen gave one an almost sacred character. The man was clearly ostentatious about his wealth, and in the habit of displaying it daily: “He feasted sumptuously every day” (v. 19). In him we can catch a dramatic glimpse of the corruption of sin, which progresses in three successive stages: love of money, vanity and pride (cf. Homily, 20 September 2013).

The Apostle Paul tells us that “the love of money is the root of all evils” (1 Tim 6:10). It is the main cause of corruption and a source of envy, strife and suspicion. Money can come to dominate us, even to the point of becoming a tyrannical idol (cf. Evangelii Gaudium, 55). Instead of being an instrument at our service for doing good and showing solidarity towards others, money can chain us and the entire world to a selfish logic that leaves no room for love and hinders peace.

The parable then shows that the rich man’s greed makes him vain. His personality finds expression in appearances, in showing others what he can do. But his appearance masks an interior emptiness. His life is a prisoner to outward appearances, to the most superficial and fleeting aspects of existence (cf. ibid., 62).

The lowest rung of this moral degradation is pride. The rich man dresses like a king and acts like a god, forgetting that he is merely mortal. For those corrupted by love of riches, nothing exists beyond their own ego. Those around them do not come into their line of sight. The result of attachment to money is a sort of blindness. The rich man does not see the poor man who is starving, hurting, lying at his door.

Looking at this character, we can understand why the Gospel so bluntly condemns the love of money: “No one can be the slave of two masters: he will either hate the first and love the second, or be attached to the first and despise the second. You cannot be the slave both of God and of money” (Mt 6:24).

3. The Word is a gift

The Gospel of the rich man and Lazarus helps us to make a good preparation for the approach of Easter. The liturgy of Ash Wednesday invites us to an experience quite similar to that of the rich man. When the priest imposes the ashes on our heads, he repeats the words: “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return”. As it turned out, the rich man and the poor man both died, and the greater part of the parable takes place in the afterlife. The two characters suddenly discover that “we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it” (1 Tim 6:7).

We too see what happens in the afterlife. There the rich man speaks at length with Abraham, whom he calls “father” (Lk 16:24.27), as a sign that he belongs to God’s people. This detail makes his life appear all the more contradictory, for until this moment there had been no mention of his relation to
God. In fact, there was no place for God in his life. His only god was himself.
The rich man recognizes Lazarus only amid the torments of the afterlife. He wants the poor man to alleviate his suffering with a drop of water. What he asks of Lazarus is similar to what he could have done but never did. Abraham tells him: “During your life you had your fill of good things, just as Lazarus had his fill of bad. Now he is being comforted here while you are in agony” (v. 25). In the afterlife, a kind of fairness is restored and life’s evils are balanced by good.

The parable goes on to offer a message for all Christians. The rich man asks Abraham to send Lazarus to warn his brothers, who are still alive. But Abraham answers: “They have Moses and the prophets, let them listen to them” (v. 29). Countering the rich man’s objections, he adds: “If they will not listen either to Moses or to the prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone should rise from the dead” (v. 31).

The rich man’s real problem thus comes to the fore. At the root of all his ills was the failure to heed God’s word. As a result, he no longer loved God and grew to despise his neighbour. The word of God is alive and powerful, capable of converting hearts and leading them back to God. When we close our heart to the gift of God’s word, we end up closing our heart to the gift of our brothers and sisters.

Dear friends, Lent is the favourable season for renewing our encounter with Christ, living in his word, in the sacraments and in our neighbour. The Lord, who overcame the deceptions of the Tempter during the forty days in the desert, shows us the path we must take. May the Holy Spirit lead us on a true journey of conversion, so that we can rediscover the gift of God’s word, be purified of the sin that blinds us, and serve Christ present in our brothers and sisters in need. I encourage all the faithful to express this spiritual renewal also by sharing in the Lenten Campaigns promoted by many Church organizations in different parts of the world, and thus to favour the culture of encounter in our one human family. Let us pray for one another so that, by sharing in the victory of Christ, we may open our doors to the weak and poor. Then we will be able to experience and share to the full the joy of Easter.

From the Vatican, 18 October 2016

FRANCIS

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Lessons from Prison Ministry
By Laura DeMaria

One Saturday morning about a year and a half ago I attended training to volunteer at the local county jail. During the training, the deputy instructor spent the morning teaching us everything that can go wrong in a prison. Riots, lock downs, power outages, disease outbreak, homemade weapons – it really is quite an impressive spectrum. Her goal was to help us become well-informed volunteers, and though I appreciated her help, I also started feeling terrified, wondering if I made a huge mistake.

Early Apprehension
Before that morning, I had never been inside a prison, let alone inside a prison cell. On a tour of the women’s floor, I quickly walked in and out of a tiny, empty compartment with two cots, a sink and a toilet. It was about the size of the foyer in my apartment, and there was one sliver of a window. On the floor, inmates walked around, played cards, talked, and didn’t really pay much attention to us. Even more bizarre was visiting the high security floor, with its darkened tower and absolute silence, the inmates closed in their cells at all times. Some of them are violent criminals; some simply can’t be with the general inmate population because of who they are. I couldn’t help but cry for a moment, there at the end of the day, for all the suffering compacted in that building. There are so many ways that humans hurt each other, and it is disturbing to be so close to so much of it in one moment.

Despite this beginning, I have grown to love working with inmates. I began prison ministry with a sense of us vs. them; regular people vs. inmates. While understanding fully the place and necessity of the justice system, I was compelled to see the inmates as humans above all else. During his papacy, Pope Francis has emphasized the need to seek out the poor, marginalized, and forgotten- to try always to see the face of Christ in others. There is no better boot camp for this attitude than meeting face to face with inmates.

Continued on next page
How it Works
The format of our ministry is simple: on alternating weeks we hold a Mass or a liturgical service. That means studying the readings from the previous Sunday and having discussion, mediation, and prayer with the inmates. Both male and female are welcome in our program, and during discussion time we sit in a circle, men on one side, women on the other.

Our meeting is in the prison’s “multipurpose room.” It is a gray cinder block room with tables, plastic chairs, and fluorescent lights, though we set up an altar on the table with candles (never lit) and religious images to brighten up the space.

Before getting there, one must go through a series of checks, including a metal detector and three different badge checkpoints. There are many things one cannot have in that space, or anywhere in the prison, including staples and spring-loaded writing pens. The inmates in our program are those on good behavior or lower-level offenders, and a deputy is always stationed outside, watching and listening on the CCTV. We never ask the inmates the nature of their crimes, and it is rare they will speak of them in detail, but I have never once heard an inmate insist on his or her innocence. To the contrary, they are painfully aware they are where they need to be.

Even when a priest is there to offer Mass the format is relaxed, and he encourages the inmates to share their perspective on the readings after his homily. We have discussed forgiveness and mercy, abandonment, how to maintain faith in the most difficult of circumstances, how to notice when God is calling us, how to maintain mindfulness, how to let go of the past. Often an inmate’s insight into a particular reading shows me something I missed, and we on the volunteer side are always learning.

But for the Grace of God
Immersed in this environment week after week, I slowly felt my perspective change. It was admittedly difficult in the beginning not to think, “I’m in prison! I’m in a jail! I’m talking to an inmate!” But as the weeks passed, I saw that the inmates were not so “other” as I thought.

From this experience, I have learned a few important realities, the first being that anyone, truly, could be in prison. Before I began this work another member of the Legion of Mary told me, “But for the grace of God, any of us could be behind bars,” and I thought, that’s a silly thing to say. Later I realized it means that, given a different set of circumstances, life decisions, and environmental factors, yes, any one of us could end up in prison. All of life is a series of choices, one after another, and the consequences of certain choices can be devastating. This is a lesson often learned the hard way, once it’s too late.

Meeting with the inmates has also taught me a greater appreciation for the miracle which is the Mass. I had never been to Mass outside of church, even outdoors, and certainly not inside a prison, before this experience. This was a great revelation: the Mass is the Mass, no matter where it is celebrated. Father Paul has a handy little kit that contains the wine and bread, and he puts on his vestments as we organize chairs and set hymnals out for each person. Suddenly the room is not just a meeting place, but a holy place, a place where Jesus Himself is physically present.
Listen

Prison ministry has also helped me cultivate gratitude. The reality of these inmates’ situation, even when they are optimistic, is never too far off. There is nothing jolly about their lives, although they try to bring their best attitude to our meetings. If ever during our time together I feel I am simply having a nice conversation with another person interested in God, re-focusing on the identical jumpsuits snaps me back to reality.

A Beautiful Ministry
At the end of the Mass or liturgical service, everyone has an opportunity to pray aloud for special intentions. We pray for obvious things like the other inmates and our families; more often than not one of the inmates will pray for us, the volunteers. I considered this one evening: all prayer has value, but is there some special grace that comes from prayer offered up in suffering? I have perhaps the child-like tendency to view prayer like a booster shot; an extra touch of goodness and energy you receive when someone prays for you. How much more so if the one praying is in a particular place of suffering? Ultimately what I have encountered in this ministry are inmates hopeful and searching for answers, willing to admit they have refused God’s will. As I recognize pieces of myself and others I know in them, I realize there may be less of a divide between us than I thought. The experience has taught me deeper gratitude for what I have and an appreciation for the universality of the Mass and the faith, which strengthens my understanding of the power of the sacraments and the truth that, “Where two or more are gathered together in my name, there am I with them” (Matthew 18:20). I keep them all in my prayers and, knowing they do the same for me, feel that much closer to God.

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http://www.catholicstand.com/lessons-prison-ministry/
www.laurademaria.com
# Archdiocese of Boston Prison Chaplains

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The Beauty of Prayer as a Lenten Practice for Beginning Anew

By Msgr. Bill Fay – Director of Campus Ministry

St. Francis of Assisi, it is told, used a simple formula to encourage himself and his followers to a faithful life in Christ. He said, “Preach the Gospel; use words if necessary.” For St. Francis, the Gospel is most effectively preached not by words, but by the quality of one’s life. The truth of this insight of Francis has been recognized from the time that the Apostles first began preaching Jesus as raised from the dead. We know from the Acts of the Apostles, for example, that the Church grew by leaps and bounds in her very early years. This happened not because people were ready to join a new cause or because they heard a message that appealed to them. It happened because people were moved by the example, the faithfulness – even unto death, of those who were baptized into Christ Jesus. They wanted to imitate in their own lives what they witnessed in the life of the Lord and his disciples.

Lent is a time for us to reclaim our baptismal calling, a time of rebirth. It is a time for us to deepen our union with and discipleship in Christ. Not that we can do this on our own. It is only by God’s grace and constant assistance that we can draw near to the Lord. God is always present to us, drawing us to his Son. We need only to listen and to respond. Interestingly – and not surprisingly, the first antiphon from Scripture that we pray in the Liturgy of the Hours every morning during Lent comes from Psalm 95: “If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.” That exhortation is a call given to every one of us. Has my heart become hardened? Can it be more receptive to the voice of the Lord?

There are three very ancient and simple practices that the Church has always recommended during Lent as ways to dispose us more fully to God’s presence and to his call in our lives. They are prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Prayer is perhaps the practice most familiar to us.

Most of us learned how to say our prayers as children. The Sign of the Cross, the Our Father, the Hail Mary and the Glory Be were the first prayers we learned and the most common. There are many other prayers that we learned over the years – like the Act of Contrition, the Rosary, the Angelus and the Blessing Before Meals to name a few. When the Church encourages us to pray more frequently during Lent, she is certainly recommending that we increase the amount of prayers that we say, including increasing our participation at Mass which is the greatest prayer of all. But she is recommending something more. She is recommending that we learn, remember and treasure the fact that the prayers we say are part of a dialogue, a conversation that always begins with God.

Continued on next page
We pray to God because he spoke to us first. Had God not spoken to us, it never would have occurred to us to speak to him as we do in prayer. In the Gospel of St. Matthew, Jesus, who is always in conversation with his Father, teaches us how to pray:

“When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, who love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on street corners so that others may see them. Truly, I say to you, they have their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. In praying, do not babble like the pagans, who think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them. Your Father knows what you need before you ask him. Pray then like this: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done…” (Mt 5:1-13).

The more we come to know and experience prayer as our response in a conversation that God begins, the easier and more delightful prayer becomes. I stop worrying about what I am going to say or what I need to ask for; and I delight more in the knowledge that God is in conversation with me. When I know this, I know for the first time the true communion that Christ has with his Father. I also come to know that the Lord truly wants me to enjoy this communion with his Father. And I begin to desire this communion for myself as well. It is in this moment that I recognize that I cannot live without Christ in the communion he has with the Father. It is now that I am ready to imitate in my life what I see in the Lord’s, and to preach him faithfully by example more than words. May the Lord help me to make this new beginning during this Lent.
“Tonight at work I learned of the sudden death of a coworker and good friend. My heart hurts. My tears are flowing too easily. My brain is replaying so many memories: from the night he saw a ghost in the empty former surgical suite on the 3rd floor, to the night we celebrated his Naturalization (he was from Ghana) to the night he hugged me and was scolded by a coworker because "You can't hug her! That's sexual harassment!"....to which he replied "It's not sexual harassment- she's my SISTER!". Sleep well my friend. You will be sorely missed.”

This was my Facebook post from February 18th at 9:28 PM. This post is filled with pain, with sadness, with grief….and yet, also with happiness for what we had shared. He was a good, kind, friendly man. He was an immigrant, from Ghana in Africa, and so very proud that he had become a Naturalized citizen. The night we celebrated his citizenship, with a cake, and dozens of mini American flags, he was so appreciative. His African name was Obed; when he naturalized, he opted for a more Americanized name, and so he chose Joseph. In the first weeks after his official name change, most of us would forget, and call him Obed. One of us jokingly suggested calling him ‘Jobed’, which for some reason stuck.

He had worked so hard - he worked two jobs, day and night for many years- to bring his family to America; he would speak with such pride in his voice of his wife, who arrived here a little over a year ago, completed a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) course, and is now working as a CNA. He spoke eagerly of his adult daughter, who planned to join the family here in America. She hadn’t seen her dad in nearly four years.

His sudden death at the age of 52 stunned those of us who shared our workplace with him.

My priest often says that he can always tell, in the face of death, when loved ones of the deceased have faith. The loved ones are sad, yet not despondent. Their belief in the Resurrection is palpable. This is the season when Jesus prepared for his own death and Resurrection. Jobed was a Catholic; he believed in the beauty of the Resurrection. In this time of mourning the loss of my friend, it is indeed my faith that sustains me: I have no doubt of his new beginning, his new life, in Heaven with God.

Continued on next page
Faith Community Nursing Ministry

Listen

The theme of this newsletter is “Lent. New Life. New Beginnings. And how these change us in ministry”.

My parish, and a couple of nearby parishes, began a six week virtual Lenten ‘Walk to Jerusalem’ this past weekend. This ‘Walk’ is a walking/e exercise program that is intended to increase the physical, spiritual and emotional health of participants. This “imaginary” trip to Jerusalem is accomplished by individuals logging their own walking miles each week. Any activity can be counted; every 20 minutes of activity is equivalent to one mile. Each week, the totals are combined. This year’s walk will last six weeks, during which we will ‘journey’ just over 6000 miles, arriving in Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, so that we may experience Holy Week ‘in Jerusalem’. There are maps of the world, a poster board, and log-in sheets located at the back of the church. Each week there are devotions to pray over while we exercise. This is a time for new beginnings: new activities, new attention to the condition of our bodies, minds and spirits.

The Walk to Jerusalem is a fantastic way to embark on a new beginning in this most holy of seasons. “For we walk by faith, not by sight” 2 Corinthians 5:7

Continued from previous page
When a mother loses a child, reach out with tears, not words, pope says

By Carol Glatz
Posted: 1/4/2017

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- In the depths of despair, when no words or gestures will help, then cry with those who suffer, because tears are the seeds of hope, Pope Francis said.

When people are hurting, "it is necessary to share in their desperation. In order to dry the tears from the face of those who suffer, we must join our weeping with theirs. This is the only way our words may truly be able to offer a bit of hope," he said Jan. 4 during his weekly general audience.

"And if I can't offer words like this, with tears, with sorrow, then silence is better, a caress, a gesture and no words," he said.

In his first general audience of the new year, the pope continued his series of talks on Christian hope by reflecting on Rachel's inconsolable sorrow and mourning for her children who "are no more," as written by the prophet Jeremiah.

Rachel's refusal to be consoled "expresses the depth of her pain and the bitterness of her weeping," the pope told those gathered in the Vatican's Paul VI hall.

"Facing the tragedy of the loss of her children, a mother cannot bear words or gestures of consolation, which are always inadequate, always unable to alleviate the pain of a wound that cannot and doesn't want to heal," he said. The amount of pain, he said, is proportional to the amount of love in her heart.

Rachel and her weeping, he said, represent every mother and every person throughout history who cry over an "irreparable loss."

Rachel's refusal to be consoled also "teaches us how much sensitivity is asked of us" and how delicately one must approach a person in pain, the pope said.

Jeremiah shows how God responded to Rachel in a loving and gentle way, with words that are "genuine, not fake."

The pope said God answers with a promise that her tears are not in vain and her children shall return from exile and there will be new life and hope.

"Tears generated hope. This isn't easy to understand, but it is true," he said.

"So often in our life, tears sow hope, they are seeds of hope," he said, emphasizing how Mary's tears at the foot of the cross generated new life and hope for those who, through their faith, became her children in the body of Christ, the church.

Continued on next page
Listen

This innocent "lamb of God" died for all of humanity, which is always important to remember, especially when struggling with the question of why children are allowed to suffer in this world, he said.

The pope said when people ask him why such suffering happens, he said he has no answer. "I just say, 'Look at the crucifix. God gave us his son, he suffered, and perhaps there you will find an answer.'"

No appropriate words or replies will ever come from the head, he said, one can only look at the love God showed by offering his son, who offered his life -- this may point the way to some consolation.

God’s word is the definitive word of consolation "because it is born of weeping."


https://www.emfgp.org/

The Emmaus Ministry For Grieving Parents
194 Bishops Forest Drive
Waltham MA 02452
Phone: (800) 919-9332

Email: info@emmausministryforgrievingparents.com
To speak with an Emmaus Parent Companion, whose child has died, call (800) 919-9332.
Vatican Updates Health Care Charter

New version’s purpose is to remove question marks from modern ethical concerns.

Elise Harris/CNA/EWTN News

VATICAN CITY — The Vatican has issued an updated version of their charter for health care workers, removing question marks from modern ethical concerns such as euthanasia and the creation of human-animal chimeras by offering a clear set of guidelines.

In the past 20 years, “there have been two situations, two events” that have made the production of a new health care charter necessary, professor Antonio Gioacchino Spagnolo told CNA Feb. 6.

The first, he said, is “scientific progress. In these 20 years, there has been a lot of scientific progress in the field of the beginning of life as well as in the phase of the end of life, in the context of living.”

But alongside advancements in science, the Church’s magisterium has also produced several texts dealing with new and current issues, offering an authoritative take on how they should be handled.

The charter, he said, “encompasses a sort of collection of the various positions there have been, the various pronouncements, keeping the progress of biomedicine in mind.”

Spagnolo, director of the Institute of Bioethics and Medical Humanities at the Faculty of Medicine and Surgery at the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart in Rome, spoke to journalists at the Feb. 6 presentation of the new charter and played a key role in drafting the new text.

A first edition of the charter was published in 1994, but in the wake of broad scientific advancements and various updates in the Church’s magisterium, the Holy See, last Monday, rolled out the new version of the charter for health care workers.

Released to coincide with the annual World Day of the Sick celebrations taking place in Lourdes, France, the updated charter includes all magisterial documents published since 1994 and will be sent to bishops’ conferences around the world.

At roughly 150 pages, including the index, the charter is structured much like the old edition and is divided into three parts: “Procreation,” “Life” and “Death”

Continued on next page
The section on procreation covers everything from contraception, in vitro fertilization and the scientific use of embryos, including freezing them, as well as newer topics such as the mixing of human and animal gametes, the gestation of human embryos in animal or artificial wombs, cloning, asexual reproduction and parthenogenesis.

In the “Life” section, topics covered are “all of the health events that are in some way connected to living,” Spagnolo said, including vaccinations, preventative care, drug testing, transplants, abortion and anencephalic fetuses, as well as gene therapy and regenerative medicine.

The social part of the charter also covers areas specifically linked to poverty, such as access to medicines and the availability of new technologies in developing countries or countries that are politically and economically unstable. Rare and “neglected” diseases are also covered in the new text.

In his comments to CNA, Spagnolo commented on recent cases the updated charter covers, including the creation of human-pig “chimeras,” as well as the case of an elderly woman with dementia who was held down by her family while being euthanized.

The first case refers to the recent high-level scientific research project that culminated in the creation of chimeras, or organisms made from two different species.

While the project initially began by conducting the experiment on rats and mice, at the end of January, it culminated with the human-pig mix, marking the first time a case had been reported in which human stem cells had begun to grow inside another species.

In the experiment, which appeared in the scientific journal *Cell*, researchers from various institutes, including Stanford and the Salk Institute in California, injected pig embryos with human stem cells when they were just a few days old and monitored their development for 28 days to see if more human cells would be generated.

Human cells inside a number of the embryos had begun to develop into specialized tissue precursors; however, the success rate of the human cells was overall low, with the majority failing to produce human cells.

Commenting on the case, Spagnolo said this type of “hybridization between human and animal cells” was primarily done to garner more scientific information, but cautioned that science cannot be “indifferent” to how the information is used.

If a scientist decides to mingle human cells with those of another species in order to create some sort of hybrid being, “this is, of course, something that can’t be accepted, because in some way it means using the generation of a life as an instrument to reach one’s own ends.”
However, if it’s done for a purpose other than generating alternate beings, such as growing human organs for transplant, Spagnolo said this would be acceptable.

One thing that’s already being proposed, he said, is the possibility of xenografts, i.e., tissue grafts or organ transplants from a donor that is a different species than the recipient.

The idea of doing this, Spagnolo said, is to “inoculate” pigs with human cells, allowing the organs of the pig to receive human antigens, “so when a transplant were done with a liver or heart from the pig inside a (human being), there wouldn’t be the rejection that there is normally doing it with other species.”

Spagnolo said that using the hybrid cells for organ or tissue transplant “is acceptable because to transfer a human cell to a pig doesn’t mean creating a life.”

Rather, it allows the pig “to have a genetic patrimony similar to that of a human being to then be able to use the organs to help people,” he said, emphasizing the fact that it’s not pig cells being injected into human beings, but vice versa.

So to make a good, informed decision involves first of all seeing “what type of experiments” are being done, deciding from that “whether it’s acceptable or not,” then looking at what “one intends to produce, what are the objectives one intends to reach.”

Pointing to the case of an elderly woman in her 80s who was held down by her relatives as her doctors euthanized her. The woman was not consulted and woke up as the doctor was trying to give the injection. When she fought the procedure, her family members were asked to hold her down while the injection was completed.

“When medicine no longer does what it should, [it] completely alters the doctor-patient relationship,” Spagnolo said. He pointed to a bill that is currently on the table in Italy that would effectively legalize euthanasia and assisted suicide, requiring doctors to act on the advanced statements of their patients in this regard, and prohibiting them from conscientious objection.

This bill, as well as the case of the woman in the Netherlands, illustrates “the difficulty of advance statements,” Spagnolo said, explaining that if someone makes an advance statement and later decides against it, “the fact of having said it before is used and is done (by) drugging the patient.”

Parish Outreach to the Sick and Homebound

Listen

2017 marks the 100th Anniversary of the Apparitions of Our Lady of Fatima. What a wonderful opportunity to share the gift of praying the rosary with those who are sick and homebound.

Perhaps your Parish has a prayer line containing many intentions that need special prayerful attention. Someone who is homebound may feel isolated or feel that they are not contributing in any way. Offering them a blessed rosary from your parish priest along with maybe a small statue of Our Lady of Fatima, a rosary prayer book and instruction of how to pray for the Parish can lead to many answered prayers. It can also lead them to a closer relationship with the Blessed Mother and Jesus Christ.

Your Parishioner may already be praying the rosary, so how can you further encourage them? Specific prayer intentions give a focus that replaces the lack of a daily schedule. Also, make sure that these Prayer Warriors are notified of answered prayers. It is a great way for them to build confidence in the power of interceding for those who are most in need.

Three ways to obtain an indulgence for the 100-year Fatima anniversary

1. Make a pilgrimage to the shrine
The first way is for “the faithful to make a pilgrimage to the Fatima Shrine in Portugal and participate in a celebration or prayer dedicated to the Virgin.”

In addition, the faithful must pray the Our Father, recite the Creed, and invoke the Mother of God.

2. Pray before any statue of Our Lady of Fatima
The second way applies to “the pious faithful who visit with devotion a statue of Our Lady of Fatima solemnly exposed for public veneration in any church, oratory or proper place during the days of the anniversary of the apparitions, the 13th of each month from May to October (2017), and there devoutly participate in some celebration or prayer in honor of the Virgin Mary.”

Regarding this second way, the rector of the Fatima Shrine told CNA that the visit to the statue of the Virgin, “does not necessarily have to be only at Fatima or exclusively in Portugal,” but can be done anywhere in the world.

Those seeking an indulgence must also pray an Our Father, recite the Creed and invoke Our Lady of Fatima.

3. The elderly and infirm
The third way to obtain a plenary indulgence applies to people who, because of age, illness or other serious cause, are unable to get around.

These individuals can pray in front of a statue of Our Lady of Fatima and must spiritually unite themselves to the jubilee celebrations on the days of the apparitions, the 13th of each month, between May and October 2017.

They also must “offer to merciful God with confidence, through Mary, their prayers and sufferings or the sacrifices they make in their own lives.”

Parish Outreach to the Sick and Homebound

Listen

Pastoral Care to the Sick and Homebound Workshops

Spring 2017

Holy Family, Amesbury
Need to attend both Saturdays
March 4 and 11
9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Instructor Tim Duff

St Patrick, Stoneham
March 8 to April 12
1:00 PM to 3:00 PM
Instructor Dr Mary Beth Moran

St Jude, Norfolk
Need to attend both Saturdays
March 25 and April 1
9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Instructor Tim Duff

St Agnes, Reading
April 25 Tuesday to May 3-31 Wednesdays
7:00 PM to 9:00 PM
Instructor Dr Mary Beth Moran

St Joseph the Worker, Hanson
Need to attend both Saturdays
May 13 and 20
9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Instructor Tim Duff
OFFICE OF HEALTH CARE MINISTRY

Pastoral Ministry Courses

2017 Registration Form

Individual Information

Please Circle:  Mr.  Mrs.  Ms.  Rev.  Dn.  Br.  Sr.

Name: _____________________________________________________________________________

Home Address _____________________________________________________________________

City/State ________________________ Zip Code ____________________

Phone (Work) __________________________________

Phone (Home)* ___________________________________

Fax: _________________________________________

E-mail: ________________________________________

Name of Parish: ________________________________

City where Parish is located: ______________________

Fee to be paid by:  Individual __
Parish __

Course Name:  Pastoral Care to the Sick and Homebound

Location:

First Class Date: __

Fee: $40

Registrations and checks (payable to the Office of Health Care Ministry) should be mailed to:

Karen Farrell
Office of Health Care Ministry
Archdiocese of Boston
66 Brooks Drive
Braintree, MA  02184-3839

Information: 617-746-5843
e-mail: kfarrell@rcab.org
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**THE LIGHT IS ON FOR YOU**

*Celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation*

Every Wednesday during Lent
6:30 - 8 PM

**Dates to Remember**

April 26 Spring Retreat
April 29 Campus/University Confirmation
June 17 Annual Pastoral Visitor Breakfast

*He is Risen...*

Easter Sunday April 16

Please check enclosed attachments

Spring 2017
Listen

He is Risen!