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Pope Francis greets the Cardinals of the National Camerillo before meeting with the Cardinals, Patriarchs and all cardinals on July 25 at the Vatican, Vatican.

Gay woman wins battle against US bishops to become foster parent

By **BRIAN FRAGA**
bfraga@ncronline.org

Ruby Baker was in legal battle to become a foster parent to rescue children. But Baker still feels like she's "on trial."

"I don't know what to make of it," Baker said of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' opposition earlier this year that "is unrepresentative" of the views of the educating agencies in 2021 to deny her approval to become a foster parent because she is gay.

Baker and one of her sisters told NCR that they expect to find out how that mischaracterizing happened. They also arranged to learn if the bishops' opposition would mean to write her sister, Lisa, if Baker, who is single, begins dating or marries a woman.

"We never did get answers to those questions," said Kenneth Upton, an attorney with Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, Americans United and Lambda Legal, a civil rights organization that supports the LGBTQ community represented Baker. Continued on Page 8

Pope apologizes to Canada's Indigenous

By **CHRISTOPHER WHITE**
cwhite@ncronline.org

Pope Francis made an historic speech during a week-long trip to Canada in late July, apologizing for the "terrible wrong" of the Catholic Church's "colonialist" involvement in removing Indigenous children from their families.

"I humbly beg forgiveness for the environmental damage that was done to the Indigenous peoples," Francis said on July 27 during a solemn meeting with Indigenous representatives, while visiting the former residential schools in the country on July 28.

The pope's message — his first of his kind — was a landmark moment on Canadian soil for the "spiritual, cultural, emotional, physical and social abuse of First Nations, Inuit and Métis children in Catholic-run residential schools."

"I am sorry," said Francis. "I ask forgiveness, in particular, for the harm done to the children."

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Voters in Marietta, Georgia, line up to cast ballots in the U.S. Senate runoff election on July 5, 2022.

Catholic hospitals struggle to aid collapsing Zimbabwe system

By **TIKANDIA KAROVIC**

Public hospitals in Zimbabwe have experienced significant labor shortages in recent months, with staff at many hospitals going on strike to protest pay cuts in a country where the rate of currency inflation has reached 100%.

Staff at Catholic hospitals in the southern African nation are trying to pick up the slack, but are also struggling with the workload and the nation's worsening economic conditions.

Dr. Thebe Sibilo, a physician at the Catholic-run St. Anne's Mission Hospital in Zimbabwe's southeast, has been trained in all kinds of life-saving medical practices. But lately because of more frequent electricity outages, he has had to adapt to providing aid under candle or kerosene light.

"We are struggling," Sibilo told NCR of the staff at his hospital. "It



Health workers led by nurses take part in a demonstration over salaries at Parirere-Robert Mugabe hospital in Harare, Zimbabwe, June 2. A strike by health workers has left the country's major hospitals under strain. Catholic hospitals are trying to pick up the slack, but are also struggling with the workload and the nation's worsening economic conditions.

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In June, Sibilo's colleague and

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Climate-concerned voters ready to bring faith to midterm polls

By **BRIAN ROYCE**

With less than 100 days until the midterm elections, a national network of state-based environmental faith groups is gearing up for a final push to register their communities to vote and their own faith with voting the crucial final weekend.

Since the spring, Interfaith Power & Light has mobilized its state chapters to engage their local congregations through its Faith Climate Justice Voter campaign. The effort seeks to increase the number of registered voters and to educate communities of all religions traditions about the importance of voting and what's at stake in the coming elections for the environment, climate

Napa Institute conference focuses on banning abortion nationwide

By **BRIAN FRAGA**
bfraga@ncronline.org

On the evening of July 16, former U.S. Attorney General William Barr addressed a friendly audience that once three days at the Napa Institute's annual summit on the Supreme Court's decision on the right to life.

But it wasn't just a group of pro-life activists that gathered. Barr's remarks, praising the resilience of conservative Catholics and other business leaders to demand for the products to get on and saving the State of Texas, that Barr said in his address.

"If I had known earlier that I think Lafayette Park would have been a lot easier," Barr said with a smile as he referenced his addressing before his retirement in 2015 to the Supreme Court's decision on the right to life.

The audience at the Napa Institute's annual summit on the Supreme Court's decision on the right to life, that Barr said in his address.

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Black Catholic groups gather for in-person meeting

By **DAN STOOKMAN**
dstookman@ncronline.org

The new president of the National Black Sisters' Conference closed the group's annual gathering with a message, praising all for Black sisters, congregations and organizations to stand with her as a witness that Black lives do matter.

Dr. Adèle Lorraine Walker of the School Sisters of Notre Dame was elected to lead the 26-year-old conference at the group's annual meeting with three other Black Catholic groups and also presided the conference's Sacred Tables Award, which honors inspirational leaders.



Dr. Adèle Lorraine Walker of the School Sisters of Notre Dame was elected to lead the 26-year-old conference at the group's annual meeting with three other Black Catholic groups and also presided the conference's Sacred Tables Award, which honors inspirational leaders.

Walker said she would only accept the award if those in the banquet hall would accept the responsibility that comes with being Black in a white-dominated American Catholic church.

"We can stand together, then I accept this award," she said.

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The front pages of two recent issues of the National Catholic Reporter (NCR graphic)



by Bill Mitchell

[View Author Profile](#)

bmitchell@ncronline.org

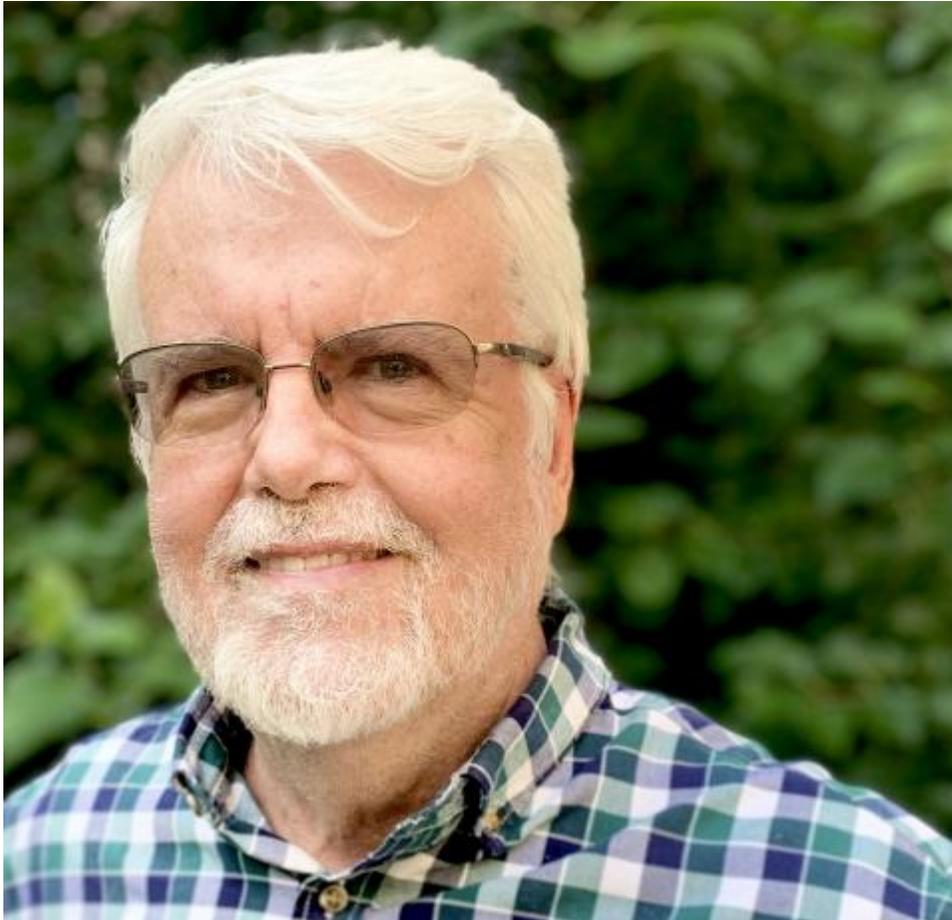
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When I wrote my first story for the National Catholic Reporter as a college freshman in 1967, I certainly had no idea I'd end up as its publisher and CEO a half century later.



Bill Mitchell

When I accepted the position two years ago, I told the board I would serve until my 75th birthday, with the goal of helping the board identify a longer-term publisher to lead NCR into the second half of its first century. Although my 75th birthday is a year off, NCR is on a positive trajectory and now is the time to begin the search for that next leader.

I spent the vast majority of my career in secular journalism, but the mission is fundamentally the same as what we do at NCR: to probe the issues that matter most to the communities we serve and to rely on our independence to hold the powerful accountable.

As readers and donors tell me every week, though, NCR does something more. It provides an inspirational vision of a church rooted in the Gospels and committed to values of faith and justice.

If you know of someone you believe would be the right fit, please direct them to ncr.media/pubjob for the job description and instructions on how to apply.

As ever, I thank you for your support and look forward to hearing from you.

All the best,

Bill Mitchell

816-968-2259

bmitchell@ncronline.org

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