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NATIONAL CATHOLIC

REPORTER

THE INDEPENDENT NEWS SOURCE

McGraw-Hill

August 1-16, 2022

Vol. 58, No. 22 \$2.00



Pope Francis greets the Cardinals of the National Camerium before meeting with the National, Polish and Italian Cardinals on July 25 at the Vatican, Vatican.

Gay woman wins battle against US bishops to become foster parent

By **BRIAN FRAGA**
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Ruby Baker was in legal battle to become a foster parent to rescue children. But Baker still feels like she's "in limbo."

"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 unfortunately" causing one of the fundraising agencies in 2021 to deny her application 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 fundraising agency, which they also managed, will respond to the bishops' opposition. They also arranged to learn if the bishops' opposition would mean to write her sister, Lisa, 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.

"I am sorry," said Francis. "I am sorry for the bishops." *Continued on Page 8*

Pope apologizes to Canada's Indigenous

By **CHRISTOPHER WHITE**
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Pope Francis made an historic apology during a week-long trip to Canada in late July, saying he was "deeply sorry" for the Catholic Church's "catastrophic" involvement in running abusive residential schools for Indigenous children.

"I humbly beg forgiveness for the evil committed by many Catholics against the Indigenous peoples," Francis said on July 27 during a solemn meeting with Indigenous representatives, while visiting the former site of a residential school.

...one of the largest residential schools in the country on July 28. The pope's message — his first of his first visit to the country on July 28 — fulfilled a demand from the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which since 2015 has called on the pope to formally issue an apology on Canadian soil for the "spiritual, cultural, emotional, physical and sexual abuse of First Nations, Inuit and Métis children in Catholic-run residential schools."

"I am sorry," said Francis. "I am sorry for the bishops." *Continued on Page 8*

Catholic hospitals struggle to aid collapsing Zimbabwe system

By **TIKANDIA KAROVIC**

HEALTH CARE — 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 percent.

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 Cathedral of St. Anne's Mission Hospital in Zimbabwe's southeast, has been treated 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 candlelight.

"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 hospital in Harare, Zimbabwe, June 2. A strike by health workers has left the country's major hospitals undermanned. Catholic hospitals are trying to pick up the slack, but are also struggling with the workload and the nation's worsening economic conditions.


have to keep going to work even when the conditions are very difficult to keep working."

In June, Sibilo's colleague and others at government-run health centers embedded on a scale-downing maintenance in U.S. dollars. The job *Continued on Page 10*

This issue was mailed on July 29.

COMMENTARY

GERMAN REFORM
Is this threat of reform real?
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APPRECIATION

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Priest and author, member of the Society of the Sacred Mission, died at 88
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NATIONAL CATHOLIC

REPORTER

THE INDEPENDENT NEWS SOURCE

McGraw-Hill

August 19-September 1, 2022

Vol. 58, No. 23 \$2.00



Voters in Marietta, Georgia, line up to cast ballots in the U.S. Senate runoff election on July 20, 2022.

Climate-concerned voters ready to bring faith to midterm polls

By **BRIAN ROEWE**
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With less than 90 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 election for the environment, climate change and democracy.

"The reality is that in order to create this world that is built on our values, we have to vote," said Rev. Susan Strickerhoff, president of Interfaith Power & Light. "Voting is a way that we can create the world that we want to live in, and a world in which we're voting for our neighbors and voting for the environment, climate change and democracy."

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Black Catholic groups gather for in-person meeting

By **DAN STOOKMAN**
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WINE AND BREAD — The new president of the National Black Sisters' Conference closed the group's annual gathering with a message, praising its call for Black sisters, congregations and seminarians 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 over 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 over 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. *Continued on Page 8*

This issue was mailed on Aug. 10.

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



by Bill Mitchell

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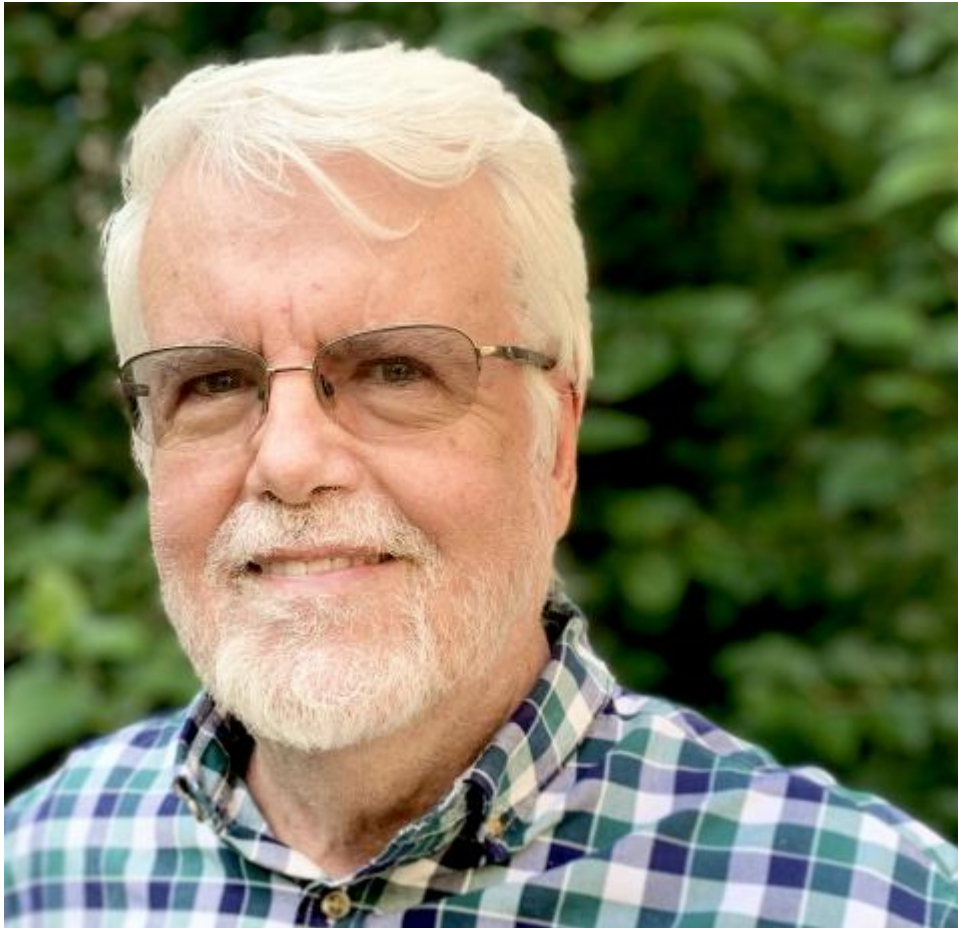
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August 26, 2022

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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

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A version of this story appeared in the **Sept 2-15, 2022** print issue.