



The

# Criterion

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## Emmaus Walk

Life lessons can be learned from embarrassing moments, writes columnist Debra Tomaselli, page 12.

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## From the heart



Lynne Locke has been chosen as this year's recipient of the Saint Theodora Excellence in Education Award, the highest honor for a Catholic educator in the archdiocese. Locke teaches junior high theology and social studies at Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School in Indianapolis.

(Photo by John Shaughnessy)

## Award-winning teacher sets the 'God' standard, hoping to help her students become saints

By John Shaughnessy

Lynne Locke wipes away the tears as she shares the story of a boy she taught during a junior high school theology class, a child who struggled for years in school.

"I offered to meet with him after school. After we had worked together for a while, he came over to me one day and said, 'Last year's teacher did not care about me. Last year's teacher gave up on me.'"

The boy didn't say anything else, but his look let Locke know that he

appreciated the difference she was trying to make.

"I kept telling him, 'You can do this. You're smart. I'll continue to help you. I'm not giving up on you.'"

It's a bond between a teacher and a student that continues, similar to the bond that marks a second story that shows Locke's caring as a teacher.

This moment also occurred at Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School in Indianapolis, where Locke teaches junior high theology and social studies. But this moment unfolded with a former student

on the day when members of Ritter's then-sophomore class were scheduled to receive their high school class rings during a special ceremony.

"Her mother wasn't able to be there. Something came up and her mother had to work," recalls Locke, who has taught in archdiocesan schools for 26 years.

"So she asked me to present her ring to her. I was so surprised by it, and so touched. Kids don't realize the impact something like that has on you. It meant a lot to me."

See LOCKE, page 2

## Connected in the Spirit decisions for New Albany, Tell City deaneries are announced

By Sean Gallagher

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson announced on April 19 decisions that will affect parishes across the New Albany and Tell City deaneries.

As a result of the decisions, three parishes will be merged into nearby faith communities.

In the New Albany Deanery, Most Precious Blood Parish in New Middleton and St. Peter Parish in Harrison County will be closed and merged into St. Joseph Parish in Corydon.

In the Tell City Deanery, St. Martin of Tours Parish in Siberia will be closed and merged into St. Isidore the Farmer Parish in Perry County.

Any future use of the church buildings of the parishes to be closed will be determined by the faith communities into which they will be merged.

All of the decisions will be effective on July 5. They were the result of the involvement of the deaneries' pastoral leaders and representatives of its lay members through the Connected in the Spirit planning process that began in November 2015.

Any member of the merged parishes may appeal the decisions in writing to Archbishop Thompson.

Much of the process was complete when Pope Francis appointed then-Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin as the new shepherd of the Archdiocese of Newark, N.J., on Nov. 7, 2016.

After Archbishop Thompson was appointed on June 13, 2017, as the new shepherd of the Church in central and southern Indiana, he studied the proposals that were the result of the process.

"I then sought to engage the people of the New Albany and Tell City deaneries through listening sessions," Archbishop Thompson said to *The Criterion*. "After prayerful consideration, following the strong recommendations from the Council

See CONNECTED, page 7

## Faced with possible deportation, mother of two turns for support to the Church community she calls home

By Natalie Hoefler

At 11 a.m. on April 24, Erika Fierro's name was called. She stood and walked to the door being held open to lead her to see the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) field office director. Fierro wore the tracking device she has had strapped to her ankle since Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers came to arrest her and her husband Jesus at their Indianapolis home on March 21.

Fierro was there to plead for her family. With her husband detained and awaiting deportation, Erika's deportation would leave their 3- and 8-year-old children without the support of their parents, alone in the only country they've ever known.

See SUPPORT, page 10



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson prays over Erika Fierro outside of the Department of Homeland Security office in Indianapolis on April 24 prior to her meeting asking for a 'credible fear interview.' Also pictured is Franciscan Father Larry Janezic. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)



# LOCKE

continued from page 1

## Hoping to make 'students into saints'

Locke's depth of caring for her students is one of the reasons that she is this year's recipient of the Saint Theodora Excellence in Education Award, the highest honor for a Catholic educator in the archdiocese.

Another reason is her commitment to the community, including preparing and serving meals to families of hospitalized children at the Ronald McDonald House in Indianapolis.

There's also her commitment at school. She has coached three Academic Challenge teams to championships in the past three years. She also coordinates the eighth-grade class trip to New Albany and St. Louis so students can learn more about the legacy of Cardinal Joseph E. Ritter, a champion of school desegregation in both the archdioceses of Indianapolis and St. Louis.

Summing up Locke's qualities, Cardinal Ritter's principal Steve Pelych shared this assessment in recommending her for the archdiocesan honor:

"What makes Lynne most special is her commitment to the Catholic faith. Lynne lives her life evangelizing the Catholic faith through the manner in which she lives. Generations of students are not only smarter, but better people because of the guidance and teachings of Lynne."

The chairperson of the school's theology department Aaron Hollowell adds, "Lynne exemplifies the Catholic approach to education because from the moment you walk into her classroom you know her goal is to make her students into saints."

That goal becomes clear while spending time watching Locke teach.

## From the heart

In a theology class about the sacraments, she prepares her students for the opportunity for reconciliation that they will have the next day at school.

"Let's think about what we're putting into our relationship with God," she tells a class of seventh-grade boys. "God wants you to be in relation to him."

She encourages the students when they meet with the priest to share their confession "from the heart."

Those three words could easily describe her approach to teaching. There's also the reality that, for her, teaching and living her faith are always connected.

"Teaching is my way of bringing out the kingdom of God on Earth," she says. "I see teaching as an avenue for helping children learn to be aware of their path in life, to



As a teacher at Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School in Indianapolis, Lynne Locke coordinates the eighth-grade class trip to New Albany and St. Louis so students can learn more about the legacy of Cardinal Joseph E. Ritter, a champion of school desegregation in both the archdioceses of Indianapolis and St. Louis. Here, Locke points out the baptismal record of Cardinal Ritter to student Luis Pabon on March 19. Cardinal Ritter's baptismal record is on display in St. Mary Church in New Albany. (Submitted photo)

stay on the path to heaven, to allow God to guide their thoughts and actions."

Locke has taken her own special journey to her Catholic faith. Growing up in the Episcopal Church, she experienced her turning point when she was a freshman in 1977 at Ball State University in Muncie, Ind. During the first week of school, her Catholic roommate said, "Let's go to church," and Locke joined her.


"I think it was that experience that made me realize I was at home. I really started the conversion process in college, and finished it when I wanted to get married in 1985. My husband Ed is Catholic."

Now, she says, "My Catholic faith is everything to me. It grounds me. It's the basis for everything I think and do. I can't imagine life without my Catholic faith."

## A lasting impact

Her faith shines through in the way that she and her two siblings have made a commitment to make sure that one of them visits their mother—who suffered a stroke five years ago—at her nursing home every day.

"I always bring food because she was an extraordinary cook in her day," Locke says with a smile. "She loves spaghetti and meatballs."



## Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

### April 28 – May 9, 2018

<p><b>April 28 — 11 a.m.</b> Confirmation of youths of St. Gabriel Parish, Connerville; St. Bridget of Ireland Parish, Liberty; St. Mary Parish, Rushville; and St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, Richmond, at St. Gabriel Church</p> <p><b>April 28 — 5 p.m.</b> Confirmation of youths of St. Agnes Parish, Nashville, at St. Agnes Church</p> <p><b>April 29 — 10:30 a.m.</b> Mass of the Newly Initiated at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis</p> <p><b>April 30 – May 1 — 5:30 p.m.</b> Provincial Meeting of the Indiana tribunals at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, Indianapolis</p> <p><b>May 1 — 11 a.m.</b> Mass at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, Indianapolis</p> <p><b>May 1 — 1 p.m.</b> Indianapolis East Deanery Priests' Meeting, SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis</p> <p><b>May 1 — 7 p.m.</b> CYO Volunteer Awards Ceremony and Reception at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis, with reception afterward at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis</p> <p><b>May 2 — 11 a.m.</b> Mass at Franciscan Hospice House Chapel, Indianapolis</p>	<p><b>May 2 — 7 p.m.</b> Confirmation of youths of St. Malachy Parish, Brownsburg, at St. Malachy Church</p> <p><b>May 3 — 10 a.m.</b> Leadership Team Meeting, Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis</p> <p><b>May 6 — 12:30 p.m.</b> Bilingual confirmation of youths of St. Ambrose Parish, Seymour, at St. Ambrose Church</p> <p><b>May 8 — 10:30 a.m.</b> Priests' Personnel Meeting, Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis</p> <p><b>May 8 — 7 p.m.</b> Bilingual confirmation of youths of St. Anthony Parish and St. Mary Parish, Indianapolis, at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis</p> <p><b>May 9 — 10:30 a.m.</b> Bloomington Deanery Priests' Meeting at St. Paul Catholic Center, Bloomington</p> <p><b>May 9 — 3:30 p.m.</b> Catholic Community Foundation Board of Trustees' Meeting, Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis</p> <p><b>May 9 — 6 p.m.</b> Circle of Giving Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis, with reception and dinner afterward at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis <i>(Schedule subject to change.)</i></p>
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The faith of the mother of two grown children is also reflected in the way that she considers her students as an extension of her family.

"I think of them all the time," she says. "You're always looking for a way to reach them. I'm here to be a role model to them, a listening ear, and even to be the person who might say, 'That's not acceptable.'"

"You have to look at the individual person and try to understand where they're coming from. It gives you the ability to look beyond what you see, to find ways you can reach children."

When Locke is asked about the lasting

impact that she hopes to have on her students, she pauses. Then she shares an answer that could serve as the trinity of goals that all Catholic educators should have for their students.

"I hope they always love to learn, and they always look for ways to get greater knowledge about anything.

"I hope they understand the love that Christ has for them and the importance of going to heaven one day.

"I hope they remember that I cared about them, and that I truly wanted what is best for them.

"I think they feel that way about me. I hope they do." †

## Finalists for teaching honor come from throughout the archdiocese

While Lynne Locke of Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School in Indianapolis was selected as this year's recipient of the Saint Theodora Guerin Excellence in Education Award, four other teachers were named as finalists for the highest honor for a Catholic educator in the archdiocese.

Finalists also included:

- **Jennifer Fisher Kelly**—St. Anthony of Padua School in Clarksville
- **Maggie Kuflewski**—St. Barnabas School in Indianapolis
- **Lindsey Morris**—St. Mary School in North Vernon
- **Pam Wells**—SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi School in Greenwood †

## Mass for newly initiated into Church set for April 29 at cathedral in Indy

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson will celebrate "A Mass for the Newly Initiated" at 10:30 a.m. on April 29 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 North Meridian St., in Indianapolis.

All of the neophytes and those received into full communion with the Church after Easter 2017 through Easter weekend of 2018 are invited to this archdiocesan celebration.

The Mass will be celebrated in English and Spanish, and will allow the newly initiated to gather with the archbishop to celebrate the Eucharist, the source and the summit of our faith.

Parking will be available across the street at the Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, where there will be a reception in the Assembly Hall immediately following Mass. †



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# More than 1,000 students to graduate from area Catholic colleges

## Criterion staff report

Students, families, friends and educators will join in the celebration as the three Catholic colleges in the archdiocese hold their graduation ceremonies in May.

Here is a glimpse of each ceremony.

### Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College

Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College in St. Mary-of-the-Woods will celebrate its commencement on May 5 when 106 graduates of the Class of 2018 will receive their associate's, bachelor's or master's degrees.

The Baccalaureate Mass will be celebrated at 10:30 a.m. in the college's Church of the Immaculate Conception. The commencement ceremony will begin at 1:15 p.m. in the college's Jeanne Knoerle Sports & Recreation Center.

The commencement speaker will be Annette "Mickey" Lentz, chancellor of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.



Annette "Mickey" Lentz

A graduate of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College, Lentz has served in many leadership roles during her 57 years of dedication to the archdiocese. Lentz will receive an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree during the commencement ceremony.

### Marian University

Marian University in Indianapolis will award 933 degrees at its commencement ceremony on May 6.

A record 781 undergraduate and graduate students will receive bachelor's and master's degrees during the ceremony at the Indiana Farmers Coliseum at the Indiana State Fairgrounds in Indianapolis.

During the same ceremony, which begins at 1 p.m., 152 future doctors will

graduate from the Marian University College of Osteopathic Medicine.

Former Indianapolis Mayor Greg Ballard will deliver the address at Marian's 81st commencement, which is being held at the Fairgrounds due to construction on campus.

Ballard and his wife, Winnie, will receive honorary Doctor of Public Service degrees during the ceremony.

Four other individuals will also receive honorary degrees: Marilyn Strasburger Brouillette will be presented with an honorary Doctor of Philanthropy degree; Phil and Brigitt Caito will receive honorary Doctor of Business degrees; and Maxine McIntosh Ferguson will receive an honorary Doctor of Arts degree.



Greg Ballard

### Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology

Forty-eight students are expected to graduate when Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad holds its commencement on May 12.

The ceremony will be at 2 p.m. Central Time in St. Bede Theater on the Saint Meinrad campus. The commencement address will be delivered by Bishop Christopher J. Coyne



Bishop Christopher J. Coyne

auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis who is now the spiritual leader of the Diocese of Burlington, Vt.

Mass for the graduates and their guests will be at 10:30 a.m. Central Time in the Archabbey Church of Our Lady of Einsiedeln. †

# Oldenburg Academy dean recognized with national award in education

## Special to The Criterion

Annette Hunger was thrilled when she recently received a national award for her "dedication and commitment to excellence" in Catholic education.

Yet while she was touched to receive a 2018 "Lead, Learn, Proclaim Award" from the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA), it's not the best part of her 15 years at Oldenburg Academy of the Immaculate Conception in Oldenburg.

"Without a doubt, the most rewarding



Annette Hunger

aspect of my career in Catholic education would be the people that I have met and worked with, and the lasting relationships created with students and families," said Hunger, the dean of enrollment management at

Oldenburg Academy.

Hunger was one of 27 people to

receive the award during the NCEA's national convention on April 3-5 in Cincinnati.

"It takes dedicated people in the schools, the dioceses, the parishes and the communities to carry out the mission of faith formation in Catholic schools," said Barbara McGraw Edmondson, NCEA's chief leadership and program officer. "They are the living messengers of God's purpose from generation to generation."

Hunger has exemplified that attitude during her tenure at

Oldenburg Academy, said Diane Laake, the president of the private Catholic high school.

"She believes passionately in our mission and continues to sacrifice to empower others to have the opportunities available at Oldenburg Academy," Laake said. "At Oldenburg Academy, we say that our most valued 'one-to-one' program does not involve our tech devices; it involves our people. Annette has been the primary driver of this vision from the beginning." †

# Faith can help cleanse societal waters of evil of racism, says Cardinal Wuerl

WASHINGTON (CNS)—With faith, people can confront and help overcome the evil of racism, Washington Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl said in an April 17 talk at The Catholic University of America.

"The elimination of racism may seem too great a task for any one of us or even for the whole Church," he said. "Yet we place our confidence in the Lord, because in Christ, we are brothers and sisters, one to the other. With Christ, we stand in the spirit of justice, peace and love."

Cardinal Wuerl, who as the archbishop of Washington is Catholic University's chancellor, was invited by its president, John Garvey, to speak on his recent pastoral letter, "The Challenge of Racism Today."

Speaking at the university's Pryzbyla Center to an audience consisting mostly of seminarians and other students, the cardinal compared racism to a residue that has contaminated streams that flow into the societal well from which people drink. He warned that the unhealthy contaminants causing racism in our

culture can be subtle and ubiquitous.

"We have the possibility to be that fresh stream of water flowing into the societal well," he said.

Noting that the U.S. bishops in their 1979 pastoral letter "Brothers and Sisters to Us" identified racism as a sin, the cardinal said that evil has spanned continents and centuries, and continues in today's world.

"In societies around the world, the social construct of race has been used to classify 'us' and 'them,' separating those who are seen as 'different'—those who come from a different place or look differently or speak a different language," Cardinal Wuerl said. "This construct has then led to the assertion of innate superiority of one group over the other. This has real destructive effects in society and in the lives of individuals and families."

He said the concept of race is not a biological reality, but a social construct.

"Properly understood, there are not multiple races, but objectively there

is only one race—the human race," he explained. "We are all one species, one people, one human family, albeit manifested in diverse ethnic, cultural and societal ways."

He added, "We are, all of us, brothers and sisters, children of the same God."

Quoting from his pastoral letter on racism, Cardinal Wuerl said, "Today we need to acknowledge past sins of racism and, in a spirit of reconciliation, move toward a Church and society where the wounds of racism are healed."

Noting that African-Americans because of their skin color have borne "the social scars of denigration and a cultural classification rooted, fostered and experienced in slavery in this nation and the denial of their fundamental human dignity," he said the societal impacts of racism endure today.

"The context in which our response to racism takes place," the cardinal said, "must also include a recognition of the lingering effects of slavery and segregation and of the many social inequities that exist, including

the disparate negative impact that certain policies have had, including the concentration of people by race in residential neighborhoods, de facto segregation in public schools, with many African-American children being consigned to poor quality schools, the inequities manifested in employment opportunities, health care and incarceration rates."

In his pastoral letter, Cardinal Wuerl emphasized the importance of Church efforts to foster social justice, opportunity and hope in facing those problems.

Speaking in the month that marked the 50th anniversary of the assassination of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., Cardinal Wuerl praised him as being first and foremost "a man of faith."

"His Christian faith is what animated his life and kept him going day after day," the cardinal said. "Always faithful to the Lord and his Gospel, he also insistently, forcefully, yet without violence, reminded this nation that we are all brothers and sisters, because we are all children of the same God." †

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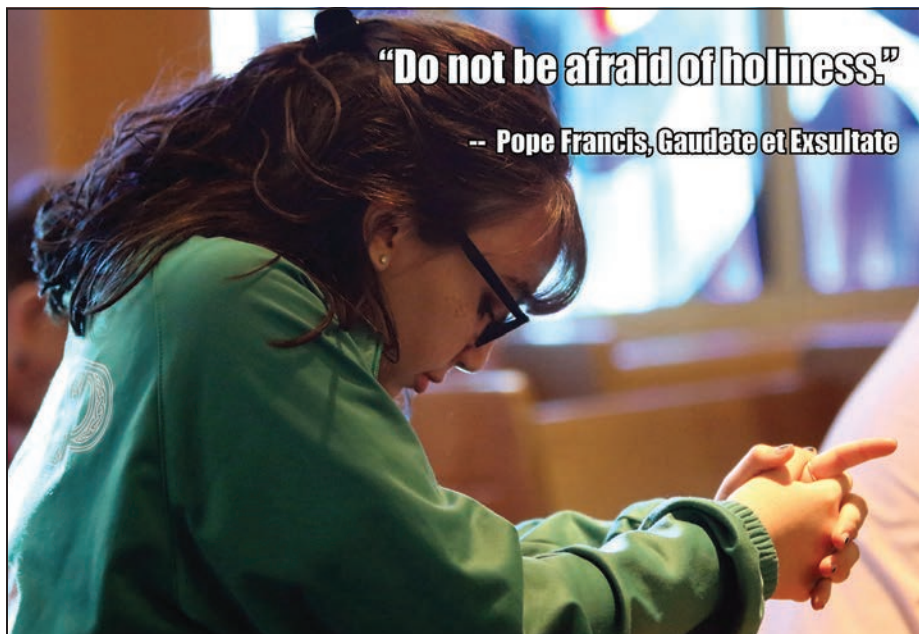


# The Criterion

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## Editorial



This image contains a quote from Pope Francis' exhortation, "*Gaudete et Exsultate*" ("Rejoice and Be Glad"), on the "call to holiness in today's world." (CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)

## Pope Francis tells us how to get to heaven

Pope Francis is only the latest person to tell us that we must all strive for holiness. He does so in his apostolic exhortation "*Gaudete et Exsultate*" ("Rejoice and be glad"). St. Peter, the first pope wrote, "As he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in every aspect of your conduct, for it is written, 'Be holy because I am holy'" (1 Pt 1:15-16).

In his new document, Pope Francis tries to help us find holiness in the ordinary circumstances of our lives. St. Francis de Sales did that, too, back in the 17th century, in his *Introduction to the Devout Life*, when he wrote, "I say that devotion must be practiced in different ways by the nobleman and by the working man, by the servant and by the prince, by the widow, by the unmarried girl and by the married woman. But even this distinction is not sufficient; for the practice of devotion must be adapted to the strength, to the occupation and to the duties of each one in particular."

Pope Francis quotes his predecessor, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, who said, "Holiness is nothing other than charity lived to the full." Pope Francis puts it this way: "We are all called to be holy by living our lives with love and by bearing witness in everything we do: wherever we find ourselves" (#14).

The pope writes that Jesus taught us what it means to be holy when he preached the Beatitudes found in Matthew's Gospel (Mt 5:3-11). The same Gospel tells us that to get to heaven, we should feed the sick, give drink to the thirsty, welcome the stranger, clothe the naked, care for the sick and visit the prisoner (Mt 25:31-46).

Our Holy Father writes that prayer is essential for holiness even if that prayer need not be lengthy or involve intense emotion. He also recommends a daily examination of conscience and the development of discernment to determine when we are truly following the will of God rather than the ways of the world.

With all this exhortation says about ways that all of us can become saints, it's too bad that it was met with controversy

when it was released on April 9. The headline in *The Washington Post* read "Pope Francis's new major document: Caring for migrants and the poor is just as important as preventing abortion."

This is because of this passage in the exhortation: "Our defense of the innocent unborn, for example, needs to be clear, firm and passionate, for at stake is the dignity of a human life, which is always sacred and demands love for each person, regardless of his or her stage of development. Equally sacred, however, are the lives of the poor, those already born, the destitute, the abandoned and the underprivileged, the vulnerable infirm and elderly exposed to covert euthanasia, the victims of human trafficking, new forms of slavery, and every form of rejection" (#101).

In other words, it should never be a matter of either defense of the unborn or care for those other categories. As Indianapolis Archbishop Charles C. Thompson continues to point out, it's *both* a defense of the unborn *and* care for all other human life.

In his recent pastoral letter, "We Are One in Christ," Archbishop Thompson wrote that the Catholic Church's social teachings are based on an anthropology that emphasizes the equal dignity of all people as being created in the image and likeness of God, and favors helping those on the margins of society as "the least of these my brothers and sisters," with whom Jesus identified himself (Mt 25:40, 45).

Pope Francis and Archbishop Thompson clearly believe that the defense of the innocent unborn must be, in the words of the pope, "clear, firm and passionate." But we must also be clear, firm and passionate about all human beings, including migrants and refugees who come to the U.S. seeking relief from economic, political and religious strife.

We hope that many of our readers will get a copy of this exhortation, for the good of their souls. The document can be accessed online at [bit.ly/2qm6f4C](http://bit.ly/2qm6f4C).

The Holy Father is doing nothing less than telling us the best way to heaven.

—John F. Fink

Perspective/Daniel Conway

## Monks' weekend retreat helps recovering alcoholics find God

Christian monks have been seeking God since the dawn of Christianity. They have removed themselves from the chaos



and temptations of daily life "in the world" in order to pray, do good work and share their journeys with others who also seek God in community.

Of course, the monk quickly learns that "the world"

comes with him or her. There is no absolute escape from the trials and temptations of life. There is only the transforming power of God's amazing grace which is available to all God's children wherever they are. Even so, there *are* special—holy—places where it seems much easier to seek and find "the God of our understanding," and to discover—and then do—God's will. Saint Meinrad Archabbey, a Benedictine monastery in southern Indiana, is one of these holy places.

For the past nine years, Saint Meinrad Archabbey has served as the host for a weekend retreat for recovering alcoholics. The overarching theme of the retreat is the 11th Step of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA): "Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood him, praying only for knowledge of his will for us and the power to carry that out."

What better place to examine prayerfully this important step in the recovery process? Could there be a better group of people to pray with and share their spiritual journeys than those who have freely given themselves to a life dedicated to the search for "conscious contact with God"?

Many believe that alcoholism is a multifaceted disease that affects the mind, body and emotions of those who suffer from this all-too-common form

of physical addiction, mental obsession and emotional illness. There is no cure, experts say, but many women and men do recover if they can work the 12 steps of AA with honesty and humility. One day at a time.

Alcoholics Anonymous describes itself as "a spiritual program" that has no affiliation with any religious or secular group. AA's spiritual program of recovery is open to "all God's kids" regardless of religious, social or economic status. Thus, the 11th Step Retreat is open to all—including spouses, family members, friends and professionals who work with people in recovery.

In addition to the retreat conferences, the program includes opportunities for prayer with the monks, silent reflection and meditation, and fellowship with other retreatants at meal times and during social gatherings.

Pope Francis recently spoke about the value of this kind of retreat:

"In this age, when people are so busy that they do not have enough time to listen to God's voice, monasteries and convents become like oases, where men and women of all ages, backgrounds, cultures and religions can discover the beauty of silence. At monasteries, people can rediscover themselves in harmony with creation, allowing God to restore a proper order in their lives" (Pope Francis, general audience, April 19, 2018).

The ninth annual 11th Step Retreat will be held at Saint Meinrad on July 13-15. Its particular theme is "The Joy of the Journey," and guest speakers include Dr. John M., author of *Being Sober and Becoming Happy*, and a video presentation by Franciscan Father Richard Rohr, author of *Breathing Under Water*.

Those thinking about attending should go to [spiritualretreatsteps.com](http://spiritualretreatsteps.com) to register.

(Daniel Conway is a member of The Criterion's editorial committee.) †

## Letter to the Editor

### Reader offers more reflections about disciples on road to Emmaus

My father, John F. Fink, had a reflection in the April 13 issue of *The Criterion* about who the disciples were whom Jesus met on the road to Emmaus. I happened to talk on this subject as lecturer at a Knights of Columbus gathering in Nashville, Tenn. Here are a few reasons I also believe that the "other" disciple was Mary, the wife of Cleopas.

First, the two disciples' eyes are opened at the breaking of the bread. What other meal in the Bible opens the eyes of a married couple? Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden at the first creation when they ate the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Now, on the first day of the new creation (Easter Sunday) this married couple eats of the fruit of the tree of life—the cross, and the Eucharist is fruit of that tree.

Second, this story is also prefigured earlier in Luke's Gospel when another married couple loses Jesus for three days. When they find him, Mary asks, "Why have you done this to us?" (Lk 2:48)

Jesus replies, "Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" (Lk 2:49)—that it was necessary. After Cleopas and Mary lose Jesus for three days, he tells them, "Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" (Lk 24:26). Jesus seems to rebuke both couples. "Oh, how foolish you are" (Lk 24:25).

Third, the Gospel of John tells us,

"Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala" (Jn 19:25). Clopas is the Hebrew version of the Greek name Cleopas and was an extremely rare name for a first-century Jew. So we know Cleopas and Mary were both in Jerusalem.

Fourth, when they arrived in Emmaus they invited Jesus to stay with them in the home they shared. That would make sense if they were married.

Fifth, God walks with Adam and Eve in the garden, and God walks with Cleopas and Mary on the road to Emmaus. God wants to walk with us in our marriages. That's why Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen said that a marriage takes three.

And finally, the most conclusive proof that they were a married couple is the fact that the Greek word used for conversing and debating in Lk 24:13 really means to argue, so they must be married.

I also mentioned that the Emmaus story prefigures the Mass since Jesus first interprets the Scriptures for them (the Liturgy of the Word) and then he breaks the Bread (the Liturgy of the Eucharist). Jesus established a sacramental Church. The disciples' eyes were not opened by just hearing the Word of God, but at the breaking of the bread.

Robert P. Fink  
Brentwood, Tenn.





# Christ the Cornerstone

## Christ is the vine, we are the branches, bearing fruit together

*“Anyone who does not remain in me will be thrown out like a branch and wither. People will gather them and throw them into a fire and they will be burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you. By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples” (Jn 15: 6–8).*

Imagery used in the Scripture readings for the Fifth Sunday of Easter speaks of vineyards and the fruit that produces good wine. In St. John’s Gospel (Jn 15:1-8), Jesus tells us that he is the true vine and his Father is the vine grower. “He takes away every branch in me that does not bear fruit, and every one that does, he prunes so that it bears more fruit” (Jn 15:2).

This is important information because this is no ordinary vineyard. Our Lord is speaking of the vine that is his body, and he tells us in no uncertain terms that *we* are the branches that are either thrown away to wither and be cast into a fire and burned, or that bear fruit and are pruned in order to be even more productive.

Christ is the vine, and we are the branches. If we remain true to God’s word, we can flourish and produce much fruit. If we refuse to listen to, or follow, God’s commandments, we wither and die. “Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine,” Jesus says, “so neither can you unless you remain in me” (Jn 15:4).

The second reading for the Fifth Sunday of Easter (1 Jn 3:18-24) tells us how to “remain in him,” that is, to remain a vital branch that belongs to a healthy and fruitful vine. “Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence in God and receive from him whatever we ask, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him” (1 Jn 3:21-22).

God’s commandments are simple but not easy: We must love God with our whole heart and soul and mind. And we must love one another as we love ourselves. Or, as St. John expresses this: “And his commandment is this: we should believe in the name of God’s son, Jesus Christ, and love one another just as he commanded us” (1 Jn 3:23).

But we are sinners who frequently fall short of the goal to love God and each other. That’s why we cling to the love and mercy of God, which restores us whenever we miss the mark because of our sin.

Remaining true to God’s word and to our calling as disciples of Jesus Christ requires ongoing confession of our sins and genuine acts of repentance. We must stand up again after falling and, with the help of God’s grace, continue on the road set out for us at the time of our baptism. This is the life story of all great saints—conversion experiences that are never once and for all, but are mixed with acceptance of God’s constant forgiveness. This should be our story as well.

The first reading for next Sunday (Acts 9:26–31) tells the immediate aftermath of St. Paul’s conversion from a hateful persecutor to a humble follower of Jesus. It tells us that Paul’s initial attempts to join the disciples were not successful because “they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple” (Acts 9:26). Paul did not give up. “He moved about freely with them in Jerusalem

and spoke out boldly in the name of the Lord” (Acts 9:28). He even spoke and debated with non-Jews (Hellenists), “but they tried to kill him” (Acts 9:29).

In spite of everything, the early Church “was being built up and walked in the fear of the Lord, and with the consolation of the Holy Spirit it grew in numbers” (Acts 9:31). Why? Because after the Lord’s resurrection and the disciples’ reception of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the Church kept the commandments and remained in Jesus as he remains with the Father.

These are readings that should give us much hope this Easter season. No matter how far we stray from the road that leads to union with Jesus Christ and the eternal life we are promised with him and with all the saints, the Holy Spirit is active among us always, redirecting us by God’s infinite love and mercy.

In the remaining weeks of this Easter season, let’s rejoice in the opportunities we have been given to believe in the name of God’s only Son, Jesus Christ. And let’s love one another just as our risen Lord has commanded us. †



## Cristo, la piedra angular

## Cristo es la vid, nosotros los sarmientos y juntos damos fruto

*“Pero el que no permanece en mí, es como el sarmiento que se tira y se seca; después se recoge, se arroja al fuego y arde. Si ustedes permanecen en mí y mis palabras permanecen en ustedes, pidan lo que quieran y lo obtendrán. La gloria de mi Padre consiste en que ustedes den fruto abundante, y así sean mis discípulos” (Jn 15:6-8).*

Las imágenes de las lecturas del quinto domingo de Pascua nos hablan de los viñedos y de los frutos que produce un buen vino. En el Evangelio según san Juan (Jn 15:1-8), Jesús nos dice que él es la vid verdadera y que su Padre es el viñador. “Él corta todos mis sarmientos que no dan fruto; al que da fruto, lo poda para que dé más todavía” (Jn 15:2).

Esta es una información importante porque no se trata de un viñedo cualquiera; el Señor habla de la vid que es su cuerpo y nos dice, de una forma muy directa, que **nosotros** somos los sarmientos que, o bien se tiran y se secan, y después se echan al fuego para quemarlos, o que dan fruto y que se podan para que sean todavía más productivos.

Cristo es la vid y nosotros somos los sarmientos. Si nos mantenemos fieles a la Palabra de Dios podemos florecer y rendir mucho fruto, pero

si nos negamos a escuchar o cumplir con los mandamientos de Dios, nos secamos y nos morimos. “Así como el sarmiento no puede dar fruto si no permanece en la vid—dice Jesús—, tampoco ustedes, si no permanecen en mí” (Jn 15:4).

La segunda lectura del quinto domingo de Pascua (1 Jn 3:18-24) nos explica cómo “permanecer en él,” es decir, seguir siendo un sarmiento vivo que pertenece a la vid sana y fructífera. “Queridos míos, si nuestro corazón no nos hace ningún reproche, podemos acercarnos a Dios con plena confianza, y él nos concederá todo cuanto le pidamos, porque cumplimos sus mandamientos y hacemos lo que le agrada” (1 Jn 3:21-22).

Los mandamientos de Dios son sencillos pero no fáciles de cumplir: debemos amar a Dios con todo el corazón, el alma y la mente. Y debemos amarnos los unos a los otros, tal como a nosotros mismos. O según lo expresa san Juan: “Su mandamiento es este: que creamos en el nombre de su Hijo Jesucristo, y nos amemos los unos a los otros como él nos ordenó” (1 Jn 3:23).

Pero somos pecadores que a menudo incumplimos con nuestra meta de amar a Dios y al prójimo. Es por ello que nos

aferramos al amor y la misericordia de Dios que nos restablece siempre que nos alejamos a causa del pecado.

Ser fieles a la Palabra de Dios y en nuestro llamado como discípulos de Jesucristo requiere la confesión constante de nuestros pecados y actos de arrepentimiento genuinos. Tras caer, debemos levantarnos nuevamente y, con la ayuda de la gracia de Dios, seguir en el camino que se nos trazó al momento del bautizo. Esta es la historia de la vida de todos los grandes santos: experiencias de conversión que jamás son definitivas sino que se entremezclan con la aceptación del constante perdón de Dios. Así debería ser también nuestra historia.

La primera lectura del próximo domingo (Hechos 9:26-31) relata los acontecimientos que sucedieron inmediatamente después de la conversión de san Pablo, quien pasó de ser un odioso perseguidor a un humilde seguidor de Jesús. En esta vemos que los primeros intentos de Pablo de unirse a los discípulos fueron infructuosos porque “todos le tenían desconfianza porque no creían que también él fuera un verdadero discípulo” (Hechos 9:26). Pablo no se dio por vencido. “Empezó a convivir con los discípulos en Jerusalén y

predicaba decididamente en el nombre del Señor” (Hechos 9:28). Incluso habló y debatió con algunos que no eran judíos (helenistas) “pero estos tramaban su muerte” (Hechos 9:29).

Pese a todo, la Iglesia primitiva “se iba consolidando, vivía en el temor del Señor y crecía en número, asistida por el Espíritu Santo” (Hechos 9:31). ¿Por qué? Porque después de la resurrección del Señor y de que los discípulos recibieran al Espíritu Santo en Pentecostés, la Iglesia conservó los mandamientos y permaneció en Jesús, de la misma forma que él permanece con el Padre.

Estas lecturas deberían infundirnos mucha esperanza en esta temporada de Pascua. Sin importar cuánto nos desviemos del camino que conduce a la unión con Jesucristo y a la vida eterna, tenemos la promesa de que junto con él y todos los santos, el Espíritu Santo siempre está activo entre nosotros y nos vuelve a encauzar hacia el amor y la misericordia infinitos de Dios.

En las semanas restantes de la Pascua, alegrémonos de las oportunidades que hemos recibido de creer en el nombre del único Hijo de Dios, Jesucristo, y amémonos los unos a los otros, tal como nos lo ha ordenado el Señor resucitado. †



# Events Calendar

For a list of events for the next four weeks as reported to The Criterion, log on to [www.archindy.org/events](http://www.archindy.org/events).

## May 1

Mission 27 Resale, 132 Leota St., Indianapolis. **Senior Discount Day**, every Tuesday, seniors get 30 percent off all purchases, 9 a.m.-6 p.m., ministry supports Indianapolis St. Vincent de Paul Society Food Pantry and Changing Lives Forever program. Information: 317-687-8260.

## May 2

Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **Solo Seniors**, Catholic, educational, charitable and social singles, 50 and over, single, separated, widowed or divorced. New members welcome. 6 p.m. Information: 317-243-0777.

Ritz Charles, 12156 N. Meridian, Carmel. **St. Augustine Guild "Hats off to Spring" Luncheon, Style Show and Silent Auction**, benefiting elderly needs, 10:30 a.m., \$55. Information and reservations: 317-294-1955, [sallylittlejohn4@gmail.com](mailto:sallylittlejohn4@gmail.com).

## May 4

Our Lady of the Greenwood Church, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. **First Friday** celebration of the Most

Sacred Heart of Jesus, Mass, 5:45 p.m., exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, following Mass until 9 p.m., sacrament of reconciliation available. Information: 317-888-2861 or [info@olgreenwood.org](mailto:info@olgreenwood.org).

St. Lawrence Church, 6944 E. 46th St., Indianapolis. **First Friday Charismatic Renewal Praise and Mass**, praise and worship 7 p.m., Mass 7:30 p.m. Information: 317-546-7328, [mkeyes@indy.rr.com](mailto:mkeyes@indy.rr.com).

Women's Care Center, 4901 W. 86th St., Indianapolis. **First Friday Mass**, 5 p.m., Msgr. Joseph Schaedel presiding, optional tour of center to follow. Information: 317-829-6800, [www.womenscarecenter.org](http://www.womenscarecenter.org).

## May 5

Benedict Inn Retreat & Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **Shop Inn-Spiced Spring Sale and Open House**, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Information: 317-788-7581.

St. Michael Church, 145 St. Michael Blvd., Brookville. **First Saturday Marian Devotional Prayer Group**, Mass, prayers, rosary,

confession, meditation, 8 a.m. Information: 765-647-5462.

1st Choice for Women, 5455 W. 86th St., Indianapolis. **Sidewalk Advocacy Training**, hosted by Sidewalk Advocates of Indianapolis, a ministry of the Gabriel Project, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., \$10 includes materials and lunch. Register by April 30: [sheryl@goangels.org](mailto:sheryl@goangels.org). Information: 317-407-6881.

Seton Catholic High School, 233 S. 5th St., Richmond. **4th Annual Bazaar and Vintage Market**, handmade goods, re-purposed items, vintage finds, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., free admission. Information: 765-960-6121, [smkitchin3@gmail.com](mailto:smkitchin3@gmail.com).

## May 6

Monte Cassino Shrine, 13312 Monte Cassino Shrine Road, St. Meinrad. **Blessed Mother Pilgrimage**, hosted by Saint Meinrad Archabbey, prayers, hymns, rosary procession, Litany of the Blessed Virgin, Benedictine Brother Lorenzo Peñalosa presenting, 2 p.m. CT. Information: 812-357-6501 weekdays, or 812-357-6611 day of the event.

## May 8

Church of the Immaculate Conception, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. **Monthly Taizé Prayer Service**, theme "Praying for Peace in the World and in Our Hearts," 7-8 p.m., silent and spoken prayers, simple music, silence. Information: 812-535-2952, [provctr@spsmw.org](mailto:provctr@spsmw.org).

St. Paul Hermitage, 501 N. 17th Ave., Beech Grove. **Ave Maria Guild**, 12:30 p.m. Information: 317-223-3687, [vlgmimi@aol.com](mailto:vlgmimi@aol.com).

## May 9

St. Ambrose Church, 325 S. Chestnut St., Seymour. **Holy Hour of Prayer for Vocations**, 7-8 p.m. Information: 317-236-1490, [amiller@archindy.org](mailto:amiller@archindy.org).

## May 10

Benedict Inn Retreat & Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **Peace and Nature Garden Walk**, Benedictine Sister Angela Jarboe facilitating, 7-8:30 p.m., free will donation. Information and registration: 317-788-7581, [benedictinn.org](http://benedictinn.org).

St. Louis de Montfort Parish, Craig Willy Hall, 11441 Hague Road, Fishers (Lafayette Diocese).

**Pilgrimage to Shrine of Christ's Passion, St. John, Ind.**, Indianapolis North Deanery members invited, 7:45 a.m. departure, \$75 includes lunch and transportation, trams available upon arrival, 7 p.m. return, Registration: [www.sldmfishers.org](http://www.sldmfishers.org). Information: Mary Lou Fischer, 317-842-6778.

## May 12

St. Bartholomew Church, 1306 27th St., Columbus. **12th Annual Concert Series: All That Jazz**, featuring Hot Horns. 7 p.m., freewill offering. Information: [www.saintbartholomew.org](http://www.saintbartholomew.org) under "Music Ministry," or [bminut@stbparish.net](mailto:bminut@stbparish.net).

## May 13

Monte Cassino Shrine, 13312 Monte Cassino Shrine Road, St. Meinrad. **Blessed Mother Pilgrimage**, hosted by Saint Meinrad Archabbey, prayers, hymns, rosary procession, Litany of the Blessed Virgin, Benedictine Father Meinrad Blume presenting, 2 p.m. CT.

Information: 812-357-6501 weekdays, or 812-357-6611 day of the event.

Providence Spirituality & Conference Center, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Mother's Day Brunch**, O'Shaughnessy Dining Room, 9 a.m., 10:45 a.m. and 12:15 p.m. seating times, shrimp cocktail, prime rib, raspberry pork loin, salads, sides, desserts, non-alcoholic drink, adults \$24; seniors (55 and older), military, first responders and teachers \$22; children \$13; Mimosas and Bloody Mary's available for additional cost. Advance tickets and information: [www.spsmw.org/event/mothers-day-brunch-woods](http://www.spsmw.org/event/mothers-day-brunch-woods), 812-535-4285.

Thomas Aquinas Church, 4625 N. Kenwood Ave., Indianapolis. **Mass in French**, 12:30 p.m. Information: 317-627-7729 or [acfadi2014@gmail.com](mailto:acfadi2014@gmail.com).

St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Church, 4720 E. 13th St., Indianapolis. **Class of '63 monthly gathering**, 6 p.m. Mass, optional dinner afterward. Information: 317-408-6396. †

## Retreats and Programs

For a complete list of retreats as reported to The Criterion, log on to [www.archindy.org/retreats](http://www.archindy.org/retreats).

### May 8-10

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guest House and Retreat Center, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **On Becoming the Publican in the Temple: St. Benedict's Degrees of Humility**, Benedictine Father Colman Grabert, \$255 single,

\$425 double. Information: 812-357-6585 or [mzoeller@saintmeinrad.edu](mailto:mzoeller@saintmeinrad.edu).

### May 10

Benedict Inn Retreat & Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **A Biblical Walk with**

**Mary: The Annunciation**, Benedictine Sister Carol Faulkner and Patty Moore presenting, first of four (May 17, 24, 31), 7-8:30 p.m., \$25 per session, \$90 for four. Information and registration: 317-788-7581, [www.benedictinn.org](http://www.benedictinn.org). †

## Indy parishes host pro-life events this May

The Pro-Life Ministry of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish and the Sanctity of Life Committee of St. John the Evangelist Parish, both in Indianapolis, are co-sponsoring two pro-life events in May.

The documentary, *At the Death House Door*, will be shown at St. John, 126 W. Georgia St., at 6:30 p.m. on May 11.

The documentary follows the career of Carrol Pickett, who served as a death-row chaplain for 15 years. A panel discussion on the Church's teaching on the death penalty will follow. A simple supper will be served.

The event is free, although freewill offerings will be accepted.

Reservations are requested by calling Sheryl Dye at 317-407-6881 or

e-mailing [smdye1@gmail.com](mailto:smdye1@gmail.com).

On May 23, Dr. Brandon Brown, a physician at Riley Hospital for Children, will present "Caring for the Least among Us: A Conversation on Fetal Medicine" at Holy Rosary Parish, 520 Stevens St., at 6:30 p.m.

Brown is a pediatric and fetal radiologist at the Indianapolis hospital. He will describe the complex care and support of high-risk pregnancies and how medical advancements can be used to improve the understanding of human life and development.

A simple meal will be served.

Reservations are requested by calling Eric Slaughter at 317-408-0528 or emailing [holyrosary.prolife@gmail.com](mailto:holyrosary.prolife@gmail.com). †

## Bereavement ministry to host end-of-life conference in Indianapolis on May 8

The Bereavement Ministry of the archdiocesan Office of Marriage and Family Life is hosting its 17th Annual Mission Day Conference titled "End of Life: Moral Guidelines, Health Care Decisions and Pastoral Care" at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., in Indianapolis, from 8:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m. on May 8.

Presenters include Father C. Ryan McCarthy, chaplain of the Catholic Medical Association's Raphael Guild, who will share the Church's guidelines on end-of-life decisions; Dr. Colleen C. Brown, a certified hospice and palliative care physician; and Melissa

Wilson, a licensed social worker.

The conference will conclude with a presentation and panel discussion led by Father James Farrell on pastoral care of patients and their families.

The event is open to individuals and parish grief ministry teams.

The cost is \$30, which includes materials and lunch.

Registration is required online at [archindy.org/grief](http://archindy.org/grief) or by calling Keri Carroll at 317-236-1521 or e-mailing [kcarroll@archindy.org](mailto:kcarroll@archindy.org).

For additional information, contact Deb Van Velse at 317-236-1586 or [dvanvelse@archindy.org](mailto:dvanvelse@archindy.org). †

## Clayton Anderson concert to benefit Becky's Place in Bedford on May 12

Clayton Anderson, along with special guests Stone Carnival and Cody Ikerd, will be the featured performers at a concert benefiting Becky's Place at the Bedford North Lawrence Performing Arts Center, 595 Stars Blvd., in Bedford, at 6:30 p.m. on May 12. The doors open at 6 p.m.

Becky's Place, a ministry of Catholic Charities Bloomington, provides shelter and creates hope for women and children who are experiencing homelessness and moving toward a life of self-sufficiency.

General admission tickets are \$10

per person. For \$50, supporters can participate in a meet-and-greet at 5 p.m., a short acoustic performance by Anderson and early admittance to the concert. A VIP package is available for \$100, which includes food, backstage access and stage side seating.

Tickets are available online at [archindy.org/cc/bloomington/beckysplace.html](http://archindy.org/cc/bloomington/beckysplace.html).

For concert updates, including a list of locations to purchase tickets, "Like" the "Becky's Place" Facebook page.

For additional information, call 812-275-5773. †

## Healing service with Father Blount planned at St. Nicholas in Ripley County on May 15

A healing service with Society of Our Lady of The Most Holy Trinity Father James Blount will be held at St. Nicholas Church, 6461 E. St. Nicholas Dr., Sunman, at 6:30 p.m. on May 15.

Father Blount, an internationally-known speaker, retreat leader and exorcist, will share the message of his healing ministry that through the power of the Holy Spirit, God's Church can

make a difference in the world today. He will discuss the gifts of the Holy Spirit in anticipation of Pentecost.

The evening will begin with prayer and worship at 6:30 p.m., followed by the service at 7 p.m. Confessions will be available throughout the service.

For more information, call 812-623-2964 or e-mail [servantsofgod@etzone.com](mailto:servantsofgod@etzone.com). †

## 5K Friar Run and family run/walk planned at Mount St. Francis Center on May 12

New Albany Deanery Catholic Youth Ministries (NADCYM) is sponsoring a 5K Friar Run and One-Mile Family Fun Run/Walk at Mount St. Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Dr., in Mt. St. Francis, on May 12.

Check-in begins at 7:30 a.m. with an 8:30 a.m. start time.

A kids area will be open prior to and after the race with free child care.

This is a chip-timed race with overall and age group awards.

The cost is \$20 per person through May 11, and \$25 on race day.

Children age 6 and younger are free. Registrations received through April 30 include a T-shirt. After April 30, T-shirts are available while supplies last.

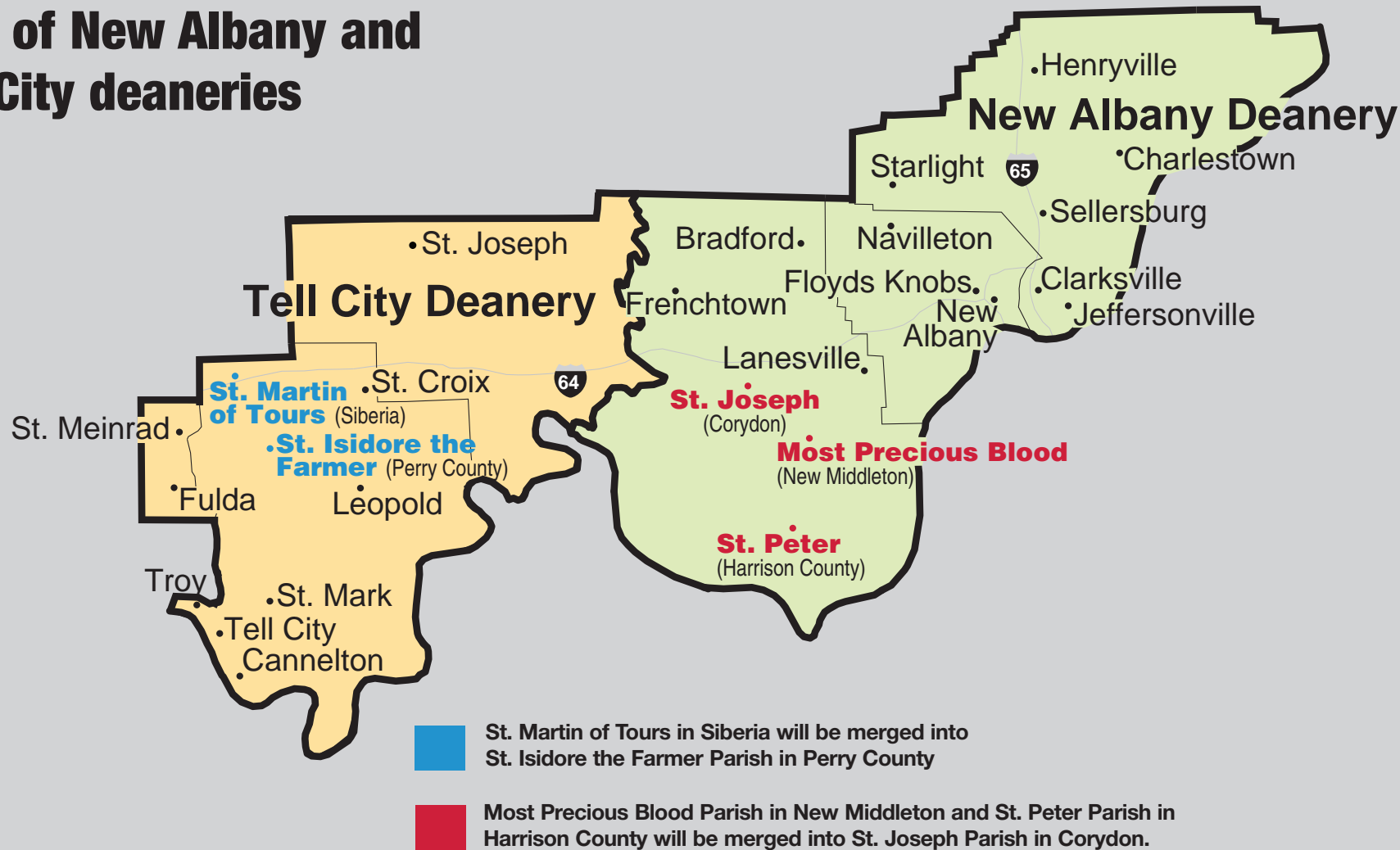
All proceeds benefit local and Appalachian mission experiences sponsored by NADCYM.

A registration form can be downloaded at [nadyouth.org](http://nadyouth.org).

For registration questions, contact Sandy Winstead at 812-923-8355 or e-mail [sandy@nadyouth.org](mailto:sandy@nadyouth.org).

Send questions regarding the race to Liz Ernstberger at [cptlizard@gmail.com](mailto:cptlizard@gmail.com).

## Map of New Albany and Tell City deaneries



## CONNECTED

continued from page 1

of Priests and College of Deans, I determined that the final proposals for these two deaneries needed to be implemented.”

He had previous experience of such planning processes in the Archdiocese of Louisville, Ky., and the Diocese of Evansville, Ind.

See decrees for affected parishes on pages 8-9.

“I realize the reality of the grieving process that goes along with change in both the lives of individuals and communities,”

Archbishop Thompson said. “That grief is real and must be honored. However, there is also the reality of new life and energy that often takes root over time.

“For me, the ultimate focus is the kingdom of God and salvation of souls. Toward this ultimate focus, the more immediate goal is to strengthen Catholic identity, presence and mission throughout the 39 counties in the 11 deaneries that comprise the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.”

Many of the parishes in the two deaneries that have already forged relationships through sharing a priest will continue to be linked and are encouraged to increase their cooperation.

The only new linkage in the New Albany Deanery will be between St. John the Baptist Parish in Starlight and St. Mary Parish in Navilleton.

In the Tell City Deanery, the only new linkage will be among St. Mark Parish in Perry County, St. Michael Parish in

Cannelton, St. Paul Parish in Tell City and St. Pius V Parish in Troy.

Several sets of partnerships among parishes in the two deaneries will also be established in which they will be encouraged to collaborate in various forms of ministry. (See box on page 9 for complete list of mergers, linkages and partnerships.)

Archbishop Thompson’s decisions were announced at St. Martin of Tours during Mass the weekend of April 21-22. When Janet James heard the announcement, she had “several feelings.”

She had expected the merger after hearing about the discussions that had taken place during the Connected in the Spirit process.

“That doesn’t take away from the little bit of sadness that you feel in your heart,” said James. “It’s such a nice, small parish with good people, hard-working people. Anytime something is happening, whether it be a funeral or our ham shoot, any activity, everybody’s there to help.”

She’s hopeful, though, that, as St. Isidore and St. Martin parishioners come to know each other and become one parish, this experience of community will continue.

“I think it will work,” James said. “I think it will be a really good mix. I really do.”

Benedictine Father Luke Waugh, administrator of both St. Isidore the Farmer and St. Martin of Tours, began taking steps last fall to foster the relationship between the two faith communities.

Last Advent, they co-sponsored a book study. And interparish liturgies have been celebrated.

“No one wants to see their parish combined with another parish,” Father Luke said. “However, most parishioners have mentioned that merging with St. Isidore is the best possible scenario for maintaining a faith-based community at St. Martin.”

One aspect of St. Martin that Father Luke said will definitely continue after the merger is its St. Martin’s Cloak charitable ministry, which serves people in need in Perry, Dubois and Crawford counties through its food pantry that is open twice a month.

“St. Martin’s Cloak serves a population that is not otherwise served through a Catholic Charities agency,” he said. “Relocation is not an option. Now that St. Martin will be officially part of a larger combined parish, it is time for us to re-examine the mission of St. Martin’s Cloak and see if our offerings to the poor can be expanded. ... St. Martin’s Cloak is not going away. Its mission is too important.”

For 10 years, archdiocesan chancellor Annette “Mickey” Lentz has seen this growth in cooperation among parishes across central and southern Indiana increase while she has been involved in the Connected in the Spirit planning process since it began in the Terre Haute Deanery in 2008.

“I feel like it’s been a good process,” she said. “It’s made us take a hard look at things. People have been connected in some way, either liturgically or in sharing resources. It might be as common as a partnership where they take turns having fish fries.”

Father Joseph Feltz, archdiocesan vicar for clergy, religious and parish life coordinators, also appreciates the increased collaboration among parishes brought about through Connected in the Spirit.

“I’ve witnessed more cooperation and communication among parishes that just wasn’t happening before,” he said. “In some ways, for the people in the pews, there’s a deeper realization that the local Church isn’t just their parish, but is wider than their parish.”

Father Feltz has seen this increased collaboration, in part, through reports that faith communities across central and southern Indiana have shared with archdiocesan leaders as part of the implementation stage of Connected in the Spirit, which he said will continue

‘It’s made us take a hard look at things. People have been connected in some way, either liturgically or in sharing resources. It might be as common as a partnership where they take turns having fish fries.’

— Annette “Mickey” Lentz, chancellor of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis



in the future.

On weekends, Father Feltz celebrates Mass at Sacred Heart Parish in Terre Haute and St. Mary-of-the-Woods Parish in St. Mary-of-the-Woods, both of which had parishes merged into them.

The former St. Anne Parish in Terre Haute was merged into Sacred Heart in 2011. Its campus remains active, though, housing programs of Catholic Charities Terre Haute.

“Former parishioners are able to look at it and say that maybe it’s not a parish, but it’s still doing good, a location where people are encountering Jesus,” Father Feltz said, “maybe in the help that they need instead of the sacramental life that was there for many years.”

Archbishop Thompson said that it is this kind of collaboration and creative use of the resources of the archdiocese that is at the heart of Connected in the Spirit.

“Our unity as one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church must be reflected in the ministries and services of our Catholic faith,” he said. “Connected in the Spirit is a process by which we seek to know the will of the Father, embrace the mission of the Son and discern the movement of the Spirit.”

(To learn more about the Connected in the Spirit planning process in the Church in central and southern Indiana, visit [archindy.org/connected](http://archindy.org/connected).) †

‘No one wants to see their parish combined with another parish. However, most parishioners have mentioned that merging with St. Isidore is the best possible scenario for maintaining a faith-based community at St. Martin.’



— Benedictine Father Luke Waugh, administrator of St. Isidore the Farmer Parish, Perry County, and St. Martin of Tours Parish, Siberia





ARCHDIOCESE OF INDIANAPOLIS  
The Church in Central and Southern Indiana

## Connected in the Spirit: New Albany and Tell City deaneries

### Most Precious Blood of Jesus New Middleton

#### Decree

Whereas my predecessors, Archbishop Daniel Mark Buechlein, O.S.B., and Joseph William Cardinal Tobin, C.Ss.R., instituted a process to assess the pastoral needs of the parishes of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis; and,

Whereas this process, known as Connected in the Spirit, was designed to consider the needs of the parishes according to deaneries; and,

Whereas it was deemed beneficial to consider the pastoral needs of the parishes of the New Albany Deanery; and,

Whereas in the course of this process, information concerning both the current condition of the Most Precious Blood of Jesus Parish of New Middletown, Indiana, and the pastoral needs of the people of the parish was made available to both the Archdiocesan Planning Commission and to myself as the Archbishop and Ordinary of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis; and,

Whereas the information concerning the condition of the parish and the pastoral needs of its people demonstrated that:

- the number of parishioners at Most Precious Blood of Jesus Parish has declined from 150 parishioners to 94, a decline of 37%, between 2010 and 2017;
- from 2010 through 2017, the parish has experienced one infant baptism, five confirmations of young persons, one marriage, and one funeral;
- adult, adolescent, and elementary catechesis programs are already a shared ministry with St. Joseph Parish in Corydon, Indiana;
- Most Precious Blood of Jesus Parish has few liturgical ministries;
- Most Precious Blood of Jesus Parish has few social outreach programs;
- the extinctive union of Most Precious Blood of Jesus Parish and the merger of the people of the parish into St. Joseph Parish of Corydon, Indiana, will provide the opportunity for an increase in ministry, evangelization, and outreach in Harrison County;
- since 2011, Most Precious Blood of Jesus Parish has incurred deficits in two of the seven years from 2011 through 2017;
- the Planning Commission reached the conclusion that the income problems of the parish could be ameliorated by an extinctive union with St. Joseph Parish of Corydon, Indiana;
- such an extinctive union and merger should be readily accepted, as both parishes already share a common pastor.

Whereas the Planning Commission proposed the merger, canonically known as an extinctive union, of Most Precious Blood of Jesus Parish of New Middletown, Indiana, into St. Joseph Parish of Corydon, Indiana; and,

Whereas the unification of the parishes would allow for effective administration and stewardship of the resources of the unified parish; and

Whereas, while such a unification is sufficiently justified for the reasons *in rem* related above, it also allows for a prudent allocation of limited resources and personnel, particularly priests; and,

Whereas I convened the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese and sought its counsel concerning the manner in which the pastoral needs of the people of Most Precious Blood of Jesus Parish might best be addressed; and,

Whereas the Presbyteral Council, after fully considering the issue, recommended by unanimous consultative vote that Most Precious Blood of Jesus Parish of New Middletown, Indiana, be merged into St. Joseph Parish of Corydon, Indiana;

I, Charles C. Thompson, Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, having considered the advice of the Archdiocesan Planning Commission and the Archdiocesan Presbyteral Council, and having in mind my responsibility to best meet the spiritual needs of the people of Most Precious Blood of Jesus Parish of New Middletown, Indiana, the spiritual needs of the New Albany Deanery and the Archdiocese of Indianapolis in general, now hereby decree that:

1. Most Precious Blood of Jesus Parish of New Middletown, Indiana, is to be merged into St. Joseph Parish of Corydon, Indiana, on 5 July 2018.
2. The public juridical person of Most Precious Blood of Jesus Parish is to be extinguished on the same date, or, if the matter should be appealed, upon the resolution of any such appeal.
3. Upon the extinction of the public juridical person of Most Precious Blood of Jesus Parish and the unification of its people into St. Joseph Parish, the civil corporation of Most Precious Blood of Jesus Parish shall immediately transfer all assets and liabilities of the corporation, whether legal or equitable, to the civil corporation of St. Joseph Parish.
4. Upon the completion of the transfer of such assets and liabilities, the civil corporation of Most Precious Blood of Jesus Parish shall take such actions at civil law as are necessary to dissolve itself.
5. This decree is to be published to the pastor of Most Precious Blood of Jesus Parish and St. Joseph Parish.
6. The parishioners of Most Precious Blood of Jesus Parish and the parishioners of St. Joseph Parish are to be given notice of this decree upon its receipt by the pastor of the parishes. Copies of this decree are to be made available for inspection at the offices of both parishes, and the parishioners shall be given notice as soon as is possible after its receipt by the pastor.
7. This decree is to be published in the Archdiocesan newspaper, *The Criterion*.

8. This decree is to be posted to the website of the Archdiocese.

Given under my hand and the seal of this Archdiocese on this 19th day of April, 2018.

*+ Charles C. Thompson*

Most Rev. Charles C. Thompson, D.D., J.C.L.  
Archbishop of Indianapolis

*Annette "Mickey" Lentz*

Annette "Mickey" Lentz  
Chancellor

### St. Martin of Tours Siberia

#### Decree

Whereas my predecessors, Archbishop Daniel Mark Buechlein, O.S.B., and Joseph William Cardinal Tobin, C.Ss.R., instituted a process to assess the pastoral needs of the parishes of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis; and,

Whereas this process, known as Connected in the Spirit, was designed to consider the needs of the parishes according to deaneries; and,

Whereas it was deemed beneficial to consider the pastoral needs of the parishes of the Tell City Deanery; and,

Whereas in the course of this process, information concerning both the current condition of St. Martin of Tours of Siberia, Indiana, and the pastoral needs of the people of the parish was made available to both the Archdiocesan Planning Commission and to myself as the Archbishop and Ordinary of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis; and,

Whereas the information concerning the condition of the parish and the pastoral needs of its people demonstrated that:

- the parish has approximately fifty registered households and approximately 106 parishioners;
- the parish church has a capacity of 232 persons, but the average weekend attendance for the period surveyed was only 50 persons;
- there are no regular evangelization efforts being made in the parish, and the parish has neither had a catechumen baptized nor received a candidate into the parish in the five years for which information was provided by the parish to the planning commission;
- the parish has had only 13 infant baptisms in the five years for which the parish provided information to the Planning Commission, and one additional baptism in the last two years (2016-2017);
- there has been one marriage in the five years for which the parish provided information to the Planning Commission, and no additional weddings in the last two years (2016-2017);

• Saint Martin of Tours has a total of \$77,054.00 in deferred maintenance projects;

• From 2010 to 2015, the net income of the parish has continually decreased from \$13,859 in 2010 to \$3,154 in 2015 and has carried a deficit since 2015 (\$15,319.00 in 2015-2016, and \$27,919.00 in 2016-2017).

Whereas the Planning Commission proposed the merger, canonically known as an extinctive union, of St. Martin of Tours of Siberia, Indiana, into St. Isidore the Farmer of Bristow, Indiana; and,

Whereas the unification of the parishes would allow for effective administration and stewardship of the resources of the unified parish; and

Whereas, while such a unification is sufficiently justified for the reasons *in rem* related above, it also allows for a prudent allocation of limited resources and personnel, particularly priests; and,

Whereas I convened the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese and sought its counsel concerning the manner in which the pastoral needs of the people of St. Martin of Tours Parish might best be addressed; and,

Whereas the Presbyteral Council, after fully considering the issue, recommended by unanimous consultative vote that St. Martin of Tours Parish of Siberia, Indiana, be merged into St. Isidore the Farmer Parish of Bristow, Indiana;

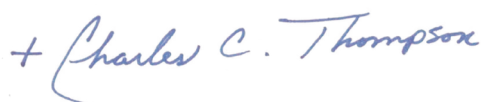
I, Charles C. Thompson, Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, having considered the advice of the Archdiocesan Planning Commission and the Archdiocesan Presbyteral Council, and having in mind my responsibility to best meet the spiritual needs of the people of St. Martin of Tours Parish of Siberia, Indiana, the spiritual needs of the Tell City Deanery and the Archdiocese of Indianapolis in general, now hereby decree that:

1. St. Martin of Tours Parish of Siberia, Indiana, is to be merged into St. Isidore the Farmer Parish of Bristow, Indiana, effective as of 5 July 2018.
2. The public juridical person of St. Martin of Tours Parish is to be extinguished on the same date, or, if the matter should be appealed, upon the resolution of any such appeal.
3. Upon the extinction of the public juridical person of St. Martin of Tours Parish and the unification of its people into St. Isidore the Farmer Parish, the civil corporation of St. Martin of Tours Parish shall immediately transfer all assets and liabilities of the corporation, whether legal or equitable, to the civil corporation of St. Isidore the Farmer Parish.
4. Upon the completion of the transfer of such assets and liabilities, the civil corporation of St. Martin of Tours Parish shall take such actions at civil law as are necessary to dissolve itself.
5. This decree is to be published to the parish administrator of St. Martin of Tours Parish and St. Isidore the Farmer Parish.

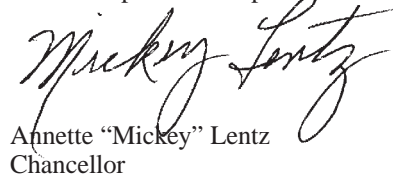


6. The parishioners of St. Martin of Tours Parish and the parishioners of St. Isidore the Farmer Parish are to be given notice of this decree upon its receipt by the parish administrator of the parishes. Copies of this decree are to be made available for inspection at the offices of both parishes, and the parishioners shall be given notice as soon as is possible after its receipt by the parish administrator.
7. This decree is to be published in the Archdiocesan newspaper, *The Criterion*.
8. This decree is to be posted to the website of the Archdiocese.

Given under my hand and the seal of this Archdiocese on this 19th day of April, 2018.



Most Rev. Charles C. Thompson, D.D., J.C.L.  
 Archbishop of Indianapolis



Annette "Mickey" Lentz  
 Chancellor

**St. Peter Elizabeth**

**Decree**

Whereas my predecessors, Archbishop Daniel Mark Buechlein, O.S.B., and Joseph William Cardinal Tobin, C.Ss.R., instituted a process to assess the pastoral needs of the parishes of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis; and,

Whereas this process, known as Connected in the Spirit, was designed to consider the needs of the parishes according to deaneries; and,

Whereas it was deemed beneficial to

consider the pastoral needs of the parishes of the New Albany Deanery; and,

Whereas in the course of this process, information concerning both the current condition of St. Peter Parish of Elizabeth, Indiana, and the pastoral needs of the people of the parish was made available to both the Archdiocesan Planning Commission and to myself as the Archbishop and Ordinary of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis; and,

Whereas the information concerning the condition of the parish and the pastoral needs of its people demonstrated that:

- apart from Mass there is little pastoral activity on the parish campus;
- there are no regular evangelization efforts being made in the parish, and the parish had one person in RCIA in the six years for which information was provided by the parish to the planning commission;
- adult, adolescent, and elementary catechesis programs are already a shared ministry with St. Joseph Parish in Corydon, Indiana;
- there have been five baptisms, twenty-three funerals, and four marriages in the last seven years;
- since 2011, St. Peter Parish has experienced a steady decline in both gross and net income and has incurred deficits in three of the seven years from 2011 through 2017 (the year ending in 2015 did not run a deficit because of a capital campaign grant);
- that St. Peter Parish has \$17,427.00 in deferred maintenance, which was 28 percent of the parish's income for the fiscal year of 2016-2017;
- the Planning Commission reached the conclusion that the income problems of the parish could be ameliorated by an extinctive union with St. Joseph Parish of Corydon, Indiana;
- the extinctive union of the parish would allow for an enhanced staff and

increased administrative efficiency, thus enhancing the pastoral service available to the people in Elizabeth, Indiana.

Whereas the Planning Commission proposed the merger, canonically known as an extinctive union, of St. Peter Parish of Elizabeth, Indiana, into St. Joseph Parish of Corydon, Indiana; and,

Whereas the unification of the parishes would allow for effective administration and stewardship of the resources of the unified parish; and,

Whereas, while such a unification is sufficiently justified for the reasons *in rem* related above, it also allows for a prudent allocation of limited resources and personnel, particularly priests; and,

Whereas I convened the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese and sought its counsel concerning the manner in which the pastoral needs of the people of St. Peter Parish might best be addressed; and,

Whereas the Presbyteral Council, after fully considering the issue, recommended by unanimous consultative vote that St. Peter Parish of Elizabeth, Indiana, be merged into St. Joseph Parish of Corydon, Indiana;

I, Charles C. Thompson, Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, having considered the advice of the Archdiocesan Planning Commission and the Archdiocesan Presbyteral Council, and having in mind my responsibility to best meet the spiritual needs of the people of St. Peter Parish, the spiritual needs of the New Albany Deanery and the Archdiocese of Indianapolis in general, now hereby decree that:

1. St. Peter Parish of Elizabeth, Indiana, is to be merged into St. Joseph Parish of Corydon, Indiana, effective as of 5 July 2018.
2. The public juridical person of St. Peter Parish is to be extinguished on the same date, or, if the matter should be appealed, upon the resolution of any such appeal.

3. Upon the extinction of the public juridical person of St. Peter Parish and the unification of its people into St. Joseph Parish, the civil corporation of St. Peter Parish shall immediately transfer all assets and liabilities of the corporation, whether legal or equitable, to the civil corporation of St. Joseph Parish.

4. Upon the completion of the transfer of such assets and liabilities, the civil corporation of St. Peter Parish shall take such actions at civil law as are necessary to dissolve itself.

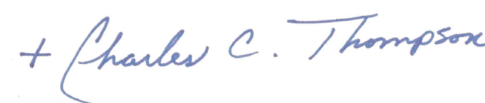
5. This decree is to be published to the administrator of St. Peter Parish and pastor of St. Joseph Parish.

6. The parishioners of St. Peter Parish and the parishioners of St. Joseph Parish are to be given notice of this decree upon its receipt by the parish administrator of St. Peter Parish and the pastor of St. Joseph Parish. Copies of this decree are to be made available for inspection at the offices of both parishes, and the parishioners shall be given notice as soon as is possible after its receipt by the parish administrator/pastor.

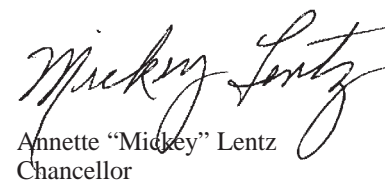
7. This decree is to be published in the Archdiocesan newspaper, *The Criterion*.

8. This decree is to be posted to the website of the Archdiocese.

Given under my hand and the seal of this Archdiocese on this 19th day of April, 2018.



Most Rev. Charles C. Thompson, D.D., J.C.L.  
 Archbishop of Indianapolis



Annette "Mickey" Lentz  
 Chancellor

**Connected in the Spirit decisions for the New Albany and Tell City deaneries**

**Merged parishes**

Merged parishes are entirely joined to another; in these cases, the independent identity of one of the parishes will cease with the merger, and its members and assets will be incorporated into another.

**New Albany Deanery**

- Most Precious Blood Parish in New Middleton will be merged into St. Joseph Parish in Corydon.
- St. Peter Parish in Harrison County will be merged into St. Joseph Parish in Corydon.

**Tell City Deanery**

- St. Martin of Tours Parish in Siberia will be merged into St. Isidore the Farmer Parish in Perry County.

**Linked parishes**

Linked parishes share a single pastoral leader and cooperate in as many ways as possible, since the pastor or administrator is striving to serve two separate parishes.

**New Albany Deanery**

- Most Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish and St. Augustine Parish, both in Jeffersonville, will continue to be linked.
- St. Bernard Parish in Frenchtown, St. Joseph Parish in Crawford County and St. Michael Parish in Bradford will continue to be linked.
- St. Francis Xavier Parish in Henryville and St. Michael Parish in Charlestown will continue to be linked.
- St. John the Baptist Parish in Starlight and St. Mary Parish in Navilleton will be linked.

**Tell City Deanery**

- Holy Cross Parish in St. Croix and St. Augustine Parish in Leopold will continue to be linked.
- St. Boniface Parish in Fulda and St. Meinrad Parish in St. Meinrad will continue to be linked.
- St. Mark Parish in Perry County, St. Michael Parish in Cannelton, St. Paul Parish in Tell City and St. Pius V Parish in Troy will be linked.

**Partnerships**

Partnerships are created through the implementation of joint programs, the appropriate sharing of staff with a view to enhancing the quality of ministry as well as the practice of good stewardship of resources and the use of joint councils and commissions.

**New Albany Deanery**

- Holy Family Parish, Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, St. Mary Parish, all in New Albany, and St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Clarksville will be partnered.
- St. Joseph Parish in Corydon and St. Mary Parish in Lanesville will be partnered.
- St. John the Baptist Parish in Starlight, St. Mary Parish in Navilleton and St. Mary-of-the-Knobs Parish in Floyd County will be partnered.
- St. Francis Xavier Parish in Henryville, St. John Paul II Parish in Sellersburg and St. Michael Parish in Charlestown will be partnered.

**Tell City Deanery**

- St. Boniface in Fulda, St. Isidore the Farmer Parish in Perry County and St. Meinrad Parish in St. Meinrad will be partnered.

(To learn more about the Connected in the Spirit planning process in the Church in central and southern Indiana, visit [archindy.org/connected](http://archindy.org/connected).) †



# SUPPORT

continued from page 1

She didn't know it yet, but her plea would go unanswered.

As she walked toward the door, she asked if either of the men with her could accompany her for comfort—either her pastor, Franciscan Father Larry Janezic of St. Patrick Parish in Indianapolis, or Archbishop Charles C. Thompson. Both were denied admission.

"They [said] that if she didn't go back alone, they would call ICE to say she didn't show up for her meeting," said Providence Sister Tracey Horan, who works for Faith in Indiana (formerly IndyCAN).

So Fierro walked through the door alone.

Yet when asked that morning how she felt prior to the DHS meeting, Fierro answered, "Overwhelmed, but blessed. Very blessed by all this support."

That support came from several clergy of various denominations and more than 30 people who came to pray with her—and for her family—outside of the DHS office in Indianapolis.

They prayed for the success of her request to be granted a "credible fear interview."

"She has family members in Mexico who have been kidnapped and murdered," says Sister Tracey. "She's terrified to have to go back there."

Fierro was brought to the United States 30 years ago at the age of 5 when her parents emigrated from Mexico. She graduated in 2001 from Beech Grove High School. Six years later, she married Jesus Fierro. Together, the Catholic couple serve the Church through a shared music ministry.

"We formed a music ministry for prayer groups ... here in Indianapolis," Fierro said in an interview with *The Criterion* before departing for the DHS meeting. The two have started music ministries at three Indianapolis parishes.

"On the day we were arrested, we were supposed to play at four upcoming Masses—one on Holy Thursday, one on Good Friday, then on Saturday and Sunday," she said.

Shortly after speaking with *The Criterion*, Fierro stood before the DHS office surrounded by cameras recording from several local television stations. With a voice choked with emotion and pausing often to wipe away tears, she described what happened on March 21.

"They came to the house in the dark. They arrested my husband as he was leaving for work [at his construction job]. Then they got me out of my house, telling me they had to give me his tools, expensive tools owned by [the construction company]. They gave me nothing. It was all a lie, and they said they were arresting me, too."

"I asked why they were there. They said, 'We're ICE, and we're taking you.' I asked why. They screamed back, 'Because you're not from here! You need to go back to the country you came from! Take your kids with you, pack up and go!'"

When she asked if they had a warrant, Fierro said, "They shouted back, 'We're ICE! We don't need a warrant!' And they don't. They have the power to arrest without a warrant. And they do it in the dark, because that's how evil works."

Fierro protested that she needed to stay because her children were asleep inside.

"They said, 'We can do this the easy way out here, or we can do it the hard way. We'll arrest you inside and make sure your children see it.'"

In the end, Fierro was able to negotiate an in-home detention. Their 3-year-old daughter has a medical issue, and she had paperwork proving the child had a doctor appointment that same day. A tracking device was placed on her ankle. Since then, she has had to check in regularly with DHS.

While Fierro falls under the category of "Dreamer"—an undocumented immigrant brought to the United States as a child—she is ineligible for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status because she returned to Mexico in 2007. Crossing the border and coming back to the U.S. can render a Dreamer ineligible for DACA status, according to immigration law.

In her interview with *The Criterion*, Fierro said neither she nor her husband had a criminal record, and neither had ever been arrested until March 21.

Their arrests run counter to President Donald J. Trump's statement on Jan. 25, 2017, when he signed an executive order to pursue undocumented immigrants.

"We are going to get the bad ones out—the criminals and the drug dealers and gangs and gang members," he said.

On Feb. 11 of this year, *The Washington Post* reported that ICE arrested 37,734 undocumented "noncriminal" immigrants in the 2017 fiscal year, more than double the amount in 2016. This category of people includes those facing charges but not convicted, and those with no criminal records—people like the Fierros.

A friend of Fierro's who did not share her name spoke in support of her in front of the DHS office.

"When I told my 4-year-old son that Erika had been arrested, he asked, 'Why? What did she do? Did she kill someone? Did she steal something?' My son doesn't understand how a good person can be arrested. How do you explain to a 4-year-old that she was arrested because she didn't have a document?"

Before entering the DHS facility, Archbishop Thompson placed his hand upon Fierro's head and prayed a blessing over her, asking God to grant her "his goodness, his peace, his mercy, his love. May he fill you with a spirit of courage, and give you strength to persevere always in faith, hope and charity. ... May you know the power of God at work in you, and may you never feel abandoned."

Minutes later in the DHS waiting room, Archbishop Thompson explained why he chose to accompany Fierro to the meeting.

"This is something the U.S. bishops have been very, very outspoken about, that we need to be attentive to the plight of the immigrant, the migrant, the refugee," he said. "It's at the heart of the Gospel of Matthew when Jesus says, 'What you do for the least of my brothers you do for me' (Mt 25:40)."

"It's a process of accompaniment, a word Pope Francis uses a lot ... accompanying people, walking with people in whatever challenges are in their lives. This is just an opportunity to carry out that same spirit."

Archbishop Thompson said he hoped through his presence to help Fierro know



Rev. Joel Weir of St. Stephen Orthodox Church in America of Crawfordsville, Ind., left, and Providence Sister Tracey Horan sing a hymn with Erika Fierro in Indianapolis on April 24. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)

"that she is not alone, that she knows that she's got the love and support of people who care for her. ... And secondly, that hopefully we make an impression upon those who have the power to affect her life, that they know that there are people that care about her."

His words broke off as tension rose at the door where Fierro was asking permission for the archbishop or Father Larry to join her. Neither would have that opportunity.

An hour later, Sister Tracey reported the outcome of Fierro's request for a credible fear interview.

"The good news is, Erika is still with us," she said. "The bad news is, the situation is still the same. They are still in the process of deportation."

Fierro will return to the DHS office in two weeks. In the meantime, said Sister Tracey, "We will continue to work with her lawyer to pursue a credible fear interview. And we'll continue to stand with her and fight for her."

(For anyone wanting to comment on the Fierro family's situation to Indiana's U.S. senators, call Sen. Todd Young at 202-224-5623 and Sen. Joe Donnelly at 202-224-4814.) †

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GUEST SPEAKER:

Chris Ballard, General Manager of The Colts

10:00 — REGISTRATION  
11:00 — MASS  
11:30 — LUNCH (All American Buffet)  
12:15 — TO GOLF CARTS (for instructions)  
12:30 — SHOTGUN START

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## Church has clear norms for authenticating and preserving relics

By Mike Nelson

The significance of relics in the Church is well expressed in the Gospel story of the woman desperate to stop her bleeding who approached Jesus, believing, “If only I can touch his cloak, I shall be cured” (Mt 9:21).

Once she had done so, Jesus told her, “Courage, daughter! Your faith has saved you” (Mt 9:22).

The Second Vatican Council declared in the “Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy” that saints “have been traditionally honored in the Church and their authentic relics and images held in veneration” (#111).

To better ensure that the veneration of relics—practiced by Christians since the earliest days of the Church—is properly followed, the Vatican’s Congregation for Saints’ Causes released a new instruction late last year, aimed at upholding the integrity of the practice.

“Relics in the Church: Authenticity and Preservation,” promulgated last Dec. 8 and published on Dec. 16 by the congregation, seeks to clarify the canonical procedures local bishops must follow during the process of verifying the authenticity of a relic and the mortal remains of a saint or blessed.

The instruction spells out specific steps pertaining to canonical recognition, extraction of fragments and creation of relics, transfer of the urn containing relics, transfer of ownership of relics, obtaining the consent of the congregation to perform such procedures and the steps to follow and personnel necessary for the use of relics in pilgrimage.

A Catholic News Service (CNS) report noted that collectively these procedures are designed to better guarantee a relic’s preservation, approve and track its movements and promote its veneration.

It is directed, the congregation said in the instruction’s introduction, “to diocesan bishops, eparchs [leaders of local Eastern Catholic Churches] and those who are equivalent to them in law, as well as to those who participate in the procedures regarding the relics of blesseds and saints and the mortal remains of servants of God and venerables, in order to facilitate the application of what is required in such a particular matter.”

Those declared servants of God or venerable are in the first stages of the

process the Church uses to determine whether or not a person is a saint.

As the CNS report stated, the instruction clarifies and reaffirms that:

- Only relics that have been certified as authentic can be exposed for veneration by the faithful.

- Relics of the blesseds and saints “may not be displayed for the veneration of the faithful without a proper certificate of the ecclesiastical authority who guarantees their authenticity.”

- Any action taken regarding the relics or remains must have the consent of the congregation and the person recognized as the deceased’s “heir.”

- “Dismembering of the body is not allowed” unless the bishop has obtained permission from the congregation.

- The sale or trade of relics remains “absolutely prohibited,” as well as exposing them in “profane” or “unauthorized places.”

In the event of an upcoming canonization or beatification, the CNS report noted, some small pieces or fragments already separated from the body can be removed for placement in a properly sealed reliquary.

A “similar discipline,” the instruction stated, is likewise “applied to the mortal remains (“*exuviae*”) of the servants of God and the venerables, whose causes of beatification and canonization are in progress.”

Until “servants of God” and “venerables” are beatified or canonized, the instruction said, “their mortal remains may not enjoy any public” veneration.

Relics are divided into three classifications: a part of a saint’s body (first-class), something a saint possessed (second-class) and objects that have touched a first-class relic (third-class).

Many relics are encased in the altars of parish churches, especially cathedrals, or preserved in appropriate reliquaries on parish grounds, to be venerated by worshippers. Some miracles (and subsequent canonizations) have been attributed to coming into contact with a relic of a person deemed holy and virtuous.

As long as the veneration of relics has existed, so too has the possibility for abusing the authentication process, desecrating the relics and misconstruing what it means to venerate a relic.



A Catholic media group takes a June 22, 2011, tour of St. Anthony’s Chapel in Pittsburgh, which houses more than 5,000 holy relics, the largest collection outside of the Vatican. To better ensure that the veneration of relics—practiced by Christians since the earliest days of the Church—is properly followed, the Congregation for Saints’ Causes released a new instruction in late 2017, aimed at upholding the integrity of the practice. (CNS photo/Nancy Wlechech)

St. Jerome alluded to as much in the fifth century, when he wrote, “We do not worship, we do not adore for fear that we should bow down to the creature rather than to the Creator.” Rather, Jerome said, we venerate relics “the better to adore him whose martyrs they are.”

In the mid-16th century, the Council of Trent called upon bishops to encourage their faithful to venerate “the holy bodies of holy martyrs,” since through them “many benefits are bestowed by God.”

At the same time, the council decreed that in the veneration of relics and the sacred use of images, “every superstition shall be removed, all filthy lucre abolished.”

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* notes that “the religious sense” of Christians has always found expression in “various forms of piety surrounding the Church’s sacramental life,” including the veneration of relics as well as participating in pilgrimages, Stations of the Cross, the rosary and more (#1674).

“These expressions of piety,” the catechism says, “extend the liturgical life of the Church, but do not replace it” (#1675).

(Catholic journalist Mike Nelson writes from Los Angeles.) †

## The veneration of relics is rooted in Scripture and early Church history

By Paul Senz

The veneration of relics is a fundamentally biblical practice; it is not some sort of innovation that emerged in the centuries after Christ. On the contrary, as Scripture reveals, the veneration of relics was widely practiced, in one form or another, by ancient Jews as well.

In the Old Testament, the Second Book of Kings details the death of Elisha the prophet. “Once some people were burying a man, when suddenly they saw ... a raiding band. So they cast the man into the grave of Elisha, and everyone went off. But when the man came in contact with bones of Elisha, he came back to life and got to his feet” (2 Kgs 13:20-21).

This miracle is an early example of relics and the way that God can work wonders through them.

In the New Testament, one of the clearest examples is the story in the Gospels of Matthew (Mt 14:35-36), Mark (Mk 6:56) and Luke (Lk 8:43-44), in which people bring the sick to Jesus so that they might “touch only the tassel on his cloak,” and by coming into this direct contact with him, be healed.

The Acts of the Apostles tells of an early practice of venerating relics: “So extraordinary were the mighty deeds God accomplished at the hands of Paul that when face cloths or aprons that touched his skin were applied to the sick, their diseases left them and the evil spirits came out of them” (Acts 19:11-12).

In the early Church, the age of martyrs and persecution, relics took on an even more important role in the life of the Church. St. Polycarp, a disciple of the Apostle St. John, was martyred around 155. A contemporary account of Polycarp’s martyrdom stated:

“We took up his bones, which are more valuable than precious stones and finer than refined gold, and laid them in a suitable place, where the Lord will permit us to gather ourselves together, as we are able, in gladness and joy and to celebrate the birthday of his martyrdom.”

So, with all of this in mind, what does the Church teach about the veneration of relics?

The Vatican’s “Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy” states that the term “relics of the saints” typically refers to “the bodies—or notable parts of the bodies—of the saints who, as

distinguished members of Christ’s mystical body and as temples of the Holy Spirit in virtue of their heroic sanctity, now dwell in heaven, but who once lived on Earth.”

Furthermore, it is not just their bodies, but “objects that belonged to the saints. ...Personal objects, clothes and manuscripts are also considered relics, as are objects that have touched their bodies or tombs such as oils, cloths and images” (#236).

Catholics venerate relics—not because the individual saint is worthy of some sort of worship, or because there is anything inherently powerful in the relic



Worshippers venerate the relics of St. Pio of Pietrelcina, popularly known as Padre Pio, at St. Francis Borgia Church in Chicago on Sept. 25, 2017. The veneration of relics is a fundamentally biblical practice.

(CNS photo/Karen Callaway, Chicago Catholic)

itself—but because the relics are used by God as channels of grace and wonder, and to manifest his power and love.

(Paul Senz is a freelance writer living in Oregon with his family.) †



From the Editor Emeritus/John E. Fink

## An adventure during our trip to Expo '67 in Montreal

My past three columns were about trips I made at one time or another during my career as a Catholic journalist. I hope you won't mind one more; then I'll go back



to writing about other things.

Last week, I wrote about blown tires on a plane. A blown tire is included in this story, too.

As our children were growing up, my wife Marie and I made it a practice to take them to most of the Catholic Press Association (CPA) conventions. It was a way of giving them an opportunity to see various parts of the United States while also enabling us to go to the conventions together. Marie and the children couldn't always go if the children had to be in school, but she got to most of the conventions. As the kids got older and had a lot of high school activities, it was sometimes difficult to make them enthusiastic about those trips. Boring.

One of those trips that stands out was to the CPA convention in Toronto, Canada, in 1967. That was the year of the World's Fair (Expo '67) in Montreal, so we decided to drive there first, and then go to Toronto. My mother also rode with us.

There were six children by then, so our station wagon was filled with nine people, including 20-month-old David.

I always did most of the driving on our trips, but Marie drove for a while when we were on a major four-lane highway in Canada. Marie was going about 70 miles per hour around a slight curve with a deep drop to the right. Suddenly, a tire blew and the car lurched to the right! I felt sure we were going to end up at the bottom of that deep drop, but somehow Marie was able to keep the car under control and bring it to a stop.

Of course, in order to change the tire we had to unload the back of the station wagon, but I was relieved that we hadn't all been killed.

When we got to Montreal, we went to the hotel where I had made reservations through the Expo '67 official convention office. It wasn't until we were trying to check in that our attention was called to the fact that our reservation was for the hotel's annex. The annex proved to be a large temporary trailer court set up some blocks away. There was absolutely nothing else available in Montreal, and we ended up getting all nine of us in a very small trailer. Nevertheless, we thoroughly enjoyed the World's Fair.

I flew from Montreal to Toronto for meetings prior to the convention itself while my family spent an extra day at Expo '67. Then Marie drove Mother and the children to Toronto.

That wasn't the first World's Fair we had attended. We also took the children to the New York World's Fair in 1965. Later, we took them to the World's Fair in Knoxville in 1982. All the World's Fairs were beneficial to our children as they were growing up. †

Faith and Family/Sean Gallagher

## Taking a trip to heaven on spring break

My school-age sons were on spring break recently. When I was their age, my parents, sister and I often visited my grandparents, who were living in Sarasota, Fla. It was nice to visit them since we didn't get to see them that often. And spending time on a sunny Florida beach wasn't too bad, either.



My own family stays closer to home

on spring break. We often make day trips to Indiana state parks. This year, we traveled to Versailles State Park, had a nice picnic lunch and hiked on a trail on which we got our feet wet crossing a stream a few times.

On another day, my oldest son Michael and I took a road trip across central and south central Indiana.

The youth group Michael belongs to at our parish put a challenge to its members last fall. If they prayed at each of the 13 perpetual adoration chapels in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis by June, plus one in the Lafayette Diocese, they would get an all-expense paid overnight trip this coming summer.

A perpetual adoration chapel is a place where there is always at least one person present praying 24 hours a day, seven days a week before the Blessed Sacrament exposed in a monstrance.

This spring break, Michael and I visited such chapels at St. Thomas Moore Parish in Mooresville, St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Bedford and St. Mary Parish in North Vernon. He has only a couple more chapels to visit. Hopefully, we'll get to them in time.

To learn the location of all perpetual adoration chapels in the archdiocese, visit [archindy.org/adoration/index.html](http://archindy.org/adoration/index.html).

Although anyone can visit these chapels at any time, people make a commitment to pray a specific hour on a specific day of the week at the chapel to make sure that there is always someone praying there.

The first perpetual adoration chapel in the archdiocese was started at St. Michael the Archangel Parish in Indianapolis about 25 years ago. Just think about that. There have been people here in central Indiana praying around the clock for you and me and the world for a quarter of a century.

Hopefully, being more mindful of the presence of perpetual adoration chapels across central and southern Indiana, knowing that people are always there praying for the Church and the world, can encourage each of us to dedicate time each day to prayer.

There can never be enough prayer in our world. So whether you go to pray in a perpetual adoration chapel, your own church where the Lord is present in every tabernacle or in the privacy of your home, just pray!

It's been a wonderful project to work on with Michael. I pray that his experience and those of other youth group members will lead them to a deeper life of prayer and a closer relationship with Christ and the Church as they grow.

Mooresville, Bedford and North Vernon, as nice as each are, don't have the sunny beaches that so often get visited on spring break by people who want a little bit of warmth this time of year (and maybe especially this spring).

But when Michael and I walked into the adoration chapels in each of these towns, placing ourselves before our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, it was like spending a few moments in heaven, taking part in the eternal, joy-filled worship of God with all the angels and saints.

It's hard to think of a better spring break trip than that. †

Amid the Fray/Greg Erlandson

## A little boy meets a pastor at a moment of great sorrow

A remarkable video of Pope Francis answering a young boy's deeply personal question was posted by Catholic News Service recently.



It moved many viewers to tears.

It also moved some Catholics to fits of sarcasm and anti-papal gibes, which left me wondering: What is happening to some of our pew mates?

The video was produced by Robert Duncan and showed a visit by Pope Francis to a sprawling, decrepit housing complex on the outskirts of Rome. During these visits, the pope often takes questions from the children.

On this visit, a young boy named Emanuele, perhaps 9 or 10 years old, approached the microphone. But nerves got the best of him, so the pope asked him to "come and whisper it in my ear." That scene alone was quite touching, as the little boy buried his head into the pope's shoulder and whispered his question.

But then the pope, with Emanuele's permission, told the crowd that the boy's father was dead. A nonbeliever, he'd had his children baptized, however. The

weeping boy wanted to know if his father was in heaven.

The pope gave a moving response, praising the little boy for his courage, and saying that his father was a good man. "That man did not have the gift of faith, he wasn't a believer, but he had his children baptized. He had a good heart," the pope said. "God is the one who says who goes to heaven."

He then told the children that God has "a father's heart. God has a dad's heart."

The pope reassured little Emanuele. "Does God abandon his children?" The children in the audience shouted no. "There, Emanuele, that is the answer," the pope told the boy. "God surely was proud of your father, because it is easier as a believer to baptize your children than to baptize them when you are not a believer. Surely this pleased God very much."

With such a young and grief-stricken boy, this was not a moment for high theology. In that district of Rome, who knows how his father lost his life. The children there have seen more of life's cruelty than most their age. The pope's message was that God was a loving father. That he did not abandon his children. That he loved them.

The reaction to the video of this encounter has been quite positive.

Surprisingly, however, there has been a strong minority who felt this was more evidence that the pope was not up to snuff when it comes to doling out doctrine.

Some accused the pope of teaching error: "Unfortunately, the pope lied. According to the Bible, his dad, as a nonbeliever, is in hell."

"This pope did not tell the boy the truth," wrote another.

Such certainty about who is or is not in hell is not entrusted to anyone in the Church, as the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* rightly explains. And no pastor of any sort would crush the heart of a little boy who had lost his father. Yet today in social media such discourse—and worse—is, unfortunately, quite common.

In his newest apostolic exhortation, "Rejoice and Be Glad," Pope Francis warns about "networks of verbal violence."

"Even in Catholic media, limits can be overstepped," he said.

A little boy in Italy encountered a pastor at a moment of great worry and sorrow. For this, all of us should be able to put down our brickbats for a moment and rejoice and be glad.

(Greg Erlandson, director and editor-in-chief of Catholic News Service, can be reached at [gerlandson@catholicnews.com](mailto:gerlandson@catholicnews.com).) †

Emmaus Walk/Debra Tomaselli

## What's the most embarrassing thing that's ever happened to you?

"Grandma, tell us a story!" My granddaughters bounced onto the sofa, eyes sparkling with delight.

"I can't think of any," I said. "I've told you all my stories."



Ave, twisting her long, blond pigtails, spoke. "What was the most embarrassing thing that ever happened to you?"

Hands down, I had a story.

"Well, when I was in middle school,

I went to the store with my friend, Madelyn," I said.

It was a small five-and-dime. We were browsing the toiletries aisle, where Madelyn was studying curlers and hair spray. As we discussed the products, I found myself squaring my shoulders. We were growing up, weren't we?

A few feet away, some sweet-smelling deodorant demanded attention. I didn't really wear deodorant yet, but some of my friends did. Maybe I should purchase some. Surely, it was the prestigious thing to do. It would elevate me in the sight of my peers, right?

I took another sniff, replaced the lid, and decided I had to have it. I fingered the cash in my pocket ... my own money that I'd earned while baby-sitting. Wouldn't it be great to use my own money to buy something so grown-up? The idea made me stand a little taller.

But I hesitated. I'd never bought deodorant before. I'd used my baby-sitting money to purchase music, candy, jump ropes and hula hoops, but never deodorant. The thought of buying something so personal made me nervous.

Then, I had an idea. "Madelyn," I said. She was, after all, my best friend.

Her long brown hair bounced on her shoulders as she turned my way. "Yes?" she said.

"I want this deodorant, but I'm too embarrassed to buy it. Will you?"

Her eyes widened as she covered her mouth in a mock gasp.

"What?" she said. "Why? Just buy it! What's to be embarrassed about?"

"No, yeah, I can't," I said. "I don't know. I can't do it. I'll give you the money. Will you just buy it for me?"

"Come on," she said. "Buy it yourself!" But I insisted.

"I really can't. I don't know why, but

it's embarrassing." I glanced around the little, quiet store with only a handful of customers. "What if someone sees me," I said. "Pleeese."

"OK," she said, grabbing the deodorant and the money.

I sighed with relief and followed her to the cashier.

Moments later, Madelyn paid for the deodorant. I watched the cashier bag the purchase and hand it to Madelyn, along with the change. With that, Madelyn turned to me, held the bag out, and, in a loud voice, announced, "Here's your deodorant, Debbie."

I nearly melted into the floor. My face reddened. I scurried to the exit, grumbling to Madelyn the whole way. (Yes, we remained friends.)

My granddaughters rolled in laughter. Me, too.

"I learned from that," I said. "I learned to have courage to do something I know I need to do. I learned to laugh at myself. I learned that truth will always be told, even if we try to hide it."

Life lessons for all of us.

(Debra Tomaselli writes from Altamonte Springs, Fla. She can be reached at [dtomaselli@cfl.rr.com](mailto:dtomaselli@cfl.rr.com).) †



Fifth Sunday of Easter/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

# The Sunday Readings

Sunday, April 29, 2018

- Acts of the Apostles 9:26-31
- 1 John 3:18-24
- John 15:1-8

The Acts of the Apostles is again this Easter season the source of the first reading for Mass this weekend. It highlights St. Paul. In an earlier passage, not read in this liturgy, the intensely devoted Jew, Paul, after having persecuted Christians, miraculously experiences the presence of Jesus on the way to Damascus.



Paul immediately converts to Christianity. Eventually, the Christian community accepts him, although understandably some Christians were nervous, considering his record of persecuting them. He had been quite hostile to followers of Jesus.

At last accepted, in this weekend's reading he returns to Jerusalem. With his irascible personality and religious fervor, now bursting with belief in Christ, he openly debates with Greek-speaking Jews.

Paul was well educated. From Tarsus in what is now Turkey, he was not a native of the Holy Land, although he was an ethnic and religiously observant Jew. He spoke Greek, the language of the empire and of scholarship.

Paul's intensity made enemies for him. The Christians took him for his own safety to Caesarea, the Roman capital of Palestine, a place now in ruins on the outskirts of modern Tel Aviv. From Caesarea, a seaport, the Christians sent him home to Tarsus for his personal security.

An important statement in this reading is in its final verse. It says that throughout the entire area the Church was at peace and making progress. Notice that the term "Church" is used.

For the second reading this Easter weekend, the Church offers a selection from the First Epistle of St. John. It refers to its readers as "children" (1 Jn 3:18). Obviously, adults comprised the epistle's audience, or most of the audience. Still, this term of endearment is used in the epistle. Those who follow Jesus indeed are God's "children" in their vulnerability and need for God.

St. John's Gospel supplies the last reading, part of the long discourse by Jesus given to the Apostles at the Last Supper.

This reading has a deeply eucharistic undertone. At the Last Supper, Jesus gave the Twelve the wine that became, through the Lord's power, his own blood.

Wine, of course, is the product of grapes. Grapes grow on vines. In this reading, Jesus says, "I am the true vine" (Jn 15:1). All who love the Lord are the branches. God protects the vine, even by cutting away branches because of sin.

Thus, Jesus warns that no vine can bear fruit if it separates itself from the true vine of God.

This bond between vine and branches is made and strengthened by the blood of Christ.

## Reflections

In the Acts of the Apostles, the First Letter of John, and the Gospel of John, the Church calls us to absolute faith in and deep love for God in Jesus risen to life after dying on the cross. Jesus is the cornerstone of our faith and of our lives.

Part of the Lord's legacy is the Church. The Church does not mean an earthly, visible and coincidental entity that we can take or leave. If we truly are with Christ, then we are part of the Church, and the Church is part of us.

The Church is the mystical body of Christ, a phrase rich in its references to Paul's own thoughts. It then also is the vine. Members of the Church are its branches.

Vines and branches involve a living relationship. The vine nourishes and holds the branches. Cut away from the vine, the branches die. This Church offers us divine nourishment, the eucharistic blood of Christ, which also unites us to the Lord.

On this weekend, the Church again invites us to celebrate the victory of Jesus over death. If faithful in the Church, Christ's mystical body, we are with Jesus. He is the vine. We are the branches. In union with Christ, we live and are strong, nourished by the Eucharist. †

## Daily Readings

### Monday, April 30

St. Pius V, pope  
Acts 14:5-18  
Psalm 115:1-5, 15-16  
John 14:21-26

### Tuesday, May 1

St. Joseph the Worker  
Acts 14:19-28  
Psalm 145:10-13ab, 21  
John 14:27-31a

### Wednesday, May 2

St. Athanasius, bishop and doctor of the Church  
Acts 15:1-6  
Psalm 122:1-5  
John 15:1-8

### Thursday, May 3

St. Philip, Apostle  
St. James, Apostle  
1 Corinthians 15:1-8  
Psalm 19:2-5  
John 14:6-14

### Friday, May 4

Acts 15:22-31  
Psalm 57:8-12  
John 15:12-17

### Saturday, May 5

Acts 16:1-10  
Psalm 100:2, 3, 5  
John 15:18-21

### Sunday, May 6

Sixth Sunday of Easter  
Acts 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48  
Psalm 98:1-4  
1 John 4:7-10  
John 15:9-17

## Question Corner/Fr. Kenneth Doyle

# Pope's reported denial of existence of hell is 'misinformation'

Q Did Pope Francis just say that there is no hell? That's what I've read reported in the media. (Virginia)

A No. Pope Francis did not say that there is no hell. That misinformation comes from a March 2018 article in the



Italian newspaper *La Repubblica*. The article—written by that newspaper's co-founder and former editor, Eugenio Scalfari—claimed that the pope had told Scalfari in a recent conversation that "the souls of those who are unrepentant, and thus cannot be forgiven, disappear," and that "hell does not exist; the disappearance of sinful souls exists."

In a statement in response, the Vatican said that Scalfari's piece was "a product of his own reconstruction," and that "no quotes of the aforementioned article should therefore be considered as a faithful transcription of the Holy Father's words." Scalfari, a 93-year-old avowed atheist, has admitted that he does not take notes or use a recording device when doing interviews with the pope.

In fact, Pope Francis has spoken on a number of occasions of hell as a real and final destination for serious sinners who do not repent. In 2014, for example—speaking to families of those victimized by the Mafia—the pontiff pleaded with members of the Mafia to turn their lives around. "Convert," said Pope Francis, "there is still time for not ending up in hell. It is what is waiting for you if you continue on this path."

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* says, "The teaching of the Church affirms the existence of hell and its eternity. Immediately after death the souls of those who die in a state of mortal sin descend into hell, where they suffer the punishments of hell, 'eternal fire.' The chief punishment of hell is eternal separation from God, in whom alone man can possess the life and happiness for which he was created and for which he longs" (#1035).

Q I am a divorced and remarried Catholic and have been asked by my grandniece to be her sponsor for confirmation. Forty years ago, I was divorced and remarried. At that time, I was told by my pastor that I could not receive Communion, and so I have not done so for all these years. I still, though, go to Mass every Sunday, believe in Jesus as my Lord and God, and try to live a

good Catholic life. But does this mean that I cannot be her sponsor? (Maryland)

A A sponsor must be a practicing Catholic eligible to participate fully in the sacramental life of the Church, including holy Communion.

The Church's *Code of Canon Law* expresses it this way: "To be permitted to take on the function of sponsor a person must ... be a Catholic who has been confirmed and has already received the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist and who leads a life of faith in keeping with the function to be taken on" (#874).

That prescription is commonly taken to require full sacramental eligibility. The reason is that a sponsor serves as a role model in the faith for the person being baptized or confirmed and so, logically, must be able to share completely in the Church's sacramental life.

And so, sadly, at this time you would not be able to be a confirmation sponsor for your grandniece. I certainly compliment you, though, on remaining faithful to Mass attendance over all this time. That is exactly as it should be; you are still a member of the Church and you no doubt benefit spiritually from your regular presence at Mass.

You would also, by the way, be able to receive the anointing of the sick when seriously ill and to have a Catholic funeral. But have you ever thought about talking to a priest about your particular situation? It may be that an annulment of your first marriage is possible, so that you could return to reception of the Eucharist—and be able to be a sponsor.

(Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at [askfatherdoyle@gmail.com](mailto:askfatherdoyle@gmail.com) and 30 Columbia Circle Dr., Albany, New York 12203.) †

## My Journey to God

# Fist, or Open Hand

By Natalie Hoefler

I tend to move through life as a fist:

- clutching my agenda,
- forcing my will,
- unopen to interruptions,
- centered on myself,
- closed off to grace.

Lord, grant me the grace to live each day as an open hand:

- releasing my agenda,
- receptive to Your will,
- welcoming others,
- desiring to serve You,
- open to receive all of Your gifts.



(Natalie Hoefler is a member of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis and a reporter for The Criterion. A woman prays in the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit in Istanbul in this Sept. 28, 2006, photo.) (CNS photo/Jerry Lampen, Reuters)

## Readers may submit prose or poetry for faith column

The *Criterion* invites readers to submit original prose or poetry relating to faith or experiences of prayer for possible publication in the "My Journey to God" column.

Seasonal reflections also are appreciated. Please include name, address, parish and telephone number with submissions.

Send material for consideration to "My Journey to God," *The Criterion*, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367 or e-mail to [critterion@archindy.org](mailto:critterion@archindy.org). †



# Rest in peace

Please submit in writing to our office by 10 a.m. Thursday before the week of publication; be sure to state date of death. Obituaries of archdiocesan priests serving our archdiocese are listed elsewhere in *The Criterion*. Order priests and religious sisters and brothers are included here, unless they are natives of the archdiocese or have other connections to it; those are separate obituaries on this page.

**BALL, Michael L.**, 67, St. Jude, Indianapolis, April 13. Husband of Janet Ball. Father of Michael and Timothy Ball. Brother of William Ball. Grandfather of seven.

**BECHT, Keith**, 56, St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd County, April 16. Son of Louise Becht. Brother of Barbara Allen, Sharon Harvey, Melissa Matthews, Cindy, Eric, Kevin, John and Steven Becht. Uncle and great-uncle of several.

**BEYER, Donna**, 71, St. Malachy, Brownsburg, March 22. Wife of Michael Beyer. Mother of Andrew, David, Robert and Thomas Beyer. Grandmother of eight.

**BUSALD, Mary T.**, 89, St. Mary, Rushville, April 11. Mother of Marilyn Kozlowski, Esther Sibrel, Helen, Jim and Paul Busald. Sister of Hubert Schmitter. Grandmother of 17. Great-grandmother of 34. Great-great-grandmother of six.

**CRALLEY, Hilda**, 93, Sacred Heart of Jesus, Indianapolis, April 6. Aunt, great-aunt and great-great-aunt of several.

**CRAWFORD, Anna**, 85, St. Simon the Apostle, Indianapolis, April 12. Mother of Theresa Mendez, Karen Tucker, Charlie, Dennis and Steven Crawford. Sister of Larry and Ralph Hardin. Grandmother of eight. Great-grandmother of five.

**DUNCAN, Frieda**, 82, Sacred Heart of Jesus, Indianapolis, April 15. Mother of Diana Deweese, Maria Jessie, Angela McIntosh, Katrina Oprisi, Laurie Reams, Christopher,

Jeffrey, Robert, Jr. and Timothy Duncan. Sister of Patty Ottinger, Fred, Jr. and Tom Jones. Grandmother, great-grandmother and great-great-grandmother of several.

**ELSON, Linda K.**, 71, Christ the King, Indianapolis, April 4. Mother of Tracy Lee, Jimmy and Ricky Elson. Sister of Marianne Miller and Jay Lauck. Grandmother of six.

**FRANCIS, Catherine**, 95, Our Lady of Lourdes, Indianapolis, April 5. Mother of Janie Brown, Joan Flecker, Kathy Keyes, Jean Ann Meyer and Helen Wailes. Sister of Helen Kramer. Grandmother of nine. Great-grandmother of nine.

**GRAF, Lee**, 65, Holy Guardian Angels, Cedar Grove, April 5. Husband of Cathy Graf. Father of Stephanie Bohman, Autumn Reinier, Ashley and Phillip Graf. Brother of Yvonne Brandes, Shelly Lunsford, Trisha Rosenberger, Rena Sacksteder, Alan and Greg Graf. Grandfather of nine.

**GRAMMAN, Elizabeth**, 85, St. Michael, Brookville, April 12. Mother of Jeanne Beck, Pam Brown, Judy Conwell, Patty Heckel, Nancy Meyer, Sharon Pepper, Debbie Seale, Jim, Randy, Rick and Tim Gramman. Grandmother of 26. Great-grandmother of 27.

**GRIGSBY, Keith M.**, 59, Holy Angels, Indianapolis, March 24. Father of Ashley Allen, Jacqueline McGee, Lakesha and Keith Grigsby, Jr. Brother of Angela Espada, Shirley and Jason Grigsby. Grandfather of 11.



## Crosses for peace

Students at Archbishop McNicholas High School in Cincinnati made these crosses as part of the school's "Day of Reflection for Peace" on April 20. Many students across the country were participating that day in the National School Walkout to protest gun violence and mark the 19th anniversary of the school shooting at Columbine High School in Colorado.

(CNS photo/Archbishop McNicholas High School)

**GROTHOUSE, Christine R.**, 95, St. Agnes, Nashville, March 21. Mother of Susan Rannocho and Sara Van Dyke. Grandmother of four.

**GUNN, Carl**, 90, St. Boniface, Fulda, March 1. Husband of Helen Gunn. Father of Polly Hagedorn, Mary Ellen Moore, Kris, Susan and Tom Gunn. Grandfather of three. Great-grandfather of two.

**JONES, Chris**, 64, St. Vincent de Paul, Shelby County, April 7. Wife of JJ Jones. Mother of Lori Cummins, Andrew and William Jones. Sister of Michael Weintraut. Grandmother of six.

**KLEIN, Leo**, 83, St. Mary, New Albany, April 5. Husband of Ida Klein. Father of Pam Dauby, Jennifer Jantzen, Sharon Kern, Brenda Miller, Cyndi Morgan and Shirley Tidwell. Brother of

Carolyn Blunk and Shirley Stillier. Grandfather of 12. Great-grandfather of 18. Great-great-grandfather of two.

**LAPACK, Rita**, 79, Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Indianapolis, March 29. Wife of Richard LaPack. Mother of Anna Kitchens, Kevin, Lance and Mark LaPack. Sister of Tim Cravens. Grandmother of eight. Great-grandmother of eight.

**PETERS, Rose A.**, 74, St. Boniface, Fulda, March 22. Wife of David Peters. Mother of Jane Hosking. Sister of Jenny Butler and Vera Price. Grandmother of three. Great-grandmother of one.

**PINARD, Norm**, 74, Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Indianapolis, April 4. Husband of Nancy Pinard. Father of Tracey Fitzgerald and Tina Wagner. Brother

of Diana Holliday, Armand, Leo and Roger Pinard. Grandfather of one.

**ROELL, Jerome R.**, 63, St. Louis, Batesville, April 14. Husband of Jacqueline Roell. Father of Jessica and Jeremy Roell. Brother of Pat Meer, Mary, Carl, Louis and Stanley Roell. Grandfather of five.

**SANTAROSSA, Elsie A.**, 93, St. Matthew the Apostle, Indianapolis, April 6. Mother of Teresa Piggott Kovey, Pamela Krull, Marie Walden, David, John and Rob Santarossa. Grandmother of 20. Great-grandmother of 18.

**SCHOETTMER, Kathryn**, 86, St. Mary, Greensburg, April 18. Wife of Robert Schoettmer. Mother of Kathy, Gary, Keith and Mark Schoettmer. Grandmother of 11. Great-grandmother of nine.

**SICHTING, Forrest D.**, 80, St. Martin of Tours, Martinsville, April 12. Husband of Sara Sighting. Father of Lisa Helms, Bradley and David Sighting. Brother of Marie Housand, Harold, Paul, Vic and Web Sighting. Grandfather of five. Great-grandfather of three.

**SITZMAN, Clayton**, 46, St. Meinrad, St. Meinrad, March 30. Husband of Jennifer Sitzman. Father of Colt and Wyatt Sitzman. Son of Dorothy Sitzman. Brother of Cheryl Smith and Paul Hubert.

**SPENCER, Robert A.**, 88, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, April 9. Father of Karen LeSturgeon, Susan and Paul Spencer. Brother of Mary Ann Weltzien. Grandfather of six. Great-grandfather of one.

**STEWART, Elizabeth G. (Suding)**, 95, Good Shepherd, Indianapolis, April 1. Mother of Geri McKay and Joe Stewart. Grandmother of seven. †

## Little Sister of the Poor Sister Alexis Berchmans served aged poor for 74 years

Little Sister of the Poor Sister Alexis Berchmans died on April 16 at the order's St. Augustine Home for the Aged in Indianapolis. She was 94.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on April 20 at the chapel

at the St. Augustine Home. Burial followed at Holy Cross Cemetery in Indianapolis.

Sister Alexis was born on July 9, 1923, in Lafayette, Ind. She entered the Little Sisters of the Poor after graduating

from high school, professed first vows on Dec. 10, 1943, and final vows on Oct. 15, 1948.

After many years of ministering to the aged poor in Baltimore and Evansville, Ind., Sister Alexis came to live at the

St. Augustine Home in 2014.

She is survived by a sister, Paula Alexander, of Lafayette.

Memorial gifts may be sent to the St. Augustine Home for the Aged, 2345 W. 86th St., Indianapolis, IN 46260. †

## Ordaining new priests, Pope Francis asks them to be merciful with people

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Ordaining 16 men to the priesthood, Pope Francis urged them to be merciful with the people who approach them, especially in the confessional.

Marking the World Day of Prayer for Vocations on April 22, the pope ordained 11 men for the Diocese of Rome, four for the Family of Disciples and one for the Sons of Divine Providence. The new priests ranged in age from 26 to 41 and came from Italy, Colombia, Croatia, El Salvador, Madagascar, Myanmar and Vietnam.

As is his custom for ordinations, Pope Francis used the homily prescribed by the Italian Missal, but paused when he reached the description of how, through each sacrament, the new priests would minister to the people.

"With the sacrament of penance, you will remit sins in the name of Christ and the Church," he read from the text. "And here, I'm going to stop to ask you, please, never tire of being merciful. Think of

your sins, your wretchedness, which Jesus forgives. Be merciful."

After the Mass, Pope Francis went up to the window of his studio in the Apostolic Palace to lead the midday recitation of the "Regina Coeli" prayer with an estimated 30,000 people gathered below in St. Peter's Square.

He brought four of the new priests with him, inviting them to join him at the window to greet the crowd and give the people their blessing.

"We ask the Lord to send many good workers to labor in his field, and also to increase vocations to consecrated life and to Christian marriage," the pope told the crowd.

Pope Francis also commented on the day's reading from the Gospel of John in which Jesus describes himself as the good shepherd.

"Jesus says to each person, 'Your life is worth so much to me that in order to save it, I will give myself,'" the pope said. "It is precisely the offer of his life

that makes him the good shepherd par excellence, the one who heals, the one who enables us to live a beautiful and fruitful life."

Jesus tells his disciples that he knows his sheep and that his sheep know him. That relationship, the pope said, is the key to happiness and fulfillment.

The first step toward creating "a living relationship with Jesus," he said, is "allowing ourselves to be known by him."

"Don't close yourself off; open yourself to the Lord," the pope said. "He is attentive to each of us, he knows the depths of our hearts. He knows our virtues and our defects, the plans we have realized and the hopes that have been dashed.

"But he accepts us as we are, even with our sins, in order to heal us, forgive us and guide us with love so we can cross even the most arduous paths without losing the way," Pope Francis said. "He accompanies us." †



Pope Francis ordains one of 16 new priests during a Mass in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican on April 22. The pope urged the new priests to be merciful with people who approach them, especially in the confessional.

(CNS photo/Tony Gentile, Reuters)



# CASA volunteers work to change lives of vulnerable children

(Editor's Note: April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month.)

By Patricia Happel Cornwell  
Special to *The Criterion*

NEW ALBANY—In southern Indiana, cases of child abuse and neglect are on the rise. According to Debra Mefford, director of St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities' Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) program, "There has been a 58 percent increase in cases of abused and neglected children since 2015, mostly due to parents using drugs."

The St. Elizabeth website notes its CASA program was created to address the needs of those children who get "caught up in the complicated family court and foster care system" after being removed from an unsafe environment. CASA volunteers "receive specialized training and are sworn in as officers of the court to speak up on behalf of [those] children."

St. Elizabeth's CASA program began serving Floyd and Washington counties in southern Indiana in 1987. Before Mefford assumed leadership of the program in 2015, she was a CASA volunteer for five years in Kentucky. She also worked for more than 20 years as a paralegal advocating for individuals injured on the job. Now, she trains advocates for children.

While some other counties have their own programs, Mefford says, "All counties have the same need for volunteers and the same goal of serving abused and neglected children."

CASA children may have suffered physical or sexual abuse, homelessness or unsanitary home conditions. Some are removed from the home and placed in foster care. Others remain with parents or are placed with relatives, where they may still be at risk.

"We try to work with parents," Mefford says, "but the safety of the child comes first. Often, if there is no bruise or broken bone, it can be hard to understand that a child has been damaged. But know this: what is not seen is just as damaging."

### 'Change the path of a child for the better'

According to St. Elizabeth's web site, more than 700,000 children suffer abuse and

neglect in the U.S. every year and enter the family court and foster care systems.

St. Elizabeth's CASA program has two paid staff advocates, one whose position, funded by a federal Victims of Crime Act grant, enables her to handle the cases of more than 50 children, and one who assists volunteers in and out of court and manages the program's database. Yet the number of abused and neglected children in the area is so great that volunteers are badly needed.

Although there are currently 73 trained CASA volunteers serving approximately 240 children, 250 more children are waiting to be assigned a volunteer. At present, most of the children in the program are toddlers, but children up to 18 years of age are eligible.

Prospective volunteers undergo a background check before going through 30 hours of training—half in a classroom, half in a courtroom. There are no educational or residency requirements for volunteers. They need not live in the same county where the child for whom they advocate lives.

"What is mostly needed," Mefford says, "is a person who has the desire to change the path of a child for the better."

Classes are offered on an almost continuous basis, and the most recent group of volunteers started their training in mid-March. Trainees must be at least 21 years old and make a one-year commitment to the program.

Part of the role of CASA volunteers is to gather information about a child's situation. To do so, they interview relatives, neighbors, friends, teachers, baby sitters or anyone who knows the child and the family.

Mefford says the national CASA standard for volunteer/child contact is once a month, but St. Elizabeth's CASA program encourages contact "at least every other week, more depending on the circumstances."

### Outreach 'is very rewarding'

Bob and Pam Spiller of New Albany work as a team representing three youths, two aged 14 and one who is 17. They see them about every two weeks. The couple has attended the teens' sporting events, a graduation dinner, taken prom pictures and met them for lunch.

Members of Our Lady of Perpetual Help



A Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteer meeting takes place on April 3 in New Albany. Pictured are left, Debbie Mefford, director of St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities' CASA program; volunteer Cheryl Schy; Kerma Hopewell, staff advocate/recruiter; and volunteers Donna Sherrard, Lynda Grunzinger and Paul Grunzinger. (Submitted photo)

Parish in New Albany, the Spillers have two adult children. The couple became aware of CASA when Pam volunteered with St. Elizabeth's maternity program.

Bob says, "Our experience is that these kids do not have any responsible, trustworthy adults in their lives. Getting to know them and slowly becoming someone in their life that they trust and look up to is very rewarding."

The most difficult part of the role, he says, is "holding back. When you read the case reports, the first thing you want to do is take them out to lunch or dinner or bring them gifts, anything to make their life better. CASA has rules, which I agree with. You can't take them in your vehicle or bring them to your house. You're not supposed to bring them gifts or give them money. Our job is to investigate, facilitate, monitor and advocate."

CASA volunteer Aubrey Dufour of Salem, has six children of her own, ages 6 to 19. She has been in the program for about four years.

"My motivation for becoming a CASA [volunteer] was to help kids," she says. "So many of these kids need someone on their team, and it just breaks my heart that many do not have that."

Dufour has worked with eight children during the four years, the youngest 2 years old and the oldest 18. She presently represents three children—two children who are both 12 and a 17-year-old. "I find I feel more useful working with older children. These are difficult cases, because it's hard to find foster homes for them.

"Besides going to court with them, I visit my [assigned] kids wherever they happen to be placed," Dufour adds. "Depending on the

family situation, sometimes I'm a bolster to boost the relationships between them and their parents, but in some cases I am all they have. In those cases, I try to have a bigger presence. I do lunches on family day [at school]. Sometimes, I sit with them in a waiting room at a doctor's office or take late-night phone calls or meet them for lunch. My [CASA] kids know they can call me at any time.

"The most rewarding part," Dufour says, "is knowing that these kids might have a chance if they know someone believes in them. I love seeing them succeed even in the smallest of their battles. The most difficult part for me is the uphill battle of making sure these kids have the tools they need to survive and succeed when they become adults. Being a volunteer, plain and simple, brings me joy."

### 'The greatest reward'

Pekin, Ind., resident George Wright has been a CASA volunteer for more than six years, representing five children from age 6 months to 10 years old. He and his wife Linda have four adult children and eight grandchildren.

Wright, a former teacher, says, "Considering my skill set and training, CASA seemed like an ideal fit for me after I retired.

"I was raised in a small town north of Evansville with the typical small-town experience," Wright says, "which included being an altar boy and a Boy Scout. Experiences like these and the examples of my parents taught me that a person should give back more to society than they take from society."

He visits with his CASA children at their foster homes or at school once a month or,

See *CASA*, page 16



**'We try to work with parents, but the safety of the child comes first. Often, if there is no bruise or broken bone, it can be hard to understand that a child has been damaged. But know this: what is not seen is just as damaging.'**

— Debra Mefford, director of St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities' Court Appointed Special Advocates program

## Philippine authorities detain nun who advocated for tribal people

MANILA, Philippines (CNS)—Philippine authorities have arrested, detained and intend to deport a 71-year-old Australian nun for allegedly engaging in illegal political activities.

[Ucanews.com](http://ucanews.com) reported immigration officers arrested Sister Patricia Fox, Philippine superior of the Sisters of Our Lady of Zion, at her convent in Quezon City on April 16.

Although the prosecutor in charge "found no probable cause" for her arrest and ordered the nun's "release for further investigation," immigration officials insisted on the nun's detention.

They said Sister Patricia failed to surrender her passport to the bureau. The nun said her documents were with a travel agency.

Sister Patricia was detained at the bureau's intelligence division, but was released on April 17.

Immigration officials have accused the nun, who has worked in rural communities for 27 years, of being an "undesirable alien" for joining protest rallies and visiting political prisoners.

Among the evidence presented by authorities are pictures of the nun taken during a jail visit in the southern Philippines with a banner that reads "Stop Killing Farmers."

The nun also joined a recent fact-finding and solidarity mission that investigated alleged human rights abuses committed against farmers and tribal people in the southern Philippines.

She told [ucanews.com](http://ucanews.com) that part of her missionary work is "to immerse with the poorest of the poor in any event." †

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### Employment

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### Parishioners at Sacred Heart in Jeffersonville

Gathered for this Jan. 6, 1983, photo are members of Most Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Jeffersonville. In the front row are Father Wilfred “Sonny” Day, left, Albert Jones, president of the parish council and Henry Striby. In the back row are Pauline Bourne, left, Judy Butcher, principal of the parish’s school, Paul Semones, Bob Hickey, director of religious education, and Charles Bernhart. Sacred Heart School was unique in the diocese for the presence of Dominican sisters. At the time of this photograph, three sisters taught in the school, two were retired, and three were residents in the parish. Sacred Heart Parish was founded in 1953.

(Would you like to comment on or share information about this photo? Contact archdiocesan archivist Julie Motyka at 800-382-9836, ext. 1538; 317-236-1538; or by e-mail at [jmotyka@archindy.org](mailto:jmotyka@archindy.org).)

## CASA

continued from page 15

depending on the case, more frequently.

“The most valuable lesson I glean from being a CASA [volunteer],” Wright says, “is not to take for granted my family, or the efforts of multiple generations to become what we are—and what I hope we become in future generations.”

He appreciates “the knowledge that I have touched the future and probably changed the lives of children yet born, due to the cyclical nature of child abuse and neglect—that is the greatest reward.”

Being a CASA volunteer has its difficult side as well. Wright says the hardest part is “going through the Termination of Parental Rights procedure with a case. No parent starts out by saying, ‘I intend to make my child’s life miserable.’ Yet that is the end result of some parental actions or inactions. *Caring for* a child emotionally is not tantamount to *taking care of* a child on a day in, day out basis. The heartache for both the parent and the child keeps me awake at night, even though I know that in the long run it is best for the child.”

#### ‘The eyes and ears of the court’

In Floyd County, volunteers accompany children to appearances before Circuit Court Judge Terrence Cody. In Washington County, their cases are overseen by Circuit Court Judge Larry Medlock.

“The judges both have a lot of respect for our CASA program and certainly for the volunteers,” Mefford says. “They make doing this work easier than it would be otherwise.”

Cody says, “Whenever a new group of volunteers is introduced to me, before the swearing-in ceremony, I tell them that I look at them as the eyes and ears of the court regarding what is going on in the life of the child and the lives of the

parents. CASA volunteers are officers of the court, which gives them the special status of being able to gather information and advocate for what is in the child’s best interest.

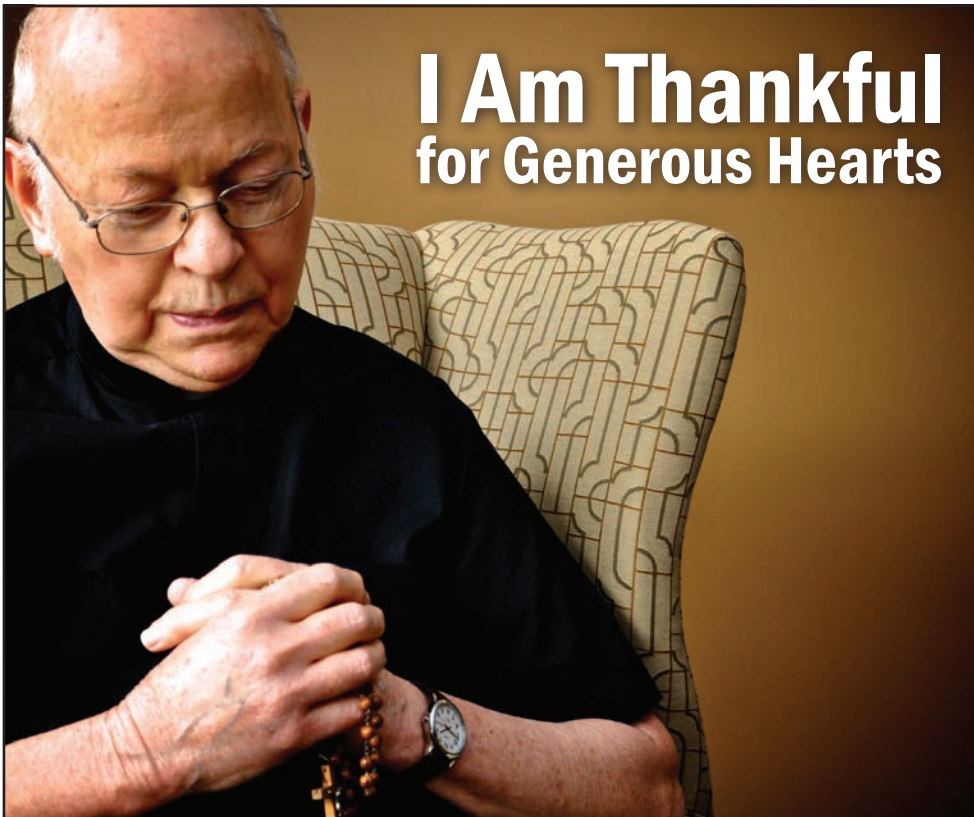
“The need for volunteers is immense,” Cody continues. “In the past, we actually had a volunteer for every child, but not in the past five or six years. We’ve had an explosion of cases in the last three years, due to the opioid and methamphetamine epidemic.

“These volunteers become very invested in what they do,” he adds. “The CASA volunteers have my utmost respect for what they do for me, not to mention what they do for a child.”

Medlock also has praise for the volunteers. “It takes a special individual to become a CASA volunteer and involve themselves in the system,” he says. “I have to make determinations based on the information available to me, and sometimes there are nuances that the legal system doesn’t take into consideration. CASA volunteers fill in the blanks. There are situations that might not be rectified if not for their willingness to participate. I’m extremely grateful to them.”

Medlock says the younger the child, the greater the need for representation by a CASA volunteer. He points out, “Many of the children are very young, and their parents have been their whole world. Many of the cases we get are newborns—they have *no* voice. Debbie [Mefford] and her staff make sure they do have a voice through a CASA volunteer. Older children have a limited perspective on what is wrong, but they don’t know what is best for them. CASA volunteers expand their world.”

(Patricia Happel Cornwell is a freelance writer and a member of St. Joseph Parish in Corydon. For more information on St. Elizabeth’s Catholic Charities CASA program in Floyd and Washington counties, visit [www.stecharities.org/programs](http://www.stecharities.org/programs) or [www.facebook.com/CASAFloydWashington](http://www.facebook.com/CASAFloydWashington).) †



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