



The

Criterion

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Catechesis Supplement



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Ben Wissel, a member of the New Albany Knights of Columbus #1221 Council, second from right, recites a poem during a burial service for miscarried babies—whose tiny caskets seen in the background were built by the Knights—at Holy Trinity Cemetery in New Albany on July 14. The service was led by Conventual Franciscan Father Mark Weaver, pastor of St. Mary Parish in New Albany, at right. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)

After COVID-19 pandemic, burial service for miscarried babies resumes in New Albany

By Natalie Hoefler

NEW ALBANY—Kara Garrison wiped the tear tracing down her cheek as the poem “Little Angel Unknown” was read aloud. Behind the man reciting the poem were 109 tiny caskets placed around a Pietà statue, each holding the precious remains of a miscarried child.

Having spent 14 years as a nurse on the Women’s Services unit at Baptist Health Floyd hospital in New Albany, Garrison saw more than just small boxes.

“It’s just devastating when you have a young couple who’s just lost their hopes and dreams,” she said. “It’s devastating for everyone.”

The recitation of the poem was part of a burial service for the 109 short-lived lives held in an outdoor pavilion at Holy Trinity Cemetery in New Albany on July 14.

While such services have typically been held there quarterly since 2017, this was the first one to be held in more than two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

New Albany Catholic Cemeteries (NACC) director Teri Popp was overjoyed to see the burial services resume.

“This is the mission of the Church,” she said. “We do this because we should.”

‘Doing the just thing’

When Popp became NACC director in September of 2016, she envisioned creating a plot for children of 22 weeks or less gestation who were miscarried at a local hospital.

She reached out to what was then Floyd Memorial Hospital. At the time, the facility cremated miscarried fetal remains and discarded them as biohazardous waste.

“I told them that, at zero cost to them, we would take the miscarried babies and give them a private burial service and place them into a small mass grave,” said Popp. “But they didn’t want to mix religion and state.”

Just one month later, Baptist Health Floyd bought Floyd Memorial.

“I called the hospital and spoke with them, and they had been struggling with what to do with the babies,” Popp recalls. “With their religious background, they have more of an understanding that babies should be treated with respect from the time of conception.”

Popp said providing the priest-led burial service—which includes prayer, Scripture, song and a blessing of the caskets with holy water—is “doing the just thing.”

Of the three NACC locations, she chose Holy Trinity, an “old Irish cemetery” founded in 1929, for the mass grave.

See BABIES, page 14

Franciscan Sister Shirley Gerth retires after 32 years of parish leadership

By Sean Gallagher

NAPOLEON—With the archdiocese being 189 years old, it’s not often nowadays that Catholics can celebrate a real pioneer in the life of the Church in central and southern Indiana.

But that’s what the members of St. Maurice Parish in Napoleon in southeastern Indiana were able to do in July

See SISTER, page 8

Franciscan Sister Shirley Gerth stands on May 31 in St. Maurice Church in Napoleon. She led the Batesville Deanery faith community as parish life coordinator since 2010. In July, she retired after serving 32 years in the archdiocese as a parish life coordinator. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)



Red Mass for legal professionals set for Oct. 2 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral

By Sean Gallagher

The St. Thomas More Society of Central Indiana's annual Red Mass for legal professionals will be celebrated at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., in Indianapolis, at 5:30 p.m. on Oct. 2. Archbishop Charles C. Thompson is scheduled to be the principal celebrant of the Mass.

A dinner reception will follow in the Assembly Hall of the Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., across the street from the cathedral. During the dinner event, Angela Espada, executive director of the Indiana



Angela Espada

Catholic Conference, will be honored with the society's "Woman for All Seasons" award.

Judge David Certo, who serves in the Marion County Superior Court, was a student at the Indiana University McKinney School of Law in

Indianapolis when Espada was a dean in its administration.

"She was a towering figure to me when I first met her, even though I'm much taller than she is," said Judge Certo, president of the St. Thomas More Society. "I'm very grateful to have observed her career since then, including her service in leading the Indiana Catholic Conference on behalf of all the Catholic bishops of Indiana at the Statehouse. I've especially appreciated learning about her lived example of our faith from her public roles and in her personal life."

Judge Certo expressed admiration for how Espada is a good example for Catholics in the legal profession.

"It's true that we're tempted to view

the world and live our lives through an ideological lens," Judge Certo said. "Her public witness resists that temptation. We can't be stuck in ideological positions if we're going to be open to the Holy Spirit and receptive to the needs of others."

A Red Mass is a centuries-old tradition of those who work in law to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit at the beginning of the legal term in the early fall. The liturgy derives its name from the red vestments worn by the clergy during the Mass, red being symbolic of the Holy Spirit.

The keynote speaker at the dinner that will follow the liturgy will be Judge Robert Conrad, a senior judge for the U.S. District Court for Western North Carolina. He is the author of *John Fisher and Thomas More: Keeping Their Souls While Losing Their Heads* (TAN, 2021), a book about the two 16th-century English saints. Both were beheaded as martyrs for opposing King Henry VIII's claim to be the head of the Church in England.

Judge Certo said that the St. Thomas More Society invited Judge Conrad "to come to Indianapolis to share ideas about how we can all live a more saintly life by listening to the voices of those two saints in particular who point toward Christ."

All are invited to take part in the Mass and dinner. Judges, attorneys, law students and others who work in the legal field are especially encouraged to attend.

The cost for the dinner is \$40. A table sponsorship is \$400, and a bar sponsorship is \$1,500.

Registration for the dinner is required and due by Sept. 21. Reservations may be made at cutt.ly/RedMass. No registration is required for those only attending the Mass.

For more information about registration or sponsorship, call 317-236-1482. For information about the Red Mass, send an email to stthomasmoreindy@gmail.com. †



Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

September 9–16, 2023

September 9 – 11:30 a.m.
Baptism at St. Luke the Evangelist Church, Indianapolis

September 10 – 10 a.m.
150th Anniversary Mass and Celebration for St. Anne Parish, New Castle, at St. Anne Church

September 11 – 9 a.m.
U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) CCLV committee meeting, Washington, D.C.

September 12 – 5:30 p.m.
The Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem Annual Bishops Mass and dinner at St. Luke the Evangelist Parish, Indianapolis

September 13 – 8:45 a.m.
Mass for the students of Cathedral High School at Cathedral High School, Indianapolis

September 13 – 12:30 p.m.
Legacy Gala Sponsor lunch, Indianapolis

September 14 – 8:15 a.m.
Virtual Judicatories meeting

September 14 – 10 a.m.
Leadership Team meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

September 14 – Noon
Virtual USCCB Universal School Choice discussion

September 14 – 3 p.m.
Finance Council meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center

September 14 – 6 p.m.
Dinner with Legacy Gala auction winner, Greenwood

September 16 – 1 p.m.
Marian University football game at Marian University, Indianapolis

Synod assembly won't be secret, but won't be open to press, pope says

ABOARD THE PAPAL FLIGHT FROM MONGOLIA (CNS)—The Synod of Bishops is not a television show or a parliamentary debate, and its



Pope Francis

discussions will not be open to the public or to reporters, Pope Francis said.

"We must safeguard the synodal climate," the pope responded on Sept. 4 when asked by journalists about access to the discussions at the

assembly of the Synod of Bishops on Oct. 4-29.

"This isn't a television program where you talk about everything; no, it is a religious moment, a religious exchange," he told reporters flying back to Rome with him from Mongolia.

The synod process began in October 2021 with a succession of listening sessions on the parish, diocesan, national and regional levels focused on creating a more "synodal Church," where each person feels welcomed, valued and called to contribute and to share the Gospel.

After so many Catholics around the world devoted their time and their prayers to the process, an initial idea was to livestream the general discussions from the synod hall or at least allow reporters some access.

Pope Francis made it clear on the plane that would not happen. An official summary of the day's discussions—without saying who said what—will be made by the synod's communication committee, led by Paolo Ruffini, prefect of the Vatican Dicastery for Communication.

Beyond the anonymous, summarized points, journalists will try to interview participants to at least get individual points of view about the day's synod work.

Pope Francis told reporters that each synod member—including lay women and men for the first time—would have three or four minutes to address the assembly. Each address will be followed by three or four minutes of silence "for prayer."

"Without this spirit of prayer, there is no synodality, it's just politics, parliamentarianism," he said.

Having a committee summarize the discussions for the press is necessary "to safeguard the religiosity [of the synod] and safeguard the freedom of those who speak" but may not want to do so publicly, he said.

"But more open than that, I don't know," he said. "The commission will be very respectful of the speeches of each person and will try not to gossip, but to recount things about how the synod is progressing that are constructive for the Church." †

How has God made his presence known in your life? Share it with our readers

The Criterion is inviting you, our readers, to share your thoughts and stories about this question, "How has God made his presence known in your life?"

Maybe you routinely feel his presence in an everyday situation. Maybe you have known his presence in a life-changing moment. Maybe it's happened in your relationship with a family member, a friend or even a stranger. Maybe it was in a dark time of your life or an especially joyful one.

Whatever the case may be, we would like to hear your thoughts and your stories. Send your submissions to John Shaughnessy by e-mail at jshaughnessy@archindy.org or by mail in care of *The Criterion*, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202. Please include your parish and a daytime phone number where you can be reached. †

Corrections

In the Aug. 25 issue of *The Criterion*, in the article about Catholic Charities Terre Haute's 50th anniversary, the correct name for the food bank is Terre Haute Catholic Charities Food Bank.

An article in the Aug. 25 issue about the archdiocese's 32 seminarians failed to note that one of them is enrolled at Mount St. Mary's Seminary and School of Theology in Cincinnati. †



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E-mail us: criterion@archindy.org

Staff:
Editor: Mike Krokos
Assistant Editor: John Shaughnessy
Reporter: Sean Gallagher
Reporter: Natalie Hoefler
Graphic Designer / Online Editor: Brandon A. Evans
Executive Assistant: Ann Lewis



Phone Numbers:
Main office:..... 317-236-1570
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National Eucharistic Congress will be ‘real presence of Christ,’ organizers say

By Natalie Hoefler

Local and national organizers of the National Eucharistic Congress (NEC)—which will take place in Indianapolis on July 17-21, 2024—have been meeting virtually for some time.

But for the first time, scores of them met in person in Indianapolis on Aug. 30 at Lucas Oil Stadium, where in less than a year tens of thousands of Catholics will gather for the closing Mass of the historic event—the first in 83 years.

The congress will launch the third year of the three-year National Eucharistic Revival.

“The Holy Spirit is inviting the United States to find unity and renewal through a grassroots National Eucharistic Revival,”

said NEC event lead Jaime Reyna, quoting remarks from a letter written by NEC executive director Tim Glemkowski.

“This movement—discerned and approved by the bishops of the U.S.—is critical to rekindling a living faith in

the hearts of Catholics across America, unleashing a new missionary chapter at this pivotal moment in Church history. ...

“The goal is to start a fire, not a program.”

‘A lot of people who are really excited’

More than 25,000 have already registered for the event, said Reyna.

“We just have a lot of people who are excited about gathering,” he noted.

“Remember that feeling after COVID when people just wanted to come back together? It’s almost the same way, that there’s that spiritual connection of

wanting to come together and pray and for the many different reasons that people are just wanting to come together.”

In addition to general and breakout sessions, the five-day event will be filled with opportunities for prayer, worship and the sacraments, said Father Patrick Beidelman. The pastor of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Indianapolis is chair of the NEC liturgy committee.

“We’ll have a large Mass each day, three at the Indiana Convention Center [ICC] and the closing Mass at Lucas Oil Stadium, ... and opportunities for confession all over the place,” he said.

“And St. John [the Evangelist] Church [across from the ICC] will be turned into a place of perpetual adoration starting on Wednesday evening through Sunday.”

The route of a massive eucharistic procession is still being determined, he noted.

Reyna spoke with excitement about the speakers scheduled for the general and breakout sessions. Among them are well-known Catholic speakers, including priests, religious and bishops.

The Church is diverse, Reyna also noted, and event coordinators are taking that into consideration. In addition to programming in English and Spanish, he said the NEC team is working with existing ministries to address other language needs as well.

“We’re talking about Vietnamese, Native Americans, Asian-Pacific Islanders and others,” he said.

The team is also cognizant of engaging those with special needs.

“We are working with national ministry organizations, like the National Catholic Office for Deaf Ministry,” said Reyna.

“We are also trying to be as inclusive as possible for all our brothers and sisters, including those who may have some physical disabilities, to make sure that

they are able to participate and to see how we can accommodate and serve them.”

‘Representing the real presence of Christ’

The event will involve “hundreds if not thousands” of volunteers, said Nikki Slater of Maribeth Smith & Associates, the Indianapolis-based event planning firm contracted to coordinate the National Eucharistic Congress.

While registration for specific volunteer opportunities and shifts will go live next spring, Slater noted that a section of the NEC website will be created soon for people interested in volunteering.

The Knights of Columbus are providing many volunteers as well.

“I’m on the volunteer committee, so I’m working with NEC to figure out where they need volunteers,” Scott Schutte told *The Criterion* after the meeting. Schutte is state deputy of the Indiana Knights of Columbus. “I’ve got guys who are all excited about being part of the event.”

His current efforts are focused on the four routes pilgrims will walk from the north, south, east and west portions of the United States, all meeting in Indianapolis just before the National Eucharistic Congress begins.

“We’re trying to get with diocesan coordinators [for the routes] to find out where the Knights can provide water, food, a place to rest, maybe direct a little traffic ... or at least participate in some way,” said Schutte.

He noted that the Knights of Columbus Supreme Council is a national sponsor for the congress.

“We want to give our 33,000 men the opportunity to be involved,” he said.

Speaking on behalf of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, archdiocesan chancellor Christopher Walsh said it is “a



Christopher Walsh

tremendous honor to be the host diocese for this historic event.”

He noted the archdiocese’s commitment to the effort. But he also recognized the vital help from all of the local organizers—including state and

local police, firemen and emergency medical services—for their help “in making this event the success that we certainly know it is going to be.”

Walsh called the National Eucharistic Congress “truly an event for all, as all are united in the mystical body of Christ.

“That is what this is about, and certainly about representing the real presence of Christ in the world today through this event.”

(For information on the National Eucharistic Congress, registration, schedule, speakers or to become a sponsor, go to eucharisticcongress.org. Applications for financial aid will open on Sept. 15. A section on the site will be available soon for those interested in volunteering. For information on being an exhibitor, contact sponsorships@eucharisticcongress.org.) †



Jaime Reyna

said NEC event lead Jaime Reyna, quoting remarks from a letter written by NEC executive director Tim Glemkowski.

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the hearts of Catholics across America, unleashing a new missionary chapter at this pivotal moment in Church history. ...

“The goal is to start a fire, not a program.”

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Editorial

Mary, the “wished-for child” is our guiding star

Blessed by the Lord are you, O daughter: for through you we have received the fruit of life. (Traditional Marian Antiphon)

Today, Sept. 8, is the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Devotion to Mary, the Mother of God and our mother, is a distinctive feature of our Catholic way of life. She is our guiding star, the one who leads us to her son, Jesus.

In the biblical account of creation, found in the Book of Genesis, human beings are given the power of “naming” all God’s creatures. To name something is to know it, define it and therefore enter into some kind of relationship with it. Of course, human naming is never comprehensive, exhaustive or definitive.

We name things precisely in order to get to know them better, and even the wisest among us would freely admit that we can never fully understand anything that we have named. Why? Because only the Creator can fully understand his creation.

When Mary’s parents named their daughter Mary (*Maryam* in Aramaic), they had no idea that she would become a woman venerated by “all generations,” including Christians and Muslims throughout the ages (Lk 1:48).

The root meaning of the name Mary offers many different associations from a variety of ancient cultures. Some of these include bitter, rebellious and wished-for child.

Knowing that her parents, traditionally identified as SS. Joachim and Anne, were devout Jews who had waited patiently to conceive a child, we can assume that they named her Mary because she was their “wished-for child.”

Certainly, nothing in our knowledge of her suggests bitterness or a rebellious spirit. On the contrary, the woman that we read about in the New Testament is the model for every loving, trusting and patient person. Even when she is repeatedly faced with great injustice and sorrow, she trusts in God’s providence.

Mary lived in a tumultuous time of human history. Religious freedom was threatened. The poor, the sick, and people who for various reasons found themselves on the margins of society were routinely persecuted, abused or neglected. A devout Jew like her parents, Mary was surrounded by the hypocrisy,

intolerance and self-aggrandizement of the political and religious leaders of her time who failed to help their people see the truth.

What was Mary’s response? Faithful acceptance of God’s will, dedication to her family, and service to others. Although the world around her was in chaos, Mary remained steadfast.

Only God knows the whole truth about the material and spiritual world and everything in it. Our participation in the mystery of creation is a gift that allows us to know people, places and things in limited ways—and to grow in our understanding through the study of science, mathematics and the liberal arts. But the more we know

about anything, the closer we get to the mystery that transcends our human knowledge and experience. That’s why true wisdom is knowing that we do not know anything as God knows it.

We venerate Mary as the Seat of Wisdom because through her guidance, we are invited, and challenged, to seek the truth about God and the universe he created. Every one of us, including Mary, was born with an insatiable desire to discover and embrace the mystery we call God. We are free to ignore this invitation/challenge, but it remains integral to who we are as human persons.

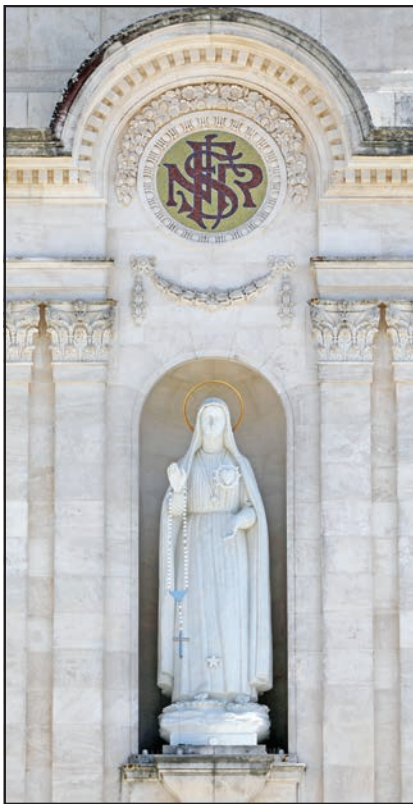
Or, like Mary, we can open ourselves to the Word of God and we can choose to embrace

all aspects of reality—both the spiritual and the material. In the end, Mary is the shining star that helps us in times of confusion or doubt. She helps us to better understand the will of God and, by her example, she shows us how to say “Yes.”

Like Mary, we find ourselves living in tumultuous times. That’s why we turn to our Mother to comfort and support us and to show us the way to her son, Jesus. The closer we come to Mary, the more we can open our minds and hearts to the mystery that has been revealed to us by her divine Son. And the more we imitate Mary, the more we discover who we are called to be.

We reverence the name of Mary, especially as we celebrate her birth, because she is our guiding star. Let’s look to her when we are lost or lonely. Let’s follow her example and trust in the providence of God.

—Daniel Conway



A statue of Immaculate Heart of Mary is pictured on the bell tower of *Basilica de Nossa Senhora do Rosário, Our Lady of the Rosary in Fátima, Portugal, on Aug. 7.* (OSV News photo/Bob Roller)

Be Our Guest! Sr. Sheila Marie Fitzpatrick, O.S.B.

Season of Creation calls us to transform ourselves through prayer and action

The prophet Amos cries out, “But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!” (Am 5:24) From this cry, we are moved to act in our



world today so peace may flow in the hearts and life of all of creation.

We have entered the Season of Creation for this year, which began on Sept. 1, the Day of Prayer for Creation, and continuing until Oct. 4,

the feast of St. Francis of Assisi. This is a time to renew our relationship with our Creator and all of creation through prayer, education, a change in habits and advocacy. The theme for this year draws on Amos’ image of a mighty river.

How can we contribute to the mighty river of justice and peace? In his message for the Season of Creation, Pope Francis calls us to transform our hearts, our lifestyles and the public policies ruling our societies. Through our prayer and actions we can join the worldwide Church in these efforts.

Also, this year the closing of the Season of Creation coincides with the opening of the Synod on Synodality at the Vatican, whose theme is “For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission.”

The river gives us another image, one of a basin with its many tiny and larger tributaries. So too, “. . . the Church is a communion of countless local Churches, religious communities and associations that draw from the same shared waters. Each source adds its unique and irreplaceable contribution, until all flow

together into the vast ocean of God’s loving mercy” (Pope Francis, Message for the Season of Creation, 2023).

There are many actions you can take to mark the Season of Creation. First, join us at 6 p.m. on Sept. 26 at St. Thomas Aquinas Church, 4625 N. Kenwood, Ave., in Indianapolis, for a Mass with Archbishop Charles C. Thompson.

Furthermore, given this year’s theme of peace and justice, you may choose to become a liaison with the Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC). Visit its website, indianacc.org, to learn more.

In addition, the international organization *Laudato Si* Movement has created a powerful, full-length documentary titled *The Letter*, available on YouTube.com that discusses the connections between nature and our relationship with God. Additional actions, prayers and meditations are available at the Archdiocese of Indianapolis’ Creation Care Commission website: www.ourcommonhome.org.

As Salesian Sister Alessandra Smerilli, the Secretary of the Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, stated in this year’s Season of Creation message: “The Earth needs justice to flourish. Our task is to call for an integral vision of life, beginning with the conviction that everyone is connected and that we are interdependently connected with one another.”

Let us work together to care for our common home.

(Benedictine Sister Sheila Marie Fitzpatrick is director of facilities at the *Benedict Inn Retreat & Conference Center in Beech Grove* and is a member of the archdiocese’s *Creation Care Commission*.) †



A Mighty River
Amos 5: 24

Let Justice and Peace Flow
Season of Creation 2023

Letter to the Editor

Photo of seminarians offers ‘dignified, ... refreshing’ view, reader says

We appreciate the work that you do so much, and we faithfully read our newspaper every week.

We just wanted to say how much we enjoyed the unusually informal photo of the seminarians on the steps of the SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis on page 12 of the Aug. 25 issue of *The Criterion*.

While it was still dignified, it was just a little less stiff than most photos usually are, and we found it refreshing.

Thanks to each of you for the good work you do every day.

Colette Fike
Indianapolis

Letters Policy

Letters from readers are welcome and every effort will be made to include letters from as many people and representing as many viewpoints as possible. Letters should be informed, relevant, well-expressed and temperate in tone. They must reflect a basic sense of courtesy and respect.

The editors reserve the right to select the letters that will be published and to edit letters from readers as necessary based on space limitations, pastoral sensitivity and content (including spelling and grammar). In

order to encourage opinions from a variety of readers, frequent writers will ordinarily be limited to one letter every three months. Concise letters (usually less than 300 words) are more likely to be printed.

Letters must be signed, but, for serious reasons, names may be withheld.

Send letters to “Letters to the Editor,” *The Criterion*, 1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367. Readers with access to e-mail may send letters to criterion@archindy.org. †

ARCHBISHOP/ARZOBISPO CHARLES C. THOMPSON



Christ the Cornerstone

Let's celebrate Mary's birthday and the great gift of her 'yes'

Let us celebrate with joy the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, for from her arose the sun of justice, Christ our God. (Entrance Antiphon)

The publication date for this column is Friday, Sept. 8, the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Today we are invited to celebrate Mary's birthday, and as every birthday should be, this is an opportunity to give thanks to God for the precious and inviolable gift of human life.

In addition, today we are rejoicing because of Mary's absolutely unique role in the history of our salvation. Because of Mary's collaboration in God's plan, we have all been freed from the oppression of sin and death, and that truly is cause for rejoicing!

Mary's birth in a small town called Nazareth was not a public event. It was as simple and unassuming as she was. We assume that SS. Anne and Joachim (traditionally identified as the parents of Mary and grandparents of Jesus) rejoiced at Mary's birth, perhaps surrounded by family members and friends. But no one among them could have known what God intended this "ordinary" daughter of Zion to become for the world.

In fact, Mary's greatness remained hidden until as a young woman she said "yes" to God's Word and then gave birth to our Redeemer in a stable far from her home.

Mary's own birth may have seemed uneventful, but it was prepared for by the whole history of the Jewish people. Mary is the fulfillment of God's promise to send a savior (the meaning of the name "Jesus") to redeem us from our sins. All of the law and prophets chronicled in the Old Testament prepare the way for the mother of our Lord, whose courageous free choice sets in motion the realization of God's plan.

Like the Nativity of St. John the Baptist—the only other saint birthday celebrated in the Church's liturgical calendar—Mary's birth has a special significance for us because it prepares us for the gift of life eternal that Jesus alone can give.

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI) once offered the insight that while we traditionally associate the birth of the Church with the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, there is a sense in which the Church is born in and through Mary, the Mother of the Church. In fact, he says there is a close

correlation between these two "births":

*The time of Jesus' public activity had been for [Mary] the time of rejection, the time of darkness. The scene at Pentecost, however, reprises the beginning of the story in Nazareth and shows how the whole hangs together. Just as Christ had at that time been born of the Holy Spirit, so now the Church is born by the working of the same Spirit. But Mary is in the midst of those who pray and wait (Acts 1:16) (from the book *Credo for Today: What Christians Believe*).*

And, of course, we Christians believe that the same Holy Spirit who was present at the birth of Jesus and at Pentecost was also present and instrumental at the nativity of Mary, who was born full of grace and free from original sin.

We rejoice at Mary's birthday for many reasons, but perhaps the most obvious reason is Mary's role as our spiritual mother.

At the time of his passion, Jesus gave us two extremely precious gifts—the gift of himself in the holy Eucharist and the gift of his Blessed Mother.

We are invited to celebrate with joy the nativity of Mary because it is our spiritual mother's birthday, a special

time for thanksgiving and praise to God. And just as we honor and respect our earthly mothers on the occasion of their birthdays, it's only right that we should celebrate with Mary today.

Mary's importance for us, her children, cannot be emphasized too strongly. In many ways, this simple, strong, ordinary woman from Nazareth shows us how we are meant to live. Her prayer, her trust in God, her devotion to her Son, and her instruction to us: "Do whatever he tells you" (Jn 2:5), all serve as examples of Mary's maternal care for us, her children.

It is impossible to imagine the Catholic Church without Mary. She was the first Christian disciple, her Son's most loyal follower, one who stood with him until the bitter end, who rejoiced in his resurrection and ascension, and who stood with the disciples when the Church was born at Pentecost. She remains present throughout Christian history, accompanying us on our synodal journey as the pilgrim people of God.

Let's celebrate our mother's birthday with simplicity but with great joy, giving thanks to God for the great gift of our Mother Mary. †



Cristo, la piedra angular

Celebremos el cumpleaños de María y el gran regalo de su 'sí'

Celebremos con alegría la Natividad de la Santísima Virgen María, pues de ella surgió el sol de justicia, Cristo nuestro Señor. (Antífona de entrada)

La fecha de publicación de esta columna es el viernes 8 de septiembre, la festividad de la Natividad de la Santísima Virgen María. Hoy se nos invita a celebrar el cumpleaños de María y, como debería ser todo cumpleaños, es una oportunidad para dar gracias a Dios por el obsequio precioso e inviolable de la vida humana.

Además, hoy nos alegramos por el papel absolutamente único de María en la historia de nuestra salvación pues gracias a su colaboración en el plan de Dios, todos hemos sido liberados de la opresión del pecado y de la muerte, ¡y eso sí que es motivo de regocijo!

El nacimiento de María en un pequeño pueblo llamado Nazaret no fue un acontecimiento público, sino que fue algo tan simple y sencillo como ella. Suponemos que los santos Ana y Joaquín (tradicionalmente identificados como los padres de María y abuelos de Jesús) se alegraron del nacimiento de María, quizá rodeados de familiares y amigos. Pero ninguno de ellos podía saber lo que Dios le deparaba para esta hija "corriente" de Sión y lo que

llegaría a ser para el mundo.

De hecho, la grandeza de María permaneció oculta hasta que, siendo una joven mujer, dijo "sí" a la Palabra de Dios y dio a luz a nuestro Redentor en un establo lejos de su casa.

El propio nacimiento de María puede haber parecido anodino, pero estaba escrito en la historia del pueblo judío. En María se cumple la promesa de Dios de enviar un salvador (el significado del nombre "Jesús") para redimirnos de nuestros pecados. Toda la ley y los profetas que figuran en el Antiguo Testamento preparan el camino para la madre de nuestro Señor, cuya valiente elección libre pone en marcha la realización del plan de Dios.

Al igual que la Natividad de San Juan Bautista—el único otro cumpleaños que se celebra en el calendario litúrgico de la Iglesia—el nacimiento de María tiene un significado especial para nosotros porque nos prepara para el don de la vida eterna que solamente Jesús puede dar.

El cardenal Joseph Ratzinger (el Papa Benedicto XVI) planteó en una ocasión la idea de que, aunque tradicionalmente asociamos el nacimiento de la Iglesia con la venida del Espíritu Santo en Pentecostés, en cierta forma la Iglesia nace en María

y a través de ella, por ser la Madre de la Iglesia. De hecho, afirma que existe una estrecha correlación entre estos dos "nacimientos":

*El tiempo de la actividad pública de Jesús había sido para [María] el tiempo del rechazo, el tiempo de la oscuridad. La escena de Pentecostés, sin embargo, retoma el comienzo de la historia en Nazaret y muestra cómo todo cae en su lugar. Así como Cristo había nacido entonces del Espíritu Santo, ahora la Iglesia nace por obra del mismo Espíritu. Pero María está en medio de los que oran y esperan (Hechos 1:16) (del libro *El Credo, hoy*).*

Y, por supuesto, los cristianos creemos que el mismo Espíritu Santo que estuvo presente en el nacimiento de Jesús y en Pentecostés también estuvo presente y fue instrumento en la natividad de María, que nació llena de gracia y libre del pecado original.

Nos alegramos del cumpleaños de María por muchas razones, pero quizá la más obvia sea el papel de María como nuestra madre espiritual.

En el momento de su pasión, Jesús nos hizo dos regalos sumamente preciosos: el obsequio de sí mismo en la sagrada Eucaristía y el obsequio de su Santísima Madre.

Estamos invitados a celebrar con alegría la natividad de María porque

es el cumpleaños de nuestra madre espiritual, un momento especial para dar gracias y alabar a Dios. Y al igual que honramos y respetamos a nuestras madres terrenales en ocasión de su cumpleaños, es justo que hoy celebremos con María.

La importancia de María para nosotros, sus hijos, es algo que nunca se recalará lo suficiente. En muchos sentidos, esta mujer sencilla, fuerte y corriente de Nazaret nos muestra cómo debemos vivir. Su oración, su confianza en Dios, su devoción a su Hijo y su instrucción para nosotros: "Hagan todo lo que él les diga" (Jn 2:5), todos sirven como ejemplos del cuidado maternal que nos dispensa María por ser sus hijos.

Es imposible imaginar la Iglesia católica sin María. Fue la primera discípula cristiana, la más leal seguidora de su Hijo, la que estuvo con él hasta el amargo final, la que se alegró de su resurrección y ascensión, y la que estuvo con los discípulos cuando nació la Iglesia en Pentecostés. Ella permanece presente a lo largo de la historia cristiana, acompañándonos en nuestro viaje sinodal como pueblo peregrino de Dios.

Celebremos el cumpleaños de nuestra madre con sencillez pero con gran alegría dando gracias a Dios por el gran regalo de nuestra Madre María. †

Events Calendar

For a list of events for the next four weeks as reported to The Criterion, log on to www.archindy.org/events.

September 12

Church of the Immaculate Conception, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Taizé Prayer at the Woods**, 7-8 p.m., silent and spoken prayers, simple music, silence, virtual option available. Information: Taize.SistersofProvidence.org, 812-535-2952.

September 15

Northside Events and Social Club, 2100 E. 71st St., Indianapolis. **Catholic Business Exchange**, new archdiocesan CYO executive director Jack Schmitz presenting, rosary 6:35 a.m., Mass 7 a.m., buffet breakfast and program following, \$18 members, \$24 non-members. Register by 4 p.m. on Sept. 12. Information, registration: cutt.ly/CBE-Reg.

September 15-16

St. Bartholomew Parish, 1306 27th St., Columbus. **Fall Festival**, Fri. 6-10 p.m., Sat. 4-10 p.m., live music, food, games, free admission. Information: 812-379-9353, sbartholomewfestival@gmail.com.

St. Luke the Evangelist Parish, 7575 Holliday Dr. E., Indianapolis. **Fall Fest**, live music, beer garden, children's game and activity area, free admission. Information: 317-259-4373, bkudla@stluke.org.

St. Thomas More Parish, 1200 N. Indiana St., Mooresville.

Fall Festival, 5-10 p.m., live music, kids and teen games, raffles, bingo, beer and wine garden, food including hand-breaded tenderloins, hand-battered corn dogs, hot air balloon rides (depending on weather), free admission. Information: 317-831-4142, pweber@stm-church.org.

September 16

St. Mary Parish, 415 E. Eighth St., New Albany. **Multicultural Festival**, 5-11 p.m., Mass 4 p.m., followed by live entertainment, DJ, ethnic food, kids' games, prize booth, free admission. Information: 812-944-0417, info@stmarysna.org.

St. Bridget of Ireland Parish, 404 E. Vine St., Liberty. **Oktoberfest**, 4-11 p.m., Mass at 4 p.m., German meal for \$15 served 4-7 p.m., adult and children's games begin 5 p.m., handmade crafts, beer/wine garden, cash raffle, poker, games of chance, free admission. Information: 765-825-8578, secretary@stgabrielconnersville.org.

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus School parking lot, 1840 E. Eighth St., Jeffersonville. **Street Dance**, 7-11 p.m., school fundraiser, live music, food trucks, kids' area, \$10 admission. Information: 812-283-3123, info@sacredheartschool.us.

September 17

Mount Saint Francis Center

for Spirituality, Pump House Studio, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis. **Bluegrass Jam**, 5:30 p.m., free. Information: franciscansusa.org/bluegrass-jam.

St. Michael Parish, 101 St. Michaels Dr., Charlestown. **Septemberfest**, 11 a.m.-4 p.m., chicken dinner, games, quilt and cash raffles, silent auction, free admission. Information: 812-256-3200, stmichaelsecretary@northclarkcountycatholic.org.

St. Meinrad Parish, 19570 N. 4th St., St. Meinrad. **Annual Fall Picnic**, 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. CT, outdoor dining pavilion, food court, famous soup, German tenderloins, fried chicken dinners, live music, raffles, free admission. Information: 812-357-5533, info@myparishfamily.church.

September 20

Calvary Mausoleum Chapel, 435 W. Troy Ave., Indianapolis. **Mass**, 2 p.m. Information: 317-784-4439, catholiccemeteries.cc.

St. John the Evangelist Parish, 10701 Olcott Ave., St. John, Ind. (Gary Diocese). **DiscipleShift Conference for Parish Leaders**, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. CT, registration opens 8 a.m. CT, speakers include co-founder of Divine Renovation Ron Huntley, National Director of Alpha USA in the Catholic Context Josh Danis and Father Sammie

Maletta, lunch included, \$75, diocesan discounts available. Information, registration: discipleshiftconference.com, hr@stjohnparish.org, 219-365-5678, ext. 269.

Indianapolis Marriott Downtown, 350 W. Maryland St., Indianapolis. **Celebrate Life Dinner**, 6 p.m. registration, 6:45 p.m. dinner and awards, 8 p.m. filmmaker, author and actor Alex Kendrick presenting, benefitting Right to Life of Indianapolis, \$75 individual, \$750 table of 10, \$525 student table, sponsorships available. Information, registration: rtlindy.org/annual-right-to-life-dinner, 317-582-1526.

September 21

Our Lady of Peace Cemetery and Mausoleum, 9001 Haverstick Road,

Indianapolis. **Mass**, 2 p.m. Information: 317-574-8898, catholiccemeteries.cc.

Mt. Gilad Church, 6019 E. State Road 144, Mooresville. **Right to Life Johnson and Morgan Counties Banquet**, 6:30 p.m., keynote by Greg Mayo—local author of *Almost Daddy*, with legislative update by Indiana Attorney General Todd Rokita, \$35 per person, register by Sept. 14. Information, registration: 317-560-0678, RightToLifeJMC@gmail.com.

September 21-23

Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, 5333 E. Washington St., Indianapolis. **Fall Festival**, Thurs. 5-10 p.m., Fri. 5-10 p.m. with concert 9 p.m.-1 a.m., Sat. 2 p.m.-midnight, \$5,000 raffle grand prize, pull tabs, Texas Hold'em, poker, carnival rides, kids' games, silent

auction, live bands, food, three parking lots: Lot 1 at Our Lady of Lourdes, 5333 E. Washington St.; Lot 2 at Oakley Hammond Funeral Home, 5342 E. Washington St.; Lot 3 at Mundell and Associates, 110 S. Downey Ave. Information: 317-356-7291, ollfallfest.org, ollfallfest@gmail.com.

September 22

Northside Events and Social Club, 2100 E. 71st St., Indianapolis. **JoJo's Jumpstart Foundation Birthday Bash**, 7-11 p.m., scholarship fundraiser, live and silent auctions, heavy hors d'oeuvres, open bar, live music by Six Figures, casual attire, \$75, register by Sept. 21. Information, registration: jojostart.org/donate, 317-260-8015, jojostart@gmail.com. †

Fr. Chester P. Smith National Black Catholic Men's Conference set for Oct. 12-15 in Louisville

The Fr. Chester P. Smith National Black Catholic Men's Conference will take place at the Marriott Louisville Downtown, 280 W. Jefferson St., in Louisville, Ky., on Oct. 12-14.

The conference is sponsored by the Bowman-Francis Ministry, founded and located in Indianapolis.

This year's conference will feature keynote addresses by Louisville Archbishop Shelton J. Fabre, Rev. Andre Barns of "I'm Just Saying ... Dre!" ministry, Bowman-Francis Ministry co-founder Society of the Divine Word Father Kenneth Hamilton, The Catholic Center at AUC Lyke House chaplain Society of the Divine Word Father Urey Mark, and Marc Guess.

The conference will offer 20

workshops, praise and worship, Mass, music by Men in the Fire, vocational vendors, a health fair and more.

The cost is \$150 for ages 18 and older, and \$100 for ages 17 and younger.

Hotel rooms are available at the Marriott Louisville Downtown for \$239 per night through Sept. 19, and \$351 per night after Sept. 19. Self-parking is \$40, and valet parking is \$45. To book a room, go to cutt.ly/nbcmc23book or call 888-236-2427.

To defray costs, scholarships are now available. E-mail catechesis@archindy.org for details.

For more information or to register for the conference, go to bowmanfrancis.org or call 317-800-1621. †

Two six-week Project Hope groups will begin in September

Two six-week Project Hope mental health peer groups will begin meeting in mid-September at two Indianapolis parishes: St. Jude, 5353 McFarland Road, on Tuesdays from Sept. 12-Oct. 24 (except for Oct. 10), and St. Luke the Evangelist, 7575 Holliday Dr. E., on Wednesdays from Sept. 13-Oct. 25 (except for Oct. 11). Both groups meet from 6:30-8 p.m.

Project Hope is a new ministry of the archdiocesan Office of Human Life and Dignity's Mental Health Ministry. It is a faith-based mental health support group where participants can encounter Jesus through community, support and Scripture. Participants

will have the opportunity to share their experiences and process challenges through the lens of Scripture and Catholic teaching.

A group will consist of 8-10 adults, including a facilitator who is a mental health professional. Each meeting will include time for checking in and sharing, prayer, reflecting on Scripture, and fellowship.

For more information or to register, go to cutt.ly/ProjectHope0923 or contact Brie Anne Varick at 317-236-1543 or bvarick@archindy.org. Also contact Brie Anne for information on starting a Project Hope group in your parish. †

Wedding Anniversaries

ROBERT AND MARY (MUCKERHEIDE) PRICE, members of St. Paul Catholic Center in Bloomington, celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on Aug. 31.

The couple was married in Our Lady of the Valley Church in Hemet, Calif., on Aug. 31, 1963.

They have three children: Rebecca Livingston, Robert and William Price.

The couple also has six grandchildren.



DAVID AND CHRIS (STOKER) ARDELEAN, members of St. Malachy Parish in Brownsburg, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Aug. 25.

The couple was married in Mary Queen of Peace Church in Danville on Aug. 25, 1973.

They have six children: Susie Ardelean, Katie Buck, Emily Muth, Julie Ratliff, Jane Seib and Amy Spencer.

The couple also has 19 grandchildren.



KEN AND DEBBIE (KRUTHAAPT) BURKHART, members of St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Decatur County, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Aug. 18.

The couple was married in the former St. Mary-of-the-Rock Church in Franklin County on Aug. 18, 1973.

They have two children: Dawn Ernestes and Eric Burkhardt.

The couple also has four grandchildren.

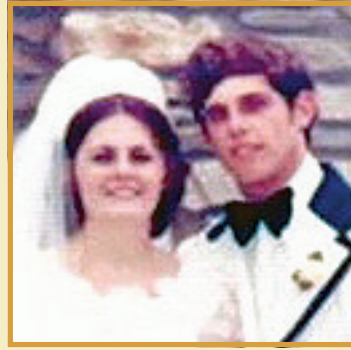


STEPHEN AND ALICE (ANDRES) VOLPERT, members of St. Mary-of-the-Knobs Parish in Floyds Knobs, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Aug. 11.

The couple was married in St. Mary-of-the-Knobs Church on Aug. 11, 1973.

They have two children: Leslie Alison and Jennifer Payne.

The couple also has one grandchild.



PETER AND MARLA (GRZELAK) ZINKAN, members of St. Pius X Parish in Indianapolis, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on Sept. 8.

The couple was married in Holy Spirit Church in Indianapolis on Sept. 8, 1973.

They have two children: Christine Coleman and Kyle Redmond.

The couple also has three grandchildren.



Announcements for couples celebrating 50, 55, 60, 65, 70 or more years of marriage are accepted. Go to cutt.ly/anniversaries or call 317-236-1585.

Criterion staff receives honors for excellence in journalism

Criterion staff report

Staff members of *The Criterion* were recently honored for excellence in journalism by three organizations.

The recognition included awards from the Catholic Media Association of the United States and Canada (CMA), the Woman's Press Club of Indiana (WPCI) and the National Federation of Press Women (NFPW).

WPCI and NFPW awards

The recognition for work completed during the 2022 calendar year started in April when staff writer Natalie Hoefler was honored by WPCI. She garnered five awards:

- First place: Special articles, Religion—“More than 1,000 Zomi Catholics gather in Indy for National Eucharistic Congress”;
- First place: Special articles, Obituary—“William Bruns leaves a legacy of service to the archdiocese”;
- First place: Profile, more than 750 words—“Ryves director offered youths 40 years of ‘support, positive memories’ and love”;
- Second place: Column—“Mass Excursions: St. Boniface boasts outreach, historic church and

hospitality”;

—Third place: Photographer-Writer—“March for Life and rally draw nearly 1,000 hopeful for the end of *Roe v. Wade*.”

All three of her WPCI first-place entries advanced to the national NFPW competition.

In the NFPW competition, Hoefler's honors included:

—Second place: Special articles, Obituary—“William Bruns leaves a legacy of service to the archdiocese”;

—Honorable Mention: Special articles, Religion—“More than 1,000 Zomi Catholics gather in Indy for National Eucharistic Congress.”

CMA awards

The staff received more recognition on June 9 during the awards program, held in Baltimore, of the Catholic Media Association of the United States and Canada.

Assistant editor John Shaughnessy was awarded first place in the “Best Reporting on Social Justice Issues—Solidarity,” for his article, “Faith, a couple's love and extended family help guide a Ukrainian to his true home.” The story focused on then-19-year-old Anton Bezborodov, a foreign exchange student

“Finding a Home, Living the Faith.”

The stories included: “Acts of kindness lead young couple to love and a mission to bring college students to God”; “Young firefighter's trust in God continues to be inflamed, even in life-threatening moments”; and “Young woman finds a friendship with God on her journey to her dream.”

“Well-written and thought provoking, these stories explore the need and value of discovering not only ourselves and our relationship to others, but our relationship to Jesus,” judges wrote. “So, we read of a couple, now with two children, who met in college and developed not only their personal relationship but also made sure their relationship with God became stronger. And we are also introduced to a firefighter who reaches for his rosary as he battles a threatening Idaho forest fire and later proclaims that his relationship with God is very strong. And of a young girl who had enough faith to leave her familiar Mexico to finish high school in the States. Inspiring without being too preachy.”

Reporter Sean Gallagher earned a first-place award in the “Best Reporting on Vocations to the Priesthood, Religious Life or Diaconate—Series.” The articles included: “Seminarians' wood-chopping work ...”; “Personal trials prepare Deacon Michael Clawson ...”; “Challenges in diaconate formation ...”; “Missionaries of Charity in Indianapolis ...”; and “Hardships and blessings of Burmese seminarians ...”

“Wood-chopping' gives good view of how [future] priests can better immerse themselves in the lives of their parishioners,” judges noted. “Clawson [profile] is a great look at a compelling story leading a man into the priesthood.”



Assistant editor John Shaughnessy of *The Criterion* received a first-place award from the Catholic Media Association of the United States and Canada for his story on then-19-year-old Anton Bezborodov, a foreign exchange student from Ukraine, and his desperate yearning to return to Indianapolis to the home of Beth and Thomas Wright, the family who had adopted him as one of their own. The award was presented in the “Best Reporting on Social Justice Issues—Solidarity” category.

Staff of *The Criterion*



Mike Krokos



John Shaughnessy



Sean Gallagher



Natalie Hoefler



Brandon A. Evans



Katie Rutter (Freelancer)

A dad's wish leads a daughter to kickstart a tournament that brings joy, helps others

By John Shaughnessy

Before he died three years ago, Michael Maio encouraged the youngest of his eight children to return to coaching—knowing the passion that Antoinette Maio-Burford had for kickball, knowing the difference she made to the girls she coached.

In August, the 55-year-old Maio-Burford was back on the kickball diamond again, leading a tournament for



Antoinette Maio-Burford poses for a team photo with the fifth-and-sixth-grade kickball players she coaches at St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Parish in Indianapolis. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

44 teams in the archdiocese's Catholic Youth Organization (CYO), all with the ultimate goal of helping to save lives.

In its third year, the “One Faith, One Family, One Sock” tournament on Aug. 8-12 was organized to raise funds to buy smoke detectors for families in low-income areas in Indianapolis. Enough money was raised to buy 25 smoke detectors.

“If we save one life, we'll be successful,” Maio-Burford said about the tournament that took place at Holy Spirit and St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) parishes in Indianapolis. “The whole goal with our Catholic faith is to make sure that everybody is one, regardless of who you are, where you live, what you do. We want everybody to be healthy, safe and to love life.”

There's no doubt that Maio-Burford loves kickball and the opportunity that the sport—and especially the tournament—offers to build confidence and create camaraderie among the coaches and the girls from different teams who play.

“Coaches who have never coached before learn from those who have been coaching a long time,” she said about the tournament's approach. “And it's fun to watch the kids make new friends. As an example, there was a player from St. Barnabas [Parish in Indianapolis] who invited all the Little Flower girls to come down and watch a movie with all the St. Barnabas players. So, friendships are made along the way.”

Maio-Burford was instrumental in starting the tournament three years ago with Tracy Miller, coordinator

of the kickball program at St. Barnabas Parish, and Ellie Leffler, the former kickball coordinator of Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ Parish in Indianapolis.

The name of the tournament—“One Faith, One Family, One Sock”—came naturally.

“We're all professing our faith,” Maio-Burford said. “CYO is all about family. And you wear one sock for kickball. That's your kicking foot, your strong foot. It all kind of fit together.”

In the tournament's first year, players, coaches, parents and fans made donations to benefit Holy Family Shelter in Indianapolis. In its second year, the money raised helped teams from low-income parishes—including the donation of one player who brought her piggy bank and emptied it for the fundraiser. This year, donations were placed in the boot of an Indianapolis Fire Department firefighter.

“The idea was to fill the boot,” said Maio-Burford, whose husband Steven Burford is an Indianapolis firefighter.

As for Maio-Burford, her passion for kickball still burns intensely even after coaching it since she was 16—39 years ago.

“Kickball is a rite of passage if you're a girl who goes to a Catholic school,” she said. “The girls love it. And it's a passion for me. I love watching the girls grow, watching them love the sport.”

She believes her dad, who also coached, is watching her at every practice and during every game.

“I learned from the best,” she said. “It's all about your faith, family, the kids.” †

See AWARDS, page 13

SISTER

continued from page 1

as they honored Franciscan Sister Shirley Gerth as she retired from 32 years of ministry as a parish life coordinator (PLC) in the archdiocese.

The last 13 of those were spent in Napoleon. But when she was first appointed a PLC in 1991, Sister Shirley was only the second person to hold such a position in the history of the archdiocese, with the first person to do so serving in that ministry for only a year.

On May 1, 1991, Sister Shirley became the PLC for the former St. Anne Parish in Hamburg, St. John the Evangelist Parish in Enochburg and St. Maurice Parish in Decatur County (the last two of which now comprise St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Decatur County).

Although she had served from 1987 as pastoral associate at St. John, she knew something in her ministry had changed in a significant way.

"I can remember waking up on May 1," Sister Shirley recalled. "I had been doing the same work, but I just felt a heaviness, because I knew that I was the one that was responsible now. I knew that I was a pioneer in this position."

A prayerful leader

Sister Shirley, 79, grew up as a member of St. Mary Parish in North Vernon. Being educated in the parish's school by Franciscan sisters from Oldenburg, she felt drawn to their vocation.

She entered its novitiate in 1962 and expected to spend much of her life serving in Catholic schools.

"I never thought about what work I would do. I just knew I wanted to be a sister," Sister Shirley said. "Of course, in that community in that time, most of them taught."

And, for 12 years, that is what she did, serving, among other schools, at St. Louis School in Batesville and the former St. Rita School in Indianapolis.

Beginning in the early 1970s, when Sister Shirley was still only in her late 20s, she began to feel a call to parish ministry.

"I felt that, if God was calling me to this, God would find a place for me," she said.

That place ended up being her home parish in North Vernon, where she served as pastoral associate for a decade from 1974-84 before moving on to St. Mary Parish in Greensburg for three years.

In Greensburg and at Enochburg, she collaborated with Father John Geis, respectively the pastor and administrator of those faith communities.

In 1991, Father Geis was appointed archdiocesan vicar for clergy. That same year Sister Shirley became a pioneer PLC in the archdiocese.

Although she was keenly aware of the responsibility she had taken on, Sister Shirley appreciated the wide range of ministry open to her in leading parishes.

"One of the joys for me of being a parish life coordinator was that I was involved with all age groups, from babies all the way to the elderly," Sister Shirley said.

Father Geis was certain she could lead a parish well.

"She didn't just wield power in making decisions because she had the power to do that," said Father Geis, now retired. "She really was truly involved with people and knew what their needs were. She made decisions from that point of view."

He also knew that Sister Shirley was able to face crises and make difficult decisions in the life of a parish.

"She could do that," Father Geis said. "But she took it to prayer and then did what she felt was the right thing to do. She gave herself as a sister totally to her ministry, to the Church and to people in whatever way she could."

'A born leader'

Sister Shirley's decades of parish ministry were put to a test that she could never have imagined on the morning of April 7, 2007.

She had been serving as PLC of St. Anne Parish in New Castle and the former St. Rose of Lima Parish in Knightstown since 1995.

On that Holy Saturday morning, just hours before the parish's celebration of the Easter Vigil, Sister Shirley discovered that St. Anne Church was on fire.

The fire, later found to have been started by an arsonist, gutted the church.

Sister Shirley leaned hard on her dedication to prayer and to the people of St. Anne as she led them through this tragedy.

"I learned to take it a day at a time," she said as she recalled those difficult days. "I felt such a part of the people. I cried with them. Together, we tried to speak words of hope, trust and encouragement."

As the parishioners learned that the destruction of their beloved church was not an accident but an act of arson by New Castle resident William Abbot, Sister Shirley faced the challenge of leading her parishioners to forgive him.

She only became fully aware of the enormity of this test as she sat in a Henry County courtroom with Abbot during a court hearing related to the arson fire.

"I remember both of us looking at each other," Sister Shirley said. "I said to myself, 'My God, I'm asking the



Then-Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein and Franciscan Sister Shirley Gerth, then-parish life coordinator of St. Anne Parish in New Castle, break ground for the parish's new \$4.4 million church on March 29, 2009. (Criterion file photo)

parish to do something that I haven't begun myself.' And that was the journey of forgiving him."

In addition to the spiritual challenges Sister Shirley faced from the fire at St. Anne, she also had a physical one—leading the building of a new parish church.

She called on the assistance of parishioner Jack Basler, at the time a longtime chief executive officer of Henry Community Health, a hospital in New Castle, to lead the parish's building committee.

Calling Sister Shirley "a born leader," Basler was impressed by her leadership of the parish during this difficult time.

"She knew what had to be done, got to it and did it immediately," he recalled. "Without her, we would have never accomplished the project."

Basler noted that Sister Shirley's ability to handle the many complexities of building a new \$4.4 million church wouldn't have been effective had she also not been able to bring the parish community to support the project.

"She was able to get the people all on the same page, all heading in the same direction at the same time," Basler said.

"A small parish like we are, and considering the age of the parishioners, she raised more money than I thought was possible. After we built the church, we had enough money to go ahead and re-do the school building as a parish center—with no debt on top of it."

A leader 'filled with the Holy Spirit'

Just months after Sister Shirley joyfully witnessed the dedication of the new St. Anne Church, she left New Castle when then-Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein appointed her as PLC of St. Maurice Parish in Napoleon.

Sister Shirley reflected on how during times of transition, she always asked God to prepare the place where she was going to take up a new ministry.

Those prayers seem to have been answered when she arrived in Napoleon.

"They were and are a welcoming community," Sister Shirley said. "I felt very comfortable the very first time I was here."

She hoped, after dealing with the crisis of a church burning and the complexities of building a new church, that ministry in Napoleon might be a little more relaxed.

However, Sister Shirley soon learned that the St. Maurice parishioners had been working for a decade to raise enough funds to build a new parish life center.

When she saw the people's faith, she knew she couldn't ignore their desires.

"We still had to have a capital campaign to raise about half [the funds needed]," Sister Shirley said. "But we had it paid off in six months."

That wasn't the only project Sister Shirley oversaw in her 13 years in Napoleon. During that time, she raised some \$1.6 million in the small parish to put a new roof on the church and do tuckpointing work on it.

In her final days in the parish, she made sure a new sidewalk was poured in front of the parish rectory, stained-glass windows in the church were repaired and new fencing installed in the parish cemetery.

"She was a strong leader and got things done," said Mary Bultman, chairperson of St. Maurice's finance committee. "Financially, she knew how to make everyone want to give. As a parish family, we give of our talent, time and treasure very well."

Bultman said that, while Sister Shirley was adept in



Franciscan Sister Shirley Gerth carries a candle that would be used as the sanctuary candle in the newly dedicated St. Anne Church during its Feb. 28, 2010, dedication Mass. (Criterion file photo)

guiding practical building projects, she also was a valued pastoral leader.

"She's just filled with the Holy Spirit," Bultman said. "She gave you a shoulder to cry on or a nudge you need to push ahead. She was always there in times of need. She brought all of us together more closely."

Although people like Basler, Bultman and Father Geis praised Sister Shirley for her pastoral leadership, the retiring PLC pointed to all of the people she served for making her into the Franciscan sister that she is.

"I am who I am—whoever that is in God's eyes—because of all the people who have touched my life," Sister Shirley said. "I love the saying, 'Beauty in all its forms feeds my soul.' I tried to find beauty in the people I served. I really feel that they have helped me form my life."

In July, Sister Shirley retired after nearly 50 years of parish ministry in the archdiocese, 32 of those leading parishes as a PLC, and moved to her community's motherhouse in Oldenburg.

"Now, I'm asking God to prepare the way to the motherhouse for me," Sister Shirley said. "And I also realize that I should be asking God to prepare heaven for me, too." †



Catechesis Supplement

Evangelizing catechesis: Inviting people to a disciple relationship with Jesus in the Church

By Ken Ogorek

First it was consubstantial. Then came missionary disciples. Now the Church wants us to become familiar with another phrase: “evangelizing catechesis.”



Official definitions, practical examples

A semi-official definition of this phrase, as it's currently used, can be found via the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops webpage:

“At the heart of the Church's mission to all

people, an evangelizing catechesis seeks to deepen a personal encounter with Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. It proclaims the core message of the Gospel, the *kerygma*. It accompanies people to a response of faith and conversion to Christ; it provides a systematic exposition of God's revelation within the communion of the Catholic Church; and it sends out missionary disciples as witnesses to the good news of salvation.”

I like to use an example when explaining it: Jesus taught. And when he teaches, he often includes an invitation. “Follow me.” “Be my disciple.”

Evangelizing catechesis, then, teaches the faith in ways that intentionally include invitations to a personal, disciple relationship with Jesus—lived in full communion with his mystical body and spotless bride, the holy Catholic Church.

Lifelong learning, new vocabulary

I've heard folks say they prefer the phrases “religious education” or “faith formation” to the word “catechesis.” And while it's generally good to avoid jargon that can be at least a bit off-putting, it's also OK to use (or revive) a new word or phrase occasionally.

We're lifelong learners. And if a phrase catches our attention because it's a bit unfamiliar, this can be an invitation to explore the meaning and intention behind this specific vocabulary.

What exactly is a missionary disciple? Why is it important to profess that Jesus is of the same substance—consubstantial—as our heavenly Father?

How we support parish ministry

As for evangelizing catechesis, one place you might notice this phrase is in connection to how our archdiocesan offices support ministry in parishes. I often say, “The reason people like me have jobs is to help support parish ministries.”

Several offices supporting ministries in various ways are now enfolded within what's called the archdiocesan Secretariat for Evangelizing Catechesis. This small group of archdiocesan staff members stands ready to serve as a resource for your parish—working with parish leaders to help serve God's people faithfully and effectively, all by his grace and mercy.

As you enjoy this annual Catechesis Supplement of *The Criterion*, I hope you'll see that efforts—throughout the archdiocese—to teach the faith are bearing good fruit thanks to the work of dedicated catechists who place themselves in God's service, striving to do his will by answering the call to catechetical ministry. In central and southern Indiana, an evangelizing catechesis is alive, well and growing—praise God!

Yes, evangelization is still important. So is catechesis. They're both very much interrelated in the ministry of missionary discipleship. You might even say they're ... consubstantial.

(Ken Ogorek is executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Evangelizing Catechesis. He can be reached at kogorek@archindy.org.) †

From water fights to rosary lessons, children and teens grow in faith through cooperation of parishes

By John Shaughnessy

A childlike joy fills 34-year-old Megan Rust as she describes a fun-filled scene from earlier this summer.

When a water truck from a local fire station approached the hill by St. Mark Church in Perry County in southern Indiana, a group of children waiting for it couldn't hide their excitement. And when the firefighters unleashed the water onto a slip-and-slide, the children took turns giddily heading down the hill with huge smiles.

The fun was just beginning. A water balloon fight followed, with Rust joining in, getting blasted time and time again by the children, leaving her soaked and smiling.

Rust had a similar smile earlier on that late June morning as she watched the same children enter into the church for the closing Mass of the Tell City Deanery's Totus Tuus program.

Latin for “Totally Yours,” Totus Tuus is a weeklong summer program designed to bring children and teenagers closer to Jesus, the Blessed Mother and the Church. And Rust saw that development by the reverence the children showed during the closing Mass.

“Their participation went from not a whole lot on Monday to really being involved and much more reverent by Friday,” says Rust, the catechetical leader of St. Paul Parish in Tell City.



The children who participated in the Totus Tuus summer program in the Tell City Deanery line up for a group photo on the last day of the program, which included the fun of a water balloon fight and a slip-and-slide. (Submitted photo)

“It was a joy to watch those kindergartners to sixth graders really come to appreciate the Mass more.”

Another joy for Rust was knowing that there were 80 children and teens who participated in this year's program, a record number that reflects the increased cooperation among the 10 faith communities in the Tell City Deanery to combine their resources to help grow and deepen the faith of their youths.

“Something that we do for Totus Tuus and something that is supported across the deanery is that we don't charge for it,” Rust says.

“We provide a free meal to every student and adult who comes in for the program. And we couldn't do that without the support of the community.”

“Not only are we doing this with great numbers, but we also have such tremendous support from all of the parishes. When we're able to pool those resources from all of the different parishes, the kids win.”

That deanery-wide support is also complemented by the contributions of the Tell City Knights of Columbus Council #1172. Rust also says that individual Catholics in the

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Catechetical leader points people to Christ and the Church through storytelling

By Sean Gallagher

The Christian faith that began 2,000 years ago in Palestine and has spread to the ends of the Earth is rooted in a story—the story of God's love for humanity told in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Sandra Hartlieb has been convinced for some 50 years that the Holy Spirit has empowered her to draw others to Christ and his Church by sharing that story.

Beginning in the early 1970s as a young wife and mother in Indianapolis, she began working with other people to dramatically act out Bible stories—a ministry she continues today.

For the last 10 of those years, Hartlieb served as the director of adult faith formation at St. Lawrence Parish in Indianapolis, incorporating her interest in Scripture and drama into her ministry there.

Hartlieb was recently honored with the archdiocese's 2023 Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein



In 10 years of ministry as director of adult faith formation at St. Lawrence Parish in Indianapolis, Sandra Hartlieb often brought the Gospel to life through storytelling. (Submitted photo)

Excellence in Catechesis Award for her years of catechetical ministry at St. Lawrence.

Ken Ogorek, executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Evangelizing Catechesis, presented her with the award at a June 24 Mass at St. Lawrence Church. The Mass preceded a party celebrating her retirement—but the award was a surprise.

“Sandra has been very generous with her time and talent over the years,” Ogorek said. “Her knack for creatively portraying key figures in our faith—for example, the Blessed Virgin Mary—engages the imagination in ways that help deepen faith and devotion. Sandra has been and remains a blessing to many folks.”

Hartlieb described the moment when she realized that Ogorek was at the Mass to give her the award.

“I just wanted to shrink in my seat because I don't need to get awards,” she recalled. “I feel so blessed and called by the Holy Spirit to spread the Gospel. I choose to do that through storytelling and teaching. That has blessed my life for a very long time.”

As director of adult faith formation at St. Lawrence, Hartlieb oversaw the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) and Bible studies. She also helped adults with developmental disabilities grow in their love for Christ and the Church.

She said that guiding adults into the full communion of the Church through RCIA provided her with many “monumental moments in my spiritual journey.”

Hartlieb recalled working with a Muslim man who had married a Catholic woman and who initially participated in RCIA simply to learn more about the faith of his wife.

Later, though, he fully embraced the Gospel and was received into the Church.

“He told me that, as a Muslim, he was a slave

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Bilingual catechist workshop builds up bonds of faith in New Albany Deanery

By Sean Gallagher

Catechists from across the New Albany Deanery gathered on Aug. 16 at St. Mary Parish in the southern Indiana city to learn more about the faith and to hone their skills in passing it on to others.

The workshop involved a bilingual question-and-answer session and opportunities for bilingual communal prayer. There were also breakout sessions in Spanish and English that focused on teaching young people how to pray and how to retain the knowledge of the faith they are given.

Ken Ogorek, executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Evangelizing Catechesis, and Felix Navarete, archdiocesan coordinator of Hispanic ministry, helped lead the workshop attended by more than 20 catechists from three New Albany Deanery faith communities.

"It's so important for catechists to invest in their own formation," Ogorek said. "Workshops like this are great ways for folks who teach the faith to increase their own knowledge and ability to share sacred truths as catechists."

"And a bilingual format is an excellent way to manifest the breadth of our Church as well as showing how several offices and ministries can collaborate fruitfully."

"We are a Church that every day is becoming more diverse," Navarete said. "The fact of having such different catechists in this workshop gave us a widely open panorama about what a multicultural Church means."

"There were not only people with different skin colors, but also people with different realities, from different parishes, with different experiences and backgrounds. In



Members of St. Michael Parish in Charlestown pose during an Aug. 16 bilingual catechist workshop at St. Mary Parish in New Albany. They are, from left in the front row, Laura Kinder, Jessica Sarver, Jennie Lathem and Christina Smith. From left in the second row, Nick Smith, Haley Cady, Abigail Martinez, Evangelina Delgado Veliz, Luz Elena Niño-Melchor and Gerardo Pascual. (Submitted photo)

the end, though, they were united by the same goal: to train to better serve others."

Andrew Hennessy, St. Mary's parish catechetical leader and youth minister, helped organize the workshop. He noted that the initiative can strengthen the ties within the diverse New Albany Deanery faith community and give encouragement to people who are just beginning to pass on the faith to others in parish programs.

"Every opportunity to have folks from different ethnic and language backgrounds together for a common cause is a small but important step to continued integration and mutual enrichment," Hennessy said. "Perhaps the special thing about the workshop is it also acknowledges our common needs to grow, of our common doubts about taking up the role of lay apostolate."

"When our new catechists are nervous and see the same in the others, there is a chance to build not only cooperation but mutual support." Jessica Sarver, pastoral associate at St. Francis Xavier Parish in Henryville and St. Michael Parish in Charlestown, attended the workshop with 10 catechists from St. Michael. "We are always seeking to develop in our ministry, and this was a perfect opportunity for our Spanish and Anglo communities to come together for a common training," Sarver said. "The training was very helpful, as it gave us some practical suggestions, some of which I was able to put into practice at a recent meeting at my parish. "I have two new young adult volunteers that will be helping with youth ministry this year. They were both able to attend the training with us." She also appreciated how people from diverse ethnic backgrounds came together at the workshop to learn more about the faith that they all share and seek to pass on to others. "This is extremely important, especially for the parish communities that serve both a Spanish-speaking community and an Anglo community," Sarver said. "We do a pretty good job of bringing our Anglo and Spanish communities together in children's and youth ministry, but not so much in adult ministry. "We are working hard to collaborate more at St. Michael. Bringing our Anglo and Spanish catechists together for one training really helps. †



Felix Navarete, archdiocesan coordinator of Hispanic ministry, leads a breakout session during an Aug. 16 catechist workshop at St. Mary Parish in New Albany. (Submitted photo)

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to Allah, but as a Christian he would be a child of God," Hartlieb said with emotion. "That he began to understand, that was the reward that I got. It meant so much to me."



Sandra Hartlieb portrays Mother Theodore Guérin, the foundress of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods and Indiana's first saint, in 2015 at St. Lawrence Parish in Indianapolis. In decades of ministry, Hartlieb has used drama and storytelling to help people grow closer to Christ and the Church. (Submitted photo)

In helping the adults of St. Lawrence explore Scripture, Hartlieb often taught them through her love of storytelling and drama—a love she's had since she was a child.

"I feel that people remember something better when they hear it in a story," she said. "That I could help people to want to open up their Bibles

was beautiful to me."

Helping people in RCIA and Bible studies happened in a very different way in 2020 during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I had never heard of Zoom before COVID hit us," Hartlieb said of the online video conferencing platform. "Just to have to learn this technology was amazing. But what I found out was that you could reach people that you would never have had sitting in a room."

People far beyond St. Lawrence took part in their online Bible studies the parish offered during that time. And online-streamed RCIA sessions allowed people to participate in them when they could not attend them—a practice that has continued at St. Lawrence.

"Several people had never signed up for a traditional Bible study and sat in a classroom for one," Hartlieb said. "But this was a medium that worked for them. What a tool for evangelization that this could be. That had never occurred to us before."

Father Thomas Schliessmann hired Hartlieb when he was St. Lawrence's pastor.

"She was very personable and worked one-on-one with a lot of

people," said Father Schliessmann, now the pastor of St. Joan of Arc Parish in Indianapolis. "She was very hands on and creative."

Even though the way catechetical ministry was carried out during COVID stood in stark contrast to the way it had been done previously, Father Schliessmann noted that Hartlieb took the changes in stride.

"It just seemed to flow from her," he said. "She had everything in place, sending out links, making sure that I was there when I was doing talks, getting handouts by e-mail to people in advance."

Whether meeting with people in person one-on-one or in groups, or leading online faith-formation sessions, Hartlieb encouraged catechists to remember that faith comes to life in people when "they make a connection with a person and that person connects them with Jesus Christ."

"The important thing is to make connections with people," Hartlieb said. "Start out being a good listener. Find out how your story connects with other people's stories. That's the way we share faith."

(For more information on Sandra Hartlieb, visit www.sandrahartlieb.com.) †

'Lots of joy' at annual SPREAD retreat for those with special needs

By Natalie Hoefler

For 23 years, a special group of people have met for an annual summer retreat.

It's a retreat that spreads joy, spreads the word of God and spreads the light of Christ.

In light of all that "spreading," perhaps it's providential that the acronym for the annual Special Religious Education and Discipleship summer gathering is the "SPREAD" Retreat.

The most recent retreat was held on July 22-23 at the Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center in Beech Grove, with 28 participants.

"The goal is to bring all the SPREAD groups together in community for a weekend with a spiritual focus," says Jennifer Bryans, disabilities ministry coordinator for the archdiocesan Office of Catechesis.

SPREAD (formerly SPRED for Special Religious Development) groups have been active in the archdiocese since 1997 as a means of providing regular faith formation to people with developmental disabilities.

"When they all come together for the retreat, it's like a big family reunion," says Bryans. "They haven't seen each other for a year, so there's lots of hugging, lots of laughter, lots of joy."

Each annual retreat centers around a catechetical message.

"Usually, the theme is based on a verse from the Bible," Bryans explains. "This time we chose 'Footprints in the Sand,'" from the popular, anonymously-written poem "Footprints."

"The message was that Jesus is with you in the good times and the bad, even in the times when you don't feel like he is by your side—that those are the times when he's closest."

'A great catechetical moment'

Whatever the theme is, "We just try to help them apply the message to their daily life," says Shannon Farrell. She is a catechist for the SPREAD group at St. Pius X Parish in Indianapolis and has been involved with the annual summer retreat for "eight or nine years."

Each year, the catechetical message is shared in numerous ways: group discussion, crafts, games, interactive activities, prayer, praise and worship. The sacrament of reconciliation is always offered, and each retreat culminates with Mass.

Whatever the activity, the participants are all in.

"They're always open to hear what we say," Farrell says. "They listen well; they respond when we ask questions; they participate in discussions. They're just enthusiastic participants."

That fact applies to activities repeated each year, like their praise and worship sing-a-long with Benedictine Sister Cathy Anne Lapore, and to new activities as well. "This year we added adoration," says Bryans.

"Because it was the first time, we weren't sure how it would go. But they were so very prayerful. We said the rosary, and everyone knew all the prayers."

Father Todd Riebe says he's seen that same enthusiasm and reverence at the closing Mass he has celebrated at the last four retreats.

"The parishioners could learn about participation from them—I ask a question during the homily, and every hand goes up," says Father Riebe, who retired last year and now lives in Terre Haute.

The participants who proclaim readings and serve at the Mass "help with such dignity," he adds. "Every movement—they just do it so intently and carefully."

"And they have so much love and concern for each other. I open up the [prayers of] intercession, and it could go on for half hour if I let it, with their needs and concern for each other."

Father Riebe calls the SPREAD retreat "a great catechetical moment. Even the Mass, just to open the Scripture in the most fundamental way, even more than at parishes, to help them understand it and celebrate it."

"Their sense of faith and belief is absolutely strengthened at the retreat."

'So much love and support'

The retreat offers something else important for the participants: community.

"This retreat is so important because that sense of belonging to the Church is strengthened," says Father Riebe.

Farrell agrees. "People with disabilities are important members of our society," she says. "They deserve to have their faith enriched just like the rest of us. Coming together as a larger community helps them feel like they're part of something bigger."

Farrell notes that some participants say they've been coming since the retreat was first offered.

"One told me they feel like it's a place where they can really be themselves and be accepted for who they are and not be judged," she says.

The participants feel "so much love and support" at the retreat, adds Bryans.

"One parent said that their son, who is on the autism

spectrum, looks forward to this retreat more than he does Christmas."

Even Father Riebe, who is only present for a short time during the weekend, sees the bond of the participants.

"It's a real community," he says. "I witness nothing but joy from start to end. And they're so welcoming of new participants. We can learn so much about community from them."

And more than just community, says Farrell.

"Most of them really are very faith-filled to start with," she says. "Just seeing their faith and being interested in learning more makes me feel like I want to learn more, too."

Bryans agrees.

"We, as leaders and catechists and volunteers, learn from them," she says. "In fact, I'd say we learn more from them than they learn from us. They are so open spiritually and so giving."

'A beautiful weekend in so many ways'

The catechetical focus is changing a bit, too, both for the retreat and the special needs faith formation groups.

"We have decided to change our name from SPRED—Special Religious Development—to SPREAD—Special Religious Education and Discipleship," says Bryans.

"We aren't exclusively using the SPRED materials [through the Archdiocese of Chicago] for the faith formation groups anymore," she explains. "We're now using a variety of programs and materials to best meet the needs of the different groups."

The second reason for the change has to do with the length of time the groups have been in existence.

"Some of them have been around since 1997," says Bryans. "They have grown in their faith formation, and we would like to move in the direction of discipleship, becoming more active members in their parish communities."

She calls the retreat "a wonderful opportunity for awareness and education for those volunteers who have never worked with this community."

No catechetical training or background in working with those with special needs is necessary to volunteer, Bryans notes.

"You just need to be willing to be open, willing to learn and willing to have a wonderful experience."

"It's just a beautiful, beautiful weekend in so many ways."

(For more information on the SPREAD retreat or catechesis for those with special needs, contact Jennifer Bryans at jbryans@archindy.org or 317-236-1448.) †



Participants, volunteers and catechists pose for a photo on July 23 at the Benedict Inn and Conference Center in Beech Grove after the 23rd annual summer Special Religious Education and Discipleship retreat for those with special needs. Among the catechists are Shannon Farrell, far left on fourth step, and archdiocesan special needs coordinator Jennifer Bryans, far right on fifth step. (Submitted photo)

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deanery have an impact, too, including the parishioner who provided a rosary for each participant in this year's Totus Tuus program, which had the theme, "The Mystery of Salvation," with an emphasis on the sorrowful mysteries of the rosary.

A dramatic impact

The impact of all that cooperation for the Totus Tuus program has been noticeable.

"I've seen more kids in Mass since we've done Totus Tuus," Rust says. "I've seen an uptick in our younger families. I would say the same is true the past couple of years."

"That's neat to see because we don't have a Catholic school here. Religious ed, Totus Tuus and Mass on Sunday are as much as they get. That's what we provide. By the end of the week, they had learned to pray the rosary, and they were proud of that accomplishment. That was something really neat to watch."

The cooperation of the parishes in the deanery also extends to the confirmation retreat at Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad that Benedictine Father Luke Waugh leads each year.



Megan Rust, catechetical leader of St. Paul Parish in Tell City, poses for a photo with her nieces—Adley Greene, left, and Ayrá Greene—during the Totus Tuus program in the Tell City Deanery this summer. (Submitted photo)

"It's designed to foster a dialogue between the confirmand and their sponsor," says Father Luke, who serves in Holy Cross Parish in St. Croix, St. Augustine Parish in Leopold and St. Isidore the Farmer Parish in Perry County. "That seems to be well-received."

"In early January, we usually have an Epiphany tour where we get the kids of the deanery together, and we'll go tour different parishes to see how they decorate for Christmas and then have a little party afterward."

There was also a deanery-wide pool party for youths on July 28.

These efforts are geared to overcoming one of the biggest challenges a parish priest has, Father Luke says—"getting our young people to participate in things."

"We get a lot more participation when we get all our kids together," he says. "We try to look for a whole lot of avenues to do this. As priests, we try to support all of our lay catechists and lay leaders with this."

'I really felt a lot of happiness'

For Father Luke, that included concelebrating a Mass at this year's Totus Tuus with Father Michael Keucher, vocations director for the archdiocese.

"The program helps extend the young people's faith," Father Luke says. "They get to know their brothers and sisters in Christ that are of the same age. We have a good mix of students from different school systems, so it's nice to see them interacting. It's nice to see their faith grow. The participants from my parishes have always enjoyed it and look forward to returning."



Benedictine Father Kolbe Wolniakowski poses for a photo with altar servers Serena Guillaume, left, Macie McBride and Carter Sweat on one of the days he celebrated Mass during the Totus Tuus program in the Tell City Deanery. Father Kolbe, a monk of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad, serves as parochial vicar of St. Paul Parish in Tell City. (Submitted photo)

The same is true for the children and teenagers who participate from St. Mark Parish, says Bridgett Berger, the parish's volunteer religious education coordinator.

"I couldn't believe how many more kids we had this year and how much fun they had. I love that the program keeps growing by leaps and bounds each year," Berger says. "The kids tell their friends, 'You should come too.' Seeing their faces light up as they're learning about Jesus and Mary, it's inspirational. I love it. They're the future of our Church."

For Berger, that focus on "the future of our Church" can't be overstated.

"If we don't have our kids in our churches, in our communities, we're not going to have a future," she says. "We're not going to be able to keep our little parish."

"The children are our future. We have to teach them. We have to show them what it's like to be a Catholic, what it means. We have to open up and share with them. Hopefully, we do a good job. Hopefully, we can promote new priests and sisters to religious life."

Rust heaped praise on the college-age students who served as the team leaders of this year's Totus Tuus program.

"The way they really focus on a relationship with the young people is huge," she says. "They can reach them in a way I cannot, being a 30-something adult."

"We had a young lady who came to our night-time program and was a little hesitant. She became very glad she came by the end of the week because she was more involved, she was talking, and she made friends. To really see her blossom and grow in that manner was just wonderful."

For Rust, that's the lasting impact of the cooperation among the parishes. It offers a common connection to the faith, to each other and to being part of the faith community at the parish, the deanery, the archdiocesan and the universal Church levels.

By the end of this summer's Totus Tuus program, Rust was soaked from the water balloon fight and ready for a long nap. She also had a satisfied smile.

"I really felt a lot of happiness because I felt we touched a lot of kids this year, a lot of kids we never had before," she says. "To just see the smiles on their faces as they left, to hear their excitement and the question, 'We're going to do this next year, right?!' It always brings me joy to know they've had a good time, and they've learned something. To witness that is always a pleasure." †



Children draw in coloring books about the rosary to help learn how to pray during the Totus Tuus program in the Tell City Deanery this summer. (Submitted photo)

Parents' search leads to a way of hope to honor their son

By John Shaughnessy

Robin and Jeff Kontor believe that for most of us, our lives are marked by searching—searching to find our place in life, searching for how we can best contribute to the world, and even searching to understand the toughest times in our lives and how to keep moving forward in hope.

The Kontors have been on such a search ever since their 28-year-old son Jordan died in February of 2022 from a seizure related to his lifelong struggle with epilepsy.

As they tried to deal with their heartbreak, they kept remembering how Jordan tried to live his life. They focused on his smile, his willingness to help others, and his ability to make people see their worth. They also constantly recalled his work ethic, and how he started his own landscaping service while at Bishop Chatard High School in Indianapolis, continued it through college and made it his business as an adult.

As they thought of those qualities, they began searching for a way to honor their son. And when they found one, they shared its hope in a statement they wrote together.

“Our lives were forever changed when we lost our son,” noted the Kontors, members of Our Lady of Grace Parish in Noblesville, Ind., in the Lafayette Diocese. “From the pain of losing Jordan came a vision to help others find their purpose. We want to continue Jordan’s legacy by helping young people. We believe that the period from the teens through the 20s is a critical time. There are challenges and opportunities. It is a time filled with questions on what the future holds.

“No matter what hand you are dealt and with each struggle, you learn a lesson that forces you forward, to get stronger and wiser. We want emerging adults to have

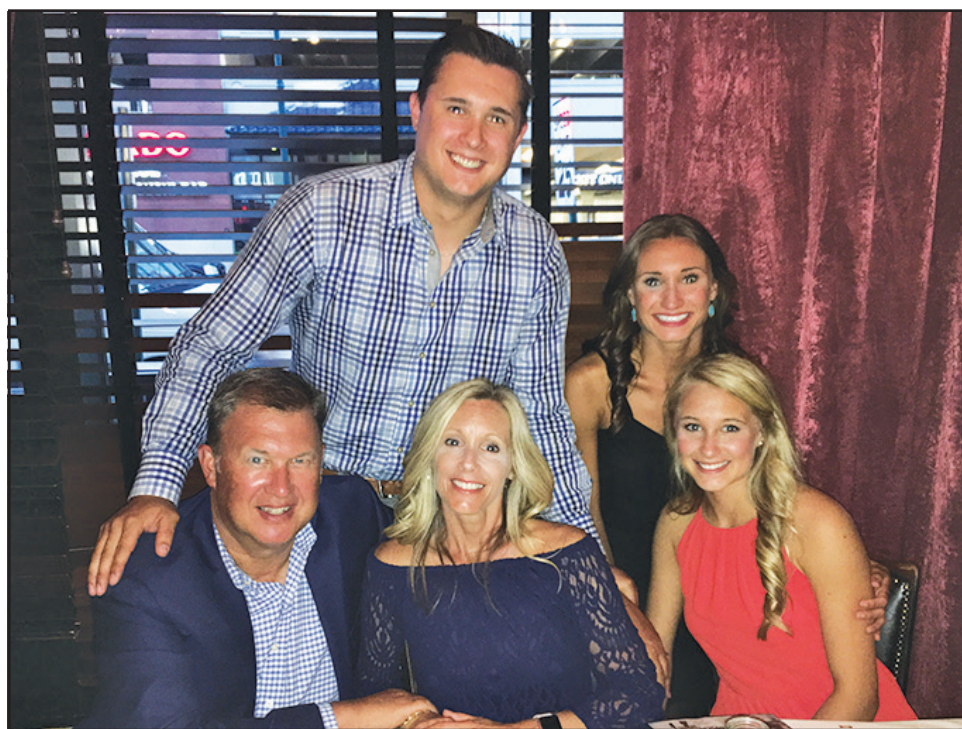
the resources they need to reach their unique potential and dreams.”

Those words form the essence of JoJo’s Jumpstart Foundation—“JoJo” being the nickname they have for their son. The mission for the foundation is to provide “financial assistance for scholarships for graduating high school seniors for continuing education, trade school or entrepreneurship.” Another goal is for each recipient to be matched with a mentor.

A first fundraiser for the foundation will be held on Sept. 22, which is the day that Jordan would have celebrated his 30th birthday. The event from 7-11 p.m. will be at the Northside Events and Social Club in Indianapolis.

As a longtime former teacher at Bishop Chatard High School, Robin Kontor knows the challenges that young people—especially those with learning disabilities—face while making the transition from youth to adulthood. She also believes that Jordan—who had severe dyslexia—would smile about his family’s tribute to him.

“As much as our hearts are broken to lose JoJo, we know he would love this idea,” his mother says. “He would be so proud that kids who are on the same path



The Kontor family members are all smiles in a past moment of celebration. In the front row are Jeff, Robin and Frankie Kontor. In the back row, Jordan stands next to his other sister, Courtney Robinson. (Submitted photo)

as him are getting acknowledged for their gifts and talents.”

(For more information about JoJo’s Jumpstart Foundation, visit the website, www.jojosjumpstart.org. Click on “donate” to learn more about the fundraiser. Scholarship information and applications can also be found on the website.) †

AWARDS

continued from page 7

57 years in Africa,” judges wrote, “and continues today as a 90-year-old priest in residence who [celebrates] Mass and hears confessions and, oh, yes, also ministers to college students. It is all part of one whole—sharing the joy of Jesus. An inspirational, readable story sprinkled with quotes and great pictures.”

Krokos also received a second-place honor in the “Best Editorial on a National or International Issue—Weekly Newspaper” for “Praying for peace and the conversion of hardened hearts,” which reflected on Russia’s unjust invasion of Ukraine and the lives lost as a result of the war.

“A great topic in the news and guidance on how to approach it from a Catholic perspective,” judges wrote. “Excellent prose. The conclusion presents a clear action that is achievable by any reader. And it is a good reminder of what the reader’s response should be to similar situations past and present. Nice work!”

Gallagher received third place recognition in the “Best Photograph—Holy Days/Liturgical Seasons” category for his

photo, “Honoring St. Lucy,” which was taken on her feast day during a Dec. 13, 2022, Mass celebrated at Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Church in Indianapolis.

“It’s a nice photo that draws in the reader to wonder what is going in,” judges wrote. “So, while the photo doesn’t necessarily tell a story on its own, it nevertheless compels the viewer to want to know more. Plus, it is a nice composition with the lighting and shading. Nice work!”

Shaughnessy earned a third-place honor in the “Best Feature Writing—Weekly Newspaper” category for his story, “To honor their son’s life, parents strive to change the world, one person at a time.” The article focused on Steve and Cheryl Shockley and how the parents dealt with their son Jack’s tragic murder and the scholarship fund they created in his memory.

“Well-written, heartfelt [story],” judges noted. “[It] keeps readers entranced from beginning to end.”

Online editor and graphic designer Brandon A. Evans was recognized with an honorable mention award in the “Best Regular Column—Spiritual Life” for his column, “Sight Unseen,” an occasional

column that explores God and the world.

Krokos also earned an honorable mention honor in the “Best Editorial on a National or International Issue—Weekly newspaper” for his editorial, “More unspeakable tragedies and our response as people of faith.” The editorial focused on the mass shootings at an elementary school in Uvalde, Texas, and a grocery store shooting in Buffalo, N.Y., and how faith must play a role in how tragedies such as these are addressed.

On June 8, the CMA presented its 2023 Cardinal John P. Foley Award to Katie Rutter, a video producer, editor, writer, videographer and journalist now based in Minnesota. Rutter, who most recently was a member of St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Bloomington, did freelance work for *The Criterion*. She also is co-founder and producer of

Hundredfold Video (formerly Thing in a Pot Productions) and specializes in Catholic/Christian media.

The Foley Award recognizes demonstrated excellence and innovation in Catholic storytelling in the preceding year, with work presented on various media platforms, including—but not limited to—video, podcasts, photo spreads, blogs or a multimedia melding of platforms.

In recognizing *The Criterion* staff for its dedication in serving the people of central and southern Indiana, Archbishop Charles C. Thompson said the newspaper serves as his primary tool of evangelization.

“The awards received by the staff this past year,” Archbishop Thompson noted, “are a testament to our efforts to bring the Good News of the Risen Christ to the people of central and southern Indiana.” †



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BABIES

continued from page 1

But every project has a price, and Popp was worried about where to find funding.

Enter the Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH), a Catholic Irish organization.

"This is an Irish cemetery, and the Hibernians are based on faith, unity and Christian charity," said Frank McPhillips, charity committee chairman of AOH Fr. Abram J. Ryan Division 1 in Louisville, Ky., and a member of St. John the Baptist Parish in Starlight. "Within five weeks, we had the funding approved."

The organization now donates yearly to the cause.

"It's something that we are very proud of being able to offer to the community," he said.

Burying the dead is one of the Church's seven corporal acts of mercy. But the service and small mass grave site also help the living, said Kelsey Marshall, bereavement coordinator for Baptist Health Floyd.

"It really does provide closure to [hospital] staff to know that these babies are being laid to rest and that their lives are being honored," she said.

'They immediately stepped up'

Since the first burial service in April 2017, 327 babies "have been rescued from the biohazard waste dump," said Popp.

But issues from the COVID-19 pandemic caught up, and the quarterly services ended in May of 2021.

When the burial date was finally set for July, Popp didn't have an exact count of the number of miscarried babies to be laid to rest. But after more than two years with no burials, she knew it would be "a lot."

Not only was she unsure of the number of caskets needed, she also didn't know where they would come from.

"The hospital didn't have the resources

to build the boxes for the babies this time," said Popp. "So, I called the Knights of Columbus [in New Albany], and they immediately stepped up."

With the organization's focus on faith, family, community and life, the request "was obviously right in our wheelhouse," said Mike Carter, a past Grand Knight of the city's Knights of Columbus (K of C) Cardinal Ritter #1221 Council. "We were more than happy to help give these babies a proper burial."

Kits to make the boxes were sent to K of C member Ron Webber, whose woodshop became assembly-central.

"As soon as we put the word out to the Knights, 11 people came out of the woodwork—all different ages and backgrounds—and wanted to be involved," he said.

In less than a week, the men had cut the wood and assembled the small boxes.

"It was good fellowship for us, just to know what we were a part of," said Webber.

All told, the Knights built about 250 boxes, enough for the 109 babies buried in July—more than double the previous high count—and for several burial services to come.

'A sign of our trust in his providence'

It was hot and humid as Popp and others placed the 109 little boxes around the Pietà statue in Holy Trinity Cemetery's outdoor pavilion on July 14. But the afternoon's heat did not prevent nearly 50 people from coming to the service—by far the highest attendance since they began, said Popp.

Among them were members of the New Albany Knights of Columbus and representatives of the AOH in Louisville.

Several of those present were staff members from Baptist Health Floyd, including Kelly Owsley, clinical coordinator for the hospital's Women's and Children's Services.

"I'm Catholic," said Owsley, a member



Members of the New Albany Knights of Columbus #1221 Council assemble small wooden caskets at the woodshop of Knights member Ron Webber. The Knights assembled about 250 of the boxes, 109 of which were used during a burial service for miscarried babies at Holy Trinity Cemetery in New Albany on July 14. (Submitted photo)

of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in New Albany. "So, it was important for me to see that these babies were laid to rest and not just considered products of conception."

Right to Life of Southern Indiana (RTLISI) president Doris Corby and members of the organization's board also attended the service.

"We wanted to come to honor these babies, these lives," said the member of St. John Lutheran Church in Lanesville. "They didn't have long on this Earth, but they lived on this Earth, and they need to be honored."

Denny Voelker, an RTLISI board member and parishioner of St. Mary Parish in Lanesville, agreed.

"The service and burial give more integrity to the fact that each baby was a life," he said. "And all life has purpose."

The service was led by Conventual Franciscan Father Mark Weaver, pastor of St. Mary Parish in New Albany. It included Scripture, a hymn and a reading of the poem that brought tears to the eyes of Garrison and others.

Before sprinkling the small caskets, Father Mark blessed the water, "asking that the Lord use it, that it be a sign of the baptism that we have received and our trust in the Lord. And also a sign of our trust in his providence over our lives. We entrust these little ones to his providence."

'It can just give so much comfort'

After the service, many of those present silently and solemnly carried the boxes from the pavilion to the gravesite.

Garrison, Owsley and Marshall consoled each other after the service.

"Caring for these families and babies can just be emotionally and physically draining in the sense that we, too, feel the loss and the sadness of these families," said Marshall.

"As time moves forward, we never forget them, and we never forget their stories.

There were many instances flashing through my mind during the ceremony. It's always a sweet remembrance of that bond that we build with these families that have come into our lives through unfortunate circumstances."

Garrison was as visibly moved after the service as she was during it.

"Grief is tough," she said with a heavy sigh. "So, it's nice to have someplace where you can come back and visit and basically work through those stages."

Her words ring true not just for hospital staff, but for family members of the miscarried babies, too.

"I send people home, and they're not at their best," said Garrison. "They're working through those processes. When you lose a baby in miscarriage, you may not be able to make certain decisions.

"But when the community steps in and creates this space, it can just give so much comfort." †



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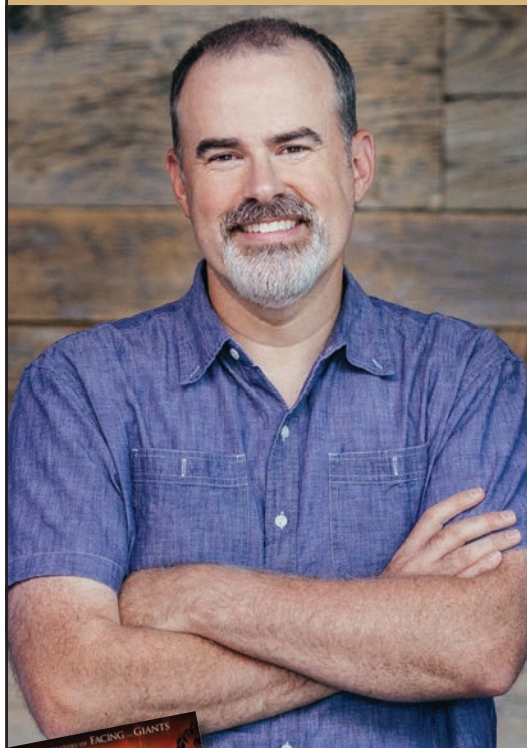
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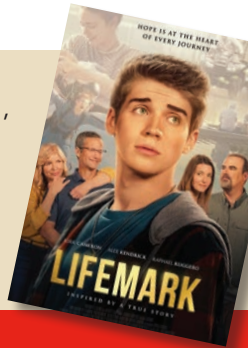
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SIMPLY CATHOLIC

What the papacy of John Paul I could have looked like

By Russell Shaw

(OSV News)—When the cardinals gathered 45 years ago to choose a successor to Pope Paul VI, they wanted—not unreasonably—a smiling pope. In the person of Cardinal Albino Luciani, patriarch of Venice, they got one. He took the name John Paul I.

He was selected, according to Church historian Eamon Duffy, in the hopeful expectation that his cheerful grin and modest manner would “lift the gloom” that had descended on St. Paul VI—a cerebral, sensitive man who’d grown old amid a swarm of problems, including theological dissent and departures from the priesthood and religious life.

By contrast, Cardinal Luciani was viewed as a simple, good-humored bishop more like St. John XXIII than St. Paul VI in style. The new pontiff took the names of his two immediate predecessors as a sign of respect for both, while choosing as his papal motto the same one he’d had as a bishop—“*Humilitas*” (“humility”).

Unfortunately, besides getting a pope with a great smile and a winning demeanor, the cardinals who elected him on Aug. 26, 1978, unwittingly picked a man with health issues that only 33 days later would lead to his death, making his pontificate one of the shortest ever.

Today, he is remembered largely for that famous smile. What he might have done as pope is unknown. Yet, here and there in his life and career are hints suggesting what the pontificate of Blessed John Paul I might have been like.

Born on Oct. 17, 1912, in Forno di Canale (now, Canale d’Agordo), a village in northern Italy near Belluno, Albino Luciani was the oldest of four children in a family of modest means. His father was a bricklayer who often traveled to Switzerland to find work. When his son announced that he wanted to enter the seminary, the elder Luciani is said to have replied, “I hope that when you become a priest you will be on the side of the workers.”

Ordained in 1935, Father Luciani became a professor and vice-rector of the Belluno seminary in 1937. Later, he served as chancellor and then vicar general of the diocese. In 1947, he earned a doctorate in theology from the Gregorian University in Rome.

Father Luciani was in charge of catechesis for a eucharistic congress held in Belluno in 1949 and drew on that experience in writing *Crumbs from the Catechism*, a book about teaching the faith.

Named bishop of Vittorio Veneto in December 1958 by St. John XXIII, he took part in all four sessions of the Second Vatican Council. He also was an active member of the Italian bishops’ conference, serving on its doctrinal committee and, from 1972-75, as vice president.

On Dec. 15, 1969, St. Pope Paul VI named him patriarch of Venice, a position that had already been held twice in the 20th century by future popes (both of them now also canonized saints): Pius X, who served in Venice from 1893-1903, and John XXIII, from 1953-1958.

When Bishop Luciani became patriarch in 1969, few people are likely to have seen the unassuming new occupant of the office as a likely candidate to be the third to make the transition from Venice to Rome before the century was out.

Indeed, he would appear to have had no such papal ambitions himself. When asked as he was leaving Venice



Pope John Paul I is pictured at the Vatican in 1978 during his short time as pontiff. Italian Cardinal Albino Luciani was elected pope on Aug. 26, 1978, and served in the seat of St. Peter for only 34 days. He was found dead one morning after suffering a massive heart attack brought on by circulatory problems. Pope Francis beatified him on Sept. 4, 2022. (CNS file photo)

for the conclave following Paul VI’s death if he would be elected pope, Patriarch Luciani said, “You don’t make gnocchi out of this dough.” (Gnocchi are Italian dumplings.)

In 1971, St. Paul VI selected him to take part in the meeting of the world Synod of Bishops held in October of that year. There, he delivered an intervention in which he proposed that wealthy countries give 1% of their annual incomes to poor ones—“not as alms but as something that is owed” in light of their exploitation by the rich. In 1973, St. Paul VI elevated him to the College of Cardinals.

During his pre-papal years, Cardinal Luciani addressed many religious and social issues.

He sold a gold cross given him by St. John XXIII, used the money to help children with disabilities, and encouraged his priests to do likewise. He also established family counseling clinics to help poor people deal with marital and financial problems.

He opposed the idea of worker priests (priests who would hold factory jobs alongside the workers they sought to evangelize), threatened disciplinary measures for priests who supported the communist party and suspended some priests who endorsed the liberalization of divorce in Italy.

He also supported St. Paul VI’s 1968 encyclical “*Humanae Vitae*” condemning artificial birth control, while taking a patient line with people who had trouble living up to it.

In 1978, when news of the birth of the first “test tube baby,” Louise Brown, electrified the world, he extended good wishes to the infant while at the same time upholding the moral norm against artificial insemination. “I do not find any valid reasons to deviate from this norm by declaring licit the separation of the transmission of life from the marriage act,” he said.

On women, Cardinal Luciani said that they are “admirable figures” in the Gospels, “more so than the Apostles themselves.” But he added: “Through the will of Christ, women—in my judgment—carry out a different, complementary and precious service of the Church, but they

are not ‘possible priests.’ ... That does not do wrong to women.”

About religious freedom as Vatican II had endorsed it, he said: “The choice of religious belief must be free. The freer and more earnest the choice, the more those that embrace the faith will feel honored. These are rights, natural rights. Rights always come hand in hand with duties. The non-Catholics have the right to profess their religion, and I have the duty to respect their right as a private citizen, as a priest, as a bishop and as a state.”

He also wrote a series of popular essays relating faith to life, which were published in a monthly magazine. They were cast in the form of letters to famous people, both fictional and real-life, among them Pinocchio, Figaro, St. Teresa of Avila, Charles Dickens, Mark Twain, the German poet Goethe, King David and Jesus. The pieces were collected in 1976 in a book called “*Illustrissimi*” that appeared in an English translation after the author’s election as pope.

On becoming pope, John Paul I laid out a six-point program for his pontificate: renew the Church by implementing the Second Vatican Council; complete the revision of the *Code of Canon Law*; remind Catholics of their duty to preach the Gospel; promote religious unity without compromising doctrine; foster dialogue; and seek world peace and social justice.

It was a good plan, but he did not live to see it carried out.

He experienced severe pain several times during the day on Sept. 28, but refused to see a doctor. Around 5:30 a.m. the following morning, one of the papal apartment’s nun-housekeepers found him dead: in bed, nightstand light on, with reading material still in his hand. Death, it appears, was the result of a pulmonary embolism.

The people around him muffled the announcement by giving contradictory accounts with the apparent aim of being edifying. Wild rumors flew: Pope John Paul was killed by the KGB, the CIA, the mafia, officials of the Roman curia afraid of losing their jobs, the Freemasons.

Stefania Falasca, the vice-postulator for John Paul I’s cause for canonization, aimed to end speculation once and for all with her 2021 book, published in English as *The September Pope: The Final Days of John Paul I*.

The process that could lead one day to the Church’s formal recognition of Pope John Paul I as a saint began in 1990, and Pope Francis beatified him on Sept. 4, 2022. In his homily, Pope Francis encouraged us to pray in his predecessor’s own words: “Lord take me as I am, with my defects, with my shortcomings, but make me become what you want me to be.”

(Russell Shaw, a veteran journalist and writer, is the author of more than 20 books, including three novels.) †



Pope Francis prays at the tomb of Pope John Paul I in the crypt of St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican on All Souls’ Day, on Nov. 2, 2020. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

Twenty Something/Christina Capecchi

How to travel lightly: embracing the great de-clutter

My next-door neighbors have been packing up to move for the last month. The empty nesters are downsizing, and I've watched their weeklong purge with a mix of horror and admiration.



High-school letter jacket? Give.
Handmade desk? Give.
Barbie clothes sewn by Grandma? Give.
Almost everything had to go. There was no longer space or, it turns out, need.

They've raised their kids, retired from their careers. So they handpicked recipients for special items that no longer serve them and donated the rest.

Yesterday, when the moving truck pulled up, their garage became the graveyard for the final bits: a wooden Santa, a large clock, potting soil and a box labeled "rags."

That's what it had come down to: the rags.

I could see a lightness in the wife's face. Sure, the past month had been grueling—endless sorting, boxing, lifting, lugging. But she had eliminated all the unnecessary stuff in her life and, with it, a tremendous psychological weight.

She is ready for the next chapter, and she has put in the work so she can travel lightly.

I want to do the same. I just don't know if I'm ready.

For guidance, I've been reading Laraine Bennett, the Catholic author best known for her writing on temperaments. Bennett's latest book explores the spiritual underpinnings of our consumerist culture. It draws inspiration from St. Thérèse of Lisieux, who wrote: "Happiness has nothing to do with the material things that surround us; it dwells in the very depths of the soul." It is titled: *The Little Way of Living with Less: Learning to Let Go with the Little Flower*.

The book begins with Bennett's account of selling almost everything to move to Germany with her husband and two young children. They settled in an old farmhouse with a tiny kitchen and miniature stove. Their American-size box spring wouldn't fit through the stairs, so they made do

with a mattress on the floor and fleas from the barn animals next door.

Ultimately, we need very little. But the line between want and need has never been blurrier in the age of Amazon. We buy for so many reasons: because we can, because it brings a momentary thrill or distraction, because it was recommended by an influencer.

(Christina Capecchi is a freelance writer from Inver Grove Heights, Minn.) †

"This discomfort opened up a space where there was a possibility of spiritual awakening, an encounter, a surprise," Bennett writes. "God is the God of surprises," Pope Francis says. "But when you are too comfortable, too content with the status quo, you rarely step out of your cozy cocoon to encounter the surprise."

In lieu of the frantic Christmas shopping she'd witnessed in the U.S., the young mom participated in a neighborhood tradition: hiking through snowy woods to a mountaintop where snow began to fall just as St. Nicholas appeared with a bishop's miter and staff in a horse-drawn carriage.

"When our hearts are filled with our earthly loves, our creature comforts and our material possessions, we have less room for God," Bennett writes.

Ultimately, we need very little. But the line between want and need has never been blurrier in the age of Amazon. We buy for so many reasons: because we can, because it brings a momentary thrill or distraction, because it was recommended by an influencer.

It can be difficult to examine our motives, especially when the period from idea to acquisition spans a matter of seconds.

This year I've tried to slow that down. What I discovered is that sometimes—embarrassingly—I already had the thing I was about to buy, or something similar. I could get by.

Before a party, I could dig through my "Rainy Day Bin" and find a gift that would suffice. I've become more honest about the recipient's needs. I picture a cluttered house and busy schedule and opt, instead, for a handwritten card paired with a jar of honey or box of tea.

Buying less isn't fun, but I can feel virtue building—patience, prudence, peace. It feels good to be resourceful, more easily contented.

I want to travel lightly, unencumbered, with my arms and heart open wide, ready to be surprised.

Guest Column/Sr. Alicia Torres, EE.

Eucharistic adoration: Doing is good; being is even better

I am not totally sure how my parents felt when I told them I'd signed up for the 3 a.m. hour of prayer on Good Friday



when I was 16 years old. Our parish had invited us to "watch an hour" with Jesus, and I certainly didn't want him to be alone for one minute. There was only one small detail I'd neglected to consider: I didn't have a driver's license yet!

But I remember my father quietly driving me to church without any sense of tension, and to this day I have no idea what he was thinking as he watched from the back pew as I silently knelt before the altar of repose.

Admittedly, I was a rather pious child, and an equally zealous teen: anything I could do to be a better Catholic, I wanted to do. If that meant kneeling before the Eucharist in the wee hours of the morning during the Easter triduum, I was game.

Little did I realize, though, that as I kept Jesus company on that deep, dark night, he was not only planting the seeds of my vocation, but helping me discover a great secret: that while what I did for him was good, who I am in him was even better—a truth he longed to share with me.

Years later, I was in the midst of a crisis. As a young Franciscan sister, I had sustained a serious head injury, the trauma of which so affected me that I could do nothing. I lay in bed all day, and my only recourse was our daily Mass and holy hour, for which I somehow mustered the strength to be present.

I was very sick, and it was very hard. But in that God-permitted time of suffering, pain and isolation there was finally the space for Jesus to allow those seeds planted so long ago to begin to bear fruit. Slowly, in prayer before the Eucharist and in the solitude of my room, I realized that I was never alone—not because our faithful German Shepherd, Liberty, kept constant watch over me, but because all around me and within me was the secret, silent, hidden presence of God.

So many years before, I had had a desire to watch one hour with him; now I began to understand that all my life, Jesus had been delighting in watching every moment of every hour with me.

Praise God, I recovered from my head injury, finished grad school, professed final vows in 2015 and continue to live and serve among the very poor on Chicago's West side with my community. I even ran a marathon in 2018 to help raise funds for our apostolate.

I have never lost the profound sense of gift that came of recognizing that Jesus is ever present to me. This confidence is renewed every day at every Mass, where Jesus' passion, death, resurrection and ascension are represented for you and for me: this is his daily giving of himself, completely. This gift of presence is also deepened during every moment of every holy hour I have the privilege to attend.

Because I have grown to see Jesus present in the Eucharist, I am more able to see him in my brothers and sisters—especially those most broken and lost ones. Jesus is ever present to me, and I long to be present to him. I am sure I would be lost without him, and yet with him, not only am I found, but I am truly home, and on my way home. I can't even imagine what it will be like to enter the kingdom one day and realize what it means to watch, to be present, to be united with Jesus not just for an hour, a day or a lifetime but for all of eternity.

(Franciscans of the Eucharist of Chicago Sister Alicia Torres is a National Eucharistic Revival executive team member and managing editor for the Heart of the Revival newsletter.) †

Amid the Fray/Greg Erlandson

Survey reveals Catholic media use is on the upswing

The good news today is that Catholics are still reading, listening and watching Catholic material. The better news is that the numbers who are reading, listening and watching have been going up.



The bad news, of course, is that it isn't everybody.

Catholic statistics of all sorts have been trending downward for years, highlighting a frustrating decline in sacramental practice and attendance. Only 21% of Catholics are attending Mass weekly or more. In fact, 53% of self-identified Catholics go to Mass only a few times a year or not at all.

Yet a new survey by the premier Catholic research institution known familiarly as CARA (the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate) shows that Catholics are accessing Catholic materials at a significantly higher rate than when the survey was last taken in 2011.

Here is some of what the CARA survey is telling us:

- Watching religious or spiritual video content nearly doubled from 24% in 2011 to 45% in 2023. (Thank you, "The Chosen.")
- Listening to religious or spiritual audio content more than doubled from 13% to 29%. (Thank you, Bishop Robert E. Barron and Father Mike Schmitz.)
- Reading a print or e-version of a religious or spiritual book also jumped, as did the purchasing of these materials. (Thank you, Catholic publishers, for hanging in there!)

When it comes to newspapers, the numbers are also heartening. The reading of print copies of magazines or newspapers has stayed flat at 18%, but reading a newspaper or magazine online jumped from 3% to 13%. A total of 21% get information about the Church from print or online newspapers. Only parish bulletins or word of mouth rank higher.

For all the chancery naysayers who repeat the cliché that print is dead and urge the killing of the newspaper or magazine to save money, the survey may be a disappointment. But for Church leaders committed to keeping Catholics both inspired and informed, it is validation that a both/and approach to

communications remains the recipe: Print plus online plus social media.

The survey also underscores a fact often missing when talking about the cost of a diocesan publication. The most faithful and dedicated Catholics read and rely on them.

CARA found that 62% of weekly Mass attenders believe the print version of their diocesan newspaper or magazine is an essential part of how the diocese communicates. Sixty percent of monthly Mass attenders responded similarly. And "54% of weekly attenders agree that they would be upset by any suggestion that their diocese stop producing a print version of its publication. Fifty-three percent of monthly attenders responded as such," the report said.

Only 55% of Catholics regularly contribute to the parish offertory collection. While CARA did not specifically ask this question, my guess is that the largest percentage of those donors would be those weekly attendees and media readers.

The survey recognizes that there are a wide range of Catholic communication efforts, from websites, social media and blogs, to television, radio, video, print and online. The number of Catholics actively practicing their faith may be in slow decline, but those who are committed are relying now more than ever on Catholic media.

The takeaways are this: Church leaders should want to be in the game, not standing on the sidelines while others control the messaging. And they should also want to be committed to providing resources of high quality because it maintains their connection with their most committed parishioners. This isn't their only audience, and newspapers and magazines are not their only tools, but they remain essential in a world where secular mass communications are becoming more sophisticated and, too often, more manipulative.

When weighing the cost of their media efforts, dioceses should make sure the mission value of these investments makes it into their spreadsheets as well.

(Greg Erlandson is an award-winning Catholic publisher, editor and journalist whose column appears monthly at OSV News. Follow him on Twitter @GregErlandson.) †

Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, September 10, 2023

- Ezekiel 33:7-9
- Romans 13:8-10
- Matthew 18:15-20

For the first reading at Mass this weekend, the Church gives us a passage from the ancient Book of Ezekiel.



Ezekiel's name in Hebrew in effect was a prayer: "May God make [him] strong." It was fitting since, as the prophet himself said in complaint, his calling to be a prophet put him at odds with so many people.

For God's people, times were hard. The Babylonian Empire, at the time one of the Middle East's most powerful states, had destroyed much and had killed many in Israel. Then the Babylonians took back to Babylon many survivors of their invasion.

In Babylon, these exiles and their descendants languished for four generations. Ezekiel saw this disaster not as a direct punishment from God, pressed down upon the people in a fury of revenge for their sinfulness, but as the result of the people's sin.

Although the prophet was harsh in this respect, he also consoled the people that a better day would come—if they returned to God. If they obeyed God, then he would protect them.

No matter the people's disobedience, Ezekiel wrote, God would never forsake them and never desert them in the face of peril.

St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans is the source of the second reading. It continues the pattern for these weekends of the summer, so many of which have presented readings from Romans.

A highly educated, sophisticated and wealthy Jew, fully versed in the teachings of Judaism, Paul knew the commandments well. While he saw a special vocation in his outreach to gentiles, he knew that God had acted through Hebrew agents in the past. The commandments were from God, who gave them to Moses.

Paul set the commandments in context. People should obey God because they love God. People should treat others well, according to the commandments, because they love others. This urging echoed the teaching of Jesus.

For its last reading, the Church this weekend offers a passage from the Gospel of St. Matthew. Jesus told the disciples to admonish anyone among them who somehow is at fault.

The Lord gives a progression of steps. First, a Christian should call a wayward brother or sister to task. This step failing, the Christian should seek the aid of others in calling the wayward to correct his or her ways. Finally, this step also failing, the disciple should go to the Church.

If the wayward individual will not reform, the Church should dismiss that person.

The reading reminds us of the teachings of the Church regarding how to read the Gospels. We should remember that the Gospels were not written at the time of Jesus, but rather years later. By the time Matthew was written, the Church that Christ had founded had begun to develop more fully along the direction given by the Holy Spirit through the Apostles.

Being a follower of Jesus is a serious matter. The Church, representing Christ, has the right to judge a member's behavior, even a member's sincerity. Christ is in the assembly of disciples. The Church is not simply a convenient, occasional gathering of people of like minds or good intentions.

Reflection

For weeks, we have heard advice about being good disciples. We hear that again this weekend.

Ezekiel gives us a clear message. All humans are inclined to sin. Bad results follow when we forget God. Searching for excuses, we blame others or some unwelcomed coincidence. We say that we are helpless in the face of temptation or did not understand the seriousness of our sin.

But we are responsible for what we do. We are weak. We are myopic. We are afraid. Even so, if we ask, God will strengthen us.

God speaks and acts through the Church. So, the Church acts with God's authority. It guides us and warns us. Frank and straightforward, it reminds us for our own good that we must love God above all else. †

Daily Readings

Monday, September 11

Colossians 1:24-2:3
Psalm 62:6-7, 9
Luke 6:6-11

Tuesday, September 12

The Most Holy Name of Mary
Colossians 2:6-15
Psalm 145:1-2, 8-11
Luke 6:12-19

Wednesday, September 13

St. John Chrysostom, bishop and doctor of the Church
Colossians 3:1-11
Psalm 145:2-3, 10-13
Luke 6:20-26

Thursday, September 14

The Exaltation of the Holy Cross
Numbers 21:4b-9
Psalm 78:1b-2, 34-38
Philippians 2:6-11
John 3:13-17

Friday, September 15

Our Lady of Sorrows
1 Timothy 1:1-2, 12-14
Psalm 16:1-2, 5, 7-8, 11
John 19:25-27
or Luke 2:33-35

Saturday, September 16

St. Cornelius, pope and martyr
St. Cyprian, bishop and martyr
1 Timothy 1:15-17
Psalm 113:1-7
Luke 6:43-49

Sunday, September 17

Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Sirach 27:30-28:7
Psalm 103:1-4, 9-12
Romans 14:7-9
Matthew 18:21-35

Question Corner/Jenna Marie Cooper

Prayer of spiritual communion related to Christ's presence in the Eucharist

Q We've been wondering about the wording in a prayer used for those who attend Sunday Mass virtually.



The phrases: "Come at least spiritually into my heart" and "I love you as if you were already there" don't reflect good theology. Don't we believe that the Bible and our faith assure us of God's constant presence and unconditional love? Please address this question since it is used by many parishes every weekend. (Location withheld)

A The prayer you mention sounds like what would be traditionally called an act of "spiritual communion."

It's a prayer that is meant to be said by those who would like to be receiving Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, but who are unable to do this for whatever reason. It makes sense that this prayer would be said specifically for the benefit of those who are watching the Mass via livestream or TV, since those who are not present at Mass are obviously not able, in that moment, to receive Communion in the same physical way that most of the assembled congregation would be.

A prayer of spiritual communion is not meant as a global theological statement on God's omnipresence in general. God is indeed present always and everywhere, and he loves us unconditionally no matter where we are. It's not as though God is somehow absent from us unless (or until) we say a certain prayer.

Yet, at the same time, as Catholics we believe in the doctrine of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, meaning that the prayers of consecration at Mass, through the power of the Holy Spirit, literally turn the offered bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus.

Because the bread and wine become Jesus's body and blood,

we believe that during the Eucharist he becomes present to us in a uniquely intense and physical way; and that on an individual level, his presence to us is especially intimate when we personally receive him in Holy Communion.

Acts of spiritual communion are meant as a way for those who cannot receive Communion at a particular point to try to "bridge the gap" between their current circumstances and their desire to receive Jesus sacramentally. You could look at spiritual communion as a way of making ourselves especially open to God's constant presence.

Q Can priests be wrong? (Wisconsin)

A Taking your question at simple face value, yes, of course priests can be wrong. Priests are mere human beings, not all-knowing demigods or supercomputers running on perfect algorithms. And no priest is going to be an expert in all areas of knowledge. Like the rest of us, priests can and will be wrong about at least some things some of the time.

Priests do receive quite an extensive training in graduate-level theology, so—in general—when a priest explains Church teaching, he is speaking as a qualified professional in his field. Many priests have roles of authority (like, for example, pastor of a parish) which empower them to make practical decisions. So even if we, for example, believe that our priest is wrong in his prudential decision-making in a given instance, it may nevertheless be a choice the priest is legitimately able to make.

We Catholics also have a concept of papal infallibility, which means that the pope is protected from error in certain very specific circumstances, namely when he "proclaims by a definitive act some doctrine of faith or morals" (See "*Lumen Gentium*," #25). That is, the Holy Father is infallible when he specifically and deliberately raises some aspect of established Catholic teaching on faith or morals to the level of infallibility.

This is a rare occurrence. The last time it happened was in 1950 with the proclamation of the dogma of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary body and soul into the heaven. There is no belief that the pope would be infallible in areas unrelated to faith or morals.

(Jenna Marie Cooper, who holds a licentiate in canon law, is a consecrated virgin and a canonist whose column appears weekly at OSV News. Send your questions to CatholicQA@osv.com.) †

My Journey to God

On the Day You Were Born

By Natalie Hoefler

In your mother's arms you stretched and yawned,
Swaddled in a woven cloth of blue.
"Anne, she's perfect," your father fawned,
Unaware he had spoken the truth.

"Mary," said your parents when asked your name.
Unlike you, the name was not unique,
For many a Jewish girl was called the same—
But none could match your eternal mystique.

Your name may have been common, yes,
But none other did it so aptly fit,
For "Mary" means both "bitter" and "blessed,"
foretelling the life you were destined to live:

That one day an angel would greet you
and declare you to be "full of grace";
That nine months later in a stable rude
You would gaze upon God's holy face;

That one day a sword would pierce your Son,
O blessed Immaculate Conception;
That dark would descend and banish the sun
as you wept bitterly at His crucifixion;

That He would rise triumphant and crown you
as heaven and Earth's glorious Queen;
That with your prayers we could know life anew
through your Son, O Mother Most Serene.

Your parents happily knew none of this
As they adored you peacefully sleeping,
Blessing you with many a gentle kiss,
Your little form in memory keeping.

Your mother rocked you as she hummed,
unaware she held the Mother Most Blest,
or that the world's salvation would come
through one as small as the utterance, "Yes."

(Natalie Hoefler is a member of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis and is a reporter for The Criterion.)

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.

BRAUN, Daniel, 62, Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Indianapolis, June 30. Son of Betty Jane Braun. Brother of Timothy and David Braun. Uncle and great-uncle of several.

BUNNY, Mark E., 69, St. Jude, Indianapolis, Aug. 15. Husband of Karen Bunny. Father of Caroline and Laura Bunny. Brother of Camille Svihlik, Phillip and Stephen Bunny.

BURIANEK, Dolores F., 97, SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi, Greenwood, Aug. 17. Wife of Frazier Burianek. Mother of Jeffrey, Mark, Terry and Thomas Burianek. Grandmother of 12. Great-grandmother of six.

CAMPBELL, Travis A., 47, St. Mary, North Vernon, Aug. 18. Husband of Kristin Campbell. Father of Sydney Stephan, Norah and Cyrus Campbell. Son of Joanne Campbell. Brother of Jodi Hill and Troy Campbell.

CANNON, Walter, 89, St. Anthony of Padua, Clarksville, Aug. 20. Husband of Anna Cannon. Father of Carolyn Anderson and Elizabeth Grube. Grandfather of six. Great-grandfather of three.

DELUCIO, F. Romaine, 91, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Richmond, Aug. 14. Mother of Paula Ripberger, Joan Woodruff, P. Thomas and Richard DeLucio. Sister of

Mary Coblentz and Jean Krebs. Grandmother of 11. Great-grandmother of 25. Great-great-grandmother of one.

GAFFNEY, Barbara (Tutterow), 84, Christ the King, Indianapolis, Aug. 18. Mother of Kelley and Michael Gaffney. Sister of Grace Bavender and Debbie Maples.

KENDALL, Carey A. (Mick), 44, St. Roch, Indianapolis, Aug. 14. Wife of Andy Kendall. Mother of Drew and Owen Kendall. Daughter of Michael Mick and Leanne Smith. Sister of Erica Neutzman, Amy, Emily and Lisa Mick. Grandmother of two.

LIPINSKI, Anna E., 83, Christ the King, Indianapolis, Aug. 20. Mother of Theresa Hotwagner, Rosemary Wrona, John and Myron Lipinski. Sister of Wanda Blair. Grandmother of 22. Great-grandmother of five.

SHANK, Joan M. (Nicholas), 79, St. Thomas Aquinas, Indianapolis, Aug. 12. Wife of Steve Shank. Mother of Jonathan, Nicholas and Stephen Shank. Sister of Carol Vodde, Bob, Don and Ken Nicholas. Grandmother of six.

SHAW, Theresa (Shima), 61, Holy Family, New Albany, Aug. 14. Wife of David Shaw. Mother of Andrea Wise, Ben and Chris Shaw. Daughter of Dan Shima. Sister of Mary Maloney, Tammy Saskowski and Paul Shima. Grandmother of one.

SHINE, Thomas, 69, St. Mark the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Aug. 14. Husband of Merlin Shine. Father of Brittany Clark and Dan Church, Jr. Brother of Bill, Daniel, Donnie and Mike Shine. Grandfather of three. Great-grandfather of one.

SNAPP, David T., 85, St. Charles Borromeo, Bloomington, Aug. 17. Husband of Brenda Snapp. Father of Michelle Fox, Barbara Ellen Rosales, Mickey Smith, Emily Swager, David and Mark Snapp. Brother of Norma Jean Fitzgerald and Sharleen Myers. Grandfather of 13. Great-grandfather of 11.

SPARKS, Kenneth, 78, St. Gabriel, Connersville, July 29. Husband of Regina Sparks. Father of Sabrina Retherford, Kenneth Bryan and Kenneth Corey Sparks.



Family Tree Quilt

Marcella Smith, who celebrated her 100th birthday on Aug. 24, poses by a family tree quilt she created, adding to it as her family has grown through the years. In her 66 years as a member of Holy Spirit Parish in Indianapolis, Smith helped start a quilting group there, making many quilts for raffle at Holy Spirit festivals. Smith is a mother of eight, a grandmother of 27, a great-grandmother of 44 and a great-great-grandmother of several. (Submitted photo)

Brother of Prentis Hunsinger. Grandfather of three.

STEWART, Daniel, 77, St. Augustine, Jeffersonville, Aug. 8. Husband of Kate Stewart. Father of Dani Stewart Hass, Gabe, Nathaniel, Seth and Zach Stewart. Grandfather of 10. Great-grandfather of one.

STUMLER, Jo Ellen, 70, St. John the Baptist, Starlight, Aug. 12. Wife of Larry Stumler. Mother of

Lori Kraemer, Lisa Lynch and Patrick Stumler. Grandmother of six. Great-grandmother of four.

VAUGHN, Jenny L., 79, Prince of Peace, Madison, Aug. 17. Wife of R. Michael Vaughn. Mother of Elissa McGauley and Jill Whaley. Grandmother of three.

VAUGHN, R. Michael, 82, Prince of Peace, Madison, Aug. 26. Father of Elissa McGauley and Jill Whaley. Grandfather of three.

WACHENDORF, Marvin, 85, St. Malachy, Brownsburg, Aug. 15. Father of Karen, Brian and Mark Wachendorf. Grandfather of five.

WHITE, Mary E. (Crays), 91, St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower), Indianapolis, Aug. 17. Mother of Elaine Ford, Ann Hannant, Janet Method, Karen Ryan, Diane, Judy and Mark White. Grandmother of 13. Great-grandmother of 13.

WHITFIELD, Jeanette, 83, St. Mary, New Albany, Aug. 9. Sister of Richard Wimbish. Aunt and great-aunt of several.

WROBLEWSKI, Mary L. (Noll), 76, SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi, Aug. 9. Wife of Michael Wroblewski. Mother of Jennifer Blount, Stephanie Lowes and Michael Wroblewski. Sister of Donna Pooos, Elaine Wagner and Danny Noll. Grandmother of five. †

Pope confirms ‘second *Laudato Si*’ will be an apostolic exhortation

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis confirmed plans to publish a “second *Laudato Si*,” which is expected to update and expand on his 2015 encyclical on the environment.

Greeting visitors in the Paul VI audience hall after his weekly general audience on Aug. 30, the pope drew attention to the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation on Sept. 1, the beginning of the Season of Creation, a monthlong ecumenical period for prayer and action to promote ecological principles. The Season of Creation ends on Oct. 4, the feast of St. Francis Assisi.

“On that date, I intend to publish an exhortation, a second *Laudato Si*,” Pope Francis said. The document will be the sixth apostolic exhortation of his pontificate and the first since his February 2020 post-synodal exhortation on the Amazon.

To conclude his weekly audience, the pope asked Catholics to join with “our Christian brothers and sisters in the commitment to caring for creation as a sacred gift of the Creator.

“It is necessary to side with the victims of environmental and climate injustices, striving to end the senseless war on our common home, which is a global, terrible war,” he said.

The pope had mentioned the upcoming document on Aug. 21 when he met with a group of lawyers. He said he was preparing the document as a “second part to *Laudato Si*” to update it on current problems.”

Pope Francis also mentioned the exhortation on July 26 when he spent an hour responding to questions from young people from the Archdiocese of Melbourne, Australia, according to Archbishop Peter A. Comensoli. “We decided to keep mum about it, to let Pope Francis share the news when he wanted,” the archbishop posted

on X, formerly Twitter.

The Season of Creation grew out of the observance of the day of prayer, which originated in the Orthodox Church and was added to the Catholic Church’s calendar by Pope Francis in 2015. In his message for this year’s celebration, the pope called on world leaders attending the U.N. climate summit in Dubai on Nov. 30 to Dec. 12 to “institute a rapid and equitable transition to end the era of fossil fuel.”

In an article published on the British Jesuits’ Thinking Faith website on Aug. 29, Cardinal Michael Czerny, prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, encouraged people to ask themselves, “What issues have emerged as significantly more

dangerous and urgent today than their treatment in the 2015 encyclical suggests? What is our role in each one? What can and must we do about each one?”

“No matter how the encyclical is updated our obligation to the future is incontestable,” he wrote and then referred to “*Laudato Si*”: “We must never forget that the younger generations have the right to receive a beautiful and livable world from us, and that this implies that we have a grave responsibility toward creation which we have received from the generous hands of God.”

Eight years after the publication of “*Laudato Si*,” the cardinal urged people to ask: “What impact did the encyclical have? What changes or developments should we be grateful for? What areas did it not reach? How can we help both parts of *Laudato Si* to reach more widely and more deeply?” †



Pope Francis

Online Lay Ministry Formation

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis has partnered with the University of Notre Dame and Catholic Distance University (CDU) to offer not-for-credit online theology classes:

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REPORT SEXUAL MISCONDUCT NOW

If you are a victim of sexual misconduct by a person ministering on behalf of the Church, or if you know of anyone who has been a victim of such misconduct, please contact the archdiocesan victim assistance coordinator. There are two ways to make a report:

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Analysis from 'heart of Asia': Pope's words go beyond Mongolian borders

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Being a Catholic does not destroy or replace a person's culture, and wanting to share the Gospel message does not mean wanting to take someone's allegiance away from their nation.



Pope Francis

Visiting Mongolia on Sept. 1-4, Pope Francis encouraged the nation's tiny Catholic community to grow in faith and charity, but the visit also was designed to reassure the government that it has nothing to fear from the Catholic missionaries who arrived in the country in 1992.

The pope's speeches in Ulaanbaatar, the national capital, repeatedly referenced positive contacts between Mongolians and the Vatican going back to the 1200s when Pope Innocent IV sent an emissary to Güyük Khan, the ruler of the Mongol Empire and grandson of Genghis Khan.

Pope Francis used the *ger*, the traditional round house of the nomadic Mongolians, as symbols of warmth and unity. And he made repeated references to the "big sky" of Mongolian poetry as a sign of the Mongolian people's constant attention to the transcendent.

At the end of Mass on Sept. 3, the pope praised Mongolians as "good Christians and honest citizens," and told them to "go forward, gently and without

fear, conscious of the closeness and the encouragement of the entire Church, and above all the tender gaze of the Lord, who forgets no one and looks with love upon each of his children."

Earlier, meeting with the missionaries in the Cathedral of SS. Peter and Paul, Pope Francis told them: "Closeness, compassion and tenderness: treat people like that, personally caring for them, learning their language, respecting and loving their culture, not allowing yourselves to be tempted by worldly forms of security, but remaining steadfast in the Gospel through exemplary moral and spiritual lives."

And while the focus was on Mongolia and its 1,400 Catholics, China—and perhaps Vietnam—was never far from Pope Francis' mind.

The Catholic Church is registered as a "foreign NGO" in Mongolia, not as a Church. Individual parishes are registered separately. Missionaries receive visas that must be renewed each year. And for every foreign missionary granted a visa, the Church must hire at least five Mongolians.

The bigger challenge, Catholic missionaries told reporters covering the trip, is convincing Mongolians that Catholic missionaries are not some kind of advance team preparing for a Western invasion of their country.

Similar suspicions exist in China and, to a lesser degree, Vietnam.

Pope Francis flew over China early on Sept. 1 before landing in Ulaanbaatar

and again on Sept. 4 on his way back to Rome, sending courtesy telegrams to Chinese President Xi Jinping, thanking him for allowing the papal plane to enter Chinese airspace and offering his blessings and good wishes to the nation.

Throughout his stay in Mongolia, Pope Francis was accompanied by bishops from Central Asia and beyond. They included Cardinal-designate Stephen Chow Sau-Yan of Hong Kong and the city's retired Cardinal John Tong Hon.

At the end of Mass on Sept. 3 in Ulaanbaatar's Steppe Arena, the pope called the two over to him and told the international congregation, "I want to take the opportunity of their presence to send a warm greeting to the noble Chinese people."

To Chinese Catholics, he added, "I ask you to be good Christians and good citizens."

Mao Ning, spokeswoman of the Chinese foreign ministry, was asked about the pope's remarks at a Sept. 4 news conference.

"We noted the reports," she said. "China is positive toward improving the relations and we are in contact and communication with the Vatican."

Bishops and priests from mainland China were not permitted to travel to Mongolia, but several small groups of lay Catholics from China did manage to cross the border to see the pope.

A large group of Catholics from Vietnam also were present and were hopeful that the pope could visit their country soon.

"I don't know if I will go, but John XXIV certainly will," the pope, using the name he has invented for his successor, told reporters on his flight back to Rome.

The Vatican and Vietnam's communist government have a joint working group focused mainly on bilateral relations

and trying to reach an agreement on establishing diplomatic ties. And since the 1990s, a Vatican delegation has made annual visits to Vietnam, getting government approval for the nomination of bishops and seeking permission on issues like establishing or expanding seminaries.

"I am very positive about the relationship with Vietnam; good work has been going on for years," Pope Francis told reporters on the plane on Sept. 4.

"I remember four years ago, a group of Vietnamese parliamentarians came to visit. There was a nice dialogue with them, very respectful," the pope said. "When a culture is open, there is possibility for dialogue; if there is closure or suspicion, dialogue is very difficult. With Vietnam, the dialogue is open, with its pluses and minuses, but it is open and slowly moving forward. There have been some problems, but they have been resolved."

Pope Francis and his predecessors have been betting on a similarly patient dialogue with China for decades. And Pope Francis shows no sign of giving up.

"The relationship with China is very respectful, very respectful," he told reporters on the flight back to Rome. "I personally have great admiration for the Chinese people."

While some priests and Catholic intellectuals have been invited to teach at Chinese universities, promoting a cultural dialogue, the pope said, "I think we need to move forward in the religious aspect to understand each other better and so that Chinese citizens do not think that the Church does not accept their culture and values" and to dispel the idea that through ties with the pope, the Catholic Church in China "is dependent on another, foreign power."

"Relations are moving forward," he repeated. †

Benedictine novice professes vows at Saint Meinrad Archabbey

Benedictine Novice Angel Romero-Olivas professed temporary vows as a monk of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad in a ceremony on Aug. 6 in the monastery's Archabbey Church of Our Lady of Einsiedeln.



Br. Jude Angel Romero-Olivas, O.S.B.

He had completed his novitiate, a year of prayer and study of the Benedictine way of life. As is the

custom during the profession of vows, he was given a religious name. Novice Angel is now Brother Jude.

Brother Jude, 39, is a native of Chihuahua, Mexico, where he was a member of Santa Rosalia Parish. He attended the Autonomous University of Chihuahua Law School.

Before entering the monastery, he worked at a Mexican consulate and in law.

Temporary vows are typically for three years. This period offers a continuing opportunity for the monk and the monastic community to determine whether monastic life is, indeed, the right vocation for this individual. †

Employment

Secretary/Receptionist Position

Historic Cathedral of the Assumption
433 S. 5th St., Louisville KY 40202

This is a full-time hourly position eligible for Archdiocesan benefits package that includes vacation and sick time, medical insurance, and 401K. \$15/hour. Candidate must demonstrate excellent communication skills, proficiency in Microsoft Office, and have experience with database software. The candidate must represent the Cathedral with the awareness that the Cathedral resources are a trust provided through the generosity and faith of many people. Please send resume to administrator@cathedraloftheassumption.org.

Faith Formation Coordinator

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Cathedral of the Assumption, 433 S. 5th Street, Louisville KY

Coordinate RCIA, Adult Formation Events, and Religious Education for Children. Coordinate sacramental preparation for First Eucharist, Reconciliation, and Confirmation. Collaborate with Director of Worship in planning the rites of the RCIA process and Sacramental reception. Serve as a member of the Parish Formation Committee.

Our current RCIA classes and Children and Youth Religious Education Classes meet September – April on Sunday mornings.

Qualifications: The Faith Formation Coordinator must be a fully initiated, practicing Catholic who adheres to Church teaching in faith and morals, and who serves with the awareness that the Cathedral resources are a trust provided through the generosity and faith of many people. A degree in Theology or related field is preferable. A Master Catechist Certification from the Archdiocese of Louisville is required.

Please send resume to administrator@cathedraloftheassumption.org.

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St. Joan of Arc School eucharistic procession

Father Thomas Schliessmann, carrying the Blessed Sacrament in a monstrance, leads students of St. Joan of Arc School in Indianapolis during an Aug. 18 eucharistic procession on the grounds of St. Joan of Arc Parish. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

Saint Meinrad Archabbey welcomes two new novices

In a brief ceremony on Aug. 5, Patrick Albright and Andrew Levering were clothed in the Benedictine habit at the entrance of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad.

The two novices now begin a year of monastic formation, including study of the *Rule* of St. Benedict and monastic history.

Novice Patrick, 26, is from Loogootee, Ind. He was a member of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Loogootee in the Evansville Diocese and attended Loogootee High School.

He studied law enforcement at Vincennes University Jasper Campus in Jasper, Ind.,



Nov. Patrick Albright, O.S.B.

graduating in 2017 with an associate degree. Before joining the monastery, Novice Patrick worked as a police officer and dispatcher for Loogootee Police Department and as a corrections officer with Daviess County Sheriff's Office. He was also a private first class in the Marine Corps in 2020 before being medically discharged.

Novice Andrew, 24, is a native of Libertyville, Ill., where he was a member of St. Joseph Parish and attended Vernon Hills High School in Vernon Hills, Ill.



Nov. Andrew Levering, O.S.B.

He earned a bachelor's degree in Christian theology in 2021 from Hope College in Holland, Mich. After graduating from college, Novice Andrew worked as a forklift driver.

As novices, they will take a year off from formal studies and trades. The novitiate is a time of prayer and learning intended to help a novice discern his vocation as a monk. At the end of this year, a novice may be permitted to profess temporary vows of obedience, fidelity to the monastic way of life and stability in the community of Saint Meinrad. †

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