



The

Criterion

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NATIONAL
**Eucharistic
Congress**

National Eucharistic Congress promises 'profound impact' for families and no cost for those 12 and younger, page 3.

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Archbishop Charles C. Thompson ritually breathes on chrism oil on March 26 during the annual archdiocesan chrism Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. Assisting at the Mass are transitional Deacon Bobby Vogel, left, and seminarian Samuel Hansen. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

Chrism Mass draws Catholics from across the archdiocese to celebrate their faith

By Sean Gallagher

Catholics from across central and southern Indiana made their way on March 26 to SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis for one of the holiest days of the Church's liturgical year.

They were young and old, born in places around the world but all now living in Indiana. They were lay, religious and ordained Catholics, all gathered with Archbishop Charles C. Thompson.

The annual chrism Mass celebrated during Holy Week is the one liturgy in which the archdiocese is best represented in one place.

A group of teenagers from Richmond came to Indianapolis to experience it for the first time. Among them was Lily Feist, a freshman at Seton Catholic High School. She was excited to be at the Mass because Archbishop Thompson would bless the chrism oil that would anoint her forehead in November when she will receive the sacrament of confirmation.

"Witnessing it will be great for me," Lily said before the liturgy. "I'm a person who likes to see how things are done. Being able to see what I'm going to be confirmed with is really amazing."

See **CHRISM MASS**, page 8

On Easter, pope asks Christ to 'roll away' the stones of war worldwide

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Just as Jesus removed the stone that sealed his tomb on the morning of the resurrection, on Easter Christ alone "has the power to roll away the stones that block the path to life" and which trap humanity in war and injustice, Pope Francis said.



Pope Francis

Through his resurrection, Jesus opens "those doors that continually we shut with the wars spreading throughout the world," he said

after celebrating Easter Mass in St. Peter's Square on March 31. "Only the risen Christ, by granting us the forgiveness of our sins, opens the way for a renewed world."

Seated on the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica, the pope asked the risen Christ to bring peace in Israel, Palestine and Ukraine and a host of other conflict-ridden regions in the world.

"In calling for respect for the principles of international law, I express my hope for a general exchange of all prisoners between Russia and Ukraine," he said. "All for the sake of all!"

Pope Francis then appealed to the international community to ensure access of humanitarian aid to Gaza and called for the "prompt release" of hostages taken during Hamas' attack on Israel on Oct. 7 as well as "an immediate cease-fire in the strip."

"War is always an absurdity, war is always a defeat," he said, asking that the "strengthening winds of war" do not reach Europe and the Mediterranean. "Let us not yield to the logic of weapons and re-arming. Peace is never made with arms, but with outstretched hands and open hearts."

Easter Mass in the flower-laden square began with the singing of the "alleluia," traditionally absent from liturgical

See **EASTER**, page 7

Unusual school program draws families closer in prayer and closer to Christ in the Eucharist

By John Shaughnessy

As an educator, Ruth Hittel believes an unusual yet uplifting program can help bring families closer together—and closer to Jesus.

As parents, Meg and Brian Bauer insist the program reinforces their emphasis on having their children understand the importance of prayer and seeing God in everyday life.

As elementary school students, Mike and Mary Bauer notice how the program has an impact on their faith and the faith of their classmates.

And they all agree that the "traveling monstrance" program has increased their commitment to—and reverence of—the Eucharist

See **MONSTRANCE**, page 7

The "traveling monstrance" program at St. Michael School in Greenfield has helped students and their families come together in prayer and closer to Jesus. Michael, left, Katie, Zeile and Mary Bauer—all students at St. Michael School—kneel in front of the family altar that has been created in their home. (Submitted photo)



Vatican announces April 8 publication of document on human dignity

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The Vatican press office announced that the Dicastery for the Doctrine of Faith’s declaration on human dignity, said to include a



Pope Francis

faith-based critique of “gender ideologies” and surrogacy, will be released on April 8.

Cardinal Víctor Manuel Fernández, prefect of the dicastery, and Msgr. Armando Matteo, secretary of the doctrinal section of the dicastery, along

with Dr. Paola Scarcella, a professor of medicine and director of catechesis for persons with disabilities with the Community of Sant’Egidio, will speak at a Vatican news conference, the press office announced on April 2.

In an interview with the Spanish news agency EFE in January,

Cardinal Fernández had said, “We are preparing a very important document on human dignity which includes not only social issues, but also a strong critique of moral issues such as sex change, surrogacy, gender ideologies, etc.”

The social issues would include anything that impacts human dignity, such as immigration, poverty, war and environmental degradation.

“As Christians, we must not tire of insisting on the primacy of the human person and the defense of his or her dignity beyond every circumstance,” Pope Francis told members of the doctrinal dicastery in late January.

The pope said he hoped the new document “will help us, as a Church, to always be close to all those who, without fanfare, in concrete daily life, fight and personally pay the price for defending the rights of those who do not count.” †

Scholarships are available to help those with financial constraints attend the National Eucharistic Congress

Criterion staff report

Members of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis can purchase discounted five-day passes to attend the July 17-21 National Eucharistic Congress (NEC) in Indianapolis by using the code Indy24 when registering. This reduces the cost of 1-14 individual passes from \$375 to \$274 per pass. Passes are already discounted when registering as a 15-person group or larger (\$299) or as a parish youth group (\$250).

But for individuals, groups and families still struggling to afford passes—whether for one day, several days, the weekend or all five days—there is additional financial help available.

The Solidarity Fund is an initiative led by the bishops of the United States to help individuals, groups and families in need of financial assistance with NEC registration costs.

The application form asks: which days the person, group or family plans to attend; about housing plans; and for an explanation of the need to apply for funding.

Applicants must meet both of the primary criteria listed below. Additional consideration will be given to applicants who also meet the secondary criteria:

Primary criteria:

- Applicant can demonstrate or attest to financial need.
- Applicant is prepared to secure his or her own lodging for the event.

Secondary criteria:

- Applicant comes from an under-represented area of the country or is part of an under-represented group.
- Applicant is seeking support to bring a larger group to attend the Congress.

To apply for the Solidarity Fund, go to www.eucharisticcongress.org/solidarity-fund.

Donations can also be made to the fund to help those in need experience the National Eucharistic Congress. To donate, go to tinyurl.com/NECSolidarityFund. †



NATIONAL EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS WEEKLY UPDATE



Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

April 5–19, 2024

April 5-6

Faith and Science Retreat at Mother of the Redeemer Retreat Center, Bloomington

April 9 – 10:30 a.m.

Priest Personnel Board meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

April 9 – 7 p.m.

Confirmation Mass for youths of St. Michael Parish, Greenfield; St. Jude Parish, Indianapolis; and St. Thomas the Apostle Parish, Fortville, at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis

April 10 – 10 a.m.

Catholic Center Connection at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center

April 11 – 8:15 a.m.

Virtual Judicatories meeting

April 11 – 10 a.m.

Leadership Team meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center

April 12 – 1:30 p.m.

Virtual National Eucharistic Revival Executive Team meeting

April 16 – 11 a.m.

College of Deans meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center

April 17 – 10 a.m.

Department Heads meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center

April 17 – 7 p.m.

Confirmation for youths of St. Roch and St. Matthew the Apostle parishes, Indianapolis, at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral

April 18 – 5:30 p.m.

St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities Gala at The Galt House, Louisville

April 19 – 2 p.m.

Virtual National Eucharistic Revival Bishops Advisory Group meeting

Nicaragua cracks down on Church as the faithful celebrate Holy Week

CUERNAVACA, Mexico (OSV News)—Catholics turned out in large numbers to celebrate Holy Week in Nicaragua. But the ruling Sandinista regime prohibited public exhibitions of faith—such as processions and re-enactments of the passion of Christ—as it continued exercising control over religious activities in what’s becoming an increasingly totalitarian country.

Processions occurred within Church atriums and sanctuaries as police and paramilitaries monitored activities outside and even were captured filming events, according to social media accounts. Some 30 police officers corralled attendees at the Managua cathedral on Good Friday, March 29, independent news outlet *Confidential* reported, ensuring that nothing occurred outside of Church property.

Martha Patricia Molina, a Nicaraguan lawyer in exile who documents Church repression, calculated some 4,000 police were deployed during Holy Week and an estimated 4,800 processions were canceled. She posted a video on X, formerly know as Twitter, of three students being arrested for simply carrying the image of a saint.

“Palm Sunday with police and paramilitaries inside and outside of parishes. They’re filming and photographing laity. A Sunday under extreme siege,” she posted on March 24.

“Jesus was also a victim of mobs, who violently seized him with clubs and swords,” Father Edwing Román, an exiled Nicaraguan priest, posted the same day.

Holy Week marked the second consecutive year the regime has prohibited processions and limited activities to Church premises. A source in Nicaragua told OSV News that priests watch their words during Mass and report being spied upon by police and paramilitaries.

The regime of President Daniel Ortega and his wife, Vice President Rosario Murillo, has cracked down on all forms of dissent—and portrayed the Catholic Church as an enemy for its attempts at finding a political solution to 2018 protests calling for Ortega’s ouster and subsequent work with the families of political prisoners.

Bishop Rolando Álvarez of Matagalpa, who regularly denounced the regime’s excesses, was imprisoned for 500 days and exiled to the Vatican in January along with another prelate, Bishop Isidoro Mora of Siuna, and 17 other Churchmen.

The regime has subsequently moderated its public discourse toward the Church, according to observers, after blasting Church leaders as “terrorists” and “coup mongers.”

Evangelical pastors have also come under persecution in Nicaragua. Eleven pastors affiliated with Nicaraguan Mountain Gateway ministries were convicted on money laundering charges, the organization said in a March 28 statement.

The pastors received sentences of between 12 and 15 years in prison and each was fined \$80 million. Three U.S. missionaries also were charged, but were not in Nicaragua at the time of the other pastors’ arrests †



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National Eucharistic Congress promises ‘profound impact’ for families, and no cost for those 12 and younger

By Natalie Hoefler

Catholics will come to Indianapolis in the tens of thousands this July for the National Eucharistic Congress (NEC) on July 17-21—some as individuals, some as couples, some as groups.



And some will come as families.

“The Church is a family of families,” says Gabriela Ross, director of the archdiocese’s

Office of Marriage and Family Life. “It just makes sense for them to be here for the congress!”

Ross serves on the NEC planning team for the congress’ family track.

“We’ve tried to think of everything to make attending the National Eucharistic Congress as easy as possible for families,” she says, including offering free admission for children ages 12 and younger traveling with their family.

Ross spoke with *The Criterion* about the experience families can look forward to at the congress—and how families can prepare and be involved, whether or not they attend.

‘An essential part of this movement’

Families coming together to spend time focusing on the Eucharist is important, says Ross.

“The Eucharist is the source and summit of our faith,” she says. “And marriage as a sacrament is an icon of God’s love.”

“The vocation of marriage is to baptize and evangelize the family. If marriages are going to succeed in that vocation and mission, then they need the Eucharist as the source of their love, because the Eucharist transforms and purifies the family.”

The NEC website notes that “fostering a love of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist within our homes will have a profound impact on how we love others outside of our homes. ... Eucharistic revival happens at the grassroots level, and the domestic Church is an essential part of this movement.”

This message will be shared during the morning “Cultivate” family impact sessions during the congress. Speakers include Voluntas Dei Father Leo Patalinghug, founder of the Plating Grace international food and faith movement and host of EWTN’s “Savoring Our Faith” show; John Paul II Healing Center founder Bob Schuchts; and Damon and Melanie Owens, founders of the online Joyful Ever After marriage ministry.

Ennie and Cana Hickman, founders of the Del Rey Collective ministry, will serve as emcees, and popular Catholic musician Steve Angrisano will provide music at each session.

“It’s wonderful for Catholic families to encourage and support each other in their witness,” says Ross. “The family track has taken the time to anticipate a lot

of those family needs—nursing, a sensory-friendly room, a family quiet room, volunteers at all entrances and exits, like a checkpoint in case little ones try to wander off.”

While the morning sessions are ticketed and have a capacity limit, all attendees are welcome to enjoy afternoon breakout talks and experiences.

“There are other family workshops beyond the talks,” Ross adds, including a “Catholic home experience that has eucharistic adoration and activities for the whole family every day,” and an area offering Catechesis of the Good Shepherd.

Families can also enjoy some sightseeing in the afternoons. The Indiana Convention Center and neighboring Lucas Oil Stadium—the two NEC venues—are within walking distance of several museums, the canal walk, Monument Circle and more.

‘It’s in our own backyard!’

Whether planning on attending the congress or not, there are ways for families to be involved and focused on the Eucharist ahead of time, according to Ross.

Her office’s website links to National Eucharistic Revival resources in English and Spanish for families and children of different ages. Options include videos and activities on eucharistic saints, the Mass, small group discussions and more.

“Join in a *Corpus Christi* procession, and invite other families to join you,” Ross suggests. The feast is celebrated on June 1-2 this year.

Families might also participate in one of the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage events, as eucharistic processions from the northern, eastern, southern and western areas of the United States make stops for adoration in certain archdiocesan parishes before converging in Indianapolis for the congress.

“Most importantly, pray,” says Ross. “Pray the Sisters of Life’s eucharistic family prayer [see image on this page]. Pray as a family in adoration. Talk with your parish about offering a family adoration experience—I’m happy to share best practices.”

As families pray, Ross invites them to include the National Eucharistic Congress among their intentions.

“Pray for the success of the congress, for those in attendance, for those planning the event,” she requests. “And pray for renewal, that the archdiocese and our

country will experience renewed love for the Eucharist.”

Ross encourages families in central and southern Indiana to come to the National Eucharistic Congress.

“This is such a unique moment in the life of the Church, and we get to encounter it in our own state—it’s in our own backyard!” she says. “It really is an incredible opportunity for families that will have a ripple effect.”

“But it takes families to come to create those ripple effects when they go back to their communities and take their lived experience and witness to the faith.”

Ross acknowledges that planning any family trip can have its challenges.

“But in this case, everything is planned out for you—all you have to do is come!”

(For links to register for the National Eucharistic Congress, to view the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage map with parish stops, and Eucharist-based family resources in English and Spanish, go to marriageandfamily.archindy.org. For family adoration best practices, contact Gabriela Ross at 317-592-4007 or gross@archindy.org.) †

COME REIGN IN US

Eucharistic Prayer for the family

O Jesus, King of the World,
You entered our lives
hidden and humble
in a Bethlehem cave.
Now, hidden in the Host,
You come.

O Jesus in the Eucharist,
let the rays of Your love and
mercy radiate out and flood
my soul, and the soul of
every person in my family.

With Your saving power,
Jesus, cast out all anxiety,
unforgiveness, addiction, pride,
impurity, confusion, hatred,
resentment, fear, and despair.
Pierce the darkness with
Your light and fill us with
Your presence.

O Jesus in the Eucharist,
King filled with compassion,
**Come, reign in me
and in my family.**

O Jesus in the Eucharist,
King of infinite mercy,
**Come, reign in me
and in my family.**

O Jesus in the Eucharist,
King Who is all truth and beauty,
**Come, reign in me
and in my family.**

Mary, Mother of God,
St. Joseph, protector
of the Holy Family,
**Help us to love Jesus
and to entrust ourselves
completely to Him.**

O Jesus in the Eucharist,
Prince of Peace,
Come reign in us!

Amen.

This “Come Reign in Us” Eucharistic Prayer for the Family was written by the Sisters of Life (www.sistersoflife.org). The prayer is available in a tri-fold card format. The archdiocesan Office of Marriage and Family Life has a limited supply of these cards available at no charge. To request copies, contact Gabriela Ross at 317-592-4007 or gross@archindy.org. Bundles of cards are also available for purchase at tinyurl.com/SOLFamilyPrayerCard. The cost is \$12 for a bundle of 25, and discounts are available for bundles of 50, 100 or 500.

Volunteers are needed to help with National Eucharistic Congress family track

Criterion staff report

Volunteers are needed to help with the family track during the National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis on July 17-21.

“Volunteers of all generations are needed,” says Gabriela Ross, director of the archdiocesan Office of Marriage and Family Life. “It’s especially a great opportunity for grandparents. They form such an important part of the family.”

She notes that grandparents attending the National Eucharistic Congress “can go to any track they choose, so we invite them to consider volunteering for just an hour or two at the family track as a cheerful witness of love.”

Volunteers must be age 18 and older.

To express an interest in volunteering, an online form is available at eucharisticcongress.org/volunteer. It takes only one to two minutes to complete.

Volunteers must complete the archdiocese’s online safe environment training, which is available 24/7.

To participate in the National Eucharistic Congress events and sessions, volunteers must register separately. To register for a day, weekend or five-day pass, go to eucharisticcongress.org/register. Members of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis can receive a discount by using the code Indy24 when registering. †



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Editorial

Reasons for being joyful

This is the season of Easter joy. It is the time of year when Christians pay special attention to the heartfelt joy that is an integral part of life in Christ.

Pope Benedict XVI once wrote that during the baroque period, the Church's liturgy used to include "the *risus paschalis*, the Easter laughter."

According to Pope Benedict, in those days "the Easter homily had to contain a story which made people laugh, so that the Church resounded with joyful laughter. That may be a somewhat superficial form of Christian joy. But is there not something very beautiful and appropriate about laughter becoming a liturgical symbol?"

The Church's liturgy should always be reverent, but it does not need to be somber or bleak. Humor has its rightful place in the liturgy and in our Christian lives. Laughter is a beautiful and appropriate liturgical symbol when it expresses the joy that we are called to feel as people who have been redeemed in Christ.

The 20th-century Christian philosopher Josef Pieper wrote that joy is an emotion that must be supported by some cause—a reason to be joyful. Joy does not exist in isolation from the concrete experiences of life. It springs from some external factor or reason.

Here are some reasons why we Christians should be joyful this Easter season:

—**Life.** The gift of life has been given to us by God so that we can share in his divine life and participate in the work of creation. Life is threatened today by so many things that we dare not take it for granted!

—**Freedom.** The death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ has liberated us from the slavery of sin and death. Too many people today do not experience the freedom that is theirs by the grace of God.

—**Mission.** We have been baptized and given a special share in the ministry of Jesus as disciples sent to proclaim the Gospel and transform the world. We are all co-responsible leaders and missionary disciples in Christ's Church.

—**Grace.** We are not powerless. The Holy Spirit has strengthened us with his grace. He is the power through which Christ causes us to experience his closeness.

—**Communion.** We are not alone. The Lord has gathered us into his Church and has invited us to intimate communion with him through frequent reception of his body and blood in the Eucharist. We have family, friends and co-workers who know, love and respect us as individuals and as members of the family of God.

—**Laughter.** We are free to laugh, to sing and to enjoy the boundless beauty of God's creation. The Book of Revelation's vision of heaven expresses what we see by faith at Easter: The Lamb who was slain lives. Since he lives, our weeping comes to an end and is transformed into laughter.

—**Participation.** We are not spectators in the life of our Church.

We are invited to "full, conscious and active participation" in the liturgy and sacraments of our Church and in the ministries of our parish, archdiocese and the Church universal. We have the opportunity to participate actively in the community life of our neighborhoods, our cities, our nation and our world without suffering from oppression or fear because we know that we are free people.

—**Love.** We are loved immeasurably. "Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom 8:35-39).

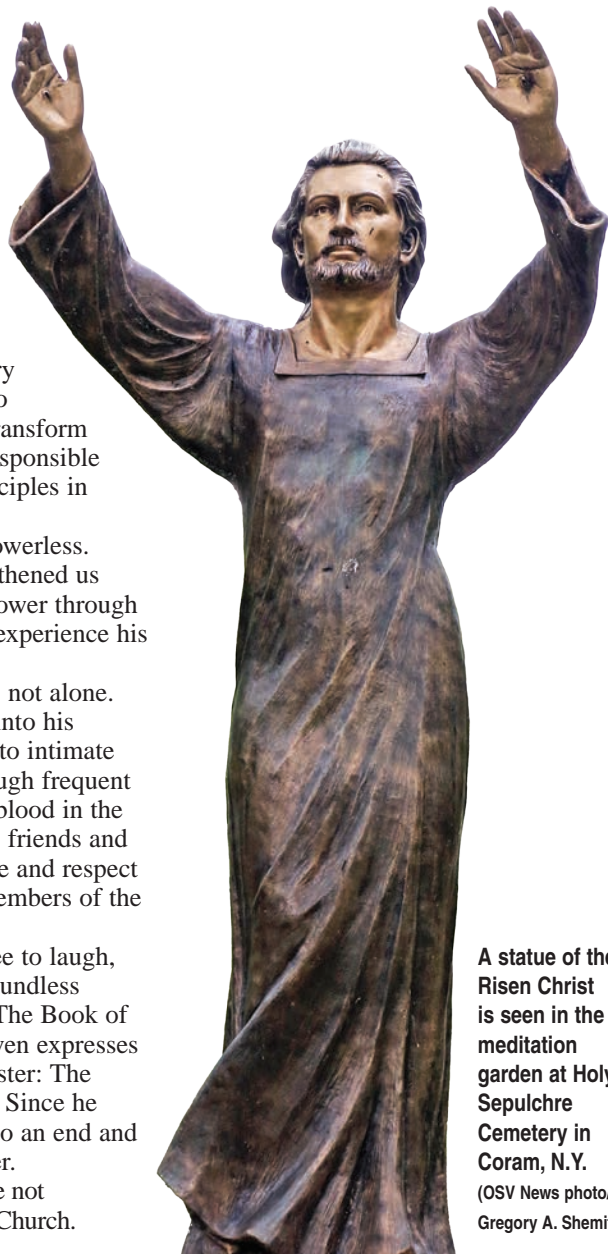
We can rejoice now that Lent is over, and we have entered into the Easter season. Each of us can identify our own reasons to be joyful.

We know we can all develop long lists of reasons to be sad and depressed. And as if that's not enough, all we have to do is turn on the television, read a newspaper or log on to the internet to find plenty of reasons to be miserable.

The truth is that Christ has overcome the powers of death and darkness. He is risen! He has set us free. And he has given us powerful reasons to be joyful and filled with hope.

Let us rejoice and be glad this Easter season. Let us thank God for the gifts he has given us and for the many reasons we have to be joyful—at Easter time and always!

—Daniel Conway



A statue of the Risen Christ is seen in the meditation garden at Holy Sepulchre Cemetery in Coram, N.Y. (OSV News photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)

Reflection/John Shaughnessy

An Irish poet's prayer, a 'Ted Lasso' scene and a song of hope remind us of who we are called to be

In the midst of our busy lives, we often need reminders of who we are called to be.

During a day when completing a series of errands seemed important, I was rushing from returning some items at the library when a thin book at the edge of a display table caught my eye.

Flipping through the first pages of *Being Here* by Irish poet Padraig O Tuama, I came across "A Prayer for the People" that he had written, including this part:

*"Jesus of Nazareth,
you encountered many
lives
calling people to
justice
love and curiosity.
May we—in all our
nights, days
and activities—act
with more
justice, love and
curiosity.
Because this might
save us,
and make us more like
you,
who turns to us in love.
Amen."*

As you read those lines, maybe one word, phrase or thought jumped out to you. For me, it was "curiosity," which immediately reminded me of one of my favorite scenes from the television series, "Ted Lasso."

In that scene, which takes place in a crowded bar, Ted has agreed to a game of darts as part of a bet with the unscrupulous Rupert Mannion—at which point Mannion smirks as he pulls out a small, wooden case filled with exquisitely crafted darts, reflecting his prowess in the game. And all hope of Ted winning the bet seems to disappear as Mannion leads the game by a significant margin as Ted needs to hit a combination of seemingly impossible shots with his last three throws.

As Mannion sneers, "Good luck," Ted prepares to throw his first dart, saying, "You know, Rupert, guys have underestimated me my entire life. And for years, I never understood why. It used to really bother me. But then one day, I was driving my little boy to school, and I saw this quote by Walt Whitman, and it was painted on the wall there. It said, 'Be

curious, not judgmental.' I like that."

Throwing his first dart, Ted hits the mark he needed, and then he continues, "So I get back in my car, and I'm driving to work, and all of a sudden it hits me. All them fellas that used to belittle me, not a single one of them were curious. You know, they thought they had everything all figured out. So, they judged everything, and they judged everyone. And I realized that their underestimating me—who I was—had nothing to do with it. 'Cause if they were curious, they would've asked questions. You know? Like, 'Have you played a lot of darts, Ted?'"

Throwing his second dart, Ted hits the needed mark again. Then he says, "To which I would've answered, 'Yes, sir. Every Sunday afternoon at a sports bar with my father, from age 10 until I was 16 when he passed away.'" A moment later, Ted throws his third dart, hitting the bullseye to win the game. While the crowd in the bar cheers, Ted looks at Mannion and says, "Good game, Rupert."

There's no doubt that we live in a time of divisiveness—when people often seem more judgmental than curious. And the same could be said of the divisions that exist within our faith. And yet, there come moments that remind us of who we are called to be.

My wife and I had one of those moments when we attended a concert featuring the musical choirs of Butler University in Indianapolis recently. We listened in joy as the students—Asian, Black, Hispanic and white—blended their voices in beautiful harmony, ending the evening with these lyrics from Carly Simon's "Let the River Run":

*"We're coming to the
edge
Running on the water
Coming through the
fog
Your sons and
daughters*

*Let the river run
Let all the dreamers
Wake the nation
Come, the New Jerusalem."*

Another reminder of who Christ calls us to be—people of hope, justice, curiosity and love.

(John Shaughnessy is the assistant editor of *The Criterion*, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.) †

*There's no
doubt that we
live in a time of
divisiveness—
when
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seem more
judgmental
than curious.
And the same
could be said
of the divisions
that exist
within our
faith. And yet,
there come
moments that
remind us of
who we are
called to be.*

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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

God's love is everlasting, his mercy endures forever

*Let those who fear the Lord say,
"His mercy endures forever" (Ps 118:4).*

The Second Sunday of Easter, which concludes the Easter Octave, is known as Divine Mercy Sunday. Pope St. John Paul II established this liturgical feast on April 30, 2000, when he canonized Polish Sister Faustina Kowalska, who was a strong advocate for devotion to God's mercy.

On April 22, 2001, one year after establishing Divine Mercy Sunday, St. John Paul II re-emphasized its message in the resurrection context of Easter:

"Jesus said to St. Faustina one day: 'Humanity will never find peace until it turns with trust to Divine Mercy.' Divine Mercy! This is the Easter gift that the Church receives from the risen Christ and offers to humanity."

Pope John Paul II, who died in April 2005 on the vigil of Divine Mercy Sunday, was himself beatified on Divine Mercy Sunday—May 1, 2011—by his successor Pope Benedict XVI, and was canonized together with Pope John XXIII on Divine Mercy Sunday, April 27, 2014, by Pope Francis.

Given our current state of constant warfare—in Ukraine, in the Holy Land

and in many other parts of the world—devotion to Divine Mercy is sorely needed now.

The responsorial psalm for Divine Mercy Sunday (Ps 118) affirms that God's love is everlasting, and that divine mercy endures forever:

The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. By the Lord has this been done; it is wonderful in our eyes. This is the day the Lord has made; let us be glad and rejoice in it. (Ps 118:22-24)

"Christ the Cornerstone" is my episcopal motto. It affirms that God loves us so much that he sent his only Son to save us in the greatest act of mercy ever known—the Lord's passion, death and resurrection. Our Church is built on this firm foundation. As a community of faith, we are grounded in the merciful love of God that endures forever in the face of all obstacles.

The Gospel reading for this Sunday (Jn 20:19-31) tells the familiar story of the "doubting Thomas," the Apostle who refused to believe in the resurrection of Jesus, saying: "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the nail marks and put my hand into his side, I will

not believe" (Jn 20:25). Like many of us, Thomas was skeptical; he couldn't accept what he was unable to touch with his own hands or see with his own eyes.

St. John tells us that, a week later, Jesus allowed Thomas to encounter him in his post-resurrection, glorified humanity, but he praised those who "see" Jesus with only the eyes of faith:

Jesus came, although the doors were locked, and stood in their midst and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe." Thomas answered and said to him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed." (Jn 20:26-29)

The Divine Mercy extends to all—even atheists, agnostics and those whose faith is weak. But for those who believe, the fullness of God's love is revealed in encounters with the risen Lord during prayer, the sacraments and service to others, especially those who are most in need. This is why we have to practice our faith. Unless

we continually encounter Jesus, he becomes just a vague idea or a distant memory. For our faith to be vibrant, we must "see" Jesus frequently (every day, if we can) with the eyes of an active and experiential faith.

In the first reading for Divine Mercy Sunday (Acts 4:32-35), we learn that "with great power the Apostles bore witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great favor was accorded them all" (Acts 4:33). The "favor" accorded to the members of the early Church was their ability to live together in harmony, sharing everything in common. This is divine mercy in action, the love of Christ that fills our hearts and allows us to live together in peace.

As we continue our celebration of this Easter season, let's thank God for his endless mercy and for all the gifts he gives us so generously. Let's practice our faith in Jesus by renewing our commitment to encounter him in our prayers, in sacred Scripture, in the holy Eucharist and all the sacraments, and in service to "the least of these," his brothers and sisters.

May this Easter time deepen our faith and lead us to the joy of Christ's presence. Alleluia! †



Cristo, la piedra angular

El amor de Dios es eterno, su misericordia permanece para siempre

*Que lo digan los temerosos del Señor
"¡Su misericordia permanece para siempre!" (Sal 118:4)*

El segundo domingo de Pascua, con el cual concluye la Octava de Pascua, se conoce también como el domingo de la Divina Misericordia. El Papa San Juan Pablo II estableció esta fiesta litúrgica el 30 de abril de 2000, cuando canonizó a la hermana polaca Faustina Kowalska, que fue una firme defensora de la devoción a la misericordia de Dios.

El 22 de abril de 2001, un año después de establecer el Domingo de la Divina Misericordia, San Juan Pablo II volvió a insistir en su mensaje en el contexto de la Pascua de Resurrección:

Jesús le dijo un día a santa Faustina: "La humanidad nunca encontrará la paz hasta que se encomiende con confianza a la Divina Misericordia." ¡Divina Misericordia! Este es el don pascual que la Iglesia recibe de Cristo resucitado y ofrece a la humanidad.

El Papa Juan Pablo II, quien falleció en abril de 2005 durante la vigilia del Domingo de la Divina Misericordia, fue a su vez beatificado el Domingo de la Divina Misericordia—el 1 de mayo de 2011—por su sucesor, el Papa Benedicto XVI y conjuntamente con el Papa Juan XXIII, fue canonizado por el Papa Francisco el Domingo de la Divina Misericordia, el 27 de abril de 2014.

Dado nuestro estado actual de guerra constante—en Ucrania, en Tierra Santa y en muchas otras partes del mundo—la devoción a la Divina Misericordia es muy necesaria ahora.

El salmo responsorial del Domingo de la Divina Misericordia (Sal 118) afirma que el amor de Dios es eterno y que la misericordia divina perdura para siempre:

"La piedra que los constructores rechazaron, ha llegado a ser la piedra angular. Esto viene de parte del Señor; y al verlo nuestros ojos se quedan maravillados. Este es el día que ha hecho el Señor; alegrémonos y regocijémonos en él" (Sal 118:22-24).

"Cristo, la piedra angular" es mi lema episcopal y la confirmación de que Dios nos ama tanto que envió a su Hijo único para salvarnos en el mayor acto de misericordia jamás conocido: la pasión, muerte y resurrección del Señor. Nuestra Iglesia se construye sobre estos firmes cimientos. Como comunidad de fe, estamos cimentados en el amor misericordioso de Dios que perdura para siempre frente a todos los obstáculos.

La lectura del Evangelio de este domingo (Jn 20:19-31) relata la conocida historia del "Tomás incrédulo," el apóstol que se negó a creer en la resurrección de Jesús, diciendo: "Si yo no veo en sus manos

la señal de los clavos, ni meto mi dedo en el lugar de los clavos, y mi mano en su costado, no creeré" (Jn 20:25). Como muchos de nosotros, Tomás era escéptico; no podía aceptar lo que no podía tocar con sus propias manos ni ver con sus propios ojos.

San Juan nos dice que, una semana después, Jesús le permitió a Tomás encontrarse con él en su forma humana glorificada posterior a la resurrección, pero elogió a los que "ven" a Jesús únicamente con los ojos de la fe:

Estando las puertas cerradas, Jesús llegó, se puso en medio de ellos y les dijo: "La paz sea con ustedes." Luego le dijo a Tomás: "Pon aquí tu dedo, y mira mis manos; y acerca tu mano, y métela en mi costado; y no seas incrédulo, sino creyente." Entonces Tomás respondió y le dijo: "¡Señor mío, y Dios mío!" Jesús le dijo: "Tomás, has creído porque me has visto. Bienaventurados los que no vieron y creyeron" (Jn 20:26-29).

La Divina Misericordia se extiende a todos, incluso a los ateos, agnósticos y a aquellos cuya fe es débil. Pero para los creyentes, la plenitud del amor de Dios se revela en los encuentros con el Señor resucitado durante la oración, los sacramentos y el servicio a los demás, especialmente a los más necesitados. Por eso debemos practicar nuestra fe: a menos que estemos en el encuentro

constante con Jesús, se convierte en una vaga idea o en un recuerdo lejano. Para que nuestra fe se mantenga viva, debemos "er" a Jesús con frecuencia (todos los días, de ser posible) con los ojos de una fe activa y vivencial.

En la primera lectura del Domingo de la Divina Misericordia (Hch 4:32-35), descubrimos que "los apóstoles daban un testimonio poderoso de la resurrección del Señor Jesús, y la gracia de Dios sobreaundaba en todos ellos" (Hch 4:33). La "gracia" concedida a los miembros de la Iglesia primitiva era su capacidad para vivir juntos en armonía, compartiendo todo en común. Esta es la misericordia divina en acción, el amor de Cristo que llena nuestros corazones y nos permite vivir juntos en paz.

Mientras continuamos nuestra celebración de esta temporada de Pascua, demos gracias a Dios por su infinita misericordia y por todos los dones que nos da tan generosamente. Practiquemos nuestra fe en Jesús al renovar nuestro compromiso de encontrarnos con él en nuestras oraciones, en las Sagradas Escrituras, en la santa eucaristía, así como en todos los sacramentos, y en el servicio a "los más pequeños" de nuestros hermanos y hermanas.

Que este tiempo de Pascua profundice nuestra fe y nos conduzca a la alegría de la presencia de Cristo. ¡Aleluia! †

Events Calendar

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

April 8

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **Free Solar Eclipse Event**, 2-4 p.m., \$5 donation for solar glasses, snacks and drinks provided. Information, registration: 812-933-6437, oldenburgfranciscancenter.org.

April 9

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.

April 17

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

April 18

Our Lady of Peace Cemetery and Mausoleum, 9001 Haverstick Road, Indianapolis. **Mass**, 2 p.m. Information: 317-574-8898, catholiccemeteries.cc.

April 19-21

Theater at the Fort, 8920 Otis Ave., Indianapolis.

Alice in Wonderland, Fri. 7:30 p.m., Sat. 3 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., Sun. 3 p.m., performed by Agape Theater Company youth actors, tickets \$5-\$15. Information, tickets: 317-450-5171, info@agapetheatercompany.com, tinyurl.com/agape-alice24.

April 20

Sidewalk Advocates for Life training, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m., location and other details given by phone, \$10 for materials, trainees must be available to volunteer as sidewalk advocate or prayer partner at Planned Parenthood facility at 8590 Georgetown Road in Indianapolis during normal business hours Mon.-Fri., register by April 11. Information, registration: Sheryl Dye, smdye1@gmail.com, 317-407-6881.

Sisters of Providence White Violet Center for Eco-Justice, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Earth Day Festival**, 11 a.m.-3 p.m., nature shows, kids' activities, craft demonstrations, exhibits, tours of the organic gardens and horse barns, bake sale, free admission, donations accepted. Information:

812-535-2932, wvc@spsmw.org, WhiteViolet.org.

Sisters of Providence, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Youth Volunteer Day**, 11 a.m.-3 p.m., ages 12-18, assist residents in attending Earth Day Festival at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. Information, registration: teenvolunteer.sistersofprovidence.org, jluna@spsmw.org, 361-500-9505.

April 20-21

Project Joseph Healing Retreat, post-abortive healing retreat for men, Bloomington area (location given upon registering). Information, registration: dlbangs1@gmail.com, 765-860-6006, projectjosephmidwest.org.

St. Bartholomew Parish courtyard, 1306 27th St., Columbus. **Care for Our Common Home: Earth Day Displays**, Sat. following 5 p.m. Mass, Sun. following 8 a.m., 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. Masses, rain location parish hall, free. Information: 812-379-9353.

April 21

Crane Bay Event Center, 551 Merrill St., Indianapolis. **Light**

in the City Annual Dinner, benefitting Lumen Christi Catholic School, 4-9 p.m., 4 p.m. cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, silent auction viewing and bidding, 6 p.m. dinner, 6:45 p.m. program, 7:45 p.m. silent auction closes, 8:25 p.m. silent auction checkout, \$125 per person, \$1,000 table of eight, register by April 14. Information, registration: lumenchristi.home.qtego.us, 317-632-3174.

April 22

St. Bartholomew Church, 1306 27th St., Columbus. **Our Common Home: An Earth Day Concert**, 6 p.m., featuring St. Bartholomew Adult and Children's Choir and Fairlawn Presbyterian Chancel Choir, free admission, donations accepted. Information: 812-379-9353.

April 25

St. Joan of Arc Parish, 4217 Central Ave., Indianapolis. **Cor Jesu**, 7-8 p.m., night of communal prayer, adoration, Benediction and fellowship, free. Information: megt2014@gmail.com.

April 27

Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish, 520 Stevens St., Indianapolis. **Faithful Citizens Rosary Walk**, 10:45-11:45 a.m.,

meet in front of church. Information: holyrosary.prolife@gmail.com.

White River State Park, 801 W. Washington St., Indianapolis. **St. Vincent de Paul Love Your Neighbor 5K Run/Walk**, prices for one-three participants: 5K ages 23 and older \$34 through April 26, \$39 on site; ages 22 and younger \$25; \$5 discount per person when registering four or more. **One-mile Fun Run**: one-three participants: \$24.99 through April 26, \$29.99 on site; \$5 discount per person when registering four or more. Walk-ups welcome. Information, registration: 317-924-5769, ext. 238, dweeney@sudpindy.org, sudpindy.org/neighbor.

St. Agnes Parish, 1008 McLary Road, Nashville. **Evangelization 101 Workshop**, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., hosted by the archdiocesan Office of Evangelization, \$20 (self-pay or contact your parish to see if they will assume the cost), register by April 22. Information: 317-236-1466, abardo@archindy.org.

St. Jude Parish, 5353 McFarland Road, Indianapolis. **Together in Holiness**

Marriage Enrichment Conference, 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m., early bird until March 11 \$54 couple, \$35 individual, after March 11 \$64 couple, \$40 individual, online registration ends April 25, childcare \$5 per child, includes Mass, presentations, lunch, opportunity for adoration and confession. Information, registration: togetherinholiness.org/indianapolis, 832-779-1070, heather@forlifeandfamily.org.

April 27-May 17

Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **Shop INN-Spired Final Closing Sale**, Sat. 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Mon.-Fri. 9 a.m.-4 p.m.; final sale, all gift shop items marked down 50%-85%, books, jewelry, gifts, religious articles, handmade items. Information: 317-788-7581, benedictinn@benedictinn.org.

May 3

Our Lady of the Greenwood Church, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. First Friday bilingual celebration of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Mass 6 p.m. followed by adoration until 9 p.m., sacrament of reconciliation available. Information: 317-750-7309, msross1@hotmail.com. †

Retreats and Programs

For a complete list of retreats as reported to The Criterion, log on to www.archindy.org/retreats.

April 22-26

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Priests Retreat: The Gospel of Mark—Lessons in Rejection**, Benedictine Father Eugene Hensell presenting, \$465 single, \$200 commuter. Registration: 812-357-6611, saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

April 23

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Day of Silence**, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., \$45, includes room, lunch, Mass and use of common areas and grounds, overnight stay available for additional \$32, dinner additional \$11. Registration: archindy.org/fatima, 317-545-7681, lcoons@archindy.org.

April 26-28, June 28-30

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Tobit Marriage Preparation Weekend**,

7 p.m. Fri.-11:45 a.m. Sun., \$298 per couple, includes separate rooms, meals and materials. Information, registration: fm.retreatportal.com/events, 317-545-7681, lcoons@archindy.org.

Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis. **Women's Weekend of Peace**, Fri. 7 p.m.-Sun. noon, \$250, includes accommodations, meals and materials, limited to six participants. Information, registration: offmgr@mountsaintfrancis.org, 812-923-8817, tinyurl.com/msfwomenwknd24.

April 27

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **E.A.R.T.H. (Energy Awareness for Rural Towns and Homes)**, 9:30-11:30 a.m., Franciscan Sister Claire Whalen, Peter Schubert

and Kathryn Lisinicchia presenting, \$30. Information, registration: 812-933-6437, oldenburgfranciscancenter.org.

May 1

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **Contemplative Prayer**, in person or via Zoom, 2-3 p.m., Franciscan Sister Olga Wittekind presenting, freewill donation. Information, registration: 812-933-6437, center@oldenburgosf.com, oldenburgfranciscancenter.org.

May 3

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **A Day of Quiet Renewal**, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., \$20, \$80 with spiritual direction. Information, registration: 812-933-6437, oldenburgfranciscancenter.org.

May 3-5

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr.,

St. Meinrad. **Young Adult Retreat**, 5 p.m. Fri. (vespers)-1 p.m. Sun. (lunch), for young adults ages 18-39, quiet day of reflection with spiritual direction available, includes overnight accommodations and meals, \$50 single room. Registration: 812-357-6501, yae@saintmeinrad.edu.

May 4

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Keep Your**

Lamps Trimmed and Burning, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. CT, Jane Feliz Rush presenting, \$55 single, \$110 double. Registration: 812-357-6611, saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

May 14

Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **Personal Day of Retreat**, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., \$40, includes private room for the day and lunch; spiritual direction available for additional \$30,

must be scheduled in advance. Information, registration: benedictinn.org/programs, 317-788-7581, benedictinn@benedictinn.org.

May 17-19

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Benedictine Spirituality 101**, Benedictine Father Adrian Burke presenting, \$300 single, \$425 double. Registration: 812-357-6611, saintmeinrad.org/retreats. †

'Hats Off to Spring' luncheon and style show benefiting St. Augustine Home is set for May 1; register by April 19

"Hats off to Spring," a luncheon and style show benefiting the Little Sisters of the Poor's St. Augustine Home for the Aged in Indianapolis, will be held at the Ritz Charles, 12156 N. Meridian St., in Carmel, Ind., from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. on May 1.

The event, sponsored by the St. Augustine Home Guild, starts with a social hour with complimentary mimosas and shopping with local vendors who are donating 20% of their proceeds. There will also be a 50/50 raffle, a "Golden Ticket" raffle for a

dinner for 10 with wine pairings to be hosted at the Lucas Estate in Carmel, Ind., and lunch during a fashion show featuring the latest styles from the Secret Ingredient of Indianapolis.

The St. Augustine Home is a charitable ministry of the Little Sisters of the Poor serving elderly people of limited means throughout the state.

The cost is \$65, and registration is required by April 19.

For more information or to register, call 317-294-1955 or e-mail joannedyer@aol.com. †

Wedding Anniversaries

LEONARD AND CATHERINE (MARTIN) ECKSTEIN, members of St. Louis Parish in Batesville, will celebrate their 65th wedding anniversary on April 18.

The couple was married in St. Anthony of Padua Church in Morris on April 18, 1959.

They have six children: Mary Gehring, Margaret Suding, Anthony, Daniel, Leonard and Timothy Eckstein.

The couple also has 14 grandchildren and 22 great-grandchildren.



JOHN AND CAROL (MORGAN) DINGLEDY, members of St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on April 6.

The couple was married in St. James of the Valley Church in Wyoming, Ohio, on April 6, 1974.

They have two children: Kathleen Gratz and Matthew Dingley.

The couple also has six 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.



Pope Francis observes the crowd in St. Peter's Square before he imparts his "urbi et orbi" (to the city and the world) blessing from the central balcony of St. Peter's Basilica on March 31. (CNS photo/Lola Gomez)



Pope Francis prays as he begins Easter morning Mass in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican on March 31. (CNS photo/Lola Gomez)

EASTER

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celebrations during Lent, as part of the rite of "Resurrexit" in which an icon of Jesus is presented to the pope to recall St. Peter's witness to Christ's resurrection.

More than 21,000 flower bulbs donated by Dutch flower growers decorated the square and popped with color against the overcast sky.

As is traditional, the pope did not give a homily during the morning Mass, but bowed his head and observed several minutes of silent reflection after the chanting of the Gospel in both Latin and Greek.

Although the Vatican said Pope Francis stayed home from a Way of the Cross service at Rome's Colosseum on Good Friday on March 29 "to conserve his health" for the Easter Vigil and Mass, the pope appeared in high spirits while greeting cardinals and bishops after the Mass. He spent considerable time riding the popemobile among the faithful,

smiling and waving to the throngs of visitors in St. Peter's Square and lining the long avenue approaching the Vatican.

The Vatican said some 30,000 people attended the pope's morning Mass and, by noon, there were approximately 60,000 people inside and around St. Peter's Square for his Easter message and blessing "urbi et orbi" (to the city and the world).

U.S. Cardinal James M. Harvey, archpriest of Rome's Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls, stood alongside Pope Francis for the blessing and announced a plenary indulgence available to those present and to everyone following through radio, television and other channels of communication.

Stopping only occasionally to clear his throat, Pope Francis read the entirety of his Easter message and prayed for peace in several conflict hotspots around the world, including Syria, Lebanon, Haiti, Myanmar, Sudan, Mozambique and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

He also prayed for the Rohingya—a persecuted, predominantly Muslim, ethnic group residing largely in Myanmar—who

he said are "beset by a grave humanitarian crisis."

The pope praised the Western Balkan region's steps toward European integration, urging the region to embrace its ethnic, cultural and confessional differences, as well as the peace negotiations taking place between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

"May the risen Christ open a path of hope to all those who in other parts of the world are suffering from violence, conflict, food insecurity and the effects of climate change. May he grant consolation to the victims of terrorism in all its forms," he prayed, asking visitors to "pray for all those who have lost their lives and implore the repentance and conversion of the perpetrators of those crimes."

On Easter, which Pope Francis said celebrates the life given to humanity through the resurrection of God's Son, he lamented "how much the precious gift of life is despised" today.

"How many children cannot even be born?" he asked. "How many die of hunger and are deprived of essential care

or are victims of abuse and violence? How many lives are made objects of trafficking for the increasing commerce in human beings?

"On the day when Christ has set us free from the slavery of death, I appeal to all who have political responsibilities to spare no efforts in combatting the scourge of human trafficking, by working tirelessly to dismantle the networks of exploitation and to bring freedom to those who are their victims," he said.

Pope Francis also asked that the light of the risen Christ "shine upon migrants and on all those who are passing through a period of economic difficulty" as a source of consolation and hope.

"May Christ guide all persons of goodwill to unite themselves in solidarity, in order to address together the many challenges which loom over the poorest families in their search for a better life and happiness," he said, praying that the light of the resurrection "illumine our minds and convert our hearts, and make us aware of the value of every human life, which must be welcomed, protected and loved." †

MONSTRANCE

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during this time of the National Eucharistic Revival.

In its second year at St. Michael School in Greenfield, the program revolves around the monstrance, a receptacle which holds a consecrated host—transformed into Christ's body—during eucharistic adoration.

"We're in the eucharistic revival, and we were trying to think of ways to infuse more of our faith into after-school hours," says Hittel, the principal of St. Michael School. "We do things during the school day. We go to adoration and Benediction every Friday. I had invited parents to join us for adoration, but busy schedules made it difficult for many families to join us. So we thought, 'How can we take it home?' The idea of being able to take a traveling monstrance home bloomed out of that.

"Each of the classes has created their own traveling monstrance. Within their portable box is a replica of a monstrance, a journal and some prayer cards to help the families know where to begin. They can use their own prayers, too. We want to make sure we've given our families every opportunity to pray together."

It's important to note that the traveling monstrance doesn't contain a consecrated host when students bring it into their home. Instead, the purpose of the traveling monstrance is as a symbol to remind families of the importance of coming together in prayer. It's also had the impact of drawing them to eucharistic adoration and a closer relationship to Christ.

"It absolutely has an impact," Hittel says. "Immediately after the school Mass on Friday, Father [Aaron Jenkins] will do the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. And sometime during the day on Friday, each class spends a half hour to 45 minutes in church in

adoration. On Friday afternoon, we come together as a school for the Blessed Sacrament to be reposed and we do that in Benediction. To spend time in quiet prayer with the children is amazing. It warms the heart.

"The students are more prepared, too, and they have a greater understanding of what the expectations are in eucharistic adoration. The wiggles and the jiggles and the squiggles are far less because the students understand the reverence they need to have. We try to help them understand on their level, whether it's kindergarten or eighth grade, what the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament means."

'It allowed me to see that I can bring Christ into our house'

In the program, students take turns bringing the traveling monstrance home for a couple of days. As part of the program, the children are given journals in which they write about what their family did together with the monstrance in their home.

"Some of the journal entries are about just being thankful for our Savior, Jesus Christ. Some children have written about how it made their family feel to pray together," Hittel says. "It has gone over really, really well. Even with our non-Catholic families, it's time their family can come together in prayer.

"You know how busy everyone's lives are. This is just five minutes without a video game. Five minutes without watching TV. Five minutes where even if the family just spends that time talking together, then we've made progress. I couldn't be more pleased."

As students at St. Michael, Mike and Mary Bauer see the difference the program has made to them and their classmates.

"It's been a good way to get families to pray together," says Mike, an eighth-grade student. "It allowed me to see

that I can bring Christ into our house. Even at home, I can pray to him, and he'll hear me."

"They like the idea," Mary says about her sixth-grade classmates. "It's a way they can pray with their family and have other people pray for their family, not just at school but at home, too. It definitely shows that even if you don't have the ability to go to eucharistic adoration, you can still worship God in your home even without the traveling monstrance or even going to the church for eucharistic adoration."

Seeing God in everyday life

The parents of Mike and Mary also praise the program. Meg and Brian Bauer have seven children, ranging in age from 2 to 17—with four of them attending St. Michael School.

"This is the second year we've done it. It's been a really good thing," Meg says. "It reinforces exactly what our family focuses on at home. We have our own family altar. When we bring the traveling monstrance home, we set it up on our family home altar, and it joins with all the other sacramentals we have here.

"We incorporate it into our nighttime family prayers that we pray together. We do special prayers for different things going on in our family's life. It helps raise and recognize the importance of prayer and seeing God in everyday life."

Meg says, with a laugh, that their prayer time together isn't always quiet, especially with a 2-year-old, "but we still have the reminder of the presence of God in the Eucharist."

The traveling monstrance program also supports the commitment that their family has made to eucharistic adoration—a primary goal of the program. On first Fridays at St. Michael Church, the Bauer family is represented at eucharistic adoration from 11:30 p.m. to 12:30 a.m.

"Sometimes, it's my husband. Sometimes, it's me. Sometimes, it's our eldest daughter," Meg says. "Oftentimes, we'll even take the younger ones with us, even if they end up falling asleep.

"It's a good, quiet, restful period to try to listen to God, listen to Jesus, and be there in his presence—to make the effort to show up and be there with Jesus. I'm really thankful that my husband and I work to make that happen. But it does take effort to show up and be there."

Her daughter Mary has also embraced the blessing of eucharistic adoration in her life.

"For me, it gives an opportunity to know you're in the presence of God completely in the Eucharist," says Mary, who is 11. "That's your time where you can just freely listen to him and ask him for help. I like that the school gives you time to do that." †



Teachers at St. Michael School in Greenfield show the traveling monstrances that the students in their classes have created. (Submitted photo)

CHRISM MASS

continued from page 1

“I really enjoy seeing all the different people—youth, elderly, everyone. It’s really wonderful that everyone is able to come together to witness such a great thing. Being here brings me in closer to my faith. Witnessing something like this for the first time is going to be great in building up my faith.”

Cyndi Voegelé knows from experience how much the chrim Mass builds up her faith. A member of All Saints Parish in Dearborn County who coordinates its pre-kindergarten through sixth-grade catechetical program, she said she has attended the chrim Mass at least 35 times.

“It’s an honor,” Voegelé said. “It’s such a testament to our Catholic faith. The richness of the liturgy itself draws all of us together. This is the covenant that we all share in Christ’s body, blood, passion, soul and divinity—the whole thing.”

In his homily during the Mass, Archbishop Thompson praised the “enriching diversity” on display during the liturgy.

“We are bound together—clergy, religious, laity—as the people of God, as something greater than ourselves, the body of Christ,” he said. “It is the Holy Spirit that unites us in all our diversity. It is the desire and willingness to seek the will of God that enables us to rise above egos, ideologies and personal agendas.”

He went on to note that the oils he was about to bless were reminders of “the call to holiness and mission of all the baptized [which] necessarily requires that we ... rely upon divine grace to fill up what is lacking in our human merit.”

Those oils are used in the dedication of churches and altars and the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, holy orders and the anointing of the sick.

Representatives from parishes and religious congregations across central and southern Indiana received the oils and took them back to their faith communities to be used at the Easter Vigil.

And some 150 priests from across the archdiocese concelebrated the chrim Mass with Archbishop Thompson, renewing the promises they made at their ordination.



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson and some 150 priests process on March 26 into SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis at the start of the annual archdiocesan chrim Mass. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

Witnessing this recommitment to priestly life and ministry were three transitional deacons at the liturgy who will be ordained archdiocesan priests on June 1: deacons Anthony Armbruster, Samuel Rosko and Bobby Vogel.

The chrim oils blessed at the liturgy will be used to anoint their hands at their ordination.

Deacon Vogel, a member of St. Joseph Parish in Jennings County, was impressed by seeing so many priests renew the promises that he will make in about two months.

“It moved my heart,” he said. “I’ll be part of the presbyterate of a Church that is universal and so beautiful. It’s such an honor and gift to be chosen for something that I could never dare to take for myself.”

Father Jose Neri, parochial vicar of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood, was in the deacons’ position last year. He was ordained a priest on June 3, 2023, with Father Jack Wright, parochial vicar of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis.

“It was very emotional,” said Father Neri of this year’s chrim Mass. “Instead of being by the altar [as a deacon] waiting to be ordained, I was with the priests. It felt good.”

He spoke, too, of how priestly life and ministry has been fulfilling for him during the past year.

“It’s been awesome,” said Father Neri. “I enjoy it very much. I enjoy being with the people and everything that I do—celebrating the sacraments, getting to know the people.”

The richness of the chrim Mass in its rituals and the faith of the diverse people gathered at it sparked emotions in Elyse Turula, a member of Christ the King Parish in Indianapolis, who received oils for her faith community.

Raised in the faith, Turula, 61, was away from the Church for a period before returning to it three years ago.

“It’s so good to be back,” she said before the chrim Mass. “I have a much fuller and deeper appreciation of it now.”

She said she was “overwhelmed at the privilege” of bringing the



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson elevates a chalice during the annual archdiocesan chrim Mass on March 26 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. Standing as concelebrants at the altar are archdiocesan vicar general Msgr. William F. Stumpf, left, Conventual Franciscan Father Martin Day and Father Joseph Newton, archdiocesan vicar judicial. (Photo by Mike Krokos)



Anita Bardo, archdiocesan coordinator of evangelization and discipleship, proclaims the first reading at the annual archdiocesan chrim Mass on March 26 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. (Photo by Mike Krokos)



Priests serving in the archdiocese extend hands in prayer during the annual archdiocesan chrim Mass on March 26 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. (Photo by Mike Krokos)



Elyse Turula, a member of Christ the King Parish in Indianapolis, receives Communion on March 26 from Father Jude Meril Sahayam during the annual archdiocesan chrim Mass. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

oils to her parish that will be used to welcome people into the Church at the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday night.

“I’m just so happy for all the people coming into this beautiful faith,” Turula said. “I’m so happy for them.”

(For more photos from the chrim Mass, read this article at www.CriterionOnline.com.) †

Archbishop Thompson relates annual chrism Mass to defining moments in the Church

By Sean Gallagher

In his homily at the annual chrism Mass on March 26 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis, Archbishop Charles C. Thompson related the meaning of the liturgy to important events happening in the broader Church.

Taking place between the first and concluding sessions on synodality of the Vatican's Synod of Bishops, Archbishop Thompson noted at the chrism Mass that the oils blessed at the liturgy for use in the sacraments highlight the "co-responsibility" of all the faithful for the Church, which the synod on synodality has emphasized.

In particular, he reflected on how chrism oil used in baptism, confirmation and holy orders is a living sign of how all the faithful, not just those who are ordained, "are commissioned to assume responsibility for the mission entrusted to the Church by Jesus Christ."

"With sacred chrism, we receive a special anointing in baptism, confirmation and holy orders," Archbishop Thompson said. "We are anointed as priests, prophets and kings to carry out the two-fold task of evangelization and catechesis, not *either/or*, but *both/and*."

This year's chrism Mass also took place within the three-year National Eucharistic Revival of the Church in the U.S. and less than four months before tens of thousands of Catholics from across the country will come to Indianapolis in mid-July for the National Eucharistic Congress.

In his homily, Archbishop Thompson proposed the "four pillars" of the revival "for consideration of living out our shared identity, witness and mission as the body of Christ."

First, he identified "seeking personal encounters with the Lord and one another."

"Not just to know about him," Archbishop Thompson

said. "We have to know him personally if we are to witness to him to others."

Second, he spoke of "striving to reinvigorate full, conscious and active participation in worship."

"We don't look just to come back as we were before COVID, but to go far beyond," Archbishop Thompson said. "We want to bring people to not just be mere spectators at liturgies, but to a full, conscious and active participation."

The third pillar Archbishop Thompson shared was "deepening ongoing formation and education in the faith for all ages."

"We never graduate from evangelization and catechesis, not on this side of death," he said.

Finally, Archbishop Thompson spoke of "calling forth missionary



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson preaches a homily during the annual archdiocesan chrism Mass on March 26 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. (Photo by Mike Krokos)

disciples to provide a eucharistic-centered witness to the transforming grace of Jesus' saving presence in the world."

"We must go out," he said. "What we do here this afternoon within these walls is something beautiful and inspiring. But it means little if we can't take it and live it outside these walls and doors."

"The most holy Eucharist unites us to God and one another, not through our merit, but through the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ," Archbishop Thompson said in concluding his homily. "In him, united with the community of believers both local and universal, we are indeed blessed as one, holy, Catholic and apostolic Church." †



Priests serving across central and southern Indiana listen on March 26 to Archbishop Charles C. Thompson preaching a homily at the annual archdiocesan chrism Mass. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

Irena's Vow reveals the complex moral choices a Polish Catholic woman faced during the Holocaust

By Ann Margaret Lewis

Many important films exist about the Jewish Holocaust of World War II, among them *Schindler's List* and *Life is Beautiful*. *Irena's Vow*, an intense film about a young woman's devotion to life and the complex challenges she faced, should be counted among those movies.

While this production is rated R for intense scenes of violence as well as (non-graphic) sexual themes, it reveals the true story of a Polish Catholic woman who made agonizing choices, some moral, some not, to save the lives of 12 hunted Jews by hiding them in the cellar of a German officer's home where she served as housekeeper.

Sophie Nélisse (*Yellowjackets*, *The Book Thief*) skillfully plays the titular character Irena Gut, whose resilience in the face of horrors that defied

comprehension and adaptability in sticky situations make her an admirable heroine. With her powerful performance, Nélisse manages to display a Catholic conscience through Irena's eyes that is both conflicted and resolved at the same time.

The film is a Canadian and Polish co-production and employs many actors who would probably be unknown to American audiences. Those who watch British drama might be familiar with Emmy and BAFTA-winning Scottish actor and producer Dougray Scott, who artfully portrays Major Rugmer, Irena's ambivalent boss.

The entire cast gives impressive and convincing performances. The production itself, the directing, set and costume creation, editing, are all well done. The script, based on a stage play by the same writer Dan Gordon,

a nominee for the Canadian Academy Award, is a solid piece of writing, giving actors room to live in their roles.

This is a strong film with only one disadvantage—and that is that other strong films have been made on the same subject matter, and viewers are likely to make comparisons. It is similar to *Schindler's List* in that it tells the story of someone who makes a decision to save Jewish lives at the risk of her own with all the tension that entails. Irena's story, however, is a unique one, and she is so compellingly portrayed that it's worth watching on its own merits.

As the film is rated R, and the violence can be shocking, I'd not recommend this film for younger viewers. *Irena's Vow* will be available in theaters through Fathom events only on April 15 and 16. To find a theater, go to fathomevents.com/events/irenas-vow. †



Florida Supreme Court approves abortion ballot measure sought by pro-choice groups

(OSV News)—The Florida Supreme Court on April 1 simultaneously upheld that the state's Constitution does not protect abortion access and allowed a proposed amendment seeking to do so to qualify for the state's November ballot.

In separate rulings, the Sunshine State's high court upheld the state's 15-week ban on abortion, which will in effect permit the state to enforce a six-week ban known as The Heartbeat Protection Act, which was signed by the state's Gov. Ron DeSantis in April 2023, and on pause pending the ruling.

If enforced, the Heartbeat Protection Act would prohibit most abortions in Florida, with exceptions for women who are victims of rape or who face a mortality risk associated with the pregnancy. The bill also would

make exceptions for cases of a diagnosis of a fatal fetal anomaly until the third trimester. It also allocates some funds to crisis pregnancy centers, and restricts the use of abortion drugs via telemedicine, requiring in-person visits rather than the distribution of those drugs by mail.

But the Florida Supreme Court also said a proposed constitutional amendment to prohibit abortion bans in the state prior to viability qualified for the ballot. If approved by Florida voters in November, its enactment would undo those restrictions on abortion.

Michael B. Sheedy, executive director of the Florida Conference of Catholic Bishops, said in a statement the group is "greatly dismayed that the Florida Supreme Court did not reject this deceptively worded amendment,

and that it will appear on the November 2024 ballot.

"Under the guise of limiting government interference, this extreme ballot initiative would legalize full-term abortion, including when the baby is capable of feeling pain," Sheedy said. "If passed, the amendment to our state constitution would put the most innocent of human lives in grave danger until the moment of birth and would eliminate gains made over the past several decades to protect women from the harms of abortion, including health and safety protocols at abortion facilities."

The Florida Conference of Catholic Bishops, he said, "will work hard to oppose this cruel and dangerous amendment and urge all Floridians to vote 'no' on Amendment 4." †

Let 'tears of repentance' flow, pope tells priests at chrism Mass

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Just before some 1,500 priests, bishops and cardinals renewed their priestly promises, Pope Francis asked them to embrace “compunction,” which he said was “an aspect of the spiritual life that has been somewhat neglected yet remains essential.”

Looking at its etymology, he said that “compunction is ‘a piercing of the heart’ that is painful and evokes tears of repentance,” but it also is the only path to spiritual growth and to a merciful ministry to others.

Presiding over the chrism Mass on March 28 in St. Peter’s Basilica, Pope Francis ended his lengthy homily by thanking the priests present and, by extension, those around the world.

“Thank you, dear priests, for your open and docile hearts. Thank you for all your hard work and your tears. Thank you, because you bring the miracle of God’s mercy to our brothers and sisters in today’s world,” he said. “May the Lord console you, strengthen you and reward you.”

Pope Francis preached for more than 20 minutes without apparent difficulty. While he presided over the chrism Mass, which is named after the olive oil mixed with balsam that is blessed during the liturgy, the principal concelebrant at the altar was Cardinal Angelo De Donatis, the pope’s vicar for Rome.

The Holy Week Mass was the first major liturgical celebration in the basilica since the towering baldachino over the main altar was wrapped in scaffolding for a 10-month restoration project funded by the Knights of Columbus.

Some 40 cardinals, 40 bishops and 1,500 priests concelebrated the liturgy.

After the homily, the clergy present renewed the promises made to their bishop at their ordinations and pledged

to strive to be more united to Christ, “faithful stewards” of the sacraments and zealous pastors of souls.

Twelve deacons then wheeled large silver urns of oil down the center aisle of St. Peter’s Basilica for the pope’s blessing. The blessed oils will be distributed to Rome parishes and used for the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, ordination and the anointing of the sick in the coming year.

In his homily, Pope Francis said that compunction is “not a sense of guilt that makes us discouraged or obsessed with our unworthiness, but a beneficial ‘piercing’ that purifies and heals the heart” and often leads to the gift of tears, which are “the holiest waters after those of baptism.”

Christians who feel compunction, he said, “increasingly feel themselves brothers and sisters to all the sinners of the world, setting aside airs of superiority and harsh judgments” and are “filled with a burning desire to show love and make reparation.”

“Dear brother priests, from us, his shepherds, the Lord desires not harshness but love, and tears for those



Some 1,500 priests join Pope Francis for the celebration of the chrism Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican on March 28. (CNS photo/Lola Gomez)

who have strayed,” the pope said. “How greatly we need to be set free from harshness and recrimination, selfishness and ambition, rigidity and frustration, in order to entrust ourselves completely to God and to find in him the calm that shields us from the storms raging all around us.”

In increasingly secular societies, Pope Francis said, priests and other Church workers can be tempted to be “hyperactive” and yet feel completely inadequate.

“When that happens, we can become bitter and prickly,” he said. But “if bitterness and compunction are directed not to the

world but to our own hearts, the Lord will not fail to visit us and raise us up.”

Compunction, Pope Francis said, should promote “a spirit of repentance,” but one motivated by love for the Lord and certain of the Lord’s love always.

“Let us rediscover our need to cultivate prayer that is not obligatory and functional, but freely chosen, tranquil and prolonged,” he told the priests. “Let us return to adoration and the prayer of the heart. Let us repeat: Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner. Let us sense God’s grandeur even as we contemplate our own sinfulness and open our hearts to the healing power of his gaze.” †

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SIMPLY CATHOLIC



A burial cloth is left behind in an empty tomb at Resurrection Cemetery and Mausoleum in Peoria, Ill. The first followers of Jesus encountering his empty tomb three days after his crucifixion was the starting point of what became their unshakable faith in his resurrection. (CNS photo/Nellie Gould, *The Catholic Post*)

Despite doubts, Christian faith is rooted in the empty tomb

By Carl E. Olson

Imagine for a moment that St. Peter, standing before the centurion Cornelius, had said, with a somewhat embarrassed grimace, “Well, it’s my personal opinion that Jesus rose from the dead—whatever that means. But that’s simply my truth—just one possible explanation.”

It sounds ridiculous. But it’s impossible to ignore that such words have often come from the lips of many modern-day Christians. Perhaps they have only a passing knowledge of what Scripture, tradition and history say about the Resurrection. Perhaps they don’t wish to offend those who scoff at such a “simplistic” acceptance of a supernatural event. Or perhaps they really feel different people can have different “truths.”

But Peter’s words were direct and bold. “We are witnesses of all that he did,” he said. “This man God raised on the third day and granted that he be visible, not to all the people, but to us, the witnesses chosen by God in advance” (Acts 10:39a, 40-41).

Such words are, to many people today, triumphalistic, exclusive and arrogant. But then, we live in an age in which the only firm belief given a free pass is the belief that faith is not believable. “Faith” is seen as superstitious, based (at best) on feelings and intuitions.

Yet St. Cyril of Jerusalem wrote in the fourth century that when Peter and John ran to the empty tomb they did not “meet Christ risen from the dead, but they infer his resurrection from the bundle of linen clothes,” and connected that physical fact to Jesus’ words and the prophecies of Scripture. “When, therefore, they looked at the issues of events in the light of the prophecies that turned out true, their faith was from that time forward rooted on a firm foundation.”

The 20th-century Swiss theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar observed that Peter represents the ecclesial office—the papacy—and John symbolizes ecclesial love. Love, not burdened by the cares of the Office, runs faster.

“Yet Love yields to Office when it comes to examining the tomb, and Peter thus becomes the first to view the cloth that had covered Jesus’ head and establish that no theft had occurred.” Then Love entered, “and he saw and

believed.” This indicated, von Balthasar stated, that “faith in Jesus is justified despite all the opaqueness of the situation.”

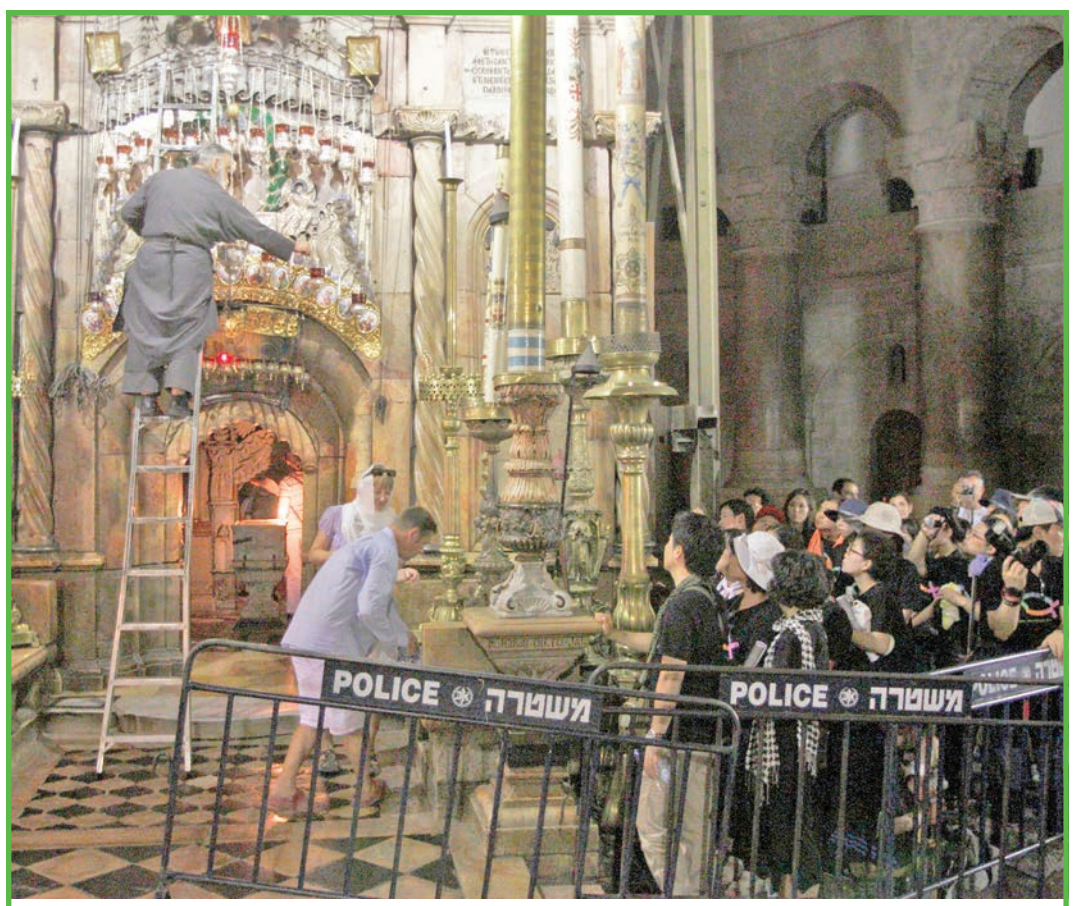
By the time Peter preached on Pentecost (Acts 2:14-36) and later to the household of Cornelius, the opaqueness had completely dissolved in the light of the risen Christ. Peter and the Apostles were witnesses—and it is important to note that the Greek root word for “witness” and “testimony” (see Jn 21:24) is “*martus*,” from which comes “martyr.”

Peter, in particular, had a special role as witness. “If being a Christian essentially means believing in the risen Lord,” Pope Benedict XVI wrote in *Jesus of Nazareth: Holy Week*, “then Peter’s special witnessing role is a confirmation of his commission to be the rock on which the Church is built.” This is brought home emphatically in the final chapter of John’s Gospel, where Peter’s place as head Apostle was reaffirmed by Jesus and then further affirmed by the promise of martyrdom (Jn 21:15-19).

When it comes to Jesus and the

resurrection, the world offers a host of opinions, most of which dismiss and deny the possibility that “this man” was “raised on the third day” by God. But, as St. John Henry Newman pointed out, “No one is a martyr for a conclusion, no one is a martyr for an opinion; it is faith that makes martyrs.”

(Carl E. Olson is editor of *Catholic World Report* and *Ignatius Insight*.) †



An Orthodox monk uses a ladder to refuel lamps as pilgrims wait behind barriers inside the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem. The church is believed to rest over the sites of Jesus’ crucifixion and empty tomb. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

Guest Column/Elizabeth Scalia

What is 'Catholic enough?' Being in balance with Jesus Christ, our savior

A discussion among practicing Catholics occurred in a social media group, inevitably landing on current divisions between Catholics—those who would describe themselves as “orthodox” versus the “more progressive;” those who pronounce themselves “proudly cafeteria” versus those who identify as “proudly



traditionalist.”

For Christians in touch with their own failings, it seems pointless to be “proudly” anything, and yet the stink of pride eventually attaches to most of us, no matter how pure our practice.

That led to questions about what “purity” means in a fallen world, and debate on following all the “rules” promulgated by the Church in the face of Christ’s own teachings. For instance, is Jesus’ story of the Prodigal Son—in which he depicts the father running toward the imperfectly contrite son, even “while he was still a long way off” (Lk 15:20)—contrary to the mandate that we all be in a “state of grace” before we may approach Christ in the Eucharist?

It is good that such conversations happen, good to see people still actively wondering. Wonder grounds the work of better-knowing God.

Still, after lengthy exchanges, someone

finally wailed, “How can any of us ever be ‘Catholic enough?’”

That *cri du coeur* is worth pondering in prayer: What is “Catholic enough?”

The answer might be as simple, and as difficult, as love moving without limits, yet within the natural law, and unchained to human excess.

As any parent will tell you, rules matter. Honest parents will admit that sometimes love requires carefully reconsidering even the most entrenched and principled of family rules.

Does that touch the modern Church? Some Catholics fear any “development of doctrine,” while others clamor for it.

Perhaps we should read St. John Henry Newman’s *On the Development of Doctrine*, wherein he makes helpful distinctions between principles and doctrine: “Principles are abstract and general, doctrines relate to facts; doctrines develop, and principles at first sight do not; doctrines grow and are enlarged, principles are permanent; doctrines are intellectual, and principles are more immediately ethical and practical. Systems live in principles and represent doctrines. Personal responsibility is a principle, the Being of a God is a doctrine; from that doctrine all theology has come in due course, whereas that principle is not clearer under the Gospel than in paradise, and depends, not on belief in an Almighty Governor, but on conscience” (Chapter 5.2).

As a both/and Church, we entwine

with the supernatural and the world—“all things visible and invisible.” Does this contribute to our branching away from each other, aligning with factions rather than working the faith together? We want to embrace the (mostly undiscussed) supernatural of the Church, but instinctively wish to serve humanity in humane ways.

Both efforts can be taken up in good faith but brought to extremes, weighing too heavily in one direction or the other. The thudding end to extremism is, well, pride.

It is entirely possible to become prideful as a Pharisee, preening as we follow all the rules while also overworking the supernaturalism—and yes, the urge and action toward prayer is supernatural, as in the inspiration to serve.

I knew someone who prayed a full rosary every day, reciting not just the Fatima prayer but also the prayer to St. Michael at the end of each decade and calling it “necessary.” It made me wonder how often we proclaim our faith while not trusting that prayer can be both simple and “enough.”

Did pride cause my acquaintance to deem a powerful prayer as inadequate to the world’s needs? God knows. But if we offer prayer yet don’t trust God enough to believe that prayer is both efficacious and plenty, then what are we really offering?

Is prayer without trust part of our pride? On the other hand, I know people so committed to the world-service side of faith that they’ve become detached from the supernaturalism of prayer. I

was sneered at once by an ardent “social justice” Catholic who called eucharistic adoration “a medieval relic, too passive in the face of so much human need.”

“Yet it supports the work you do,” I argued.

Were we both prideful? Again, God knows.

A both/and Church is a Martha-and-Mary Church of “being” and “doing.” We broken humans constantly forget that, leaning one way or the other. It’s a tricky but necessary thing to take time to sit quietly before the Lord while also putting your time and talent into service for Christ’s sake. If we all worked on that, there might be less discontent and distrust between Catholics, and fewer questions about whether we’re doing Catholicism “correctly.”

The crucifix shows us right and left—justice and mercy; the worldly and the supernatural—borne on the horizontal beam from which Jesus spreads out his arms. His body—our Eucharist—fills the vertical beam, grounded, yet heavenward.

Jesus is the balance. He alone is what keeps either side from crash-landing. Perhaps when we habitually join our crosses to his, questions of purity and perfection will become moot.

Because there is nothing purer or more perfect than being in balance with Christ.

(Elizabeth Scalia is editor at large for OSV. Follow her on X [formerly known as Twitter] @the anchoress.) †

Amid the Fray/Greg Erlandson

As the greatest feast of the Church, let’s celebrate Easter for a while

This year, I’m glad to see Lent come to an end, and not just because of Easter Alleluias and Cadbury dark chocolate eggs.



It was a tough Lent. Part of it, of course, had nothing explicitly to do with Lent. The news has generally been dreadful, a reminder, I suppose of why we need saving. This broken, battered, cruel world needs a savior. I need a savior.

Perhaps this was not true for you, but my Lent was especially difficult because I had trouble keeping my Lenten resolves. None of them were

all that hard, by the way. But each of them demanded a certain amount of diligence in the sacrifice, and diligence was a struggle this year.

I won’t go into all the bloody details, except to say that when “Son of a ...” flew from my lips, only to remember that I had resolved to refrain from saying “Son of a ...” well, it was that kind of Lent.

One of my favorite Easter reflections is from St. John Chrysostom. He is a saint revered by both the Eastern and Western churches, and for many good reasons. But this quote from his Easter homily

proclaiming the time to celebrate reveals his Christ-like love of our poor humanity.

“First and last alike receive your reward; rich and poor, rejoice together! Sober and slothful, celebrate the day! You that have kept the fast, and you that have not, rejoice today for the table is richly laden! Feast royally on it, the calf is a fatted one. Let no one go away hungry. Partake, all, of the cup of faith. Enjoy all the riches of his goodness! Let no one grieve at his poverty, for the universal kingdom has been revealed. Let no one mourn that he has fallen again and again; for forgiveness has risen from the grave.”

“Forgiveness has risen from the grave,” so “you that have kept the fast, and you that have not,” come and celebrate all the same. All of us: Those of us who didn’t do so well this Lent. Those of us who kept our resolutions with gritted teeth and quiet grumbling. Those of us who sacrificed with a prayerful soul and a smile.

St. Chrysostom reminds us that all of us are invited to the feast: The lazy and the good, the sober and the slothful, rich and poor.

In another part of the same homily, he invokes that great parable that so frustrates Americans. It is the one

about the workers in the vineyard (Mt 20:1-16) who show up at different times of the day, yet all get the same payment at day’s end. Boy, does that frost our puritan cupcake.

Easter, St. Chrysostom says, is the same reward for all of us. Lent is a good discipline, a way of reminding us of the Lord’s own suffering and sacrifice on our behalf. But that sacrifice has been already made for us, and now in this glorious Easter season, we can celebrate that he truly is risen and death defeated.

And if I may suggest an Easter resolution: Let’s not let Easter be forgotten in a flash. We spent 40 days in the desert of Lent. Let us now, as they did in St. Chrysostom’s day, spend 40 days rejoicing.

Break out the Cadbury eggs! Celebrate with special foods! Express gratitude for the blessing that this, the greatest feast in the Church calendar, truly is.

There will be other Lents. There is just one Easter event. Let’s remind this tormented old world that there is a happy ending.

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

Guest Column/Richard Etienne

Scripture reminds us that ‘wisdom is vindicated by all her children’

I have recently been intrigued by the last sentence in the Gospel passage where Jesus is discussing John the



Baptist’s role in his mission (Lk 7:24-35).

In a previous passage, John had sent two disciples to ask Jesus if he is the “one to come” (Lk 7:20).

Christ was trying to explain to the crowd the specific role that John had played in

preparing for Jesus’ arrival. In the final line of the passage, Jesus says, “But wisdom is vindicated by all her children” (Lk 7:35).

What could the evangelist have been thinking when this little morsel of wisdom was dropped just as this Scripture passage was concluding?

As I reflected on this passage, I

thought that this phrase was not unlike the image of a tree being known by its fruit. The true nature of anything (wisdom) is revealed in what things come forth from it (her children). Is it good works or are the “fruits” sometimes rotten in nature? Incidentally, in Matthew 3, we hear John the Baptist say, “Every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire” (Mt 7:19).

I began to search for other explanations or theories. “Wisdom is shown to be right by all [of] her children,” I reflected, which some believe means by the lifestyle, moral character and good deeds of her followers.

Jesus may be saying that because John follows the dictates of true and eternal wisdom, then his character and deeds also exemplify this wisdom. The Scriptures return over and over to the topic of wisdom.

There is a book of the Bible titled Wisdom. There is the fairly lengthy book of Sirach, which is attributed to a grandfather’s advice (his wisdom) to his grandson. There is the book of Proverbs, which is intended to impart wisdom to its readers. And it goes on in Scripture.

I believe it is critical to never stop learning—gaining wisdom—in life.

I have been very fortunate to have been a founding member of a study group for the last few years.

Once a month, we designate a facilitator for the next meeting, set our next date and time, then pick a discussion topic. We then submit possible discussion questions to the facilitator, who makes final decisions regarding the sequence and specific questions before our next meeting.

Some examples of questions might include: What did I find interesting in my studies? What did the topic reveal

to me about myself? What made this topic relevant today? What could I do differently in my life as a result of our discussion?

Our brains, which are an incredible gift from God, are like all of the muscles in our body. If we don’t use a muscle, it begins to weaken—like the muscles under a cast when a bone is trying to heal after a break.

Similarly, our brains must be exercised or they too will atrophy. As you continue on your journey, make time to keep learning and continually thanking God for that wonderful brain that you have been given. And pray that your use of it, God willing, helps “bear much fruit.”

(Richard Etienne has a degree in theology from Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad and resides in Newburgh, Ind.) †

Divine Mercy Sunday/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, April 7, 2024

- Acts of the Apostles 4:32-35
- 1 John 5:1-6
- John 20:19-31

As almost always in the Easter season, the Acts of the Apostles furnishes the first reading for Mass this weekend.



Acts claims to be, and scholars assume it indeed to be, the work of the evangelist who wrote St. Luke's Gospel. Acts, therefore, may properly be seen as a continuation of the story presented in Luke, which closes

with the Ascension of Jesus. Acts then begins at this point.

As it progresses, Acts traces for some years the development of the infant Church, describing the plight of its first members. In so doing, it provides a fascinating insight into the formation of the Church's structure, as well as a powerful lesson in the basic beliefs that so compelled absolute loyalty and devotion from the early Christians whom Acts praises.

It also gives great examples of unqualified selfishness, human ignorance, treachery and the idea that might makes right.

In this weekend's reading, Acts presents the first members of the Church as being "of one heart and one mind" (Acts 4:32). Love for and adherence to the Lord were supreme for them.

Central in the story were the Apostles, the Lord's special followers and students, whom Jesus commissioned to continue the work of salvation. The Apostles literally had seen the risen Lord, so the first Christians revered them.

Love for others in the model of Jesus was more than a platitude. The early Christians assisted the poor, so much so that they sold their property to obtain funds to assist the needy.

St. John's First Epistle supplies the second reading, defining what being a Christian means.

Each believer must give her or his self fully in love to God through trust and faith in Jesus. Because of this commitment and because of the Lord's redeeming acts in Christ, each Christian

is a child of God. This term means much more than merely earthly creation. It means eternal life.

Baptism symbolizes and brings about this absolute commitment.

The Gospel reading for this weekend is from St. John's Gospel. It is a resurrection narrative, a story with which most Christians are quite familiar. Recall the dismay among the followers of Jesus when they found the empty tomb? Where had the body of the Lord been taken?

This reading answers the question. The body of the Lord has not been hidden. Jesus lives! The encounter with the doubting, demanding Thomas affirms this glorious fact.

Resurrection from the dead is stunning, but Jesus further acts as God by conferring the very power of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles. He grants them the authority of forgiving sins, a divine privilege as sins affront God. He sends them to the four corners of the world to bring redemption to all humanity.

Passing through locked doors as through thin air, Jesus greeted the Apostles with "Peace be with you" (Jn 20:19). He makes clear that peace only is in God. The living Lord is the sole source of peace.

Reflection

Sadly, Ukrainians this year likely modified their historic celebration of Easter, due to the war. But here and there, the traditional Ukrainian Easter eggs might have been seen, reminders of an ancient faith.

These eggs, the more elaborately decorated the better, represent the tomb in which the crucified body of Jesus lay. It was a blessed place since, from it, Jesus triumphantly rose.

Distancing from, indifference to and certainly outright rebellion against Jesus make our lives tombs, cold and dark.

We observe Divine Mercy Sunday on this weekend. In and through Jesus, the Son of God, divine mercy is with us, strengthening, restoring, empowering, healing and freeing us, opening the sealed doors of the tombs in which we lay. Come forth! Live in the peace of Christ! †

Daily Readings

Monday, April 8

The Annunciation of the Lord
Isaiah 7:10-14; 8:10
Psalm 40:7-11
Hebrews 10:4-10
Luke 1:26-38

Tuesday, April 9

Acts 4:32-37
Psalm 93:1-2, 5
John 3:7b-15

Wednesday, April 10

Acts 5:17-26
Psalm 34:2-9
John 3:16-21

Thursday, April 11

St. Stanislaus, bishop and martyr
Acts 5:27-33
Psalm 34:2, 9, 17-20
John 3:31-36

Friday, April 12

Acts 5:34-42
Psalm 27:1, 4, 13-14
John 6:1-15

Saturday, April 13

St. Martin I, pope and martyr
Acts 6:1-7
Psalm 33:1-2, 4-5, 18-19
John 6:16-21

Sunday, April 14

Third Sunday of Easter
Acts 3:13-15, 17-19
Psalm 4:2, 4, 7-9
1 John 2:1-5a
Luke 24:35-48

Question Corner/Jenna Marie Cooper

Christ on a crucifix has been portrayed in a variety of ways

QI have a friend who observed that some crucifixes depict the Savior with his eyes open and some depict him with his eyes closed. He wants to know which is correct—alive or dead? (Florida)



AWith respect to the second part of your question, I think it's equally correct for a crucifix

to portray Jesus either as still alive on the cross or as just having died. The crucifixion was a progressive event in time, not one static snapshot, so it would be reasonable for an artist to choose to portray any number of given points of this part of Jesus' passion.

As a parallel, we might think of artistic depictions of the Stations of the Cross. The second station, where Jesus is just taking up his cross, is not any more correct than the 14th station, when he is laid in the tomb, despite Jesus being alive in one and already dead in the other.

Considering the broader question of why Jesus' eyes are open on some crucifixes and closed in others, it occurs to me that a crucifix with Jesus' eyes closed might not necessarily be intended to show him as having already died. That is, it could be that an eyes-closed crucifix is meant rather to show the intensity of Jesus' agony.

As far as I can tell, closed eyes on a crucifix does not indicate any specific symbolism on its own, unlike other symbols in Western Christian art that do have a specific meaning.

For example, when Our Lady is shown with a white lily, this is understood as

a reference to her purity and sinlessness. But the eyes of a crucifix might tell us something about the period in which the artist was working, or the style a modern artist was trying to emulate.

In the Church's first few centuries, crucifixes were not a common symbol at all. It seems that for the early Christians, crucifixion imagery was a bit too jarring—which makes sense when you consider that the early Christians would have known crucifixion as a grisly contemporary method of execution. In early Christian art, it is much more common to see Christ portrayed as the Good Shepherd, or for Christianity to be referenced via other more abstract symbols, such as a fish.

We started seeing more crucifixes around the time of the early Middle Ages, when Christianity became the dominant religion in Europe and parts of the Middle East, and when Christians likely had more of a sense of distance from the brutality of the Roman Empire.

But even in this period, crucifixes tended to show Christ as a victorious king. Often in these crucifixes, Jesus' expression is serene and untroubled, with his eyes wide open and staring ahead.

While this early medieval style of crucifix does express some real truths of our faith—Jesus was indeed victorious on the cross, and he never ceased to trust God his Father—these depictions can tend to engage the intellect more than the emotions.

This is not the case for later crucifixes, especially from what is called the Counter-Reformation period in the late 1500s. Alongside trends in Western art in general, these crucifixes often show Jesus in a very lifelike, naturalistic way, where his suffering is depicted in realistic and often graphic detail. The goal of this style was to touch the heart of its viewers, to help move their souls to greater love of the suffering Christ and to greater sorrow for their sins. This makes sense for this period in Church history, as this was a time when the Church—often through saints such as Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross, and Ignatius of Loyola—was calling the faithful to a greater spirit of penance and a more personal engagement in prayer after some of the abuses that occurred in the late medieval period.

(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

Gabriel Wept

By Janine Schorsch

Hail Mary, full of grace ...
I delivered the loving message
of my Creator and my God
to the gentle virgin, Mary.

I saw the shock and confusion
pass over Mary's face.
"How can this be?"
You will be overshadowed by the Holy Spirit.

The words that fell from her lips said "Yes"
to the salvation of the world.
"Behold the handmaid of the Lord.
Let it be done unto me ..."
I wept tears of joy.

Conceived in her womb,
fully human, fully God,
the soul and body of Jesus,
the Messiah, the Word Incarnate.
I knelt in awe and adoration
before my Creator and my God.

(Janine Schorsch is a member of St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross Parish in Bright. Photo: This stained-glass image from a window in St. Augustine Church in Jeffersonville depicts the Annunciation, celebrated this year on April 8.) (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)



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.

BAUMER, Joseph J., 96, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Richmond, March 20. Father of Greg and Mark Baumer. Brother of Catherine Perkins and Edward Baumer. Grandfather of three. Great-grandfather of three.

BECKNER, Imogene, 94, St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower), Indianapolis, March 9. Sister of Connie, Marie and Albert Bennett. Grandmother of two. Great-grandmother of five. Great-great-grandmother of two.

BRANDT III, Charles C., 57, St. Luke the Evangelist, Indianapolis, March 11. Husband of Kathy Brandt. Father of Anna, Elizabeth and Mary Kate Brandt. Son of Charles C. Brant. Brother of Elizabeth Bordes and Leslie Small.

BUSALD, Edna, 94, St. Jude, Indianapolis, March 10. Mother of Marcia Hendrickson and Garry Busald. Grandmother of four. Great-grandmother of seven.

HARMEYER, Ralph H., 93, St. Louis, Batesville, Feb. 22. Husband of Bernie Harmeyer. Father of Gerald, Irvin and Kenneth Harmeyer. Grandfather of eight. Great-grandfather of 16.

HOCHADEL, Joseph E., 77, St. Augustine, Jeffersonville, Jan. 31. Father of Rebecca Houchens, Rose Hunsaker and Joseph Hochadel. Brother of Lorraine Hodgin and Kitty McGloshen. Grandfather of seven. Great-grandfather of 10.

KIEL, David R., 80, St. Bartholomew, Columbus, March 14. Husband of Dee Kiel. Father of Chris and John Kiel. Brother of Kathy Lubker, Marshall and Ted Kiel. Grandfather of two.

LARKIN, Barbara, 90, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany, March 16. Mother of Kim Griffith, Roberta Huber, Karen McDonald and Pat Musgrave. Sister of Ann Bowling and

Janet Fisher. Grandmother of 10. Great-grandmother of 17.

LYNN, Elizabeth, 87, St. Augustine, Jeffersonville, Feb. 13. Mother of Lee Ann Lumpkins, James and Kevin Lynn. Grandmother of seven. Great-grandmother of 10.

MAXWELL, Michael P., 91, St. Jude, Indianapolis, March 14. Father of Andrew, Christopher, John and Michael Maxwell, Jr. Brother of Mary Jane Biro and Paul Koch. Grandfather of seven. Great-grandfather of two.

MEISBERGER, Sandra K., 83, Prince of Peace, Madison, March 27. Wife of Melvin Meisberger. Mother of Caroline Cumberworth, Amy Fischmer, Debbie Gloyd, Julie Underwood and

Brian Meisberger. Sister of Diana Yoakum, Jack and Toby Ricketts. Grandmother of 10. Great-grandmother of five.

PAGANI, Carla J. (Azzarello), 80, St. Charles Borromeo, Bloomington, March 22. Wife of Victor Pagani. Mother of Tricia Miles, Christina Wrobel and Marc Pagani. Grandmother of five.

PAYNE, Vincent G., 90, St. Charles Borromeo, Bloomington, Feb. 26. Husband of Regina Payne. Father of Lisa Payne-Ratliff, Kathy Wicker, David and Timothy Payne. Grandfather of three.

RAIDY, William P., 96, St. Augustine, Jeffersonville,

March 18. Husband of Marian Raidy. Father of Jane Elliott and Patrick Raidy. Grandfather of five. Great-grandfather of four.

SCHAFFER, James B., 81, St. John Paul II, Sellersburg, March 13. Husband of Mary Jo Schaffer. Father of Angela Banet and Christine Heilginberg. Brother of Norma Krentz and Charles Schaffer. Grandfather of seven.

STONEBRAKER, Robert, 91, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Richmond, March 13. Uncle of one.

URBANSKI, Braden M., 23, St. Charles Borromeo, Bloomington, March 8. Son of Jason and Jennifer Urbanski. Brother of

Ainsley and Aiken Urbanski. Grandson of Steve Lytle, Mike and Gloria Urbanski and Jane Williams.

WADE, James F., 84, St. Charles Borromeo, Bloomington, March 9. Husband of Ruth Ann Wade. Father of Debbie Beyers, Sandy Jolivet and Jamie Richards. Brother of Dorothy O'Connor, Helen and Donald Wade. Grandfather of six. Great-grandfather of two.

WANCHIC, John N., 63, St. Charles Borromeo, Bloomington, Jan. 26. Husband of Cecilia Wanchic. Father of Sarah, John, Michael and Nicholas Wanchic. Brother of Nina, Mark, Michael and Tom. Grandfather of two. †

Holy Thursday in Jerusalem



Clergy and religious pray on March 28 during a celebration of the Holy Thursday Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem's Old City. (OSV News photo/Ronen Zvulun, Reuters)

Gallup: Just 3 in 10 U.S. adults regularly attend religious services

(OSV News)—The pews may have been a bit more crowded at Mass this Easter—but on balance, regular church attendance in the U.S. continues to decline across the board, particularly among Catholics.

Gallup poll results released on March 25 show that just three in 10 U.S. adults attend religious services regularly, 21% every week and 9% almost every week.

A reported 11% attend religious services about once a month, while 25% seldom and 31% never attend.

The survey was based on cell and landline telephone interviews from a number of Gallup polls conducted in 2021-2023 among 32,445 adults, aged 18 and older, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia.

Topping the list of the most observant adherents are members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (also known as the Mormon Church), with two-thirds saying they attend church weekly or almost weekly. Forty-four percent of Protestant and nondenominational Christians

attend services regularly, followed by 38% of Muslims and 33% of Catholics.

Gallup said that “majorities of Jewish, Orthodox, Buddhist and Hindu Americans say they seldom or never attend religious services.”

Twenty years ago, “an average of 42% of U.S. adults attended religious services every week or nearly every week,” said Gallup.

The polling firm also observed that “among religious groups, Catholics show one of the larger drops in attendance [during the past two decades], from 45% to 33%, while there are slightly smaller decreases among Orthodox [9 percentage points] and Hindu followers [8 points].”

Gallup said the general decline in religious service attendance among U.S. residents “is largely driven by the increase in the percentage of Americans with no religious affiliation—9% in 2000-2003 versus 21% in 2021-2023—almost all of whom do not attend services regularly.”

At the same time, “Muslim and Jewish Americans have shown slight increases in religious service attendance over the past two decades,” said Gallup, with the former rising from 34% to 38% and the latter from 15% to 22%.

Gallup predicts that “church attendance will likely continue to decline in the future, given younger Americans’ weaker attachments to religion.”

Among 18- to 29-year-olds, 35% say they have no religious preference or affiliation, with 32% identifying themselves as Protestant and just 19% as Catholic. Regardless of their affiliation or lack thereof, young adults are “much less likely” as a whole to attend religious services, with 22%—eight points below the national average—doing so.

Gallup said the trends it observed in this poll “are consistent with other Gallup indicators of religious beliefs and practices, including the importance of religion to Americans and formal membership in churches and other houses of worship.” †

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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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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Pope Francis reaches out to comfort an inmate as she sheds tears after the Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord's Supper on March 28 at the Rebibbia women's prison on the outskirts of Rome. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)



Pope Francis kisses the foot of an inmate after washing it during the Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord's Supper at the Rebibbia women's prison on the outskirts of Rome on March 28. The pontiff washed the feet of 12 inmates at the prison. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

Tears flow as pope washes feet of women inmates at Rome prison

ROME (CNS)—As Pope Francis poured water over their feet, dried them with a towel and kissed their feet, 12 women inmates at Rome's Rebibbia prison wept.

The pope celebrated the evening Mass of the Lord's Supper on March 28 at the women's prison under a tent set up outside.

The 12 women whose feet were washed by Pope Francis during the liturgy sat on stools on a raised platform so the pope, who has difficulty walking, could wash their feet while seated in his wheelchair.

Many of the women were wearing warmup suits and were fidgeting as they awaited the pope. They included women from Italy, Bulgaria, Nigeria, Ukraine, Russia, Peru, Venezuela and Bosnia-

Herzegovina. All are housed in the medium-security section, Vatican News reported.

Since it was Pope Francis' first Holy Thursday visit to a prison with only women present, it was the first time as pope that he washed the feet only of women.

After Mass, he gave a large chocolate Easter egg to a little boy, the only toddler currently living with his mother in the prison, according to the prison director. Italian prisons have special units for mothers with children, and the law allows women who are detained to keep their children with them until they are 3 years old.

Pope Francis has made a tradition of celebrating the Holy Thursday Mass at a prison or juvenile detention facility,

often washing the feet of both men and women, whether Catholic or not.

And, keeping with his practice at the facilities, he gave only a brief homily, speaking without notes.

By washing his disciples' feet, Jesus humbles himself, the pope said. "With this gesture, he makes us understand what he had said, 'I came not to be served but to serve' [Mt 20:28]. He teaches us the path of service."

The evening Gospel reading also included the line, "The devil had already induced Judas, son of Simon the Iscariot, to hand him over" (Jn 13:2).

Pope Francis told the women that Judas was incapable of love, and so "money, selfishness lead him to this horrible thing" of betraying Jesus.

But, the pope said, "Jesus forgives everything. Jesus always forgives. He only asks that we ask pardon."

Quoting a "wise, old woman," Pope Francis said, "Jesus never tires of forgiving, but we tire of asking forgiveness."

"Today, let's ask the Lord for the grace not to tire," he said. "All of us have small failures, big failures—everyone has their own story—but the Lord awaits us always with open arms and never tires of forgiving."

Before he washed the women's feet,

he encouraged the women to pray that "the Lord will make all of us grow in the vocation of service."

The Vatican press office said about 200 people were present, including many seated outside the tent on the lawn. The prison director said 360 women are currently housed at the facility.

Archbishop Diego Giovanni Ravelli, the papal master of liturgical ceremonies, was the main celebrant at the altar.

Father Andrea Carosella, the main chaplain at the Rebibbia prison complex, told Vatican News that the women themselves invited the pope. "For them, the pope's visit is a sign of his great attention to the prison reality and is a great encouragement."

Pope Francis washing the women's feet, he said, "is a sign of the mercy and love of God who goes out to meet the suffering and pain of humanity."

Sister Maria Pia Iammarino, a member of the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor, told Vatican News that Pope Francis' ministry to the women is a model.

In her ministry at the prison, she said, "I do not need to tell them that God loves them, but to be a witness of God's love for them, to look at them with benevolence and acceptance without judgment. Then, when you have gained the trust of the inmates, you can add words." †



'Today, let's ask the Lord for the grace not to tire. All of us have small failures, big failures—everyone has their own story—but the Lord awaits us always with open arms and never tires of forgiving.'

—Pope Francis

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Employment

ASL Interpreters Needed!

The Disabilities Ministry of the archdiocesan Office of Catechesis is in need of American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters for special Masses and events. ASL interpreters will be paid an hourly stipend.

It is preferred that interpreters be Catholic, but those who have a strong familiarity with the Catholic Mass and other liturgical rites are encouraged to apply. It is also preferred that interpreters have an Indiana Interpreting Certificate, though allowances can be made depending on experience.

For more information, contact Jenny Bryans, Disabilities Ministry Coordinator, at jbryans@archindy.org or 317-236-1448.

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