



The

Criterion

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The gift of the Eucharist

Timeless photo captures the joy of first Communion for a teacher, her students, page 11.

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'Unsung hero' embraces his faith and the opportunities to create lasting memories

By John Shaughnessy

As Jim Poole stepped forward to receive the prestigious award, he was visibly touched by the honor, but he also remembered something that has always bothered him about such moments in sports, and he was determined to let everyone at the event know exactly what he felt deep in his heart.

As for the award, Poole couldn't have been more moved that the Indiana Professional Golfers Association (PGA) had chosen him to receive the 2024 Deacon Palmer Award. It's named in honor of the father of one of the greatest golfers

of all time—Arnold Palmer—and it's given to "an unsung hero" who represents "outstanding integrity, character and leadership in the effort to overcome a major obstacle in their life."

At 58, Poole has strived to live his life by these qualities. And that drive for the co-head coach of the boys' golf program at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis has intensified since being diagnosed 13 years ago with stage 4 prostate cancer, a life-threatening diagnosis that indicates the cancer has spread to other parts of his body.

See UNSUNG HERO, page 10

Above: As the co-head coach of the boys' golf program at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis, Jim Poole works closely with his team members, including giving a tip to Noah Irwin, during this past season. (Submitted photo)

Bishops discuss anti-poverty arm, pastoral frameworks, groundbreaking proposals at spring meeting

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (OSV News)—Gathered in Louisville for their spring plenary assembly, the U.S. bishops' June 12-14 meeting saw a mix of



Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio

important matters discussed—with some unexpected twists and moments of robust discussion—starting with how the bishops would continue to address the scourge of poverty in the U.S. and ending with a view to the future for the National Eucharistic Revival.

The first day of the bishops' public session on June 13 was split between the morning executive session and an afternoon public session. Behind closed doors, the bishops discussed the future of the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD), their domestic anti-poverty initiative, which has suffered in recent years from declining donations and questions about grant-making decisions that had depleted its funding reserves.

In a June 13 press conference, Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio of the U.S. Archdiocese for Military Services USA, the president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), told reporters that no decisions had been made yet. But he emphasized the bishops remain committed "to the vital work of fighting poverty in this country," and that the subcommittee responsible for overseeing CCHD would review the bishops' input and act on that advice.

In a shift from previous assemblies, Cardinal Christophe Pierre, the papal ambassador to the U.S., did not focus his address to the bishops on the process of becoming a synodal Church—the

See BISHOPS, page 9

A new voice, a timeless message: Incoming ICC leader a 'missionary disciple' for Catholic social teaching

By Victoria Arthur

When Alexander Mingus becomes the new leader of the Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC) next month, 2,000 years of Catholic social teaching will be embodied in a 28-year-old with a deep love for the Church and a gift for bringing its message to the public sphere.

See MINGUS, page 12


Alexander Mingus, associate director of the Indiana Catholic Conference and soon to be its director, addresses a gathering of the Catholic Business Exchange in Indianapolis in October 2023. (Photo credit Denis Kelly)



MVPS dinner



Dr. Chuck Dietzen speaks on May 2 at the 15th annual MVPS (Men Valuing Prayer and Service) dinner at St. Luke the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis. More than 250 men from across the Indianapolis North Deanery took part in the event. Dietzen is a speaker, author and pediatric rehabilitation specialist who ministered with St. Teresa of Calcutta and has been awarded for his service to children. (Submitted photo)



Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

June 22–July 9, 2024

<p>June 22 – 10 a.m. Archdiocesan Pastoral Council meeting at St. Bartholomew Church, Columbus</p> <p>June 24-27 Priest Convocation at Saint Meinrad Archabbey, St. Meinrad</p>	<p>July 2 – 6 p.m. Mass for Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary at Our Lady of the Greenwood Church, Greenwood</p> <p>July 9 – 6 p.m. National Eucharistic Pilgrimage monstration passing from Archdiocese of Louisville to Archdiocese of Indianapolis on Big Four Bridge, Louisville, Ky.</p>
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Catholics urged to promote religious freedom through prayer, action

WASHINGTON (OSV News)—“Called to the Fullness of Dignity” is the theme of this year’s Religious Freedom Week of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). The observance opens on June 22, the feast day of SS. Thomas More and John Fisher, both English martyrs who fought religious persecution. The week ends on June 29, the feast of SS. Peter and Paul, and includes the Nativity of St. John the Baptist, which is on June 24. Building on this year’s annual report by the USCCB’s Committee on Religious Liberty, Religious Freedom Week 2024 highlights concerns about attacks on houses of worship. “There is no greater threat to religious liberty than for one’s house of worship to become a place of danger, and the country sadly finds itself in a place where that danger is real,” the committee said in its 48-page report, “The State of Religious Liberty in the

United States,” issued in January. Religious Freedom Week also calls attention to threats to Catholic ministries that serve immigrants. “In recent years, Christian services to migrants have faced aggressive accusations by both media personalities and political leaders seeking to advance a certain narrative about current immigration trends,” said the June 7 USCCB release on the upcoming weeklong observance. “The attacks on both sacred spaces and ministries to migrants reflect the political and cultural polarization that has come to characterize so much of American life.” One recent example of political leaders’ aggressive moves against assistance for migrants by churches and other nonprofits is Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton’s attempt to shut down El Paso’s Annunciation House, a Catholic nonprofit serving migrants. A couple of months after Paxton’s previous

effort was blocked by a judge, his office said on May 8 it filed an application for a temporary injunction against Annunciation House, accusing it of “systemic criminal conduct in Texas,” including facilitating illegal border crossings or concealing “illegally present aliens from law enforcement.” Annunciation House’s lawyer said those are false allegations. In his earlier attempt to shut down Annunciation House, Paxton accused it of “human smuggling,” which was denounced by Catholic immigration advocates, including El Paso Bishop Mark J. Seitz. The special week “encourages Catholics to do their part to promote civility by recognizing the dignity of

all people and inviting others to do the same,” the release said, adding that “through prayer, education and public action during Religious Freedom Week, the faithful can promote the essential right of religious freedom for Catholics and for those of all faiths.” The USCCB provides “Pray-Reflect-Act” resources at www.usccb.org/ReligiousFreedomWeek. Each day focuses on different religious liberty topics for prayer, reflection and action. Once again, the Committee for Religious Liberty, in collaboration with the USCCB Secretariat of Catholic Education and Our Sunday Visitor Institute, hosted a religious liberty essay contest. Contestants were asked to share the story of a witness to freedom—a story of the people who inspire us. The top essays from the competition will be published during Religious Freedom Week at www.usccb.org/ReligiousFreedomWeek. †



Bishop Mark J. Seitz

Nominations sought for Respect Life and Pro-Life Youth awards through Sept. 5

The archdiocesan Office of Human Life and Dignity is accepting nominations for the Archbishop O’Meara Respect Life Award and the Our Lady of Guadalupe Pro-Life Youth Award through Sept. 5.

The Archbishop O’Meara Respect Life Award honors an adult or married couple who demonstrate leadership in promoting the dignity and sanctity of human life from birth to natural

death in a parish community and in the archdiocese. The Our Lady of Guadalupe Pro-Life Youth Award honors a high school student who demonstrates leadership in promoting the dignity and sanctity of all human life in a parish community, school community and in central and southern Indiana. The awards will be presented at the Respect Life Mass to be celebrated by Archbishop Charles C. Thompson at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347

N. Meridian St., in Indianapolis, at 10 a.m. on Oct. 6. Printable nomination forms can be found at tinyurl.com/RespLifeNom2024. Completed forms should be mailed to the Office of Human Life and Dignity, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202, or e-mailed to bvarick@archindy.org. For more information, contact Brie Anne Varick, director of the archdiocesan Office of Human Life and Dignity, at 317-236-1543 or bvarick@archindy.org. †

Correction

In the article, “Synodal sessions ‘help support and strengthen’ three Tell City Deanery parishes” in the June 7 issue of *The Criterion*, the number of youths that attended the Catholic Youth Club cookout was 30 rather than 300. †

Official Appointments


Effective July 1, 2024

Rev. Benjamin Keller, O.P., appointed parochial vicar of St. Paul Catholic Center, Bloomington.

Effective July 3, 2024

Deacon Michael Braun, permanent deacon to St. Simon the Apostle, Indianapolis, appointed to permanent diaconate ministry at St. Matthew the Apostle, Indianapolis.

(These appointments are from the office of the Most Rev. Charles C. Thompson, Archbishop of Indianapolis.) †



Pope Francis’ prayer intentions for July

- **For the pastoral care of the sick**—We pray that the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick confer to those who receive it and their loved ones the power of the Lord, and become ever more a visible sign of compassion and hope for all.

See Pope Francis’ monthly intentions at archindy.org/popessintentions.



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Deacon Francis Klauder served at St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in Fortville

By Sean Gallagher

Deacon Francis Klauder, a retired permanent deacon of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, died on June 10. He was 81.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on June 20 at St. Michael Church in Greenfield. The principal celebrant was Father Aaron Jenkins, pastor of St. Michael Parish in Greenfield and St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in Fortville. Deacon Robert Decker was the homilist.



Deacon Francis Klauder

Burial will follow at a later date at Resurrection Cemetery in Bensalem, Pa. Deacon Klauder was ordained a permanent deacon for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia in 1989. After his wife Lynn Klauder died in 2006, he moved to Indiana to be close to family members who lived here. He incardinated into the Archdiocese of Indianapolis in 2010 and served at St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in Fortville and in prison ministry.

Deacon Robert Decker became a friend of Deacon Klauder when the two of them were members of a deacon support group.

“He was kind to everybody that he talked to,” said Deacon Decker, who serves at All Saints Parish in Dearborn County. “He was also a gentleman. But he wasn’t afraid to speak out for justice on some issues that needed a little bit more than just gentleness.

“He wanted to do things the way our Lord wants us to do them, reaching out to one another, to all peoples.”

Deacon Decker also spoke about how Deacon Klauder showed forth Christ in his life and ministry as a deacon.

“We are called to be an icon of the servant Jesus Christ,” Deacon Decker said. “And he truly was a servant. He was a servant to the people in his parish. He did everything he could for the people in the parish.”

Deacon Klauder was also praised by Father George Nangachiveettil, a now-retired priest who served as pastor of St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in Fortville during the same time that Deacon Klauder served there.

“He was a dedicated deacon,” Father Nangachiveettil said. “He was there with every family’s needs, especially at funerals, or at the bedside of the sick. He was a good homilist with fine humor. The people loved him for his presence at the [parish] festival and in the Church.”

Francis Charles Klauder was born on Dec. 10, 1942, in Philadelphia to the late Philip and Margaret Klauder.

Following graduation from the former North Catholic High School in Philadelphia, he worked as an officer in the Philadelphia Police Department until 1975 when he then partnered with a brother in a family trucking and warehouse business. He later worked in insurance before retiring in 2007 when he relocated to Indiana.

Deacon Klauder married his wife Lynn, who preceded him in death, on June 30, 1979. They had three children, all of whom survive.

In 1989, he was ordained as a permanent deacon for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and served at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Bensalem.

In addition to serving at St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in Fortville, Deacon Klauder in the archdiocese ministered as chaplain for police departments in Greenfield and Fortville. He was also a founding member of the St. Thomas the Apostle Knights of Columbus Council #15912, which was established in 2012.

Deacon Klauder is survived by his daughters Kathleen Vahle and Michele Lewis, and his son Michael Klauder; his sisters Mary Kay Crockett and Sallianne Tschoepe, and his brothers Dr. Gerard and Philip Klauder, Jr. He was a grandfather of seven.

Memorial contributions may be sent to the Kenneth Butler Memorial Soup Kitchen, 202 E. Main Street, Greenfield, IN 46140. †

World needs urgent political action to guide AI, Pope Francis tells G7 leaders

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Political leaders have a responsibility to create



Pope Francis

the conditions necessary for artificial intelligence to be at the service of humanity and to help mitigate its risks, Pope Francis told world leaders.

“We cannot allow a tool as powerful and indispensable as artificial intelligence

to reinforce such a [technocratic] paradigm, but rather, we must make

artificial intelligence a bulwark” against the threat, he said in his address on June 14 at the Group of Seven (G7) summit being held in southern Italy.

“This is precisely where political action is urgently needed,” he said.

Many people believe politics is “a distasteful word, often due to the mistakes, corruption and inefficiency of some politicians—not all of them, some. There are also attempts to discredit politics, to replace it with economics or to twist it to one ideology or another,” he said.

But the world cannot function without healthy politics, the pope said, and

effective progress toward “universal fraternity and social peace” requires a sound political life.

The pope addressed leaders at the G7’s special “outreach” session dedicated to artificial intelligence. In addition to the G7 members—the United States, Japan, Canada, Germany, France, Italy and Great Britain—the forum included specially invited heads of state, including the leaders of Argentina, India and Brazil.

The G7 summit was held in Borgo Egnazia in Puglia on June 13-15 to discuss a series of global issues, such as migration, climate change and development in Africa, and the situation

in the Middle East and Ukraine. The pope met privately with heads of state in bilateral meetings before and after his talk, including U.S. President Joe Biden.

Because of time limits set for speakers during the outreach session, the pope read only a portion of his five-page speech, although the full text was made part of the official record. The Vatican provided a copy of the full text.

In his speech, the pope called artificial intelligence “an exciting and fearsome tool.” It could be used to expand access to knowledge to everyone, to advance scientific research rapidly and to give

See POPE, page 8

Marriage

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Be a part of our Fall Marriage Edition

August 23 issue of The Criterion

Couples who are planning to be married between Aug. 9, 2024, and Jan. 31, 2025, in a marriage that is recognized as a valid sacramental or valid natural marriage, or couples who were wed between Jan. 31 and Aug. 9, 2024, in such a recognized marriage and did not have their engagement announcement in *The Criterion* are invited to submit the information for the upcoming Aug. 23 Fall Marriage Edition.

Announcements can be submitted by mail using the form below or electronically at www.archindy.org/engagements.

E-mailed photos
Photos should be saved in jpg format and be at least 500 kb. Color photos are preferred. We recommend sending a photo where the couple’s faces are close to each other. Please send the photo as an attachment to the e-mail: alewis@archindy.org. Subject line: Spring Marriage (Last name). In the e-mail, please include the information in the form located below.

If it is not possible to e-mail a photo, a photo can be mailed with the bottom form. Please no photocopies or laser prints. To have the photo returned, please include a return addressed envelope with a postage stamp on it.

Deadline
All announcements and photos must be received by 5 p.m. on Aug. 9.

— Use this form to furnish information by mail —

Clip and mail to: BRIDES, The Criterion, ATTN: Ann Lewis, 1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367. To submit information online go to: www.archindy.org/engagements. **Deadline with photos:** Tuesday, Aug. 9, at 5 p.m.

Please print or type:

Name of Bride (first, middle, last)		Daytime Phone	
Mailing Address	City	State	Zip Code
Name of Bride’s Parents (first, last)			
City		State	
Name of Bridegroom (first, middle, last)			
Name of Bridegroom’s Parents (first, last)			
City		State	
Wedding Date	Church	City	State

Photo Enclosed
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Editorial

Beatitudes show us how to be happy as disciples of Jesus Christ

“Blessed are the poor in spirit. Theirs is the kingdom of God” (Mt 5:3; Lk 6:20).

“What do we need to do to be really happy?” When Jesus was asked this question by a wealthy young man, his initial response was: “Keep the commandments” (cf. Mt 16:19–30). But when the man said he kept the commandments but was looking for more—to be completely or perfectly happy—Jesus proposed that he observe the first beatitude: to become poor in spirit by selling everything he owned and following Jesus.

The Beatitudes do not replace the Ten Commandments. They fulfill them. The Commandments are God’s laws. They show us that the way to true happiness is found by loving God and loving our neighbor. They warn us that certain behaviors—including idolatry, disrespect, disobedience, lying, stealing, murder, adultery and covetousness—lead to death and damnation rather than to the fullness of life.

In *Jesus of Nazareth*, Pope Benedict XVI tells us that the Beatitudes are “directions for discipleship.” He also says that they “display the mystery of Christ himself” and show us how to follow him.

Jesus’ way is the way to perfect happiness (blessedness or beatitude). It is a way of life that contradicts what we are taught by the world with its secular values of self-indulgence, prestige and power. Jesus’ way is different. It involves suffering, discomfort and self-sacrifice. It celebrates mourning, meekness and mercy where secularism denies death and encourages self-aggrandizement and greed.

The Beatitudes turn the world’s values inside-out and show us a radically different way to live. *“Blessed are the poor in spirit. Theirs is the kingdom of God” (Mt 5:3; Lk 6:20).* The world tells us that poverty is evil, and most of us would agree that the kind of poverty that is imposed on people through no fault of their own is a grave injustice.

During his time on Earth, Jesus was deeply moved by the poverty of his sisters and brothers. He did not take their deprivation for granted. He fed the hungry, clothed the naked, cured

the sick and raised up those who were oppressed. Today, he commands us to do the same!

But paradoxically, the Lord tells us that these same poor are blessed and that the kingdom of God is theirs. What does this say to us—especially to those of us who are not poor but have all that we need to live happy, productive lives?

Pope Benedict calls our attention to the witness of the saints—women and men who freely choose to embrace poverty. Saints such as Francis and Clare of Assisi, Anne Thérèse Guérin, Francis Xavier, Teresa of Calcutta, and countless others show us in their daily lives what it means to be poor in spirit. Pope Benedict praises their humility, which he says was the source of their

freedom—above all “freedom for service, freedom for mission, ultimate trust in God who cares not only for the flowers of the field, but specifically for his human children.”

The first beatitude, which praises the poor in spirit and proclaims their heavenly inheritance, is a challenge to every man and woman who seeks to follow Jesus. We are called to let go of our dependence on worldly comforts, on social status, on attempts to control the world around us. If we

want to be truly happy, we must empty ourselves. We need to get rid of the stuff that weighs us down. Like St. Francis, the namesake of our current pope, who was “gripped in an utterly radical way by the promise of the first beatitude,” we must be willing to become spiritually poor in order to let our hearts be filled with the richness of God’s grace.

The paradox of the first beatitude is that happiness cannot be found in any of the places that the world tells us to look for it. As Pope Benedict writes, “the poor, in their humility, are the ones closest to God’s heart, whereas the opposite is true of the arrogant pride of the rich, who rely only on themselves.”

To be happy, we must let go of our arrogant pride and open our hearts to God. This is not an easy task for any of us. Fortunately, we are not alone. All the saints are with us. Let’s turn to them for help and encouragement as we seek to become poor in spirit.

—Daniel Conway



A church window depicts Jesus giving his Sermon on the Mount, which begins with the beatitudes. Jesus singled out persecuted people in his beatitudes, along with people who were poor, hungry or meek and humble (Mt 5:3-13; Lk 6:20-23). (CNS photo/Crosiers)

Be Our Guest/Ann Wolski

Every day offers blessings from God

“God comes to you every day disguised as your life.”

I’m not sure who wrote these words of wisdom, but this is one of my favorite quotes. Every day is an adventure. You never know who or what will come into your world and change your perspective. The people I’ve met and my many experiences have been amazing, thought provoking, sad, but always a memorable part of my living day.

—A girl needs her peanut butter, so I stopped at the store to pick up some “chunky.” As I was checking out, I mentioned to the salesclerk that I was going on a walk to enjoy the beautiful day. From that one sentence came a life story that went from granddaughter to God journey. Before I left, she gave me a big bear hug. As I hugged her back, our two souls—black and white—seemed to melt into one another. We were just two women having a moment.

—A father and son were walking around the neighborhood, deep in conversation. As they approached, I was stunned. When did son become taller than dad? When did son become old enough to be going off to college in the fall? As they passed, I wished the dad “Happy Father’s Day.” He smiled and said, “It is a happy Father’s Day. I’m a lucky one.”

Later that day, I learned that because of his busy work schedule, the father was not able to spend as much time with his five children as he would have liked. He spent his Father’s Day walking with each child individually. After three hours and a few miles in his tennis shoes, he reconnected

with his family.

—A neighbor stopped to tell me that a dog was running loose in the area, so beware. I couldn’t help but stare into her sparkling blue eyes as she relayed the wild dog warning. I blurted out, “You are beautiful.”

She smiled and said, “I try, but my 93-year-old husband has Alzheimer’s and I spend all my time caring for him. I’m lucky to get my lipstick on in the morning. I just get so tired. Some days are better than others, but we do alright.”

I hugged her and whispered, “You are my hero. Bless you.”

—Their journey together has not been easy. So many years of hurtful feelings between them—a mom who could not care for her baby girl; a daughter who just wanted a mom to love her. But now, at 94 years of age when her mom needed more help, the daughter was willing to step up despite the emotional pain.

On a recent trip to the mall, the daughter saw a dress her mom might like. She bought two.

As the daughter modeled the new dress, her mom commented, “Very pretty. If you stretch it out a little and can’t wear it, I’d love to have it.”

“Mom, let me go change and you can try it on. I think the dress might fit you.”

The daughter slipped into the bedroom and traded her small size for the extra-large.

Her mom’s delight was apparent as she slipped on the dress and twirled around exclaiming, “I look just like you.”

“Mom, you are lovely,” the daughter said.

Each day take time to look around and find God’s hidden blessings in your life. And when you do, those heavenly moments won’t be disguised anymore.

(Ann Wolski is a member of St. Matthew the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis.) †

Be Our Guest/Megan Rathz

Date of nephew’s baptism now a time of reconciliation and new life

If you’ve ever lost someone, you know that certain days, songs, anniversaries, stories, holidays and milestones can evoke emotion from the deepest part of your core. Out of nowhere, something small can hit like a ton of bricks and make you realize how desperately you miss someone.

Sometimes you tell yourself that you’re more healed, and then something will happen where you realize that you’ve moved on simply for the fact that life carries on and you don’t have a choice. It’s not so much that you’re healed, but more so you just didn’t have a choice.

There’s a day we lost my dad 16 years ago. It’s always a day that I take an extra deep breath when I see it coming up on the calendar. In fact, even as I write this column, I don’t like seeing the date in print. It is a day that has shaped the course of my life and many others in our family. It’s a day I normally just try to “power through” and draw the least amount of attention to. It’s a day that 16 years later doesn’t really get any easier. It’s a day for 16 years I’ve wondered what my life would look like today if it had never happened.

This year, however, on the same dreaded day, my sister told me that my sweet nephew’s baptism was going to take place. My immediate thought when hearing this was: *Why would you pick such an awful day for such a beautiful event?*

As the day drew closer, we also got the joyous news that my nephew’s adoption finalization date also happened to be that same week. This baptism was not just a celebration of new life, but also the bookend to a very long journey for our

entire family with the adoption process. It was a day we all prayed for and longed to celebrate.

As the day approached, I was flooded with so many emotions. It happened to take place during a very emotional week as we also had the funeral of a loved one, which turned into a joyful reunion with people I love and care about from my childhood. There was peace made that I did not realize how badly my heart needed.

Standing at the baptismal font and watching this perfect little baby be celebrated and given a new life in Jesus saved me all over again. The same waters that gave my nephew new life also cleansed my soul and helped me heal. He saved me from constantly having to dread a stupid date on the calendar, and gave me joy and a reason to smile on a day that I wish didn’t exist.

I was talking to someone that week, after sharing how emotional the week was, who said, “All joy is a bit bittersweet when someone is missing.” That statement really struck me because it’s just so true. The happiest events are always a little sad just because someone I love so much, who should be here, is not. Instead of running from it, I just acknowledge that life is bittersweet. And if I didn’t love him so much, I wouldn’t struggle so much in his absence.

Of course, I will always remember what happened that day and the way it changed the trajectory of my life, but it is no longer just a day of sadness; it is one of new life, fresh starts, healing, reconciliation, and a cleansing of my heart as my godson was placed in the waters of new life.

(Megan Rathz is a member of St. Matthew the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis. She also is a teacher at the parish’s school.) †

ARCHBISHOP/ARZOBISPO CHARLES C. THOMPSON



Christ the Cornerstone

Revival is an invitation to enkindle a living relationship with Jesus

Now that we are less than a month away from the 10th National Eucharistic Congress, which will be held in Indianapolis on July 17–21, it is more important than ever that we understand why the Eucharist is so important for the mission of the Church. The purpose of the U.S. Catholic Bishops' three-year National Eucharistic Revival is "to renew the Church by enkindling a living relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist."

This "living relationship" is the result of a personal encounter with Jesus that takes place when we recognize the real presence of the Lord—body and blood, soul and divinity—in the Eucharist. When we receive holy Communion, and when we adore our Lord present in the Blessed Sacrament, we are privileged to enter into an intimate relationship with the second person of the Trinity. We come close to him, and he shares himself with us in a profoundly personal way.

This experience of divine intimacy is not merely symbolic. It is totally real. Christ's body and blood become one with us, and we become—really and

truly—the body of Christ. No words can adequately express the depths and richness of this mystery, but when we can accept in faith the truth of our oneness in Christ, nothing can stand in the way of our carrying out the mission given to us by Jesus.

The information provided to parishes and dioceses throughout our country explains the purpose of the National Eucharistic Revival this way:

In an age marked by division and doubt, the Holy Spirit is inviting the United States to find unity and renewal through a grassroots National Eucharistic Revival. This movement—discerned and approved by the bishops of the U.S.—is critical to rekindling a living faith in the hearts of Catholics across America, unleashing a new missionary chapter at this pivotal moment in Church history.

The vision underlying the National Eucharistic Revival is: To inspire a movement of Catholics across the United States who are healed, converted, formed, and unified by an encounter with Jesus in the Eucharist—and who are then sent out on mission "for the life of the world."

Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens, chair of

the National Eucharistic Revival Inc., offers this view of the first Eucharistic Congress in more than 80 years: "Our hope is that the fire which burned in the hearts of the first Christians begins to burn in our hearts in a new and powerful way, so that we can't help but share with others what is burning within us. When that happens, when we become missionaries to the whole of the Good News of our salvation in Christ, then we fulfill in our time the Great Commission which Jesus has given to us: 'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations' " (Mt 28:19).

In order to ignite this fire and, more importantly, to sustain it in the months and years ahead, our personal encounter with Jesus Christ in the Eucharist must be truly transformative. It must change the way we understand ourselves and the world around us. This transformation starts with the way we approach the Blessed Sacrament—with reverence and awe, with gratitude and joy, and with the firm conviction that Jesus knows and loves us personally as friends and as sisters and brothers in the one family of God.

Then, once we have received holy Communion, or spent time with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, we must live

our daily lives fully conscious of the great gift we have been given in the holy Eucharist. The grace of this sacrament should strengthen us in mind and heart so that we can faithfully carry out the mission entrusted to us by our Lord. We have been given this marvelous gift of intimacy with Jesus not to jealously hold onto it, but to share it generously with everyone we meet.

Pope Francis frequently speaks of the Church's need for pastoral and missionary conversion "which cannot leave things as they presently are." We contribute to this experience of conversion when we take seriously both the privileges and the responsibilities that are given to us in and through the holy Eucharist.

May the Holy Spirit kindle in us the fire that burned in the hearts of the disciples who encountered Jesus in the breaking of bread on the road to Emmaus. May the same Spirit fill our hearts and minds with a deep knowledge and love of the real presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament so that we can generously share this great gift and so that the Church in the United States might be "permanently in a state of mission" ("*Evangelii Gaudium*," #25). †



Cristo, la piedra angular

El Avivamiento es una invitación a encender una relación viva con Jesús

Ahora que estamos a menos de un mes del inicio del X Congreso Eucarístico Nacional, que se celebrará en Indianápolis del 17 al 21 de julio, es más importante que nunca que comprendamos por qué la Eucaristía es vital para la misión de la Iglesia. El propósito del Avivamiento Eucarístico Nacional de tres años de los obispos católicos de EE. UU. es "renovar la Iglesia encendiendo una relación viva con el Señor Jesucristo en la Sagrada Eucaristía."

Esta "relación viva" es el resultado de un encuentro personal con Jesús que tiene lugar cuando reconocemos la presencia real del Señor en cuerpo y sangre, alma y divinidad en la Eucaristía. Cuando recibimos la sagrada Comunión, y cuando adoramos a nuestro Señor presente en el Santísimo Sacramento, tenemos el privilegio de entrar en una relación íntima con la segunda persona de la Trinidad. Nos acercamos a él y al mismo tiempo se entrega a nosotros de una forma profundamente personal.

Esta experiencia de intimidad divina no es meramente simbólica sino que es totalmente real. El cuerpo y la sangre de Cristo se hacen uno con nosotros, y nos convertimos verdaderamente en el cuerpo de Cristo. No hay palabras que puedan expresar adecuadamente el alcance y la riqueza de este misterio, pero cuando podemos aceptar con fe

la verdad de nuestra unidad en Cristo, nada puede interponerse en nuestro camino para llevar a cabo la misión que Jesús nos encomendó.

La información que comparten las parroquias y diócesis de todo el país explica de la siguiente forma la finalidad del Avivamiento Eucarístico Nacional:

En una época marcada por la división y la duda, el Espíritu Santo invita a Estados Unidos a encontrar la unidad y la renovación a través de un Avivamiento Eucarístico Nacional de base. Este movimiento, discernido y aprobado por los obispos de EE. UU., es fundamental para renovar una fe que arda en los corazones de los católicos de todo el país y que impulse un nuevo capítulo misionero en este momento crucial de la historia de la Iglesia.

La visión subyacente del Avivamiento Eucarístico Nacional es: Inspirar un movimiento de católicos en todo Estados Unidos que sean sanados, convertidos, formados y unificados mediante un encuentro con Jesús en la Eucaristía, y que luego salgan a cumplir su misión "por la vida del mundo."

El obispo Andrew H. Cozzens, presidente de National Eucharistic Revival Inc., ofrece esta visión del primer Congreso Eucarístico en más de 80 años: "Nuestra esperanza es que el

fuego que ardía en los corazones de los primeros cristianos comience a arder en nuestros corazones de una forma nueva y poderosa, de modo que no podamos evitar compartir con los demás esa llama encendida en nuestro interior. Cuando eso ocurra, cuando nos convirtamos en misioneros de la Buena Nueva de nuestra salvación en Cristo, entonces cumpliremos en nuestro tiempo la Gran Obra que Jesús nos ha encomendado: "Por tanto, vayan y hagan discípulos de todas las naciones" (Mt 28:19).

Para encender este fuego y, lo que es más importante, para mantenerlo vivo en los meses y años venideros, nuestro encuentro personal con Jesucristo en la Eucaristía debe ser verdaderamente transformador. Debe cambiar la forma en que nos concebimos a nosotros mismos y al mundo que nos rodea. Esta transformación comienza con la forma en que nos acercamos al Santísimo Sacramento: con reverencia y asombro, con gratitud y alegría, y con la firme convicción de que Jesús nos conoce y nos ama personalmente como amigos y como hermanas y hermanos en la única familia de Dios.

Después, una vez que hayamos recibido la sagrada Comunión, o pasado un tiempo con Jesús en el Santísimo Sacramento, debemos vivir nuestra vida cotidiana plenamente conscientes

del gran don que se nos ha concedido en la sagrada Eucaristía. La gracia de este sacramento debe fortalecernos en mente y corazón para que podamos llevar a cabo fielmente la misión que nos ha confiado nuestro Señor. Se nos ha concedido este maravilloso don de la intimidad con Jesús no para que nos aferremos celosamente a él, sino para que lo compartamos generosamente con todos los que conozcamos.

El Papa Francisco habla con frecuencia de la necesidad que tiene la Iglesia de una conversión pastoral y misionera "que no puede dejar las cosas como están actualmente." Contribuimos a esta experiencia de conversión cuando nos tomamos en serio tanto los privilegios como las responsabilidades que recibimos en la sagrada Eucaristía y a través de esta.

Que el Espíritu Santo encienda en nosotros el fuego que ardía en el corazón de los discípulos que se encontraron con Jesús al partir el pan en el camino de Emaús. Que el mismo Espíritu llene nuestros corazones y mentes con un profundo conocimiento y amor de la presencia real de Jesús en el Santísimo Sacramento para que podamos compartir generosamente este gran don y para que la Iglesia en Estados Unidos pueda estar "permanentemente en estado de misión" (cf. "*Evangelii Gaudium*," #25). †

Events Calendar

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

June 26

McGowan Hall, 1305 N. Delaware St., Indianapolis. **Theology on Tap**, 6-9 p.m., Father Thomas Haan, pastor of St. Louis de Monfort Parish (Diocese of Lafayette), presenting, ages 18-39, full bar, food trucks, socializing, free admission. Information: 317-592-4006, emastronicola@archindy.org.

June 27

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.

New Albany Knights of Columbus, Cardinal Ritter Council #1221 building, 809 E. Main St., New Albany. **Theology on Tap**, 6-8 p.m., ages 21 and older, last of four stand-alone sessions, Jesuit Father Joseph Laramie, National Eucharistic Preacher, presenting "Spiritual Warfare in My Heart," \$20 online registration through June 23, \$25 after and for walk-ins. Information, registration: catalystcatholic.org/tot, 812-923-8355, kelli@catalystcatholic.org.

June 29

St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Parish

parking lot, 4720 E. 13th St., Indianapolis. **St. Vincent de Paul Stuff A Truck**, 9-11 a.m., accepting clothing, household goods and linens (all in closed bags), furniture, bicycles, bicycle helmets and locks, backpacks. List of items most needed: cutt.ly/ItemsNeeded. Information: dsweeney@svdpindy.org.

June 30

St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Decatur County, St. Maurice campus, 1963 N. Saint John's St., Greensburg. **Parish Festival**, fried chicken dinner, turtle soup, kids' and adult games, pedal tractor pull, beer garden, live music, free admission, 10:30-4 p.m., 812-560-6017, stcatherinekb@gmail.com.

July 4

Fairbanks Park, 1100 Girl Scout Lane, Terre Haute. Wabash Valley Rubber Duck Regatta, 7 p.m., free, adopt ducks in advance: one for \$5, six for \$25, 12 for \$50, 24 for \$100, owner of winning duck receives \$10,000 and chance at \$1 million. Information on how to adopt ducks: WabashValley-RubberDuckRegatta.com.

July 5

Women's Care Center, 4901 W. 86th St., Indianapolis. **First Friday Mass**, 5 p.m., optional

tour of center to follow. Information: 317-829-6800, womenscarecenter.org.

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.

St. John Paul II Church, 2253 St. Joe Road W., Sellersburg. **First Friday Devotion**, 11:40 a.m., litany, consecration to the Sacred Heart, Divine Mercy Chaplet followed by noon Mass. Information: 812-246-2512.

July 7

St. John Paul II Church, 2253 St. Joe Road W., Sellersburg. **First Saturday Devotion**, 8 a.m., rosary, litany, consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, confession 8-8:30 a.m. followed by 8:30 a.m. Mass. Information: 812-246-2512.

July 8

Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish, Madonna Hall, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. **Confraternity of Christian Mothers**, 6 p.m. Mass followed by meeting, for all Catholic women whether a parent or not, free.

required. Information, registration; lcoons@archindy.org, 317-545-7681.

August 23-25

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Discipleship According to the Gospel of Mark**, Benedictine Father Eugene Hensell presenting, \$300 single, \$425 double. Registration: 812-357-6611, saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

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.

September 13-15

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Letting Holy Leisure Be Our Way**, for ages 20-40, Benedictine Father Simon Herrmann presenting, \$300 single, \$425 double. Registration: 812-357-6611, saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

September 20-22

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Navigating Difference: Serving in Multicultural Communities**, Saint Meinrad Assistant Professor of Spanish Dr. Daniela Abraham presenting, \$300 single, \$425 double. Registration: 812-357-6611, saintmeinrad.org/retreats. †

Information: 217-638-7433, paulabeechler@gmail.com.

Hillcrest Country Club, 6098 Fall Creek Road, Indianapolis. **Golf Outing for Life**, 10 a.m. check-in, 11 a.m. Mass, 11:30 a.m. lunch, 12:30 p.m. golf, 5 p.m. awards and social, proceeds go to Women's Care Center in Indianapolis, \$150 per player or \$600 per foursome, sponsorship opportunities available, register by July 1. Information, registration: indianakofc.org, life@indianakofc.org.

July 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.

July 10

McGowan Hall, 1305 N. Delaware St., Indianapolis. **Theology on Tap**,

6-9 p.m., Pilgrim Formation Manager Verso Ministries Joan Watson presenting, ages 18-39, includes presentation, full bar, food trucks and socializing, free admission. Information: 317-592-4006, emastronicola@archindy.org.

July 13

St. Roch Parish parking lot, 3600 S. Pennsylvania St., Indianapolis. **St. Vincent de Paul Stuff A Truck**, 9-11 a.m., accepting clothing, household goods and linens (all in closed bags), furniture, bicycles, bicycle helmets and locks, backpacks. List of items most needed: cutt.ly/ItemsNeeded. Information: dsweeney@svdpindy.org.

July 13-14

All Saints Parish, Dearborn County, St. John the Baptist Campus, 25743 State Route 1, Guilford. **Chicken Dinner and Summer Festival**, Sat. 5 p.m.-midnight, Sun. 11 a.m.-9 p.m., food, beer garden, B&G ice cream, kiddie land, raffles, live music, Sun. only chicken dinner served beginning at 11 a.m., free admission. Information:

812-576-4302, emilyalig_esp@gmail.com.

July 15-19

Mount St. Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis. **Art and Science Camps**, ages 7-11, 9 a.m.-noon Art and Nature Camp, \$175; 1-4 p.m. Science and Nature Camp, \$175; both camps, \$325. Information and registration: 812-923-8817, mountsaintfrancis.org/kids-summer-camp.

July 17

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

St. Louis School cafeteria, 17 E. St. Louis Pl., Batesville. **Father Ed: The Story of Bill W.'s Spiritual Sponsor**, 7 p.m., author Dawn Eden Goldstein presenting on Alcoholics Anonymous founder Jesuit Father Edward Dowling, copies of Goldstein's book available for purchase and signing, coffee and cookies, free. Information: 812-934-3204. †

Retreats and Programs

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

July 10, August 29, September 25

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-events, 317-545-7681, lcoons@archindy.org.

July 12-14

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **A Step 11 Retreat for Recovering Alcoholics and Alanons: Conscious Contact**, Kathleen McCauley presenting, \$300 single, \$425 double. Registration: 812-357-6611, saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

July 15

You are Not Alone Series: The Healing Journey Forward with Suicide Loss (virtual via Zoom), 6:30-8 p.m., second of three independent sessions (Aug. 19), Providence Sister Connie Kramer and Lisa Thibault presenters, geared toward adults, however teens 15 and older may attend with parent or guardian, free, registration required. Information, registration; lcoons@archindy.org, 317-545-7681.

July 29-August 2

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Summer Chant Workshop**,

Benedictine Brother John Glasenapp and Dr. Rosemary Heredos presenting, for directors of liturgical music and singers in parish liturgies, \$750 single, \$835 double, \$200 commuter. Registration: 812-357-6611, saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

August 2-4

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Young Adult Retreat**, 5 p.m. Fri. (vespers)-1 p.m. Sun. (lunch), 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.

August 9-11

St. Joseph Retreat Center, 1440 W. Division Rd., Tipton (Diocese of Lafayette). **Franciscan Connect Retreat 2024**, 8 a.m. Fri.-1:30 p.m. Sun., Franciscan Father Dennet Jung retreat director, \$310 single, \$430 double, scholarships available, register by July 15. Information, registration: 231-670-1511, kenrasp55@gmail.com.

August 19

You are Not Alone Series: The Healing Journey Forward with Suicide Loss (virtual via Zoom), 6:30-8 p.m., last of three independent sessions, Father Jim Farrell presenting, geared toward adults, however teens 15 and older may attend with parent or guardian, free, registration

Wedding Anniversaries

GORDON AND CAROLE (SPECK) GRINDSTAFF, members of St. Thomas More Parish in Mooresville, celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on June 6. The couple was married in St. Patrick Church in Indianapolis on June 6, 1964. They have four children: Julie Lesh, Jason, Joe and the late John Grindstaff. The couple also has three grandchildren. The couple also has one great-grandchild.



JIM AND HELEN (FRITZ) WELTER, members of St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis, celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary on June 20. The couple was married in St. Thomas More Church in Mooresville on June 20, 1969. They have two children: Mark and James Welter II. The couple also has one grandchild.



NORBERT AND LADONNA (BEDEL) HOEING, members of Immaculate Conception Parish in Millhousen, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on June 8. The couple was married in St. Mary Church in Greensburg on June 8, 1974. They have three children: Christine Meyer, Melissa Stier and Timothy Hoeing. The couple also has eight grandchildren.



TOM AND DIANA (CAMPBELL) MAIER, members of Good Shepherd Parish in Indianapolis, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on June 1. The couple was married in the chapel of Indiana Central College (now University of Indianapolis) in Indianapolis on June 1, 1974, and received dispensation to be married there. They have two children: Dawn and James Maier. (correction)



JAMES AND THERESA (MILLER) RUSSELL, members of St. Simon the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on May 25. The couple was married in St. Lawrence Church in Indianapolis on May 25, 1974. They have four children: Laura Quiett, Evan, Jason and the late Justin Russell. The couple also has four 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.

Creating care packages—and encounters

Criterion staff report

Parishes and groups throughout central and southern Indiana participated in a pre-National Eucharistic Congress service project sponsored by the archdiocesan Catholic Charities-Social Concerns ministry and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in Indianapolis.

The project allowed members of the archdiocese—whether attending the congress or not—to help those in need throughout the country to receive both a package of

hygiene items and an encounter with Christ.

Each Ziploc-bag package will contain a pair of socks, hygiene items, a Mylar blanket, a soft snack and a small card with Scripture or an encouraging message.

The care packages will be used during the July 17-21 National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis in two ways. First, they will be given to homeless people in Indianapolis as members of the Christ in the City organization lead small groups through the downtown area for encounters with Christ in the faces of the poor.

The remaining packages will be available for congress attendees to take back to their home communities, thus helping those in need and creating “Christ encounters” throughout the country.

Parishes and groups have delivered about 650 care packages to the St. Vincent de Paul distribution center in Indianapolis so far, where the packages will be stored until the National Eucharistic Congress. The deadline to deliver packages is July 1. For more information, go to cutt.ly/nec-carepackages.†



Members of the St. Vincent de Paul Society conferences at St. Barnabas and St. Mark the Evangelist parishes, both in Indianapolis, and members of the Young at Heart group at St. Jude Parish in Indianapolis prepare hygiene packages in Msgr. Shafer Hall at St. Mark on May 29. The groups spent the previous day sorting the three parishes’ donated items and setting up assembly lines. Franciscan Health Indianapolis donated Mylar blankets for the kits. Area dentists donated toothbrushes and toothpaste, and a rosary-making group at St. Mark the Evangelist made 300 rosaries to include in the care packages. (Submitted photos)



Members of the Knights of Peter Claver and Ladies Auxiliaries of Holy Angels, St. Andrew the Apostle and St. Rita parishes, all in Indianapolis, form an assembly line at Holy Angles Parish on May 8 to create care packages for distribution at the National Eucharistic Congress. With donated items from the Indianapolis Central Committee of the Knights of Peter Claver and Ladies Auxiliary (composed of members from the above parishes as well as SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral Parish in Indianapolis) as the committee’s annual community project, the group was able to make 100 packages.



Members of the St. Vincent de Paul Society conferences at St. Barnabas and St. Mark the Evangelist parishes, both in Indianapolis, and members of the Young at Heart group at St. Jude Parish in Indianapolis pose on May 29 with the 325 hygiene care packages they were able to create from the items donated by members of the three parishes, Franciscan Health Indianapolis and local dentists. It took two cars to carry the packages to the St. Vincent de Paul Society distribution center in downtown Indianapolis.

Service opportunities during National Eucharistic Congress help ‘serve the face of Jesus Christ in the poor’

By Natalie Hoefler

In his Feb. 24, 1980, apostolic letter “*Dominicae Cenae*” (“The Mystery and Worship of the Eucharist”), St. John Paul II noted that, “If our eucharistic worship is authentic, it must make us grow in awareness of the dignity of each person” (#6).

In light of this connection between Christ in the Eucharist and the call for human dignity, National Eucharistic Congress participants will have two unique service opportunities on July 18 and 19, days two and three of the July 17-21 event in Indianapolis.

One opportunity invites Congress attendees to participate in packaging 420,000 meals through Million Meals Movement, an Indiana-based organization that provides volunteer-packed meals to food banks and food pantries throughout the state.

From noon-6 p.m. on July 18 and 19, individuals and families can stop by the Million Meals Movement area in the Indiana Convention Center exhibit hall to join in assembly lines making macaroni and cheese packaged meals and rice casserole packaged meals.

“We were thrilled when we got the call from the National Eucharistic Congress [team] saying they wanted to partner with us,” says Molly Adams, sales account executive for the organization.



**NATIONAL EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS
WEEKLY UPDATE**

“This project will make a huge impact for the state and for those attending the Congress. It’s a very fulfilling opportunity that gives people a hands-on experience that will benefit others.”

The second service opportunity will bring participants into a personal encounter with the homeless in downtown Indianapolis.

Twice each day on July 18 and 19, staff and missionaries of Christ in the City will train and lead small groups of three to five people “to encounter the chronically homeless—homeless people on the street corners,” says Blake Brouillette, managing director of the Colorado-based ministry. “We’ll engage with them in conversation, hearing their stories, giving them a care package, just having a moment of encounter with the poor.”

“The same face of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist is same face of Jesus Christ in the poor. We’re providing an opportunity to serve the face of Christ as [Congress attendees] are at a place where they’re adoring and praising the face of Christ in the Eucharist.”

Those interested in participating in this opportunity can stop by the Christ in the City booth in the Indiana Convention Center exhibit hall during the National Eucharistic Congress to sign up. Space is limited, with 15 slots available for each of the four outings. Outings will take place around noon and again in the late afternoon on July 18 and 19. Participants must be age 18 or older.

The care packages to be given to the homeless will be provided by archdiocesan parishes and groups that participated in a pre-Congress service opportunity to create the packages. (See related article above.)

(For a list of all NEC Updates printed in The Criterion, go to www.archindy.org/criterion/local/congress.html.) †

SERRA CLUB VOCATIONS ESSAY

Student draws closer to Christ through hardships, service to others

By Sydney Cullina
Special to *The Criterion*

Growing up in a Catholic upbringing since words were able to come out of my mouth, each aspect of my school,



parish and family life have nurtured me into the woman I am today.

One of the often overlooked, yet earliest examples of appreciating the Eucharist I can remember is simple Mass attendance.

While putting down the coloring pages my parents used to keep me engaged as a child or finding the urge to get out of bed on a Sunday morning might have struck me as an inconvenience before I started to see God's true goodness, following my dad's return from mental health rehabilitation is when this hour of

God's presence as a restart to the week really began to mean the most to me.

While the hardships my family endured battling addiction and mental health may have been a huge setback to the average atheist, this toll my family life had on me is what actually allowed me to embrace Christ in my life.

Being blessed with the ability to admire my parents' demonstrated reverence and faith participation, I looked forward to looking up at the altar and finding comfort in the silence, feeling God's presence in the body and blood, along with my loved ones, reaffirming that he has a plan for us even if we have yet to see it.

If every young person was as fortunate as I am to recognize one role model in their life to imitate their eucharistic devotion and used their setbacks in their family life as motivations to recognize the light God has prepared for them at the end of the tunnel, this would provide generations to come an endless amount of hope.

Two similar experiences I encountered on a deeper level that allowed me to experience a step closer to my vocational call was my childcare mission trip to Guatemala in June of 2023 and the opportunity to not only attend, but also lead a retreat for the junior class in November of 2023.

Although the body and blood of Christ may not have been present in these moments, Christ himself certainly was, through starving children's smiles and "thank you's" when receiving a snack, and through the introverted retreatants' abilities to open their hearts and speak up following reflection time.

Both of these experiences allowed me to be a voice of reason for others and provide insight to a vulnerable group of individuals who needed God's guidance and provided me with the insight that I want to continue this Christian leadership.

While it may be daunting to put yourself out there, I assure you that everyone's faith journey looks a

little different. Being an advocate of Christianity and a sense of encouragement both at the local and national level served as a reminder to me that God's love is needed everywhere, and there simply is no measure to it.

Although our faith-based environments can help us to hold ourselves accountable for going to Mass, attending school retreats and reaching our service hours, personally I think the key is finding gratitude and God's goodness in the littlest ways. And that comes from within our individual motivation to seek him.

(Sydney and her parents, Kameron and Sheila Cullina, are members of Christ the King Parish in Indianapolis. She recently completed the 12th grade at Bishop Chatard High School in Indianapolis and is the 12th-grade division winner in the Indianapolis Serra Club's 2024 John D. Kelley Vocations Essay Contest.) †

POPE

continued from page 3

"demanding and arduous work to machines.

"Yet at the same time, it could bring with it a greater injustice between advanced and developing nations or between dominant and oppressed social classes, raising the dangerous possibility that a 'throwaway culture' be preferred to a 'culture of encounter,'" he said.

Like every tool and technology, he said, "the benefits or harm it will bring will depend on its use."

While he called for the global community to find shared principles for a more ethical use of AI, Pope Francis also called for an outright ban of certain applications.

For example, he repeated his insistence that so-called "lethal autonomous weapons" be banned, saying "no machine should ever choose to take the life of a human being."

Decision-making "must always be left to the human person," he said. Human dignity itself depends on there being proper human control over the choices made by artificial intelligence programs.

Humanity would be condemned to a future without hope "if we took away people's ability to make decisions about themselves and their lives, by dooming them to depend on the choices of machines," he said. In his text, he specifically criticized judges using AI with prisoner's personal data, such as their ethnicity, background, education, psychological assessments and credit rating, to determine whether the prisoner is

likely to re-offend upon release and therefore require home-confinement.

The pope also cautioned, students especially, against "generative artificial intelligence," which are "magnificent tools" and easily make available online "applications for composing a text or producing an image on any theme or subject."

However, he said, these tools are not "generative," in that they do not develop new analyses or concepts; they are merely "reinforcing" as they can only repeat what they find, giving it "an appealing form" and "without checking whether it contains errors or preconceptions."

Generative AI "not only runs the risk of legitimizing fake news and strengthening a dominant culture's advantage, but, in short, it also undermines the educational process itself," his text said. †

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United in the Eucharist

BISHOPS

continued from page 1

topic of the global Synod on Synodality in Rome—but instead focused on the National Eucharistic Revival, affirming the central importance of the bishops' endeavor. He urged them to experience this revival as bishops, and emphasized Pope Francis' insight that eucharistic devotion is connected with the Church's mission of "washing the feet of wounded humanity."

The U.S. bishops voted to send a message to Pope Francis, joining him in praying for peace in the world, calling for diplomatic solutions that affirm human fraternity, and thanking him for sending Cardinal Luis A. Tagle as his delegate to the National Eucharistic Congress in July.

Archbishop Broglio gave a presidential address that began with a reflection on the American sacrifices to liberate Europe from Nazi domination that were made 80 years ago at D-Day on the blood-soaked beaches of Normandy, France, and affirmed many of the points in the bishops' message. In particular, he focused on how various Catholic agencies and individuals were bringing the Church's witness to peace amid ongoing conflicts—many of which the rest of the world has otherwise forgotten, such as Syria and Haiti.

During the course of both days, the bishops also heard about the ongoing progress of the Synod on Synodality, and that its second session this October will zero in on what a synodal Church should look like. The bishops heard that becoming a synodal Church was about creating a place of encounter in the Church, where tensions could be fruitfully transformed for the sake of the Church's health and holiness.

Bishop Daniel E. Flores, who served last year as a president delegate of the synod assembly and a member of the synod's preparatory commission, emphasized it would help bishops "to think together with our people about how to be about what we should be about, which is the concerns of Christ the Lord."

The bishops of the Latin Church also voted to approve all their agenda items related to English translation texts for the Liturgy of the Hours and the Roman Missal—a process which the bishops' chair of the Committee on Divine Worship, Bishop Steven J. Lopes of the Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter, said finally completed the work on the new English translation of the Liturgy of the Hours that the bishops began in 2012.

The U.S. bishops overwhelmingly voted on June 14 to approve a pastoral framework for Indigenous Catholic ministry, which also included an apology for the Church's failures through the course of its history in North America "to nurture, strengthen, honor, recognize and appreciate those entrusted to our pastoral care."

However, the bishops' pastoral framework for youth and young adult ministry hit a snag that stunned the bishops and Bishop Robert E. Barron of Winona-Rochester, Minn.—chair of the bishops' Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life, and Youth—who had presented on it just the day before as a "watershed moment" in forming youth and young adults for "missionary discipleship" and "Christlike leadership in society."

Despite overwhelming support from the bishops present, too many individual bishops had already left for their home dioceses by the June 14 morning vote, and the framework failed to meet the two-thirds threshold for passage by two votes.

It was an unexpected hiccup, as ultimately the youth and young adult framework was expected to pass once the absent bishops were polled.

The aspect of the bishops' meeting that most resembled a real debate was a vigorous discussion on June 14 about creating a national directory of instituted ministries. The bishops had a lively exchange regarding lay ministries and whether they should together consider the ministries of acolyte, lector and catechist—the former two which Pope Francis expanded to include women and the latter which he formally instituted—or start work on guidelines for the catechist, an ancient office in the Church and now an instituted lay ministry. They also expressed concern about proper formation, but also about a kind of "professionalization" that would exclude faithful people from living this ministry—particularly those who had valuable experience from Latin American contexts.

Bishop Lopes suggested the bishops should continue by considering all three together, and work on clarifying their complementary roles in carrying out the local Church's mission, saying Pope Francis seemed to be inviting them to understand these ministries as not simply serving a liturgical function, but encompassing a "larger reality" of lived discipleship.

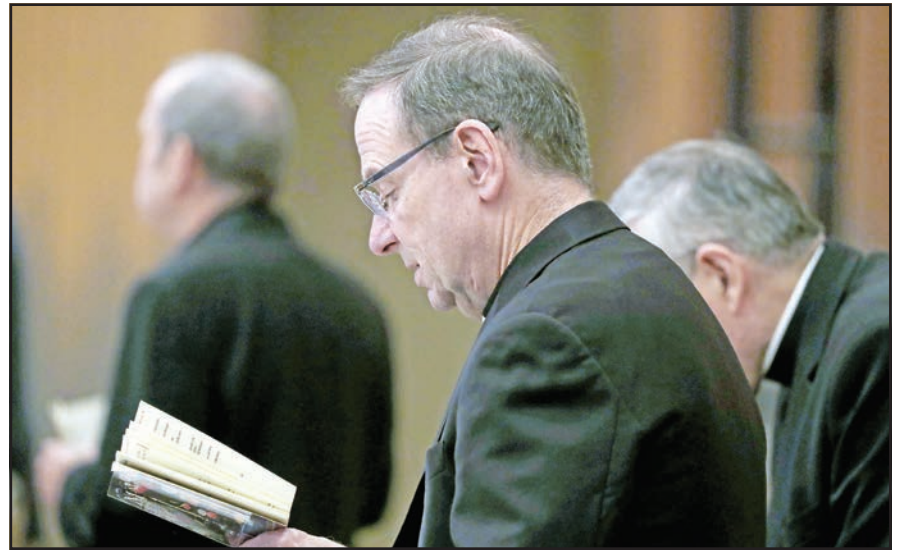
Archbishop Alfred C. Hughes, archbishop emeritus of New Orleans, however, advocated an amendment to start some preliminary work on the ministry of catechist—making adjustments at a later date with respect to the ministry of acolyte and lector—that the bishops could examine at their meeting in November.

Speaking on behalf of the Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis, he cited the urgency of catechesis given the high rates of Catholic adults disaffiliating from the Church. The committee's amendment ultimately carried the day, and the bishops approved the national directory proposal.

The bishops had another robust discussion the day before, on June 13, following the update on their mental health campaign, which included presentations on how Catholic Charities can help the bishops form a "trauma-aware Church," and the vital importance of parish engagement and accompaniment in this effort to save lives.

The bishops' exchange affirmed their view that ending the stigma surrounding mental health was not only good for the faithful, but also for clergy, allowing them to open up about their own mental health needs.

Bishop John P. Dolan of Phoenix applauded these efforts, saying they were "bringing people back into the framework of Church through accompaniment."



Bishop Michael F. Burbidge of Arlington, Va., chairman of the U.S. Catholic bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities, prays on June 14 at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Spring Plenary Assembly in Louisville, Ky. (OSV News photo/Bob Roller)

The bishops also voiced their unanimous approval for the plans of Bishop David L. Ricken of Green Bay, Wis., to open a cause for the canonization of Adele Brise, a Belgian-born immigrant from the 19th-century, whose visions of the Virgin Mary Bishop Ricken had declared worthy of belief in 2010. The bishop suggested Brise provided a model for their evangelization and catechesis efforts.

Although the bishops' public sessions had opened with matters that seemed routine, the June 14 session included presentations inviting the bishops to authorize groundbreaking efforts on combatting abuse and an urgent call to engage with lawmakers on immigration policy affecting religious workers from foreign countries.

Suzanne Healy, chair of the bishops' National Review Board, introduced proposals toward combating sexual abuse, including the issuance of guidelines that would address the sexual or spiritual abuse of adults, a new John Jay College to study abuse allegations since 2011, and a 2027 national day of prayer as an act of restorative justice.

"You again have the opportunity to break ground and establish the foundation for the next evolution of safeguarding," she said.

The bishops' final agenda item on June 14 was the matter of the National Eucharistic Congress. Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens of Crookston, Minn., board chair of the National Eucharistic Congress Inc., told the bishops that they expect a sold-out stadium of 50,000 people for the weekend of July 17-21 at the National Eucharistic Congress. He noted the strong participation of at least 50,000 people with the four National Eucharistic Pilgrimage routes that were halfway toward their destination of Indianapolis.

But he emphasized that their eye was already toward the future, from initiatives to invite Catholics to "consider walking one person back to the faith," along with forming "Eucharistic missionaries," and planning future national Eucharistic congresses, similar to what takes place in other countries.

"The hope is this will not be a one and done," he said. With no questions from the body of bishops, he said, "See you all in Indianapolis!" †

Bishops eager to renew and deepen appreciation of the Eucharist

By Daniel Conway

Special to *The Criterion*

I recently had the privilege of attending the public sessions of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) spring plenary assembly held in Louisville, Ky., on June 12–14.

The bishops meet twice a year for prayer and discussion of issues that concern the Church and our nation. This year, topics discussed included the worldwide 2021–2024 Synod on Synodality; the bishops' national mental health campaign; the National Eucharistic Revival and the National Eucharistic Congress; the Religious Worker Visa Program, and the National Review Board. For more information about this meeting and the matters discussed, please consult the USCCB website at [tinyurl.com/USCCBSpring2024](https://www.usccb.org/news/2024/06/12).

Among the many important issues that the bishops addressed was the three-year National Eucharistic Revival, which will experience a "peak moment" during the National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis on July 17-21. The National Eucharistic Revival was also consistently mentioned by the bishops who spoke or gave reports.

In their opening remarks, apostolic nuncio Cardinal Christophe Pierre, the pope's representative in the United States, and Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio of the U.S. Archdiocese for Military Services USA, president of the USCCB, both reflected on the importance of the Eucharistic Revival to the spiritual health and vitality of the Church in the United States.

"We have set out on this Eucharistic Revival because we want our people to come to a renewed and deeper appreciation of Christ's presence in the Eucharist. We want them to know that Christ is there for them in the Eucharist: to receive their adoration, to accompany them in their earthly journey, and to feed them with the Bread of Life," Cardinal Pierre said. "We want them also to know the implications of encountering Christ in this way: how it calls them to an ongoing journey of conversion; and also how it commits them to a life of evangelization—of being people who offer an open-hearted welcome of mercy to everyone who seeks a place in God's Church.

"The eucharistic processions that are going on right now, and which will converge on Indianapolis next month, are an outward symbol of what we want

to happen on a spiritual level. We want people to turn to the Eucharistic Lord, to walk with him, and to be led by him," he continued. "We also want this to happen in the context of community. Our people need to experience that a journey with the Lord is also a journey with others who seek the Lord. That this journey is a true synod."

The apostolic nuncio's words were echoed by the USCCB president in his address on June 14. Archbishop Broglio observed that the bishops of the United States are eagerly awaiting the Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis because it will be a powerful moment of prayer, witness and spiritual growth for the Church in our country. He expressed his thanks to Indianapolis Archbishop Charles C. Thompson and Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens of Crookston, Minn., for their leadership of this important event.

The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Church's life. Everything that the bishops discussed, and every action taken at the spring meeting, must be grounded in devotion to the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. Everything must flow from, and be sustained by, the Church's unwavering conviction that Christ is here with

us now—body and blood, soul and divinity—as the Word of God Incarnate truly present to us in the holy Eucharist.

Cardinal Pierre's reference to the eucharistic journey as a "true synod" recalls the consistent refrain of our Holy Father that the Church is governed by the Holy Spirit, not by politics or parliamentary procedures. The bishops who gathered in Louisville are not rulers or legislators. They are pastors who must listen to the word of God, and the voices of their people, in order to discern God's will for our Church.

Bishops are also not superheroes. They are ordinary men who have been called to an extraordinary ministry of love and service. Without the Holy Spirit, they are powerless to make decisions and take actions that will carry out the responsibilities entrusted to them at the time of their episcopal ordination.

Devotion to the holy Eucharist is a vivid sacramental reminder of the fact that Christ is truly present among us. The U.S. bishops are right to remind themselves—and all of us—that Christ alone is the head of the Church and Savior of the world.

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

UNSUNG HERO

continued from page 1

And yet for Poole, a member of St. Susanna Parish in Plainfield, those 13 years have been marked by a combination of joy, gratitude and faith. And that last gift—faith—is the source of what has long bothered Poole about such wonderful personal moments in sports.

“Every once in a while, you see an athlete stand up and say, ‘All glory to God. I thank him for everything. He’s given me all the gifts I have to get to this point.’

“Yet, it’s never a Catholic who’s the one saying that. It’s a Christian, a Baptist, whatever. Catholics don’t talk that way, and it’s always bothered me. And so, when I got my award, I wanted to make sure I gave credit to my Catholic faith in front of all the PGA members. I just wanted to give credit to my faith for allowing me to live the type of life that anyone would consider me for this award.”

While that story shows Poole’s dedication to his Catholic faith, there’s another story that reveals his approach to life and coaching.

‘I want all of us to have great memories together’

On Roncalli’s athletics website, here’s how Poole describes his goal for each season: “Whatever happens this season, I create amazing memories every year!”

When Poole was asked about that goal in an interview, he added, “That’s what it’s about, right? There are things we look back on that make us happy. Oftentimes, we relive them over and over and over for years. I want these kids to have their moments that they can remember for the rest of their lives. I want all of us to have great memories together.”

One of those great memories occurred this spring when the team did well in the Marion County tournament. To celebrate that performance, Poole and co-head coach Greg White took the golfers out for a meal at a place where the specialty is a hot chicken sandwich.

“It’s a fun little restaurant. They’ve got graffiti on the walls and punk rock music playing,” Poole recalls with delight. “It was a gorgeous day. We sat outside and laughed together while listening to punk rock music and eating chicken sandwiches.”

Asked about the punk rock music, Poole notes, “Oh yeah, I love that stuff. I’m a big fan of The Clash.”

That joy and the appreciation of the small, important moments in life have made him well-loved by his golfers.

“He is truly an inspiration to everyone around him,” says Nathan Fikes, who recently completed four years of playing under Poole at Roncalli. “He has faced a multitude of struggles throughout many years, but this has not stopped him from being a great teacher and mentor to many. He spends every day trying to help others. He has an open-door policy where anyone can come anytime to get a golf lesson or get advice.”

Roncalli’s athletic director David Lauck notes, “There isn’t a tougher, more prepared coach in our athletic department. Coach Poole is beyond deserving of any and all honors and recognition that come his way.”

For Poole, it’s all a part of sharing the gift of life, in thanksgiving for the extra years of life he continues to have.

“I see what happens around me,” he says. “While there are many days where I do not feel my best, I have seen so many people who have lost their lives in the 13 years since I’ve been diagnosed. I try to take advantage of the opportunities I have been given to this point—to try in some small way to validate my existence while so many others were not given these opportunities. I have seen the wonderful side of people. I am so grateful to be here and to have learned what I have learned from being a cancer survivor.”

He’s also grateful for the extra time he’s had with his wife of 30 years, Kelly, who has faced her own serious health issues.

‘It was devastating, scary’

They met at Marian University in Indianapolis in a philosophy/religion class while sitting next to each other. Her faith was clear to him while his had faded, but he went to a Mass to impress her—which became a turning point in his faith.

That faith was tested when their twin sons, Luke and Mark, were infants.

“The boys weren’t quite one when Kelly was diagnosed with lymphoma,” Poole recalls. “It was devastating, scary. With twin kids under one, you try not to think forward in that situation. You just try to focus on every day and moving forward. When I imagined going forward without her and raising Luke and Mark on my own, that was challenging. We were lucky. She was done with everything in a year.”

Later, Kelly was diagnosed with breast cancer and more recently she suffered a bout of pneumonia, surviving both. Then there was his diagnosis. He kept getting sick, then the pain in his side became unbearable.

“When I was diagnosed, I was only 45 years old. The reason my rib hurt so bad was that the cancer had metastasized to my bones. My rib had cancer in it, and it broke,” he says. “When I went in for my appointment, I was told I had the largest and firmest prostate they had ever felt. I was in complete shock, my head spinning. The doctor said, ‘I’d like to start your treatment today.’ I said, ‘All right, let’s go.’ It was scary, a lot of tears.”

Thirteen years later, he still gets an infusion of a bone strengthener every six months “so my bones can continue to work,” he says. Through the years, he’s also taken a lot of different medications to keep the cancer in check. When one eventually fails, the doctors put him on another. He knows the latest medication will fail, too.

“Then, we will try something else,” he says, knowing the real possibility that there may come a time when the cancer prevails.

Even with that possibility, his faith endures.

‘I don’t take things for granted’

“I remember when I was first diagnosed, I had the fear, and that stays with you for a long time—I mean, for years,” Poole says. “I was just scared of dying. Not just death itself. The biggest thing for me was my children.

“Coaching really helped in those early years of fear. Faith was a big deal, too. Just going to church and thinking about things when you’re there and praying.



Jim and Kelly Poole, members of St. Susanna Parish in Plainfield, pose for a family photo with their sons, Luke, left, and Mark, during a trip to Ireland. (Submitted photo)

I’m always asking for help and strength to be better, to be stronger.”

In fact, he wears his faith on his right wrist, showcasing it on a thin blue band that says, “Stay positive,” a band that also has “G3” on it, a short way of noting “Give God Glory.”

“I don’t take things for granted. I live a very grateful life,” he says. “I think that’s one of the things that has really helped me on my journey.”

The journey of the past 13 years has included extra time with Kelly, who is a teacher at St. Susanna School. It has also involved nine seasons of coaching at Roncalli.

“My greatest joy is seeing these young kids develop, not just as golfers but as young men,” he says. “My attitude toward these kids is just love. You just cherish every opportunity because you just don’t know how many you have left. The kids know I’m emotional. They know how much I care for them. I tell them I love them.”

The journey has also included the joy of coaching both his sons at Roncalli and then watching them play golf in college.

It’s a journey of gratitude that has also brought Poole closer to other people.

“Sometimes being sick can be a blessing,” he says. “When you have your down moments, you don’t realize until you’ve been in them how good people really are. There’s the kindness and the generosity and the love I got from people everywhere. It was earth-shattering. I’m so thankful to those people.”

That thanks especially connects to the message he shared when he received the Deacon Palmer Award—how he relies on God.

“I was never angry or frustrated at God,” he says. “I understood these things happen to people. I always remember the book *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*. It was reassuring. It’s just the way life is. I get it. So, I just wanted to be the best I could be. Plus, I thought more about my afterlife. I want to see God in heaven. So, what can I do to make that happen? I think I’ve been pretty good, but have I done enough? I still ask myself that question all the time.

“I’m good with God. Absolutely. I love him.” †

Lasting peace requires all warring parties in dialogue, cardinal says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The only way to achieve true, stable and just peace is by having all sides of a conflict involved in dialogue, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, said at

a peace summit in Switzerland.

“The Holy See expresses its hope that the diplomatic effort currently being promoted by Ukraine and supported by so many countries will be improved,

in order to achieve the results that the victims deserve and that the entire world is hoping for,” he said in his speech on June 16.

Upon Ukraine’s request, Switzerland organized a Summit on Peace in Ukraine, which was held at a resort overlooking Lake Lucerne in the Canton of Nidwalden on June 15-16. Switzerland invited more than 160 heads of state and other government leaders to kick-start a peace process by developing “a common understanding of a path toward a just and lasting peace in Ukraine.”

About 100 delegations, including 57 heads of state and governments, attended the conference. Russia, which escalated its attacks on Ukraine with a full-scale assault in 2022, was not invited after it had indicated multiple times it had no interest in participating, and China, repeatedly called on by international leaders to use its leverage to bring Russia to the negotiating table, was also absent.

Cardinal Parolin, who led the Vatican delegation, said, “It is important to reiterate that the only means capable of achieving true, stable and just peace is dialogue between all the parties involved.

“In the face of war and its tragic consequences, it is important never to give up, but to continue to seek ways to end the conflict with good intentions, trust

and creativity,” he continued, praising Ukraine for working “continuously on the diplomatic front, eager to achieve a just and lasting peace” all while it is “making enormous efforts to defend itself from aggression.”

The Vatican is deeply concerned about “the tragic humanitarian consequences” of the war “and is especially committed to facilitating the repatriation of children and encouraging the release of prisoners, especially seriously wounded soldiers and civilians” by maintaining direct contact and communication with both Ukrainian and Russian authorities, he said.

“The reunification of minors with their families or legal guardians must be a paramount concern for all parties, and any exploitation of their situation is unacceptable. It is therefore imperative that every available channel is strengthened to facilitate this process,” he said.

The Vatican “remains prepared to assist in the implementation of potential mediation initiatives that are acceptable to all parties and benefit those who have been affected,” he said, encouraging all nations and members of the international community “to explore ways of providing assistance and facilitating mediation, whether of a humanitarian or political nature.” †



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A timeless photo captures the joy of first Communion for a teacher and her students

(The Criterion has invited readers, teachers, children and catechetical leaders to share their thoughts and stories relating to the first Communion of girls and boys in our parishes. Here is the first story in this series.)

By John Shaughnessy

The photo captures the joy of a child on the day of her first holy Communion.

Wearing a white dress and a veil, both made with the love and the artistry of her mother, the second-grade child named Jen beams as she is surrounded by her two brothers and her sister.



Jen Wetherell

Forty years have passed since that photo was taken, but that moment still means so much to Jen Wetherell that she features it year-round in the second-grade classroom where she teaches at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School in Richmond.

A child-like joy even fills Wetherell's voice as she shares the first of the two reasons she wants her students to be able to see that photo every day.

"It helps my students see I'm not this unattainable person, this adult teacher, that I was once a child who was in their position," she says. "They're like, 'Ooooooh!' They enjoy seeing me that way."

A combination of awe and reverence marks her words as she mentions the second reason she features the photo—it shows her students *her* joy in receiving the Eucharist for the first time.

"Oh, my goodness yes, I still remember it!" she says. "There was such joy instilled in me—that this was a gift.



On Mother's Day, May 12, children pose for a photo on the steps of St. Mary Church of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Richmond after receiving their first Communion. (Submitted photo)

Just such a special day to receive Jesus. He is in me. This was something so exciting for me."

So was seeing her students receive holy Communion during a special Mass on Mother's Day, May 12, at St. Mary Church of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish.

"It is absolute joy—and a little selfish pleasure. It makes me feel so good," says Wetherell, a mother of five. "I am being a disciple of Christ. I have given this love to these children. And I'm also receiving that love and joy. It brings me back to my first holy Communion, and it brings me back to when my children received their first holy Communion. It's just joy and love."

Some of the second-grade children who received the Eucharist for the first time on Mother's Day shared their joy in a sweet way.

"It felt good, and I can't wait to receive him again!" Grace Hunter said.

Classmate Leah Evans noted, "Now that I have Jesus in me, I feel like a kinder person."

Wetherell strives to make the joy, love and specialness of the occasion extend beyond that one day. She wants them to carry that moment in their hearts for a lifetime.

'Showing them how to be Jesus to one another'

"This isn't just for one moment. This isn't just about second grade. This is a lifelong journey," she says. "I've always viewed the Eucharist as one of the greatest gifts we can receive. We want them to walk hand in hand with Christ, to be filled with God for a lifetime."

Toward that goal, Wetherell begins their preparation for the sacrament at the start of the school year, focusing on helping them see that Mass is a celebration of the Eucharist. She has even created an interactive Mass book that explains the parts of the Mass and their importance.

"Really understanding the Mass, so that by the end of second grade we're mentally and spiritually prepared for this gift that we're receiving," she says.

Wetherell also shares Bible passages, daily devotionals and stories of eucharistic miracles, including those documented by Blessed Carlo Acutis, a youth who embraced the Eucharist at the heart of his life before he died at 15 of leukemia. Pope Francis will canonize him a saint in the near future.

"All day long, I try to make our love of God and Jesus Christ the focus. Even in math, I pull things out of the Bible," Wetherell says. "When there are frustrations, I ask, 'How would Jesus handle this? What do you think Jesus wants us to do with this?' Just making God the center of my classroom—and in my actions, too."

She also works closely with Vicky Roosa, the parish's catechetical leader, and Camela Schmitz, a catechist, praising them for the first Communion preparation of the parish's children who don't attend the parish school. Together, they lead sessions for the families of all the children, making the families part of the preparation.



Taken 40 years ago, a photo captures Jen English Wetherell on the day of her first Communion, joined in the photo by her siblings, David English, left, Megan English and Robert English. (Submitted photo)

"She goes above and beyond in preparing the hearts of her students to receive Jesus in first holy Eucharist," Roosa says about Wetherell. "Her smile and her caring heart reach out to all children in her classroom, Catholic and not, teaching them the faith and showing them how to be Jesus to one another."

A moment of innocence, a gift of a lifetime

Wetherell's preparations for first Communion come with touches of humor, too.

"It may not be appropriate to share in *The Criterion*, but we do a practice run-through," she says with a laugh.

"The children get to taste the unconsecrated host and they get a little sip of the wine. It's humorous to watch them the first time they taste wine. I always get a little chuckle out of that first practice run-through, but other than that it is just such a special moment. I'm beyond grateful to share that moment with these children."

That moment of innocence—with the girls in their white dresses and the boys in their suits—always takes Wetherell back to her own first Communion.

"In teaching the children, I've actually deepened my own faith," she says. "Not only am I teaching them that it's a gift, but I'm also receiving a gift in seeing their joy, in their understanding of what the Eucharist is. I received this wonderful gift 40 years ago, I help these kids receive this gift, and I'm still receiving the blessings.

"This whole experience has been absolutely wonderful for me." †

'The most important thing I do': Teacher shares gift of the Eucharist with children

By John Shaughnessy

Melissa Cull knows that the gifts in our lives come in many ways.

As a second-grade teacher, Cull considers it a great gift that she has been entrusted for nearly 20 years with preparing her students at St. Mary School in Rushville for their first holy Communion.

"It is, by far, the most important thing I do," she says. "I feel like I'm very blessed

that I get to help them prepare for first Communion and get to teach them about taking Jesus into their body and letting it be a special occasion for them."

That gift takes on an added dimension when she gets to see the faces of the children as they receive the Eucharist for the first time. As an extraordinary minister of holy Communion, she is often involved in sharing the body and blood of Christ with the children, offering them the wine that has been transformed into Christ's blood.

"It's amazing to see their faces. It almost always takes my breath away. I see joy, love, reverence, peace," she says. "I always make sure they know exactly what they're doing. They know that's Jesus. They know that's Jesus' body. They know the wine is Jesus' blood. It's truly a blessing to be there and get to watch them.

"I always tell the kids how much I love to see them grow and to be with Jesus, and now Jesus is with them."

This year, the second-grade students at St. Mary received their first Communion on May 5 during a Sunday

Mass at the parish. The following day, Cull continued a long tradition she has followed for her students.

"I always have a little gift for them when we come back to school on Monday," she says. "The whole class, whether they're Catholic or not, I always have a little gift for them. I let the kids who are Catholic tell the kids who are not Catholic how they feel. And how special they thought it was. And I always let them tell about their party. I show pictures to the rest of the class who were not at church, so the rest of the class feels involved and not left out.

"This year, I found some really pretty rosaries. And the kids who are not Catholic were as excited as the kids who made their first Communion."

'I still feel how special it is'

Receiving their first Communion definitely made an impact on the children.

"It made me feel more kind because Jesus is in me and he was kind," Audra Mahan said.

Tuff Busald noted, "It made me feel more holy."

"At first, I was scared," said Luis Leon. "But afterward, I felt really good inside."

Wes Hoeing chimed in, "It was good to have Jesus in me."

Cull approaches the entire experience of first Communion as a great gift because that's the way she has always viewed the Eucharist in her life. It was part of her life when she and her husband

Stephen entered into full communion of the Church and were married in the Church. It was part of her life as she prepared two of her three children and her granddaughter for their first Communion.

"My husband and I joined the Church before we got married 30-some years ago," she says. "I still feel how special it is every time I take Communion, and I want that for the kids. I hope they always feel that way."

She pauses for a moment to consider just how much the Eucharist is a gift in her life.

"How do you describe the indescribable?" she says "How do you describe being filled with joy and love and peace when you take Communion? It's a very important part of my life. There have been lots of times—especially in the last couple of years when COVID was going on and I was trying to teach online and when we were trying to run our family business—that it has truly kept me centered. It's kept me thinking about what's actually important in my life."

Her instincts as a teacher lead her back to thoughts of her students who received their first Communion.

"I can't really explain how cool it is to know this sacrament started with Jesus, and that we're still passing that along, we're still doing exactly what Jesus did, and the kids know that. I hope they always feel it's as special as they did that day." †



The children at St. Mary Parish in Rushville who received their first Communion on May 5 in the parish church line up for a photo with the people who supported them in their path to the sacrament. (Submitted photo)

MINGUS

continued from page 1

Mingus has had four years to prepare for the role of serving as head of the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Indiana, working directly with Angela Espada, who has served as executive director of the ICC since 2019 and plans to retire at the end of July.

In announcing the ICC leadership changes earlier this month, Indianapolis Archbishop Charles C. Thompson spoke of the “tremendous blessing” in witnessing how the two “have complemented one another’s gifts and skills in service to the Church and people of Indiana.”

He also expressed his confidence in the incoming young leader as he prepares to take on the responsibility of representing the five Catholic bishops across the state and promoting the Church’s position on critical issues at the Indiana Statehouse and beyond.

“Alexander understands the importance of being the official public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Indiana, and I am confident that his knowledge of the faith, strong skills and intellect, and experience at the Statehouse will be assets wherever he represents us,” Archbishop Thompson said. “Like his predecessors, I know Alexander will continue being an advocate on multiple issues that are important to our faith community, including education, families, poverty, care for creation, and the sacredness of life and the dignity of persons.”

Mingus, who credits divine providence in every major step he has taken in his life, approaches his new assignment with a sense of awe and deep appreciation.

“My overwhelming feeling is gratitude,” said Mingus, an Alabama native who at 18 had been named by the bishop of Birmingham as one of the first Catholic Agents of the

New Evangelization. “I’ve always wanted to be involved in advocacy, and it is such a blessing to be given this unique role that blends so many interests and passions of mine.”

He recalls a similar sense of wonder when, at 24, he was offered the role of associate director of the ICC. At the time, he was serving as manager of ministry formation at the St. Vincent de Paul Society of Dayton, Ohio, after earning a degree in political science and human rights studies at the University of Dayton and then pursuing graduate studies there.

Upon receiving the job offer, Mingus immediately made his way to the onsite chapel at St. Vincent de Paul to offer thanks to God for this new opportunity and to seek his wisdom and guidance.

“I remember telling our Lord, ‘Thank you! I am overwhelmed with gratitude,’” Mingus said. “And I remember opening myself up to God and saying, ‘I don’t want this to be about me; I want this to be about you.’ I asked him to help me respond to his will for me in this new role.”

Since joining the ICC in 2020, Mingus has worked closely with Espada through four legislative sessions, encouraging lawmakers to shape public policy in the best interest of the common good.

His first session at the Statehouse was an unusual one, as the COVID-19 pandemic wreaked havoc on the normal business of the legislature. But social distancing provided Mingus with the opportunity to focus on enhancing the ICC’s social media presence. He also revamped the ICC website, and together with Espada launched a regular podcast to keep the Catholic faithful engaged on important issues and legislation.

As Espada began making plans to retire, Mingus—with characteristic humility—admits that he questioned whether at his age he should even contemplate seeking the executive director role. After more prayer and discernment,

he added his name to the list of candidates and went through the interview process.

Upon receiving the call from Archbishop Thompson offering him the job, Mingus gratefully accepted and then again retreated to the nearest chapel—this time just steps away at the Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center in downtown Indianapolis.

As he approaches his July 15 start date at the helm of the ICC, Mingus expresses deep appreciation to Espada for preparing him for his mission ahead.

“Angela has contributed so much to my growth, boosting my confidence being fresh out of graduate school and still in my first years of navigating the professional world,” Mingus said. “She has always been willing to throw challenges my way, and her guidance and mentoring have been invaluable.”

Espada, who is concluding a history-making tenure as the first woman to lead the ICC and the first woman of color to hold a Catholic conference directorship nationwide, says the ICC will be in great hands when Mingus takes on his new role.

“I am so excited that Alexander wanted to take on this challenge,” said Espada, a former deputy prosecutor and law school administrator. “He brings so many strengths to the role—not just his deep knowledge of Catholic social teaching, which is the foundation for all of our work at the ICC, but his gift for relationship building and his genuine love for the Church.”

‘The epitome of servant leadership’

Colleagues, lawmakers and the Catholic faithful share Espada’s enthusiasm for what the new ICC leader will bring to the table.

“It’s been incredibly impressive to see someone so passionate about living their faith in the public arena,” said Mike Krokos, editor of *The Criterion*. “Alexander and Angela had such a wonderful collaborative relationship, and I saw so much positive work that they did together as a team. There is such a strong history of leaders in the Indiana Catholic Conference, and Alexander will continue that strong leadership we’ve had as a voice at the Statehouse and beyond.”

In addition to crediting Mingus with moving the ICC forward in terms of technology and social media presence, Krokos points to numerous intangible qualities that he will bring to his new role.

“Alexander is the epitome of servant leadership,” Krokos said. “And when I think of the term missionary disciple, that fits Alexander to a T. He’s all about accompaniment, and these are obviously words and phrases that Pope Francis has used quite regularly in his pontificate. To me, that fits Alexander perfectly because he is so committed to the mission—not only of the ICC, but to the mission of the Catholic Church.

“He exudes Jesus Christ in everything he does,” Krokos continued. “When I think of someone who sees Jesus in others, and is Jesus to others, that’s Alexander to me.”

Carley Haselhorst, who serves as a liaison between the ICC and two parishes in two different dioceses, adds another descriptor for Alexander: bridge builder.

In collaborating with the ICC to engage the Catholic faithful on matters of public policy, she has witnessed Mingus address parishioners on Catholic social teaching—also known as Catholic social doctrine—and how it shapes the Church’s positions on important issues from fighting poverty to protecting the sanctity of life.

“Alexander is intelligent, eloquent and engaging, as well as considerate, open-minded and a good listener,” said Haselhorst, coordinator of young adult ministry at St. Pius X Parish in Indianapolis. “We’ve become so polarized politically in the United States, and then that seeps into the Church. I think Alexander knows that, and he knows that having those conversations about Catholic social teaching can help break down barriers, which will then allow us to shine a light on public policy from that more united place.”

Haselhorst especially appreciated



Alexander Mingus, incoming executive director of the Indiana Catholic Conference, and his wife Emily, music therapist at St. Augustine Home for the Aged in Indianapolis, are parents to Gabriel and Cecilia. (Photo credit @ livykatephotography)

the opportunity to hear from Sen. Scott Baldwin (R-Noblesville), a fellow member of her home parish of Our Lady of Grace in the Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana, when Mingus invited him to attend a presentation.

“It was such a unique opportunity to be formed in Catholic social teaching sitting next to a state senator,” said Haselhorst, who on July 1 will become director of faith formation at St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis. “This was a really wonderful opportunity that Alexander pulled together because of the relationships that he has with legislators. Lawmakers do respect Angela and Alexander and their opinions.”

Rep. Peggy Mayfield (R-Martinsville) underscored that sentiment.

“As legislators, we are bombarded with so many topics and details,” said Mayfield, who has collaborated with the ICC on pro-life legislation and other key matters. “Angela and Alexander keep their eye on important issues and keep us apprised.”

The lawmaker, who is a member of St. Martin of Tours Parish in Martinsville, said she has been enlightened by the in-depth knowledge of Catholic social teaching that Mingus has shared with her.

“He has inspired me to dig deeper into the faith,” Mayfield said. “Alexander and Angela have both been such a valuable resource to me.

“This will be a seamless transition.”

Bringing Christ in

All who know Mingus point to a poise and maturity well beyond his years, along with his abiding faith.

As the incoming leader of the ICC has grown professionally during the past four years, he also has taken on two life-changing roles in that time frame—those of husband and father.

For a man so grounded in and guided by his relationship with God, perhaps it isn’t surprising that Mingus proposed to his now-wife Emily in an adoration chapel on Easter Sunday 2019. They married the following year and are now parents to Cecilia, 3, and Gabriel, 1.

“Part of how I look at the world is, how do we bring Christ into all human relationships?” said Mingus, who along with his family are members of St. Joan of Arc Parish in Indianapolis. “There will always be a slate of issues that are key priorities for us at the ICC, but relationship building will continue to be one of my most important objectives.”

To help Mingus pursue this goal into the future, the ICC is now searching for a new associate director.

“I’m praying that God will lead the right person into the open role at this time of transition for the ICC,” Mingus said. “As we continue to build upon the relationships forged by my predecessors, I’m excited to continue with a new team that looks hopefully to a fruitful future of sharing the Gospel.”

(Victoria Arthur, a member of St. Therese of the Infant Jesus [Little Flower] Parish in Indianapolis, is a correspondent for *The Criterion*. For more information about the ICC and ways to get involved with its mission, visit www.indianacc.org.) †

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Knights show support for priestly vocations at their state convention

By Sean Gallagher

BLOOMINGTON—The Knights of Columbus do many things to help the Church at the local, national and international levels.

On the first day of the Knights' Indiana state convention in May at the Monroe Convention Center in Bloomington, members of the Catholic fraternal organization from across the state focused on their promotion of priestly vocations.

On May 17, Archbishop Charles C. Thompson celebrated a Mass for the Knights that had a special focus on vocations. A dinner followed in which two archdiocesan priests reflected on helping others discern a priestly vocation.

In his homily during the liturgy, Archbishop Thompson thanked the Knights for "defending human life, families and religious liberty, among other issues" in the midst of a culture that "prioritizes radical individualism over the common good and prefers subjective truth to objective truth."

He also spoke about the upcoming National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis, which has received much support from the Knights.

"It is a time when we celebrate, adore, worship and reflect—always calling us to go outward to tend the sheep, to feed the lambs, to serve others," Archbishop Thompson said.

This led him to reflect on promoting the call to the priesthood.

"In promoting vocations in the Church, we must be intentional about living this outward focus of missionary discipleship," Archbishop Thompson said. "Through prayer, rooted in word, sacrament and service, we must strive to cultivate a culture of vocations by transforming the culture and society with the steadfast commitment to the witness of Gospel values in Catholic teaching.

"It is in the defense of human life, families and religious liberty that we cultivate a culture of vocations rooted in Christ-centered dedication of worship and service."

In the dinner that followed the Mass, Father Jack Wright, parochial vicar of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis, reflected on discerning a priestly vocation.

The priest, who was ordained an archdiocesan priest on June 3, 2023, noted that many young people find discerning

their vocation difficult.

"It can really torment them," Father Wright said. "This was my experience, especially in high school. I used to have this sense that God had something in mind for me that he wanted me to do. And I really wanted to do whatever that was. The problem was, I had no idea what that was."

He suggested a way to make discerning easier: start with reflecting on Christ's words, "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends" (Jn 15:13).

"If we look at discerning our vocation from this perspective, it becomes a lot simpler," Father Wright said. "So, what is our vocation? What is God's will for us? Our Lord makes it clear to us: to love one another, to lay down our lives for others. That's our vocation, every single one of us."

He then explained that, with this basic reality in mind, people discerning their vocation can turn to different questions.

"What is the best way for me to do that? What am I most suited for in laying down my life for others?" Father Wright said. "Then it becomes a question of knowing ourselves, thinking about our own personality, our own heart, our own gifts, weaknesses, resources."

It's the ministry of Father Michael Keucher as archdiocesan vocations director to accompany people across central and southern Indiana as they discern what God is calling them to in their lives.

"I have the best job in the archdiocese," Father Keucher told the Knights at the vocations dinner. "It's really awesome. It's a total joy to walk with young folks who are thinking about what God wants for their life. Constantly, every day, I get to talk with people who care about God, about the Church, about souls."

Father Keucher then told the stories of priest saints who had laid down their lives for Christ and the souls of the people they served.

There was St. John Nepomuk, a 14th-century Czech priest who died as a martyr after he refused to break the seal of the confessional.

Father Keucher shared the story of the American priest Father Edward Flanagan, who cared for orphaned boys at Boys Town in Omaha, Neb., which he started in 1917. He died in 1948.

There was also St. Damien of Molokai,



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson celebrates Mass on May 17 at the Monroe Convention Center in Bloomington during the Indiana state convention of the Knights of Columbus. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

a 19th-century Belgian missionary priest who cared for a leper colony in Hawaii, ultimately contracting the disease and dying of it in 1889.

Father Keucher also recounted the story of Blessed Stanley Rother, a priest of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, Okla., who served as a missionary in Guatemala and who died there as a martyr in 1981.

He also spoke about St. Toribio Romo Gonzalez, a priest of the Archdiocese of Guadalajara, Mexico, who died as a martyr in 1928 during the Cristero War there.

"I think about all these priests," Father Keucher said. "I've been praying a lot about them and talking about them with our discerners."

He then thanked the Knights for assisting the Church in Indiana in promoting priestly vocations.

"Thank you for being zealous about the priesthood," Father Keucher said. "It means so much to me and to our seminarians and priests to have you Knights be so zealous about the priesthood, because truly salvation depends on it."

In an interview with *The Criterion*, state deputy of the Indiana State Council of the Knights of Columbus Scott Schutte, a member of SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Parish in Greenwood, spoke in gratitude for the presence of Archbishop Thompson and priests from across the state at the convention.

"The Indiana Knights of Columbus do our best to stand with our priests

and bishops, and we also do what we can to support seminarians at the local seminaries," Schutte said. "As state deputy, I have had the opportunity to develop a relationship with all of the bishops within the state, and I have also had the opportunity to meet a good number of our priests. Their prayers and guidance are always invaluable."

Knights across the state contribute to their "Support Our Seminarians" program, which resulted in each seminarian in Indiana last year receiving a donation of more than \$500 to help them meet their living expenses.

Each local council of the Knights of Columbus is also encouraged to spiritually adopt a seminarian to show their care for their discernment and priestly formation.

Many local councils also host dinners to show support for priests and seminarians.

"We as Knights need to encourage our sons and other young men to explore the priestly vocation," Schutte said. "We can do so by including the local parish when we celebrate our relationship with the priests at our vocations dinners. We should also be looking for ways to reach out to young men that are involved in the Church to encourage them to consider the priesthood."

(For more information on a vocation to the priesthood in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, visit HearGodsCall.com.) †

Priest speaks in Indianapolis weeks after living through attack on Israel

By Sean Gallagher

On the night of April 13, Msgr. Peter Vaccari took refuge in a bomb shelter in Jerusalem as Iran launched a drone and missile attack against Israel.

The priest of the Diocese of Brooklyn, N.Y., was in the Holy Land to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the founding of Pontifical Mission for Palestine, an aid agency in the Middle East of the Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA).

He and Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan, archbishop of New York and chairman of CNEWA's board, continued their trip to the Holy Land after the attack.

A few weeks later, Msgr. Vaccari visited a much more peaceful Indianapolis to reflect on the work of CNEWA



Msgr. Peter Vaccari, president of the New York-based Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA) and ex-officio chair of the board of trustees for the Pontifical Mission for Palestine, CNEWA's aid organization in the Middle East, preaches a homily on May 4 at St. Michael the Archangel Church in Indianapolis. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)

in the Middle East during weekend Masses on May 4-5 at St. Michael the Archangel Parish on behalf of CNEWA, the New York-based agency that aids Eastern Catholic Churches in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Africa and India.

Msgr. Vaccari, the president of CNEWA, spoke on behalf of the organization, which was founded by Pope Pius XI in 1926. Since its founding, the archbishop of

New York has served as the chairman of its board.

Msgr. Vaccari spoke with *The Criterion* after his visit to Indianapolis about his experience in Israel during Iran's attacks, which came in response to the Jewish state's continued fight against Hamas in Gaza following its raids on Israel on Oct. 7, 2023.

The April trip to celebrate the Pontifical Mission's 75th anniversary, Msgr. Vaccari said, was also an opportunity for Cardinal Dolan "to reach out to let the Israeli and Jewish people know of his solidarity with them in this time of suffering, as well as the Palestinians in this time of their suffering."

"He wanted to be there for them, to let them know that he cares for and loves them and is praying for them," Msgr. Vaccari continued.

Earlier in the day on April 13, Cardinal Dolan and his delegation celebrated an anniversary Mass in Jerusalem. Taking shelter because of the drone and missile attack wasn't a new experience for Msgr. Vaccari, who had to do that more than once last summer in a visit to war-torn Ukraine in support of Eastern Catholic Churches there.

The day after Iran's attack on Israel, Msgr. Vaccari and Cardinal Dolan visited a parish in Beit Jala near Bethlehem in the West Bank. They went there to celebrate the Pontifical Mission's anniversary with Palestinian Catholics of the West Bank because the Palestinians were not permitted to travel to Jerusalem for a celebratory Mass that day at the Notre Dame of Jerusalem Center.

Despite the attacks the night before, Msgr. Vaccari noted, "the church was packed."

"It was a matter for the people there of life continuing," he said. "It was time to get up and go to Mass or go to work—those who are able to go to work. What's happened since October 7 has had a tremendous

[economic] impact. The unemployment rate has skyrocketed, especially in West Bank towns."

Msgr. Vaccari acknowledged that, while Catholics in the Middle East are facing tremendous challenges at present, this is not a new situation. CNEWA and the Pontifical Mission for Palestine, he said, have stood with them and people of all faiths in the Middle East in the turmoil that has marked the past several decades.

"We are engaged on the ground with the people who are going through the changes that they've experienced over the past 75 years," he said. "We're there working with the local Church, the Latin Patriarchate, and with what our mandate is, which is to the Eastern Catholic Churches. But we're also with non-Catholics."

Going forward from its anniversary, Msgr. Vaccari said that the Pontifical Mission "will continue to shape an identity as an agency of healing and hope."

In his homily during the Mass at St. Michael the Archangel, Msgr. Vaccari invited Catholics in central and southern Indiana and across the U.S. to support their brothers and sisters in faith in the Middle East through prayer, growing in knowledge of the situation there and through financial contributions.

He also spoke of the blessings he's experienced in aiding the Church in the Middle East.

"I've been very humbled by the experience," Msgr. Vaccari said. "It's very moving. I experience on a regular basis the depth of the faith life of people who are really trying to make sense out of their faith in a world in which there's an awful lot of violence, injustice and persecution."

(To learn more about the ongoing ministry of the Catholic Near East Welfare Association and Pontifical Mission or to donate to it, visit cnewa.org.) †

St. Michael Parish, Greenfield: ‘faithful, traditional’—and a eucharistic pilgrimage stop on July 12-14

By Natalie Hoefler

When St. Michael Parish in Greenfield was founded in 1860, Abraham Lincoln was running for president, the Civil War had not yet begun and “Little Orphant Annie” (whose real name was Mary Alice Smith) was still a year away from coming to stay at the Greenfield home of then 11-year-old James Whitcomb Riley, the future “Hoosier Poet.”

Nearly 165 years have passed. The current church—the parish’s fourth structure—recently underwent a major renovation, and the school begun in 1953 is still going strong.

Now the parish is eagerly anticipating its next hallmark: serving as a stopping point on the eastern route of the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage on July 12-14.

‘A faithful, traditional parish’

For 26 years, Christie Murphy has called St. Michael Parish home. She also taught one year in the school and has served as executive assistant for Father Aaron Jenkins, the parish’s pastor, since 2017.

“We’re an active parish, and we have a wide diversity of ages,” she says of the faith community’s more than 700 families. “We have a lot of families with young children, families with school-age children, recent empty-nesters and some whose children are long since grown.

“Some families have been here a long time—they grew up here and now their grandkids are going here. But we also have a fair amount of new parishioners due to warehouses opening in the area.”

With roughly 165 students, St. Michael’s pre-kindergarten through eighth grade school is the parish’s largest ministry.

One of its more unique ministries is Seasons of Hope. The six-week program is offered several times a year “to help guide people suffering the loss of a loved one,” Murphy explains. “They reflect on Scripture, share common experiences, do spiritual exercises at home and pray the chaplet of Divine Mercy at the end of each session. It’s Catholic-based, but open to anyone.

“And there’s an offshoot of people who decided to form a group that goes out for dinner once a month. That’s open to anyone, too, even those who haven’t gone through the program. It’s just another way to offer support and companionship for those who’ve lost a loved one.”

St. Michael is also one of only eight parishes in the archdiocese offering the *That Man is You!* (TMIY), a

national Catholic program to help men grow closer to Christ and be the best men they can be for their families.

In its 164 years, the parish has had four churches. Its current one, completed in 1966, recently underwent a major renovation: the reorientation of its sanctuary.

“The altar went from the east side of the church to the west side,” Murphy explains. “Our church is in a small neighborhood, and parking was an issue because the church door faced the street. The entry now faces the parking lot, so the church is easier to enter.

“And we also added a narthex. Now people can talk in the narthex and visit without bothering people praying in church.”

A mural was also painted above the entry into the nave from the narthex “depicting the sacrifice of the lamb with all of the saints around the altar,” she says. “We have a key telling what saints are looking on. It’s very pretty and colorful.”

Another feature to enjoy is a roughly one-mile walking trail that “goes all the way around the campus,” says Murphy. “There’s a field area and a pond. It’s very peaceful and a great place to pray.”

While it’s usually “just parishioners” who enjoy St. Michael’s feast day Mass, dinner, silent auction and raffle event held annually on Sept. 29, Murphy says “a lot of people outside the parish” come to enjoy the Lenten fish fries and the annual Mardi Gras bingo event held on the Friday before Ash Wednesday.

An historic event will take place on July 12-14 as St. Michael hosts the eastern journey of the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage leading up to the National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis on July 17-21.

“It’s super-exciting,” says Murphy. “Our parishioners are thrilled they’re coming.”

All are invited to participate in events at the parish surrounding the pilgrimage. (See below for schedule of events.)

There’s no need to wait for a national event to visit St. Michael Parish in Greenfield, Murphy notes.

“It’s a faithful, traditional parish,” she says. “Everyone is very kind. The people here really love God. Father Aaron is a great pastor and leader, and he encourages us in our faith. It’s a good place to come to worship and find connection with other people.”

For Mass times, go to www.stmichaelsgrfld.org or call 317-462-4240.

Past and present meet in Greenfield

Located along historic U.S. 40 (the National Road dating to the early 1830s) and the birthplace of Hoosier poet James Whitcomb Riley, Greenfield offers



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson prays the eucharistic prayer during a Jan. 30, 2021, dedication Mass at St. Michael Church in Greenfield after renovations moved the altar from the east side to the west side of the church. (File photo by Sean Gallagher)

glimpses of the past and experiences of the present to take in before or after worshiping at Mass with the members of St. Michael.

Riley (1849-1916) spent the first 21 years of his life in Greenfield. Most of those years he lived in a home his father built in the mid-1850s along the National Road. The house is now a museum offering tours that give insight into Riley’s life and the environment that inspired so much of his poetry. Currently, tours are offered Tuesday through Saturday, with tickets ranging from free to \$4. For hours and more information, go to parksingreenfield.com/riley-home or call 317-462-8539.

The Riley home is close to Greenfield’s charming town square, which includes several antique shops and restaurants. Murphy recommends The Mug for its hamburgers, hot dogs and its use of locally-sourced ingredients; Griggsby’s Station for something a little more upscale; and Greenfield Chocolates, whose chocolatier has won international awards. (“The chocolates are very, very good,” Murphy assures.)

The town square also serves as home of the annual Riley Festival, which runs for four days beginning on the first Thursday of October, to honor the poet’s Oct. 7 birthday. The festival includes entertainment stages and more than 450 exhibitors, craft and food vendors—or test your talent in their poetry, photography and pumpkin carving contests. For more information, go to rileyfestival.com.

For fall or year-round fun, visit Tuttle Orchards, a family-run farmstead spanning four generations. Yes, there are “u-pick” opportunities. But there is so much more: a produce shop, a farm-to-table dining room, greenhouses, flower fields, fruit festivals and other

activities that vary by season. But be sure to go on Saturday then worship at St. Michael, because Tuttle’s is closed on Sundays. For more information, go to indianapolisorchard.com (don’t let the web address fool you—Tuttle Orchards is in Greenfield).

National Eucharistic Pilgrimage events at St. Michael Parish, July 12-14

July 12:

—Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament begins at 1 p.m., continuing through the day and night;

—Free dinner from 5:30-7 p.m. open to anyone (registration is required at tinyurl.com/July12Dinner);

—Holy hour from 7-8 p.m., with reflections by Father Roger Landry, a priest of the Diocese of Fall River, Mass., who is chaplain of the eastern portion of the national pilgrimage;

July 13:

—Benediction at 8:30 a.m.;

—Mass at 8:45 a.m.;

—Official pilgrims will volunteer at a local food pantry then rest.

July 14:

—Mass at 8:30 a.m.;

—Eucharistic procession from church parking lot through neighborhood (less than a mile) immediately after Mass, ending at about 10:15 a.m.;

—Benediction around 10:20 a.m.;

—Mass at 11 a.m.

(*Mass Excursions is a recurring feature highlighting an archdiocesan parish and local attractions, encouraging a trip to the area that includes Mass with the members of that parish. Each article will highlight a parish in a different deanery to showcase faith communities throughout central and southern Indiana.*) †



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All Calls and Locations Are Confidential.

A Special Word to Those Who Have Had an Abortion ...

Do not give in to discouragement and do not lose hope....
If you have not already done so, give yourselves over with humility
and trust to repentance. The Father of mercies is ready to give you
his forgiveness and his peace ...
~Saint John Paul II, *The Gospel Life*

SIMPLY CATHOLIC

Founder of the Knights motivated to help immigrant Catholics

By Russell Shaw

(OSV News)—In many ways, Father Michael McGivney was just one more of that band of hardworking Irish-American priests who spent themselves building up the Church in America in the latter years of the 19th century.

But in one truly extraordinary respect, he was unique: Before he was 30, Michael McGivney had founded what was to become the largest Catholic men's organization in the world: the Knights of Columbus.

That happened, largely unnoticed, in early February 1882 in New Haven, Conn., in the basement of St. Mary Church. The young curate had assembled 80 Catholic laymen—Irish-Americans like himself—who voted to launch the new group. No one, least of all Father McGivney, suspected that 142 years later the Knights of Columbus would grow to be an international body of 1.9 million Catholic men and a powerful force for good.

"Father McGivney is too modest to assume to himself any honor," one of his lay associates later said. "But if this order succeeds ... the honor as its founder will be his." History seconds that judgment.

The parish priest's contribution to the United States was recently highlighted when St. Mary—where Father McGivney's remains are interred—was chosen to host the May 18 Pentecost Vigil Mass that served as the launch for the eastern route of the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage.

However, Father McGivney's achievement is best appreciated in the context of 19th-century Catholic immigration to the United States, including especially the newcomers' sometimes desperate struggle to survive and flourish in the face of nativist hostility. The collision of these two powerful forces—immigration and anti-Catholicism—was central to much that happened in Catholicism in America in those years.

In 1820, the Catholic population of the United States numbered only a modest 120,000. Then the great explosion began. During the half-century that followed, 2.7 million Catholic immigrants poured into the country. By 1900, there were 12 million Catholics in America—a hundred-fold increase.

Not all of the immigrants came from Ireland, but many did. Their numbers rose rapidly—52,000 in the 1820s; 171,000 in the 1830s; 656,000 in the decade that followed, more than a million in the 1850s. The first of the Irish were relatively well-off and mostly Protestant. But by mid-century, with Ireland in the grip of famine and dire poverty, the newcomers were overwhelmingly Catholic and poor.

They struggled to put down roots, and in time they succeeded. In a sermon in 1871, Cardinal James Gibbons of Baltimore, the Irish-American leader of the U.S. bishops, hailed the Irish diaspora as an expression of God's plan that the Irish play an important role in "the establishment and prosperity of the greatest republic in the world."

In 1834, an Ursuline convent outside Boston was burned to the ground by an angry mob. In the years that followed, anti-Catholic, anti-Irish violence flared in other cities. Launching a new anti-Catholic group in 1842, Protestant ministers summed up widely-held sentiments in declaring Catholic principles to be "subversive of civil and religious liberty."

When priests like Michael McGivney sought to



Blessed Michael McGivney, founder of the Knights of Columbus, is pictured in an undated painting by Antonella Cappuccio. The painting features immigrants arriving in the U.S. by boat. The son of Irish immigrants, the priest was motivated to found the Knights by his desire to support Catholic immigrants to the U.S. (CNS photo/courtesy Knights of Columbus)

promote the interests of their Church and their people, they had their work cut out for them.

Father McGivney was born on Aug. 12, 1852, in Waterbury, Conn., the oldest of 13 children of an immigrant couple named Patrick and Mary Lynch McGivney. Six of his brothers and sisters died in infancy or childhood. His father worked in a Waterbury brass mill.

A quick learner, young Michael felt an early attraction to the priesthood and prepared for the seminary. Following studies at St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore, he was ordained a priest on Dec. 22, 1877, by Archbishop (later Cardinal) Gibbons. His first assignment was at St. Mary Parish in New Haven.

There, he became convinced that a benevolent organization for Catholic men was required as a means of providing their families with financial support in times of need, while also keeping the men themselves out of the clutches of anti-Catholic secret societies. The priest and his lay associates explored various options, including establishing a local branch of some already existing group.

Eventually, though, they decided to launch a new organization—a "cooperative benefit order" to be called the Knights of Columbus.

The choice of that name was significant. "Columbus" was a response to bigots who sought to deny Catholics a place in America—a verbal reminder that it was a Catholic, Christopher Columbus, who had discovered America in the first place. "Knights" was an affirmation of members' chivalrous loyalty to the Church in the face of anti-Catholic, anti-Irish sentiment.

The young priest accepted the office of secretary in the new group, though later he took the less time-consuming post of supreme chaplain. In his book *Faith and Fraternalism: The History of the Knights of Columbus*, Church historian Christopher Kauffman notes in the early days the Knights' leaders "confronted severe criticism, experienced deep disillusionment and seriously doubted the value of their efforts." He credits the group's survival to Father McGivney's "persistence and optimism."

Two years after the founding, Father McGivney was named pastor of St. Thomas Parish in Thomaston, Conn. Responsibility for a second parish also came with the job. Working alone, he carried a

backbreaking pastoral load while managing to stay active in defending and promoting the Knights.

Never physically robust, in January 1890 he contracted pneumonia. His health declined during the following months, and on Aug. 14 he died. He was only 38. His funeral and the burial in his hometown of Waterbury were major public events.

The process that could one day lead the Church to recognize Father McGivney as a saint was formally opened in 1996. In 2020, he was beatified at St. Joseph Cathedral in Hartford, Conn., after the Vatican confirmed a healing miracle through his intercession.

And little short of miraculous has been the growth of the Knights of Columbus itself. Overwhelmingly Irish in the early days, the nearly 2 million Knights today are an ethnically and racially diverse body, with members in the United States, Canada, Mexico, the Philippines, the Caribbean, Central America and lately Poland, Ukraine and Lithuania.

Meanwhile, their material success fuels an impressive program of charity and good works. At the national and international levels, the group gives away millions of dollars every year, including several million annually to the pope and the Holy See. At all levels, the Knights of Columbus is a major source of financial and human support for countless good causes.

From the start, patriotism has been a major part of the K of C program. In fact, it's the special theme of the group's Fourth Degree—those men with berets and swords who are a highly visible presence at numerous Church events. According to Kauffman, this emphasis on patriotism is a reminder that the group in its early days "provided first- and second-generation immigrants a 'rite of passage' into American society," and is "a classic instance of a minority's drive to assimilate."

Undoubtedly true. Yet in recent years, people familiar with the group have sensed a change, with fidelity to Catholic beliefs and values increasingly causing the Knights of Columbus to take a countercultural stance toward secular culture.

This is especially true on issues like abortion and marriage redefinition, where their strongly held commitment to human life makes the Knights an important part of the pro-life movement and their support for traditional marriage places them in opposition to other versions.

Throughout their history, the Knights have also done much to support oppressed Catholics and other Christians around the world, from Catholics in Mexico a century ago during the Cristero War to believers persecuted in the Middle East in recent years.

It seems likely Father McGivney would have expected no less of his Knights.

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



Standing beside a portrait and relic of Blessed Michael McGivney, Baltimore Archbishop William E. Lori, supreme chaplain of the Knights of Columbus, celebrates a Mass of thanksgiving at St. Mary Church in New Haven, Conn., on Nov. 1, 2020, the day after the beatification of the Irish-American priest who founded the Knights. (OSV News photo/Jeff Bruno, courtesy Knights of Columbus)

Corrections Ministries/Deacon John Cord

Finding compassionate solutions for health care for our elderly homeless

I recently spent a day at our local homeless shelter in Seymour. There was an elderly couple in the lunch area watching television. I asked them why they were there, and their answer was shocking. They had been evicted from their apartment of 17 years.



They explained the landlord raised the rent, and their Social Security check was no longer enough. Here they were—the gentleman with a walker and the wife with hearing aids—in a homeless shelter. They both worked their entire life. He was a construction worker, and she cleaned houses. Their son was in prison, and they had nowhere to go.

I asked Megan, the executive director of the shelter, about them. She told me they are more frequently seeing the elderly who have been evicted at the shelter. The rapid increase in rental rates has created this new problem. There are not enough government-funded apartments. Housing subsidies are hard to find right now. So, shelters are filling with older people.

There is an even greater problem. Our elderly homeless need long-term health care. However, most cities cannot provide the services they need at no cost. Medicaid will pay for short convalescent care. But it typically won't pay for long-term care.

Many of the elderly homeless need surgery, such as a hip replacement. But their doctors might be hesitant to do the surgery if they are not sure the person can convalesce in a safe environment.

The aging of the homeless has become a real problem across the state. But so has the aging of our prison population. More than one-third of men and women incarcerated in Indiana are older than 55.

Several years ago, during the "War on Drugs" and "Get Tough on Crime" periods in society, many were sentenced for life. These folks are aging. The Indiana Department of Corrections is finding itself needing to create more space and services for the elderly and infirm.

There is some light on the horizon for both of these issues. Senate Bill 291 (SB 291), called the "Compassionate Release Bill," is moving its way through the state legislature. This bill will give a pathway to release an elderly inmate if they meet certain criteria, such as have a

record of good behavior and posing no risk if they return home. It stalled during the last session, but we are hopeful that it will move forward in 2025.

For the elderly homeless, no-cost respite care centers are starting to pop up across the country. An organization called the National Institute for Medical Respite Care (www.nimrc.org) assists these organizations to find funding and become certified. In Indiana, we now have three certified non-profit no-cost respite care centers for the homeless. In Indianapolis, the Gennesaret Center has 12 beds and provides a full range of convalescent care (www.gennesaret.org). There are also respite care centers for the homeless in Lafayette and in Evansville.

As people on the margins age, we need to work to find compassionate solutions for them. Please support SB 291 and please help your community find compassionate solutions for health care for our elderly homeless.

(Deacon John Cord is the coordinator of Corrections Ministry for the archdiocese. For more information on supporting the office's re-entry ministry, contact Deacon Cord at 317-432-6604 or e-mail jcord@archindy.org.) †

Journey of the Heart/

Jennifer Burger

With God and Jesus in our hearts, we cannot be 'boxed' in

I love a good box! Those who feel the same way that I do can identify these boxes in an instant—sturdiness is definitely high



on the list, as is size, and perhaps even a unique design that begs to be kept for some good reason rather than to be broken down and added to the recycling bin.

What really defines a good box is its usefulness—to satisfy

a need—for sending a care package, packing up items for a move, using as gift boxes for those odd-shaped items that are hard to wrap or storing things that don't have a permanent home. Sometimes these needs are apparent, but most often for us box lovers, the motto is, "You never know when you need a good box!"

Having things in their place and being organized are important to me, so many of these boxes have been put to good use; however, we seem to have an abundance of these empty cardboard vessels that remain unused and are taking up space in our basement. The funny (or odd) thing about this is that I sometimes find myself starting to organize my empty boxes—as if to create some purpose in having them at all!

Our hearts can look much like my basement with empty strongholds that we reserve for our "what if's" and "if only's."

I'm not talking about dreams and goals, but things and ideas of the world to which we are attracted and attached and that we try to give meaning to, but that serve no purpose in living life in abundance as God so desires for us. We hold fast to these empty promises or beliefs, creating space for resentment, anxiety, disappointment, etc., leaving little room for God in our hearts.

There are days when I find myself more irritable or needy than others and these less-than-virtuous feelings arise—feelings that I know are not of God. At the end of the day when I do a nightly Examen, I can empty these spaces, offering them to God and asking for the graces I need for the next day. This is very helpful, but I may find myself in the same place sometime later filled with these feelings again, and I realize that I need to look not just at what I'm storing in my heart, but also the place or receptacle that is holding this disease in my heart.

You may have heard the phrase, "You cannot put God in a box." I don't know if there is any theological truth to this, but it applies to us in these situations: if only goodness comes from God, and you can't put God in a box, then the empty boxes in our heart can only hold what is *not* of God and might indicate a stronghold we need to examine more carefully.

Dismantling our strongholds can be tedious work, but for God it is as easy as breaking down a cardboard box! With his help, it is possible. It may start with a prayer to make more room for God—for Jesus—in our hearts. We can start unpacking these boxes with a priest or spiritual director. And in the sacrament of reconciliation, we can give these boxes as "care packages" to God who will promptly put them in the recycle bin!

As for me, I can still appreciate a good box, but I don't need the clutter in my house. When there is truly a need for a good box one can be found. God always provides!

(Jennifer Burger is program manager at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House in Indianapolis and a member of St. Simon the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis. She is also a spiritual director.) †

That All May Be One/Father Rick Ginther

Eiteljorg exhibit reveals lack of ecumenical spirit in early west

I seldom go to museums, especially art museums. As a strong "sensate" on the Myer-Briggs Personality Type Indicator, when I encounter too much visual information, it overwhelms me.



It takes about 45 minutes. Brain fatigue sets in. I must leave. I flee to the gift shop, or find a bench upon which to sit, close my eyes, and ruminate.

On Memorial Day, my sister Mary Ginther-Oss, Father Larry Richardt and I went to the Eiteljorg Museum in Indianapolis. We were drawn there by an exhibit both historic and stimulating—"Acts of Faith: Religion and the American West."

The exhibit attempts to "explore how a diverse range of religious practices shaped the American West and how the American West shaped religion."

Upon arrival, the three of us went our ways and explored. And what a treasure of discovery it was! I was in the exhibit well beyond 45 minutes—reading, digesting, wondering, learning.

From an ecumenical stance, there were some revealing insights.

Roman Catholic presence grew from St. Louis, California, Texas, New Mexico and Colorado. Our presence was to care

for the Catholics journeying west and those who were formerly in the Spanish territories.

Various Protestant denominations were very active as well. Supporting and encouraging their missionary efforts was the New York City Tract House. Their hope was "to Christianize the West." Their method, besides sending missionaries, was pamphlets (tracts) it published and the Bibles it sent west by the railcar loads.

In Denver, a former slave named Clara Brown began a successful laundry business among the gold miners. Her Christian upbringing and financial success allowed her to promote Christian life and values.

From an interreligious stance, there were some revealing insights.

The first Jewish congregation in the American west sprang up in St. Louis. This *minyan* (gathering of 10) grew through time. Other Jewish communities emerged from them, going west.

The forced migration of the Church of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons) from the east to their eventual home in Utah was arduous and dangerous.

Their allowance of polygamy and other teachings were not well tolerated by Christians. Arriving in Utah, they eventually flourished, in part because polygamy was later outlawed.

See GINTHER, page 19

Evangelization Outreach/Deacon Jim Wood

Program assists youths to fill their 'ARK' with knowledge of faith

Author G.K. Chesterton once said, "The difficulty explaining why I am Catholic is that there are 10,000 reasons all amounting to one reason: that Catholicism is true."



This quote has stayed with me throughout my years as a married lay person and now as a permanent deacon for the archdiocese.

As my second anniversary of diaconate ordination approaches, I can state one thing for certain: I can't remember when I have been so in love with Christ and his Church, and all the folks that make up the body of Christ.

Since I was a boy, I became very interested in the Church. I wanted to understand the Mass better; I wanted to fully participate in the sacraments; and I wanted to know why we did the things we did throughout the liturgical year.

My catechetical upbringing was meager at best, yet filled with hope that I was following the one and true Christian religion. I had several mentors who helped me along the way, to which I credit my path of following our Lord, Jesus Christ.

These folks helped me to see that Jesus was the Word made flesh who pitched his tent among us. They helped me see Jesus as my Lord and Savior, my redeemer. And they helped me see the Eucharist as God with us, body and blood, soul and divinity, to which this day I follow with zeal for the Gospel.

As I matured in my faith, and resources for catechesis and evangelization got better, I became an insatiable reader of the works from Aquinas to Augustine, from the Church Fathers to Bishop Robert E. Barron. And this naturally led me to want to spread the faith to my brothers and sisters in Christ. Through the many years of being a catechist and teacher, I passed on to others the gift of knowing the faith with courage and conviction.

Throughout our archdiocese, we have hundreds of catechists, teachers and youth ministers who pass on the faith to our young people. During the months between the school and program year, they prepare their students for the annual assessment we call ARK, which is an acronym for "assessment of religious knowledge."

Given annually in the spring, ARK is a new tool used by the archdiocese to assess not only students' religious knowledge but also their belief and behaviors toward our faith.

ARK is replacing ACRE (Assessment of Child/Youth Religious Education), another assessment tool. Beginning in the 2024-25 school and program year, all schools, religious education programs and youth ministry groups will be required to assess their students using ARK in grades 3, 5, 7, 9 and 11. Most of these assessments will be completed online; however, ARK does offer a written paper and pencil version.

ARK can keep track of a child's performance in subsequent years as they progress through their catechetical upbringing. Catechists, teachers, administrators and youth ministers can also be assessed with an adult version of ARK.

All in all, ARK will be a necessary and beneficial tool moving forward. So, fill your ARK, learn about our faith, and be assured that, as theologian Carl Olson said, "... not everyone can be a theologian, but everyone should know some theology."

(Deacon Jim Wood is catechetical resources coordinator within the archdiocesan Department of Parish Leadership. He can be reached at jwood@archindy.org.) †

Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, June 23, 2024

- Job 38:1, 8-11
- 2 Corinthians 5:14-17
- Mark 4:35-41

The first reading from the Bible for Mass this weekend is from the Book of Job. The title character of this book has been popularly mislabeled over the centuries as heroically patient. In fact, Job challenged God after he underwent many hardships in his life. Job resented the hardships he faced in life. He questioned God's mercy.



The Book of Job chronicles this long exchange between Job and the Almighty. The final verdict is that God is powerful and good, but also ultimately beyond limited human comprehension.

Trapped by his own concerns and fears, unable to see all possibilities, wanting instant solutions, Job simply lost sight of God's perfection.

For the second reading, the Church offers a passage from St. Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians. As is so often the case in Pauline writings, this selection is a great testament to the reality of Jesus, both the Son of God and fully human, and to the unbreakable bond between Jesus and true Christians.

It is a bond confirmed and wonderfully extended to all generations in all places by the Lord's willing sacrifice on Calvary. In and through this sacrifice, all is made right between God and humanity.

True disciples share in the gift achieved by this sacrifice, eternal life itself and life with God.

St. Mark's Gospel supplies the last reading.

The story is set on the Sea of Galilee, as the modern Lake of Tiberias was known in ancient times. Several of the Apostles were fishermen. All the Apostles, however, would have been familiar with fishing as a livelihood, since all came from the region around the lake.

Terrible storms in the mold of today's hurricanes and tornadoes do not now occur in this northern part of present-day Israel. They did not happen in this region

at the time of Jesus. Yet thunderstorms and winds did come upon the lake.

This story's recollection of such a storm, therefore, is not farfetched. Not difficult either to imagine is the fright created by being in a small boat at some distance from the safety of the shore when a storm arose. Sailing would not have been easy. An open boat could have easily taken on water.

Jesus was asleep on a cushion in the boat when the storm came. He was not afraid. He took no notice of the storm.

The Apostles were very frightened. They awakened Jesus, sure that they were about to drown, and they pleaded for the Lord's help.

Jesus controlled the elements by ordering the water to be calm.

The contrast between the Apostles and Jesus is clear. Jesus had power over the elements. As Mark's Gospel presents Jesus elsewhere, the Lord is the Son of God, but the Apostles are mere mortals. They cannot control the elements. They cannot foresee their own future. They cannot even find a quick way to assure their safety. They only know that they are vulnerable to death. Fear runs away with them. They imagine the worst.

Reflection

In the cherished "Lord's Prayer," Christians address Almighty God as "Our Father," stating a reality and, if sincere, trust, intimacy, recognition and love.

God is the loving Father of all. No one is an orphan. God gave to us all Jesus as our brother. Jesus ascended into heaven. He lives with us in the life of the Spirit, given in and through the Church.

The Church invites us to respond to God's love. Basic to this response is our admission of our own inadequacies and sins. Despite accomplishments, talents or plain good luck, we humans are always children. We need God, just as the Apostles needed Jesus on the tossing waters.

God, our Father, lovingly fills our need. †

Daily Readings

Monday, June 24

The Nativity of St. John the Baptist
Isaiah 49:1-6
Psalm 139:1-3, 13-15
Acts 13:22-26
Luke 1:57-66, 80

Tuesday, June 25

2 Kings 19:9b-11, 14-21, 31-35a, 36
Psalm 48:2-4, 10-11
Matthew 7:6, 12-14

Wednesday, June 26

2 Kings 22:8-13; 23:1-3
Psalm 119:33-37, 40
Matthew 7:15-20

Thursday, June 27

St. Cyril of Alexandria, bishop and doctor of the Church
2 Kings 24:8-17
Psalm 79:1b-5, 8-9
Matthew 7:21-29

Friday, June 28

St. Irenaeus, bishop, martyr and doctor of the Church
2 Kings 25:1-12
Psalm 137:1-6
Matthew 8:1-4

Vigil Mass of the Solemnity of SS. Peter and Paul, Apostles

Acts 3:1-10
Psalm 19:2-5
Galatians 1:11-20
John 21:15-19

Saturday, June 29

St. Peter, Apostle
St. Paul, Apostle
Acts 12:1-11
Psalm 34:2-9
2 Timothy 4:6-8, 17-18
Matthew 16:13-19

See READINGS, page 18

Question Corner/Jenna Marie Cooper

Catholics may practice yoga under certain conditions, but not reiki

Q: Can you explain the Church's teachings about yoga and reiki?

Recently a priest gave a presentation in which he said that, to avoid the devil, Catholics should also avoid things like palm readers and ouija boards. He also mentioned yoga and reiki. I've practiced yoga on and off for many years and have found no religious



references to it in my practices.

My experience has been a western, non-religious practice for strength, deep breathing and calmness. I became familiar with reiki when I had cancer and received reiki treatments. During recent years, medical practices and hospitals use reiki to help patients with relaxation and pain reduction. (Location withheld)

A: First, this priest was absolutely correct in saying that Catholics should avoid things like palm readers, ouija boards or anything else related to the occult. Not only can engaging in such activities open us up to contact with evil spirits, but these activities are also a sin against the first commandment.

Currently, the Church does not have any clearly defined teaching on yoga, and so it remains somewhat of a gray area.

On the one hand, yoga did originate as a non-Catholic religious practice, and for this reason it would be problematic if a Catholic engaged in yoga on specifically spiritual terms.

On the other hand, as you note, many if not most westerners who engage in yoga do so without any kind of religious intentions. That is, they participate in yoga for the pure physiological benefits of this kind of gentle exercise and controlled breathing, benefits that do seem

to have a basis in the natural medical sciences.

Some would argue that because yoga began as a religious practice, it is impossible to ever fully "divorce" yoga from the spirituality of its origins. Yet, others would point out that the Church has a long history of adopting what is good from various pagan cultures—for example, St. Thomas Aquinas made extensive use of the ancient pagan Greek philosophers in his writings—and that a similar argument might be made for the legitimacy of non-religious yoga.

I think right now, unless or until the Church offers a clearer teaching on yoga, whether or not Catholics should engage in yoga is something that should be personally discerned, perhaps with the help of a confessor or spiritual director. And of course, if Catholics do choose to engage in yoga, they should be sure that whatever classes they attend are firmly non-spiritual and for health benefits only.

Reiki is a different story. In 2009, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a document titled "Guidelines for Evaluating Reiki as an Alternative Therapy." This document begins by noting that physical healing can come about through natural or supernatural means, i.e., through medical science or through God's direct intervention in response to prayer.

While we can ask God for direct supernatural healing, we ultimately must accept that such healing can only come about at God's discretion and cannot be seen as an automatic guarantee. But we are always free to use the natural means at our disposal to try to effect physical healing.

While reiki is not a religious practice per se, it is based on the idea of channeling purely spiritual energies. And so (unlike yoga) it has no plausible basis in the natural medical sciences. The document concludes by stating that "since reiki therapy is not compatible with either Christian teaching or scientific evidence, it would be inappropriate for Catholic institutions, such as Catholic health care facilities and retreat centers, or persons representing the Church, such as Catholic chaplains, to promote or to provide support for reiki therapy."

By extension, it stands to reason that Catholics should not practice or receive reiki, because it would be inappropriate, if not spiritually dangerous, for a Catholic to seek out purely supernatural healing apart from Christian prayer or the sacraments.

(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

My Father, Our Father

By Stephanie Jackson

We all have a biological father,
most whom are fortunate to know.
Then there are others like me,
whose father had chosen to go.

For those who are like me,
here's some comfort I can share.
We all have a Heavenly Father,
here to stay and always care.

His presence is always with us,
keeping his promise to never leave.
He shares in our joyful moments
and comforts us when we grieve.

He guides us through our day,
available to listen when we talk.
He's kind, loving, patient, and forgiving,
even when we sulk and squawk.

Depending on how you perceive it
and make the effort to bother;
by choosing to embrace faith unseen
you'll never be without a father.



(Stephanie Jackson is a member of St. Vincent DePaul Parish in Bedford. Photo: This 1773 painting, "The Return of the Prodigal Son," by Pompeo Batoni depicts the parable in Luke 15:20-32 in which a loving, merciful father—representing God—embraces his wayward son.) (Public domain photo courtesy of commons.

wikimedia.org)

Rest in peace

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

BALL, Helen A., 99, St. Mary, New Albany, May 30. Sister of Agnes Lee. Aunt, great-aunt, great-great-aunt and great-great-great aunt of several.

BOLES, Charles E., 65, St. Roch, Indianapolis, May 23. Brother of Pamela Alte, James Boles, Joseph Radican, Bart and Mike Reiger. Uncle of several.

BORMAN, Bennie, 92, St. Luke the Evangelist, Indianapolis, May 28. Husband of Florence Borman. Father of Debra Bartlett, Teresa Borman, Barbara Murphy and Patricia Redding. Grandfather of six. Great-grandfather of five.

CALHOUN, Judith A., 81, St. Gabriel, Connerville, May 23. Mother of Tammy Schaefer and Randy Smith. Sister of John Murphy. Grandmother of five.

CHRISTENSEN, Jacqueline, 97, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Richmond, June 8. Mother of Carole Godwin, Jeffrey and Robert Gainey, Jr. Sister of Sharon Malone. Grandmother of eight. Great-grandmother of nine.

CLEARY, Mary, 80, Prince of Peace, Madison, June 1. Wife of Edward Cleary. Mother of Jeanne Cleary Leiske, and James and Kenny Cleary. Sister of Susan Gertner, Margaret and Tom Montgomery. Grandmother of 12. Great-grandmother of one.

CRANDALL, Jo Donna, 74, St. Mary, Mitchell, April 22. Wife of Roger Crandall. Mother of Tyson Crandall. Sister of Maria Lyons. Grandmother of five.

CRITES, Imogene, 92, St. Mary, Mitchell, May 11. Mother of Charles and Paul Crites. Grandmother of four. Great-grandmother of four.

DOYLE, Richard J., 78, St. Jude, Indianapolis, April 29. Husband of Pamela Doyle. Father of Michelle Kernea and Melissa Schossler. Brother of Barbara Boehm, Ann Dodds and Mary Hines. Grandfather of two.

ELBERT, Lambert P., 101, St. Joseph, Corydon, May 21. Father of Connie Lahue, Cathy McCarty, Mary Ann Wells, Jim, John, Randy, Richard and Steve Elbert. Grandfather of 17. Great-grandfather of 30.

FERRIELL, Joseph A., 84, St. Joseph, Corydon, May 20. Father of Deborah Gentry, Melissa Lewis, Michael and Mitchel Ferriell and Allan and Ricky King. Grandfather of 15. Great-grandfather of 12.

GALLAGHER, David M., 66, St. Jude, Indianapolis, June 1. Son of Beverly Shroat. Stepson of Mary Jo Gallagher. Brother of Deanna Carter, Michele Paynter, John and Joseph Gallagher. Stepbrother of Michael Shroat. Uncle of several.

GAMERO, Pablo E. Ayala, 61, St. Anthony, Indianapolis, May 15. Father of Mercedes, Wendy and Pablo Ayala. Brother of Francisca Ayala. Grandfather of five.

HANDRICK, Mary Ann, 94, St. Simon the Apostle, Indianapolis, June 6. Mother of Judy Dyckman, Daryl and Don Handrick. Sister

of Janet Larsen, Sheila Schermetzler and Ronald Gotz. Grandmother of two. Great-grandmother of one.

JAMES, Kyle, 45, St. Augustine, Leopold, May 27. Husband of Emily James. Father of Addison James and Trista Marshall. Son of Larry and Marlene James. Brother of Kristy Herr.

JOHNSON, David, 77, St. Ann, Indianapolis, May 28. Husband of Mary Johnson. Father of Kathleen Byrd, Christina Wilson and David Johnson. Grandfather of four. Great-grandfather of two.

KNABLE, Stella M. (Kochert), 87, St. Mary, New Albany, May 19. Mother of Anne Knable Boenig, Patricia Lavey, Mary, Gregory and William Knable. Grandmother of eight. Great-grandmother of 16.

MATTZ, Bridget, 90, St. Simon the Apostle, Indianapolis, May 23. Aunt and great-aunt of several.

MEYER, Joyce A., 75, Holy Family, Oldenburg, May 24. Wife of Richard Meyer. Mother of Abigail Suddath, Bradley and Jamison Meyer. Sister of David Cross. Grandmother of 7.

MILLER, Kathleen, 84, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, May 14. Wife of Ross Miller. Mother of Sandy Hogan, Joyce Moore, Kathy Sutherland, Larry and Tom Foley and Kevin and Kyle Miller. Grandmother of 12. Great-grandmother of 24. Great-great-grandmother of three.

O'BRIEN, John J., 86, Our Lady of Lourdes, Indianapolis, May 4. Husband of Janice O'Brien. Father of Molly O'Brien Funk, Patrick and Sean O'Brien. Grandfather of five.

ORTMAN, David W., 81, St. Jude, Indianapolis, May 28. Father of Charles Jones and Anthony and Michael Ortmann. Grandfather of 10.

PEIDRA GARCIA, Socorro, 52, St. Anthony, Indianapolis, May 22. Wife of Bernardo



A member of the Royal Irish Regiment and 38th (Irish) Brigade performs before Pope Francis arrives to St. Peter's Square at the Vatican for his weekly general audience on June 12. The regiment visited the Vatican with the 38th (Irish) Brigade to mark the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Rome from Nazi occupation and the brigade's audience with Pope Pius XII on June 12, 1944. (CNS photo/Lola Gomez)

Martinez Amaya. Mother of Alejandra, Marisela, Juan and Luis Martinez. Sister of Josefina, Irene, Marmen, Ceferino, Jesus, Juan and Roman Piedra. Grandmother of one.

RIALL, Robert O., 98, St. John Paul II, Sellersburg, June 5. Father of Randy and Ron Riall. Brother of Mary Balogh. Grandfather of six.

RODENBERG, Lucille A., 97, St. Lawrence, Lawrenceburg, May 27. Aunt and great-aunt of several.

SCHAFER, Nancy L., 77, Prince of Peace, Madison, May 24. Wife of Robert Schaefer. Mother of Angela Schaefer Potter and Robert Schaefer, Jr. Grandmother of two.

SITZMAN, Judy A., 81, St. Barnabas, Indianapolis, June 5. Wife of Richard Sitzman. Mother of Kate, Keith, Ken and Kevin Sitzman. Sister of Charles,

Jerry and Richard Schooley. Grandmother of seven.

SMITH, Rita L., 87, St. Jude, Indianapolis, May 26. Mother of Anita, Christopher and Donald Smith. Sister of Linda Harrison. Grandmother of three. Great-grandmother of 10.

SMITH, Wilma C. (Hollkamp), 89, St. John Paul II, Sellersburg, June 3. Mother of June Krueger, Jane Smith-Lamb and Jude Smith. Sister of Phyllis Burkholder and Elizabeth Williams. Grandmother of four. Great-grandmother of eight.

SWISHER, John A., 83, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, May 14. Husband of Monica Swisher. Father of Shannon Heidenreich and Shavaun Trimpe. Brother of Tom Swisher. Grandfather of five. Great-grandfather of three.

TREADWELL, Stephanie (Dicus), 57, St. Roch, Indianapolis, June 2. Wife

of Gary Treadwell. Mother of Amanda and Christopher Treadwell. Sister of Michele Beard and Ann Gough. Grandmother of three.

UPTON, Charmaine M., 94, St. Mary, New Albany, May 19. Mother of Gregory Parker and Anthony Upton. Grandmother of 11.

VOGEL, Michael F., 75, St. John Paul II, Sellersburg, May 23. Husband of Stephanie Vogel. Father of Carrie Kauffman and Daniel Vogel. Brother of Jane Meyer Briscoe and Mary Canter. Grandfather of one.

WALTER, John A., 87, St. Mary, Lanesville, June 1. Husband of Nancy Walter. Father of JoAnn Baker, Diana Kerr, Denise Sanders, Bob, Jim, Mike, Tom and Tony Walter. Brother of Roberta Garrett and Jude Walter. Grandfather of 33. Great-grandfather of 45. Great-great-grandfather of one. †

Ann Wadelton, 94, mother of Father Christopher Wadelton, died on June 4

Ann (Harrington) Wadelton, the mother of Father Christopher Wadelton, pastor of St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus and sacramental minister of Holy Trinity Parish in Edinburgh, died on June 4 in Indianapolis. She was 94.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on June 17 at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Indianapolis. Burial followed at Our Lady of Peace Cemetery in Indianapolis.

Wadelton was born on Aug. 19, 1929, in Lafayette, Ind., to William and Ellen Harrington. On May 2, 1959, Ann married Tommy Wadelton, who preceded her in death, at St. Thomas Aquinas Church in West Lafayette, Ind. Together, they were parents to five children.

A longtime member of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Indianapolis, Wadelton showed an unwavering commitment to service and faith throughout her life. This was seen in starting an organization for widowed Catholics, chairing Immaculate Heart of Mary's peace and justice commission and volunteering for the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, the Cathedral Kitchen and Habitat for Humanity. Her life of faith and service was celebrated in 1995 when she received the Spirit of Service Award from the archdiocese's Catholic Charities.

In her professional life, Wadelton worked as food editor of the *Indianapolis Star*. It was during her work there that

she met her husband, who was a feature photographer for the newspaper. Wadelton later served as communications director for the Indiana Catholic Conference.

She is survived by her children, Anita Ready, Mary Moore, Father Christopher, Mike and Tom Wadleton, and by her brother, Franciscan Father Jeremy Harrington. She was a grandmother of seven and great-grandmother of three.

Memorial gifts may be sent to Catholics for Peace and Justice (www.catholicsforpeaceandjustice.org) or Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology (www.saintmeinrad.edu). †

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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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READINGS

continued from page 17

Sunday, June 30

Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Wisdom 1:13-15; 2:23-24
Psalm 30:2, 4-6, 11-13
2 Corinthians 8:7, 9, 13-15
Mark 5:21-43 or Mark 5:21-24, 35b-43

Monday, July 1

St. Junipero Serra, priest
Amos 2:6-10, 13-16
Psalm 50:16b-23
Matthew 8:18-22

Tuesday, July 2

Amos 3:1-8; 4:11-12
Psalm 5:4b-8
Matthew 8:23-27

Wednesday, July 3

St. Thomas, Apostle
Ephesians 2:19-22
Psalm 117:1-2
John 20:24-29

Thursday, July 4

Amos 7:10-17
Psalm 19:8-11
Matthew 9:1-8

Friday, July 5

St. Anthony Zaccaria, priest
 St. Elizabeth of Portugal
Amos 8:4-6, 9-12
Psalm 119:2, 10, 20, 30, 40, 131
Matthew 9:9-13

Saturday, July 6

St. Maria Goretti, virgin and martyr
Amos 9:11-15
Psalm 85:9ab, 10-14
Matthew 9:14-17

Sunday, July 7

Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Ezekiel 2:2-5
Psalm 123:1-4
2 Corinthians 12:7-10
Mark 6:1-6a

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 P.O. Box 1410, Indianapolis, IN 46206-1410
317-236-1548 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1548
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We provide numerous opportunities for spiritual and community enrichment to our donors. These include semi-annual evening retreat offerings, a Circle of Giving Mass and dinner with Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, and membership in the Catholic Legacy Society.

—We honor your goals

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Recently, we have improved gift processing efficiency through streamlining and digitization efforts; boosted marketing and communication resources for our parishes; established CCF liaisons at pilot parishes; and intentionally reengaged the professional advisor community.

CCF is uniquely qualified and positioned to empower Catholics who are inspired to strengthen the body of Christ by working together. For more information or help, e-mail us at ccf@archindy.org or call 317-236-1482.

(James Maslar is a Catholic philanthropic advisor for the archdiocese's Catholic Community Foundation (CCF). Tax or legal information provided herein is not intended as tax or legal advice. Always consult with your legal, tax or financial advisors before implementing any gift plan.) †

GINTHER

continued from page 16

The Chinese and other people from east Asia arrived. They helped to build the railroads and other infrastructure. However, their religious practices seemed strange. Racially they were not accepted by most.

The Native Americans were gathered into reservations. They wanted to maintain their spirituality and religious practices.

The Lakota were able to do so more successfully than other tribes. Sadly, controversies arose around such practices as the Lakota Sun Dance.

It was considered false religion, pagan worship of the sun. There was little tolerance for it among Christians or Mormons. As the territories that contained the reservations became states, the dance was outlawed.

The varied tribes of the west were often forced to become Christian or Catholic. However, their religious

practices remained intact, if not secretly, at least through some local blending of parts into their Christian or Catholic expression.

By the time we left the exhibit, we had a much better understanding of religion shaping the west and being shaped by the western context.

It became clear, however, that what took place in these formative decades was a far cry from religious freedom. Though the exhibit was non-judgmental and solidly factual, it still left a sense

in the observer that an ecumenical or interreligious spirit was sorely missing.

The exhibit, which opened on April 20, remains available through Aug. 4. I highly recommend a summer day trip to experience it. It is well worth the time!

(Father Rick Ginther is director of the archdiocesan Office of Ecumenism and Interreligious Affairs. He is also the pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Indianapolis.) †

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Motherhood group at Greenwood parish open to all Catholic women

By Jennifer Lindberg

GREENWOOD—Their faces showed they were glad to be there: a group of women with newborns to grandchildren sharing their faith, hopes and dreams with a new ministry encouraging them in their vocation as mothers.

The group has laid fallow for a long time, since 1958 when the chapter of the Confraternity of Christian Motherhood ceased to exist at Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood.

The group has been re-established and met for Mass, fellowship and prayer at the parish on May 13, the feast of Our Lady of Fatima.

The Confraternity of Christian Mothers is a nationwide association that promotes the Catholic education of children through motherhood. Members join their hearts in prayer with the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The group also has a strong devotion to Our Lady of Sorrows.

“We are all about teaching our children, and the best teaching is by example,” said Paula Beechler, who is spearheading the local chapter of the Confraternity of Christian Motherhood that is also open to women of other parishes.

“Sometimes we struggle as mothers and feel alone,” said Hannah Ford, vice president of the group. “We want women to know they have a place here and are welcome here. We can learn from other moms who have been there. It creates a support system.”

The evening included a cozy combination of food set at a pretty table and easy conversation about shared struggles and successes as mothers or grandmothers.

Ford, who has two young boys, said she is still trying to figure out a good bedtime routine which elicited some creative advice from the older moms.

One mom talked about putting little jingle bells on her son’s ankles at bedtime and chasing her children around the house in a bedtime game that would wear them out. Other moms shared advice on keeping a tidy home, such as the “tornado clean-up” where they set the timer for two minutes to make cleaning the house a fun game instead of a chore.

They also spoke about more serious issues, such as how to be more present to their children by shutting off their cell phones or making special family times.

One mom shared the idea of “Sunday sundaes.” She makes special ice cream sundaes every Sunday to illustrate how the day is set apart for Catholics and to create a fun, family tradition on that day as well.

One of the confraternity’s main objectives is to help mothers know that their prayers and good works have inestimable value. A Christian mother and her children share in the grace and merits of the prayers and good works of all the other members as if she had performed them herself, Beecher said.

The benefits of this support system led Beecher to organize the group after attending a retreat early last December at Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish led by Capuchin Franciscan Father Joseph Tuscan, the current national director of the confraternity, which is headquartered in Pittsburgh.

It was what Beecher, the mother of two adult children, was looking for and needed. She’d tried a Bible study, but wanted deeper connections with Catholic women—especially other mothers as a way to share the joys, fears and struggles of motherhood.

Father Jose Neri, parochial vicar of Our Lady of the Greenwood, helped the women kick off their meeting with a special blessing for mothers.

“I think a group like Christian Mothers can be super beneficial for mothers because it allows them to share their experiences as persons in a common vocation, namely, motherhood,” said Father Neri. “A group like this also allows mothers to create a Christian fraternity while they learn from one another and support each other. In a group like this, mothers are able to share the struggles and joys of motherhood.

“But above all, Christian Mothers allow them to do this and much more as they share and practice their faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Father Neri also blessed medals with the Pieta image that is important to the newly formed group.



Women who restarted a local chapter of the Confraternity of Christian Mothers at Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood pose in the parish church on May 13 after receiving a blessing from Father Jose Neri, the parish’s parochial vicar. (Photo by Jennifer Lindberg)

This Pieta image by Michelangelo of the Blessed Virgin Mary holding Christ’s lifeless body after he was taken off the cross is a powerful reminder of the intercession of the Virgin Mary.

The group, which meets monthly, already has their year planned. Upcoming events include speakers presenting on Natural Family Planning and the Gabriel Project, and a day retreat at Mother of the Redeemer Retreat Center in Bloomington.

“In all our troubled times, we know we are all here for each other,” Beechler said. “We are very blessed to be mothers and teach our children. They are our future and the Church’s future.”

(For more information on the local chapter of the Confraternity of Christian Mothers, contact Paul Beechler at paulabeechler@gmail.com or 217-638-7433. For more information about the national organization, go to www.christianmothers.org.) †



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