



The

# Criterion

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## Journey of the Heart

Hospital visit reminds us that our prayers transform time and space, page 12.

CriterionOnline.com

February 21, 2025

Vol. LXV, No. 19 75¢

## Faces of faith



### Columbus teen expresses her faith by drawing portraits of city's previous pastors

By Sean Gallagher

COLUMBUS—The Church has been present in Columbus for 184 years since St. Bartholomew Parish was founded in 1841.

Mila Esposito has only lived through the last 17 years of its storied history.

But because of a senior project she's done at Columbus North High School, Mila has learned much about the parish in which she has grown up. In the process, she's given her fellow parishioners the chance to ponder the faces of 27 priests who have served as pastor in Columbus in the past.

In her "Faces of Faith" project, Mila did pencil drawings of

See **PORTRAITS**, page 8

Above: From left, Scott, Kenna and Mila Esposito pose with Judy Jackson on Feb. 7 at St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus after the unveiling and blessing of drawings that Mila created of priests who have served as pastors in Columbus since 1841. Jackson was a mentor for Mila in the creation of the drawings. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

### Universal school choice among ICC's priorities for Indiana families

By Victoria Arthur

As the 2025 legislative session reaches its midpoint, the Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC) and other advocates are striving to make this the year that school choice is extended to every Hoosier family without exception.

A provision in the draft versions of the state budget proposed by Gov. Mike Braun and the Indiana House of Representatives would remove the income cap on Indiana's current Choice Scholarship Program, more commonly known as the voucher program. Under House Bill 1001, every Indiana family would be able to take the portion of the state's budget allotted for their children to attend their local public school and apply it to tuition at a non-public school if they choose.

In the last budget year, 2023, the Indiana General Assembly expanded school choice eligibility to 97% of families statewide. Now, advocates want to see Indiana join the 10 states that have already passed universal school choice legislation.

"For many years, the General Assembly has said that we fund students, not systems," said John Elcesser,



John Elcesser

executive director of the Indiana Non-Public Education Association (INPEA). "That certainly implies *all* students. It is simply not equitable to think we would leave a small percentage of Hoosiers behind in this vision of

school choice for all. If all Hoosiers are taxpayers, why can't all Hoosiers use a small percentage of their state tax dollars to exercise private school choice?"

See **ICC**, page 10

### The odds were incredible; so are the faith and service of a young, national award winner

By John Shaughnessy

The odds of being chosen for the prestigious national award that honors Catholic school students are beyond incredible, especially when you consider these two realities:

—There are about 1.7 million Catholic school

See **AWARD**, page 2

Clare Diez of Roncalli High School in Indianapolis is one of only 10 Catholic school students from across the country to receive a prestigious national award. (Submitted photo)



# AWARD

continued from page 1

students in the United States.

—Only 10 students from across the country have been chosen for this year’s National Catholic Education Association’s (NCEA) Youth Virtues, Valor and Vision Award—an honor that recognizes “exceptional faith, leadership and dedication in serving others in ways that uplift their communities and inspire hope.”

So, it surprised 18-year-old Clare Diez—a senior at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis—when she received the news that she was one of the 10 chosen this year.

It’s also surprising to hear her share the major turning point in her young life that has led to her exceptional commitment to her faith, leadership and service.

That turning point came during the COVID-19 pandemic when she was a seventh-grade student at Holy Name of Jesus School in Beech Grove.

“Prior to that time, I always had a good relationship with God because my parents had instilled that into me early on. But it especially blossomed during that time,” Clare says. “Since I no longer had school or church to go to, there was a lot of time to think about life. It helped me think about what’s our purpose in life, what’s our goal. That goal is to ultimately get to heaven and bring other people to heaven.”

“So, I thought, ‘Then how do I do that in my regular life?’ Once the restrictions lifted and we were able to go back to places like school and church, I appreciated those things more than I already did, and I looked for opportunities that I could be even more faithful in.”

## A sharing of gifts

Clare’s approach to her life and her faith is reflected in her dedication to the Eucharist, starting with helping to lead a choir during eucharistic adoration at Roncalli.

“We have a weekly adoration where myself and some of my friends from

choir sing religious songs in the chapel,” says Clare, who also plays piano and the violin. “I enjoy singing a lot, and it’s very touching to see the different teachers and students coming into adoration. We like that our music can help enhance people’s prayer experience during adoration.”

“I also attend adoration on the other days at school when it’s silent adoration. It’s very peaceful to be there in front of God and experience his presence and pray about things I’m grateful for.”

That gratitude extends to being an altar server at Holy Name of Jesus Church, a role she has embraced since she was a fifth-grade student.

“I initially joined because I thought it would be a fun way to participate at the Mass. It’s so cool to be up so close during the Mass, to be present right there with everything that’s happening, especially with the consecration. I also really like helping the younger servers when it’s their first or second time serving.”

Clare is also the co-leader of Roncalli’s pro-life club with her friend, Emma Giddens. Their leadership in the club has included recruiting students, lining up pro-life speakers to talk at Roncalli and holding a national Pro-Life Cupcake Day celebration at the school.

“We arranged for different people to bring in homemade or store-bought cupcakes and gave them out to all the people in the cafeteria who wanted one,” she recalls. “Our motto for that was, ‘Everyone deserves a birthday.’”

Clare credits her four years at Roncalli with giving her “the confidence to branch out, speak to other people and be open about displaying my faith.”

During spring break of her junior year, she joined a Roncalli group on a mission trip to a remote, impoverished area of West Virginia, helping people in ways that ranged from tearing down a shed that was falling apart to replacing a floor in someone’s home. She has also served at the St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry in Indianapolis.

And since Clare envisions her future



## Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

February 20–March 2, 2025

<p><b>February 20-23</b> Los Angeles Religious Education Congress at Anaheim Convention Center, Anaheim, Cal.</p> <p><b>February 25 – 1 p.m.</b> Council of Priests meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis</p> <p><b>February 27 – 10 a.m.</b> Leadership Team meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center</p> <p><b>March 1 – 10:30 a.m.</b> Confirmation for youths of St. Mary Parish, Greensburg; St. Joseph Parish, Shelbyville; St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Shelby County; All Saints Parish, Dearborn County; St. Teresa Benedicta</p>	<p>of the Cross Parish, Bright; St. Lawrence Parish, Lawrenceburg; and St. Maurice Parish, Napoleon, at St. Mary Church, Greensburg</p> <p><b>March 1 – 2 p.m.</b> Confirmation for youths of St. Nicholas Parish, Ripley County; St. Peter Parish, Franklin County; St. Michael Parish, Brookville; St. Anthony of Padua Parish, Morris; and St. Louis Parish, Batesville, at St. Mary Church, Greensburg</p> <p><b>March 2 – 2 p.m.</b> Rite of Election at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis</p> <p><b>March 2 – 6 p.m.</b> Rite of Election at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral</p>
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career as an elementary school teacher, Roncalli has given her the opportunity to take a class in teaching, allowing her to help younger students at nearby St. Jude School.

All these experiences have led to a defining vision of the world for her.

“I try to view all the different people I encounter as the way God sees them,” Clare says. “I know that Jesus said, ‘What you have done for others, you have done for me.’ I know that’s true. When we’re doing something for somebody, we’re doing it for God.”

## Living the faith to the fullest

Clare’s commitment to her faith and others is extraordinary, says Father Robert Robeson, pastor of Holy Name Parish and chaplain coordinator at Roncalli. In a letter to the NCEA, he shared these thoughts:

“I have known Clare since I became the pastor at her parish almost nine years ago,” he wrote. “Her extraordinarily deep commitment to living her faith and striving for holiness has been remarkable among high school students.”

“I know that may sound embellished, but in the 20-plus years that I have worked with young people, as a seminary rector, as a parish priest, and as a high school chaplain, I’ve worked with many students, and Clare is one

of the holiest people I’ve ever had the pleasure to encounter.”

Father Robeson also noted the “kind and unassuming way” Clare helps younger children learn to become altar servers. He also focused on her care “for those who are vulnerable or marginalized.”

“She is holy in a way that is not judgmental, but rather very humble, and rooted in her deep compassion and kindness toward others,” he noted. “You can tell just by being with her that she has a deep, personal relationship with Christ; and while she is not afraid to talk about it, or to share her faith, her respect for the dignity and worth of each person allows her to relate to virtually anyone.”

Clare was nominated for the NCEA award by Roncalli’s director of campus ministry, Katie Hibner.

“Clare is the holiest student I have ever taught,” Hibner says. “She is someone with a strong moral character, love for the Lord, and a pure, genuine spirit. She shares her faith with those around her and volunteers her time. Clare is such a gift to all of us.”

For Clare, one of the best parts of receiving the national honor was having it presented to her in a school-wide pep rally at Roncalli during Catholic Schools Week in late January.

“I felt very honored, grateful and happy,” says Clare, the daughter of Andrew and Miriam Diez. “Having my parents present while I received the award was so special because they are my biggest supporters, and I am indebted to them for all the love and guidance they have given me.”

“It was also special that my parish priest, Father Bob Robeson, came to see the event. Overall, the whole experience of receiving the NCEA award at a school pep rally was slightly intimidating but very exciting and special for me—to know that all my classmates and teachers were cheering for me!” †



A senior at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis, Clare Diez, holding the crucifix, has been an altar server at Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Beech Grove since the fifth grade. The other altar servers in the photo are, from left to right, Nancy Curd, Sophia Ramsay, Maria Schoening, Makayla Kedra and Olivia Hollowell. (Submitted photo)



**Phone Numbers:**  
Main office..... 317-236-1570  
Advertising..... 317-236-1585  
Circulation / Subscriptions ... 317-236-1425

**Price:** \$22.00 per year, 75 cents per copy

**Postmaster:**  
Send address changes to *The Criterion*, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367

**Web site:** [www.CriterionOnline.com](http://www.CriterionOnline.com)

**E-mail:** [criterion@archindy.org](mailto:criterion@archindy.org)

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*The Criterion* (ISSN 0574-4350) is published weekly except the last week of December, the first week of January and every other week from June-Aug.

1400 N. Meridian St.  
Indianapolis, IN 46202  
317-236-1570  
[criterion@archindy.org](mailto:criterion@archindy.org)

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# As pope remains in hospital, Vatican announces schedule changes

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—In another sign that Pope Francis' stay in Rome's Gemelli hospital will continue for some time, the Vatican announced a substitute presider for the Mass and ordinations as part of the Jubilee of Deacons.

In a brief note to journalists on Feb. 18—the day this week's issue of *The Criterion* went to press—the Vatican said, "Due to the Holy Father's health condition," his appointments had been canceled through Feb. 22.



Pope Francis

In addition, the note said, "Pope Francis has delegated Archbishop Rino Fisichella," pro-prefect of the Dicastery for Evangelization and chief organizer of the Holy Year 2025, to celebrate the Mass and ordinations of permanent deacons on Feb. 23.

The 88-year-old pope was hospitalized on Feb. 14 after more than a week of suffering from bronchitis and difficulty breathing.

A source, who was not authorized to speak on the record, said on Feb. 18 that the pope was breathing on his own without the need for supplemental oxygen.

Matteo Bruni, director of the Vatican press office, told reporters on Feb. 18 that the pope again had rested well overnight, was eating regularly, reading newspapers and doing some work.

The Vatican had said on Feb. 17 that test results showed that the pope is suffering from a "polymicrobial infection of the respiratory tract, which required a further modification of his therapy." Polymicrobial means multiple pathogens are involved.

The pope has spent recent mornings without a fever and devoted some time to work, the Vatican said.

"The Holy Father continues to be afebrile [without fever] and is continuing the prescribed therapy," the Vatican's evening bulletin said on Feb. 17. "His clinical condition is stationary.

"This morning, he received the Eucharist and then devoted himself to some work activities and reading texts," the bulletin continued. An official said a staff member from the Vatican Secretariat of State, which coordinates much of the work of the Roman Curia, likely brought the texts to the pope.

"Pope Francis is touched by the many messages of affection and closeness that he continues to receive in these hours; in particular he wishes to address his thanks to those who are hospitalized at this time, for the affection and love they express through drawings and messages of good wishes; he prays for them and asks

that they pray for him," the official bulletin said.

The Gemelli pediatric oncology and pediatric neurosurgery wards are located on the 10th floor of the hospital next to a suite of rooms reserved for the pope, his aides and his security.

Earlier on Feb. 17, the Vatican had said test results that arrived that morning showed that the pope is suffering from a "polymicrobial infection of the respiratory tract, which required a further modification of his therapy." Doctors had also adjusted the pope's medication after tests on Feb. 15.

"All the tests performed to date indicate a complex clinical picture that will require an appropriate hospital stay," said the bulletin on Feb. 17.

Bruni declined to guess how long the pope would be hospitalized, but he announced that the pope's weekly general audience on Feb. 19 was canceled.

Italian newspapers reported on Feb. 17 that Pope Francis had an aide phone Holy Family Parish in Gaza his first two nights in the hospital to continue to check on the priests, religious and hundreds of families taking shelter there. The pope has been calling the parish every evening for months.

"The pope called us Friday and Saturday; he was in a good mood, his voice a little tired, but he wanted to know how we were," said an unnamed official at the parish who spoke to the Italian TGcom24 television station. "An aide handed him the phone and he was able to talk to us."

However, the official said, on Feb. 16 "he rested, and we knew he wouldn't call."

Father Gabriel Romanelli, pastor of the parish, later told Vatican News, "We heard his voice. It is true, he is more tired. He himself said, 'I have to take care of myself.'"

Then on Feb. 16, "Pope Francis sent a written message to my cellphone," Father Romanelli told Vatican News. Parishioners knew the pope would not call, but they did not expect the message, which thanked



A statue of St. John Paul II stands outside the main entrance of Rome's Gemelli hospital on Feb. 18. Pope Francis has been an inpatient at the hospital since Feb. 14. (CNS photo/Pablo Esparza)

parishioners for their prayers and conveyed his blessing.

The pope, who underwent surgery in 1957 to remove part of one of his lungs after suffering a severe respiratory infection, has been susceptible to colds and bouts of bronchitis.

In March 2023, he was hospitalized at Gemelli for three days for what doctors said was a respiratory infection. Pope Francis later said it had been "an acute and strong pneumonia."

Beginning with his weekly general audience on Feb. 5, Pope Francis had an aide read the bulk of his homilies and prepared speeches at public Masses and audiences.

"It is difficult for me to speak," he explained to visitors at the audience on Feb. 5 before handing off his text.

At Mass on Feb. 9 for the Jubilee of the Armed Services, Police and Security Personnel, he apologized, saying he was having "difficulty breathing."

At his general audience on Feb. 12, he apologized for not delivering the main talk himself, saying it was "because I still can't with my bronchitis. I hope next time I can."

But on all those public occasions, he took the microphone to urge prayers for peace and to give his blessing. †

# Vatican cardinal heads to Lebanon to express pope's solidarity and prayers

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—One out of four people living in Lebanon is a refugee, and the majority of children born in refugee camps are unregistered at birth, said Cardinal Michael Czerny, prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development.

The challenges facing refugees and those who host them are enormous, he told Vatican News on Feb. 18 ahead of a trip to Lebanon on Feb. 19-23.

"There is a lot of insecurity, and it is a quite terrible fact that the majority of children born in camps are not registered. So many minors are undocumented and, therefore, vulnerable to human trafficking and child labor," he said.

Lebanese Cardinal Bechara Rai, patriarch of the Maronite Catholic Church, invited Cardinal Czerny to visit the country to see firsthand the efforts of the local Church, "especially after the war that forced a million people to flee," Cardinal Czerny said.

While Israel has been fighting the Lebanon-based militant group, Hezbollah, since 2023 after the militants launched rocket attacks against Israel, Israel began a wave of airstrikes on targets in southern

and eastern Lebanon, bordering Syria, in September 2024 until a ceasefire went into effect in late November.

According to the U.N. refugee agency, at least 1.3 million people in Lebanon have been displaced as of November 2024—all while Lebanon hosts an estimated 1.5 million Syrian refugees and more than 11,000 refugees of other nationalities.

During his trip, the cardinal will meet with migrants, displaced persons and refugees receiving assistance from Caritas and the Jesuit Refugee Service.

"It is important to bring the Holy Father's closeness to the refugees and all those who represent them," he said.

"It is also important to make a gesture of thanks and support to the Lebanese people who proportionately bear the greatest burden of any country in the world," he said. "One in four residents in Lebanon is a refugee. This is an example for a world that tends toward xenophobia."

The cardinal will meet with young people engaged in peace-building and visit a school with students of different faiths. He will also meet with Lebanon's

Grand Mufti, the spiritual leader of Lebanese Muslims.

"It brings me joy to know that Lebanon is a country of dialogue where there are projects, which I will visit, where Muslims and Catholics are working together to address challenges and difficulties," he said. "I think it is a beautiful example of fraternity in action."

Cardinal Czerny will also pray at the

port of Beirut to remember those killed and injured by a massive chemical blast in 2020. At least 218 people died, more than 7,000 people were injured and an estimated 300,000 people were left homeless.

The cardinal said the message he will be bringing to everyone he meets will be "that the Holy Father remembers, prays, stands in solidarity and sends his affection to Lebanon." †



**'It brings me joy to know that Lebanon is a country of dialogue where there are projects, which I will visit, where Muslims and Catholics are working together to address challenges and difficulties. I think it is a beautiful example of fraternity in action.'**

—Cardinal Michael Czerny, prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development

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# The Criterion

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## Editorial



(OSV News photo/Bob Roller, Reuters)

### This Lent, let's seek to convert our hearts as we try to follow Christ more fully

In less than two weeks, our Church calendar turns to Lent, a 40-day season of prayer, fasting and almsgiving that begins on Ash Wednesday (March 5 this year) and ends at sundown on Holy Thursday (April 17). This year, Easter Sunday is celebrated on April 20.

As we're reminded each year, Lent is a period of preparation to celebrate the Lord's resurrection at Easter. Among other things, the 40 days represent the time that Jesus spent in the desert, where he was tempted by Satan (Mt 4:1-2, Mk 1:12-13, Lk 4:1-2).

As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches us, the "seasons and days of penance in the course of the liturgical year [Lent, and each Friday in memory of the death of the Lord] are intense moments of the Church's penitential practice.

"These times are particularly appropriate for spiritual exercises, penitential liturgies, pilgrimages as signs of penance, voluntary self-denial such as fasting and almsgiving, and fraternal sharing [charitable and missionary works]" (#1438).

The Lenten season is especially a time to seek to convert our hearts as we commit to follow Christ's will more faithfully. We are again reminded to trust and depend on God.

While many focus on the tradition of abstaining from meat on Fridays during Lent, we are also called to practice self-discipline and fast in other ways throughout this season. Why not work on your disciplines and fast from eating between meals, gossiping about others or avoiding other habits that are physically and spiritually unhealthy?

When it comes to prayer, why not increase your daily prayer schedule or add spiritual reading to your daily routine? The Bible or the Mass readings for the day might be a good place to start. Or download a faith-based app like Hallow or iBreviary to assist you.

Lent is also a final period of intensified learning and formation for individuals to be received into the full communion of the Church at the Easter Vigil through the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults. Pray for the catechumens and candidates at your parish and throughout the universal Church. The prayers of a faith community are encouraged as we joyfully await those who will join us to participate in the Eucharist and the other

sacraments, which offer a foretaste of heaven.

Many parishes offer special programs during the Lenten season. Peruse your parish bulletin or the schedules of other nearby parishes to see if a program being offered speaks to you as you try to grow in your life of faith. Or visit websites for places like Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House in Indianapolis ([fatimaretreathouse-indy.org](http://fatimaretreathouse-indy.org)) or other retreat houses. (See page 6 in this week's issue for a list of Lenten programs offered by retreat houses in the archdiocese.) The resources offered can enhance your journey of faith.

In addition, almsgiving is one way to share God's gifts—not only through the distribution of money, but through the sharing of our time and talents. Lent offers us an opportunity to be the hands and feet of Christ to those in need. Donate to food banks, the St. Vincent de Paul Society in your area and other organizations whose mission includes feeding, clothing and getting necessities to those who often go without them. And volunteer. Charitable organizations are always looking for people to help them fulfill their mission. Why not pick a day and take part in such an outreach during Lent as a family?

During Lent, all are also encouraged to experience God's forgiveness in the sacrament of penance. In next week's Feb. 28 issue of *The Criterion*, we suggest readers clip out and save the list of opportunities throughout the archdiocese where individuals can receive the sacrament of reconciliation. Why not pick a time and go as a family? It is a beautiful witness of faith when parents and their children seek God's healing mercy and the graces of the sacrament together.

Our faith teaches us grace is something we cannot live without each day.

The catechism tells us, "Grace is first and foremost the gift of the Spirit who justifies and sanctifies us. But grace also includes the gifts that the Spirit grants us to associate us with his work, to enable us to collaborate in the salvation of others and in the growth of the body of Christ, the Church" (#2003).

May we put Christ at the center of our life as we begin our Lenten journey. And may grace—which is God's divine assistance—fill our lives.

—Mike Krokos

Be Our Guest/Sr. Constance Veit, L.S.P.

### A hymn to human dignity

For this jubilee year, the Church has been given a beautiful, multilingual hymn titled "Pilgrims of Hope." If



you participate in any jubilee events, whether local or international, you will no doubt hear the uplifting melody and inspiring lyrics of this hymn.

But Pope Francis has suggested that there is another, quite unexpected hymn at the heart of the jubilee.

In the Bull for the Holy Year document, he spoke about the sick, the disabled and those experiencing weaknesses and limitations, calling for the faithful to give them "inclusive" attention.

"Care given to them," he wrote, "is a hymn to human dignity, a song of hope that calls for the choral participation of society as a whole."

How can we participate in this hymn of human dignity, this song of hope?

Lucky for us, advanced musicality is not required—it's much simpler than that.

The document states that we can lend our voices to this great jubilee choir, while obtaining the jubilee plenary indulgence, by visiting our brothers and sisters in need—the sick, prisoners, lonely seniors and the disabled—"in a sense making a pilgrimage to Christ present in them" (Mt 25; 34-36).

Let's allow Pope Francis to inspire us as we join this jubilee choir of hope.

"Signs of hope should be shown to the sick, at home or in hospital," he wrote. "Their sufferings can be allayed by the closeness and affection of those who visit them."

Naturally, he included the elderly in his thoughts for this year.

"The elderly, who frequently feel lonely and abandoned, also deserve signs of hope," he wrote. "Esteem for the treasure that they are, their life experiences, their accumulated wisdom and the contribution that they can still make, is incumbent on the Christian community and civil society, which are called to cooperate in strengthening the covenant between generations."

Pope Francis also encourages us to remember care givers.

He said, "Gratitude should likewise be shown to all those health care workers who, often in precarious conditions, carry out their mission with constant care and

concern for the sick and for those who are most vulnerable."

The recent celebration of the World Day of the Sick on Feb. 11, whose theme was "Hope does not disappoint [Rom 5:5], but strengthens us in times of trial," was a wonderful opportunity to begin "singing" in the jubilee choir of dignity and hope. But that singing can continue.

In his message for the World Day of the Sick, the pope reflects on three ways in which God remains close to those who are suffering: through encounter, gift and sharing.

First, the concept of *encounter* invites the sick to see their infirmity as an opportunity to encounter our compassionate Lord and appreciate his closeness.

Second, suffering reminds us that hope comes from the Lord as a *gift* to be received and cultivated.

Third, and this is where we can make our voices heard, places of suffering often become places of *sharing* and mutual enrichment.

"How often, at the bedside of the sick, do we learn to hope!" the pope writes. "How often, by our closeness to those who suffer, do we learn to have faith! How often, when we care for those in need, do we discover love! We realize that we are 'angels' of hope and messengers of God for one another, all of us together: whether patients, physicians, nurses, family members, friends, priests, men and women religious, no matter where we are, whether in the family or in clinics, nursing homes, hospitals or medical centers."

Whether we are ill or we care for those who are, we have an important part to play in "singing" this year's jubilee hymn.

As our Holy Father said, "Your journey together is a sign for everyone: 'a hymn to human dignity, a song of hope.' Its strains are heard far beyond the rooms and beds of health facilities and serve to elicit in charity 'the choral participation of society as a whole' in a harmony ... capable of bringing light and warmth wherever they are most needed."

So, let's get started and lend our voices to this symphony through our charity to the sick and throughout this jubilee year.

(*Little Sisters of the Poor Sister Constance Veit is director of communications for the Little Sisters of the Poor in the United States and an occupational therapist.*) †

*Signs of hope should be shown to the sick, at home or in hospital. Their sufferings can be allayed by the closeness and affection of those who visit them.*

## Letters Policy

Letters from readers are published in *The Criterion* as part of the newspaper's commitment to "the responsible exchange of freely-held and expressed opinion among the People of God" (*Communio et Progressio*, 116).

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

The editors reserve the right to select the letters that will be published and to edit letters from

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## ARCHBISHOP/ARZOBISPO CHARLES C. THOMPSON



# Christ the Cornerstone

## Christ builds his Church on the rock of St. Peter's faith

*And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it. (Mt 16:18)*

Tomorrow, Feb. 22, is the Feast of the Chair of St. Peter the Apostle. Like the conversion of St. Paul, this feast day celebrates both the saint and his significant role in the growth and development of the Church of Jesus Christ.

St. Peter was personally chosen by the Lord. His mission was to provide authority and stability to the young Church and to be the "rock" that guarantees that the powers of sin and evil ("the netherworld") can never prevent the Church from carrying out her Divine Mission. The "chair" that we reverence in this feast is the "cathedra," the honored seat from which the Vicar of Christ presides and pronounces official Church teaching.

St. Paul, whose conversion we celebrated on Jan. 25, was also personally chosen by Christ to become the Apostle to the Gentiles. His conversion was the necessary condition for his ability to fulfill his mission. All of the religious zeal that he brought to his early persecution of Jesus' followers

was redirected to his missionary work, and, as a result, Paul is recognized as one of the greatest missionary disciples who ever lived. His words still inspire us and lead us to encounter Jesus personally.

In the Gospel reading for tomorrow's liturgy (Mt 16:13-19), Jesus asks his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" (Mt 16:15). This question is as powerful and important for us today as it was 2,000 years ago in the region of Caesarea Philippi where Jesus preached. Who is Jesus? What do his life, death and resurrection mean for us personally and for the world?

Then as now there are many possible answers. Some say he is a holy man, a prophet or a great moral teacher who founded one of the Great World Religions. "But who do you say that I am?" Jesus asks his disciples (and each of us). Only Peter can answer definitively and with authority: "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God" (Mt 16:15-16).

Jesus affirms Peter's response, and he points out that it is Divinely inspired:

*Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly*

*Father. And so, I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys to the Kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on Earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on Earth shall be loosed in heaven. (Mt 16:17-19)*

As the rock that grounds the Body of Christ, the Church, and keeps it faithful to the Truth, St. Peter and his successors have provided the definitive, authoritative witness that has kept the Church faithful to her Lord for the past 2,000 years.

From the chair, the Vicar of Christ continues Jesus' ministry of teaching, healing and giving thanks and praise to his Father in heaven. By the grace of the Holy Spirit, weak and sinful men like Peter do and say remarkable things in their witness to Jesus Christ the Lord.

In tomorrow's first reading, St. Peter instructs his fellow Church leaders on how the ministry they have been given by Christ is to be exercised:

*Beloved: I exhort the presbyters among you, as a fellow presbyter and witness to the sufferings of Christ*

*and one who has a share in the glory to be revealed. Tend the flock of God in your midst, overseeing not by constraint but willingly, as God would have it, not for shameful profit but eagerly. Do not lord it over those assigned to you, but be examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd is revealed, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. (1 Pt 5:1-4)*

Those who minister in Jesus' name as collaborators with the Vicar of Christ are to be gentle shepherds, not arrogant or overbearing, but eager witnesses to the Truth. What they teach, how they pray, and the way they live must give glory to God and bring healing and hope to all God's people.

As we celebrate this holy feast, let's give thanks to God for all the weak and sinful men throughout history of the Church who have occupied the Chair of St. Peter the Apostle. And let us pray especially for Pope Francis, our current gentle shepherd. May he continue to be blessed with zeal for his mission. And when he completes his mission as the Successor of St. Peter, the Rock, may he receive "the unfading crown of glory." †



# Cristo, la piedra angular

## Cristo construye su Iglesia sobre la roca de la fe de san Pedro

*Yo también te digo que tú eres Pedro, y sobre esta roca edificaré Mi iglesia; y las puertas del Hades no prevalecerán contra ella (Mt 16:18).*

Mañana, 22 de febrero, es la Fiesta de la Cátedra de San Pedro Apóstol. Al igual que la conversión de san Pablo, esta fiesta celebra tanto al santo como su importante papel en el crecimiento y desarrollo de la Iglesia de Jesucristo.

San Pedro fue elegido personalmente por el Señor; su misión era ser la figura de autoridad y brindar estabilidad a la joven Iglesia y ser la "roca" que garantizara que los poderes del pecado y del mal (el Hades) nunca pudieran impedir que la Iglesia llevara a cabo su misión divina. Lo que veneramos en esta fiesta es la *cathedra*, el asiento o cátedra de honor desde el cual el Vicario de Cristo preside y pronuncia la doctrina oficial de la Iglesia.

San Pablo, cuya conversión celebramos el 25 de enero, también fue elegido personalmente por Cristo para convertirse en Apóstol de los gentiles. Su conversión fue la condición necesaria para que pudiera cumplir su misión. Todo el celo religioso que le dedicó inicialmente a la persecución de los seguidores de Jesús fue redirigido a su labor misionera y, como resultado, Pablo

es reconocido como uno de los más grandes discípulos misioneros de todos los tiempos. Sus palabras nos siguen inspirando y nos llevan a un encuentro personal con Jesús.

En la lectura del Evangelio de la liturgia de mañana (Mt 16:13-19), Jesús pregunta a sus discípulos: "Y ustedes, ¿quién dicen que soy Yo?" (Mt 16:15). Esta pregunta es tan poderosa e importante para nosotros hoy como lo fue hace 2,000 años en la región de Cesarea de Filipo, donde Jesús predicó. ¿Quién es Jesús? ¿Qué significan su vida, su muerte y su resurrección para nosotros personalmente y para el mundo?

Entonces, al igual que ahora, hay muchas respuestas posibles. Algunos dicen que es un hombre santo, un profeta o un gran maestro moral que fundó una de las grandes religiones del mundo. "Y ustedes, ¿quién dicen que soy yo?" Pregunta Jesús a sus discípulos (y a todos nosotros). Solamente Pedro puede responder categóricamente y con autoridad: "Tú eres el Cristo, el Hijo del Dios viviente" (Mt 16:15-16).

Jesús confirma la respuesta de Pedro y señala que proviene de la inspiración divina:

*Bienaventurado eres, Simón, hijo de Jonás, porque esto no te lo reveló*

*carne ni sangre, sino Mi Padre que está en los cielos. Yo también te digo que tú eres Pedro, y sobre esta roca edificaré Mi iglesia; y las puertas del Hades no prevalecerán contra ella. Yo te daré las llaves del reino de los cielos; y lo que ates en la tierra, será atado en los cielos; y lo que desates en la tierra, será desatado en los cielos (Mt 16:17-19).*

Como roca que sostiene el Cuerpo de Cristo, la Iglesia, y lo mantiene fiel a la verdad, san Pedro y sus sucesores han proporcionado el testimonio definitivo y fidedigno que ha mantenido a la Iglesia fiel a su Señor durante los últimos 2000 años.

Desde la cátedra, el Vicario de Cristo continúa el ministerio de Jesús de enseñar, curar y dar gracias y alabanzas a su Padre celestial. Por la gracia del Espíritu Santo, hombres débiles y pecadores como Pedro hacen y dicen cosas notables en su testimonio de Jesucristo Nuestro Señor.

En la primera lectura de mañana, san Pedro instruye a sus compañeros líderes de la Iglesia sobre cómo debe ejercerse el ministerio que Cristo les ha encomendado:

*Por tanto, a los ancianos entre ustedes, exhorto yo, anciano como ellos y testigo de los padecimientos de Cristo, y también participante*

*de la gloria que ha de ser revelada: pastoreen el rebaño de Dios entre ustedes, velando por él, no por obligación, sino voluntariamente, como quiere Dios; no por la avaricia del dinero, sino con sincero deseo; tampoco como teniendo señorío sobre los que les han sido confiados, sino demostrando ser ejemplos del rebaño. Y cuando aparezca el Príncipe de los pastores[c], ustedes recibirán la corona inmarcesible de gloria. (1 Pe 5:1-4)*

Los que ejercen su ministerio en nombre de Jesús como colaboradores del Vicario de Cristo han de ser pastores amables, no arrogantes ni prepotentes, sino testigos sinceros de la Verdad. Lo que enseñan, cómo rezan y el modo en que viven deben dar gloria a Dios y llevar sanación y esperanza a todo el pueblo de Dios.

Al celebrar esta santa fiesta, demos gracias a Dios por todos los hombres débiles y pecadores que a lo largo de la historia de la Iglesia han ocupado la cátedra del Apóstol San Pedro. Y recemos especialmente por el papa Francisco, nuestro amoroso pastor actual. Que siga siendo bendecido con el celo por su misión, y que cuando concluya su misión como sucesor de san Pedro, la Roca, que reciba "la inmarcesible corona de gloria." †

# Events Calendar

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

## February 25

St. Paul Catholic Center, 1413 E. 17th St., Bloomington. **Day of Formation for Lay Ecclesial Ministers**, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., guest speaker Michael Gormley, lunch included, \$30 (assessed to parish event). Information, registration: [kcarroll@archindy.org](mailto:kcarroll@archindy.org), [tinyurl.com/DayofFormation25](http://tinyurl.com/DayofFormation25).

## February 26

St. Simon the Apostle Church, 8155 Oakland Road, Indianapolis. **Parenting Pioneers: Navigating the Hypersexualized Culture**, 7-8:30 p.m., Diocese of Lincoln, Neb., priest and sexual addiction counselor Father Sean Kilcawley presenting, free. Information: 317-826-6000.

## February 28

St. John the Evangelist Parish, Corpus Christi Hall, 126 W. Georgia St., Indianapolis. **Pro-life Film: The 1916 Project**, 6 p.m. doors open for pizza dinner, 6:30 p.m. film showing, panel discussion following, freewill offering for dinner. Information: 317-407-6881, [smdye1@gmail.com](mailto:smdye1@gmail.com). View trailer at [the1916project.com](http://the1916project.com).

## March 1

St. Ann Parish, 6350 S. Mooresville Road, Indianapolis. **Mardi Gras Fundraiser**, 5-10 p.m., \$40 includes dinner, beverages, reverse raffle, games, silent auction, dinner plus reverse raffle ticket for \$1,000, \$20 option raffle ticket only for those who can't attend event. Tickets: 317-502-6327. Information: 317-821-2909, [admin@stannindy.org](mailto:admin@stannindy.org).

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.

St. Matthew the Apostle Church, 4100 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Children's Rosary**, 9 a.m., children of all ages invited to pray rosary every first Saturday, donuts and fellowship to follow, free. Information: [julie3reyes@gmail.com](mailto:julie3reyes@gmail.com).

## March 5

MCL Cafeteria, 5520 Castleton Corner Lane,

Indianapolis. **Solo Seniors**, 5:30-8:30 p.m., Catholic, educational, charitable and social singles—separated, widowed or divorced—age 50 and older, new members welcome, also call about regular Friday night dinner events. Information: 317-796-8605.

## March 7

**Virtual Prayer with the Sisters of Providence**, 7-7:45 p.m., for single women ages 18-42, prayer and sharing on topic of hope. Information, registration: [events.sistersofprovidence.org](http://events.sistersofprovidence.org), 361-500-9505, [jluna@spsmw.org](mailto:jluna@spsmw.org).

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](http://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](mailto:msross1@hotmail.com).

## March 7, 8, 14, 15

Theater at the Fort, 8920 Otis Ave., Indianapolis. **"Why We Must Die So Young,"** 7:30-9:30 p.m., play about the White Rose movement in Nazi Germany, performed by Agape Theater Company, \$20 individual, \$15 student, senior or military. Tickets: [artsforlawrence.org/tickets](http://artsforlawrence.org/tickets). Information: [agapetheatercompany.com](http://agapetheatercompany.com).

## March 8

Sisters of Providence, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Teen Volunteering Opportunity**, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., ages 12-18, visit with elder sisters and help them with activities such as Bingo, exercise, baking and more. Information, registration: [teenvolunteer.sistersofprovidence.org](http://teenvolunteer.sistersofprovidence.org), [jluna@spsmw.org](mailto:jluna@spsmw.org), 361-500-9505.

## March 9

McGowan Hall, 1305 Delaware St., Indianapolis. **Mary Berry St. Patrick's Day Celebration**, 2-7 p.m., live entertainment: St. Patrick's

Day Rogues Pipes and Drums, Irish Dancers, The Irish Stew, Tullies at the Wakefield; corned beef and cabbage, soda bread, desserts, cash bar, live auction, raffles, \$10, ages 12 and younger free, proceeds benefit St. Vincent de Paul Homeless Ministry in Indianapolis and CYO Camp Rancho Framasa (in memory of Bernie Price). Information: 317-695-5421, [kilcar57@gmail.com](mailto:kilcar57@gmail.com).

## March 9, 16

Theater at the Fort, 8920 Otis Ave., Indianapolis. **"Why We Must Die So Young,"** 3-5 p.m., play about the White Rose movement in Nazi Germany, performed by Agape Theater Company, \$20 individual, \$15 student, senior or military. Tickets: [artsforlawrence.org/tickets](http://artsforlawrence.org/tickets). Information: [agapetheatercompany.com](http://agapetheatercompany.com).

## March 11

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.org](http://Taize.org).

[SistersofProvidence.org](http://SistersofProvidence.org), 812-535-2952.

## March 15

Geddes Hall Auditorium, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Ind. **The Changing Face of Life-Limiting Prenatal Diagnoses: Clinical, Pastoral, and Ethical Considerations**, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m., lunch included, \$50 physicians, \$30 nurses, midwives, and other health professionals, \$10 for diocesan/parish staff, parents, students and clergy, register by March 1. Information, registration: 574-234-0687, [leverett@diocesefwsb.org](mailto:leverett@diocesefwsb.org), [diocesefwsb.org/pnd-conference](http://diocesefwsb.org/pnd-conference).

## March 15, 16

Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **Pre-Cana Marriage Preparation Retreat**, 8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. both days, includes light breakfast, box lunch, snacks, all books, materials, Mass, opportunity for confession, \$200. Information, registration: 317-236-7310, [marriageandfamily.archindy.org/pre-cana-retreat](http://marriageandfamily.archindy.org/pre-cana-retreat). †

## Retreat centers offer Lenten/Triduum retreat and reflection opportunities

Catholic retreat centers throughout central and southern Indiana will offer Lenten-themed and Easter Triduum retreats and reflection opportunities from March 5-April 20.

Here is a list of those opportunities as reported to *The Criterion*.

**Mother of the Redeemer Retreat Center, 8220 W. State Road 48, Bloomington.** Information, registration: 812-825-4642, ext. 1, [motheroftheredeemer.com](http://motheroftheredeemer.com).

—**March 22: Lent with Mary and the Saints**, 9 a.m.-noon, Franciscans of the Immaculate Friar Joseph Michael McShane facilitating, free.

**Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis.** Information, registration: [mountsaintfrancis.org](http://mountsaintfrancis.org), 812-923-8817, [retreatcommunications@mountsaintfrancis.org](mailto:retreatcommunications@mountsaintfrancis.org).

—**March 8: Lenten Letting Go Retreat: Clearing the Path to God this Lenten Season**, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., \$60, Judy Ribar presenting, includes all materials, activities and lunch.

—**April 8, 9 and 10: Lenten Evening Series on Resurrection, Humility and Mercy**, 7-8:30 p.m., Conventual Franciscan Father Steve McMichael presenting, attend any or all sessions, free, registration requested.

**Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg.** Information, registration: 812-933-6437, [www.oldenburgfranciscancenter.org](http://www.oldenburgfranciscancenter.org).

—**March 6, 13, 20, 27: Lenten Series**, 6:30-8 p.m., Franciscan Father John Baker and Franciscan Father E.J. Stein facilitating, \$55 for all sessions or \$15 per session.

**Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis.** Registration: [fm.retreatportal.com/events](http://fm.retreatportal.com/events), 317-545-7681, [lcoons@archindy.org](mailto:lcoons@archindy.org).

—**March 28: Day of Silence**, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., \$45 per day, includes room, lunch and use of common areas



and grounds, overnight stays available for additional \$32, dinner additional \$11.

—**April 1: Lenten Evening of Reflection: It Was Not You Who Chose Me, But I Who Chose You ... Coming home to God and realizing our life in God**, 5-9 p.m., Father Joseph Moriarty presenting, \$45, includes Mass, dinner and program.

—**April 2: Lenten Day of Reflection: It Was Not You Who Chose Me, But I Who Chose You ... Coming home to God and realizing our life in God**, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., Father Joseph Moriarty presenting, \$45, includes Mass, lunch and program.

—**April 4-6: Living a More Deliberate and Conscious Christian Life: Lenten Weekend Retreat**, 6 p.m. Fri.-noon Sun., Father James Farrell and Mary Schaffner presenting, \$225, includes single room, meals, Mass.

—**April 15, 16, 17: Holy Week Days of Silence**, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., \$45 per day, includes room, continental breakfast, lunch and use of common areas and grounds, overnight stays available for additional \$32 per night, dinner additional \$11 per meal.

**Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad.** Registration: 812-357-6611, [saintmeinrad.org/retreats](http://saintmeinrad.org/retreats).

—**March 5: Ashes, Awe and the Cross**, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. CT, Jane Feliz Rush presenting, \$75.

—**April 11-13: The Passion(s) of the Christ**, Benedictine Archabbot Kurt Stasiak presenting, \$350 single, \$550 double.

—**April 16-20: Holy Week: A Time to Ponder and Rejoice**, Benedictine Father Simon Herrmann presenting, \$625 single, \$1,000 double. †

## Retreats and Programs

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

## March 8

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **'Tis a Gift to Be Simple: Finding Hope and Peace of Mind in a Complex Time**, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m., Father Jeffrey Godecker and Mary Schaffner presenting, \$45. Registration: [archindy.org/fatima-events](http://archindy.org/fatima-events), 317-545-7681, [lcoons@archindy.org](mailto:lcoons@archindy.org).

## March 13, April 10

**Virtual guided meditation series via Zoom**, 7-7:45 p.m., every second Thursday of the month through May, offered by Providence Spirituality & Conference Center, free, registration required.

Information, registration: [events.SistersofProvidence.org](http://events.SistersofProvidence.org), 812-535-2952, [provctr@spsmw.org](mailto:provctr@spsmw.org).

## March 21-23

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Christian Contemplative Prayer: Being Centered on Christ**, Benedictine Father Adrian Burke presenting, \$350 single, \$550 double. Registration: 812-357-6611, [saintmeinrad.org/retreats](http://saintmeinrad.org/retreats).

## March 28-30

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Being True**

**to the Path**, 6:30 p.m. Fri.-noon Sun., president of Red Bird Foundation Paula D'Arcy presenting, \$275, includes single room, meals. Registration: [archindy.org/fatima-events](http://archindy.org/fatima-events), 317-545-7681, [lcoons@archindy.org](mailto:lcoons@archindy.org).

## March 29

**Mystics and Fellowship virtual program**, 9-10:30 a.m., sponsored by Sisters of Providence, last of four independent sessions, register by March 26, \$25 per session. Information, registration: [events.SistersofProvidence.org](http://events.SistersofProvidence.org), 812-535-2952, [provctr@spsmw.org](mailto:provctr@spsmw.org). †

## Wedding Anniversaries

**LARRY AND KATHY (HEEDE) TINDALL**, members of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Indianapolis, will celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary on Feb. 27.

The couple was married in St. Philip Neri Church in Indianapolis on Feb. 27, 1965.

They have seven children: Sarah Kopluku, Mary Ellen Morris, Susan Robertson, Nancy Tindall-Sponsel, Jason, Jeff and John Tindall.

The couple also has 27 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.

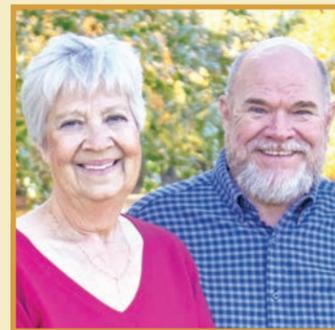


**JEFF AND LIA (GOWIN) CRAYS**, members of St. Joseph Parish in Shelbyville, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on Feb. 22.

The couple was married in St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Church in Indianapolis on Feb. 22, 1975.

They have two children: Jennifer Wilkerson and Jeffrey Crays.

The couple also has eight grandchildren.



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

# Basilicas, churches and shrines across U.S. are Jubilee 2025 pilgrimage sites

(OSV News)—Catholics across the world are embarking on pilgrimages to commemorate the Jubilee Year of Hope.

Many will travel to Rome to visit the four major basilicas and pass through their Holy Doors so as to gain a plenary indulgence.

Those unable to travel to Rome, however, are still able to participate by visiting one of the numerous Jubilee Year pilgrimage sites across the country. (See related article below for a list of sites in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.)

In the United States, bishops could designate churches, cathedrals, shrines, monasteries or other religious locations as jubilee pilgrimage sites.

According to a Vatican decree on Jubilee Year plenary indulgences, any person can gain a jubilee indulgence if they undertake a “pious pilgrimage” to any designated site and participate in Mass, adoration or receive the sacrament of penance there.

Across the country, basilicas, churches and shrines have begun opening their doors to local pilgrims.

These sites each have a unique history and hold significance in their local region, helping Catholics to encounter God in new ways.

In the East Coast, bishops have designated a multitude of jubilee sites located in cities and rural countryside.

Surrounded by dense forest, yet only a mere 50 miles away from New York City, sits Graymoor—the Holy Mountain.

Operated by the Franciscan Friars of Atonement, Graymoor serves as a home for the friars and as a retreat center. It also houses many ministries, such as St. Christopher’s Inn, a residential program for men battling drug addiction.

Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York designated Graymoor as one of the eight jubilee pilgrimage sites in his archdiocese.

When Atonement Father Jim Gardiner, director of special projects, and the other friars learned about the designation, they were ecstatic.

“We’re grateful to be named a pilgrimage site, because Cardinal Dolan could’ve named all kinds of other places,” Father Jim told OSV News. “We see it as a sign of support and encouragement, which is especially needed as these are tough times, since we, like many other places, have been struggling with vocations.”

In Father Jim’s own vocation story, a pilgrimage to Graymoor played a significant role. He said it launched his discernment journey.

“In 1948, I was in the first grade when I visited Graymoor,” Father Jim recalled. “It was so exciting. We had Mass outdoors and walked around the property. When we were preparing to leave, one of the friars stopped and asked me if I had a good day. I said yes, and he said, ‘I’m going to pray every day that you come back here.’”

“I have no idea who that friar was, but as a result of that pilgrimage, I’ve been here 60-plus years now,” he said.

While Father Jim does not know whether or not other pilgrims will find their vocation, he and the other friars are excited to welcome the busloads of pilgrims that are coming from the surrounding area.

“We want to be here for people and to host and support their pilgrimages,” Father Jim said. “We want people to take part in the liturgies we have here, to walk around our property and pray on the trails and just encounter the Lord here.”

To commemorate the Jubilee Year, Father Jim and other staff members have developed a variety of programs and events.

“We have great staff here that has been meeting regularly, coming up with all kinds of great ideas,” Father Jim said. “We have special Masses planned, special retreats. But really, we just have a great space that we want visitors to take part in.”

In the South, Sacred Heart Parish in

downtown Tampa, Fla., is preparing to welcome a plethora of pilgrims.

Founded in the early 1850s, the parish became a cornerstone in the Tampa Bay area as the city grew around it.

“Sacred Heart was founded in the infancy of Tampa Bay as a city,” Rob Boelke, director of communications at Sacred Heart, told OSV News. “John Jackson, an Irish immigrant, and his wife, Ellen, arrived in the area as a surveyor. He surveyed the majority of our downtown and the older areas of the city itself, and those streets largely stand in the same grid that he had put together. Soon after arriving, he and his wife sent a petition to the Diocese of Savannah asking for a parish to be founded.”

In the 1850s, the area that now comprises the St. Petersburg Diocese was part of the Diocese of Savannah, Ga.

Soon after the Jacksons’ request, a small wooden church was built, served by Jesuit missionaries. By the late 1800s, the parish had outgrown it and began constructing a new Romanesque-style church. Completed in 1905, the church remains today as a unique architectural fixture in Florida.

“Most of the churches in Florida were built in the 1960s and ‘70s, and they are not architecturally significant,” Boelke said. “Sacred Heart has very unique architecture that is much more in line with churches that you would see across the Northeast or in the Midwest. It’s largely Romanesque with beautiful stained-glass windows, so people are drawn to the parish for its beauty.”

In 2005, Franciscan friars assumed parish operations, promoting their unique charism within the parish and local community.

Sacred Heart is one of six Jubilee pilgrimage sites in the Diocese of St. Petersburg. Already, pilgrims are flocking to the church to commemorate both the Jubilee Year and the parish’s 120th anniversary.

“We are hosting lots of tours for both Catholic and secular schools. Other parishes are calling us to set up times for large group visits,” Boelke said. “We have this unique history, and we are excited to share and be able to share the Franciscan charism that we have with more people.”

Located in the Midwestern small town of Perryville, Mo., the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal is preparing to welcome pilgrims to its vast property for the Jubilee Year.

One of nine Jubilee sites in the Archdiocese of St. Louis, the national shrine has a robust history dating back to 1818, when a small log church was built on the property. The shrine now encompasses 55 acres and includes a large church, a rosary walk and a grotto.

Operated by Vincentian priests, Father Jim Osendorf, superior of the community, told OSV News that he hopes pilgrims will develop a deeper relationship with the Blessed Virgin Mary after visiting the site.

“Our facility is dedicated to the Blessed Mother and to commemorating the appearances of Mary to [St.] Catherine Labouré,” Father Jim said. “This just seems to be one of the perfect places to come just to kind of get away to pray, to meditate and to deepen our relationship with Mary, who leads us to Jesus.”

When the 2000 Jubilee Year took place, Father Jim’s predecessor asked the archbishop of St. Louis to designate the shrine as a pilgrimage site. So, the priest did the same for the 2025 Jubilee.

“Jubilee years are focused on deepening one’s relationship with Christ, and Mary helps us to do that,” Father Jim said. “As a community, we thought this would be the perfect way of helping us to fulfill our mission of helping people toward a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ through Mary.”

To commemorate the Holy Year, the community has planned various events throughout the year that include speakers, music and special liturgies.

“We have a number of guest speakers



Mission San Buenaventura in Ventura, Calif., is seen in this undated photo. On July 15, 2020, Pope Francis elevated the mission church to the rank of minor basilica. (OSV News photo/Mike Nelson)

who will be coming and will have musicians regularly,” Father Jim said. “But really, we just want people to come and encounter God on our property. From my office, I can see people coming to pray, pray the rosary on our walk or sometimes just getting away to think, to ponder, to meditate. And it brings me so much joy to see this happening.”

In the West, historical shrines and churches are abundant, as they have been ministering to locals since Franciscan missionaries established them centuries ago.

One such church is Mission Basilica of San Buenaventura (St. Bonaventure) in Ventura, Calif. Since the mission’s founding in 1782, it has played a critical role in the local community, Father Tom Elewaut, pastor of the mission, told OSV News.

“There are 21 original missions established by the Franciscan *padres* in what is now the state of California,” Father Elewaut explained. “The significance of our particular parish is that we were the last of the nine missions founded by St. Junipero Serra.”

The town of Ventura, located 70 miles from Los Angeles, grew around the mission. The current church was completed in 1809 and refurbished in 1812 after an earthquake.

“The artwork, the statues, the back altar—that is all original from 1809,” Father Elewaut said. “Everything that was used to decorate the church had been shipped up from New Spain [today’s Mexico], ... so there is a lot of history in the church.”

Father Elewaut is excited to welcome pilgrims from the surrounding area to the basilica. Every day, pilgrims visit the historic church, and the priest uses these interactions and Sunday Mass as an opportunity to remind them to be pilgrims of hope.

“We are pilgrims of hope, and we certainly are including that message in our homilies weekly and encouraging people to be hopeful in a world that sometimes wants to cast darkness; that we are to be people of hope in the light of Christ,” he said. “And not only for eternal life, but to be hope-filled in this life as well.” †

## Archdiocesan sites offer opportunities for Jubilee Year plenary indulgences

Criterion staff report

While more than 30 million pilgrims are expected in Rome during the ongoing Jubilee Year to visit pilgrimage sites there to obtain a plenary indulgence, not all can make that journey.

According to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on Divine Worship, a jubilee indulgence may also be obtained in local dioceses by visiting cathedrals or other churches or sacred places designated by the local bishop—along with meeting other requirements.

As reported previously in *The Criterion*, three Jubilee of Hope pilgrimage sites have been established in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. They include:

—SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis.

—The Shrine of St. Mother Theodore Guérin and the Church of the Immaculate Conception, 1 Sisters of Providence Road, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary of the Woods.

—The Archabbey Church of Our Lady of Einsiedeln at Saint Meinrad Archabbey, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad.

A plenary indulgence can be obtained by visiting one of these sites and participating in Mass or any other public prayer, a time of adoration or a rosary while there, in addition to other spiritual, sacramental and prayer requirements.

The Holy Year will end at St. Peter’s on Jan. 6, 2026, with diocesan celebrations ending on Dec. 28, 2025.

To read an in-depth article about requirements for plenary indulgences, go to [tinyurl.com/JubileeYearIndulgence](http://tinyurl.com/JubileeYearIndulgence). †

# PORTRAITS

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the faces of all the pastors except one—St. Bartholomew’s first pastor, Father Vincent Bacquelin, for whom there were no images for her to make a drawing from.

Visitors to St. Bartholomew’s parish hall can now view all of Mila’s drawings (including a silhouette of Father Bacquelin), where they are now displayed. The drawings were unveiled and blessed in a Feb. 7 ceremony at the Seymour Deanery faith community.

“It definitely strengthened my roots in St. Bartholomew,” said Mila. “While it’s been the parish I’ve grown up in, now I’ve contributed something to the parish as a whole and I know more about the history of it. So, it makes me feel more connected.”

## Bringing the past into the present

That connection was also deepened with the help of longtime St. Bartholomew parishioner Judy Jackson, who served as a mentor for Mila during the project.

Jackson, 80, has lived her entire life as a member of St. Bartholomew and was able to help Mila learn more about the parish.

“It’s wonderful to see someone of her age to do something that will be around forever,” Jackson said. “When I’m gone and when she’s gone, it will still be here.”

“There are so many things that I didn’t know about St. Bartholomew that now I do know,” Mila said. “She told me several stories about the past of the parish and its history. It was cool to see how some of my drawings brought back memories for her.

“That’s something I’m looking forward to with the whole project. I know people will come and look at it. They’ll stand and reminisce with each other.”

One drawing that Mila completed but is not yet on display captures St. Bartholomew’s current pastor, Father Christopher Wadelton.

“I asked her to give me more hair,” said Father Wadelton with a laugh during the unveiling and blessing.

He later told *The Criterion* that “it’s heartwarming to see her passion for her faith. She’s got a deep faith. Seeing her develop that has been beautiful.”

Although St. Bartholomew has longtime members like



Mila Esposito works to frame a drawing she made of a previous pastor in Columbus. It is part of her “Faces of Faith” project in which she drew portraits of pastors in Columbus dating back to 1841. (Submitted photo)



With sixth graders from St. Bartholomew School in Columbus looking on, Father Christopher Wadelton, center, speaks on Feb. 7 before blessing drawings of priests who have served as pastors in Columbus since 1841. The portraits were created by Mila Esposito, right. Father Wadelton serves as pastor of St. Bartholomew Parish. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

Jackson, many others have joined the parish during the past few decades.

Some have come to work at Columbus’ principal employer, Cummins, Inc. A large number of Hispanic Catholics have also made Columbus their home during that time.

Jackson has observed the many changes in her parish community that have happened during her 80 years.

“St. Bartholomew is full of newer people,” she noted. “So, it’s wonderful that people will be able to see the history of the parish in this project.”

## ‘Talented in so many ways’

The Esposito family is one of those relative newcomers to St. Bartholomew. Scott and Kenna Esposito, Mila’s parents, moved to Columbus from their home near Detroit in 2007, when Scott began work as an engineer for Cummins.

Although she has two older brothers who recall the move, Mila has only known Columbus as her hometown and St. Bartholomew as her parish.

As she grew up in her family’s home in Bartholomew County, Mila often watched her father taking up a favorite hobby of his: drawing.

“I would be drawing things, and she would watch and want to do it. She started doing it early,” recalled Scott, noting that he began teaching her to draw “probably from the time she could hold a pencil.”

Scott and Kenna were proud parents on the day of the unveiling and blessing.

“It’s really neat that she’s using her talent and time for something for the Church,” said Kenna. “Her faith grew in researching these real people that gave their lives for the Church. That’s been neat to see.”

“She’s talented in so many ways, not just in art,” Scott added. “She has the world in front of her. It’s neat to watch her try to figure out what she should do.”

One of the things she’s considering is a possible vocation to religious life.

“What God wants for me will bring me the most happiness,” Mila explained. “So, I need to be open to whatever he wants for me. So, if he wants me to become a nun, I’ll be a nun.”

She will discern God’s vocation for her next fall as a student at Franciscan University of Steubenville in Steubenville, Ohio, where she plans on double-majoring in theology and communications and minoring in Spanish.

## ‘Art for me is a way of prayer’

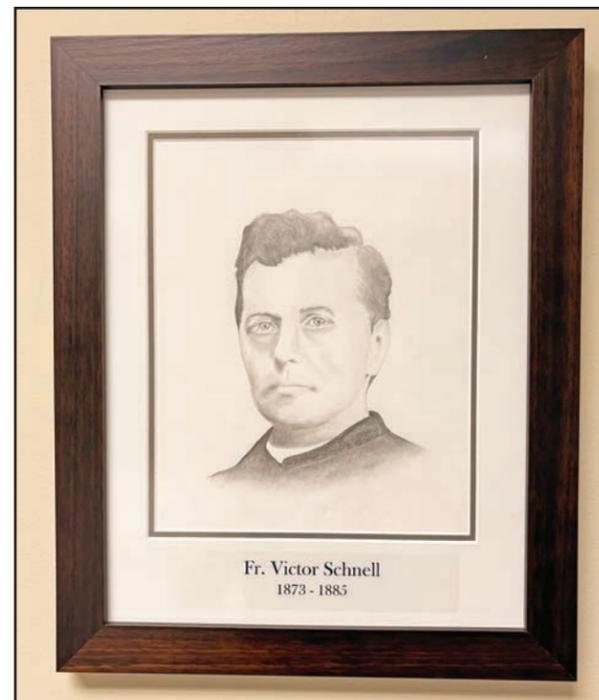
Mila’s project flowed from her faith, which her parents and the parish community at St. Bartholomew have nurtured in her from when she was very young.

“I would not know who I was without Jesus and without my faith,” Mila said. “I have all of my best friends because of my Catholic beliefs, all of my favorite subjects. All the things that I love stem from Catholicism.

“To be able to put my talents to use for the Church is kind of like a dream come true for me. I would never have thought that I could do something like that. I’m very grateful for the gift that God gave me to let me do that.”

Columbus North High School requires its seniors to work 20 hours on their project. Mila put in more than 50, spending around two hours on each drawing.

Some were difficult for her, such as the portrait of



Mila Esposito, a 17-year-old member of St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus, created this portrait drawing of Father Victor Schnell, St. Bartholomew’s pastor from 1873-85. It is part of her “Faces of Faith” project in which she drew portraits of pastors in Columbus dating back to 1841. (Submitted photo)

Father Peter Baron, who served as St. Bartholomew’s pastor from 1921-23.

“I redid his drawing so many times,” Mila said.

She said creating a faithful rendition of each priest’s eyes was challenging. At times, though, she found success in her first attempt, such as when she drew the eyes of Father Victor Schnell, St. Bartholomew’s pastor from 1873-85.

“I did his eyes, and it was like, ‘I’m never touching them again. They’re perfect,’” Mila recalled. “His eyes were so clear. It was amazing.”

Through it all, Mila wasn’t just creating portrait drawings of St. Bartholomew’s previous pastors: she was also praying.

“Art for me is a way of prayer,” Mila explained. “It’s so methodical and calming. It clears my mind to listen to God.”

In that prayer, she came to depend on God for help.

“I didn’t think I could do this project, and God totally got me through it,” Mila said. “I definitely think God directed my hands.”

Completing the Faces of Faith project has also helped Mila see how God has helped her through other people, both those living and those who go back to the earliest days of the Church in Columbus.

“My mother, my father, Judy and Father Chris were literally the best team that I could have imagined to help with this,” Mila said. “All I did was wield a pencil and eraser. They did everything else. It feels kind of wrong to say that it’s my project, because they all did so much to help with it.

“The project is a visual reminder of how faithful people have been. God’s servants have been here since 1841. You have a little bit more of a personal relationship when you draw them. These faces of faith have been part of our parish and still are.” †

## Using food truck to help fire victims, Capuchins' outreach continues

(OSV News)—When the recent Los Angeles fires forced the local Capuchin Franciscan friars to evacuate, they sought shelter at the Pasadena Convention Center along with hundreds of others.

There, they noticed that people were hungry—and decided to do something about it.

“It became very apparent that there was a need for food,” Capuchin Franciscan Father Christopher Iwancio, who operates the friars’ “Capuchin Family Kitchen” food truck, told OSV News. “I looked at one of our brothers ... and said, ‘Hey, do you think we can get the truck going for these folks?’”

That question sparked a major effort led by the friars that hundreds of people joined, whether through volunteering or donations. In mid-January, the friars began serving not only evacuees at the convention center but also first responders stationed at the nearby Rose Bowl stadium.

Later on, they worked with World Central Kitchen, a nonprofit that provides food to those impacted by natural disasters and humanitarian crises, to set up an official food site at the friars’ residence at St. Francis High School in La Cañada Flintridge.

Normally, the food truck, which relies on donations, delivers a couple hundred meals on any given week to people who are homeless in Southern California. In the aftermath of the fires, in the span of a week and a half, it served around 4,000 meals. It also gave people something else: a message of hope and accompaniment.

“We can’t bring back people’s possessions and homes, we can’t snap our fingers and just make everything reappear,” Father Christopher said. “But we can provide accompaniment [and let them know] that God is with them and they do not walk alone in their suffering, they do not walk alone in the challenges they face.”

“You’re not just feeding the body, you’re also helping feed the soul,” he added. “You’re there to listen to people, to give comfort as they break down and cry.”

While St. Francis, where six friars reside, was closed for a week, the school was not harmed, he said. The college preparatory school for boys founded by the Capuchin Franciscan friars is located by Eaton Canyon and Altadena, which were hit by the Eaton fire. The flames and smoke were visible from the school balcony; when the friars returned, they did a blessing from the balcony with the Eucharist in the monstrance.

Father Christopher, who serves as coordinator of the Spirit and Life program and religious studies instructor at St. Francis, estimated that at least 75 students asked to volunteer with them in addition to at least 20 staff and faculty members. Alumni and other families also contributed, including by putting together snack bags that were handed out in addition to meals.

“We were proud of our students who volunteered their



Capuchin Franciscan Father Christopher Iwancio, center, is flanked by volunteers as they stand next to the “Capuchin Family Kitchen” food truck outside the Pasadena Convention Center in Pasadena, Calif., in this undated photo. (OSV News photo/courtesy of Fr. Christopher Iwancio, OFM Cap.)

time and effort and grateful to the friars who ran the Capuchin Franciscan food truck,” Tracy Traver, principal of St. Francis, told OSV News in an e-mail. “During difficult times, we truly see the good in our community. Our prayers continue to be with all those families affected by the Eaton Fire.”

Father Christopher said the food truck recently resumed its normal operation of serving people who are homeless.

“But we’ve seen an uptick,” he said. “There are a lot more homeless now because the housing crisis has now just been exacerbated further by these fires.”

As for the friars, they’re expanding their fire relief efforts.

“The food was just round one,” Father Christopher said. “Once people got settled into where they needed to and the fire containment got a little bit better, we started ferrying supplies to people who needed [them].”

Those supplies include PPE, or personal protection equipment, such as coveralls, booties, respirators and goggles “just so people can get back into homes.” Now,

he said, the friars are also beginning to hand out air purifiers.

Father Christopher revealed that he has helped with relief efforts before, with hurricanes Katrina and Rita, when he lived in Louisiana before becoming a friar. Drawing from that experience, he knows that “the rebuilding and the relief work is not just a couple of weeks, it’s not just a couple months. It’s going to be a couple years.”

The priest called it a community effort to serve people impacted by the fires, and said that even the broader Franciscan network—Franciscan schools and provinces and groups—reached out to them and provided resources.

“In a country that’s so divided and so polarized, when something like this happens, you can see people of different faiths, different walks of life, different political backgrounds, all working together to help people out,” he commented.

“It just shows that we can care for each other. ... We can help bind up some of the wounds and the brokenness in our world,” Father Christopher added. “We’ve just got to stop thinking of ourselves and start thinking of others.” †

## Pope Francis calls artists to be ‘custodians of the beatitudes’ during jubilee

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Artists and cultural figures must be “custodians of the beatitudes,” embracing their vocation to create beauty, reveal truth and inspire hope in a troubled world, Pope Francis wrote to people participating in the Jubilee for Artists and the World of Culture.

“Art is not a luxury, but a necessity of the spirit. It is not an escape, but a responsibility, an invitation to action, a call, a cry,” said the homily Pope Francis prepared for the Jubilee Mass on Feb. 16 in St. Peter’s Basilica.

Cardinal José Tolentino de Mendonça,

prefect of the Dicastery for Culture and Education, celebrated the Mass with artists from more than 100 countries and read the pope’s homily during the liturgy.

“To instruct in beauty is to instruct in hope, and hope is never separated from the drama of existence—it crosses the daily struggle, the fatigue of living, the challenges of our time,” the homily said.

Pope Francis was unable to attend the Mass because he was hospitalized for treatment of a respiratory tract infection. He had also missed the audience he planned with artists and other Jubilee pilgrims on Feb. 15.

In a message for the midday *Angelus*, released by the Vatican after the Mass, Pope Francis wrote that art is “a universal language that spreads beauty and unites peoples, contributing to bringing harmony into the world and silencing every cry of war.”

At the beginning of the Jubilee Mass, Cardinal Tolentino de Mendonça blessed artists and cultural leaders, calling them “cultural prophets” and “drivers of peace” and praying for their vocations.

Reflecting on the beatitudes from the day’s Gospel account from St. Luke, the pope’s prepared homily said that “artists and people of culture are called to be witnesses to the radical vision of the beatitudes,” emphasizing that their mission is to “give voice to the voiceless” and “transform pain into hope.”

At the heart of the beatitudes, he said, is a divine reversal of worldly expectations—where the poor, the meek, the persecuted and the suffering are the ones truly blessed. “Art is called to participate in this revolution,” he said, urging artists to “bow before the wounds of the world, listen to the cry of the poor, the suffering, the persecuted, refugees, and those imprisoned.”

Particularly in a time of deep social, economic and spiritual crises, Pope Francis wrote, artists play a crucial role in ensuring that humanity does not lose sight of the “horizon of hope.”

Yet that hope is not a “comfortable refuge,” but “a fire that burns and illuminates like the word of God,” he said.

“For this reason,” the pope wrote, “authentic art is always an encounter with mystery—with a beauty that overtakes us, with a pain that interrogates us, with a truth that calls to us.”

Particularly at a time when “new walls are raised, in which differences become pretexts for division rather than opportunities for mutual enrichment,” cultural figures “are called to build bridges, to create spaces of encounter and dialogue, to illuminate minds and warm hearts,” he said.

Later that evening, after St. Peter’s Basilica was closed to the public, participants in the jubilee were scheduled to cross through the basilica’s Holy Door and partake in a quiet, contemplative walkthrough of the basilica’s interior.

Presenting the jubilee’s events at a press conference on Feb. 12, Cardinal Tolentino de Mendonça explained how artists have a special relationship with the basilica as a place where faith, history and artistic genius converge in their highest form.

And in welcoming the artists into the basilica for Mass, he began his opening prayer with a reference to one of Pope Francis’ favorite artists, the 19th-century Russian author Fyodor Dostoevsky, who famously wrote: “Beauty will save the world.”

“The beauty that saves the world is manifested in Christ,” the cardinal said, praying that artists would embrace their vocation with courage, offering their challenges and uncertainties in service of the Church and the world. †



A participant in the Jubilee of Artists and the World of Culture prays before the main altar of St. Peter’s Basilica on Feb. 16 during a special contemplative evening walkthrough of the basilica for jubilee participants after its closure to the general public. (CNS photo/Pablo Esparza)

# ICC

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While advocates hailed near-universal school choice as a major advance for Indiana two years ago, they point to the administrative burden that has remained for both families and schools to determine income eligibility for participating in school choice. Often, they say, the process is most daunting for those with the fewest financial resources.

Lawmakers recently heard testimony about those challenges from numerous parents and private school administrators, including Jenni Crain, principal of St. Adalbert School in South Bend, Ind., in the Fort Wayne-South Bend Diocese.

Crain told members of the House Ways and Means Committee that her small school serves 230 students, most living below the poverty line. She explained that many complications—from multiple generations living under one roof to parents' lack of understanding of government forms due to educational or language barriers—often make proving a family's income eligibility an overwhelming task.

"It is a substantial burden on under-resourced schools like mine who choose with intentionality to serve children and families on the margin," Crain told committee members at a Feb. 6 hearing on the state budget.

Housing insecurity—which Crain said that many of her school families face—is only one factor adding to the necessary documentation for proving eligibility for school choice.

"If you move, that's extra papers, and if you move multiple times, that's even more," Crain said. "If you live in situation where a multi-generational family is required for you to survive, then you have to get paperwork filed for every single one of those people. I have an

entire staff member devoting almost half of the year [to the income verification process], taking away from a very small team, and taking away from the things I need to be doing—being in classrooms, building relationships, advocating for students.

"I represent today a large group of Indiana educators who are doing their best," Crain continued. "We're asking you to consider alleviating the burden of income verification and making universal school choice available for all Hoosiers."

Christa Wynk, an administrator at Bishop Chatard High School in Indianapolis, shared with lawmakers other examples of students who do not qualify for vouchers—or who lose eligibility for a multitude of factors due to changing circumstances within a family or household.

"There are so many reasons that are out of the control of the family for why they lose that Choice Scholarship," said Wynk, adding that she is the staff member who must share that news with those affected. "Families should not be denied for any reason. Those dollars are designed to educate their children."

As a mother of three children who have attended both public and Catholic schools, Wynk brings a unique perspective to the matter.

"This has nothing to do with taking away from what the public school system offers," Wynk said after the committee hearing. "My kids have been in public school. We took them out of Catholic school and put them into public school for a while because that best served them at that stage of life."

"They needed something the public school offered that the private school didn't at that time, and we made that choice," she continued. "Just like we turned around and chose to send them to private high school. We thought that was best for them, and as parents we get to

make that choice. Our tax dollars should follow that choice."

Alexander Mingus, executive director of the ICC, notes that the Catholic Church has supported school choice for decades.



Alexander Mingus

"We believe in parental choice in education," Mingus said in a recent ICC podcast. "It's a fundamental right that parents have, and the Church has had this understanding for much longer than our modern debates over school choice. Equally so, we also want public schools to thrive because we know that there are countless Catholic and non-Catholic students alike who go to public schools. That's most of the students in Indiana."

The ICC is supporting other legislation involving families, including a measure that would provide extra help in the first year after a child's birth. Senate Bill 497 would establish a \$500 refundable tax credit for parents with newborn children, including those who are adopted.

"We know there is a lot of additional cost to bringing a child into this world," said Sen. Greg Walker (R-Columbus), one of the primary authors of the bill. "As Hoosier families are healthier, as they're better fed, as they're able to meet child care costs, \$500 is just a start. But this could keep a family from tipping over to a point of stress in their lives when it's most critical."

Walker was speaking before the Senate Committee on Tax and Fiscal Policy on Feb. 11, which then passed the bill on a 14-0 vote.

The bipartisan, unanimous vote is a hopeful sign that the measure will continue to advance at the Statehouse, according to Roarke LaCoursiere, associate director of the ICC.

"This is obviously something that both parties and all Hoosiers alike can agree would be helpful for families," LaCoursiere said. "It's encouraging to have the state recognize and reward families when they continue to grow, and to acknowledge that the parental role is incredibly important in making our society a better place."

The ICC will continue to monitor important legislation as it makes its way through the Statehouse in this budget year. In partnership with longtime allies like the INPEA, school choice will remain among the top priorities.

"We're so blessed in Indiana to have a diverse array of quality non-public school options available for families, and our General Assembly has shown great leadership in ensuring that these high-quality options are accessible to Hoosier families," said the INPEA's Elcesser, whose organization represents the state's more than 400 non-public schools, including Indiana's 175 Catholic schools. "Now is the time to get universal choice across the finish line."

To get involved in the advocacy efforts of the INPEA, visit [www.inpea.org](http://www.inpea.org). The website includes access to podcasts, research data, position papers, a legislative action center and other information concerning non-public schools and their mission.

To follow priority legislation of the ICC, visit [www.indianacc.org](http://www.indianacc.org). This website includes access to ICAN, the Indiana Catholic Action Network, which offers the Church's position on key issues. Those who sign up for ICAN receive alerts on legislation moving forward and ways to contact their elected representatives.

*(Victoria Arthur, a member of St. Therese of the Infant Jesus [Little Flower] Parish in Indianapolis, is a correspondent for The Criterion.) †*

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# SIMPLY CATHOLIC

## Divisions among Christians, efforts at Church unity, have deep roots

(First of two parts)

By D.D. Emmons

(OSV News)—The current year 2025 marks the 1,700th anniversary of a historic meeting of the bishops of the Church in Nicaea in present-day Turkey in what Catholic tradition calls an ecumenical council.

Catholics worshipping at Sunday and other holy day Masses today still profess a creed issued by the bishops at that council.

However, disagreements about that creed later divided the Church between East and West in a schism that came about nearly 1,000 years ago and remains today.

A schism is the purposeful separation from the unity of the Church. For Catholics, this includes the refusal to recognize the authority of the pope and can result in excommunication.

### Historic roots of the Great Schism

The Great East-West Schism had its beginning in 330 when Emperor Constantine decided to move the capital of the Roman Empire from Rome to a site on the European side of the Bosphorus Straits in present-day Turkey, an ancient Greek settlement called Byzantium.

Here, he had a perfect port on a key waterway that connected East and West, a place of thriving commerce and a strategic military location. Relocating the capital out of Rome would eventually lead to political, culture and religious controversies among members of the Church in the East and West.

Constantine wanted a religious leader for his new capital city, Constantinople, who would have the same status as the bishops of the historic local Churches of Rome, Alexandria, Jerusalem and Antioch. Such action was not widely accepted by bishops in those locations, known as patriarchs, especially in Rome.

The frequent effort to elevate the patriarch of Constantinople to a stature equal to the bishop of Rome and leaders of other important local Churches was never accepted in the West. While the issue of pope and papal authority would become a constant rub between religious leaders in the East and West, there were other differences that contributed to the Great Schism.

A year after his move to Constantinople, Emperor Constantine called an ecumenical council of all the Church's bishops. It was held at Nicaea in present-day Turkey in 325 and was the first of 21 ecumenical councils so far in Church history.

The first eight ecumenical councils were called by secular rulers. Only the initial seven councils have been acknowledged by the Orthodox Churches in the East. The pope has called all such councils since 1123. Orthodox Churches continue to deny the legitimacy of those councils, pointing to the lack of authority of the pope.

At the Council of Nicaea, the bishops dealt with the Arian heresy and clearly dismissed the claim that the Son of God was inferior to the Father. The council declared in what came to be known as the Nicene Creed that the Son was consubstantial (equal) with the Father. This council also established the date of Easter, which had been greatly contested.

The Council of Nicaea did not address beliefs regarding the Holy Spirit. Nearly 60 years later, Emperor Theodosius I called another ecumenical council to affirm the results of Nicaea and to proclaim the divinity of the Holy Spirit. In a slap at the papacy, Theodosius invited 150 Eastern bishops to this council in Constantinople but did not inform the bishop of Rome, Pope St. Damasus I, until near the start of the council in 381.

Thus, the Church in the West was not represented, and at first Rome did not accept the council's decisions. Later, however, the council was accepted as ecumenical.

At Constantinople, the attending bishops confirmed the decisions made at Nicaea and acknowledged the divinity of the Holy Spirit as equal to the Father and the Son. They amended the creed to make their point, writing: "... And the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver-of-life, who proceeds from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets."

### Divisions over 'filioque'

This addendum did not say that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. The later addition of "and the Son" ("*filioque*" as it is rendered in Latin) would prove to be divisive in the Church.

At the Council of Ephesus in 431, the bishops declared that no new creeds would be issued, and at the Council of Chalcedon in 451, the bishops read out both the



A mosaic depicting the Most Holy Trinity is seen in the Trinity Dome at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington. Early Church councils which defined Church teaching on the Trinity continue to be a foundation of Christian unity today. (OSV News file photo/Tyler Orsburn)

original creed from Nicaea and from the first Council of Constantinople. (Four other councils would be held there.)

Historians conclude that the reading of both creeds indicates that the Church in the West accepted the results of the first Council of Constantinople—meaning the Church was confirming that the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father, alone.

About a century later, though, bishops meeting in a regional council in what is now Spain began using "from the Father and the Son," including that controversial word in Latin "*filioque*," in proclaiming the creed.

The insertion of *filioque* into the creed was used throughout Spain and slowly adopted by the Church in other Western countries. At first, the popes refused to make this insertion universal. In fact, Pope Leo III, who was bishop of Rome from 795-816, had the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, without the *filioque*, inscribed on plaques and placed in the first St. Peter's Basilica (later torn down and replaced by the current basilica in the 16th century).

It was Pope Benedict VIII in the early 11th century, succumbing to political pressure, who added *filioque* to the creed as it was proclaimed at Mass. This met with a quick response from Eastern Catholics who said changing the creed could not be done without universal Church approval.

At the Second Ecumenical Council of Lyon in 1274, the bishops attending, including representatives of the Eastern Churches, issued a document stating that the "Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son" and condemned those who professed differently. Leaders in the Eastern Churches, despite agreement by their council attendees, rejected this decision.

### Other divisions in the Church

Monophysitism (meaning "of one nature") was a heresy that claimed that Christ was only divine, not divine and human. It caused much division in the Church starting in the fifth century, but was ultimately brought to an end at the Third Council of Constantinople in 681.

The emergence of Islam in the eighth century was a cause of another occasion of division among Christians: the controversy called "iconoclasm," which literally means the "breaking of images."

In the early eighth century, the Byzantine Emperor Leo III ordered the destruction of all icons, pictures and religious images in every church. Pope St. Gregory III refused to comply.

The second Council of Nicaea in 787 formally denied the removal and destruction of icons and other images. The iconoclast controversy finally ended in 843, but had created added tension between East and West.

### Divisions over papal authority

The issue of papal authority has historically been and continues to be a belief over which Christians in East and West are divided. Orthodox Churches do not accept

that the pope has primacy in the Church. They consider his authority only equal to that of other leaders of the five patriarchal sees: Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem.

The bishop of Rome has long been given senior status among the bishops, but Orthodox Churches deny that he has distinct authority over others. This issue was exacerbated during the First Vatican Council in 1869-70 when the bishops attending it defined that the pope had infallible teaching authority in certain situations dealing with faith and morals.

Going back to the start of the Great Schism in 1054 can be a way to understand how the issue of papal authority is an area of difficulty between Christians of the East and West.

During the reign of Pope Leo IX, who was bishop of Rome from 1049-54, the Roman Church interfered with Byzantine churches in southern Italy. The pope ordered them to use unleavened bread and include the *filioque* clause in the creed.

Patriarch Michael Cerularius of Constantinople objected, saying the pope had no authority for such action and made his point by closing Latin churches in Constantinople. He also wrote a letter to the churches in Italy to continue their traditional practices.

Becoming aware of the patriarch's reaction, Pope Leo dispatched emissaries to Constantinople headed by Archbishop Humbert in an attempt to discuss the difficulties.

Both Cerularius and Humbert had strong personalities and were stiff necked and uncompromising. So, the possibility of a good conclusion quickly evaporated. Cerularius ignored the envoys. Humbert excommunicated Cerularius and his staff and posted the document of excommunication in the massive and historic church of Hagia Sophia.

In return, Cerularius excommunicated the papal envoys. This was the beginning of the schism. Church unity was shattered. Some at the time did not think this problem would last long. Unfortunately, it has remained, although strong efforts at restoring Church unity have been made during the past several decades.

Before the schism, the Church was largely unified across East and West. Following the schism, those in the East began to call themselves Orthodox Christians while those in the West called themselves Catholics.

Eventually Catholics in the West became known as Roman or Latin Catholics. As centuries went by, 23 of the Orthodox Churches reunited with Rome and are Eastern Catholic Churches. These Catholics accept the authority of the pope. Today they have an estimated 18 million members, while membership in the Orthodox Churches exceeds 220 million. Total Eastern Catholics and Western Catholics is more than 1.3 billion.

(D.D. Emmons writes from Pennsylvania.) †

Journey of the Heart/Jennifer Burger

## Hospital visit reminds us that our prayers transform time and space

Sitting in the balcony section of the surgery waiting area at Community North Hospital in Indianapolis, I recently settled into a chair to pray a rosary.



My husband had just gone in for a procedure and my intentions were for those who had been and were praying for us.

As I was finishing my rosary, a shiny ribbon dangling from a helium balloon that was trapped beneath the atrium ceiling caught my eye—then I saw another.

I was curious about these “abandoned wishes.” I could not see the balloons from where I was sitting, but imagined them being imprinted with “Feel Better Soon!” or “It’s a Girl!” or some other message of consolation or congratulations.

It occurred to me that these balloons were not likely carelessly released nor were they “spent,” but remained perhaps for others to see and receive the blessing of the message?

Are not our prayers the same? Are our prayers ever spent or used up? There are no doubt numerous theological discourses on this, but I will continue to share from my own experience.

Since this was the second of two procedures for my

husband (I had been in this same waiting area two months before), I recalled the many prayers that had been prayed for us then and that carried us through the healing and recovery.

Although we had called on our “prayer warriors” for this second round, the prayers that were prayed for us two months ago were not “used up,” but just as present as they were then! They had been held deep in our heart as they, and those who had prayed them, had become a part of us in a bond of love that is not easily broken. God not only answered our prayers, but used those prayers and people to expand our hearts to “love more.”

Prayer is the air that we breathe—or rather the breath of the Holy Spirit in our midst. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* tells us that prayer is “persevering in love” (#2742). It is God’s love that dwells within and around us—and is permanent.

Sitting in the hospital, I thought of the many prayers that are “collected” there: all the utterances of need, protection, healing, rejoicing, cries of despair and of gratitude—where God, bidden or unbidden, in his infinite love and mercy, meets those whose hearts are turned outward in expression from a place of deep love and who entrust and place their fears and hopes in the hands of the divine. This hung in the air, not oppressively so, but in an uplifting way, like the helium balloons that had gathered

in the atrium as a reminder from God, saying “I am with you”—now and always.

Let us be open to how God wants to capture our attention with “what remains”—perhaps confetti or a crumpled Kleenex on the floor, a wedding or funeral program or even a Cheerio left in a pew. What prayers might have been prayed in these places?

May we become part of these prayers too, receiving blessings from them and lifting one another up, desiring the good and consolation of our sisters and brothers in Christ.

We all pray in different ways, but we can all pray. With or without words, our prayers are an outpouring of our heart, given to God, for the well-being of another, for our own needs or in praise or thanksgiving to God. The spirit by which our prayers come forth, which is love, transcends time and space and is embedded in our hearts.

This kind of prayer, by the grace of God, has the power to transform us and the world around us.

Let us pray!

(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.) †

Evangelization Outreach/Teresa Venatta

## Ordinary Time offers opportunity to seek God’s presence in spiritual direction

Spiritual direction is a ministry of loving listening and can be particularly helpful in times of transition, discernment or even crisis. These are the times when whatever is happening in our life requires extra attention—circumstances that are anything but ordinary.



In times like these, it can be extremely helpful to have the generous space of spiritual direction and the compassionate ear of a spiritual director to talk out what is happening on the surface, within our hearts, and in our relationship with the Lord. The question becomes: *How can I consecrate this chaos?*

The premise is that God is communicating with us by and through our lives. In times of transition, discernment or crisis, life is crying out to us. This divine communication can be difficult to ignore and often hard to understand—our full attention is required, and it is helpful to talk things out with a spiritual director in light of

our loving God.

But, what about in the ordinary and seemingly “boring” times in life when nothing particularly dynamic seems to be happening? Can spiritual direction play a helpful role in the “ordinary time” of our lives?

One of the great blessings of our Catholic faith is the liturgical calendar. Ordinary Time encompasses the majority of the year and is not part of the major seasons such as Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter. The focus is on the life and teachings of Jesus. It is a time to reflect on what it means to live as a disciple of Christ in our everyday lives.

Since we are not celebrating any particular mystery of our faith in Ordinary Time, we can focus on the mystery of Christ’s presence in all facets of our life. In spiritual direction, this can translate to a shift in focus from big decisions or major life events to

an exploration of how God might be present in the small details of the everyday.

Jesus begins his preaching ministry with the declaration, “This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the Gospel” (Mk 1:15). This is the reading that opened Ordinary Time in this liturgical cycle. In every moment of our lives, the kingdom of God is at hand and we are called to conversion, even in the ordinary and common place.

Through loving listening and evocative questions, a spiritual director can help a directee recognize and interpret the subtle signs and movements of the Holy Spirit in the everyday. Given the space to talk about our “ordinary,” we are invited to recognize God’s presence and discern God’s guidance in the mundane—work, play, relationships and daily sorrows and joys.

Just like sharing our ordinary can draw us into closer relationship with family and friends, contemplating our ordinary in light of God’s love can also result in a more intimate relationship with the Lord.

We can notice God’s presence everywhere and in everything! The safe space of spiritual direction offers the opportunity to be completely honest and vulnerable with our thoughts and feelings, even when they feel unimportant.

Thomas Merton said, “Let us come alive to the splendor that is all around us, and see the beauty in ordinary things.”

The spiritual journey invites awareness, love, intimacy, vulnerability, forgiveness and presence. In spiritual direction, we can explore God in our everyday feelings, thoughts and routines.

Please reach out if this speaks to you!

(Teresa Venatta is the discernment companion within the archdiocesan Secretariat for Evangelizing Catechesis. She can be reached at [spiritualdirection@archindy.org](mailto:spiritualdirection@archindy.org).) †

Guest column/Dr. Susan Bane

## The future of health care: Trusting pregnancy centers to meet women’s needs

“I came to Choices Women’s Center because I was building my exit plan.”

Those were my patient’s words, and that exit plan included leaving her marriage and possibly ending the life of her child. As she said, “I was 100% considering aborting my baby.”



Pregnancy centers are essential in the landscape of women’s health care, providing access to compassionate, high-quality, life-affirming care for women just like this patient.

As a board-certified obstetrician and gynecologist and medical director of four pregnancy centers in North Carolina, my medical practice specializes in the care of women with unplanned pregnancies. I witness firsthand the critical role these four centers and the 2,700-plus centers across this country play in saving lives—both of women and their unborn children.

Pregnancy centers offer exceptional care in state-of-the-art environments, standing as an alternative to facilities focused solely on induced abortion. Patients are seen by a highly qualified team of licensed and board-certified health care professionals.

Data from a Charlotte Lozier Institute (CLI) survey of 2,750 pregnancy centers in the United States demonstrated in its 2022 Hope for a New Generation Report that 16 million client/patient visits occurred at no charge, both in-person and through tele-health in 2021.

Women and their families received services and goods valued at \$358 million, including appointments with health care professionals, pregnancy tests, ultrasounds, parenting education programs, material goods and much more. Of the women served, 97% reported a positive experience.

Those of us who work in pregnancy centers see the merit of the life-affirming medical care we provide—care that values both women and their unborn children. We recognize that the purpose of medicine is health, healing and wholeness, and thus the direct and intentional killing of one of our patients, an innocent human being, is not health care. It never has been and never will be. Our approach aligns with the majority of obstetrician/gynecologists who do not perform induced abortions as part of their medical practice.

There is, however, a critical need to educate the public and rebuild trust in pregnancy centers that have been intentionally attacked by medical organizations that have become an openly partisan wing of the abortion lobby at the expense of both babies and moms.

I recently attended the Women’s March (now renamed “The People’s March”) in Washington, D.C., and spoke to many women who have experienced abortion. One woman told me she was pro-choice because of the story of a friend whose baby had a potentially life-limiting diagnosis, and who was told she needed to go to another state to get an abortion. When I asked her if her friend was told about the option of prenatal palliative care, similar to hospice, she said no. This lack of doctors sharing options is unlike what occurs at pregnancy centers, in which women are empowered with information and provided with a host of care options.

What’s more, The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) works to advance extreme abortion policies with no limits or barriers—going so far as to release briefs to both their membership and the public that discredit our medical services and state that pregnancy centers “operate unethically.” They have lost sight of their mission to care for both maternal and fetal patients.

If ACOG truly cares for women, they might encourage

health care professionals to refer patients to pregnancy centers and stop misleading women who need care, thus denying them services that can often be provided on the same day and at no charge.

As a veteran medical director who is pioneering a regional medical model that is serving some of the poorest and most rural counties in my state of North Carolina, I have seen the progress that can be made when we fill in the gaps of care for women who cannot access the support and treatment they need elsewhere.

At pregnancy centers, we don’t just provide medical care. We walk with women through this time that can prove challenging in their lives. One very valuable service we provide brings case workers into our centers to aid pregnant women and girls. Sixty percent of women say that they would not have sought abortions if their life circumstances were different.

We serve as a lifeline for vulnerable women to access better health care and address disparities they might face. Through our case workers, we have supported several mothers who were unsure whether they wanted to give birth due to lack of housing, child care, food, clothing, insurance and transportation.

By addressing the barriers they faced, we helped these women choose the better option for both themselves and their child. We partner with hospital systems, health departments, private practices and other nonprofits to create a network of care that ensures no woman is left behind. In short—we provide more viable options for women than the local abortion facility.

The future of women’s health care lies in building trust and expanding the reach of our centers. My mission is to encourage more of my physician colleagues to consider working with pregnancy centers to reach underserved

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

# The Sunday Readings

Sunday, February 23, 2025

- 1 Samuel 26:2, 7-9, 12-13, 22-23
- 1 Corinthians 15:45-49
- Luke 6:27-38

The First Book of Samuel supplies the first reading this weekend. Originally this book and its companion, the Second



Book of Samuel, were combined in one volume. In the third century B.C., scholars famously translated the ancient Hebrew Scriptures into Greek, a translation known as the "Septuagint."

These scholars took some liberties,

one of them being their division of Samuel into two parts.

The author of the books of Samuel is unknown. Experts cannot agree on the exact time of the books' composition. The title proceeds from the name of a prophet mentioned in the account. The story concentrates on Saul and David, the first two kings of Israel.

In this reading, King Saul's fortunes are ebbing. David, a young shepherd from Bethlehem, eventually will replace the monarch. Armed conflict erupts. Under the cover of night, David steals into Saul's camp, but respecting Saul as God's choice for the kingship, David does not kill him.

Believing, however, that he himself has been commissioned by God to lead in the place of Saul, David expresses his trust in the Almighty.

St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians is the source of the second reading. Here, the Apostle reminds the Christians of Corinth that they are creatures of the Earth, but more importantly they have within themselves the spiritual life of God.

This reference to the spiritual component of humans sets the stage for Paul's instruction that no believer should yield to merely earthly temptations.

St. Luke's Gospel furnishes the last reading. It is a call to what is at times the most demanding of Christian responsibilities. It summons followers of the Lord to love all people, including their enemies. Therefore, they are also called to be compassionate.

Jesus directed this message not to confirmed disciples, but rather to those

thinking about becoming disciples. The Lord's message is basic and radical. Love for all others, most certainly including love for enemies and compassion, is essential to discipleship.

The power of the message is better understood when balanced against Matthew 5:24a. It appears that Luke and Matthew took this scene in the life of Jesus from the same source. However, while Matthew only urged disciples to give to those who are in need, Luke in this passage expands the message. Luke notes that those with possessions have a special obligation. Also, Luke counsels followers of Jesus to give to those who wish to borrow. Finally, Luke tells disciples that they must not insist upon repayment.

The details are important. But perhaps even more important is the final and extreme character of discipleship. It is an absolute commitment to Jesus, and it is hard.

## Reflection

Soon, the Church will begin the season of Lent. Ash Wednesday is only days away. The Church is preparing us for Lent.

For centuries, Catholics and many other Christians have looked upon Lent as a time to deny themselves. The popular stories are plentiful. Many adult Catholics today remember parochial school days when all the students pledged "to give up" candy or movies.

Self-denial is still very much a part of Christian life. In these readings, looking ahead to Lent, the Church reminds us that self-denial is about much, much more than refusing a tasty chocolate.

Rather, the fundamental self-denial is rejecting the temptation to sin. Since sin masquerades itself as something good for us, self-denial means swimming against the tide, humanly speaking, and putting all trust in God. It is a process laden with reluctance and blinded by our instincts and assumptions.

Loving enemies is an example. Self-defense is part of human nature. So is resentment for injury. God calls us to love, to forgive, and to be compassionate—as was Jesus. †

## Daily Readings

### Monday, February 24

Sirach 1:1-10  
Psalm 93:1-2, 5  
Mark 9:14-29

### Tuesday, February 25

Sirach 2:1-11  
Psalm 37:3-4, 18-19, 27-28, 39-40  
Mark 9:30-37

### Wednesday, February 26

Sirach 4:11-19  
Psalm 119:165, 168, 171-172, 174-175  
Mark 9:38-40

### Thursday, February 27

St. Gregory of Narek, abbot and doctor of the Church  
Sirach 5:1-8  
Psalm 1:1-4, 6  
Mark 9:41-50

### Friday, February 28

Sirach 6:5-17  
Psalm 119:12, 16, 18, 27, 34-35  
Mark 10:1-12

### Saturday, March 1

Sirach 17:1-15  
Psalm 103:13-18  
Mark 10:13-16

### Sunday, March 2

Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time  
Sirach 27:4-7  
Psalm 92:2-3, 13-16  
1 Corinthians 15:54-58  
Luke 6:39-45

## Question Corner/Jenna Marie Cooper

# Divorce by itself does not keep a Catholic from receiving the sacraments

**Q** If someone was in an abusive marriage and later divorced would he or she lose their right to Communion?



**A** The short answer is no. The simple fact of being divorced does not in any way hinder or cut off a Catholic's access to the sacraments.

For some background, we as

Catholics do believe that, on a theological level, divorce as such is not truly possible. While the Church does recognize and respect the purely secular legal effects of a civil divorce (e.g., things like property divisions and child custody arrangements), at the end of the day the Church understands divorce as somewhat of a "legal fiction."

That is, a consummated marriage between two baptized adults who entered the union with the proper intention and with full knowledge and freedom cannot be ended by anything other than the death of one of the spouses. We can find a scriptural basis for this teaching in Matthew 19:1-12.

It is possible that there could have been a problem at the time of the wedding—such as a mental health issue that prevented one of the parties from being able to consent, or a party having the wrong intentions—which prevented a true marriage from occurring in the first place. This is what the Church's marriage nullity process exists to discern. Yet we should keep in mind that declaring an apparent marriage invalid is very different from holding that an actual marriage bond can be broken.

However, for serious reasons the Church does allow spouses to separate. In canonical terms, this is called "separation while the bond remains." And in cases of abuse, the Church's law could

be interpreted as practically encouraging the endangered spouse to leave the marital home.

As we read in canon 1153 of the *Code of Canon Law*: "A spouse who occasions grave danger of soul or body to the other or to the children, or otherwise makes the common life unduly difficult, provides the other spouse with a reason to leave, either by a decree of the local ordinary [that is, the diocesan bishop or his vicar general] or, if there is danger in delay, even on his or her own authority."

Although Canon 1153 envisions the bishop's involvement in the separation of Catholic spouses, it is noteworthy how this same canon empowers ordinary lay Catholics to use their own best judgment in determining whether there is "danger in delay" in escaping an abusive or otherwise harmful domestic situation.

In a similar vein, while the Church teaches against divorce in general, the Church also acknowledges that a merely civil divorce might be necessary and acceptable in certain situations. Paragraph 2383 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* tells us: "if civil divorce remains the only possible way of ensuring certain legal rights, the care of the children or the protection of inheritance, it can be tolerated and does not constitute a moral offense."

Divorce only becomes an obstacle for receiving the sacraments when a divorced Catholic attempts to remarry civilly without having had his or her first marriage declared null by a Catholic marriage tribunal. Since even legitimately separated Catholics are still married to their original spouse in the eyes of God and the Church, any attempt at a new marriage would not result in a valid marriage. And living with another person in the manner of a married couple, when one is still actually married to another, is objectively adultery.

Granted, most divorced and civilly remarried Catholics probably would not experience their new romantic situation as an adulterous union on a purely subjective and emotional level. Still, this does not change the fact that "on paper" at least they are living in a situation of objective and manifest (that is, publicly knowable) grave sin, which is why the divorced and remarried cannot receive Communion.

But these considerations do not apply to a Catholic who is divorced and striving to live a chaste life according to the Church's teachings.

(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](mailto:CatholicQA@osv.com).) †

## My Journey to God

# A Heart Surrendered

By Natalie Hoefler

When surrendered to Christ,  
A wounded heart heals.

When surrendered to Christ,  
A healed heart shines.

When surrendered to Christ,  
A shining heart shares  
His light and love  
To a wounded world.



(Natalie Hoefler is a member of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis and is a reporter for The Criterion. Photo: Sunlight shines on a heart-shaped cactus in Burnet, Texas, on Dec. 28, 2024.) (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)

# Rest in peace

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

**ALLBRIGHT, Dwain B.,** 72, St. Mary, Mitchell, Jan. 16. Husband of Rebecca Allbright. Father of April Corns, Theresa Kyker, Christopher, John, Phillip and Scott Allbright. Grandfather of nine.

**BRICHLER, Raymond F.,** 82, All Saints, Dearborn County, Feb. 7. Husband of Pat Brichler. Father of Bobbi Bauman, Denise Retzner, Renee and David Brichler. Brother of Virginia Howard. Grandfather of 14. Great-grandfather of two.

**CAHILL, Joan L.,** 88, St. Mary-of-the-Knobs,

Floyd County, Feb. 5. Wife of Joseph Cahill. Mother of Laurie Balmer, Denise Cope and Kathy France.

**CLOUSE, Patricia,** 82, Holy Name of Jesus, Beech Grove, Jan. 17. Mother of Cathy Gamble, Mark and Robert Clouse. Grandmother of seven. Great-grandmother of two.

**COOK, Patricia A.,** 78, St. Mary, North Vernon, Jan. 22. Mother of Dara Dougherty, Danette Kirchner and Danene Pifer. Sister of Marilyn Beesley, Doris Boas, Janet St. John, Joe and Mike Biehle. Grandmother of five. Great-grandmother of four.

**DEL VERNE, Alfred J.,** 82, SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi, Greenwood, Jan. 27. Husband of Carol Del Verne. Father of Emily Adams, Julie Coyne, Jennifer Gholston, Angelo and John Del Verne. Grandfather of 11.

**DREYER, James L.,** 87, St. Louis, Batesville, Jan. 24. Husband of Charlene Dreyer. Father of Teri Coleman, Brad, Dave, Doug, Jeff, Mark and Mike Dreyer. Brother of Tom Dreyer. Grandfather of 18. Great-grandfather of eight.

**IAMS, Andrew J.,** 47, St. Michael the Archangel, Indianapolis, Jan. 25. Father of Casey, Coley, Duffy, Grady and Toby Gaynor. Son of Mary

Iams. Brother of Amy and Timothy Iams. Grandfather of 16. Great-grandfather of one.

**MCGREW, Martha J.,** 92, St. Martin of Tours, Martinsville, Jan. 31. Mother of Beverly Kitchen, Dr. Daniel, Patrick, Robert and Thomas McGrew. Grandmother of eight. Great-grandmother of 13.

**MILLER, Stephanie E.,** 74, St. Mary, New Albany, Jan. 27. Wife of Robert Miller. Mother of Bryn Bidwell, Rachel Cowgill, Madeline Harlan and Andrea Mason. Sister of Lauren Eckel and Diane Kissel. Grandmother of four. Great-grandmother of three.

**RICHMER, Joyce (Terry),** 97, St. Mary, New Albany, Jan. 24. Mother of Mary Kay Campbell, John, Michael and Scott Richmer. Grandmother of 20. Great-grandmother of 25. Great-great-grandmother of two.

**ROACH, Linda S.,** 81, St. Jude, Indianapolis, Feb. 5. Wife of Charles Roach. Mother of Dawn Rutter, Debbie Spencer and Chuck Roach, Jr. Grandmother of nine. Great-grandmother of 10.

**SCHROEDER, Pauline,** 90, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Richmond, Jan. 16. Mother of Karen Boswell, Bob, Jim and



## Honoring St. Anthony of Padua

Archbishop Bejoy N. D'Cruze of Dhaka, Bangladesh, decorates a statue of St. Anthony of Padua in the Archdiocese of Dhaka's Panjora shrine on Feb. 7, during the St. Anthony's pilgrimage, the biggest interfaith gathering of the year led by Catholics in the Muslim majority country. (OSV News photo/ Stephan Uttom Rozario)

Stephen Schroeder. Sister of Linda Espinosa. Grandmother of nine. Great-grandmother of 17.

**SELLMER, Michael,** 91, St. Anthony of Padua, Clarksville, Jan. 12. Husband of Lois Sellmer. Father of Sheri Hammons and Tammy Moakler. Grandfather of five.

**SKINNER, Jeffrey P.,** 72, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Richmond, Jan. 23. Husband of Cathy Skinner. Father of Katie Crowe and Gabriel Pollitt. Brother of Lisa Bruce, Nancy Pipes and Marc Skinner. Grandfather of five.

**SOTO, Joe A.,** 92, St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower), Indianapolis, Jan. 29. Husband of Vincena Soto. Father of Cathy Kirkham, Katherine Shannon, Theresa Wethington, Tim Doan and Russell Soto. Brother of Henry Mory. Grandfather of 18. Great-grandfather of 24. Great-great-grandfather of four.

**STEINHARDT, Jr., Col. Norbert A.,** 81, Prince of Peace, Madison, Jan. 1. Husband of Phyllis Steinhardt. Father of Norbert III and Scott Steinhardt, Sr. Brother of Anna Fisher, Patricia Owens,

John and Joseph Steinhardt. Grandfather of four. (correction)

**WORTMAN, Mary Jo,** 70, St. Jude, Indianapolis, Jan. 27. Mother of Amelia Little and Jason Nelson. Sister of Dianne Petry, David, Jr., Michael and Pat Olmstead. Grandmother of one.

**WRIGHT, Rita J.,** 85, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Richmond, Jan. 20. Wife of Jack Wright. Mother of Joyce Deitz, Mary Fliehman, Beth Hester, Judy Houseman, Cindy Johnson and John Wright. Grandmother of 22. Great-grandmother of 27. †

## Migration chair invites Vance to dialogue over Church's work with migrants

WASHINGTON (OSV News)—Bishop Mark J. Seitz of El Paso, Texas, the U.S. bishops' migration chair, called recent comments by Vice President JD Vance about the Church's work with migrants "a tremendous mischaracterization" while speaking at an event in the nation's capital on Feb. 12. But he also invited Vance to sit down and talk with him to set the record straight.

Vance, who is Catholic, questioned the motives of the U.S. bishops' criticism of Trump's new immigration policies in a Jan. 26 interview—including reducing restrictions on raids on churches and schools and the suspension of a federal refugee resettlement program. He asked whether the bishops are actually concerned about receiving federal resettlement funding and "their bottom line."

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) responded by pointing to audited financial statements by an outside firm that show that the USCCB does not profit from the work they do with legally eligible refugees.

During remarks at a panel discussion hosted by the Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life

at Georgetown University, Bishop Seitz said, "The characterization of a bishop or a group of bishops as people who are more concerned about the bottom line ... than to serve people is a tremendous mischaracterization.

"He clearly does not know me," Bishop Seitz said. "He does not know my heart."

But the bishop added, "I would love to sit down sometime with Vice President Vance and talk to him about these issues in regard to our resettlement work and things like that because he clearly has been misinformed.

"That is so unfortunate when it comes from a person who has a loud megaphone," Bishop Seitz said. "It can be very harmful to this work of the Church to very vulnerable people. So, it really is concerning."

Bishop Seitz also thanked Pope Francis for a letter expressing his support for the U.S. bishops' work with migrants and refugees amid what the pontiff called the current "major crisis" on U.S. immigration policies.

"Pope Francis has once again come forward and spoken in a certain way on our behalf with an eloquence that few of us can," Bishop Seitz said.

The Georgetown panel discussion, "Migration, Refugee Resettlement, and Mass Deportation: Moral, Human, and Policy Choices," sought to examine recently implemented migration policy changes by the Trump administration and to discuss what the Church teaches on the subject of migration.

In his letter to the U.S. bishops, Pope Francis acknowledged "the right of a nation to defend itself and keep communities safe from those who have committed violent or serious crimes while in the country or prior to arrival." At the same time, the pontiff cautioned that "deporting people who in many cases have left their own land for reasons of extreme poverty, insecurity, exploitation, persecution or serious deterioration of the environment, damages the dignity of many men and women, and of entire families, and places them in a state of particular vulnerability and defenselessness."

One Trump administration policy over which panelists expressed particular concern was the decision to rescind long-standing restrictions on Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents from making arrests at what are seen as sensitive locations, including houses of worship, schools and hospitals.

A spokesperson for the Department of Homeland Security previously said in a statement provided to OSV News the directive "gives our law enforcement the ability to do their jobs." But panelists argued houses of worship in some locations were reporting lower attendance levels amid concerns about deportation or detention.

"When you talk to actual religious leaders about 'what does religious freedom mean to you?' their answers almost never have to do with the law and almost always have to do with the right to serve, to take care of vulnerable people, to live out their faith," Tim Schultz, president of the 1st Amendment Partnership, said during remarks on the panel.

"It is why we use the term free exercise," he continued. "Exercise is a great term for what the freedom of religion really is about. And I think when you have less of that exercise you have less of a just society."

Schultz argued, "The First Amendment and free exercise of religion tends to offend people who are in power."

Given that Republicans are currently in control of Congress and the White House, Schultz further argued, some perceptions of the concept might shift on the political left.

"I think we are going to see the Religious Freedom Restoration Act get popular with progressive people who have been skeptical about it," he said. "And you're going to see people on the right who used to really love the act," might also change their perspective.

The Religious Freedom Restoration Act, sometimes referred to as RFRA, was approved in 1993 and aimed to prevent federal and state governments from "substantially burden[ing] a person's exercise of religion." †

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

- Earn certificate in Lay Ministry
- Complete 12 courses online with ND STEP program
- CDU offers classes on Catechism of the Catholic Church
- 20% discount for all employees, volunteers, and parishioners

For more information, please log on to [www.archindy.org/layministry](http://www.archindy.org/layministry)

**REPORT SEXUAL MISCONDUCT NOW**

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

**1 Ethics Point**  
Confidential, Online Reporting  
[www.archdioceseofindianapolis.ethicspoint.com](http://www.archdioceseofindianapolis.ethicspoint.com) or 888-393-6810

**2** Victim Assistance Coordinator, Archdiocese of Indianapolis  
P.O. Box 1410, Indianapolis, IN 46206-1410  
**317-236-1548 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1548**  
[victimassistance@archindy.org](mailto:victimassistance@archindy.org)

## BANE

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patients. I also want to encourage the millions of women who have received exceptional health care at pregnancy centers to let your stories be heard.

My patient mentioned at the beginning of this column exited the doors of our pregnancy center with a different plan than when she entered, largely due to the exceptional care she received. "They held my hand until I was confident and had hope . . ."

Pregnancy centers are an essential part of the solution

to addressing gaps in the medical community, offering compassion, resources and—most importantly—high-quality care.

It is time for all of us—medical professionals, community leaders and the public—to work together to support these centers and ensure every woman has access to the excellent care and support she deserves.

(Dr. Susan Bane is a practicing OB/GYN with 25 years of experience and the founder of Dr. Pink Glasses. She serves on the board of The American Association of Pro-life Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the medical board for CareNet.) †

# Cardinal Parolin: Palestinians must not be deported from Gaza

ROME (CNS)—The same week that U.S. President Donald J. Trump reiterated his idea of emptying Gaza of more than 2 million Palestinians so it could become a “Riviera of the Middle East,” a top Vatican official said there must be no deportations.

Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, said one of the “key points” of what must happen in Gaza is “no deportations.”

The cardinal spoke to reporters on the sidelines of a ceremony at the Embassy of Italy to the Holy See on Feb. 13 marking the signing of the Lateran Pacts of 1929 in which the Vatican and the Italian state recognized each other as sovereign nations and normalized relations.

Trump had first said the U.S. would “take over” Gaza and “own” the strip of land, which faces the Mediterranean Sea and borders Egypt and Israel. Smaller than the West Bank—the other territory making up the Palestinian state—the Gaza Strip was established as a refuge for Palestinians who fled or were forced from their homes during the war in 1948, which ended with the establishment of the State of Israel.

Speaking alongside Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at a White House press briefing on Feb. 5, Trump said they were focusing on the future of the region after the 15-month-long Israeli-Hamas conflict ended in a ceasefire. Gaza has been “an unlucky place for a long time,” Trump said, and it should not be rebuilt and occupied “by the same people.”

“The U.S. will take over the Gaza Strip” and “level it out” in order to “create an economic development” to create jobs and housing “for the people of the area,” he said.

Asked by reporters at the White House on Feb. 9 if the U.S. would force the exodus of Palestinians, Trump said, “You’re going to see that they’re all going to want to leave,” according to The Associated Press. He claimed in an interview with Fox News the same day that Palestinians would not want to return “because they’re going to have much better housing” somewhere else.

According to Vatican News, Cardinal Parolin told reporters that “neighboring countries are not willing [to take in refugees]; we heard, for example, the king of Jordan recently, who absolutely said ‘no.’”

An unnamed Italian official had noted that any mass deportation “would create tension in the area,” the cardinal added.

“We have to find a solution, and the solution in our opinion is a two-state solution because this also means giving hope to the people,” he said.

Cardinal Parolin also commented on a recent phone call between Trump and Russian President Vladimir



‘We have to find a solution, and the solution in our opinion is a two-state solution because this also means giving hope to the people.’

—Cardinal Pietro Parolin

Putin. Trump had told reporters on Feb. 13 that he and Putin agreed to begin negotiations to end the war in Ukraine.

Later in the day, he told reporters in the Oval Office that Ukraine and “other people,” too, would be involved in the peace talks.

Cardinal Parolin said, “A just peace is needed.” Diplomatic efforts are continuing and “there is lots of activity, many small openings.”

The Vatican hopes the possibilities “will materialize, and we hope that we can arrive at a peace that, in order to be solid and lasting, must be a just peace, including all the parties involved and taking into account the principles of international law and the declarations of the U.N,” he said.

“Everything that is proposed is useful because we need to put an end to this carnage,” Cardinal Parolin added. †

# Pope Francis appoints religious sister to run Vatican City State

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Franciscan Sister of the Eucharist Raffaella Petrini, secretary-general of the office governing Vatican City State, will become president of the office on March 1, the Vatican confirmed.

On an Italian television program in January, Pope Francis had announced that Sister Raffaella would succeed Cardinal Fernando Vérgez Alzaga. The Vatican announcement

on Feb. 15 said Sister Raffaella’s appointment would take effect on March 1, the day Cardinal Vérgez turns 80 and is required to step down.

Appearing on talk show “*Che Tempo Che Fa*” on Jan. 19, Pope Francis said that the process of women being given

leadership roles in the Roman Curia “is something that has gone slowly,” but would continue with Sister Raffaella taking over the governor’s office.

Sister Raffaella, 56, was born in Rome and made her perpetual vows with the U.S.-based Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist in 2007.

The Vatican governor’s office oversees departments as diverse as the Vatican Museums, post office and police force; it has the largest number of employees of any Vatican office. In 2021 when Sister Raffaella was named secretary-general of the office, she became the highest-ranking woman at the Vatican.

The position of secretary-general previously had been held by a priest, who was named a bishop shortly after becoming secretary-general. The president of the office always has been a cardinal or archbishop.

Sister Raffaella holds a doctorate in

social sciences from Rome’s Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas and a master’s degree in organizational behavior from the Barney School of Business at the University of Hartford, Conn. Before being

appointed secretary-general, she worked at the then-Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples and taught courses in sociology and economics at the University of St. Thomas Aquinas. †



Sr. Raffaella Petrini, F.S.E.

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## Employment

### Director of Operations

Our Lady of Grace, Noblesville, a Pastorate of the Diocese of Lafayette in Indiana, is currently seeking candidates for the position of Director of Operations.

**Job Summary:** The Director of Operations will serve as professional administrator and strategic leader. This position will work closely with the Pastor and Principal to drive positive financial performance for the parish and school. The Director of Operations assists the Pastor with the stewardship of the human, financial, and physical resources of the parish, in accordance with diocesan policies and guidelines. This role will have responsibility for leadership of operations staff (accounting, parish office, technology, administration, human resources, and facilities). Position is available in April 2025.

#### Education/Experience:

- Bachelor’s degree in business, accounting, finance or related area, or equivalent experience. Advance degree preferred.
- At least 3 years’ experience in accounting, finance, business, or related area.
- Experience with a non-profit organization or in Church management is preferred.
- Prefer the candidate to be a practicing Catholic.
- Possess initiative and a strong desire to achieve results.
- Experience in project management preferred.
- Experience with Microsoft Office and an ability to learn diocesan software programs.
- Able to honor & maintain confidentiality.
- Able to pass and maintain diocesan child safety protocols.

Interested and qualified candidates should submit a cover letter and resume, including at least three references, to Larry Kunkel, [ljunkel@ologn.org](mailto:ljunkel@ologn.org).

## Classified Directory

### Hauling and Tree Removal Services

**Fred & Sons**  
Hauling & Tree Removal Service  
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317-626-5973  
Call today for prompt service!

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- Light Hauling
- Construction Clean-up
- Junk Removal
- Brush Pile Cleaning
- Garage/Basement/Attic Cleanout
- Gutter Cleaning
- Mini Barn / Shed / Fence / Deck Demolition & Removal
- Appliance / E-Waste Removal
- Stump Grinding

### For Sale

**CALVARY CEMETERY,**  
435 W. Troy Indianapolis;  
2 plots, section 33, lot 240,  
burial spaces 1 & 2, \$2,000  
each, prefer to sell together.  
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or text 317-345-4277.

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## Employment

### Assistant Director of Communications

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis is seeking an Assistant Director of Communications for its central office. The assistant director reports to the director of communications and will be responsible for implementing the communication strategy for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, aligning with the mission of evangelizing catechesis and the new Archdiocesan pastoral plan. This role oversees internal and external communications as well as the execution of marketing initiatives. The ideal candidate will also develop and manage content creation across all platforms, ensuring adherence to brand standards. Additionally, this position leads media relations, supports crisis communication efforts, and is prepared to step in for the Director of Communication when needed.

Qualifications include: active practicing Catholic in full communion with the Church; minimum of bachelor’s degree, master’s degree preferred in communications, public relations, mass media, marketing, journalism or related field; 10 or more years practical work experience; comfortable with various forms of electronic communications; demonstrated experience with community relations and issues management; knowledge and awareness of issues of importance in the Catholic Church; exceptional oral, written and interpersonal communication skills; knowledge of maintaining brand standards across an organization. For a complete list of requirements, go to: [tinyurl.com/archindyasstidircomm25](http://tinyurl.com/archindyasstidircomm25).

To apply, please email a resume, cover letter, and list of references to Andrea Wunnenberg, Director of Human Resources, at [awunnenberg@archindy.org](mailto:awunnenberg@archindy.org). Applications will be accepted until March 3rd with an anticipated start in April/ May of 2025.



# Legacy Gala

Life, Education,  
and Real Presence

## Thank You for Making the 2025 Legacy Gala a Success!

On February 7, we gathered in support of three vital ministries in the Archdiocese: Catholic Charities, Catholic Schools, and Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary. Thanks to your generosity, we raised over **\$539,500** to further their important work.

We are deeply grateful to all who attended and contributed. Your support is a beacon of hope for so many!

## It's Not Too Late to Make a Difference!

If you missed the Legacy Gala but still want to contribute, it's not too late! Your donation will continue to impact Catholic Charities, Catholic Schools, and Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary.

To donate, visit [bit.ly/LegacyGala\\_Donate](https://bit.ly/LegacyGala_Donate), scan the QR code, or mail a check payable to Legacy Gala and send to Archdiocese of Indianapolis, Office of Stewardship & Development, Attn: Megan Boner, 1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202.



## Save the Date!

We're already looking forward to next year's event! Mark your calendars for **February 2026**—more details to come. We hope to see you there as we continue to build a bright future for our faith and community.

## Nominate an Honoree for the 2026 Legacy Gala!

Know someone whose leadership and service has made a lasting impact? Nominate them to be honored at the 2026 Legacy Gala. Nominations are open until March 31, 2025. Submit a nomination at [bit.ly/LG26HonoreeNomination](https://bit.ly/LG26HonoreeNomination), scan the QR code, or mail your submission to Archdiocese of Indianapolis, Office of Stewardship & Development, Attn: Cheri Bush, 1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202.



Together, we continue to strengthen the faith and future of our Archdiocese. **Thank you for your ongoing support!**