



19th-century mosaic
by artist Bernard
Bonnefon. (OSV News
artwork/Bridgeman Images)

~ An Easter Message from Archbishop Charles C. Thompson ~

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

Happy Easter! Once again, we celebrate the pinnacle of our Christian faith, namely, the resurrection of our Lord

Jesus Christ. In so doing, here in 2025, we do well to reflect on that first experience of the Risen Lord Jesus Christ.

The first experience of Jesus' resurrection was as much communal as individual. According to the Gospel of John, Mary Magdalene was the first to experience the empty tomb. In the Gospel of Luke, other women accompanied her. She ran off to tell Simon Peter and John, who made their way immediately to the tomb. John was the first to arrive but waited for Peter to enter the tomb.

Later, the Risen Lord would appear to Mary Magdalene, the disciples gathered

behind locked doors and those on the road to Emmaus. Gathered all together, those first disciples would receive the

outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and go forth to proclaim the Good News of Salvation through the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

What are we to make of this communal experience of the Risen Lord Jesus Christ? Such an incredible encounter with the person of Jesus Christ, crucified and risen, cannot be kept to oneself. This is the essence of Gospel joy. The Joy of the Gospel is meant to be proclaimed and shared with others. We do so as



witnesses of faith, pilgrims of hope, and missionary disciples of Jesus Christ. Perhaps this is why we have such an increase in those entering the Church this year as well as the reason so many gather to celebrate Easter Sunday Mass.

Amid reports of increasing experiences of loneliness, depression, addiction, abuse and violence, humanity is regaining a deeper appreciation for how essential interpersonal relationships are for personal health, happiness and well-being.

We are communal by nature. It is for this reason that Jesus, just after being identified as the Christ, the Son of God, and before his death, declared that he

See ARCHBISHOP, page 15

Mensaje de Pascua del Arzobispo Charles C. Thompson

Queridos hermanas y hermanos en Cristo:

¡Feliz Pascua de Resurrección! Una vez más, celebramos la cumbre de nuestra fe cristiana: la resurrección de nuestro Señor Jesucristo. Durante el festejo de este 2025, conviene que reflexionemos sobre aquella primera

experiencia del Señor Jesucristo resucitado.

Que fue tanto comunitaria como individual. Según el Evangelio de Juan, María Magdalena fue la primera en toparse con la tumba vacía; en el Evangelio de Lucas, otras mujeres la acompañaban. Corrió a avisar a Simón Pedro y a Juan, que se dirigieron inmediatamente al sepulcro. Juan fue el primero en llegar, pero esperó a

que Pedro entrara en el sepulcro.

Más tarde, el Cristo Resucitado se aparecería a María Magdalena, a los que iban camino de Emaús y a los discípulos reunidos a puerta cerrada, quienes habrían de recibir la efusión del Espíritu Santo en Pentecostés y saldrían a proclamar la Buena Nueva de la Salvación mediante la

Ver ARZOBISPO, página 15



Pope Francis greets the faithful as he makes a surprise appearance in St. Peter's Square at the end of Palm Sunday Mass at the Vatican on April 13. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

On Palm Sunday, recovering Pope Francis says to carry the cross with compassion

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Carrying the cross means more than bearing personal suffering—it means stepping into the pain of others and walking beside them, Pope Francis wrote at the start of Holy Week. “To carry the cross of Christ is never in vain,” he wrote in his homily for Palm Sunday Mass in St. Peter’s Square on April 13. “It is the most tangible way for us to share in his redemptive love.” The pope, still recovering from respiratory infections, made only a brief appearance in the square at the end of Mass, but his homily was read by Argentine Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, subdean of the College of Cardinals, who celebrated the Mass.

“Have a good Palm Sunday. Have a good Holy Week,” the pope said with a strained voice from the stage in St. Peter’s Square. He was not using a nasal cannula to receive oxygen during his public appearance unlike the week before when he had come to the square at the end of Mass to deliver a blessing.

The Vatican also released a video of the pope in St. Peter’s Basilica after the Mass; he stopped to pray before the tombs of St. Peter, St. Pius X and Pope Benedict XV.

Despite a two-month convalescence prescribed by his doctors following his release from the hospital on March 23, Pope Francis had made several surprise public appearances in the previous week.

He delivered a blessing in St. Peter’s Square at the end of the Mass for the Jubilee of the Sick and Health Care Workers on April 6, prayed before the newly restored tomb of Pope Urban VIII in St. Peter’s Basilica on April 10 while dressed in casual attire, and went to the Basilica of St. Mary Major in Rome to pray on April 12.

As of April 13, the Vatican had not confirmed which Holy Week liturgies the pope may attend.

The Palm Sunday Mass began with throngs of laypeople processing into St. Peter’s Square holding palm branches, followed by more than 60 cardinals and bishops.

More than 20,000 people, many holding olive branches—a Palm Sunday tradition in Italy—listened as the Passion

narrative from St. Luke’s Gospel was proclaimed.

In his written homily, Pope Francis reflected on Simon of Cyrene, the man forced by Roman soldiers to carry the cross behind Jesus.

Simon, the pope said, did not speak but simply acted, and in doing so became part of salvation history. “Between him and Jesus, there is no dialogue; not a single word is spoken. Between him and Jesus, there is only the wood of the cross.”

Pope Francis invited Christians to reflect on how they respond to the suffering of others—with anger or pity, compassion or annoyance—and to recognize Christ in the people whose lives are burdened by pain and injustice.

“How many Simons of Cyrene are there in our own day, bearing the cross of Christ on their shoulders!” he wrote. “Can we recognize them? Can we see the Lord in their faces, marred by the burden of war and deprivation?”

Recognizing those faces, the pope said, must move believers to action.

“Jesus’ passion becomes compassion whenever we hold out our hand to those who feel they cannot go on, when we lift up those who have fallen, when we embrace those who are discouraged,” he said.

At the start of Holy Week, Pope Francis called on Christians to prepare for Easter by becoming companions to one another on the road of suffering and mercy.

“In order to experience this great miracle of mercy, let us decide how we are meant to carry our own cross during this Holy Week: if not on our shoulders, in our hearts,” the pope wrote. “And not only our cross, but also the cross of those who suffer all around us.

“Let us prepare for the Lord’s paschal mystery,” he said, “by becoming each of us, for one another, a Simon of Cyrene.”

In his message for the recitation of the *Angelus*, published by the Vatican, the pope thanked people for their prayers during his illness and asked them to join him in praying for those suffering from war, poverty and natural disasters. †



Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

April 18–28, 2025

April 18 – Noon
Way of the Cross with Knights of Columbus at American Legion Mall, Indianapolis

April 18 – 3 p.m.
Good Friday Service at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis

April 19 – 9 p.m.
Easter Vigil Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral

April 22 – 10 a.m.
Spring Business Meeting for Priests and Parish Life Coordinators at Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish, Greenwood

April 22 – 2 p.m.
Council of Priests meeting at Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish

April 23 – 7 p.m.
Confirmation Mass for the youths of Christ the King and Immaculate Heart of Mary parishes, Indianapolis, at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral

April 24 – 10 a.m.
Leadership Team meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

April 24 – 3:30 p.m.
Catholic Community Foundation Advisory Board meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center

April 24 – 7 p.m.
Confirmation Mass for the youths of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Indianapolis; St. Michael Parish, Greenfield; and St. Thomas the Apostle Parish, Fortville, at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral

April 26 – 11 a.m.
Confirmation Mass for the youths of Holy Family Parish, Oldenburg, and St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Decatur County, at Holy Family Church

April 27 – 10 a.m.
Disabilities Awareness Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral followed by reception at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center

April 28 – 2 p.m.
Virtual Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis and Subcommittee on Catechism Chair meeting

As Mother’s Day nears, we are seeking your stories about your mom’s influence—or your approach as a mom

In anticipation of Mother’s Day, *The Criterion* is inviting you, our readers, to share your thoughts, tributes and stories about motherhood from two perspectives—the gift of having your mom and the gift of being a mom.

First, share your thoughts, tributes and stories about how your mother has shaped your approach to faith, life and love. While serious and sentimental tributes are definitely welcomed, so are touches of humor, as most of us have experienced our mom’s influence in, let’s say, *interesting* ways.

Second, if you are a mother, share your thoughts and stories about how you tried to shape—or are trying to shape—your children’s faith and lives. Again, touches of humor regarding your approach to being a mom are also welcomed.

Please send your submissions to John Shaughnessy by e-mail at jshaughnessy@archindy.org or by mail in care of *The Criterion*, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202. Please include your parish and a daytime phone number where you can be reached. †

Correction

In an article about St. Michael the Archangel Parish in Indianapolis in the April 11 issue, it was incorrectly stated that Benediction is no longer offered at the Divine Mercy Chapel in the building next to the parish’s rectory.

Benediction is offered at the chapel at 7:30 p.m. on the first Wednesday of each month, preceded by confession and the recitation of the rosary and other prayers at 7 p.m.

For other chapel hours, weekly hours of exposition, the code needed to enter the building with the chapel or to sign up for an adoration hour, contact Lisette Shattuck at 317-283-5422 or Dyan Huey at 317-627-2658. †



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Church denounces legislation that would criminalize homelessness

By Victoria Arthur

The Catholic Church is among numerous advocates opposing an 11th-hour effort at the Statehouse to re-introduce legislation criminalizing homelessness in Indiana.



After a similar, more comprehensive bill died earlier in the legislative session amid fierce opposition, some of its language was revived and inserted as an amendment to an unrelated measure on April 7 with no opportunity for public testimony. The amended Senate Bill 197 would make sleeping or camping on public property a Class C misdemeanor punishable by a \$500 fine or 60 days in jail if a first warning from a law enforcement officer goes unheeded.

Advocates for the homeless, including those who operate Holy Family Shelter in Indianapolis, say this approach is misguided and morally indefensible.

“From a direct provider’s perspective, criminalizing homelessness is the last thing you would want to do,” said Bill Bickel, associate director of Catholic Charities Indianapolis and the administrator of Holy Family Shelter, which has served homeless families for more than 40 years. “It exacerbates the issue, and it makes it harder for other jurisdictions and service providers and law enforcement to actually focus on solutions to end homelessness.

“To criminalize someone who is homeless, you’ve now added another barrier to their ability to find long-term, stable housing,” Bickel continued. “You will have a revolving door situation between homelessness and jail, and more barriers for people to get connected to housing and services. Jails and law

enforcement are simply not equipped to play this role.”

The proposed legislation is similar to laws that recently have been passed in Florida, Georgia and Texas banning homeless encampments. These legislative efforts are backed by a Texas-based think tank, the Cicero Institute, which maintains that the primary causes of homelessness are substance abuse and mental illness rather than a lack of available housing.

Under the amendment to Senate Bill 197, a law enforcement officer would be required to give a person camping on public property a warning first, along with an offer to transport him or her to a service provider or shelter within a five-mile radius. But those opposing the legislation point to the lack of such resources statewide—both in rural areas as well as in cities.

“I don’t know what city they’re talking about,” Bickel said. “Indianapolis is at capacity above and beyond. Somebody didn’t do their homework.”

Holy Family Shelter, located on the near-westside of Indianapolis, is consistently at full capacity with a long waiting list. Each year, it serves between 250 and 300 homeless families, offering essential support during times of crisis.

Due to space limitations, many families are supported in alternative emergency housing outside the shelter. A government housing voucher program—a lifeline for homeless families, according to Bickel—soon will be temporarily paused by the Indianapolis Housing Authority, further complicating efforts to help families in need.

The Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC), the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Indiana, has issued an action alert on its website calling on the faithful to reach out to their legislators to oppose the amended bill.



‘The most efficient way to end homelessness is to prevent it in the first place. There have been many times, for the families inside the shelter right now, that if we could have talked to them a month before they came in, we could have saved their housing.’

—Bill Bickel, associate director of Catholic Charities Indianapolis and the administrator of Holy Family Shelter

At press time, Senate Bill 197 was on its way to the House floor for further consideration. “The amended bill does nothing to increase the supply of housing or services for Hoosiers experiencing homelessness and housing instability,” the ICC action alert reads, adding that it “provides no solutions and only puts additional burdens on our local law enforcement, courts, jails and communities.”

The ICC and other advocates for the homeless had no chance to weigh in on the last-minute amendment to Senate Bill 197, a broad piece of legislation on various property matters.

But earlier in the legislative session, lawmakers listened to overwhelming opposition to House Bill 1662, which focused exclusively on the prohibition of homeless encampments and consequences for those sleeping on public land.

During a February hearing in the House Government and Regulatory Reform Committee, so many advocates

signed up to testify against the bill that not everyone could be heard in the allotted time. The only testimony in favor of the measure came from a representative of the Texas-based Cicero Institute.

In a letter to members of the committee, the ICC outlined numerous concerns about the legislation, saying that the bill “falls short because it only addresses the temporary, emergency response to homelessness without necessary support for affordable housing and supportive services that lead to long-term stability.”

Particularly troubling to the ICC were the prohibition of camping in public spaces and the misdemeanor charges for repeated violations.

“The Catholic Church does not claim that public authorities have no right to control the uses of public property and the protection of the common good,” wrote Alexander Mingus, executive director of the ICC, which speaks on public policy matters on behalf of the

See LEGISLATION, page 16



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Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, *Publisher*
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Editorial



A parishioner portrays Jesus during a reenactment of the Stations of the Cross at St. John of God Church in Central Islip, N.Y., on Good Friday, April 15, 2022. Most members of the parish trace their ancestral roots to Central America, where the living Way of the Cross is a solemn Holy Week tradition. (CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)

By his wounds, we are healed

Good Friday’s celebration of the Passion of the Lord gives us an opportunity to draw near to the crucified Jesus and gaze on him whose cruel suffering and ignominious death were the cause of our salvation.

We who desperately want to deny death, to act as if it will not happen to us, are invited and challenged to face the death of Jesus head-on. What’s more, if we want to be saved, we are told that we must follow him on the way of the cross.

This would be an impossible task for us except for two things: 1) the abundant grace of God and 2) the example and intercession of Mary, the mother of Jesus, and all the saints.

Mary stood before the cross and gazed with both great love and infinite sorrow at her divine Son as he endured the most unimaginable pain and suffering. The saints throughout the 2,000-year history of our Church have added their own suffering to that of our Lord and, in the process, “rejoiced in their sufferings” (Rom 5:3) and “completed what was lacking in Christ’s afflictions” (Col 1:24).

Today, we are invited to join the Blessed Virgin Mary, our mother, and all the saints (including those who betrayed and abandoned him but who later repented and followed him) on the pilgrim journey that is the *via dolorosa* (the way of sorrows). We are given the privilege of celebrating our Lord’s passion and death in anticipation of his triumphant resurrection on the third day. We are encouraged to weep bitter tears, to cry out for mercy for our sins, in order to prepare ourselves for the abundant joy that will one day be ours because “by his wounds, we have been healed” (Is 53:5).

Let us remember today the opening words of the “*Stabat Mater*,” the 12th-century hymn set to music by many different composers, which recalls Mary’s courage, fidelity, and incomparable love for her Son and Redeemer:

At the cross her station keeping, stood the mournful Mother weeping, close to Jesus to the last. Through her heart, his sorrow sharing. All his bitter anguish bearing, now at length the sword has passed.

On Good Friday, we have the opportunity to share Mary’s sorrow in a special way, and then to rejoice with her when our Lord triumphs over sin and death on Easter Sunday. If we can mingle our tears with those of our Blessed Mother, if we can share in her grief and mourning, then we can share in her joy.

More than three decades ago, Twenty-Third Publications published a booklet by Richard G. Furey titled *Mary’s Way of the Cross*. Adapted for use in Catholic parishes, *Mary’s Way of the Cross* provides a format for praying the traditional 14 Stations of the Cross from the perspective of Christ’s mother.

At the first station, for example, Mary is quoted as saying:

All around me they shouted, “Crucify him!” I wanted to plead with them to stop, but I knew that this had to be. So, I stood by and cried silently.

This is followed by a prayer addressed to Jesus that asks for his forgiveness for the times when we, too, have judged others unfairly. Then another verse from the “*Stabat Mater*” is offered:

Who on Christ’s dear Mother gazing, pierced by anguish so amazing, born of woman would not weep?

Toward the end, when Jesus is taken down from the cross at Station 13, Mary says, “A deep sorrow engulfed my being. Yet I also felt deep joy. Life had ended cruelly for my Son, but it had also brought life to all of us.”

Today, on this Good Friday, we are invited to imitate our Blessed Mother. She did not deny the horrors her Son endured. She did not pretend that the sword that pierced her heart was not painful or unjust. But she accepted it with a profound faith that God’s will must be done, and that in God’s wisdom, and in his good time, all things must work for the good.

Today’s celebration of the Passion of the Lord is a blessing for all of us who seek to follow Jesus. Today we can stand with our Mother at the foot of the cross.

With her, and with all the women and men who have gone before us, we can rejoice even as we weep bitter tears.

Because by his wounds, we have been healed.

—Daniel Conway

Sight Unseen/Brandon A. Evans
Saving Judas

Have you ever prayed for the salvation of Judas?

It’s kind of a bizarre—even borderline sacrilegious—question, for no less than two reasons.

The first of which, of course, are the very words of Jesus Christ regarding his betrayer: “It would have been better for that man if he had never been born” (Mt 26:24).

A reasonable and nearly universal interpretation of those words is that the only thing worse than *non-existence* is an eternity in hell.

And yet, the Catholic Church has refrained from pronouncing a definitive judgment on the matter. It hasn’t stopped everyone else from believing it (and with good reason), but the *final* step of saying with absolute clarity that any particular person is in hell has been intentionally withheld.

But there is another objection: no matter what you believe, the death of Judas *has already happened*. His fate has been decided, his judgment given.

Or has it?

As we understand the nature of history, events in the past cannot be changed. You can’t pray that someone didn’t get sick or that some disaster didn’t happen or that you really did get that job. But there is a gaping loophole in this worldview: most of what happens in the human heart and mind is *not* known to the rest of us nor shared in any record.

What appears to have occurred one way may have occurred another. And so



we can pray that a person repented before death, or felt a respite from the pain of disease, or that all along had a deep happiness despite an outward sadness. It’s why we don’t just pray that people are eventually freed from purgatory: we pray that they made it that far in the first place, even though from our point of view such a thing was already decided years ago.

Since God exists outside of time and space, all things at all times that can be in play *are* in play.

And the ability of prayer to work outside the present—to alter, as it were, both past and future—is where the fate of Judas comes back in.

By all accounts, he hung himself in despair. Though grievously sorrowful for his betrayal, he did not muster the humility to ask Jesus himself for forgiveness. Such contrition would’ve sufficed to wipe clean his ghastly sin. He would’ve been redeemed along with the rest of our sorry lot on that terrible Good Friday.

But he didn’t do it. He ran *from* Jesus, not toward him. He hurried blindly to doom and death instead.

Again, though, there is a loophole, one just the size of the eye of a needle: in the moment between falling from the tree and the rope catching his neck, some light could’ve entered his mind: some vision of a Christ who somehow still loved him, who somehow still offered a forgiving hand. Judas’ conscience *could* have moved his final thought to repentance; to have said to Jesus, simply, “I’m sorry.”

We don’t know.

See EVANS, page 10

Reflection/Sean Gallagher

Relief in this life can lead to infinite joy in the next

Rory McIlroy dropped to his knees and put his head in his hands after he saw the putt drop into the hole. Relief washed over him like a flood. A weight that had laid heavily on the shoulders of the professional golfer from Northern Ireland for more than a decade and had increased during that time was finally gone.

In sinking that 4-foot putt on the 18th hole—the first hole of a sudden-death playoff—on April 13 at Augusta National Golf Club in Augusta, Ga., McIlroy had finally won the club’s famed Masters Tournament after 17 tries.

McIlroy had stormed onto the professional golf scene in his late teenage years more than 15 years ago and soon became one of the world’s best players.

By 2014, he had won three of the four major tournaments in men’s professional golf—Great Britain’s Open Championship, the U.S. Open and the P.G.A. Championship. Only the Masters was lacking to put McIlroy in the rarified air of the five golfers during the past 80 years who won all four tournaments, known as a “career grand slam.”

So, each time he returned to Augusta National for the tournament, the questions would continue. When would he don the famed green jacket worn by Masters winners? Could this golfer, who had won so many tournaments around the world, seal the deal and finally win the Masters?

Many doubted he could do it. In 2011, McIlroy, then 22, had a four-shot lead going into the final round of the tournament, only to shoot an 8-over-par 80,



ending the day in a tie for 15th place.

Even with the tournament’s patrons clearly on his side this year, those questions and doubts continued throughout the final round of this year’s tournament. McIlroy led through much of it. Then he scored a double bogey 7 on the par-5 13th hole and a bogey on the 14th hole. Meanwhile England’s Justin Rose made a late charge, birdieing six of the final nine holes in his final round.

Yet, McIlroy bounced back from his previous mistakes to birdie the 17th hole and take a one-shot lead going into the final hole. All he had to do was sink a 5-foot par putt on the 18th hole to win. But the putt slid over the edge of the hole.

So, McIlroy and Rose went to a sudden-death playoff, starting on the 18th hole. Rose parred the hole. Then McIlroy had a 4-foot putt for birdie. After missing a similar-length putt to win minutes earlier, McIlroy made the most of his second chance at victory, sinking the putt and falling to his knees.

“There was no joy in that reaction, it was all relief,” McIlroy said after the tournament. “This is my 17th time here, and I started to wonder if it would ever be my time. I think the last 10 years coming here with the burden of the Grand Slam on my shoulders and trying to achieve that ... there was a lot of pent-up emotion that just came out on that 18th green.”

On this side of eternity, we sometimes feel more relief than joy in the many small and sometimes big victories in daily life. That can happen because we often feel burdened by our own expectations or those of others.

See GALLAGHER, page 10

ARCHBISHOP/ARZOBISPO CHARLES C. THOMPSON



Christ the Cornerstone

Good Friday calls us to repent and place our hope in Christ

We adore your Cross, O Lord, we praise and glorify your holy Resurrection, for behold, because of the wood of a tree joy has come to the whole world. (Good Friday Antiphon)

Today is Good Friday, a day of sadness, mourning and shame that leads paradoxically to the experience of great hope and rejoicing. Today is the day that Jesus Christ was crucified—one of the most horrific forms of capital punishment ever devised.

For our sake, he who was without sin carried the burden of sinful humanity and submitted to the cruelty of the cross as punishment for wrongs that were committed (and are still being committed) not by him but by us.

We are right to remember this day with immense sadness. What could be worse than this sacrilegious rejection of God’s only Son? His coming to Earth was a divine rescue mission intended to redeem us from the powers of sin and death.

We rejected him, but he continued his mission and took up the cross that is the sign of our redemption. He forgave our betrayals and infidelities, and he

submitted to his Father’s will so that we might be saved. No wonder the liturgy for Good Friday has us proclaim: *We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you, for by your holy cross you have redeemed the world!*

This is a great mystery. A hideous instrument of mockery, torture and painful execution has become the means by which fallen humanity has been saved from the power of sin and death.

As we read in today’s first reading (Is 52:13-53:12), the prophet Isaiah foretold this mysterious truth in his description of the Suffering Servant:

Though he was harshly treated, he submitted and opened not his mouth; like a lamb led to the slaughter or a sheep before the shearer he was silent and opened not his mouth. Oppressed and condemned, he was taken away, and who would have thought any more of his destiny? When he was cut off from the land of the living, and smitten for the sin of his people, a grave was assigned him among the wicked and a burial place with evildoers, though he had done no wrong nor spoken any falsehood. But the Lord was pleased to

crush him in infirmity.

If he gives his life as an offering for sin, he shall see his descendants in a long life, and the will of the Lord shall be accomplished through him. (Is 53:7-10)

Isaiah tells us that “the Lord was pleased to crush him in his infirmity” (Is 53:10). How can this be? How can it please God to have anyone, especially his only Son, suffer? How can human cruelty satisfy the will of God?

The Church teaches that Jesus’ suffering and death were redemptive. They led directly to his glorious triumph over sin and death, and they achieved the victory that has set us free. As Isaiah says, “he gives his life as an offering for sin” (Is 53:10), and the result is everlasting life. Jesus says “Yes” to his Father’s will and our salvation is accomplished through him.

St. Paul correctly describes the Lord’s passion and death as an act of obedience, a profound surrender to the will of his Father. “Christ became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Because of this, God greatly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every

other name” (Phil 2:8-9). This decisive surrender, the giving up of his human life for our sake, “as an offering for sin,” is what affects his resurrection from the dead and his exaltation as the most holy Son of God. The Father lifts him up and makes his name holy “above every other name.”

Our celebration of Good Friday calls us to repentance for our sins, but it also invites us to place all our hope in Jesus who gives his life for us and who loves us so much that he is willing to offer himself as the perfect sacrifice for our sins. “By his wounds, we are set free” (Is 53:5).

Rightly observed, Good Friday affirms one of the most fundamental truths of our Catholic faith: The only way to get to the joy of heaven is by the Way of the Cross. And the only way to heal our self-inflicted wounds, is to surrender our wills to the healing power of God our Father.

Today’s sadness will give way to joy, but only after we suffer with Jesus and give ourselves to him completely. Let’s turn our minds and hearts over to Jesus, who carried the sins of the world on his shoulders in order to set us free. †



Cristo, la piedra angular

El Viernes Santo nos llama al arrepentimiento y a poner nuestra esperanza en Cristo

Adoramos tu Cruz, Señor, alabamos y glorificamos tu santa Resurrección, pues he aquí que por la madera de un árbol ha llegado la alegría al mundo entero. (Antífona del Viernes Santo)

Hoy es Viernes Santo, un día de tristeza, luto y vergüenza que conduce paradójicamente a la experiencia de una gran esperanza y regocijo. Hoy es el día en que Jesucristo fue crucificado, una de las formas más horribles de pena capital jamás concebidas.

Por nosotros, el que estaba libre de pecado cargó con el peso de la humanidad pecadora y se sometió a la crueldad de la cruz como castigo por las injusticias cometidas (y que se siguen cometiendo) no por él, sino por nosotros.

Hacemos bien en recordar este día con inmensa tristeza. ¿Qué podría ser peor que este rechazo sacrílego del Hijo único de Dios? Su venida a la Tierra fue una misión divina de rescate destinada a redimirnos de los poderes del pecado y de la muerte.

Nosotros lo rechazamos, pero él continuó su misión y tomó la cruz que es el signo de nuestra redención; perdonó nuestras traiciones e infidelidades, y se sometió a la voluntad

de su Padre para que pudiéramos salvarnos. No es de extrañar que la liturgia del Viernes Santo nos haga proclamar: *Te adoramos, oh Cristo, y te bendecimos porque por tu Santa Cruz has redimido al mundo.*

Este es un gran misterio: un horrible instrumento de burla, tortura y dolorosa ejecución se ha convertido en el medio por el que la humanidad caída ha sido salvada del poder del pecado y de la muerte.

Como leemos en la primera lectura de hoy (Is 52:13-53:12), el profeta Isaías predijo esta misteriosa verdad en su descripción del Siervo sufriente:

Se verá angustiado y afligido, pero jamás emitirá una queja; será llevado al matadero, como un cordero; y como oveja delante de sus trasquiladores se callará y no abrirá su boca. Sufirá la cárcel, el juicio y la muerte; ¿y quién entonces contará su historia, si él será arrancado por completo de este mundo de los vivientes y morirá por el pecado de mi pueblo? Se le dará sepultura con los impíos; morirá en compañía de malhechores; a pesar de que nunca hizo violencia a nadie, ni jamás profirió una sola mentira. Pero al Señor le pareció bien quebrantarlo y hacerlo padecer.

Cuando se haya presentado a sí mismo como ofrenda para la expiación

de pecado, verá a su descendencia, tendrá una larga vida, y por medio de él se verá prosperada la voluntad del Señor. (Is 53:7-10)

Isaías nos dice que “al Señor le pareció bien quebrantarlo y hacerlo padecer” (Is 53:10). ¿Cómo es esto posible? ¿Cómo puede complacer a Dios que alguien, especialmente su único Hijo, sufra? ¿Cómo puede la crueldad humana satisfacer la voluntad de Dios?

La Iglesia enseña que el sufrimiento y la muerte de Jesús fueron redentores, ya que condujeron directamente a su glorioso triunfo sobre el pecado y la muerte, y lograron la victoria que nos ha liberado. Como dice Isaías, se entrega “a sí mismo como ofrenda para la expiación de pecado” (Is 53:10) y el resultado es la vida eterna. Jesús dice “sí” a la voluntad de su Padre y nuestra salvación se lleva a cabo a través de él.

San Pablo describe correctamente la pasión y muerte del Señor como un acto de obediencia, una profunda entrega a la voluntad de su Padre. “Y hallándose en forma de hombre, se humilló Él mismo, haciéndose obediente hasta la muerte, y muerte de cruz. Por lo cual Dios también lo exaltó hasta lo sumo, y le confirió el nombre que es sobre todo nombre” (Fil 2:8-9). Esta entrega decisiva, la entrega de su vida humana por nosotros,

“ofrenda para la expiación de pecado,” es lo que determina su resurrección de entre los muertos y su exaltación como Hijo santísimo de Dios. El Padre lo eleva y santifica su nombre “sobre todo nombre.”

Nuestra celebración del Viernes Santo nos llama al arrepentimiento por nuestros pecados, pero también nos invita a poner toda nuestra esperanza en Jesús, que da su vida por nosotros y que nos ama tanto que está dispuesto a ofrecerse como sacrificio perfecto por nuestros pecados. “Mas él fue herido por nuestras transgresiones, molido por nuestros pecados; el castigo de nuestra paz fue sobre él, y por sus llagas fuimos nosotros curados” (Is 53:5).

Observado correctamente, el Viernes Santo afirma una de las verdades más fundamentales de nuestra fe católica: el único camino al cielo es el de la cruz y la única manera de curar nuestras heridas autoinfligidas, es rendir nuestra voluntad al poder sanador de Dios, nuestro Padre.

La tristeza de hoy dará paso a la alegría, pero solo después de que suframos con Jesús y nos entreguemos a Él por completo. Volvamos nuestras mentes y nuestros corazones a Jesús, que cargó sobre sus hombros los pecados del mundo para liberarnos. †

Events Calendar

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

April 24-May 29

Christ the King Parish, 5884 N. Crittenden Ave., Indianapolis. **Project Hope: Faith-Based Mental Health Support Group**, six consecutive Thursdays sessions, 7-8:30 p.m., 8-10 participant limit, mental health professional present, registration required, free. Information, registration: 317-236-1543, bvarick@archindy.org.

April 26

White River State Park, 801 W. Washington St., Indianapolis. **St. Vincent de Paul Love Your Neighbor 5K Run/Walk and One-mile Fun Run**, 9-10:30 a.m., registration opens 7:30 a.m., \$29 adult, \$25 student, \$19 family, walk-ups welcome. Information, registration: 317-924-5769, ext. 260, dsweeney@svdpindy.org, svdpindy.org/neighbor.

St. Mark the Evangelist Parish, 535 East Edgewood Road, Indianapolis. **Evangelization 101 Workshop: A Simple Approach to Forming Teams, Witnessing and Accompanying One Another**, 9 a.m.-3p.m., Archdiocese of St. Louis evangelization director Brian Miller presenting, \$30 fee assessed to parish, includes lunch and materials, registration required. Information, registration:

tinyurl.com/markevang25, 317-236-1466, abardo@archindy.org.

White Violet Center for Eco-Justice, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Earth Day Festival**, 11 a.m.-3 p.m., nature shows, live music, kids’ craft activities, demonstrations on spinning, weaving and woodcarving, visit the alpacas, bake sale, food vendors, freewill donations. Information: spsmw.org/event/earth-day-festival-2025, 812-535-2932, wvc@spsmw.org.

Father Thomas Scecina Memorial High School, 5000 Nowland Ave., Indianapolis. **Seccina Memorial Club 53 Fundraiser**, 6 p.m., food, drinks, \$10,000 reverse raffle, live entertainment, games, \$100, register by April 23. Information, tickets: 317-352-3282, adamsmith@scecina.org.

Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish, 520 Stevens St., Indianapolis. **Faithful Citizens Rosary Walk**, 10:45-11:45 a.m., meet in front of church. Information: holyrosary.prolife@gmail.com.

April 26, May 3, 17, 24

St. Gabriel the Archangel Parish, 6000 W. 34th St., Indianapolis. **“Know Your Fertility” Class in Spanish**,

6-8 p.m., four sessions, \$75. Information, registration: ccorona@archindy.org, 317-800-9306.

April 27

SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **Filipino Mass**, Divine Mercy 3 p.m., rosary 3:10 p.m., Mass 3:30 p.m. with homily in English, every fourth Sunday. Information: mariasolito@yahoo.com.

St. Anne’s Golf Course, 360 E. County Road 350 N., North Vernon. **Missy’s Hope Golf Scramble**, 8 a.m., benefitting Missy’s Hope Maternity Home, \$200 per four-person team, register by April 27. Information, registration: 812-767-2897.

April 30

Virtual Series: Learn About Our Benedictine Vows—Obedience, via Zoom, 7 p.m., last of three sessions, hosted by Sisters of St. Benedict of Monastery Immaculate Conception in Ferdinand, Ind. (Evansville Diocese), free, registration required. Information, registration: 812-367-1411, ext. 2830, vocation@thedome.org.

May 2

Women’s Care Center, 4901 W. 86th St., Indianapolis. **First Friday Mass**, 5 p.m., optional tour of center to follow.

Information: 317-829-6800, womenscarecenter.org.

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

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

May 3

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.

May 4

Crane Bay Event Center, 551 W. Merrill St., Indianapolis. **Light in the City Annual Dinner**, 4-9 p.m., benefitting Lumen Christi Catholic School, dinner, cocktail hour, silent auction, dessert dash, raffle, student speaker, award presentation, \$125. Information, ticket purchase: 317-632-3174, bcollins@lumenchristischool.org.

May 7

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.

Virtual Prayer with the Sisters of Providence, 7-7:45 p.m., for single women ages 18-42, prayer and sharing on topic of joy. Information, registration: events.sistersofprovidence.org, 361-500-9505, jluna@spsmw.org.

May 10

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, 1752 Scheller Lane, New Albany. **Spring Prayer Breakfast**, 9-11 a.m., for those who have experienced loss in the last year, songs and hymns

of consolation, free, register by May 5. Information, registration: 812-945-1647, jfey@olphna.org.

May 12

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Talk Saves Lives: An Introduction to Suicide Prevention**, 6:30-8 p.m., American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) flagship suicide prevention education program, presented by Father James Farrell and licensed therapist and AFSP Indiana Board Member Christine Turo-Shields, free, registration required. Information, registration: archindy.org/fatima-events, 317-545-7681, lcoons@archindy.org.

May 13

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

May 15

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

Retreats and Programs

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

May 2-4

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **TOBIT Marriage Preparation Weekend**, 7 p.m. Fri.-11:45 a.m. Sun., \$330 per couple, separate rooms, includes meals and

materials. Registration: ftm.retreatportal.com/events, 317-545-7681, lcoons@archindy.org.

May 8

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, 812-535-2952, provctr@spsmw.org.

Retreat for men suffering from association with past abortion will take place on May 3-4

A Project Joseph Healing Retreat for Men will take place in the central Indiana area from 9 a.m. on May 3 through 4 p.m. on May 4. The location will be provided upon registration. Are you a man suffering from the pain of a past abortion? Did you feel helpless like you had no choice, that it was your best or only option? Are you still haunted by grief or guilt? Has the anger never left you, or do you feel you should be punished for the loss of your child? Are your relationships suffering? Are you unable to talk about the experience? Don’t wait any longer to experience Christ’s mercy.

Project Joseph healing retreats are for men who struggle with the emotional and spiritual pain of abortion. The retreat is a unique and effective process designed specifically to help men experience the mercy and compassion of God. Registration is required by April 21. The next Project Joseph Healing Retreat will take place in September in southern Indiana. For more information or to register, contact David Bangs at 765-860-6006 or dlbangs1@gmail.com. For more information on the Project Joseph ministry, go to projectjosephmidwest.org. †

Disabilities Awareness Mass will take place at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral on April 27

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson will celebrate the annual Disabilities Awareness Mass that will take place at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., in Indianapolis, at 10 a.m. on April 27. A reception following the Mass will be held across the street at the Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., in the Assembly Hall. The Mass celebrates the gifts those

with disabilities bring to the Church. Members of the archdiocese’s Special Religious Education and Discipleship community—which hosts the Mass—will participate in the liturgy as ushers, altar servers, gift-bearers and more. For more information, contact Jenny Bryans, coordinator of the Special Religious Education and Discipleship ministry, at 317-236-1448 or jbryans@archindy.org. †

May 15, June 10, July 9

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

May 16, June 20, July 18

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

May 16-18

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr.,

St. Meinrad. **The Rosary Zone**, Benedictine Brother Zachary Wilberding presenting, \$350 single, \$550 double. Registration: 812-357-6611, saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

May 17

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **Divine Mysteries in the Universe**, 9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m., Jesuit Father Edward Kinerk presenting, \$30, Information, registration: 812-933-6437, oldenburgfranciscancenter.org.

June 6-8

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Praying the Mass: Eucharistic Spirituality**, Benedictine Father Lorenzo Penalosa presenting, \$350 single, \$550 double. Registration: 812-357-6611, saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

June 13-15

Mother of the Redeemer Retreat Center, 8220 W. State Road 48, Bloomington. **St. Jacinta of Fatima: A Prophetess for Our Times**, 5 p.m. Fri.-10 a.m. Sun., Franciscans of the Immaculate Father Jacinto Chapin facilitating, \$241 for single, \$302.90 double, \$368 triple, \$433.12 quadruple, includes four meals and room for two nights, commuters \$50.70 includes lunch and dinner on Sat. Information, registration: 812-825-4642, ext. 1, motheroftheredeemer.com.

June 20-22

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Making “Soma” from “Sarx”: The Transformative Power of the Gospel**, Benedictine Father Adrian Burke presenting, \$350 single, \$550 double. Registration: 812-357-6611, saintmeinrad.org/retreats. †

Wedding Anniversaries

RALPH AND DEBORAH (SHAW) WERNER, members of St. Gabriel Parish in Connersville, celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary on April 4. The couple was married in St. Elizabeth of Hungary Church in Cambridge City on April 4, 1970. They have one child: Jennifer Townsend. The couple also has two grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. †



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

Listening sessions play integral role in developing archdiocesan pastoral plan

By Sandi Patel
Special to The Criterion

Last fall, the Archdiocese of Indianapolis facilitated a series of listening sessions, held in each deanery, to meet with parishioners across central and southern Indiana to include their voices in a pastoral planning process.

At the listening sessions, held between August and November, people were invited to complete a survey that included four questions. The first two were: “Where are we today?” and “Where is God calling us to be?” which addressed five aspects of the life of the archdiocese: community, evangelization and catechesis, parish life, faith formation and education, and Catholic social teaching.

Participants next responded to two open-ended questions: “What other areas of focus are important?” and “What are your hopes for your parish and the archdiocese?”

An opportunity to share, a plan with prayer

The listening sessions allowed time for people to share their thoughts and talk in small groups, followed by open sharing regarding the questions. Archbishop Charles C. Thompson concluded the listening sessions he attended with a summary of what he heard and a prayer of thanksgiving for those present.

Read an executive summary of the surveys online at archindy.org/pastoralplan.

At the end of the listening sessions, the surveys were collected so the thoughts expressed could be carefully read. With a final count of 391 completed handwritten surveys, members of the archdiocesan pastoral planning committee were pleased with the participation. It is important to note that, in addition to the in-person listening sessions, an online survey was available with the same questions, where there was equal participation.

As a member of the pastoral planning committee, I was asked to provide an analysis of the handwritten surveys. I approached it with a plan: number and batch the surveys, read them carefully, tally the responses and write a report of the overarching themes.

However, it didn’t take long for me to realize this task was so much more than my plan: it was a sacred trust to God’s people who took the time to attend a listening session. The Holy Spirit was speaking through them,

guiding us on our journey. I was holding the mind, heart and soul of the archdiocese in my hands. I owed it to my fellow Catholics to read these surveys with prayerful discernment, united to the heart of Jesus.

Inviting the Holy Spirit into the process

As I was beginning this task before the season of Advent, I was inspired by Pope Francis, who wrote in an *Angelus* prayer in 2018, “Advent invites us to a commitment to vigilance, looking beyond ourselves, expanding our mind and heart in order to open ourselves up to the needs of people, of brothers and sisters and to the desire for a new world.”

Holding onto this sacred trust to God’s people, my “plan” became my preparation for the birth of Jesus. I prepared to read each survey by inviting the Holy Spirit to quiet my heart and mind and inspire me. Every moment spent reading was a journey to the full joy of Christmas.

One participant in an October listening session at the Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center in Indianapolis expressed the hope that the surveys would be “read fully and prayed over.” I can assure everyone that this did indeed happen. From the simplest thoughts to the longest paragraphs, I held every word in prayer.

While the final report contained overall themes that were articulated by most of the people, every comment was thoughtfully considered for the report. A participant from a listening session in October at St. Mark the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis was concerned, saying, “I am unable to fully express my thoughts.”

Witnesses of faith, creating missionary disciples

However, that was not at all what I encountered. I found thoughtful expressions of God’s call for our Church from people deeply committed to our Catholic faith. There were certainly concerns and frustrations, but there was also hope and anticipation of all we could become in the light of God’s love for us.

While people articulated specific thoughts about where we are today and why—such as being divided by



‘I found thoughtful expressions of God’s call for our Church from people deeply committed to our Catholic faith. There were certainly concerns and frustrations, but there was also hope and anticipation of all we could become in the light of God’s love for us.’

—Sandi Patel

opinions, ideas, language and social issues—they also offered ideas for how we can improve, such as developing lifelong faith formation for all people that inspires the witness of our faith and creates missionary disciples.

The full reports from both the in-person listening sessions and online surveys have been submitted to Archbishop Thompson and the archdiocesan pastoral planning committee. The committee is now using the information to answer the third question, “How will we get there together?” to create action steps that follow the direction of the Holy Spirit.

Developing a framework and goals

In the most recent pastoral planning committee meeting, we reviewed an executive summary of the surveys, along with archdiocesan demographic information, to consider a framework to guide the development of goals and objectives for the pastoral plan. It is inspiring to participate in the thoughtful, vibrant conversations inspired by the information we have at hand.

Later this year, Catholics will have another opportunity to provide feedback on the action plans developed during this phase of the process. We bring our hopes to life through God’s grace and the commitment to journey together.

On behalf of Archbishop Thompson and the archdiocesan pastoral planning committee, I express my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who took the time to either attend a listening session or complete the online survey. Truly, each of you are in our hearts and prayers.

(Sandi Patel is a member of St. Matthew the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis and a member of the archdiocesan pastoral planning committee. She is employed as a grant coordinator and consultant by the Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana.) †

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Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens of Crookston, Minn., chairman of the board of the National Eucharistic Congress Inc., announces on July 21, 2024—the final day of the National Eucharistic Congress at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis—that a eucharistic pilgrimage from Indianapolis to Los Angeles is planned for spring 2025. The pilgrimage, from Indianapolis to Los Angeles, will include stops in 10 states: Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California. (OSV News photo/Bob Roller)

Registration opens for 2025 National Eucharistic Pilgrimage events

(OSV News)—Public events for each leg of the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage have been posted and registration for participation is open, event organizers announced on April 10.

The 2025 St. Katharine Drexel Route, which begins on May 18 in Indianapolis and ends on June 22 in Los Angeles, will include eight young adult “perpetual pilgrims”—including two from the Archdiocese of Indianapolis—traveling with the Eucharist across 10 states and 20 dioceses, which will host opportunities for prayer, Mass and eucharistic adoration, charitable works and community fellowship.

Events are free to attend but require registration—including for a Mass celebrated by Archbishop Charles C. Thompson at 10:30 a.m. on May 18 at St. John the Evangelist Church in Indianapolis that will launch the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage. This Mass also marks the only pilgrimage stop in the archdiocese.

Advanced registration is especially encouraged for the pilgrimage’s final event, a *Corpus Christi* celebration including Mass, a eucharistic procession and festival in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, organizers said.

Speaking during an April 10 webinar, pilgrimage leaders—including Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens of Crookston, Minn., who serves as chairman of National Eucharistic Congress Inc.—shared details of this year’s pilgrimage in the context of the National Eucharistic Revival, a three-year initiative of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops that included last year’s multi-route National Eucharistic Pilgrimage and its destination, the National Eucharistic Congress, which drew nearly 60,000 Catholics to Indianapolis. The next national congress is being planned for 2029.

With the second National Eucharistic Pilgrimage

coinciding with the 2025 Jubilee Year of Hope, organizers wanted to underscore that theme of hope, Bishop Cozzens said.

“A big part of jubilees is pilgrimage,” he said. “Pilgrimages are really at the heart of what the Jubilee is about—pilgrimage always being that journey we make in the Christian life, but symbolized in these particular pilgrimages where we pray for conversion and for healing and for reconciliation, and, especially this year, for hope.”

The pilgrimage will serve as a way for people in the United States to participate in the Jubilee Year, and participants will have an opportunity to receive a plenary indulgence, Bishop Cozzens said. “It gives it the same weight as if you go to Rome,” he said.

According to Church teaching, a plenary indulgence removes temporal punishment caused by sin.

Named for St. Katharine Drexel, an American heiress-turned-religious-order-foundress and the first U.S.-born citizen to be canonized a saint, the route stretches more than 3,340 miles. In addition to 20 Roman Catholic dioceses, the route also includes four Eastern Catholic eparchies.

Because of the pilgrimage’s emphasis on hope and healing, several events will be held to pray for healing from national tragedies, including the Jan. 29 American Airlines Flight 5342 crash in Washington and the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing. In Los Angeles, organizers are working to finalize plans for a private procession with the perpetual pilgrims and families affected by January’s Palisades and Eaton wildfires, which devastated 60 square miles and killed 29 people.

Like last year, several dioceses are finding creative and meaningful ways to engage with the pilgrimage. While some dioceses are planning boat processions, Bishop Louis Tylka of Peoria, Ill., plans to fly in a helicopter

with the Eucharist to bless his predominantly rural diocese. The pilgrimage will stop at a school in Kansas City, Mo., founded by St. Katharine Drexel; a hospice care facility in Tulsa, Okla.; and a state prison in Fort Stockton, Texas.

The Drexel Route also offers stops at cathedrals, basilicas and shrines, and several touchpoints to several American saints or those who have causes for canonization, including venerables Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen in Peoria, Ill., and Father Emil Kapaun in Wichita, Kan., and Blessed Stanley Rother in Oklahoma City.

Organizers are expecting a large crowd for the pilgrimage’s closing events on the feast of *Corpus Christi* in Los Angeles.

“I do think we could see as many as 10,000 people or more, and we’re hoping to have a huge turnout for the witness of faith,” said Sarah Houde, the National Eucharistic Congress’ vice president of events and operations, who spoke at the webinar alongside Bishop Cozzens and her colleagues Maria Benes and Kris Frank.

The pilgrimage comes at “an exciting time in the National Eucharistic Congress movement,” Bishop Cozzens said. “We’re excited about future National Eucharistic Congresses, we’re excited about future National Eucharistic Pilgrimages, and we’re excited about continuing to start the fire of evangelization and mission that’s been so much of the heart of the Eucharistic Revival, this encounter and mission, and to bring that same movement forward to serve the Church, hopefully for generations.”

(To register for the Mass at 10:30 a.m. on May 18 at St. John the Evangelist Church in Indianapolis launching the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage, go to tinyurl.com/NEPMassMay18.) †

Congregations with Community offering grants for parishes to change lives

Criterion staff report

Congregations have long been a cornerstone for unity, compassion and resilience within neighborhoods. Now, with the availability of community grants, congregations can expand their impact by offering essential services, programs and initiatives that transform lives.

Congregations with Community (CWC), a division of the Indianapolis-based Center for Congregations, envisions a surge of active partnerships between congregations and their communities, strengthening their social fabric through collective action, said McKenzie Scott Lewis, senior director of CWC.

The organization’s mission is to energize collaboration between

congregations and community partners with shared values to address social opportunities as one unified voice. In its work, CWC strives to form lasting relationships, build unity, listen, inspire imagination and secure sustainability.

In its work, CWC offers grant funds to Indiana parishes to improve their communities. Here are some facts:

- Grants range from \$35,000-\$100,000.
- The parish must partner with a local community entity (i.e. a nonprofit, business, etc.).
- The parish and community entity partnership will address one pressing community issue.
- For more information on the grant opportunity, complete a contact form at www.cwcinc.org. †

Burmese Catholics pray for stricken homeland at start of Holy Week

By Sean Gallagher

It could be said that the Burmese people of Myanmar (formerly known as Burma) have been on their own long Way of the Cross.

COVID-19 struck the southeast Asian country as the pandemic swept around the world in 2020. A year later, the country’s military took power in a coup, sparking an ongoing civil war. Major flooding caused great destruction a year ago.

And on March 28, a magnitude 7.7 earthquake struck Myanmar, killing more than 3,300 people and injuring more than 4,800.

At the start of Holy Week, some 250 Burmese Catholics living in the archdiocese gathered with Archbishop Charles C. Thompson at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis to pray for the suffering country in a Palm Sunday Mass.

Most of the Burmese Catholics living in the archdiocese have moved to Indianapolis after fleeing religious and ethnic persecution in Myanmar. Most of them are members of St. Barnabas, St. Mark the Evangelist and St. Pius X parishes, all in Indianapolis.

Father Luigi Hla Shwe, a Burmese priest serving as parochial vicar at St. Pius Parish, reflected on the suffering Myanmar is experiencing in light of the Hebrew people of Jesus’ time who sought help from God that would lead them to freedom from Roman oppression—a desire evident in the account of Christ’s passion proclaimed during the Mass.

Father Shwe preached his homily in Burmese and provided a translation of it to *The Criterion*.

“Like the people of Jesus’ time, some of us are standing in that same place right now,” he said. “We cry out, ‘God, where are you? When will you show up? When will you move in my life, in the life of my family, in this world?’ ”

But just as God in Jesus answered the cries of the people 2,000 years ago in a way they didn’t expect, Father Shwe invited his listeners to be open to God’s mysterious ways now.

“God doesn’t ignore our desperation. He moves toward it. But He doesn’t always bring the rescue we expect. He brings the rescue we need. Sometimes we ask God to show up in a specific way—and when he doesn’t, we think he’s not working. But maybe God is doing something better than we imagined. Just different.”

In remarks at the end of the Mass, Rita Hwin, a Burmese Catholic who serves as a pastoral associate at

St. Pius Parish, expressed the Burmese Catholic community’s gratitude for Archbishop Thompson coming to pray with them.

“Your presence and unwavering support provide us with hope and remind us that we are not alone on this difficult journey,” Hwin said. “... Myanmar has lost so much, yet its people remain resilient and unshaken in spirit. Together, let us continue to pray, hope, support each other, and act. Thank you all for being here tonight again, and for caring so deeply for our homeland.”

Assisting at the Mass was archdiocesan seminarian Khaing Thu, a Burmese Catholic who is a member of St. Mark the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis.

“I felt a lot of hope in just being here,” said Thu after the Mass. “Being here, united in prayer, just shows how much we are connected. Even though we may be separated physically, we feel very close spiritually to our own people here in the states, but also those in Myanmar, especially those who are suffering.”

Angela Dim, a St. Mark parishioner who was resettled in Indianapolis in 2009, had mixed feelings as she came to the Mass at Roncalli.

“I feel happy that we have the opportunity to pray together for the people of Burma,” Dim said. “This is what God wants. We are uniting our hearts together to pray together for Burma. We feel so happy about that.”



Mary Lian, a member of St. Mark the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis, holds hands while praying during an April 12 Mass at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis. Burmese Catholics in the archdiocese gathered at the liturgy to pray for their home country of Myanmar, which was struck by a major earthquake on March 28. (Photos by Sean Gallagher)



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson blesses palms held by Burmese Catholics living in the archdiocese at the start of an April 12 Palm Sunday Mass at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis.



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson prays the eucharistic prayer during an April 12 Palm Sunday Mass at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis. Concelebrating are Father John Mang, left, Father Eustace Thang, Father Eric Johnson, Father Francis Joseph Kalapurackal and Father Showreddy Thirumalareddy. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

said. “They’ve known suffering. But they’re people of great faith, of great hope, of great passion for the Gospel. “As much as they’ve suffered in adversity, they also continue to be persevering in their faith. They don’t let the cross get the best of them. They continue to look beyond it to the empty tomb and the resurrection.” †

Burmese archbishop encourages hope as death toll in Myanmar surpasses 3,300

(OSV News)—Burmese Archbishop Marco Tin Win of Mandalay said that, despite the suffering caused by a deadly earthquake on March 28, the people of Myanmar are clinging to hope in God’s mercy. In an interview published on April 3 with Fides, the news agency of the Dicastery for Evangelization, Archbishop Win said that the suffering of his people has brought them closer to God and that “today, our people have hope in God’s mercy, in the certainty of his love. “There is a divine message that transcends our human intelligence and understanding,” he said. “Our only way is to entrust ourselves to his merciful love and reaffirm our hope in God’s plan of salvation,” he said. The epicenter of the 7.7 magnitude earthquake struck Mandalay, the country’s

second largest city, on March 28, destroying roads, buildings and religious sites. According to the governing military junta, as of April 5, the death toll stood at 3,354, with 4,850 others wounded and 220 still missing. The earthquake struck at a time of uncertainty due to the ongoing civil war between resistance groups and Myanmar’s governing military junta, which overthrew the previous democratically elected government in 2021. Resistance groups, according to several reports, have accused the military-led government of continuing its bombing of rebel-controlled areas and not prioritizing relief efforts. While it had rejected initial calls for a pause in military operations from resistance groups, the government declared a ceasefire from April 3-22, The Associated Press reported.

However, according to AP, the military government warned it would take “necessary” action if resistance groups trained new recruits or launched an attack. Archbishop Win told Fides that as soon as the earthquake began, the city’s priests and religious “raised the alarm and brought people to safety” in churches, monasteries and the local seminary. “We made sure no one was injured. We encouraged and comforted frightened children and people on the streets. Many sought refuge in the church complexes that are still accessible. With our modest means, we share water, food and shelter with them while we await further external assistance,” he said. The archbishop also said three of the 40 churches in the Archdiocese of Mandalay collapsed, while others “all have minor or major cracks.”

“About 25 churches are no longer suitable for the safe celebration of services. The intermediate seminary in the city of Mandalay is also severely damaged, and the minor seminary in Pyin Oo Lwin has cracks in its building structure,” the Burmese archbishop said. Archbishop Win told Fides he saw how the tragic earthquake in Myanmar has united people “regardless of ethnicity, faith, or social class” and that witnessing the solidarity and charity toward one another was “a beautiful sign.” “It consoles us to see that the entire Church does not abandon us, neither nationally nor universally,” he said. “Even the pope prays for us and gives us comfort and hope. Easter is just around the corner: we are in God’s hands and will rise with Christ. In the year of the Jubilee, we renew our hope in Christ.” †

Religious leaders condemn Russia’s Palm Sunday attack on Ukraine

(OSV News)—Catholic and other religious leaders are condemning a Palm Sunday attack by Russia on a Ukrainian city that killed 34—including two children—and injured 119.

“When we celebrate the feast of life, the enemy wishes to inflict its feast of death on us,” said Major Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk, head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, in an April 13 statement.

Two ballistic missiles launched by Russia earlier that same day struck the center of Sumy, a city in northeastern Ukraine located some 15 miles from the Russian border.

The second missile was “likely packed with fragmentation elements” and “exploded in midair to inflict maximum damage on people in the city streets,” said Serhii Kryvosheienko of the Sumy Military Administration in a post on the Telegram social media platform.



Major Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk

He said the second strike “caused most of the casualties.”

“This is nothing but another crime against humanity,” said Major Archbishop Shevchuk.

The Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations (UCCRO), the largest organization of religious leaders in Ukraine, also condemned the strikes, which took place amid both the Jewish holiday of Passover (on April 12-20, 2025) and the Christian observance of Holy Week.

“Despite the festal period associated with the celebration of the Jewish Passover and Christian Easter, the Russian state continues to terrorize Ukrainian cities and villages day and night with drone and missile attacks, as well as shelling,” said the council in a statement.

“Such actions demonstrate that nothing is sacred for the state that declares itself to be ‘Holy Rus,’ ” the council added, referencing a longstanding theological and political concept that positions Russia as a defender of traditional Christian values.

Russian leader Vladimir Putin and Patriarch Kirill,

head of the Russian Orthodox Church, have invoked the concept to justify Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, which continues attacks launched in 2014, and which has been declared a genocide in two joint reports from the New Lines Institute and the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights.

UCCRO said in its statement that Russia’s Palm Sunday strike showed “basic respect for the value of human life is absent, not to mention respect for the holidays of Christianity and Judaism.”

The attack drew condemnation from numerous heads of state, including French President Emmanuel Macron, Canada Prime Minister Mark Carney, United Kingdom Prime Minister Keir Starmer and Moldova President Maia Sandu, who said in an April 13 post on X that “Palm Sunday is a day of peace,” and that “there is no justification for such evil.”

Ukraine President Voldymyr Zelenskyy called for a global response to the strikes, which followed a similar April 4 attack by Russia on a playground in his hometown of Kryvyi Rih. Nine children were among the 20 killed in that strike. †

EVANS

continued from page 4

And there, at last, is the way that certainty yields to hope.

If the Church won’t pronounce the meaning of Jesus’ words to Judas, then anything is still possible.

Maybe it would’ve been better if Judas had never been born because the saying

is a turn of phrase—something you say in anger about a person who lets an unbelievable act of evil pass through their hands.

Maybe, against all hope, Jesus’ words aren’t so much a final condemnation as much as a challenge. Are we bold and reckless enough to ask for the impossible?

The question of Judas’ salvation is not a foolish one. It’s absolutely relevant to a whole lot of us who need that kind of

hope for ourselves. The Church *has* to be able to look at people in those times that they don’t think they can or should be forgiven and offer the heart of a Savior whose desire for pardon is deeper than whatever shame and darkness we can muster.

So long as this world endures, the story of every person is not yet finished. Through the power of prayer, the dead *still live* in the precious

secrecy of their last moments.

The unseen and unrecorded are waiting to be decided, even if it seems like they already are.

There is still time.

(Sight Unseen is an occasional column that explores God and the world. Brandon A. Evans is the online editor and graphic designer of The Criterion and a member of St. Susanna Parish in Plainfield.) †

GALLAGHER

continued from page 4

God’s will in our lives can sometimes feel like one more expectation laid on our shoulders. To a certain degree, that’s inescapable in this life.

On this Good Friday, the Church in its worship recalls how our Lord knew that well in his agony in the garden of Gethsemane where he prayed to be relieved of the suffering that lay before him. Yet he resolutely finished his prayer by saying with conviction to his heavenly Father, “Your will be done”

(Mt 26:39; Mk 14:36; Lk 22:42).

While seeking to fulfill God’s will for us in our daily lives can sometimes seem like a heavy load of expectations, it’s good for us to remember that God’s will for us will lead us to happiness and fulfillment—in this life and the next—just as it led Christ from the agony of Calvary

to the joy of his resurrection.

Relief might at times be the best we can expect in this life. In the life of the eternal wedding fest of the lamb in heaven, we’ll experience infinite joy.

(Sean Gallagher is a reporter for The Criterion.) †





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SIMPLY CATHOLIC

Christ’s resurrection is celebrated with joy throughout the Easter season

By D.D. Emmons

(OSV News)—Just the word “Easter” brings thoughts of new life, springtime, of freshness, of the resurrection. This is not only a day—not only a few weeks on the Church calendar—but, for Christians, a way of life.

Many, from St. Augustine to Pope St. John Paul II, have said we are an “Easter people.” Our faith invites us to carry the joys of Easter with us in every aspect of our lives. God gives us the assurance of eternal life on Easter, and the Church perpetuates this assurance, extending the glory of Easter, rich in tradition and meaning.

Despite our Lenten preparations, all the events of Easter Day are impossible to assimilate in a 24-hour period. In response to our human limitations, the Church gives us more time, until Pentecost, to absorb this miracle. For the next 50 days, the stories and events of that day are amplified to us.

The Church’s “General Norms of the Liturgical Year and the Calendar,” quoting St. Athanasius, says, “The 50 days from Easter Sunday to Pentecost are celebrated in joyful exultation as one feast day, or better as ‘one great Sunday’ ” (#22). This period is now known as the Easter season. It has also been traditionally called “Eastertide.”

The first eight days, beginning with Easter Sunday, is the octave of Easter. Each octave day is a solemnity, the highest-ranking feast in the Church, and we hear those vivid accounts of that first Easter. During the 50 days, the Church helps us to unlock the mysteries and miracles of Easter.

Earlier in Church history, the first week after Easter was known as “white week” because those baptized on Easter would attend daily Mass wearing their white baptismal garments. In our time, for those who received the sacraments of initiation at the Easter Vigil, these days are commonly used to continue their formation in the sacraments and the paschal mysteries.

The last Sunday of the octave was, for centuries, called Low Sunday to differentiate it from the glories of Easter Sunday. Today, the octave ends with Divine Mercy Sunday. Pope St. John Paul II introduced this feast into the Church calendar during the canonization of St. Faustina Kowalska in April 2000. In addition to Mass, Divine Mercy Sunday services, often taking place on Sunday afternoon, focus us on the divine mercy of God as reflected through the paschal mysteries and in our lives.

The Church offers us a plenary indulgence if we take part in these Divine Mercy devotions, have gone to confession, received Communion and prayed for the intentions of the Holy Father.

The Easter season is a time when Catholics perform what has been traditionally called their “Easter Duty.” Canon law lays out Catholics’ obligation to receive Communion annually at least at Easter time. In the United States, this period is between Easter and Trinity Sunday. Before Communion, those with unconfessed mortal sin are



Juan Perez Patino is baptized at St. Stephen Church in Old Hickory, Tenn., on April 8, 2023, during his parish’s celebration of the Easter Vigil. The Church’s Easter season is a time when all the faithful renew their baptismal promises. (osv News photo/Katie Peterson, Tennessee Register)



Worshippers light candles from a paschal candle during a celebration of the Easter Vigil on March 30, 2024, at the St. Joanes, Leggio Maria of African Church Mission within Fort Jesus in the Kibera district of Nairobi, Kenya. (OSV News photo/Monica Mwangi, Reuters)

obligated to take part in the sacrament of penance.

First Communion for children is also often connected to Eastertide. From Holy Saturday through the Saturday after Pentecost, the Church honors the Blessed Mother with the praying of the “*Regina Coeli*” (“Queen of Heaven”) instead of the “*Angelus*,” traditionally at 6 a.m., noon and 6 p.m.

Forty days into the season, the Church commemorates the feast of the Ascension. Jesus returns to the Father and thus offers a foretaste of what is in store for us. St. Leo the Great said, “Christ’s ascension is our own ascension; our body has the hope of one day being where its glorious head has preceded it.”

After the Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord is another period of preparation and prayer, readying our hearts for the great feast of Pentecost. This day commemorates the sending of the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, as Christ had promised he would be sent.

With the celebration of Pentecost, a liturgy ranked by the Church only behind Easter and Christmas, we return to Ordinary Time. The Easter season is over, but Easter never ends.

We often hear that, without belief in the resurrection, the Christian faith has no basis, no foundation. Indeed, St. Paul tells us in his First Letter to the Corinthians that “if Christ has not been raised, then empty is our preaching; empty, too, your faith” (1 Cor 15:14).

The crux of the matter is that Christ died for us; Christ rose from the dead; Christ is alive. St. Paul noted that the risen Christ “appeared to more than five hundred brothers at once” (1 Cor 15:6). The four Gospel writers separately recount numerous appearances of the resurrected Christ before his disciples.

The Mass readings on Easter Sunday take us back to that first Easter. We experience the roller-coaster emotions of the women who arrive at the empty tomb and hear the angelic message, “He is not here, but he has been raised” (Lk 24:6). They wouldn’t begin to understand what really happened until they had a personal encounter with Jesus.

Our Lord was not medically revived from death like someone in a hospital or brought back to life in the manner of Lazarus. When Christ rose from the dead; he would not die again. The few followers who were at the crucifixion saw Jesus die and his body sealed in the tomb. They thought the story ended on that Good Friday; no one anticipated the Resurrection.

These followers were dismayed, confused, astounded and eventually, like

us, joyous when they realized he lived. To confirm their shaken faith, Jesus would appear to them several times during the next 40 days.

Symbolizing the risen Savior, the Easter candle was likely introduced into Easter celebrations soon after the Council of Nicaea in 325. Today, this ancient sacramental glorifies the beautiful rituals of the Easter Vigil. The Easter candle represents the light of the world, the fire that led the Israelites through the desert.

The candle is marked with the Greek letters “alpha” and “omega,” proclaiming that Christ is eternal, the beginning and the end. Five grains of incense representing Christ’s five wounds are also traditionally inserted onto the candle. After the Easter season, the Easter candle is placed near a church’s baptismal font. The candle is lit at baptisms and funerals, reflecting back on the Resurrection.

Among the contentious issues of the early Christians was a disagreement over the date of Easter. That the Resurrection took place at the time of the Passover was not argued, but the exact date when the event should be commemorated was an issue. The faithful of the Church in the East wanted the date of Easter to be on the day when the Passover is celebrated, the 14th of Nisan (April).

That meant, based on the lunar calendar, the celebration could fall on any day of the week. The faithful in the Church in the West wanted Easter to be held on the Sunday after the Passover, as that was the day of the Resurrection.

Fixing the date became so heated that, in the second century, the Bishop of Rome, St. Victor I, threatened that anyone disagreeing with the West’s position would be excommunicated. At the First Ecumenical Council, held in Nicaea in 325, the problem was resolved. Easter would be observed on the Sunday after the first full moon following the spring equinox (the first day of spring). That means that it would take place on a Sunday between March 21 and April 25. Even with this ecumenical decision, it was centuries later before the date was universal among western Christians.

Today, variations on the dating of Easter occur between Catholics and Orthodox Christians, not because of the controversies of the early Church, but because of the acceptance (or lack thereof) of the reforms to the calendar brought about by Pope Gregory XIII in 1582.

During this 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea, Pope Francis, in a gesture to promote Christian unity, has offered to seek to establish with the Orthodox Churches a common method for establishing the date for Easter.

Despite the ongoing divisions among Christians on the date of Easter, they remain united in celebrating with great joy the rising of Christ to new and eternal life.

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

Evangelization Outreach/Father James Brockmeier

A season for mystagogy and evangelization for our new Catholics

The Church is full of new Catholics! As we move into the Easter season and continue to celebrate the resurrection of Christ, all our new Catholics, or neophytes, are continuing their formation through mystagogy, a time of reflection on the sacraments they have received and how they have experienced God’s grace through baptism, confirmation and the Eucharist.

The practice of mystagogy dates to the early Church. St. Cyril of Jerusalem wrote five lessons for those who had just received the sacraments for the first time.

To those who have received the Eucharist for the first time, he wrote, “Don’t judge from the taste, but from faith be fully assured without doubt, that the Body and Blood of Christ have been given to you.”

Learning to see the sacraments through the lens of faith takes time and reflection. But through this reflection, we can begin to see not only the sacraments but the whole of our lives through the lens of God’s

saving grace, not just what we can see or taste. From the time of St. Cyril until now, using this season to reflect on the great gifts of God’s grace in the sacraments helps new Catholics and can help us to grow in our understanding and love for God’s unseen graces. As we continue to celebrate the gift of so many new Catholics in our parishes, we should not forget the call to continue to invite more people to meet Christ and his Church.

A few weeks ago, my parish, SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis, had a discussion after Mass about Lenten almsgiving.

While everyone was getting coffee and settling in, a parishioner came up to me and introduced me to a woman who had come to our parish for the first time. As our morning of discussion continued, more and more parishioners stopped me to introduce me to her. By the end of the morning, we had been “introduced” five times. I could see that she was touched by this hospitality.

Often, evangelization begins with what can be seen and felt. When we have conversations with our friends and neighbors about our faith or when we invite someone to go with us to Mass, their interest in coming back may

not be based on the intricacies of the Church’s teaching or our theology of sacraments. It will be because they have seen our joy and peace, or they have heard the conviction in our voices when talking about Christ, or they have experienced the beauty of the church building and the Mass.

Then, you can invite them to learn more about the faith in the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA) and you can go with them, perhaps becoming their sponsor.

If you ask the new Catholics around you, they will tell you how an invitation helped them to go from appreciating what can be seen to believing in God’s invisible grace, how the bread they saw their first time coming to a Catholic Mass is the body and blood of Christ.

Evangelize now, invite your friends and neighbors to Mass, so that this time next year, we can rejoice again in more lives transformed by the sacraments.

(Father James Brockmeier is the director of the Office of Worship within the archdiocesan Secretariat for Evangelizing Catechesis. He can be reached at jbrockmeier@archindy.org.) †

That All May Be One/Fr. Rick Ginther

Prayer is integral element in building bridges of faith in ecumenical efforts

We have come to the end of Lent. We are now in the Easter triduum (the great three days). The triduum concludes with the celebration of Easter, when we can say or sing “Alleluia!”

For all Christians, Easter is a common celebration and season. This has been true for centuries. As noted in this column last month, however, the date of Easter is not a common one.

Lent among some reformed Christians has not been a part of their worship or seasonal tradition until recently.

In the last 60 years, Lent has taken on a more widespread practice for what some would call “mainline Protestant churches.” This includes the distribution of ashes on Ash Wednesday.

These renewed practices are usually by the first- or second-generation reformation churches. An outlier would be the Episcopal/Anglican and Lutheran communions. They have maintained the majority of Catholic Lenten practices since the 16th century.

The age of ecumenism is in part the cause of this change. After the Second Vatican Council, Catholics and other Christians began to experience one another in service activities and common prayer.

Many clergy of these congregations began to meet as clergy associations, eating together and planning joint service projects or seasonal prayer services.

As a deacon, priest and pastor, I have experienced such in Tell City, Richmond, Terre Haute and, most recently, Indianapolis.

Our Lady of Lourdes Parish sits within historic Irvington on the city’s east side. For decades, the parish’s pastor has been a part of the Irvington Association of Ministers (IAM). It consists of Episcopalians, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, two Disciples of Christ churches and Catholic, Methodist and Presbyterian congregations.

One of IAM’s annual ecumenical efforts is a Lenten soup and bread meal and prayer service.

In recent years, all member churches celebrate their own Ash Wednesday service. The following five Wednesday nights of Lent are the setting for the soup and prayer gatherings.

At an early winter monthly meeting, IAM pastors discuss what theme will guide the five weeks. This year it was “The Holy Within.” Once that is decided, five of the churches offer to host the meal and prayer.

The meal is a Lenten feast of the best soups the congregation members can prepare. It falls short of being a competition, but it surely is delicious!

The prayer is in the tradition of the host church. The presider is usually the pastor, and the preacher is one of the other ministers from another congregation. He or she chooses a Scripture text through which to reflect on the theme. The variety of prayer forms and preaching is uplifting and eye-opening.

The neighboring churches created the Irvington Community Advocacy Network a number of years ago. It is an outreach initiative to assist the hungry, the poor and the homeless.

All congregations support this outreach with monetary, food, clothing and emergency donations. All provide volunteers for the food pantry and the clothes closet. These efforts are overseen by a part-time director. The members also offer support and prayers for the success of the individual congregation’s outreach efforts.

The person of Jesus Christ, his life, death and resurrection; our common trinitarian faith; the Gospel command (Mt 25:31-46) to care for the needy; and our seeking to fulfill the Lord’s longing that “all may be one” (Jn 17:21) impel the member churches in these ecumenical efforts.

Prayer undergirds all that we do together. Prayers offer support to each congregation. It is truly a blessing rooted in the paschal mystery! Alleluia!

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

It Is Good/Elizabeth Scalia

When worn out by the noisy, tiresome digital age, turn to God for peace

Like many writers, Flannery O’Connor once observed that she didn’t really know what she thought about anything until she’d written about it, and I suspect that became true for many as we became a keyboarding, text-based digital society.

In retrospect, some of what we were thinking turned out to have been wrong-headed or plain stupid, but 20 years ago, as the century turned and blogs proliferated, it felt like we were all engaged in the discovery of our own thinking—figuring out who we really were, based on our words, which were revealing us to ourselves.

How fascinating we were! How enthralling to post a thought and find engagement with others in the comments section! For a while we were even talking to each other in good faith—challenging but also listening, considering the other guy’s opinions. I frequently likened it to an Irish Cyberpub, where one could meet up, engage in good-natured argumentation that (occasionally) could even change one’s perspective, and go at it again next day with no hard feelings.

We should have known better, of course. Hadn’t we already learned that bringing TV screens into every facet of life meant losing a measure of control over who (and what) was being admitted into our homes, influencing our families and impacting our minds, our morals, our material values and our social make-up?

Eventually, especially with the advent of social media, the effect of more screens, more thoughts, more “world,”

(now held in our very hands) brought that black-mirrored effect into a toxic hyperdrive.

The heyday of guileless digital discussion devolved, curdling into screaming distrust and lunatic malice that has brought us to a place where moral denunciations and cries of heresy (religious or political) become justifications for life-ruining events: a stupid joke must destroy a career; feeling disrespected warrants publishing home addresses for public harassment.

The Irish Cyberpub has disappeared, replaced with a noisy, agenda-agitated miasma of predictable pronouncements and pointlessness. With any headline, one knows exactly what a particular pundit (and we are all pundits, now) will say before looking, and so logging on is increasingly unnecessary.

As is posting, in fact. Perhaps we’ve all written so much we’ve confounded Flannery’s rule, and know our thinking all too well, which means we’ve actually stopped thinking, period. Jane Eyre, wandering aimlessly in her institutional chamber, confides to the reader, “I tired of the routine of eight years in one afternoon.”

This is where I have landed, lately. The repetitiously polemical prayers of the internet (and indeed, they are prayers, for as Augustine said, “Your desire is your prayer…”) consist mostly of media-fed clockwork outrage, incessant indignation and unfettered hate, hate, hate offered to the gods of whatever ideology or agenda is currently spinning one’s individual little world. Cascades of rage drown out the small, uplifting reads we might find as we scroll endlessly, looking for something to “like” that meets our ever-sinking standards.

No one is saying anything new or surprising, and no

one is listening, anyway. Society has become saturated and overstimulated, no longer able to believe that there is more at work in the universe than what we can see with our eyes or perceive in our twitterfied, hyperventilated upsettments.

Within me is a growing certainty that I must pay attention to what is unseen, direct my own energy into cooperating with that invisible and supernatural unknown by attending to God in prayer and meditation, by recalling that despite the dazzling whirl and vulgarity of the casino, God is running the tables, and the house always wins.

God is good and full of mercy, with plans for us—plans of fullness, not of harm. Increasingly I feel called to serve that reality, to quiet down and let the frenzied world turn its terrible ways while in the grips of a chaotic magic that has been increasing in its scope for many decades.

It’s difficult to say something newish, something less predictable, to a world that really doesn’t care, is entrenched in its own enthrallments and can’t be bothered to look up, quiet down and think. Social media is destroying us; we think we are innocently killing time, but we are killing ourselves.

The psalms, this Lenten season, have given me an assignment of daily prayer, and I take it up willingly, particularly for all of us victims of social media:

“For love of my brethren and friends I say: Peace upon you. For love of the house of the Lord I will ask for your good” (Ps 122:8-9).

(Elizabeth Scalia is editor at large for OSV. Follow her on X @the anchoress.) †

Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, April 20, 2025

- Acts of the Apostles 10:34a, 37-43
- Colossians 3:1-4
- John 20:1-9

The Church celebrates the Easter Vigil late in the evening on Holy Saturday. These readings are those proclaimed during Masses on Easter Sunday itself.

For its first reading on this extraordinary feast of Christian faith, the Church presents us with a passage from the Acts of the Apostles. Acts is, in effect, a continuation of

St. Luke’s Gospel, with scholars suggesting that this Gospel and Acts were the work of the same author. Beginning with Christ’s ascension, Acts reports the life of the infant Church in Jerusalem and the initial spread of Christianity.

Important in the early chapters of Acts is a series of sermons delivered by St. Peter. He always spoke for the Church and especially for the surviving Apostles. In the sermon heard in this reading, Peter briefly gives a synopsis of the life of Jesus. Sent by God, Jesus was crucified, the victim of human scheming. He rose after death and commissioned the Apostles to continue the work of reconciling God and humanity. The Apostles learned from Jesus.

St. Paul’s Epistle to the Colossians, the source of the second reading, places Christ at God’s right hand. It says that Christians already “were raised” because they have taken Christ into their hearts (Col 3:1). Having given themselves to Jesus, they have died to earthly things and rejected earthly ideas. In the process, they have been drawn into the eternal life of the risen Lord.

St. John’s Gospel supplies the last reading. It goes into some detail about the Resurrection and its aftermath. The first figure mentioned in the story is Mary Magdalene. She was a beloved figure in early Christianity because she was an intense follower of Christ. Indeed, according to John’s Gospel, she stood beneath the cross of Calvary, refusing to abandon the dying Lord.

It was risky. She might have been construed to be an accomplice in treason against the Roman Empire. Yet she remained, despite the danger and the unforgiving Romans.

She went to Christ’s tomb before daybreak. Finding it empty, she hurried to Peter and the disciple whom Jesus loved. (Tradition long has assumed this disciple to be John, although this disciple is never identified by name in this Gospel.)

Peter and the disciple then rushed to the tomb themselves. It was overwhelming for them. Love and faith made the process easier. When the beloved disciple saw that the tomb was empty, he believed that Jesus had risen.

Reflection

It is said that, despite all the horrors of the Russian invasion of Ukraine that began in 2022, many Ukrainians still pause to observe Easter. A Ukrainian Easter tradition, centuries old, is the decoration of Easter eggs. The magnificence of their decorations puts American Easter eggs to shame.

Ukrainian eggs are not just colored, but they are festooned with the most intricate, artistic designs because, for them, an Easter egg symbolizes the tomb of Christ.

The tomb in which reposed the body of the crucified Lord was the most special of all tombs, hence the elaborate decoration.

From the tomb, on Easter morning, in the most stunning event of human history, Jesus emerged, alive once again. His grace lived. His merciful forgiveness lived. Salvation lived. People could have hope.

People today, in Christ, can have hope, confident of finding, really and truly, the way to peace in their lives, to eternal life, and to justice and peace in communities all around the world.

All of us should share the excitement of Mary Magdalene and of the Apostles when they realized on the morning of the first Easter that the Lord lives!

Aware of this thrilling fact, the first Christians totally committed themselves to Christ, listening to Peter, doing the work of the Lord. †

Daily Readings

Monday, April 21
Monday within the Octave of Easter
Acts 2:14, 22-33
Psalm 16:1-2a, 5, 7-11
Matthew 28:8-15

Tuesday, April 22
Tuesday within the Octave of Easter
Acts 2:36-41
Psalm 33:4-5, 18-20, 22
John 20:11-18

Wednesday, April 23
Wednesday within the Octave of Easter
Acts 3:1-10
Psalm 105:1-4, 6-9
Luke 24:13-35

Thursday, April 24
Thursday within the Octave of Easter
Acts 3:11-26

Psalm 8:2a, 5-9
Luke 24:35-48

Friday, April 25
Friday within the Octave of Easter
Acts 4:1-12
Psalm 118:1-2, 4, 22-27a
John 21:1-14

Saturday, April 26
Saturday within the Octave of Easter
Acts 4:13-21
Psalm 118:1, 14-15b, 16-21
Mark 16:9-15

Sunday, April 27
Second Sunday of Easter
Divine Mercy Sunday
Acts 5:12-16
Psalm 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24
Revelation 1:9-11a, 12-13, 17-19
John 20:19-31

Question Corner/Jenna Marie Cooper

Christ’s forgiveness lives on in the Church in the sacrament of penance

How could Jesus’ death “cleanse us from our sins” and “assure our entrance into heaven”? If that is the case,



why do we need confession?

First of all, since it pertains to some of the deepest mysteries of our faith, I think the exact “mechanics” of how Jesus’ passion and death redeemed the

fallen human race are ultimately going to be beyond our full understanding. But by that same token, this means it is something we can ponder for the rest of our lives without ever exhausting the theme.

St. Leo the Great makes an effort to explain this in one of his letters, a passage of which the Church includes in the Liturgy of the Hours for the Solemnity of the Annunciation on March 25 in the Office of Readings:

“To pay the debt of our sinful state, a nature that was incapable of suffering was joined to one that could suffer. Thus, in keeping with the healing that we needed, one and the same mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ, was able to die in one nature, and unable to die in the other.”

As we recall, Adam and Eve, the first humans created, introduced sin into the human experience by their primordial act of disobedience toward God. From that time on, humanity has been laboring under the negative effects of this original sin.

These effects include the inevitability of suffering and bodily death, as well as a certain inborn weakness of the will and a tendency toward sin (in technical language called “concupiscence”). All humans everywhere are subject to these

negative effects, even if they have not personally committed any serious sins themselves.

As the rift caused by original sin was so radical and severe, human beings on their own are unable to repair this breach. However, we believe that in the incarnation, the second person of the Trinity, the eternal Word of God, “became flesh and made his dwelling among us” (Jn 1:14).

We believe that Jesus, son of God and son of Mary, was one person with two natures, meaning that he was both fully human and fully divine. Jesus in his human nature endured a human death, but because he was God he had the power to resurrect himself and did not remain dead. Since he took on our nature, we as humans can, with the help of his grace, follow the path Jesus took in inheriting eternal life.

Similarly, Jesus’ perfect obedience to God’s will as the “new Adam” has the power to free humanity as a whole from the guilt incurred by the sin of the first Adam. (See 1 Cor 15:45.)

However, even with these great gifts which Jesus has made available to us, God still respects our free will and it always remains our choice to accept or reject God’s offer of his friendship and eternal life. Our baptism is what initially conforms us to Jesus in this way, and baptism is always a choice, either our own choice or—for those who were too young to speak for ourselves—a choice on the part of our parents.

Baptism frees us from the guilt—sometimes poetically referred to as the “stain”—of original sin. Yet, any time we personally commit a sin, we are deliberately rejecting God and thus the gift of redemption which Jesus gained for us. A serious “mortal” or deadly sin totally cuts us off from God; and this essentially brings us back to square one, as it is effectively forfeiting our share in the life and forgiveness gained by Jesus’ passion, death and resurrection.

Even less serious venial sins can still damage our relationship with God and can make it easier to fall into more serious sin.

Still, we know that God is totally loving and merciful, and is always ready to forgive. And this is why Jesus gave the Church the sacrament of penance, to provide a means for reconciliation after post-baptismal sins.

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

My Journey to God

The Last Phrases of Jesus

By Andrea Fleck

I sit and think of Jesus’ words
I hear the chirping of the birds
I ponder and see Him hanging there
My heart feels heavy and I whisper a prayer.

What meaning do these words have for me?
These words from my Savior hanging from a tree.
How can they change my life so bland,
Into something that in His eyes would be grand?

“Forgive them,” You say, “they know not what they do.”
Could I do this in my life just to please you?
“Today you’ll be with me in Paradise.”
Can it be I will see it with my own eyes!

Giving your Mother to all us on Earth,
This Holy Woman who was there at Your birth.
She loves us so deeply so that we might
Be close to You as we give her our plight.

“My God, My God,” did You really leave
Your only Son to cry and grieve?
You did not leave, but stepped aside,



So we could see our lives when not in your stride.
“I thirst,” He said. Was He talking to me?
What can I give that will set me free?
My will, my problems, my good and my bad,
What greater freedom have I ever had?!

“It is finished.” Dear Father, I can almost hear it.
“Into Your Hands” He commends His Spirit.
The Seven Last Phrases of Jesus our Lord,

(Andrea Fleck is a member of St. Roch Parish in. Photo: Pictured here is the crucifix in the reredos that stands behind the altar in Prince of Peace Church in Madison in the Seymour Deanery)
(Photo by Natalie Hoefer)

Divine Mercy Sunday services will be celebrated on April 27

Divine Mercy Sunday services are scheduled on April 27 at parish churches across central and southern Indiana. All services are open to the public.

St. Pope John Paul II instituted the observance of Divine Mercy Sunday—which is based on the visions of St. Faustina Kowalska, a member of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy—on the first Sunday after Easter.

To learn more about the indulgence and promises connected to Divine Mercy Sunday, go to www.thedivinemercy.org.

A plenary indulgence is available to those who go to confession about 20 days before or after the feast day, and who on the feast day receive Communion, pray for the intentions of the pope and either take part in Divine Mercy Sunday devotions or, in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament exposed or reserved in a tabernacle, recite the Our Father and the Creed, adding a prayer to the merciful Lord Jesus, such as “Merciful Jesus, I trust in you!”

Divine Mercy Sunday prayer services reported to *The Criterion* are as follows:

Batesville Deanery

- St. Michael Church**, 145 St. Michael Blvd., Brookville. 3 p.m., Divine Mercy Chaplet sung by Matt Keck, Deacon Steven Tsuleff speaker. Information: 765-647-5462, brookvilleparishes@gmail.com.
- St. Nicholas Church** (Ripley County), 6469 E. St. Nicholas Dr., Sunman. 2:30 p.m. exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, Scripture reading and reflection, Litany of the Precious Blood; 3 p.m. Chaplet of Divine Mercy followed by Benediction. Information: 812-623-2348, communications@stnicholas-sunman.org.

Bloomington Deanery

- Mother of the Redeemer Retreat Center Sacred Heart Chapel**, 8220 W. State Road 48, Bloomington. **April 26:** 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Day of Reflection, Franciscans of the Immaculate Father Terrance Chartier presenting, Mass at noon. **April 27:** 1-4 p.m. Day of Reflection: 1 p.m. adoration and confession, 1:45 p.m. Benediction, 2 p.m. Mass and blessing of images, 3 p.m. procession with relic and sung Divine Mercy Chaplet. Information: 812-825-4642, ext. 1, motheroftheredeemer.com.
- St. Martin of Tours Church**, 1709 N. Harrison St., Martinsville. 11 a.m. Chaplet of Divine Mercy.

- Information: 765-342-6379.
- St. Vincent de Paul Church**, 1723 “I” St., Bedford. 2 p.m. confessions, 3 p.m. Divine Mercy service. Information; 812-275-6539, parish@svsbedford.org.

Connersville Deanery

- St. Gabriel Church**, 232 W. 9th St., Connersville. 3-4 p.m., exposition of Blessed Sacrament, confession, Benediction, Divine Mercy Chaplet sung by youth groups of St. Gabriel, St. Bridget of Ireland Parish in Liberty and St. Mary Parish in Rushville. Information: 765-825-8578, mfronckowiak@stgabrielconnserville.org.

Indianapolis North Deanery

- St. Joan of Arc Parish**, 4217 Central Ave., Indianapolis. 3-4 p.m. holy hour, 4-4:30 p.m. Divine Mercy Sundaes reception. Information: 317-283-5508, mrivelli@sjoa.org.
- St. Luke the Evangelist Church**, 7575 Holliday Dr. E., Indianapolis. 2-3 p.m. confession, 2-4 p.m. Divine Mercy service. Information: 317-259-4373, ejeffries@stluke.org.
- St. Pius X Church**, 7200 Sarto Dr., Indianapolis. 2-3:30 p.m., exposition of Blessed Sacrament, prayer service, confession, Chaplet of Divine Mercy. Information: 317-255-2534.

Indianapolis South Deanery

- Holy Name of Jesus Church**, 89 N. 17th Ave., Beech Grove. 3-4 p.m., adoration, confession, Divine Mercy Chaplet, Litany of Divine Mercy, Benediction. Information: 317-784-5454, parishadmin@holyname.cc.
- Our Lady of the Greenwood Church**, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. 2-3:30 p.m., adoration, Divine Mercy Chaplet. Information: 317-888-2861, info@olgreenwood.org.
- Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Church**, 520 Stevens St., Indianapolis. 3 p.m., adoration, confession, Divine Mercy Chaplet, Litany of Divine Mercy, Benediction. Information: 317-636-4478, info@holyroaryindy.org.
- SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Church**, 5901 Olive Branch Road, Greenwood. 9:45 a.m., Divine Mercy Chaplet immediately following 8:30 a.m. Mass. Information: 317-859-4673, jhazard@ss-fc.org.

- St. Jude Church**, 5353 McFarland Road, Indianapolis. 3-4 p.m., adoration, Chaplet of Divine Mercy. Information: 317-786-4371, goodnews@stjudeindy.org.

Indianapolis West Deanery

- St. Malachy Church**, 9833 E. CR 750 N., Brownsburg. Noon-6 p.m. adoration, 2-4 p.m. confession, 3 p.m. Divine Mercy Chaplet. Information: 317-852-3195, info@stmalachy.org.
- St. Thomas More Church**, 1200 N. Indiana St., Mooresville. 3-4 p.m., adoration, confession, prayer service. Information: 317-831-4142, pweber@stm-church.org.

New Albany Deanery

- St. John Paul II Church, St. Joe Hill Chapel**, 2605 W. St. Joe Road, Sellersburg. New Albany Deanery Divine Mercy Celebration, 2-3 p.m. confession; 3 p.m. adoration, Scripture readings, hymns, prayers, sung Divine Mercy Chaplet; 4 p.m. reception in narthex. Information: 812-246-2512, ktipker@stjohnpaulparish.org.

Seymour Deanery

- St. Bartholomew Church**, 1306 27th St., Columbus. 3-5 p.m. adoration and sung Divine Mercy Chaplet, 4-5 p.m. confession. Information: 812-379-9353.

Terre Haute Deanery

- Sacred Heart Church**, 610 S. 6th St., Clinton. 3 p.m. Divine Mercy Chaplet. Information: 765-832-8468, sacredheartclinton@sbcglobal.net.
- St. Joseph University Church**, 113 S. 5th St., Terre Haute. 2:45 p.m. Divine Mercy service. Information: 812-232-7011, parishoffice@stjoeup.org.
- St. Margaret Mary Church**, 2405 S. 7th St., Terre Haute. **April 18-27:** 3 p.m. Divine Mercy Novena (April 18 novena will follow 3 p.m. veneration of the cross). Information: 812-232-3512, mcoad@smmth.org.
- St. Paul the Apostle Church**, 202 E. Washington St., Greencastle. Noon-2:45 p.m. adoration; noon-12:30 p.m. confession; 3 p.m. procession of Divine Mercy image, presentation on Divine Mercy devotion, chaplet, image veneration, prayers and hymns, ice cream social following in church narthex. Information: 765-653-5678, stpauloffice202@gmail.com. †

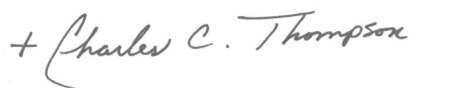
ARCHBISHOP

continued from page 1

would found the Church for the ongoing mission of bringing about the kingdom

of God. He chose to save us, not merely as individuals, but as a community of believers. Together, continuing to carry the wounds of our humanity, we celebrate the Risen Lord’s victory over sin and death.

Despite the violence and injustice that remains around us, and even among us, may we strive to accompany one another toward a greater encounter with the Risen Jesus Christ. He alone is our hope and salvation! Alleluia, Alleluia!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

ARZOBISPO

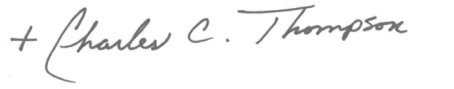
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pasión, muerte y resurrección de Jesucristo. ¿Cómo debemos proceder ante esta experiencia comunitaria del Señor Jesucristo resucitado? Un encuentro tan increíble con la persona de Jesucristo, crucificado y resucitado, no es algo que debamos guardarnos para nosotros mismos. Esta es la esencia de la alegría Evangelio: se trata de una alegría que debe ser proclamada y

compartida con los demás. Lo hacemos como testigos de la fe, peregrinos de la esperanza y discípulos misioneros de Jesucristo. Quizá por eso este año ha aumentado tanto la cantidad de personas que pasan a formar parte de la Iglesia, así como la razón por la que tantos se reúnen para celebrar la misa del Domingo de Resurrección. En medio de las noticias del aumento de los índices de soledad, depresión, adicción, abuso y violencia, la humanidad redescubre la importancia de las relaciones interpersonales para la salud,

la felicidad y el bienestar personales. Somos seres comunitarios por naturaleza. Es por esta razón que Jesús, justo después de ser identificado como el Cristo, el Hijo de Dios, y antes de su muerte, declaró que fundaría la Iglesia para la misión permanente de instaurar el Reino de Dios. Eligió salvarnos, no solo como individuos, sino como comunidad de creyentes. Juntos, seguimos cargando las heridas de nuestra condición humana y celebramos la victoria del Señor resucitado sobre el pecado y la muerte. A pesar de la violencia y la

injusticia que persiste a nuestro alrededor—e incluso entre nosotros—que nos esforcemos por acompañarnos unos a otros hacia un mayor encuentro con Jesucristo resucitado. ¡Solamente Él es nuestra esperanza y salvación! ¡Aleluya, aleluya!

De ustedes en Cristo,

Arzobispo Charles C. Thompson



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Acutis documentary to appear in theaters to coincide with his canonization

By Ann Margaret Lewis

Blessed Carlo Acutis, to be canonized on April 27 as the first “millennial saint,” will be featured in a new documentary coming to theaters through Fathom Events on April 27-29.

Carlo Acutis: Roadmap to Reality reveals the young saint’s spiritual journey in his 15-year life into the 21st century. It focuses on his fascination with technology, how he used it with amazing finesse and self-reflection for one so young, and how his example reveals ways to combat the crisis of attachment so prevalent among youths today.

As the film follows the life of Blessed Carlo, it also follows a group of high school students from North Dakota as they take an “unplugged” pilgrimage to the Italian cities of Rome, Assisi and Milan to connect with his story. Their experiences on this journey show the powerful

influence the soon-to-be saint has on them and their own personal walks with God.

Well-produced with effective visuals and personal stories, the 82-minute film includes insights from Catholic personalities as well as theologians and technology experts, including Crookston, Minn., Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens, Chris Stefanik, Katie Prejean McGrady and more, who explain Blessed Carlo’s role as “God’s influencer.” Their input completes a picture of what made the teenager so special: namely, that his effective and moderate use of technology as well as his personal evangelization efforts directed people to God and outward to their fellow human beings.

Carlo’s efforts brought conversion to his parents, babysitter, friends and other family members, most of whom are also interviewed in the film. For one so young, it is clear that he had

a profound influence on those closest to him as well as the world at large.

The documentary was made in conjunction with efforts of the National Eucharistic Congress, for which Blessed Carlo was named a patron. The end of the film features a short reflection on the congress itself and its call to attendees to become eucharistic missionaries.

Carlo Acutis: Roadmap to Reality will be shown in theaters across central and southern Indiana, as well as Kentucky and Ohio. View the film’s trailer, find locations and purchase tickets at carloacutisfilm.com, at local theaters or at fathomentertainment.com/releases/carlo-acutis. †

Carlo Acutis: Roadmap to Reality will be shown in theaters on April 27-29. (Photo courtesy of Castletown Media)



LEGISLATION

continued from page 3

five bishops of Indiana. “However, compassion for those who are homeless has long been a part of our heritage as Americans and Christians.

“Ultimately, the Catholic Church stresses an approach to the homeless that is steeped in charity out of a recognition of their God-given human dignity.”

With the chorus of opposition, the bill ultimately stalled in the House when it wasn’t called for a third reading by the mid-session deadline. But now, with language from the measure tacked on to Senate Bill 197, advocates are once again calling on lawmakers to reject the legislative push.

The Hoosier Housing Needs Coalition (HHNC) expressed “extreme disappointment and alarm” over the amendment to the bill and urged members of the General Assembly to remove the language immediately.

“Criminalizing homelessness not only adds a criminal

record to the Hoosiers whose jobs no longer pay the rent, but it also puts the burden on local law enforcement while draining community services,” said Andrew Bradley, senior director of policy and strategy for Prosperity Indiana and an HHNC steering committee member. “Lawmakers must remove the Class C misdemeanor from Senate Bill 197 and instead focus on strategies to align funding and resources to restore the supply and affordability of housing in Indiana.”

Bickel agrees. He points out that while Holy Family Shelter is able to serve up to 300 families per year, last month alone there were 1,500 evictions in Marion County.

Holy Family Shelter opened in 1984 as the first emergency shelter specifically for homeless families in Indianapolis. Staff members there offer a variety of wraparound services and case management for families, including intervention with landlords as appropriate.

“The most efficient way to end homelessness is to prevent it in the first place,” Bickel said. “There have been many times, for the families inside the shelter right

now, that if we could have talked to them a month before they came in, we could have saved their housing.

“Homelessness is a very complex situation. Ultimately, we want to get to the root of the issue, so that people are thriving—not just surviving.”

For now, Bickel says there is no place for this renewed effort to criminalize homelessness in Indiana.

“The Cicero Institute is profoundly influencing our Statehouse on these matters,” he said. “Under normal Hoosier hospitality, you would say this is not us.”

To follow priority legislation of the ICC, visit 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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