



Pope Francis: 1936-2025

Global pastor: In word and deed, pope preached mercy, outreach

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis, who died on April 21 at the age of 88, gave new energy to millions of Catholics—and caused concern for some—as he placed his personal mark on the papacy, emphasizing it as a pastoral ministry based on personal encounters and strong convictions about poverty, mission and dialogue.

U.S. Cardinal Kevin J. Farrell, chamberlain of the Holy Roman Church, announced that Pope Francis had died at 7:35 a.m.

The pope suffered a stroke and heart attack, said Dr. Andrea Arcangeli, the director of Vatican City State’s department of health services, in a statement published by the Vatican press office. He had also gone into a coma.

The doctor said the pope also had a history of “a previous episode of acute respiratory failure due to polymicrobial bilateral pneumonia; multiple bronchiectases; arterial hypertension; and type II diabetes.”

A heart monitor (or ECG) was used to ascertain his death, that is, that there was no longer any heart activity, the doctor wrote on the signed declaration.

“His whole life was dedicated to the service of the Lord and his Church,” Cardinal Farrell said in a video announcement broadcast from the chapel of the Domus Sanctae Marthae, where Pope Francis lived.

His gestures—from tenderly embracing the sick to repeatedly visiting prisoners—touched millions of hearts. But others raised concerns about his critique of the excesses of unbridled capitalism, his warnings about the human contributions to climate change, his insistence on accompanying rather than judging gay people and his criticism of gender ideology.

With bronchitis and difficulty breathing, Pope Francis was admitted to Rome’s Gemelli Hospital on Feb. 14. He was diagnosed with double pneumonia and a complex infection. He had returned

to the Vatican on March 23 to continue his convalescence.

God’s mercy was a constant theme in Pope Francis’ preaching. It was so central to his vision of what the Church’s ministry must embody that he proclaimed an extraordinary Holy Year of Mercy for Dec. 8, 2015-Nov. 20, 2016.

Elected on March 13, 2013, Pope Francis was the first pope in history to come from the Southern Hemisphere, the first non-European to be elected in almost 1,300 years and the first Jesuit to serve as successor to St. Peter.

In the first three years of his papacy, he published three major documents: “*Evangelii Gaudium*” (“The Joy of the

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Pope Francis hugs a child while joining some 1,300 guests for lunch in the Vatican audience hall on the World Day of the Poor on Nov. 13, 2022. (CNS photo/Remo Casilli, Reuters)



Pope Francis presents Archbishop Charles C. Thompson with a gift on Dec. 12, 2019, after the pontiff met in the Apostolic Palace at the Vatican with bishops from Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin as part of their *ad limina* visit, a pilgrimage to Rome that all bishops from around the world are required to make every five to seven years. (Vatican Media)

Reflecting on the life and ministry of Pope Francis

By Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

Though saddened to learn of Pope Francis’ death at age 88, we can take great consolation in his passing to his eternal reward after so many years of faithful service to Jesus Christ and his Church.

After being appointed by Pope Benedict XVI to shepherd the Diocese of Evansville in 2011, it was Pope Francis who appointed me to lead the Archdiocese of Indianapolis in 2017. I was able to meet Pope Francis at the Vatican during an *ad limina* visit in 2019, and it has been my privilege to learn from his teaching and example during the past 12 years.


Pope Francis was, in his own words, “a son of the Church.” In his many years as a Jesuit priest, a bishop in his native Argentina, and as the Bishop of Rome, the successor of St. Peter, he was filled with holiness, missionary zeal, and confidence in the presence of the Holy Spirit. As a pastor, Pope Francis was committed to leading our Church in a synodal way of Christ-centered dialogue and encounter, urging all pastors to accompany their flocks—especially the

poor and marginalized—as we minister to a world in desperate need of Christ’s peace and love.

The late pope’s desire for openness, dialogue and transparency offered us many opportunities to see firsthand how he responded to the pastoral and social challenges of our time. Pope Francis had a distinctive style and tone during his pontificate, but the message was always consistent. He truly was a man of the Church committed to upholding the eternal truths of the Catholic faith and to applying them in a pastoral way to the circumstances of today.

Like his predecessors, Pope Francis held a consistent vision of the truth that valued human life in all its dimensions. While many in the secular culture were eager to exclude the Church from the public arena, the pope never wavered in voicing the Church’s commitment to peace in our world, the sanctity of life and concern for the poor and vulnerable—a vision rooted in God’s infinite goodness and mercy for all people.

In the forward he wrote to one of the many books about his papacy, Pope Francis listed three major themes that



Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

April 26–May 1, 2025

<p>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</p> <p>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, Indianapolis</p> <p>April 28 – 2 p.m. Virtual Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis and Subcommittee on Catechism Chair meeting</p> <p>April 29 – 11 a.m. College of Deans meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center</p> <p>April 29 – 2 p.m. Virtual National Eucharistic Revival Bishops Advisory Group meeting</p> <p>April 29 – 7 p.m. Confirmation Mass for the youths of St. Pius X, Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ and St. Mark the Evangelist</p>	<p>parishes, all in Indianapolis, at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral</p> <p>April 30 – noon Mass for Annual Catholic Center Employee Recognition Celebration at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, followed by lunch at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center</p> <p>April 30 – 7 p.m. Confirmation Mass for the youths of St. Susanna Parish, Plainfield, and St. Michael the Archangel and St. Joseph parishes, both in Indianapolis, at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral</p> <p>May 1 – 10 a.m. Leadership Team meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center</p> <p>May 1 – 7 p.m. Confirmation Mass for the youths of Mary Queen of Peace Parish, Danville; St. Thomas More Parish, Mooresville; St. Ann, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) and St. Monica parishes, all in Indianapolis, at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral</p>
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could be said to preoccupy him since he succeeded St. Peter as the Bishop of Rome 12 years ago. These three are:

—First, to have a strong relationship with God;

—Second, to have a strong relationship with creation; and

—Third, to relate strongly with others, focusing on the worldwide migration of peoples.

Pope Francis unabashedly embraced all of God’s creation, especially human life—from conception to natural death—and care for the Earth, our common home. A loving and fierce advocate of all children, he once said about abortion, “It is not right to ‘do away with’ a human being, however small, in order to solve a problem.” He also affirmed the Church’s commitment to the value of all human life when he updated the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* in 2018, stating in a revision of paragraph 2267 that “the death penalty is inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity

of the person, and [the Church] works with determination for its abolition worldwide.”

The late pope was a powerful evangelist who reminded us on more than one occasion of our call “to missionary discipleship.” Every Christian is called to be a missionary, he said, sharing the good news of salvation in Christ and making disciples for him, not just for oneself or for one’s group of like-minded believers. As he wrote in his apostolic exhortation “*Evangelii Gaudium*,” “Being a disciple means being constantly ready to bring the love of Jesus to others, and this can happen unexpectedly and in any place: on the street, in a city square, during work, on a journey” (#127).

Pope Francis had an unwavering passion and devotion to the faith, to the Church, and to the people of God everywhere. He was a good and faithful servant, a Vicar of Christ. May he rest in eternal peace, gazing on the face of God. †

Reflexiones sobre la vida y el ministerio de Papa Francisco

Por Arzobispo Charles C. Thompson

Pese a la tristeza que nos invade por la noticia del fallecimiento del papa Francisco a sus 88 años, nos consuela enormemente saber que ahora goza de la recompensa eterna después de tantos años de fiel servicio a Jesucristo y a su Iglesia.

Luego de que el papa Benedicto XVI me nombrara pastor de la Diócesis de Evansville en 2011, fue el papa Francisco quien me eligió para dirigir la Arquidiócesis de Indianápolis en 2017. Pude conocerlo en el Vaticano durante una visita *ad limina* en 2019, y ha sido para mí un privilegio aprender de sus enseñanzas y

de su ejemplo durante los últimos 12 años. En sus propias palabras, el papa Francisco fue “un hijo de la Iglesia.” En sus muchos años como sacerdote jesuita, como obispo en su Argentina natal y como Obispo de Roma, sucesor de san Pedro, su vida se caracterizó por su santidad, celo misionero y confianza en la

presencia del Espíritu Santo. Como pastor, el papa Francisco se comprometió a guiar a nuestra Iglesia en un camino sinodal de diálogo y encuentro centrado en Cristo, instando a todos los pastores a acompañar a sus rebaños, con especial atención a los pobres y marginados, mientras atendemos

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Executive Assistant: Ann Lewis




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Archbishop recalls late pope’s focus on ‘Christ-centered relationships’

By Sean Gallagher

When Archbishop Charles C. Thompson remembers Pope Francis, many things come to mind: his insightful teaching, the powerful witness of his simplicity and his care for the poor and those on the margins of society.

But the late pontiff’s “contagious smile” also is a special memory for the archbishop.

That smile gave him encouragement in 2017 after the pope had appointed him to lead the Church in central and southern Indiana.

At the time, Archbishop Thompson was mindful of the weight of the duty he had been given.

For more coverage on the passing of Pope Francis, visit our website at www.archindy.org/PopeFrancis.

Next week’s issue of *The Criterion* will include coverage of the pope’s funeral and more local reaction to his ministry as our universal shepherd.

Then he took part in a Mass at the Vatican in which Pope Francis gave him a pallium, a woolen band worn over the shoulders of shepherds of archdioceses that symbolize the care they are to give their flock and their leadership in their broader Church province, which, for him, meant the archdiocese and the four other dioceses in Indiana.

“I was watching him during the Mass and the infectious smile that he had,” Archbishop Thompson recalled. “And I thought, you know, if he can still be smiling and carrying the weight of the world, I can wear mine in the state of Indiana.”

Archbishop Thompson shared his memories of Pope Francis and reflections on his leadership during a press conference on April 22, the day after Pope Francis died, at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis.

Putting the person first

At the start of the press conference, Archbishop Thompson expressed the gratitude of all in the archdiocese for the late pontiff.

“We are grateful to God for Pope Francis, for his incredible witness, for his incredible shepherding of Catholics throughout the world, for the witness he gave of a missionary spirit, a very pastoral heart, one who had a great care for the poor [and] for the marginalized,” he said. “[He] called all of us to our better selves in our faith, with the Christ-centered relationships with one another that he so beautifully showed us in his life.

“We entrust him back to God in gratitude, and we continue to ask the Lord to give him eternal joy and peace in heaven.”

When asked what impact Pope Francis had on the archdiocese, Archbishop Thompson laughed and said, “For better or worse, you got me,” since it was Pope Francis who appointed him in 2017 to lead the Church in central and southern Indiana.

More broadly, Archbishop Thompson said that the pope’s emphasis on the faithful going out to share the Gospel with others through loving actions and Christ-centered relationships will have an ongoing impact in Indiana and around the world.

“We are to go out and ... not worry about being clean and neat, even in the

messiness, the muck of life,” Archbishop Thompson said. “He talked about pastors, people who are serving others, [who] should come back with the smell of the sheep.

“We take our cue from the Holy Father. We listen, we watch what he’s writing, how he’s teaching us, where he’s leading us, and what path is he taking us forward on.”

Those paths, Archbishop Thompson noted, are to bring the faithful to “the poor and the needy, the migrants, the refugees” and “even those on death row.”

“There’s still the dignity of the person created in the image of God from conception to natural death,” Archbishop Thompson said. “No matter who we are, what we’ve done, never lose sight of that dignity.

“Pope Francis always put the person first.”

He also suggested that Hoosiers can honor Pope Francis now and in the future by trying to live much like he did.

“Remember the witness he gave to be attentive to the poor, to the marginalized, to the vulnerable,” Archbishop Thompson said, who went on to encourage Catholics and all Hoosiers “to not let anyone slip through the cracks” and that they are not to see others as “someone to be afraid of or threatened by.”

“In every person is the image of God, the dignity of what it means to be a child of God,” Archbishop Thompson said. “So, I think living that sense of respect and dignity with one another is probably the best way we can honor him.”

Christ-centered relationships

In fostering relationships based on respect for every person’s dignity, Archbishop Thompson said that Pope Francis also sought to bring together people in the Church and around the world who are divided and polarized.

He sought to carry out this goal during the past few years in fostering a sense of synodality among the faithful where they listen prayerfully together to discern where the Holy Spirit is leading the Church.

“Pope Francis realized that people need to be brought back together to a dialogue, to relationships, to encounter,” Archbishop Thompson said. “He talks about encounter a lot. Encounter implies relationship. You can’t encounter someone without being relational.

“And so how do we encounter one another? How are we in relationship to each other, and are we humble enough to realize that none of us has all the truth, that the truth is in Jesus Christ, and that wisdom doesn’t come from our human merit but from the Holy Spirit?”

Pope Francis, the archbishop said, modeled this way of encountering others in humility in his own life and ministry as the bishop of Rome.

“Pope Francis really teaches us how to be Christ-centered in our dialogue, in our relationships,” he said, “and how to remember to be attentive to the Holy Spirit among us.”

Discerning the needs of the Church and the world

Archbishop Thompson was also asked about the process the Church will follow in the coming weeks to elect Pope Francis’ successor.

He noted that, at present, the Church is focused on mourning the pope, whose funeral will be celebrated at 4 a.m. EDT on April 26 at St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican.

After that, the Church’s cardinals will



In SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis on April 22, Archbishop Charles C. Thompson responds to a reporter’s question during a press conference regarding the death of Pope Francis. At left is Father James Brockmeier, rector of the cathedral and director of the archdiocesan Office of Worship. (Photo by Natalie Hoefer)

gather to discuss the state of the Church and the world—and the qualities needed for the Church’s next leader. The cardinals who will elect Pope Francis’ successor are those who were below the age of 80 at the time of his death.

“We as Catholics believe that the Holy Spirit permeates that process and kind of guides the hearts and the minds of those electors so that we get not necessarily what we want, but what we need,” Archbishop Thompson said.

When asked about what he thinks the Church needs in its next pope, Archbishop Thompson paused and then said that the next pontiff must “always be Christ-centered.”

“It’s about Jesus Christ,” he said. “Whoever’s elected pope, he knows that. He has to be Christ-centered. He’ll bring his own particular gifts and talents to that position, to that role, but always Christ-centered.”

‘The Pope Francis effect’

No matter who is elected as the next bishop of Rome, Archbishop Thompson said that Pope Francis’ legacy will live on and come to be known more fully in the years ahead.

One possible effect of his leadership might be the growth seen recently in the archdiocese and other dioceses around

the country of people being drawn to the Church, especially youths and young adults.

“That might be part of the Pope Francis effect,” Archbishop Thompson said. “He touched a lot of young people. He touched a lot of people, especially on the issues with creation, with service to the poor, with social justice issues. That really resonates with a lot of people.”

The Church’s Jubilee Year of Hope, launched by Pope Francis in December and set to conclude on Jan. 6, 2026, is also a gift to the Church from Pope Francis, Archbishop Thompson said.

“He asked us to be pilgrims of hope,” he added. “And what was he, if not a pilgrim of hope? He was a beautiful witness to hope.”

Pope Francis’ hope came through on Easter Sunday, hours before he died, when he gave his traditional “*urbi et orbi*” blessing (“to the city and the world”).

“What a powerful thing that his last thing was to give that blessing and then to die in the night,” Archbishop Thompson said. “I think that’s how Pope Francis would have wanted to go. ... He died at the time of [Christ’s] resurrection.

“He suffered with Christ. Now he rises with Christ. Now he lives eternally with the risen Lord who gives victory for us over sin and death.” †

Did Pope Francis help shape your faith life?

The Criterion is inviting you, our readers, to share your thoughts, tributes and stories about how Pope Francis influenced your life of faith during his papacy from 2013-2025.

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. †



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OPINION



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Editorial



Pope Francis appears on the central balcony of St. Peter's Basilica to deliver his Easter blessing "*urbi et orbi*" (to the city and the world) at the Vatican on April 20. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

Remembering Pope Francis

The pope who was full of surprises has once again caught everyone off guard.

Just when it appeared that he was recovering, albeit slowly, from the near fatal illness that had caused him to be hospitalized for 37 days—and just hours after he appeared on a balcony overlooking St. Peter’s Square on Easter Sunday, giving what turned out to be his last pontifical blessing—Jorge Mario Bergoglio (Pope Francis) died. The announcement early on April 21, Easter Monday, shocked the world. After a difficult period of suffering during Lent, it seems fitting that Pope Francis entered eternal life at the start of the Church’s joyous celebration of Christ’s resurrection. May he be welcomed into the eternal joy of the risen Lord in heaven.

Pope Francis was a man who taught using extravagant, sometimes ambiguous and even controversial gestures. Who can forget the earliest days of his papacy when he insisted on paying his hotel bill in person? Or when he decided not to live in the pope’s traditional residence but to occupy an apartment in the Vatican’s guest house? Or when he decided to wash the feet of prisoners on Holy Thursday? Or when he went to the island of Lampedusa to greet refugees in person? Or when he described himself simply as “a sinner” and refused to be considered “an important person” or a “world leader”?

What did he mean when he responded to a reporter’s question about sexual orientation, saying, “Who am I to judge?” Why was he so insistent on welcoming migrants and refugees? Why was he so determined to be “the face of mercy” to the poor and to people “on the peripheries”?

From the beginning of his papacy, Pope Francis stressed the importance of sharing with everyone the loving mercy of God, which he said was evident in the face of Jesus. He urged the Church’s pastors (and all of us) to join him on the front lines of the Church’s ministry—to build bridges rather than walls, to consider the Church as “a field hospital” set up to treat spiritually wounded patients, and to be so close to their people that they literally took on “the smell of the sheep.”

In his autobiography *Hope*, Pope Francis wrote:

The Gospel is addressed to everyone, and it doesn’t condemn people, classes, conditions, categories, but

rather idolatries, such as the idolatry of wealth that produces injustice, of insensitivity to the cry of those who suffer. ... The holy faithful people of God are (sinners). (The Church) is not a supposed gathering of the pure. The Lord blesses everyone, and his Church must not, cannot do otherwise.

Some have called Pope Francis “the people’s pope.” It’s true he was immensely popular, but it’s also true that he was controversial. Some thought his gestures went too far. Others argued that he didn’t go far enough. Sometimes it was hard to tell.

One of Pope Francis’ most unsettling teachings, ironically, was a concept as old as the Church itself: synodality. In its simplest definition, synodality means coming together as one body. It refers to the unity of the Church in all its diversity, and it insists that the Holy Spirit has the power to bring together and unite people who would otherwise be hopelessly divided, even antagonistic to one another. Pope Francis said repeatedly that he had no desire to change what the Church teaches. But there is no question that he wanted to change how Church teaching is lived day-in and day-out.

Pope Francis invited us—urgently—to pray, to listen prayerfully to God’s word and each other, and to make decisions not based on worldly values or processes, but on the prompting of the Holy Spirit speaking to hearts and minds that are truly open to the grace of God.

What will be the legacy of Jorge Mario Bergoglio? It will not be found in the area of doctrine, although he taught us in both his words and his gestures. And it will not be in his many important reforms of internal Vatican policy and finance.

The legacy of Pope Francis will be his insistence that the Church must be one with the poor and the marginalized—regardless of race, gender, religion, ethnicity, social status, economic or political background.

The Gospel is for everyone, Pope Francis insisted, and this emphasis on everyone (“*todos, todos, todos*”) should never be forgotten or simply given lip service.

It must be at the heart everything the Church says and does. “The Lord blesses everyone, and his Church must not, cannot do otherwise.”

—Daniel Conway

Be Our Guest/Laura Kelly Fanucci

Walking the Emmaus road as a family

Right now is a difficult time for nearly every family I know. Parents are stressed. Teens are depressed.

Kids are anxious. Studies on mental health back this up with statistics, but start a conversation with friends, family, neighbors or parishioners and you’ll soon hear stories of struggle and suffering.

In the midst of tumultuous times in our homes and nation, what does it mean to celebrate Easter? Can we really rejoice in a moment like this?

Tucked within the Gospel of Luke is a story that shows us exactly how to live out the Easter season—not as a one-day celebration, but 50 full days of feasting. What’s more, the walk to Emmaus gives us a road map to guide our journey together as families into the hope of Easter.

First, we need to leave home. The disciples’ courage to step beyond their comfort zone—especially when their own safety was threatened—let them meet the risen Christ. Later, after they recognize the stranger who walked with them, the same impulse spurs them onward: “They set out at once and returned to Jerusalem” (Lk 24:33) to share with others what had been revealed to them. How is God calling us to step out in faith this Easter? To be not afraid, even in troubling times, to share with others the good news we have found?

Second, we must welcome the stranger. The disciples did not dismiss the traveler who joined them on the road. They engaged him in conversation, even when he corrected them in stark terms: “Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke!” (Lk 24:25). If the disciples had turned a cold shoulder instead, they might have missed everything God had waiting for them. How can we open our hearts and homes



this Easter to those we do not know? Can we remember that Christ is the face of every stranger, or will fear or judgment keep us locked away?

Third, we have to keep talking together. The disciples are willing to converse, question and debate the difficult news and most pressing questions of their times, “the things that have taken place there in these days” (Lk 24:18). They even share what weighs heaviest on their hearts. When Jesus asks what they are discussing, “they stopped, looking downcast” (Lk 24:17). Can we keep talking through differences and disagreements, bringing our full selves to each other in good faith?

Fourth, we need to break bread together. In meals around our family table and at the altar of the Eucharist, we must keep breaking bread in order to encounter Christ present among us. What place will feasting hold in our Easter celebrations? How can we pray for the wisdom to see Christ among us and the courage to respond to his call?

The road to Emmaus reminds us that Christ goes with us everywhere, walking and talking among us: in our conversations and debates, in ordinary meals and sacred liturgies, in journeys near and far. Our hearts burn within us, too, whenever we realize he has been right next to us all along.

When the disciples approached the village, Jesus “gave the impression that he was going on farther,” but they pressed him to stay with them (Lk 24:28). This small detail holds the key. No matter what is happening in our families or the wider world, inviting Jesus to stay close is the way to discover what God has waiting for us.

“Stay with us” (Lk 24:29). Their plea is our prayer, too. We need the hope of the risen Christ, perhaps now more than ever.

(Laura Kelly Fanucci is an author, speaker and founder of Mothering Spirit, an online gathering place on parenting and spirituality.) †

Be Our Guest/Sherry Foushee

National Safe Haven Alliance eager to continue helping mothers in crisis pregnancies

We are in the month of April, the first month of spring with new growth and beginnings.

It is also a very special time for the National Safe Haven Alliance (NSHA). This life-saving nonprofit works to promote the continuing existence of safe haven laws across this country and in Indiana. It celebrates April as Safe Haven Awareness Month.

As part of its mission, NSHA will continue to support mothers facing crisis pregnancies and post-birth situations with life-saving alternatives and solutions to prevent infanticide and newborn abandonment.

In many of these situations, a mother is considering surrendering her infant due to lack of family support and other challenges. Our goal is to walk with this mother to provide what she might desperately need, whether it be supporting her choice to parent, a need for temporary placement, adoption assistance, or safe haven relinquishment.

NSHA is committed to work with this mother by researching the support in her community, and always giving her the help she needs.

Our crisis response team and our 24/7 confidential hotline are always available to provide these safe options

in a crisis situation. Please call 1-888-510-BABY (2229), or visit www.nationalsafehavenalliance.org for assistance.

Spreading the awareness of this life-saving alternative is so very necessary to make sure that anyone in this crisis needing help will know that they have a confidential source of support with total anonymity and with no fear of prosecution.

Please help us celebrate the 5,000 newborns lives saved during the last 20-plus years. We are thankful and very grateful for the providers that help to save so many newborns.

We at NSHA are committed to continuing this life-saving mission until there is no need.

National Safe Haven Alliance cares.

(Sherry Foushee is a member of St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus and is the Indiana representative for National Safe Haven Alliance. She can be reached at sfoushee@nationalsafehavenalliance.org. Mothers in need can call or text 888-510-2229, where a crisis response team is available for confidential help 24/7 to provide safe options for her and her baby. For more information on NSHA, go to nationalsafehavenalliance.org.) †

ARCHBISHOP/ARZOBISPO CHARLES C. THOMPSON



Christ the Cornerstone

Open your heart to Christ's invitation of love

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

The Second Sunday of Easter is known as Divine Mercy Sunday. On this day, we continue our celebration of Easter joy by recalling how completely God showers us with his love and forgiveness.

The sacrifice of Jesus on the cross was the supreme act of mercy by God the Father who sent his only Son to redeem us from our sins.

Jesus is the face of mercy. He is love Incarnate, and his whole life was intended to demonstrate how much God loves and forgives us. While dying on the cross, he forgave us. As he rose from the dead, he liberated us. And even now, while he sits at his Father's right hand in heaven, he sends his Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with God's abundant mercy.

We are free to refuse God's forgiveness. We can say no to the invitation to repent, confess our sins,

and accept the merciful love that is offered to us in Christ.

Our Lord never forces us to do anything. He invites, encourages and even pleads with us to turn to him with open hearts. He gives us his grace to assist us, and he points to our Mother Mary and all the saints who intercede for us and show us the way. But, in the end, it's up to us.

Too often, we have a hard time believing that God's forgiveness is real—or that it can apply to us. Like St. Thomas in Sunday's Gospel reading, we demand proof: "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the nail-marks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe" (Jn 20:25).

And yet, despite our unbelief, our Lord does not hesitate to show us his wounds and to reassure us that his love and mercy are ours for the asking:

Then [Jesus] said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe." Thomas answered and said to him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you come to believe because you have seen me?

Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed" (Jn 20:27-30).

Jesus wants nothing more than to receive from us a profession of faith that acknowledges God's mercy. When we allow him to liberate us from our slavery to sin and heal us from the spiritual blindness that refuses his forgiveness, he blesses us and makes us holy.

As the psalmist prays in the Responsorial Psalm for the Second Sunday of Easter:

I was hard pressed and was falling, but the Lord helped me. My strength and my courage is the Lord, and he has been my savior. The joyful shout of victory in the tents of the just. (Ps 118:13-15)

When we fall into the disobedience of sin, the Lord helps us. He is present always, and his mercy is always available to us. We simply need to pray: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, have mercy on me, a sinner." As often as we say this prayer, the answer is always the same (even if we don't hear or understand it). When we seek God's mercy, he says to us: "Your sins are forgiven. Go, and sin no more."

The sacrament of reconciliation (penance) is the concrete, tangible way that we can experience God's love and mercy. When we confess our sins, promise to sin no more, make a sincere act of contrition, and do penance, we are assured that God's love and mercy are with us.

This great sacrament is God's instrument of healing and of joy. When we let go of the burdens of daily life, and allow God's grace to change us, we will experience a foretaste of heavenly glory. Like St. Thomas, our doubts about Jesus will evaporate, and we will know with all the certainty of faith that we are forgiven.

Christ is the cornerstone, the foundation for everything that we say and do in life. Divine Mercy Sunday flows directly from the humility and the liberating love that Jesus showed when he came down from heaven to live, die and rise again for us.

As we continue our celebration of the Easter season, let's allow our God to show us his love and forgiveness. And let's pray: Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, have mercy on us sinners. †



Cristo, la piedra angular

Abramos el corazón a la invitación de amor de Cristo

La piedra que desecharon los constructores, es ahora la piedra angular. Del Señor viene todo esto y nos parece admirable. Este es el día en que actuó el Señor; alegrémonos, gocémonos en él (Sal 118:22-24).

El segundo domingo de Pascua se conoce también como el domingo de la Divina Misericordia, un día en el que prosiguen las celebraciones de la alegría pascual recordando hasta qué punto Dios nos colma de su amor y de su perdón.

El sacrificio de Jesús en la cruz fue el acto supremo de misericordia de Dios Padre, que envió a su Hijo único para redimirnos de nuestros pecados.

Jesús es el rostro de la misericordia; es el amor encarnado, y toda su vida estuvo destinada a demostrar cuánto nos ama y nos perdona Dios. Al morir en la cruz, nos perdonó; al resucitar, nos liberó. E incluso ahora, mientras está sentado a la derecha de su Padre en el cielo, envía su Espíritu Santo para llenar nuestros corazones con la abundante misericordia de Dios.

Somos libres de rechazar el perdón de Dios, así como su invitación a arrepentirnos, confesar nuestros pecados y aceptar el amor

misericordioso que se nos ofrece en Cristo.

Nuestro Señor nunca nos obliga a nada sino que nos invita, nos anima—e incluso nos suplica—que nos dirijamos a Él con el corazón abierto. Nos da su gracia para ayudarnos, y nos señala a nuestra Madre María y a todos los santos que interceden por nosotros y nos muestran el camino. Pero al final, somos nosotros quienes tomamos la decisión.

Muy a menudo nos cuesta creer que el perdón de Dios sea real, o que puede aplicarse a nosotros. Al igual que Santo Tomás en la lectura del Evangelio del domingo, exigimos pruebas: "Si yo no veo en sus manos la señal de los clavos, ni meto mi dedo en el lugar de los clavos, y mi mano en su costado, no creeré" (Jn 20:25).

Y, sin embargo, a pesar de nuestra incredulidad, el Señor no duda en mostrarnos sus llagas y asegurarnos que su amor y su misericordia están a nuestra disposición:

Luego le dijo a Tomás: "Pon aquí tu dedo, y mira mis manos; y acerca tu mano, y métela en mi costado; y no seas incrédulo, sino creyente." Entonces Tomás respondió y le dijo: "¡Señor mío, y Dios mío!" Jesús le dijo: "Tomás, has creído porque me has visto. Bienaventurados los que no

vieron y creyeron" (Jn 20:27-30).

Jesús no quiere otra cosa que recibir de nosotros una profesión de fe que reconozca la misericordia de Dios. Cuando le permitimos que nos libere de nuestra esclavitud del pecado y nos cure de la ceguera espiritual que rechaza su perdón, nos bendice y nos hace santos.

Como reza el salmo responsorial del segundo domingo de Pascua:

Me empujaban intentando derribarme, pero el Señor me ayudó. Dios es mi fuerza y mi potencia, él fue para mí la salvación. Gritos de gozo y victoria hay en las tiendas de los justos. (Sal 118:13-15)

Cuando caemos en la desobediencia del pecado, el Señor nos ayuda. Él está siempre presente, y su misericordia está siempre a nuestra disposición. Simplemente tenemos que rezar: "Señor Jesucristo, Hijo de Dios, ten piedad de mí, que soy pecador." No importa cuántas veces recemos esta oración, la respuesta es siempre la misma (aunque no la oigamos o no la entendamos). Cuando buscamos la misericordia de Dios, Él nos dice: "Tus pecados están perdonados. Vete y no peques más."

El sacramento de la reconciliación (penitencia) es la forma concreta y tangible en que

podemos experimentar el amor y la misericordia de Dios. Cuando confesamos nuestros pecados, prometemos no pecar más, hacemos un acto sincero de contrición y cumplimos la penitencia, tenemos la seguridad de que el amor y la misericordia de Dios están con nosotros.

Este gran sacramento es el instrumento de Dios para la curación y la alegría. Cuando nos desprendamos de las cargas de la vida cotidiana y permitamos que la gracia de Dios nos cambie, experimentaremos un anticipo de la gloria celestial. Como Santo Tomás, nuestras dudas sobre Jesús se disiparán, y sabremos con toda la certeza de la fe que estamos perdonados.

Cristo es la piedra angular, el fundamento de todo lo que decimos y hacemos en la vida. El Domingo de la Divina Misericordia emana directamente de la humildad y el amor liberador que Jesús mostró cuando bajó del cielo para vivir, morir y resucitar por nosotros.

Mientras seguimos celebrando la Pascua, dejemos que nuestro Dios nos muestre su amor y su perdón. Y recemos: Señor Jesucristo, Hijo de Dios, ten piedad de nosotros, que somos pecadores. †

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 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 2-3
White Violet Center, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Spring Plant Sale,** Fri. 11 a.m.-5 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m.-3 p.m., organically grown vegetables, herbs, cut flowers. Information: spsmw.org/events, 812-535-2932, wvc@spsmw.org.

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 11
Providence Spirituality and Conference Center, O’Shaughnessy Dining Hall, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Mother’s Day Lunch,** 12:30-2:30 p.m., \$30 adults, \$15 ages 3-12, ages 2 and younger free, purchase tickets by May 3. Information, registration: 812-535-2800, ma@spsmw.org, tinyurl.com/spmotherlunch25.

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, 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.

May 16
Northside Events and Social Club, 2100 E. 71st St.,

Indianapolis. **Catholic Business Exchange,** archdiocesan executive director of the Secretariat of Catholic Charities David Bethuram presenting “Catholic Charities: Now More than Ever,” rosary 6:35 a.m., Mass 7 a.m., buffet breakfast and program following, \$20 members, \$25 non-members. Register by noon on May 13. Information, registration: cutt.ly/CBE-Reg.

May 18
Marian University, Norman Center Room 222, 3200 Cold Spring Road, Indianapolis. **People of Peace OFS Monthly Meeting,** 12:30-3 p.m., explore Franciscan spirituality with lay Franciscans, free. Information: 317-432-0909, jodymdalton@aol.com.

May 21
Calvary Mausoleum Chapel, 435 W. Troy Ave., Indianapolis. **Mass,** 2 p.m. Information: 317-784-4439, catholiccemeteries.cc.

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.

May 21-26
Daughters of Charity, 9200 New Harmony Road, Evansville, Ind. (Diocese of Evansville). **Search and Serve Discernment Week,** join Daughters of Charity in ministry while discerning a call to a life of serving the poor, for single Catholic women ages 18-40. Information, registration: sisterliz@doc.org, daughters-of-charity.com/retreats.

May 24
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.

May 26
Our Lady of Peace Cemetery and Mausoleum, 9001 Haverstick Road, Indianapolis. **Memorial Day Mass,** 2 p.m. Information: 317-574-8898, catholiccemeteries.cc.

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

Retreats and Programs

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

May 10
Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **Mother’s Day Paint and Sip,** 9:30-11:30 a.m., includes painting supplies and mimosas, or bring your own beverage, \$50, Information, registration: 812-933-6437, oldenburgfranciscancenter.org.

May 15
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
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,** 9:30-11:30 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 7
Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **Women’s Day Celebration,** 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m., keynote by Cory Lockhart, coffee, breakfast, crafts, chair yoga, essential oils, neck massages,

door prizes, coffee bar, lunch, \$60. Information, registration: 812-933-6437, oldenburgfranciscancenter.org.

June 10
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.

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
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.

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.

June 23
You Are Not Alone: The Healing Journey Forward with Suicide Loss (virtual via Zoom), 6:30-8 p.m., sponsored by Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, for adults, teens ages 15-19 and older may attend with parent or guardian, licensed therapist Christine Turo-Shields presenting, free, registration required. Registration: archindy.org/fatima-events, 317-545-7681, lcoons@archindy.org. †

Register in advance for Mass launching National Eucharistic Pilgrimage on May 18 at St. John the Evangelist Church

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson will celebrate a Mass to launch the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage at St. John the Evangelist Church, 126 W. Georgia St., in Indianapolis, at 10:30 a.m. on May 18. The Mass marks the only pilgrimage stop in the archdiocese as it travels 3,300 miles through 10 states and 20 dioceses. It will end in Los Angeles on

June 22, the feast of *Corpus Christi* (the Body of Christ). Space is limited for the Mass, and registration is required. To register, go to tinyurl.com/NEPMassMay18. For more information on the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage and stops along the route, go to eucharisticpilgrimage.org. †

Sunday pilgrimages honoring the Blessed Mother will be held at Monte Cassino Shrine in St. Meinrad in May

Saint Meinrad Archabbey will host pilgrimages honoring the Blessed Mother at Monte Cassino Shrine, located one mile east of the Archabbey on State Highway 62 in St. Meinrad, at 2 p.m. Central Time each Sunday in May.

The pilgrimages begin with a hymn and a short sermon, followed by a rosary procession. The services end with the Litany of the Blessed Virgin and a hymn.

Speakers and topics for the pilgrimages are:

—May 4: Benedictine Brother Stephen Johnson of Assumption Abbey

in Richardton, N.D., “Mary’s Power of Love.”

—May 11: Benedictine Father Paul Nord, “Mary, Queen of Apostles.”

—May 18: Benedictine Brother Gregory Morris, “Mary, Daughter of Zion.”

—May 25: Benedictine Father Sean Hoppe, “God’s Promise To and Through.”

For more information, call Krista Hall during business hours at 812-357-6501 or call 812-357-6611 on the day of the event.

For more information about Monte Cassino Shrine, go to tinyurl.com/MonteCassinoShrineStMeinrad. †

Spring Prayer Breakfast will be held in New Albany on May 10 for those who have experienced loss

A Spring Prayer Breakfast will be held at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, 1752 Scheller Lane, in New Albany, from 9-11 a.m. on May 10.

The breakfast is for those who have experienced loss in the last year. It will include songs and hymns of consolation

along with prayer.

The event is free, but registration is required by May 5.

For more information or to register, contact Joseph Fey, pastoral associate, at jfey@olphna.org or 812-945-1647. †

In calling us to change the world, pope changed the life of Cardinal Tobin

By John Shaughnessy

In his 12 years of leading the Church, Pope Francis called all of us to be the change the world needs.

Make a difference in the lives of the vulnerable, the poor, the oppressed, the immigrant, the heartbroken.

Make the world a safer and more inviting place by caring for the environment and working toward peace and hope instead of conflict and war.

Pope Francis also profoundly changed the lives of people in dramatic individual ways, including the life of Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, former archbishop of Indianapolis, and, since 2016, archbishop of Newark, N.J.

When then-Archbishop Tobin headed to Rome in November of 2016 to be installed as a cardinal by Pope Francis, his thoughts naturally returned to the first time he met the pope.

The year was 2005, and the two men were part of a meeting of the Synod of Bishops. For the better part of four weeks, they sat next to each other, talking about the topics of the meeting and getting to know each other through their shared ability to speak Spanish.

At the time, Cardinal Tobin was the superior general of the Redemptorist order while Pope Francis was Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio, the archbishop of Buenos Aires. The synod took place shortly after the conclave of 2005 that elected Benedict XVI as pope—a conclave in which many observers noted that Cardinal Bergoglio likely finished in second place in the election process.

“I told the cardinal later on that he was my mother’s candidate [in 2005],” Cardinal Tobin recalled, citing the way his mother appreciated how then-Cardinal Bergoglio lived in a small apartment, took a bus to work and cooked his own meals. “He got quite a laugh out of that.”

The bond between the two men was especially evident when Archbishop Tobin knelt before Pope Francis in St. Peter’s Basilica on June 29, 2013, to receive his pallium—a circular band made from lamb’s wool that symbolizes his role as the shepherd of the archdiocese and his

communion with the pope.

In that moment, Pope Francis spent considerable time talking with then-Archbishop Tobin.

“First, we had a conversation, and it was clear he knew the circumstances of my life in the last few years,” Cardinal Tobin recalled in 2016. “And when he put the pallium on my shoulders, he switched from Italian into Spanish because that was the language of his heart. And he said something personal to me. And it was lovely. And I’ve always been grateful for that, but I never thought it would end with the news [about being named a cardinal].”

Three months before Pope Francis made that announcement—“on a steamy afternoon at the end of July”—Cardinal Tobin visited the pope in the guest house in Vatican City where he lived, to discuss Church business.

“He invited me into a sort of television room where there were four or five chairs, and he said, ‘Pick whichever one you want. I’ll take whatever is left.’ And we talked, and shared. And I saw a very human side to him. He said twice, ‘I really don’t know why I was elected. I suspect the Italians couldn’t agree on a candidate.’”

Then Pope Francis added, “But because I wasn’t looking for this, I accepted it as God’s will. And I believe I’ll have what I need.”

Then and now, Cardinal Tobin viewed the pope’s words as an example for everyone “to stay connected to each other in solidarity, but most importantly to stay connected to Jesus Christ.”

It was a bond that connected Pope Francis and Cardinal Tobin, just as they



Pope Francis and Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin of Newark, N.J., share a moment of joy in 2017 when the pope gave the former archbishop of Indianapolis his pallium—a circular band made from lamb’s wool that symbolized Cardinal Tobin’s role as the shepherd of the Archdiocese of Newark and his communion with the pope. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

shared a vision of the Church that is open and welcoming.

“I think it’s the connection of a teacher and his disciple,” Cardinal Tobin said about their relationship. “I really do think, in all sincerity, that I’m an unworthy recipient of his affection. I don’t know why. Whatever began in 2005 has continued and deepened.”

Their bond grew stronger in the nine years that Pope Francis often called upon Cardinal Tobin to not only serve the people of the Archdiocese of Newark, but to assist him in ministries touching people’s lives around the world. Now, Cardinal Tobin will be among the cardinals who will help choose Pope Francis’ successor.

On the day of the passing of his friend and mentor, Cardinal Tobin shared this tribute.

“With profound sorrow and heartfelt

gratitude, I join the Church in mourning the death of our beloved Holy Father, Pope Francis, a shepherd who walked closely with God’s people and never tired of reminding us of God’s mercy. He was a man of deep faith, profound humility and unshakable hope—a servant whose tireless call to care for the poor and the marginalized will continue to inspire the Church for generations to come.

“In this Easter season, as we proclaim that Christ is risen and death is not the end, we entrust Pope Francis to the risen Lord whom he followed so faithfully. May Christ, our hope and resurrection, welcome him into the fullness of joy and peace.

“Let us give thanks for his life, his witness and his love for the people of God. And may we honor his memory by building a Church that reflects the face of Jesus—merciful, welcoming and always near to those on the margins.” †

Bishops honor pope’s legacy as universal shepherd in hours after his death

(OSV News)—Pope Francis, who died on April 21 at age 88, “will long be remembered for his outreach to those on the margins of the Church and of society,”



Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio

Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, said in a statement shared in the first hours after the pope’s death.

“He renewed for us the mission to bring the Gospel out to the ends of the Earth and offer divine mercy to all. He has also taken advantage of the present Jubilee to call us to a profound hope: one that is not an empty or naïve hope, but one grounded in the promise of almighty

God to be with us always,” Archbishop Broglio wrote.

Bishops around the United States began issuing tributes to Pope Francis and his 12-year pontificate shortly after the news of his death on April 21, Easter Monday. He died at the Vatican at 7:35 a.m. Rome time.

Pope Francis had been recovering from pneumonia and respiratory infections after having been released from Rome’s Gemelli Hospital on March 23 following more than five weeks of treatment.

Bishops pointed to Pope Francis’ historic and key contributions and shared their personal appreciations.

“Even with his roots in the Piedmont region of Italy, the first pope from our American continent was marked by his experience as a Jesuit and a shepherd in Buenos Aires. He brought that experience and vision with him to his ministry for the universal Church,” said Archbishop Broglio, who is also head of the U.S. Archdiocese for the Military Services. “Recently, he expressed anew prayerful hope in his letter of support to the bishops of this country in our attempts to respond to the face of Christ in the migrant, poor and unborn. In fact, he has always used the strongest and clearest expressions in the defense of the dignity of the human person from conception to natural death.”

Nodding to the 2025 Jubilee Year of Hope Pope Francis inaugurated on Dec. 24, Archbishop Broglio said

he last saw the pope at the Jubilee Mass for the Armed Forces, Police and Security Personnel, held at the Vatican on Feb. 8-9, just days before the pope was admitted to the hospital on Feb. 14.

Standing in New York’s St. Patrick’s Cathedral, where a portrait of Pope Francis was flanked by lit candles alongside an empty chair draped with purple and white stoles, Cardinal Timothy P. Dolan of New York shared informal reflections on Pope Francis during a morning Mass.

“Beyond the sorrow, the sadness that we feel at the passing of our Holy Father, Pope Francis, we express our faith in the resurrection of Jesus,” he said before the opening prayer at Mass. In his homily, he called attention to Pope Francis’ last public words being his Easter blessing.

“Yes we are sad, but we are filled with Easter joy,” Cardinal Dolan said. “When we believers are kind of a little lost and don’t know quite what to do, we always rely on prayer. Here we are, this second day of Easter, this Easter Monday, hearing the news of our Holy Father passing over. Here we are at the greatest prayer of all, the holy sacrifice of the Mass, which we offer, asking the Lord’s mercy on his immortal soul, thanking God for the gift that he was to us, and asking for consolation upon God’s family.”

Washington’s new archbishop, Cardinal Robert W. McElroy, said the Church and the world “have lost a true shepherd of souls, a beacon of unwavering hope, and a voice of penetrating truth. From the very first moments of his service to the universal Church, Pope Francis enshrined the mercy of God at the heart of his proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In doing so, he illuminated with new depth the pastoral dimension of the Church’s mission, which is rooted first in embracing love rather than in judgment.

“Pope Francis’ vision of a synodal Church—the people of God journeying together, nourished by word and sacrament, missionary in its outreach, including all and animated by the participation of all, constantly renewing itself in the light of the Gospel,” he continued, “stands as an enduring legacy of Pope Francis in his fidelity to the

Second Vatican Council and its call to preach the Gospel in the modern world. It provides a clear foundation for the journey of God’s people in the years which are to come.”

Cardinal Blase J. Cupich of Chicago called Pope Francis’ death “a moment of profound loss for me personally and for the Church.

“The finest memorial we can offer is to re-form our hearts as Pope Francis asked—to see our brothers and sisters, to listen to them and to offer our prayers and actions that all may experience the fullness of God’s promise,” said Cardinal Cupich, who served in several Vatican dicasteries under Pope Francis. “As we mourn his passing, I ask that God comfort us, but also strengthen us to remain steadfast in carrying on the work of restoring our Church’s place in the world as a source of hope and an advocate for those in need.”

Archbishop Richard G. Henning of Boston said that Pope Francis’ “legacy as Holy Father is broad and deep,” and his example “remains a guiding light to the universal Church.”

Bishop David A. Zubik of Pittsburgh praised Pope Francis’ pontificate, writing, “Pope Francis led the Church with extraordinary humility, compassion and courage. He reminded us that mercy is at the heart of the Gospel, and he consistently called us to encounter one another with tenderness and care—especially the poor, the suffering and the forgotten. His voice echoed far beyond the walls of the Church, inviting people of all backgrounds to walk together in peace, justice and love.”

In his personal encounters with Pope Francis, he said, “what struck me most was not just the dignity of his office, but the warmth of his heart.

“His attention to each person, his gentle spirit, and his genuine kindness left a lasting impression on me and so many others,” Bishop Zubik continued in his April 21 statement. “He was a shepherd who smelled like his sheep—and the world is better for it.”

Archbishop Robert G. Casey of Cincinnati, who was installed on April 3, also pointed to the Jubilee Year and its call for hope as he marked Pope Francis’ death.

POPE FRANCIS

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Gospel”), a detailed vision of the program for his papacy and his vision for the Church—particularly the Church’s outreach and its response to challenges posed by secular culture; “*Laudato Si’*,” on Care for Our Common Home,” on the environment; and “*Amoris Laetitia*” (“The Joy of Love”), his reflections on the discussions of the synods of bishops on the family in 2014 and 2015.

Holiness was the topic of his March 2018 apostolic exhortation “*Gaudete et Exsultate*” (“Rejoice and Be Glad”), in which he insisted being holy is not boring or impossible, and that it grows through small, daily gestures and acts of loving kindness.

Following in the footsteps of his predecessors, Pope Francis was an untiring voice for peace, urging an end to armed conflict, supporting dialogue and encouraging reconciliation. The pope described Russia’s 2022 invasion of Ukraine as “madness” and called on the world’s bishops to join him in consecrating Ukraine and Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. When Hamas militants attacked communities in Israel, killing scores of people and taking more than 200 people hostage in late 2023, and Israel retaliated by attacking Gaza, Pope Francis made repeated appeals for the return of hostages, a ceasefire to deliver humanitarian aid and a real commitment to a negotiated peace.

Promoting peace, solidarity and respect for the Earth, the pope insisted people need to recognize each other as brothers and sisters and issued an encyclical on that topic called “*Fratelli Tutti*: On Fraternity and Social Friendship.” He signed the text at the tomb of St. Francis of Assisi on the saint’s feast day, Oct. 4, in 2020 in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pope Francis spent much of the first nine years of his pontificate pursuing two ambitious projects: revitalizing the Church’s efforts at evangelization—constantly urging outreach rather than a preoccupation with internal Church affairs—and reforming the central administration of the Vatican, emphasizing its role of assisting bishops around the world rather than dictating policy to them.

On March 19, 2022, the ninth anniversary of the inauguration of his papacy, he promulgated “*Praedicate Evangelium*” (“Preach the Gospel”), his complete restructuring of the Roma Curia, highlighting its mission to serve the Church’s evangelization efforts at all levels.

His simple lifestyle, which included his decision not to live in the Apostolic Palace and his choice of riding around Rome in a small Fiat or Ford instead of a Mercedes sedan, sent a message of simplicity to Vatican officials and clergy throughout the Church. He reinforced the message with frequent admonitions about the Gospel demands and evangelical witness of poverty and meekness.

Although he repeatedly said he did not like to travel, he made 47 foreign trips, taking his message of Gospel joy to North and South America, Europe, Africa and Asia.

Jorge Mario Bergoglio was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina’s capital city, on Dec. 17, 1936. He earned a chemical technician’s diploma from his high school and entered the Jesuit novitiate in March 1958. After studying liberal arts in Santiago, Chile, he returned to Argentina and earned a licentiate in philosophy from the Colegio San Jose in San Miguel.

He was ordained a priest on Dec. 13, 1969, and after his perpetual profession as a Jesuit in 1973, he became master of novices at the Seminary of Villa Barilari in San Miguel. Later that same year, he was appointed



Pope Francis arrives in the popemobile for the closing Mass of the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia on Sept. 27, 2015. (CNS photo/Bob Roller)

superior of the Jesuit province of Argentina, a role in which, by his own account, he proved a divisive figure because of an “authoritarian and quick manner of making decisions.”

In May 1992, Father Bergoglio was named an auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Buenos Aires. He was appointed coadjutor archbishop five years later and became archbishop of Buenos Aires in 1998. Pope John Paul II named him to the College of Cardinals in 2001.

As leader of an archdiocese with more than 2.5 million Catholics, Cardinal Bergoglio strove to be close to the people. He rode the bus, visited the poor, lived in a simple apartment and cooked his own meals.

His international reputation was enhanced by his work at the 2007 assembly of the Latin American bishops’ council, and particularly by his role as head of the committee that drafted the gathering’s final document on reforming and reinvigorating the Church’s evangelizing efforts on the continent.

Cardinal Bergoglio was a known and respected figure within the College of Cardinals, so much so that no one disputed a respected Italian journal’s report that he received the second-highest number of votes on all four ballots cast in the 2005 conclave that elected Pope Benedict XVI.

Eight years later, Pope Benedict retired. At the cardinals’ meetings prior to the 2013 conclave to elect his successor, the need to reform the Vatican bureaucracy was a common theme of concern.

Addressing the gathering, Cardinal Bergoglio warned against “self-referentiality and a kind of theological narcissism” in the Church, and argued the next pope “must be a man who, from the contemplation and adoration of Jesus Christ, helps the Church to go out to the existential peripheries” to spread the Gospel.

His election on March 13, 2013, came on the second day of the conclave, on its fifth ballot. He chose the name Francis to honor St. Francis of Assisi, “the man



Pope Francis laughs with visitors after his weekly general audience in St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican on June 28, 2023. (CNS photo/Lola Gomez)

of poverty, the man of peace, the man who loves and protects creation,” he said.

“Go out” was Pope Francis’ constant plea to every Catholic, from curial cardinals to the people in the pews. More than once, he told people that while the Bible presents Jesus as knocking at the door of people’s hearts to get in, today Jesus is knocking at the doors of parish churches trying to get out and among the people.

But he faced criticism for what many saw as a lack of consistency in dealing forcefully with the clerical sexual abuse crisis, especially when it came to holding bishops accountable for handling allegations and removing priests credibly accused of abuse.

And while his pontificate marked major progress in the Vatican’s attempts to reach an agreement with China’s communist government on the appointment of Catholic bishops, a provisional accord signed in September 2018—and renewed in 2020, 2022 and 2024—was denounced by critics as a betrayal of Catholics who risked their lives for refusing any cooperation with the communists.

Like his predecessors, Pope Francis was a strong defender of the sacredness of human life. Meeting Catholic physicians in November 2014, for example, he insisted that in “the light of faith and the light of correct reason, human life is always sacred and always of ‘quality.’ There is no human life that is more sacred than another” and no “human life qualitatively more significant than another.”

He specifically condemned abortion on many occasions, once in 2019 likening it to “hiring a hit man to solve a problem.”

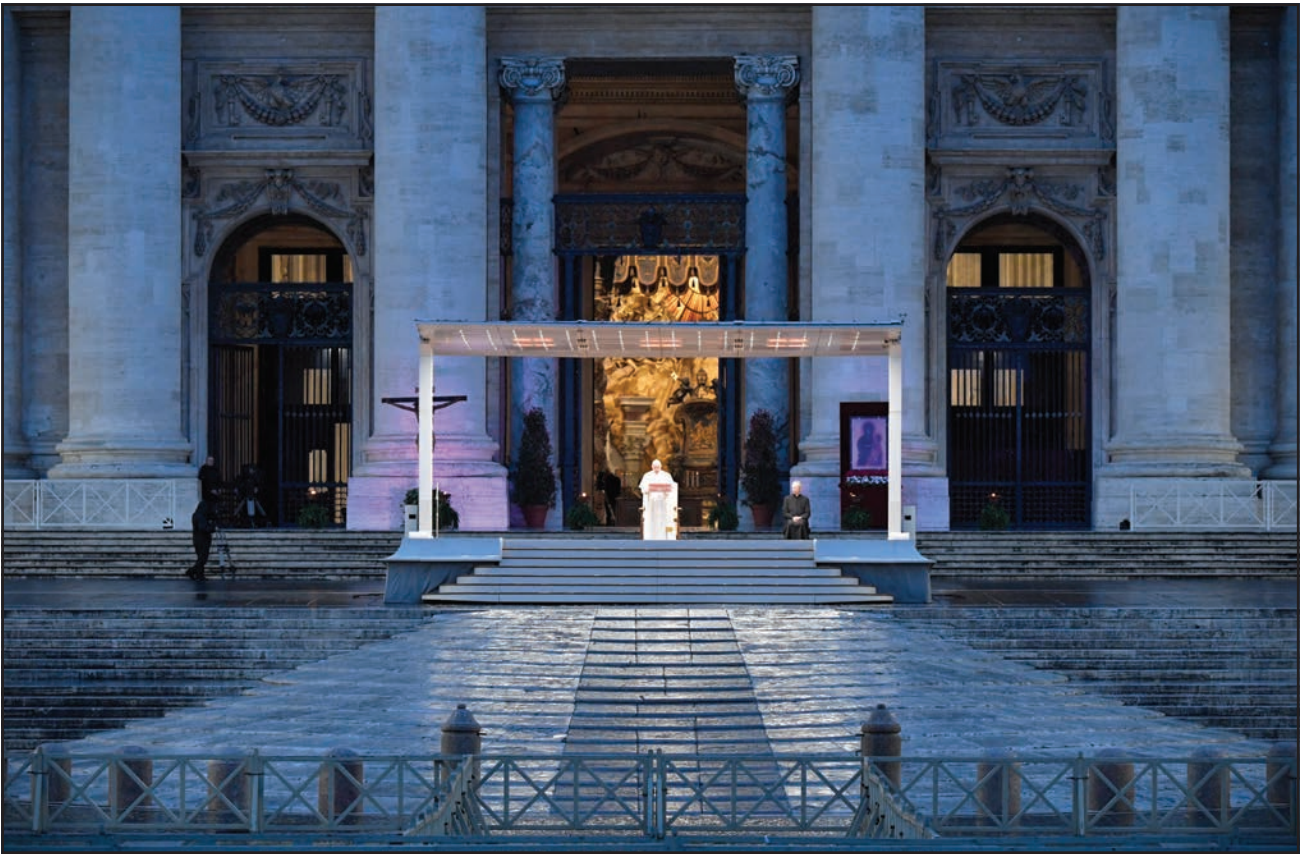
For Pope Francis, helping the defenseless also meant paying special attention to prisoners, victims of war and, particularly, Christians and other religious minorities persecuted for their faith.

When Islamic State forces and other terrorist groups began specifically targeting Christians and other religious minorities in Syria and Iraq, and later in North Africa, Pope Francis demanded the international community act.

He frequently cited figures that the number of Christian martyrs is greater today than in the first centuries of Christianity, and he insisted the international community cannot “look the other way.”

The pope’s funeral will take place in St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican at 10 a.m. Central European Time on April 26 (4 a.m. Eastern Time).

(A more in-depth obituary on the life and ministry of Pope Francis is available on our website at www.archindy.org/PopeFrancis.) †



Pope Francis leads a prayer service in an empty St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican on March 27, 2020. At the conclusion of the service, the pope held the Eucharist as he gave an extraordinary blessing “*urbi et orbi*” (to the city and the world). The service was livestreamed in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

U.S. political leaders express condolences at Holy Father’s death

WASHINGTON (OSV News)—President Donald J. Trump, officials in his administration and other U.S. political leaders issued statements expressing condolences for Pope Francis after the pontiff’s death on April 21 at age 88.

“Rest in Peace Pope Francis!” Trump wrote on his social media platform, Truth Social. “May God Bless him and all who loved him!”

Trump also ordered flags be flown at half-staff in memory of Pope Francis at public buildings, military posts, naval stations and ships, and embassies. Indiana Gov. Mike Braun, a Catholic, made a similar order for flags flown across the state.

“He was a good man, worked hard,” Trump said in comments on April 21 at the White House Easter Egg Roll. “He loved the world and it’s an honor to do that.”

The president and First Lady Melania Trump will travel to the pope’s April 26 funeral in Rome.

The pontiff’s death followed his stay in Rome’s Gemelli Hospital earlier this year while he recovered from respiratory infections. On Easter, the day before his death, Pope Francis gave his Easter blessing “*urbi et orbi*” (“to the city and the world”). He also held a brief meeting with U.S. Vice President JD Vance.

“I just learned of the passing of Pope Francis. My heart goes out to the millions of Christians all over the world who loved him,” Vance, a Catholic, wrote on the social media platform X on April 21. “I was happy to see him yesterday, though he was obviously very ill.”

Vance added he will always remember the “homily he gave in the very early days of COVID,” in reference to Pope Francis’ “*urbi et orbi*” blessing for the world at the onset of the pandemic in 2020.

“It was really quite beautiful,” Vance said. “May God rest his soul.”

During his first term, Trump met with the pontiff at the Vatican, telling him, “Thank you. Thank you. I won’t forget what you said,” after their private meeting. In the first weeks of the second Trump

administration, Pope Francis rebuked the Trump administration’s immigration policies, calling them a “major crisis” in a letter to the U.S. bishops.

Former President Joe Biden, the nation’s second Catholic president and a vocal admirer of Pope Francis, said in a statement on X, “Pope Francis will be remembered as one of the most consequential leaders of our time and I am better for having known him.

“It is with great sadness that Jill and I learned of the passing of His Holiness Pope Francis,” Biden said, adding, “He was unlike any who came before him. For decades, he served the most vulnerable across Argentina and his mission of serving the poor never ceased.”

Among the final actions of his single term in the White House, Biden bestowed the Presidential Medal of Freedom with Distinction, the nation’s highest civilian honor, to Pope Francis.

“He commanded us to fight for peace and protect our planet from a climate crisis. He advocated for the voiceless and powerless,” Biden added. “He made all feel welcome and seen by the Church. He promoted equity and an end to poverty and suffering across the globe. And above all, he was a Pope for everyone. He was the People’s Pope—a light of faith, hope and love.”

Pope Francis, formerly Argentine Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio, was elected the Catholic Church’s 266th pope on March 13, 2013, after the late Pope Benedict XVI announced his resignation.

Pope Francis made his only trip in his life to the United States in September 2015, meeting leaders and the faithful in Washington, New York and Philadelphia.

During his trip, on Sept. 24, 2015, Pope Francis became the first pope to address a joint meeting of the U.S. Congress, with then-Vice President Joe Biden and then-House Speaker John Boehner sitting behind him, members of different political parties but both Catholic.

During his remarks, Pope Francis



Pope Francis addresses a joint meeting of the U.S. Congress as then-Vice President Joe Biden (left) and then-Speaker of the House John Boehner look on in the House of Representatives Chamber at the U.S. Capitol in Washington on Sept. 24, 2015. Pope Francis, formerly Argentine Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio, died on April 21 at age 88. (CNS photo/Kevin Lamarque, Reuters)

called on the United States and its leaders to welcome immigrants and refugees, and encouraged the country to aspire to that greatness modeled by four leading Americans.

“A nation can be considered great when it defends liberty as [Abraham] Lincoln did, when it fosters a culture which enables people to ‘dream’ of full rights for all their brothers and sisters, as Martin Luther King sought to do; when it strives for justice and the cause of the oppressed, as Dorothy Day did by her tireless work, the fruit of a faith which becomes dialogue and sows peace in the contemplative style of Thomas Merton,” he said.

Pope Francis told the members of Congress that they had a “responsibility to protect and defend human life at every stage of its development,” a reference to abortion, noting that same conviction led him to also call for “the

global abolition of the death penalty.”

In comments posted on X on April 21, Boehner recalled him meeting Pope Francis at the U.S. Capitol.

“ ‘Speaker, will you pray for me?’ With those words, Pope Francis changed my life,” Boehner wrote. “He will forever hold a place in America’s history as the first Pope to address a joint meeting of the U.S. Congress, and in hearts across the world for his compassionate stewardship of the Church.”

Pope Francis was greeted by large and enthusiastic crowds during his visit, a trend then-President Barack Obama noted in remarks during the pontiff’s visit to the White House that year, calling the attendees at the event “just a small reflection of the deep devotion of some 70 million American Catholics.”

“I believe the excitement around your visit, Holy Father, must be attributed

See LEADERS, page 14

Precise rules, instructions govern what happens in period between popes

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Centuries of experience dealing with the death, or occasional resignation, of a pope has left the Catholic Church with thorough norms detailing who has responsibility for planning the funeral, preparing for the election of a new pope and taking care of essential business in the meantime.

The instructions are found in St. John Paul II’s 1996 apostolic constitution, “*Universi Dominici Gregis*” (UDG), which was revised by Pope Benedict XVI in 2007 and again just before he resigned in 2013.

The funeral and burial of a pope who dies in office should take place “between the fourth and sixth day after death,” the document said. The exact date is determined at a meeting of all the cardinals able to reach the Vatican immediately after the papal death.

The cardinals also determine when the conclave to elect a new pope should begin, although Pope Benedict’s update of UDG states that it should be at least 15 days from the death or resignation of the pope and can be no more than 20 days since the vacancy of the papacy.

An earlier start is possible, he said, “if it is clear that all the cardinal electors are present.” Cardinal electors are those who were under the age of 80 on the day the pope died or resigned.

The funeral marks the start of a mandated nine-day period of official mourning. For the next eight days, other memorial Masses are celebrated in St. Peter’s Basilica. The nine-day period is known as the “*novendiales*.”

With the death of a pope, most top-level Vatican officials—including the prefects of dicasteries—lose their jobs, but that does not mean most Vatican employees get time off. Regular business continues with dicastery secretaries overseeing the steady flow of paperwork, correspondence and meeting planning.

However, the publication of documents, the nomination of new bishops and the approval of statutes for Catholic universities and religious orders are suspended. Anything that must be issued in the name of the Vatican or in the name of the pope must await the election of a new pope and the re-confirmation or appointment of prefects for the various offices.

The two senior Vatican officials who retain their titles and responsibilities are the “*camerlengo*” or

chamberlain, currently U.S. Cardinal Kevin J. Farrell, whose job begins in earnest when a pope dies or resigns, and the head of the Apostolic Penitentiary, Cardinal Angelo De Donatis. The Apostolic Penitentiary is a Vatican court dealing with matters related to the sacrament of penance and to indulgences, so keeping him in office ensures the possibility of absolution for penitents guilty of serious sin and seeking forgiveness.

UDG also specified that “the almoner of His Holiness will also continue to carry out works of charity in accordance with the criteria employed during the pope’s lifetime.” That position is held by Cardinal Konrad Krajewski, who also is prefect of Dicastery for the Service of Charity.

Everything having to do with the funeral and with preparations for the conclave to elect Pope Francis’ successor belongs to the College of Cardinals.

The rites and rituals used—from the formal verification of the pope’s death to the eight memorial Masses after the funeral—are published in the “*Ordo Exsequiarum Romani Pontificis*” (“Order of Funeral Rites of the Roman Pontiff”), originally approved by St. John Paul II in 1998, but published only the day after his death in 2005.

In late 2024, the Vatican released a newer, simplified version on the orders of Pope Francis.

The physician who directs the Vatican health care service provides a civil certification of the pope’s death, including its cause.

But the ritual verification of the pope’s death takes place in the chapel of his residence and is presided over by the chamberlain, assisted by the dean of the College of Cardinals, the master of papal liturgical ceremonies and the physician.

If it ever was a custom to use a silver hammer to tap on the newly deceased pontiff’s forehead to make sure he is dead, it is a long disused practice.

The chamberlain also is responsible for placing seals on the pope’s study and bedroom and officially notifying the cardinal vicar for Rome and the archpriest of St. Peter’s Basilica.

Before the conclave, all the cardinals—including those over 80—participate in meetings known as “congregations.”

The “general congregation,” with all the cardinals, handles “important matters,” according to UDG, while “questions of lesser importance which arise on a daily basis or from time to time” are handled by the “particular congregation.”

The document says the cardinals draw lots to determine the three cardinals who will assist the camerlengo by serving three-day terms as members of the “particular congregation.”

However, Pope Francis’ 2022 apostolic constitution on the Roman Curia, “*Praedicate Evangelium*,” said that “one of these is the Cardinal Coordinator of the Council for the Economy,” currently German Cardinal Reinhard Marx of Munich and Freising (#224).

The general congregation meets under the leadership of the dean, Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, and besides setting the date for the funeral and for the conclave, it is responsible for:

—Ensuring that a commission of their members prepares the Domus Sanctae Marthae, the Vatican residence where Pope Francis lived, for the cardinals during the conclave. Rooms will be assigned by lot.

—Preparing the Sistine Chapel for the election of a new pope.

—Assigning two clerics “known for their sound doctrine, wisdom and moral authority” to prepare meditations for the cardinals on problems the Church faces and on choosing the next pope (UDG, #13).

—Approving the expenditures associated with the death of the pope.

—Arranging for the destruction of the papal fisherman’s ring and the lead seal that had marked Pope Francis’ letters.

Although not as secret as the conclave, the cardinals and those assisting them at the meetings of the general congregation take an oath of secrecy regarding “all matters in any way related to the election of the Roman Pontiff or those which, by their very nature, during the vacancy of the Apostolic See, call for the same secrecy” (UDG, #12).

During the general congregation meetings, the cardinals have the services of translators working in Italian, Spanish, English, French and German, as well as ushers and other aides. †



‘Brothers and sisters, this is the greatest hope of our life: we can live this poor, fragile and wounded existence clinging to Christ, because he has conquered death, he conquers our darkness and he will conquer the shadows of the world.’

—Pope Francis’ final homily, Easter Sunday 2025



Pope Francis celebrates Mass in the chapel of his residence, the Domus Sanctae Marthae, at the Vatican on July 8, 2020. He was marking the seventh anniversary of his first trip as pope to the island of Lampedusa, where thousands of migrants head each year seeking a better life in Europe. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)



Pope Francis places flowers near a statue of Mary as he prays in the Little Chapel of the Apparitions in early May of 2017 at the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima in Portugal. Mary was a courageous woman who stood by Jesus even when the crowds turned against him, and even though she knew he would face a tragic death, Pope Francis said. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)



Pope Francis kisses the foot of an inmate on April 13, 2017, at Paliano prison outside of Rome as he celebrates Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord's Supper. The pontiff washed the feet of 12 inmates at the maximum-security prison. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)



Pope Francis poses for a selfie during an evening prayer vigil with young people at the Basilica of St. Mary Major in Rome on April 8, 2017. Pope Francis chose the theme of “Young people, faith and vocational discernment” for the next Synod of Bishops held in October 2018. (CNS photo/L'Osservatore Romano)



Pope Francis greets an elderly woman as he meets with people in Asuncion, Paraguay, in this July 12, 2015, file photo. The month of July is dedicated to the elderly. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)



Pope Francis greets religious leaders during a meeting with Christian leaders and the leaders of other religions at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Thailand, on Nov. 22, 2019. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)



Pope Francis greets Lizzy Myers of Mansfield, Ohio, during his general audience in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican on April 6, 2016. Myers, who has a disease that is gradually rendering her blind and deaf, met the pope as part of her “visual bucket list.” (CNS photo/L'Osservatore Romano handout via EPA)



Pope Francis greets youths as he leaves an audience with young people from the northern Italian Diocese of Brescia in the Paul VI hall at the Vatican on April 7, 2018. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

Marking his final Easter on Earth, Pope Francis says Jesus’ resurrection makes Christians pilgrims of hope

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The hope Christians have is not a sign of avoiding reality but of trusting in the power of God to defeat sin and death as the resurrection of Jesus clearly shows, Pope Francis wrote in what would be his final Easter message.

“All those who put their hope in God place their feeble hands in his strong and mighty hand; they let themselves be raised up and set out on a journey,” said the message, read before Pope Francis gave his Easter blessing “*urbi et orbi*” (to the city and the world) on April 20. The Holy Father died at his residence hours later.

The pope’s voice was weak, as it has been since he was released from the hospital on March 23, and he barely raised his arms as he made the sign of the cross, but the tens of thousands of people in St. Peter’s Square were appreciative and clapped loudly after saying, “Amen.”

“Together with the risen Jesus,” he wrote in his message, those who trust in God “become pilgrims of hope, witnesses of the victory of love and of the disarmed power of life.”

The 88-year-old pope, who was still recovering from pneumonia, was not present at the Easter morning Mass in St. Peter’s Square but arrived shortly after noon to give the solemn blessing.

U.S. Vice President JD Vance and his family did not attend the Mass either, but Vance arrived at the Vatican at about 11:30 a.m. for a private meeting with Pope Francis in the papal residence, the Domus Sanctae Marthae. The Vatican said the meeting lasted just a few minutes and allowed the two to exchange Easter greetings.

Vance had met on April 19 with Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, and with Archbishop Paul R. Gallagher, the Vatican foreign minister. The Vatican said they discussed efforts to defend religious freedom as well as the international situation, especially regarding countries affected by war, political tensions and difficult humanitarian situations, with particular attention to migrants, refugees and prisoners.

With his voice still weak, Pope Francis wished everyone a happy Easter and then asked his master of liturgical ceremonies, Archbishop Diego G. Ravelli, to read the pope’s message, which insisted that “Easter is the celebration of life!”

“God created us for life and wants the human family to rise again,” he wrote. “In his eyes, every life is precious! The life of a child in the mother’s womb, as well as the lives of the elderly and the sick, who in more and more countries are looked upon as people to be discarded.”

Pope Francis condemned the “great thirst for death” seen in violence and wars around the world and in the “contempt” people, including government leaders, direct toward “the vulnerable, the marginalized and migrants!”



Pope Francis, in the popemobile, greets people in St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican after giving his Easter blessing on April 20. (CNS photo/Pablo Esparza)

As is traditional for the message, the pope also prayed for peace in war-torn nations, mentioning by name: Israel, Palestine, Ukraine, Yemen, Sudan, South Sudan, Congo and Myanmar.

Pope Francis condemned “the growing climate of antisemitism throughout the world.” But he also called attention to “the people of Gaza, and its Christian community in particular, where the terrible conflict continues to cause death and destruction and to create a dramatic and deplorable humanitarian situation.

“I appeal to the warring parties: call a ceasefire, release the hostages and come to the aid of a starving people that aspires to a future of peace,” the papal message said.

Pope Francis had chosen Cardinal Angelo Comastri, retired archpriest of St. Peter’s Basilica, to be his delegate to preside over the morning Mass and read his homily.

Some 50,000 tulips, daffodils,

hyacinths, roses and other flowers and bushes decorated the steps leading up to St. Peter’s Basilica while garlands framed the main entrance to the atrium of the basilica and adorned the central balcony.

Because Easter fell on the same day on the Julian and Gregorian calendars, meaning Catholic and Orthodox Christians were celebrating on the same day, the Vatican added Byzantine “*stichera*” or hymns and “*stichos*” or Psalm verses after the chanting of the Gospel in Latin and in Greek.

The homily the pope prepared focused on the Easter Gospel’s description of Mary Magdalene running to tell the disciples that Jesus had risen, and Peter and John running to verify the news.

Running, the pope wrote, “expresses the desire, the yearning of the heart, the inner attitude of those who set out to search for Jesus.”

And because he has risen from the

dead, people must look for Jesus in someplace other than the tomb, the pope’s text said.

“We must take action, set out to look for him: look for him in life, look for him in the faces of our brothers and sisters,” he said. “We must look for him without ceasing. Because if he has risen from the dead, then he is present everywhere, he dwells among us, he hides himself and reveals himself even today in the sisters and brothers we meet along the way, in the most ordinary and unpredictable situations of our lives.”

Jesus “is alive and is with us always, shedding the tears of those who suffer and adding to the beauty of life through the small acts of love carried out by each of us,” Pope Francis wrote.

After the Mass and the Easter blessing, Pope Francis got in the popemobile and rode around St. Peter’s Square, waving to the crowd and blessing babies. †

Be ‘heralds of hope,’ Pope Francis asks priests in homily for chrism Mass

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Especially in a Jubilee Year, but also every day, priests are called to continual conversion so that they can authentically preach the good news of hope, Pope Francis wrote in the homily he prepared for the Holy Thursday chrism Mass.

“It is God’s work, not ours: to bring good news to the poor, freedom to prisoners, sight to the blind and freedom to the oppressed,” the pope wrote in his text for the Mass on April 17 in St. Peter’s Basilica.

Cardinal Domenico Calcagno, retired president of the Administration of the Patrimony of the Holy See, presided over the Mass and read the homily prepared by Pope Francis, who was still recovering from respiratory infections.

Some 40 cardinals, 40 bishops and 1,800 priests celebrated the chrism Mass, which is named after the olive oil mixed with balsam that is blessed during the liturgy.

In the homily Pope Francis prepared, he focused on the connection between the Holy Year 2025 and the

Gospel reading, Luke 4:16-21, which recounts how Jesus went into the synagogue in Nazareth, opened the Scriptures and read a “jubilee” proclamation:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord” (Lk 4:18-19).

As ministers of Christ’s continued presence, Pope Francis wrote that “for us priests, the Jubilee Year thus represents a specific summons to a new beginning on our path of conversion. As pilgrims of hope, we are called to leave clericalism behind and to become heralds of hope.”

The words of Jesus, he said, must become a reality in the lives of those who are ordained for service.

“The poor before all others, children, adolescents, women, but also any who have been hurt in their experience of the Church—all these have a ‘feel’ for the presence of the Holy Spirit; they can distinguish him from

worldly spirits, they recognize him in the convergence of what we say and what we do,” the pope wrote.

Ordained ministry involves effort and, often enough, priests will not see the results of their labors, Pope Francis wrote. But “despair has no place.

“Every farmer knows seasons when nothing seems to grow,” his text said. “There are also times like these in our lives. It is God who gives the growth and who anoints his servants with the oil of gladness.”

After the homily, the clergy present renewed the promises made to their bishop at their ordinations and pledged to strive to be more united to Christ, “faithful stewards” of the sacraments and zealous pastors of souls.

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



POPE FRANCIS' PONTIFICATE:

A TIMELINE

2013



● MARCH 13

Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio of Buenos Aires, Argentina, is elected pope on the second day of the conclave, becoming the first pope from the Southern Hemisphere and the first non-European elected in almost 1,300 years. The Jesuit was also the first member of his order to be elected pope and the first member of any religious order elected in nearly two centuries.



● JULY 8

Pope Francis makes his first trip outside of Rome, choosing to go to the Italian island of Lampedusa to underline the plight of migrants crossing the Mediterranean and the countless lives lost at sea.

2014



● JUNE 8

Pope Francis, Israeli President Shimon Peres, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople and others come together in the Vatican Gardens for an unprecedented gathering to pray for peace in the Holy Land.

2015



● SEPT. 19-27

Pope Francis travels to Cuba then to Washington, D.C., New York and Philadelphia during his first visit to the United States. He addressed Congress, the United Nations and the World Meeting of Families, canonized St. Junipero Serra and visited the 9/11 memorial in New York.



● DEC. 8

Pope Francis opens the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica to inaugurate a Holy Year of Mercy. He invited churches around the world to designate a holy door as a reminder of his call for reconciliation.

2016



● FEB. 12-17

Pope Francis, on his way to Mexico, stops in Cuba to meet Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill of Moscow at the Havana airport and sign a joint declaration in the presence of Cuban President Raul Castro. In Mexico, he celebrated Mass in Ciudad Juárez, which borders El Paso, Texas. Hundreds of thousands of people attended the Mass, which included faithful on both sides of the border.

2017



● APRIL 13

Pope Francis goes to a maximum security prison to celebrate the Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord's Supper and washes the feet of 12 prisoners, including three women and a Muslim man, who were preparing for baptism. The celebration continued a practice he began as archbishop of Buenos Aires and performed every Holy Thursday as pope: including Catholics and non-Catholics, men and women, especially those who are marginalized in the foot-washing rite.

2018



● APRIL 21

Pope Francis appoints three women as consultants to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the first time women and laypeople were named as active contributors -- not support staff. They joined a growing number of women the pope has named to top-level positions at the Vatican.



● AUG. 2

Pope Francis orders the revision of the Catechism of the Catholic Church to describe the death penalty as morally inadmissible and to affirm that the church "works with determination for its abolition worldwide."

2019



● FEB. 4

Pope Francis and Sheikh Ahmad el-Tayeb, grand imam of Egypt's Al-Azhar mosque and university, sign the document on "Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together" during an interreligious meeting in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.



● FEB. 21-24

Pope Francis convenes a global summit on child protection and abuse, bringing together nearly 200 church leaders -- presidents of bishops' conferences, the heads of the Eastern Catholic churches, superiors of men's and women's religious orders, survivors and Roman Curia officials. The summit at the Vatican included a penitential liturgy.

2020



● MARCH 27

In the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, Pope Francis prays and delivers his extraordinary blessing *urbi et orbi* (to the city and the world) during an evening prayer service from St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican. St. Peter's Square was empty, and the service was livestreamed.

2021



● MARCH 5-8

Pope Francis visits Iraq amid sporadic violence continuing in the country and COVID-19. He honored those who remained faithful and worked to rebuild the country.



● JULY 4

The pope undergoes a three-hour scheduled surgery at a Rome hospital to remove part of his colon. Officials said it was required to treat diverticulitis, when bulging pouches in the lining of the intestine or colon become inflamed or infected. Throughout his pontificate he has suffered bouts of painful sciatica, and knee problems led him to start using a wheelchair in 2022.

2022



● JULY 24-29

Pope Francis makes "a penitential trip" to Canada to meet with, listen to and apologize to members of Canada's First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities, especially those who experienced abuse or attempts at forced assimilation at church-run residential schools.

2023



● JAN. 5

Pope Francis presides over the funeral Mass for Pope Benedict XVI in St. Peter's Square. It was the first time in more than 200 years that a pope celebrated the funeral of his predecessor.



● MARCH 13

Pope Francis celebrates his 10th anniversary as pope.



● AUG. 31-SEPT. 4

Pope Francis visits Mongolia, the first time a pope has visited the country.



● OCTOBER

Pope Francis convenes the first of two monthlong sessions of the "Synod on Synodality."



● DECEMBER

Pope Francis approved and signed off on "*Fiducia Supplicans*," a document that permitted blessings of those in irregular relationships, and which was strongly objected to by many church leaders.

2024



● OCTOBER

Pope Francis presided over the second monthlong session of the Synod on Synodality. In a surprise move, he signs his name to the final document drafted by synod delegates.



● OCTOBER

Pope Francis releases his final encyclical, "*Dilexit Nos*," on the Sacred Heart of Jesus.



● DECEMBER

Pope Francis opens the 2025 Jubilee Year of Hope at St. Peter's Basilica.

2025



● FEB. 14

Pope Francis is admitted to Gemelli hospital, diagnosed with bronchitis.



● MARCH 23

Pope Francis is released from hospital after a 38-day stay.



● APRIL 20

Pope Francis makes his final public appearance on Easter Sunday.



● APRIL 21

Pope Francis dies at 88.

LEADERS
continued from page 9

not only to your role as Pope, but to your unique qualities as a person,” Obama said at the time. “In your humility, your embrace of simplicity, in the gentleness of your words and the generosity of your spirit, we see a living example of Jesus’ teachings, a leader whose moral authority comes not just through words but also through deeds.”

Pope Francis was the most recent of three popes in history to visit the White House, and the fourth to ever visit the United States.

In a post on X featuring a photo with Pope Francis at the White House, Obama said, “Pope Francis was the rare leader who made us want to be better people.”

“In his humility and his gestures at once simple and profound—embracing the sick, ministering to the homeless, washing the feet of young prisoners—he shook us out of our complacency

and reminded us that we are all bound by moral obligations to God and one another,” he said. “Today, Michelle and I mourn with everyone around the world—Catholic and non-Catholic alike—who drew strength and inspiration from the Pope’s example. May we continue to heed his call to ‘never remain on the sidelines of this march of living hope.’ ”

In a statement shared on X, Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who is Catholic, said he and his wife, Jeanette, were saddened to hear of Pope Francis’ death.

“We unite in prayer with Catholics worldwide for the repose of the pontiff’s soul and for this period of transition for the Catholic Church. May he rest in peace,” Rubio said.

“The United States of America extends its deepest condolences to our friends and partners at the Holy See on the passing of His Holiness Pope Francis. Pope Francis has been a beacon of compassion, hope, and humility for Catholics worldwide,” the U.S. Embassy to the Holy See posted on X. †



Pope Francis meets briefly with U.S. Vice President JD Vance, and his translator, in the papal residence, the Domus Sanctae Marthae, at the Vatican on April 20. The Vatican said the meeting was an opportunity to exchange best wishes for Easter. (CNS photo/Vatican Media).

ARZOBISPO
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a un mundo que necesita desesperadamente la paz y el amor de Cristo.

El deseo de apertura, diálogo y transparencia del difunto Papa nos ofreció muchas oportunidades de ver de primera mano cómo respondía a los retos pastorales y sociales de nuestro tiempo. Durante su pontificado, mantuvo su estilo y tono característicos y su mensaje fue siempre constante. Fue verdaderamente un hombre de la Iglesia, comprometido con la defensa de las verdades eternas de la fe católica y con su aplicación pastoral adaptada a las circunstancias actuales.

Al igual que sus predecesores, el papa Francisco mantuvo una visión coherente sobre la verdad que valoraba la vida humana en todas sus dimensiones. Mientras muchos en la cultura secular estaban ansiosos por excluir a la Iglesia de la escena pública, el Papa nunca vaciló en expresar el compromiso de la Iglesia

con la paz en nuestro mundo, la santidad de la vida y la preocupación por los pobres y vulnerables, una visión arraigada en la infinita bondad y misericordia de Dios para con todas las personas.

En el prólogo de uno de los muchos libros que escribió sobre su papado, el papa Francisco enumeró tres grandes temas que podría decirse que le preocupaban desde que se convirtió en sucesor de san Pedro como Obispo de Roma hace 13 años, a saber:

- en primer lugar, tener una relación sólida con Dios;
- segundo, tener una fuerte relación con la creación; y
- tercero, relacionarse estrechamente con los demás, centrándose en la migración mundial de los pueblos.

El papa Francisco abrazó sin reparos toda la creación de Dios, especialmente la vida humana—desde la concepción hasta la muerte natural—y el cuidado de la Tierra, nuestra casa común. Cariñoso y feroz defensor de todos los niños, expresó en una ocasión con respecto al aborto: “No está bien ‘acabar’ con un ser humano, por pequeño que sea, para resolver un problema.” También afirmó el compromiso de la Iglesia con el valor de toda vida humana

cuando actualizó el *Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica* en 2018, afirmando en una revisión del párrafo 2267 que “la pena de muerte es inadmisibles porque atenta contra la inviolabilidad y la dignidad de la persona, y [la Iglesia] trabaja con determinación por abolirla en todo el mundo.”

El difunto Papa fue un poderoso evangelizador que nos recordó en más de una ocasión nuestro llamado “al discipulado misionero.” Todo cristiano está llamado a ser misionero, dijo, compartiendo la buena nueva de la salvación en Cristo y haciendo discípulos para Él, no solo para sí mismos o para un grupo de creyentes afines a él. Tal como escribió en su exhortación apostólica “*Evangelii Gaudium*,” “Ser discípulo es tener la disposición permanente de llevar a otros el amor de Jesús y eso se produce espontáneamente en cualquier lugar: en la calle, en la plaza, en el trabajo, en un camino” (#127).

El papa Francisco tenía una pasión y una devoción inquebrantables por la fe, la Iglesia y el pueblo de Dios en todas partes. Fue un servidor bueno y fiel, un hijo leal de la Iglesia. Que descanse en la paz eterna, contemplando el rostro de Dios. †




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SIMPLY CATHOLIC

Carlo Acutis’ ordinary life was centered on his desire for holiness

By Meg Hunter-Kilmer

(OSV News)—Blessed Carlo Acutis had a PlayStation. He made awkward videos with his friends. His favorite cartoon was “Pokémon.” And soon, he will be canonized a saint.

It was announced on Feb. 22, 2020, that Pope Francis had approved a miracle attributed to Carlo Acutis, paving the way for his beatification, which took place later that year in Assisi, where he is entombed. Acutis’ intercession reportedly helped to heal a Brazilian child suffering from a rare condition of the pancreas in 2013.

In May 2024, Pope Francis approved a second miracle attributed to Carlo: the unlikely recovery in 2022 of a Costa Rican woman who suffered a traumatic head injury in a bicycle accident while studying at a university in Florence, Italy. That miracle cleared the path for his canonization.

Acutis’ mother, Antonia, doesn’t know how he came to love Jesus. He’d been baptized as a baby, but the family didn’t practice the faith. Perhaps it was their Polish nanny who told Carlo about Jesus. Regardless of the source, Carlo had a deep love for Jesus even as a preschooler, asking his bemused mother if they could stop in to see Jesus when they walked past churches in their Milan neighborhood—and even insisting on taking flowers to place at the feet of the Blessed Mother.

Antonia wasn’t sure what to do with this piety in her young son, and she wasn’t prepared to answer his many questions. But as he asked, she began to wonder as well. His curiosity eventually prompted her to take theology classes. Beyond just returning to taking part in Mass regularly, Antonia was diving into her faith, and all because of Carlo. “He was like a little savior for me,” she said in an interview published in 2019.

Carlo’s longing for the Eucharist drove him to ask permission to receive his first Communion earlier than was customary where he lived. Carlo received his first Communion at 7 and never missed Mass since. Not just Sunday Mass, either. Every day, Carlo went to Mass. Every day, he stole a few minutes to pray in silence before a tabernacle.

And while his parents sometimes went with him, Carlo often went alone. When they traveled, Carlo’s first order of business was to find a church and figure out Mass times. Whether or not his parents joined him, Carlo would be there. Every day.

And they traveled quite a bit. Carlo’s deep love of Mary (whom he called “the only woman in my life”) led the family to Marian apparition sites all over Europe. But their pilgrimages became more intentional when Carlo was 11 and got an idea.

After receiving his first Communion, Carlo had begun to lament the many, many people who don’t go to Mass. “They’ll stand in line for hours to go to a concert,” he would say, “but won’t stay even a moment before the tabernacle.” Eager to do something to draw souls to Jesus, young Carlo began to research eucharistic miracles.

He was convinced that people wouldn’t be able to stay away from Mass if they knew about the miracles of Lanciano, Poznan and the dozens of others recognized by the Church. So, Carlo began to research, dragging his parents from one shrine to another in order to take pictures for a website he was building.

This was only 2002, but Carlo was something of a prodigy when it came to technology. When he was only 8 or 9, he had gotten hold of a university-level computer science textbook, using it to teach himself to code. From there, he moved into animation and video editing, making videos with his friends and dubbing voice-overs on videos of his dogs.

Carlo had the tech savvy, the information and the drive to create a website that documents nearly 150 miracles. It’s now been developed into an exhibit that has traveled the world.

But Carlo was no computer geek closeted in a back bedroom. For all his technological skill, Carlo was a friendly, outgoing kid. He was so friendly that his family was reluctant to go on walks with him.

Carlo knew everybody, it seemed, and couldn’t help but stop to talk to every person he passed. He had a sensitive heart and was always looking out for those who were suffering: classmates whose parents were going through a divorce, kids who were being bullied.

Carlo’s approach was always friendship. And through that friendship, people were always drawn to Jesus. As pure and as pious as he was, nobody felt judged by the young saint. His uncle says that being with Carlo filled your heart. And that joy left people seeking and wondering, as Carlo’s mother had years before. A young Hindu man who worked for Carlo’s family was baptized as a direct result of his friendship with Carlo, while many others returned to the faith.

Carlo was particularly close to the homeless people in his neighborhood, packing up food most days to take out to his friends on the street. Though his family was wealthy, Carlo had no patience for excess. He saved up his pocket money to buy a sleeping bag for a homeless friend, and when his mother suggested they buy Carlo such “luxuries” as a second pair of shoes, he revolted.

Technology, though, wasn’t a luxury for him. It was an important part of his apostolate, and Carlo had no qualms about using three computers when building his website.

Through all this, every day there were his constants: Mass, the rosary, silent time before a tabernacle. Carlo insisted that holiness was impossible otherwise. “The Eucharist is my highway to heaven,” he would say, and nothing could get between him and his daily appointment with the Lord. “The more we receive the Eucharist, the more we will become like Jesus,” Carlo said.

How did he have the time, in between teaching himself to code, playing soccer, riding his



Blessed Carlo Acutis, whose April 27 canonization is postponed due to the death of Pope Francis on April 21, is pictured in an undated photo. Born in 1991, he died at age 15 in 2006. Known as the first “millennial saint,” Acutis had ordinary interests in soccer, computer programming and cartoons like “Pokémon,” but was ultimately driven in his life by a desire for holiness. (OSV News photo/courtesy Sainthood Cause of Carlo Acutis)

bike around Milan to visit the poor, teaching himself the saxophone, patiently explaining technology to his older relatives and making one movie after another?

According to his mother, Carlo didn’t waste time on useless things. He limited himself to an hour a week of video games (because, he said, he didn’t want to become a slave to them) and focused the rest of his time on things that were valuable. But that didn’t exclude silly animations or videos of his dogs. Carlo knew that something doesn’t need to be strictly catechetical to be valuable, and he enjoyed leisure all the more because its greatest value was in being fun.

Carlo hungered for heaven. “We have always been awaited in heaven,” he said, and throughout his life his eyes were fixed on eternity. So when, at 15, he was hospitalized with flu-like symptoms and was diagnosed instead with an acute and untreatable leukemia, Carlo wasn’t upset.

He was ready to go home. “I can die happy,” he told his mother, “because I haven’t wasted even a minute on things that aren’t pleasing to God.”

Carlo Acutis died a few days later on Oct. 12, 2006. He was a remarkable young man, but he was also ordinary. He had no visions. He didn’t levitate when he prayed. He just lived like heaven was real. He was completely himself, video games and computer programming and all, but entirely Christ’s.

On his website, Carlo wrote a list of instructions for becoming holy, encouraging people to go to Mass daily and confession weekly. But his very first rule for becoming holy was this: “You must want it with all your heart.”

This is the legacy of Blessed—soon Saint—Carlo Acutis: an ordinary, modern kid who watched cartoons, used the internet and wanted holiness with all his heart. This is why the world loves him. He shows us that holiness is possible—for every one of us. Even if you have an Instagram account. Even if you’re a gamer.

But you have to want it.

(Meg Hunter-Kilmer is a Catholic author and speaker. Visit her website at piercedhands.com. Carlo Acutis’ April 27 canonization is postponed due to the death of Pope Francis on April 21.) †



Anthony Trujillo of Albuquerque, N.M., places a rosary against a relic of Blessed Carlo Acutis on July 19, 2024, during the National Eucharistic Congress at the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis. (File photo by Sean Gallagher)

Faith and Family/Sean Gallagher

Families live out the glory of Holy Week, Easter Octave all year long

Holy Week and the Octave of Easter are surely the two richest weeks of the Church’s liturgical year.

It starts with the blessing of palms on Palm Sunday and goes on to the blessing of oils at the chrism Mass. Many parishes have the washing of the feet during the Evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper on Holy Thursday, and a beautifully decorated altar of repose where the Blessed Sacrament is kept after the liturgy. Then the Church’s worship moves into the starkness of the Celebration of the Lord’s Passion on Good Friday afternoon.

The darkness that enveloped the world when our Lord died on Calvary, though, gives joyful way to his undying light as the paschal candle is processed into parish churches on the night of Holy Saturday at the Easter Vigil.

Christ’s new and unending life is shared with catechumens in baptism and renewed in the life of all worshippers who renew their baptismal promises.

While the Octave of Easter does not have the deeply symbolic rituals of Holy Week, the joy of Christ’s

resurrection radiates throughout it. Parish churches are beautifully adorned with flowers. Mass on each day of the octave is celebrated as if it was still Easter Sunday with all of its proper prayers being repeated throughout.

The octave ends with Divine Mercy Sunday, in which worshippers bask in the great gift of God’s forgiveness won for us through the paschal mystery of Christ’s suffering, death and resurrection.

No other two-week span in the Church’s year comes anywhere close to Holy Week and the Octave of Easter. After their peak moments, the day-to-day liturgical life of the Church in the doldrums of Ordinary Time might seem, well, ordinary.

But we should never forget that each Mass, no matter when it is celebrated, contains the fullness of Christ’s paschal mystery that is on such intense display during Holy Week and the Easter Octave.

And what is true of the Church’s worship is also true of its families. The teaching that families are the domestic Church isn’t just a nice theological catchphrase. It’s a transcendent reality that daily mirrors and fully embodies in its own way Christ’s dying and rising.

Countless time every day, husbands and wives, parents

and children die to themselves and rise to a greater life than they can imagine in the life they share.

Spouses learn to let slide by the idiosyncrasies of their partners that can really grate them. Parents change one more diaper, make one more meal, wash one more load of laundry and balance a million and one household duties before falling into their beds, only to wake up the next day and do it again.

Children take their turn in this mystery by learning how to live with the craziness of their siblings (and their parents) and in doing what mom or dad ask them to do, especially when there are a million and one other things they’d rather do.

All of these moments, and so many others, are hard. And I’ll be the first to confess that there are many times I fail in them. But it is possible for us to die and rise with Christ in them—but only with the help of his grace.

This all may seem a world away from the Church’s profound worship in Holy Week and the Easter Octave. But the glory of Christ’s dying and rising which he draws us into in that worship is just as fully present in its own way in the family home, the domestic Church, as it is in our parish churches. †

Journey of the Heart/Jennifer Burger

Siblings’ faith shines through in care and love for Mom and Dad

My father-in-law, Robert J. Burger, passed away on March 15. During his funeral Mass, Dad’s cousin, Father Mark Burger, spoke of him as a “soul tender.”

This is an apt description for someone who loved so completely and was a good steward of all the gifts that God had given him—especially the people in his life.

But the story I really want to share is about those who tended to his soul as well as to all his needs during his journey home to our Lord: his family. During the last eight months of Dad’s life, I witnessed the beautiful way that they tended to not only him but to each other.

When Dad’s health started to decline last summer, the family rallied into action. It was Mom and Dad’s wish that he be at home, so my husband and his five siblings took turns traveling to Cincinnati to stay at their house to help Mom take care of Dad, run errands, and make their home comfortable and functional for his increasing medical needs.

Each member of the family brought his or her gifts to the table, from medical expertise to coordination of caregivers, from availability of time for extended stays to planning family gatherings and celebrations so all could stay connected. In many ways, it was the “Burger family as normal;” however, there was an outward expression of love and unity that I always knew was there but had not ever witnessed so profoundly.

I found myself in awe and admiration of how well they all worked together. Regularly, the six children and most times Mom would get on the phone and discuss the “next steps.” I was not part of these conversations but could hear them. And if my husband Paul and I were in the car and he was driving, I would monitor the group text from “Bro’s and Sis’ ” for the latest updates.

They paid attention to every detail, pivoted as needed and moved forward with a sense of mission that was motivated by love—love for their father and their mother. They shared their lives and this particular journey with that same love for each other. Conversations toward the end of Dad’s life were more involved, but in

patience they always came to an agreement. Every decision was made with Dad’s well-being and Mom’s wishes and their needs in mind. Through their own sadness, they walked together with hope, the hope of eternal life that Dad would soon enter.

The greatest witness was of the love that Mom and Dad shared—until the very end—a love rooted in our Catholic faith that enabled them to love so well. This legacy remains and has been entrusted to his family—a family of which I have been most blessed to be a part.

I’m sure that many of you have lived a similar story and there are others whose family stories and witness may be more of dysfunction than “loving well.”

We all belong however to a family of faith as adopted children of God, a God who loves us so well that he gave his only Son Jesus, who by his life, death and resurrection, teaches us to love well.

As “Bro’s and Sis’ ” in Christ, this is our calling. Like the first Christian community that we will soon be reading about in the Acts of the Apostles, we have been entrusted with the gift of faith, handed to us through generations and through which we journey together.

May we be outward signs of God’s love and care for each other, being of one heart and of one mind—and loving each other well.

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

The Eucharistic Word/Michael R. Heinlein

Community of believers can help our children build habit of prayer

As any parent will understand, praying well at Mass with three children is not easy—or sometimes, even possible. There’s always a question about some ritual or phrase in a reading or a sippy cup dropped on the pew in front of you or just basic struggles of concentration. Oh, the distractions!

While praying as I’d like is far from reality most days, I’ve put my hope in the understanding that I’m planting seeds in the lives of my children that will continue to grow throughout a lifetime. I hope that the faith lived in our “domestic Church”

helps them to be aware of God’s presence in their lives and equips them with what is necessary to nurture and develop a relationship with him.

The challenges of praying well during Mass are not restricted to parents. Each of us experiences times of prayer that might be considered “dry” or “empty.”

Sometimes this is because we aren’t sure what we’re doing or why we do it. Sometimes it’s because we are unfocused and distracted. Sometimes we are oblivious to those around us. A lot of the time, we don’t pray well because we have not fostered good habits that allow us to do so. Praying at Mass with three little kids has helped me realize the value of this in new ways.

A line from the late Cardinal Francis E. George lingers in my mind as I endeavor to help my little people build habits in the practice of the faith, and I think it can be useful to all of us who hope to do the same. Cardinal George, one of the most impressive and inspiring American bishops in the last century, was once asked how he was able to remain tethered to Christ and his Church so effectively. Cardinal George, who died in 2015, thought for a while before he answered simply: “habit.”

Habit can give us an opportunity to deepen our reverence. Habit isn’t an absent-minded action. Habit, rather, presents the opportunity for reflection and limits us from distractions. Habit can help us to see how God makes himself present to us in the life of the Church.

By its nature, much of our ritual lends itself to becoming habitual. Through the building of good habits, we allow God to be present in our lives in new and profound ways.

Consider the readings at Mass. Could we make a habit of reverencing God present in his word by spending time with the Sunday Mass readings? Is there a day in the week when we could make it a habit to listen to God more attentively and recognize his presence and his love and desire for us? What other good habits can we cultivate throughout the week to

make Mass a place where we can sense God’s presence and love for us?

Times of silence can be more of a distraction for some, especially when we are not used to it. How could we make a plan for how to use that time more effectively so that God can be present to us?

For instance, instead of falling into the trap of watching others move through the Communion line after we’ve received the sacrament, what habit could we develop to deepen our relationship with God? Perhaps an examination of conscience? Perhaps a review of the day’s Gospel reading? Perhaps the recitation of memorized prayers that can help us to appreciate what God’s presence means in our lives?

When my kids get anxious when they have to do something specific at Mass, I always tell them: Watch others. Get to Mass a few minutes early and see how others act, behave and move in God’s presence in church. Ask a friend from church what helps them experience God’s presence more profoundly. We are a communion of believers, and we can reinforce and strengthen each other. Make it a habit to learn from our brothers and sisters.

(Michael R. Heinlein is author of Glorifying Christ: The Life of Cardinal Francis E. George, O.M.I. and a promised member of the Association of Pauline Cooperators.) †

Divine Mercy Sunday/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, April 27, 2025

- Acts of the Apostles 5:12-16
- Revelation 1:9-11a, 12-13, 17-19
- John 20:19-31

The Acts of the Apostles supplies the first reading for Mass this weekend. The first several chapters of Acts are fascinating since they depict well the life of the early Christian community in Jerusalem. This depiction begins with the story of the Lord’s ascension and proceeds forward.

Vitally important in the life of the Church in Jerusalem was the leadership of the Apostles, with St. Peter as their head. The people held them in the highest esteem. After all, Jesus had called the Apostles individually and commissioned them all to continue the work of salvation after he ascended to heaven.

In this reading, the Apostles work many miracles. When Peter moved among the sick, merely lying beneath his shadow was enough to be cured of sickness or infirmity. It is a powerful description of Peter’s place in the Church.

Earlier in Acts, it is noted that the faithful in the early days of the Church “devoted themselves to the teaching of the Apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers” (Acts 2:42).

The message is clear. Jesus did not leave the Christian body without guidance nor without access to God’s guidance.

For its second reading, the Church provides a passage from the Book of Revelation. In the reading, St. John, the author of Revelation, assumed by tradition to have been the Apostle John, said that on the Lord’s Day (or Sunday, the day of the Resurrection) he had a vision of the Lord. Jesus ordered John to write about what John saw.

St. John’s Gospel provides the last reading. It begins with an appearance of Jesus before the Apostles. First, the Lord brings them peace. He then empowers them to forgive sins.

Next comes the familiar story of doubtful Thomas. Other Apostles had seen the risen Lord, but Thomas had not

yet seen Jesus. Thomas insisted that he would not believe that he had risen from the dead until he personally could touch the wounds of Christ.

When Jesus next appeared before the Apostles, Thomas was present and saw the wounds. He proclaimed Jesus as “my lord and my God” (Jn 20:28).

The reading ends by stating that Jesus performed many other miracles. The crucified Lord lived.

Reflection

This weekend is called Divine Mercy Sunday, a theme especially meaningful for the late Pope St. John Paul II.

Only a week ago, in celebrating the feast of Easter, the Church joyfully and excitedly proclaimed to us its belief that Jesus was risen. He lives! To emphasize the meaning of this pronouncement, the Church gave us the magnificent liturgy of the Easter Vigil, the summit of the Church’s entire liturgical year.

This weekend, just a week after Easter, the Church hurries to repeat that the risen Christ is with us still—visibly, tangibly and dynamically—through the Apostles. They represented the Lord. They continued his work of salvation.

In the second reading, from the Book of Revelation, we are told of John’s extraordinary encounter with the risen Lord.

John’s Gospel, in the third reading, continues this process of reporting the Lord’s granting to the Apostles the very authority of God himself. Jesus gave them the ability to forgive sins. As sins affront God, only God can forgive sins, yet Jesus conveyed this authority to the Apostles.

Thomas is important to the story. His doubting is an expected human reaction to the amazing assertion that Christ had risen from the dead. Then Thomas saw Jesus and believed. Thomas is a model for us.

To bring the lesson home to us, Jesus, healing and forgiving sins, the Son of God, merciful and good, still lives for us through the Church founded on the efforts of the Apostles empowered by his grace.

The Lord’s plan to offer salvation to all people in all places and always is in itself Divine Mercy. †

Daily Readings

Monday, April 28

St. Peter Chanel, priest and martyr
St. Louis Grignon de Montfort, priest
Acts 4:23-31
Psalm 2:1-9
John 3:1-8

Tuesday, April 29

St. Catherine of Siena, virgin and doctor of the Church
Acts 4:32-37
Psalm 93:1-2, 5
John 3:7b-15

Wednesday, April 30

St. Pius V, pope
Acts 5:17-26
Psalm 34:2-9
John 3:16-21

Thursday, May 1

St. Joseph the Worker
Acts 5:27-33

Psalm 34:2, 9, 17-20
John 3:31-36

Friday, May 2

St. Athanasius, bishop and doctor of the Church
Acts 5:34-42
Psalm 27:1, 4, 13-14
John 6:1-15

Saturday, May 3

St. Philip, Apostle
St. James, Apostle
1 Corinthians 15:1-8
Psalm 19:2-5
John 14:6-14

Sunday, May 4

Third Sunday of Easter
Acts 5:27-32, 40b-41
Psalm 30:2, 4-6, 11-13
Revelation 5:11-14
John 21:1-19 or John 21:1-14

Question Corner/Jenna Marie Cooper

Tribunal processes are deliberate to protect people’s rights, Church teachings

Q I have a close friend who is in the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults and is very serious about her faith and becoming Catholic.



She is disappointed that she won’t be able to be baptized and join the Church this Easter because she still has an annulment case in progress at our marriage tribunal. Isn’t there something that could have been done

to speed the process up for her? (New York)

A Naturally, I can’t comment on your friend’s specific case given the limited information you’ve shared here. But I can share a few thoughts related to this topic in general.

First, for the most part, there really isn’t a way to speed up a marriage nullity trial in specific cases. People seeking a declaration

of nullity (commonly known as an annulment) can try to make sure that their case is processed as quickly as is possible by doing what they can on their own part to provide all the required information to the tribunal in a timely fashion. But this is more about avoiding unnecessary delays than it is about proactively making things run faster.

Although it might seem complex or even apparently arbitrary to an outside observer, the whole marriage nullity process is carefully designed to protect the rights of everyone involved while also safeguarding the Church’s teaching on the sacredness and permanence of marriage.

A nullity trial involves careful evidence-gathering and review by multiple canon lawyers, and for even the most efficient tribunals this is necessarily going to take some time. Any “cutting corners” or skipping steps in the process would run the risk of invalidating the whole trial, meaning that the tribunal’s eventual

decision would not be valid.

Also too, a quick decision isn’t necessarily going to be the decision your friend is hoping for; nobody is ever guaranteed a declaration of nullity, and there are times when the tribunal concludes that the marriage in question was indeed valid and binding.

But it is good to keep in mind that the real requirement for people to enter the Church is that they simply commit to following all the Church’s teaching on faith and morals, including its teaching on marriage and sexuality—and it is possible to do this even after having been divorced.

So, if aspiring Catholics have been divorced but have and continue to live out the Church’s teaching on chastity, then their marital status on its own is not an impediment to baptism or entering into full communion. It really only becomes an issue for divorced people to become Catholic if they have also attempted remarriage and/or are living with a romantic partner as if they were married.

There might still be good reasons for divorced and chaste people to approach a marriage tribunal before entering the Church, such as a desire for greater clarity about one’s marital status or for the sake of eliminating obstacles in case they ever do decide they would like to try to marry in the future.

However, strictly speaking, there is no need for divorced and chaste people to approach the marriage tribunal at all if they are living a virtuous “single life” peacefully.

If your friend is civilly remarried and is unable or unwilling to separate for whatever reason, it’s also possible for her to enter the Church and receive the sacraments if she and her civil spouse commit to living “as brother and sister” (i.e. without engaging in the marital act).

This can be a challenging proposition for many; and pastors also need to ensure that a divorced and civilly remarried person receiving Communion and the other sacraments is not going to cause any scandal or wonderment in the local parish community.

Finally, we should keep in mind that the Church sees the process of Christian initiation as a spiritual journey, not as an academic year with a deadline for “graduation.” Even if your friend cannot be baptized this year, hopefully she can be encouraged by the knowledge that she is nevertheless still on her way.

(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.

(Andrea Fleck is a member of St. Roch Parish in Indinaapolis. This poem is a reprint from the April 18 issue, in which the final line was missing. 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)



“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,
The Sacred Scripture, His Holy Word.

Pope Francis brought a message of hope and love to young people

By John Shaughnessy

As the coordinator of young adult ministry for the archdiocese, Rachel Levy appreciates the influence that Pope Francis had on her generation and her own faith life.

“When I think of Pope Francis and his message to young adults around the



Rachel Levy

world, the first word that comes to mind is hope,” Levy says. “Pope Francis has always emphasized remaining hopeful in all circumstances of life, especially in a time when despair is so prevalent in the lives of young people.”

Pope Francis was so committed to that message of hope that he made it the theme of this year’s Jubilee in the Church, calling Catholics around the world to be “pilgrims of hope.”

Levy first became aware of the pope’s emphasis on hope when he visited the United States in 2015.

“I had just started my freshman year of college, and some of my friends were making plans to travel to the cities he would be visiting,” she recalls.

“I wasn’t able to tag along, but I very

specifically remember hearing about him cancelling plans to dine with politicians and instead sharing a meal with the homeless. It was encouraging to see that the leader of our Church was making an effort to live as Christ did in reaching out to the poor.

“I remember feeling a sense of hope that other members of the Church might follow his lead in reaching out to the marginalized and loving the poor in such a direct way.”

She also saw the impact that Pope Francis had on youths and young adults during World Youth Day in 2023 in Lisbon, Portugal—an event that brought millions of young people from around the world to be with the pope as he celebrated Mass with them.

During that World Youth Day, Pope Francis told the young people, “Nothing is free in life, everything has to be paid for. Only one thing is free: the love of Jesus! So, with this free gift that we have—the love of Jesus—and with the desire to carry on the journey, let us walk in hope, let us be mindful of our roots, and move forwards, without fear. Do not be afraid.”

The pope’s words left an impact on Levy.

“He encouraged all of the youths and young adults gathered in Lisbon to ‘shine, listen, and be not afraid!’ ” she recalls



Pope Francis walks with young people from around the world during World Youth Day in 2016 in Krakow, Poland. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

about that time when she began serving the archdiocese’s young people.

“Be not afraid is a message that the young Church especially needs to hear

today in a society where it is becoming increasingly more difficult to embrace living out the Catholic faith in the midst of the world.” †

Employment

Business Manager Needed

St. Patrick Church, St Margaret Mary Church and St Patrick School
1807 Poplar Street, Terre Haute, IN 47803.

The Parish Business Manager is a senior staff member in support of the Pastor’s responsibilities to St Patrick Catholic Church, St Margaret Mary Catholic Church, and St Patrick School of the Terre Haute Deanery. The Business Manager, with the Pastor, is the principle steward of administrative, financial, physical, and human resources. The Business Manager is responsible for the business, banking and daily operations of the parishes and school.

Please email your resume to: MarkFuson@drivefuson.com

Part-time Music Director

Our Lady of the Springs and Our Lord Jesus Christ the King parishes are looking for a part-time Music Director to serve at both parishes. The qualified candidate needs to be a practicing Catholic and experienced keyboard player. The position will be responsible for selecting and playing music for our weekend and other special liturgies at the parishes. This would include weddings and funerals.

Interested persons should send or email their resume to:

Rev. Randall Summers
Our Lady of the Springs Church
8796 W. State Road 56, French Lick, IN 47432
rsummers9027@gmail.com

Employment

Archdiocese of Indianapolis Maintenance Technician

This full-time, hourly, position is responsible for the maintenance of several buildings.

Duties include:

- Completing repairs, preventative maintenance and maintenance tasks on buildings and grounds.
- Responding, in a timely manner, to internal equipment repair needs.
- A verifiable background in building maintenance.
- A working knowledge of all building systems and components.
- The ability to evaluate and repair existing equipment.
- The ability to work with contractors, subcontractors, and suppliers.
- An ability to work with the Archdiocesan staff.
- Basic computer skills.
- Good organizational and communication skills.

If you are interested in this position, please send your resume to: dherbertz@archindy.org.

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Employment

Youth and Young Adult Coordinator

St. Pius X Catholic Church and School in Indianapolis IN, is currently seeking a full-time Youth & Young Adult Ministry Leader, to facilitate the evangelization, formation, and discipleship of Middle School, High School Students and Young Adults in our parish. The Coordinator of Youth & Young Adult Ministry provides leadership in the design, implementation, and evaluation of ministry programs for youth and young adults within the parish community. The ideal candidate will be able to work independently and demonstrate flexibility, creativity, and responsibility.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Host weekly middle, and high school youth and young adult group sessions, fostering a welcoming and engaging environment for guiding students and young adults through their journey of faith and/or preparation for sacraments. Plan and organize youth and young adult retreats, missions, and social outings to mentor youth and young adults about the Catholic faith and service through interactive and relevant lessons and through social activities and opportunities to practice the Catholic faith.

Contact for more information.

For Immediate Consideration, Send applications or inquiries to:
parish@spxparish.org and communication@spxparish.org



CYO PARISH ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

St. Pius X parish, located on the Northside of Indianapolis is looking for a full-time Athletic Director to effectively plan, organize and manage the St. Pius X Parish Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) Athletic Program. To work closely with the Parish Business Manager, St. Pius Athletic Committee (SPAC), volunteer coaches and leadership. The Athletic Director will also be responsible for oversight of the concession supplies, sales, inventory and coordination of volunteers to operate concession stand with the help of the Athletic Committee.

Collaborates with members of the Administrative Staff, the Pastoral Staff, and other groups and individuals as needed.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS – Manages St. Pius X participation in (CYO) activities by: Communicating the availability of CYO sports to Saint Pius X Catholic School and the Saint Pius X Faith Formation program; Informing the parish at large of CYO programs by use of bulletin, School and Faith Formation publications, and the parish web site; Encouraging all parish youth – those in our Catholic school and those who attend other private or public school – to participate in CYO activities; Determining and overseeing the player evaluation and team selection process; and Organizing and scheduling the various practice, game, and tournament schedules. Recruits, trains, supervises, and evaluates a talent pool of volunteer coaches, assistant coaches, and other support staff by selecting the best suited volunteers and matching them to appropriate duties. Providing proper training for all volunteers, including, but not limited to, CYO coaches training and Safe Parish training. Supervising and conducting regular evaluations of volunteer coaches, including a summary of evaluations from sports participants; and Recognizing and rewarding the efforts of volunteers. Contact for more information.

For Immediate Consideration, Send applications or inquiries to:
parish@spxparish.org and communication@spxparish.org



Catholic laity, priests, deacons and religious gather at chrism Mass

By Sean Gallagher

Last year at the annual archdiocesan chrism Mass, Father Anthony Armbruster carried the crucifix at the beginning of a long procession of priests and deacons walking into SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. At the time, he was a transitional deacon about two months from being ordained a priest.

This year, Father Armbruster was in a very different position in the chrism Mass, celebrated on April 15 in the cathedral.

He was further back in the opening procession, one among the 143 priests serving in the archdiocese present at the liturgy. And he sat in the back row of a large group of concelebrating priests rather than in the sanctuary as he had done a year ago.

“I’ve been thinking about it all morning,” said Father Armbruster of the change from last year’s chrism Mass to this one. “This is kind of the moment that’s the sign of that transition from seminary life to priestly life.”

Since last July, Father Armbruster has served as parochial vicar at SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Parish in Greenwood and St. Martin of Tours Parish in Martinsville.

“There’s been a lot of learning, and it’s been full of graces and blessings,” he said of his first year of priestly life and ministry.

Some 900 people from across the archdiocese took part in the chrism Mass. It is an annual liturgy that ordinarily takes place in the archdiocese on Tuesday of Holy Week and draws members of many parishes along with religious, deacons and priests serving in the archdiocese, all gathered with Archbishop Charles C. Thompson.

After the homily during the Mass, the priests present renew the promises they made at their ordination. Some, like Father Armbruster, made them just a year ago. Retired Father Francis Eckstein made those promises when he was ordained in 1958, 42 years before Father Armbruster was born.

“It’s one of the main reasons I came,” said Father Eckstein of the yearly renewal of ordination promises at the liturgy. “It gives you a little boost to do that again and commit for another year.”

Father Eckstein in retirement lives in the home in Ripley County in which he grew up that is adjacent to St. Nicholas Parish there.

Transitional Deacon Isaac Siefker said that in the hours leading up to the chrism Mass, his upcoming priestly ordination

on June 7 in the cathedral was “the only thing I’ve been able to think about.

“I look out at the chairs, guessing which one I’ll be sitting in, imagining laying on the floor,” said Deacon Siefker, who has been ministering at Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Beech Grove since December. “Just being here today has gotten me super excited.”

He will be ordained a priest alongside transitional deacons Thomas Day and Liam Hosty.

Deacon Siefker, a member of St. John the Apostle Parish in Bloomington, noted that this year’s chrism Mass was the ninth one he had taken part in as a seminarian. He laughed as he recalled one year when seminarians at the Mass stood up when the priests rose to renew their ordination promises and Father Eric Augenstein, archdiocesan director of seminarians, quickly told them, “ ‘Sit back down. You’re not priests yet.’

“This is the last year that I have to remember to stay seated, because next year I’ll be standing with the priests,” Deacon Siefker said.

For Father Armbruster, attending the chrism Mass to renew ordination promises alongside priests like Father Eckstein and seeing men about to make them like Deacon Siefker is a good reminder of the bond he shares with priests serving across central and southern Indiana.

“When you spend most of the time in the parish, you don’t really realize the brotherhood of the priesthood until you’re here seeing something like this,” Father Armbruster said. “Then you realize that it’s much bigger than you thought it was.”

Worshipping alongside so many priests serving in the archdiocese is one of the high points of the chrism Mass for Rose Johnson, coordinator of religious education at St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Bloomington, who has made the liturgy an important part of her experience of Holy Week for many years.

She said the presence of so many priests is a powerful witness of how “they have given their lives to be in Jesus’ service.”

For Johnson, the chrism Mass is also a break in all of her busy planning for the Easter Vigil at St. Charles. She oversees the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA) at the parish, this year leading 15 adults and six children into the full communion of the Church.

“It’s a time for me to stop and take a breath and just soak in and appreciate everything that’s going on in our preparations for Holy Week,” Johnson said.



Linda Manis, a member of Prince of Peace Parish in Madison, receives blessed oils from transitional Deacon Isaac Siefker on April 15 during the annual archdiocesan chrism Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. (Photos by Sean Gallagher)

A central part of the chrism Mass also is the blessing by Archbishop Thompson of oils used in sacraments and the consecration of churches and altars in the archdiocese.

The oil of catechumens is used in baptism. The oil of the infirm is used in the anointing of the sick. And sacred chrism is used in baptism, confirmation, holy orders and the consecration of churches and altars.

Johnson was excited to see Archbishop Thompson bless the oils that would be used in the sacraments to lead those taking part in OCIA at St. Charles into the full communion of the Church.

“It’s a good connection between the archbishop and the sacraments that the people will be receiving,” she said. “It means a lot to me.”

Johnson’s 15-year-old daughter Elena has been attending the chrism Mass with her mother throughout her life. This year, she received the blessed oils for St. Charles alongside Catholics from across the archdiocese who received the oils for their faith communities.

“It’s a great honor,” Elena said. “We actually get to see where the chrism that blesses all the people who are baptized and are confirmed comes from. It’s special to see it blessed.”

Johnson was glad to come to the chrism Mass with her daughter and to pray alongside Catholic laity, religious, deacons and priests from across central and southern Indiana.



Priests serving in the archdiocese process on April 15 into the cathedral at the start of the chrism Mass, which was attended by some 900 Catholics from across central and southern Indiana.

“We’re united as one,” she said. “There’s something visual about it. I love seeing the Church together, seeing so many people who are part of our living Church.”

(To view more photos from the archdiocesan chrism Mass, view this story at www.CriterionOnline.com.) †

Holy Spirit helps people live ‘Gospel joy’ amid life’s challenges, archbishop says

By Sean Gallagher

In his homily during the archdiocesan chrism Mass on April 15 in SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis, Archbishop Charles C. Thompson said Catholics in central and southern Indiana, empowered by the



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson ritually breathes upon chrism oil on April 15 during the annual archdiocesan chrism Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral. Seminarian Khaing Thu, right, assists at the Mass. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

Holy Spirit, can show forth “a sense of Gospel joy” in the way they live their faith even when they face “challenges, hardships, pain and suffering” in daily life.

“Despite what may weigh upon our hearts or our shoulders, the Holy Spirit is able to lift us up,” Archbishop Thompson said. “So, we gather amid all the challenges of life and ministry to be lifted up by the sacramental grace made available to us through the blessing of holy oils and this sacred liturgy.”

In the chrism Mass celebrated annually during Holy Week, the archbishop blesses oils used in the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, holy orders and the anointing of the sick, as well as in the dedication of churches and altars.

During his homily, Archbishop Thompson recalled the preaching of Filipino Cardinal Antonio Tagle during the closing Mass of the National Eucharistic Congress celebrated last year on July 21 at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis.

“He exhorted us to be blessings rather than burdens—husbands and wives, parents and children, bishops and clergy—to one another,” Archbishop Thompson recalled. “We are blessed to be here in our respective roles as priests, deacons, religious and laity, all rooted in our common baptismal call to holiness and mission.”

The sacraments celebrated with the oils blessed at the chrism Mass, Archbishop Thompson explained, help Catholics of all walks of life “go forth as people of God, pilgrims of hope and missionary disciples of Jesus Christ so as to accompany those in need and relieve the burden of those feeling crushed by the various forms of injustice, fear, guilt, shame and despair weighing them down.”

In carrying out this mission, Archbishop Thompson reminded his listeners that none of them do it alone.

“As brothers and sisters, members of the same body of Christ, especially those of us who share in the fraternity of a presbyterate, we are bound to one another—bound to one another—as a community of believers, the body of Christ,” he said. “In the spirit of synodality, we are co-responsible to one another and the mission of Jesus Christ. The Spirit that rests upon us distributes various gifts and charisms, not so much for the individual or part as for the sake of whole, the Church.”

The archbishop also reminded the congregation that the oils blessed at the Mass are a reminder that the Church’s mission is only fulfilled through the power of God, “divine grace at work within and among us” which “brings about healing, reconciliation, renewal of faith, restoration of hope, salvation and redemption.”

Closing his homily, Archbishop Thompson, citing verses from the Gospel reading proclaimed at the chrism Mass, offered words of encouragement to the 900 Catholics from across central and southern Indiana taking part in the liturgy.

“There is, indeed, much to weigh us down,” he said. “If the Spirit of the Lord is upon us, however, nothing can keep us down. Thus, we are anointed and sent forth as blessings to the world so as to bring glad tidings, heal, proclaim liberty, announce a year of favor and comfort all who mourn.

“Once again, we embrace the assurance of our great high priest and Savior, Jesus Christ: ‘Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing’ ” (Lk 4:21). †