



The

Criterion

Serving the Church in Central and Southern Indiana Since 1960



Powerful moment

Gift from Pope Francis leads to a journey of hope for family, page 11.

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Journey of discernment draws future priest into the mystery of Christ

By Sean Gallagher

At the start of the summer of 2016, transitional Deacon Thomas Day, 21 years old at the time and a new college graduate, traveled from Indiana by a Greyhound bus to Newark, N.J. He then took a subway to 151st Street in the Bronx.

"I was walking down this street in the Bronx with two suitcases and a backpack, never having been to New York City before," Deacon Day recalled.

He was beginning a year of volunteer service at St. Anthony Shelter, a center for homeless men operated by the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal.

The Bronx was a world away from where Deacon Day grew up in suburban Indianapolis and attended St. Joseph's College in Rensselaer in rural northern Indiana.

Volunteering in New York was one stage on a winding journey that led to his discovery of God's vocation for him as a priest of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

That journey involved travels to places on the East Coast that were new for Deacon Day. It also involved an interior pilgrimage as God led him in his heart along many stages of discernment.

That journey will come to a turning point at 10 a.m. on June 7 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral when Archbishop Charles C. Thompson will ordain Deacon Day and

See DAY, page 8

Transitional Deacon Thomas Day incenses concelebrating priests on April 15 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis during the annual archdiocesan chrism Mass. Deacon Day will be ordained a priest on June 7 at the cathedral. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)



When white smoke billows, *The Criterion's* coverage of our new pope will begin online

As this week's issue of *The Criterion* went to press, we were awaiting the start of the May 7 conclave and news on the new pope to be chosen by cardinal-electors. Our new universal shepherd will be the 266th successor of St. Peter.

When white smoke billows from the chimney of the Sistine Chapel at the Vatican signaling that our Church has a new Holy Father, *The Criterion* will report on the historic news via our website, www.CriterionOnline.com, and through our social media accounts. Updated coverage of the conclave can also be found at www.archindy.org/conclave.

At this time, our plan for next week's May 16 issue of *The Criterion* (if we have a new pope announced in the next few days) is to include Archbishop Charles C. Thompson's thoughts on our new universal shepherd, coverage from the Vatican provided by Catholic News Service and OSV News, and reaction from Catholics around central and southern Indiana. †



(CNS photo/Paul Haring)

Tales of motherhood: a fun family tradition, a mail-order bride and a mother's first child

(Editor's note: The Criterion invited you, our readers, to share your stories and tributes about motherhood from two perspectives—the gift of having your mom and the gift of being a mom. We've received so many wonderful responses that we will share them throughout May, the month of Mother's Day and a month dedicated to the Blessed Mother. Here is the second story.)

By John Shaughnessy

Making and sharing family traditions are among the great gifts that mothers give to their children.

And even if a mom sometimes goes to extremes in establishing those traditions, her children often remember her efforts with smiles and laughs.

At least that's the approach that Joe Rust lovingly has

See MOTHERS, page 12

Joe Rust shares a photo with his mother, Sylvia Rust, and his wife, Sharyl Rust, during a trip to Poland in 2022. (Submitted photo)



Official Appointments

Effective July 2, 2025

Rev. Jerry L. Byrd, pastor of St. Ann Parish in Jennings County, St. Joseph Parish in Jennings County, and St. Mary Parish in North Vernon, appointed pastor of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish in Indianapolis.

Rev. Christopher A. Craig, pastor of Prince of Peace Parish in Madison, Most Sorrowful Mother of God Parish in Vevay, and chaplain of Father Michael Shawe Memorial Jr./Sr. High School in Madison, appointed pastor of St. Ann Parish in Jennings County, St. Joseph Parish in Jennings County and St. Mary Parish in North Vernon.

Rev. Brian G. Esarey, priest *in solidum* at St. Augustine Parish in Leopold, Holy Cross Parish in St. Croix, and St. Isidore the Farmer Parish in Perry County, appointed pastor of American Martyrs Parish in Scottsburg and St. Patrick Parish in Salem.

Rev. Joseph M. Feltz, pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in New Albany, appointed pastor of St. Christopher Parish in Indianapolis.

Rev. Robert T. Hausladen, pastor of St. Susanna Parish in Plainfield and St. Joseph Parish in Indianapolis, appointed pastor of Mary, Queen of Peace Parish in Danville, while remaining pastor of St. Susanna Parish in Plainfield.

Rev. Vincent Lampert, pastor of St. Michael Parish in Brookville and St. Peter Parish in Franklin County, appointed pastor of St. Simon the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis.

Rev. Douglas W. Marcotte, pastor of St. Simon the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis, appointed pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in New Albany.

Rev. Eric (Rick) Nagel, pastor of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis, chaplain of Indiana University Indianapolis, and chaplain of Purdue University Indianapolis, appointed pastor of Prince of Peace Parish in Madison and Most Sorrowful Mother of God Parish in Vevay, and chaplain of Father Michael Shawe Memorial Jr./Sr. High School in Madison.

Very Rev. Joseph L. Newton, Vicar Judicial in the Metropolitan Tribunal, administrator *pro tempore* of St. Rita Parish in Indianapolis and the Church of the Holy Angels Parish in Indianapolis, appointed pastor of St. Ann Parish in Indianapolis and St. Thomas More Parish in Mooresville, while remaining Vicar Judicial in the Metropolitan Tribunal.

Rev. Robert J. Robeson, pastor of Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Beech Grove, administrator of Good Shepherd Parish in Indianapolis, and chaplain coordinator at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis, appointed pastor of Good Shepherd Parish in Indianapolis, while remaining pastor of Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Beech Grove and chaplain coordinator at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis.

Rev. Luke Waugh, O.S.B., priest *in solidum* at St. Augustine Parish in Leopold, Holy Cross Parish in St. Croix, and St. Isidore the Farmer Parish in Perry County, appointed pastor of St. Augustine Parish in Leopold, Holy Cross Parish in St. Croix, and St. Isidore the Farmer Parish in Perry County.

Very Rev. Timothy M. Wyciskalla, vicar for clergy, religious and parish life coordinators, vice chancellor, and Adjunct Judicial Vicar in the Metropolitan Tribunal, appointed pastor of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis,



Public Schedule of

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

May 10 – 2 p.m.

Confirmation Mass for the youths of St. Bartholomew Parish, Columbus; Holy Trinity Parish, Edinburgh; Prince of Peace Parish, Madison; and St. Patrick Parish, Salem, at St. Bartholomew Church

May 10 – 10:30 a.m.

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

May 13 – 6:30 p.m.

CYO Volunteer Awards at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis

May 14 – 7 p.m.

Confirmation Mass for the youths of St. Anthony Parish, Indianapolis, at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral

May 15 – 10 a.m.

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

May 15 – Noon

Virtual National Eucharistic Congress Board of Directors meeting

May 15 – 2 p.m.

Blessing of new grotto at Cathedral High School, Indianapolis

May 15 – 7 p.m.

Confirmation Mass for the youths of St. Lawrence Parish, Indianapolis, at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral

May 17 – 5:30 p.m.

Confirmation for the youths of SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Parish, Greenwood, and St. Martin of Tours Parish, Martinsville, at SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Church

May 18 – 10:30 a.m.

Mass of Thanksgiving for National Eucharistic Pilgrimage at St. John the Evangelist Church, Indianapolis

May 18 – 1:30 p.m.

Graduation at Bishop Chatard High School, Indianapolis

May 18 – 6 p.m.

Graduation at Our Lady of Providence High School, Clarksville

chaplain of Indiana University Indianapolis, and chaplain of Purdue University Indianapolis, while remaining vicar for clergy, religious and parish life coordinators, vice chancellor, and Adjunct Judicial Vicar in the Metropolitan Tribunal.

Rev. Minh Quang Duong, parochial vicar at St. Joseph Parish in Indianapolis and chaplain for the Vietnamese Catholic Community in Indianapolis, appointed administrator of St. Joseph Parish in

Indianapolis, while remaining chaplain for the Vietnamese Catholic Community in Indianapolis.

Rev. Jude Meril Christopher Sahayam, administrator of St. Thomas More Parish in Mooresville and St. Ann Parish in Indianapolis, appointed administrator of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Indianapolis and St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Parish in Indianapolis.

See **APPOINTMENTS**, page 18

Glossary of some of the terms used in official appointments

Criterion staff report

In this week’s issue of *The Criterion*, we offer readers an explanation of several of the terms used in the appointments made by Archbishop Charles C. Thompson.

—Pastor: This is a priest assigned to a parish to care for the spiritual needs of the parishioners and all within the territory of the parish. They also oversee the administration of the parish and its ministries. Pastors are appointed to a term of six years, which can be renewed once. Special circumstances (such as being within six years of retirement) can allow for a pastor to stay beyond his second term.

—Administrator: The same role and responsibilities as a pastor but without a specified term length. This title is generally given to priests who have never been a pastor for their first year leading a parish; to diocesan priests who are not incardinated in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis but are serving here with permission of the bishop of their diocese; or to a priest remaining in full-time ministry after the age of 75.

—Administrator Pro Tempore: The same role and responsibilities of a pastor, except it is only for a defined

period of time. That could be until someone is named the pastor or administrator at the parish, or until the already-named pastor returns to the parish (i.e., from a sabbatical). This temporary title usually does not last for more than one year.

—Parochial Vicar: The canon law title for what has been previously known in the archdiocese as an associate pastor. The parochial vicar serves in a parish to assist the pastor or administrator in his responsibilities to ensure the spiritual needs of the faithful are met.

—Sacramental Assistant: This indicates a priest who will assist the pastor or administrator with liturgies and sacraments (confessions, weddings, baptisms, anointings and funerals) but not in the administration of the parish.

—Chaplain Coordinator: This is an assignment given in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis for our deanery high schools (Roncalli, Bishop Chatard, Cardinal Ritter, Father Thomas Scecina Memorial and Our Lady of Providence). All priests of the deanery are involved in ministry at these high schools, but the chaplain coordinator is the first point of contact for the high school in covering the sacraments and the spiritual needs of the

students and staff. This priest helps coordinate the other deanery priests to minister in the high school when he is unavailable.

—Chaplain: This appointment is given to a priest or priests responsible for the sacramental and spiritual care of colleges, hospitals, prisons or non-deanery high schools (Seton Catholic and Father Michael Shawe Memorial). Sometimes priests volunteer to take on the spiritual care of other entities without being officially and formally assigned by Archbishop Thompson to do so and are called chaplains as well (i.e., police departments, fire departments, professional sports teams, Scouts, Knights of Columbus, etc.).

—Parish Life Coordinator (PLC): This is an appointment given to someone who is not a priest (sometimes a deacon, sometimes a religious sister, sometimes a layperson) to oversee all the operations and ministries of a parish when a pastor or administrator is not appointed. Parishes with a PLC also have a priest sacramental minister assigned to provide for the sacraments, and a priest moderator to represent the parish in canonical matters on special rare occasions. †



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Washington bill requiring clergy to report child abuse signed by governor

(OSV News)—Legislation that would require clergy to report child abuse or neglect in Washington state was signed into law by Democratic Gov. Bob Ferguson on May 2.

While some have argued the bill closes an important omission from the state’s list of mandatory reporters, others have expressed concern that, without exceptions for clergy-penitent privilege, the law places Catholic priests at odds with civil law in order to uphold Church



Archbishop Paul D. Etienne

law regarding the seal of the confessional.

The legislation, Senate Bill 5375, sponsored by Democratic Sen. Noel Frame of Seattle, makes members of the clergy mandatory reporters, or people required by law to report suspected or known instances

of child abuse or neglect, without an exception to the requirement for sacramental confessions. Other mandatory reporters in Washington state include school personnel, nurses, social service counselors and psychologists.

In a May 4 statement, Archbishop Paul D. Etienne of Seattle referenced the first reading for Mass that day, two days after the bill was signed into law, in which the Apostles told the Sanhedrin that “we must obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29).

“This is our stance now in the face of this new law,” said Archbishop Etienne, formerly a priest of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. “Catholic clergy may not violate the seal of confession—or they will be excommunicated from the Church. All Catholics must know and be assured that their confessions remain sacred, secure, confidential and protected by the law of the Church.”

At the same time, he also noted that the Church “remains committed to reporting child sexual abuse, working with victim survivors towards healing, and protecting all minors and vulnerable people.

“Our policies already require priests to be mandatory reporters, but not if this information is obtained during confession.”

In a May 2 statement, Bishop Thomas A. Daly of Spokane, Wash., said, “I want

to assure you that your shepherds, bishop and priests are committed to keeping the seal of confession—even to the point of going to jail. The sacrament of penance is sacred and will remain that way in the Diocese of Spokane.

“For those legislators who question our commitment to the safety of your children, simply speak with any mom who volunteers with a parish youth group, any Catholic school teacher, any dad who coaches a parochial school basketball team or any priest, deacon or seminarian, and you will learn firsthand about our solid protocols and procedures,” he said.

“The Diocese of Spokane maintains an entire department at the Chancery, the Office of Child and Youth Protection, staffed by professional laypeople,” he continued. “We have a zero-tolerance policy regarding child sexual abuse. Our goal is do everything within our power to



Bishop Thomas A. Daly

keep your children safe while we attempt to lead them to know and love Jesus Christ who commanded, ‘let the children come to me and do not hinder them’ ” (Mt 19:14).

Bishop Daly added, “An important element to the greatness of America is our constitutional commitment to religious freedom.”

In a February statement about her bill to make clergy mandatory reporters, Frame said, “It’s long past time that the legislature steps up, closes this loophole and protects children.

“I know this is a tough subject for many of my colleagues, especially those with deep religious views,” she said. “I respect that, but this bill is about the separation of Church and state. This bill is about the state’s secular responsibility to the public interest of protecting children. That’s the most important thing we do here.”

In his statement, Archbishop Etienne asked, “Once the state asserts the right to dictate religious practices and coerce information obtained within this sacrament—privileged communication—where is the line drawn between Church and state? What else may the state now demand the right to know? Which other religious practices will it try to legislate?”

He went on to point out that the new



A confessional is seen in a file photo at the Memorial Church of the Holy Sepulcher on the grounds of the Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land in Washington. (OSV News photo/Nancy Phelan Wiechec)

law “singles out religion” while giving exemptions to attorneys, physicians and spouses.

The law, he said “is clearly both government overreach and a double-standard. The line between Church and state has been crossed and needs to be walked back. People of every religion in the state of Washington and beyond should be alarmed by this overreach of our legislature and governor.”

Similar bills failed in the legislature in the two previous years after lawmakers could not reach consensus on whether to make the exception.

The Washington State Catholic Conference opposed the particular version of the bill that was approved by the legislature, urging its supporters to tell their lawmakers to reject it “unless it is amended to provide a narrow exception for confidential communications between a member of the clergy and a penitent person of faith.

“The majority of states that include clergy as mandatory reporters include an exemption for confidential communications, demonstrating that the states’ interests in child protection can be achieved without violating the right to free exercise of religion,” the conference said in an April advocacy bulletin.

The conference, which is the public policy arm of the state’s Catholic bishops, has stated it would support such legislation with an exemption for

the sacrament of confession.

Most states that specifically include clergy in their mandatory reporting laws provide some clergy-penitent privileges to varying degrees, according to data from the Child Welfare Information Gateway, which operates under the Children’s Bureau at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

After signing the bill, Ferguson told reporters that he is Catholic and sees the legislation as “pretty straightforward.

“My uncle was a Jesuit priest for many years, [I’ve] been to confession myself—and so I’m very familiar with that,” he said, according to KXLY-TV. “I felt this was important legislation and protecting kids is first priority.”

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states that priests are strictly forbidden from divulging what penitents tell them during confession, which is part of the sacrament of reconciliation, and states that information a penitent divulges is under “seal.”

“Given the delicacy and greatness of this ministry and the respect due to persons, the Church declares that every priest who hears confessions is bound under very severe penalties to keep absolute secrecy regarding the sins that his penitents have confessed to him” (#1467), the catechism states.

The federal Justice Department opened a First Amendment investigation into the law on May 5. †

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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Marriage

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Be a part of our Fall Marriage Edition

July 11 issue of *The Criterion*

Couples who are planning to be married between July 11, 2025, and Jan. 31, 2026, in a marriage that is recognized as a valid sacramental or valid natural marriage, or couples who were wed between Feb. 1 and June 14, in such a recognized marriage and did not have their engagement announcement in *The Criterion* are invited to submit the information for the upcoming July 11 Fall Marriage Edition. Announcements can be submitted by mail using the form at www.archindy.org/engagements.

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

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

Deadline
All announcements and photos must be received by 5 p.m. on June 16.



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, *Publisher*
Sally Krause, *Associate Publisher*
Mike Krokos, *Editor*

Editorial



Cardinals from around the world line up in the Vatican's Sistine Chapel on March 12, 2013, to take their oaths at the beginning of the conclave that would elect Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio of Buenos Aires, Argentina, as Pope Francis, who died on April 21. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

Waiting for Peter’s successor

By the time this week’s issue of *The Criterion* is delivered, we may have a new pope. If that is the case, we welcome him with open hearts in the joy of this Easter season! But if the papal see is still vacant, then we promise to continue waiting prayerfully in a spirit of joyful hope.

Since the passing of our beloved Pope Francis, there has been much speculation about who his successor will be. Will he follow in the footsteps of his immediate predecessor? Or will he chart a new direction in a different leadership style—whether progressive, traditional or moderate? These conversations are natural, but they miss the mark when it comes to choosing the next Vicar of Christ.

As Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin of Newark, N.J., (and prior to that Archbishop of Indianapolis) has said, the only important questions are: “Where is God calling us to go as missionary disciples of Christ?” and “Who does the Holy Spirit want to shepherd us in this Pilgrimage of Hope?” If we are prayerfully attentive to these fundamental questions, the future of our Church will be bright regardless of the many serious challenges that our new pope—and all of us—must face in the years ahead.

Our job as Catholics is to pray for the man who is chosen to lead us as the successor of St. Peter. As Pope Francis said so forcefully, the pope is a sinner, an ordinary man called to serve others humbly and faithfully after the model of the Good Shepherd who gave his life for us, his sheep.

The one thing that we know for certain about our next pope is that he will not be perfect. He will make mistakes, and he will have to seek God’s forgiveness for his sins. He will need all of us to pray for him and to help him carry the burdens of his ministry.

As we pray for our new pope, we should also pray for ourselves. May God grant us the grace to support him, to listen to him and obey him, even when we aren’t sure we agree with everything he has to say to us. Pope Francis had his critics and his dissenters. So did his predecessors. The new pope will

also. We should pray that he will rely on God’s grace to carry out his Petrine ministry as he understands it, and that, at the same time, he will be open and attentive to God’s word and to the voices of the people he serves in Jesus’ name.

This period of waiting—whether the conclave was just a brief time or is still in session—is a blessing for our Church. It allows all of us, not just the cardinal-electors, to pause and reflect on the mission given by Christ to St. Peter to “feed my sheep” and “tend my lambs” (Jn 21:15-16).

The pope is not primarily a great man or an important religious leader. He must be, first and foremost, a humble pastor who takes the place of the Good Shepherd. Our new pope will be charged with the task given to St. Peter: “Feed my sheep.” And he will only be successful if he refuses to allow the trappings of his office to distract him from his pastoral duties as the “servant of the servants of God.”

Pope Francis used dramatic gestures and powerful images to call attention to his refusal to let the office of pope overshadow his pastoral ministry. The new pope must find his own way of resisting the temptation to be a great world leader instead of a simple shepherd. We must all help him—by our prayers and by our readiness to listen to his voice and follow him in his role as Christ’s Vicar here on Earth.

In his final “*urbi et orbi*” (to the city and the world) message, Pope Francis said: “The resurrection of Jesus is indeed the basis of our hope. For in the light of this event, hope is no longer an illusion. Thanks to Christ—crucified and risen from the dead—hope does not disappoint! Spes non confundit! [Rom 5:5]. That hope is not an evasion, but a challenge; it does not delude, but empowers us.”

We who have been waiting in hope for our new pope must embrace the opportunity that a new successor of St. Peter represents. May he challenge us, encourage us and love us as Jesus does. And may our waiting be rewarded by the hope that does not disappoint.

—Daniel Conway

Reflection/John Shaughnessy

The love at the heart of it all

When you’ve lost someone you love, what do you miss most about them?

If it’s a close friend, is it the person’s smile you miss most? Their laugh?

If the relationship was more intimate, is it their touch you long for, their embrace you crave most?

There are other questions, too.

Does a cup of coffee taste as rich as it once did when you sat across from that loved one and shared your day and stories with them?



When you unexpectedly catch a whiff of a loved one’s perfume, after-shave or the fragrance of their soap or shampoo, do you instinctively turn in the direction of the scent and maybe, even for the briefest moment, joyfully anticipate the loved one being there?

Such random questions have filled my thoughts in the past two months since my mom died.

There are no regrets about her passing. At 96, she lived a full life, including sharing the abundance of her love with her family of four generations during this past Christmas. She also kept her spirit and mental sharpness to the end. At the same time, her physical challenges and a weakening heart led her to question God, in the weeks before her death, as to why he wasn’t already ready for her to come home to him and our dad. When God graciously obliged, she was surrounded by her five children and a circle of family members in her home.

Yet while there is no regret—and the gratitude is immense for her long, joyful life—there is still healing that is needed as this first Mother’s Day without her nears.

The healing has been helped by the greatly appreciated condolences I’ve received from people, including a note from a friend who once shared a fun and favorite memory of his mother.

Growing up, he and his brother were given chores by their mother to help clean the house, including flipping cushions on the furniture. As an incentive, his mom always hid coins in the couch for her sons. And she later jokingly told him and his brother that even after she died, she would leave coins for them as a sign that she was still with them. Years after her death, during tough times in his life, he has often found coins on the street, making him think of his mother, and making him believe in her continuing presence in his life. Later, he takes the coins to the cemetery where she is buried, and places them at her gravesite.

In sharing that story, my friend had given a glimpse of his answer to the question about his mom, “What do you miss most?”

A couple I have long known once showed me another side of the answer to that question.

On that day, I came to a funeral home to pay my respects to them, for their infant son who had died. The child

was born with severe respiratory and neurological problems. He also had other birth defects, all of which led to him spending a significant part of his less-than-one-year life in a children’s hospital.

Some people said it was better for the infant and his parents that he died. Surely now, the thought was, the infant will have the peaceful, beautiful life that all children deserve. But when the infant was alive, his parents never gave any indication that it was better for their son to die. Instead, they loved and cared for him. And they swear that he returned their love—and taught them through his pain and suffering.

Standing with the infant’s father at the funeral home, I noticed a stuffed animal had been placed in his coffin. I asked the father if it was a favorite toy of his son. He answered, “No, that’s a new one we got for him. We were kind of selfish about his toys. We wanted to keep them for ourselves, to have something of his.”

In those words, it was evident that his son had touched their lives, that he was already dearly missed.

Which leads me to the question regarding my mom, “What do I miss most about her?”

The roots of my answer take me back long ago, to my senior year in high school when I was accepted into the University of Notre Dame. For years, my mom had endured how the mood of an autumn Saturday would change for my dad—and then also for me—depending upon whether the Irish won or lost a football game that day. And while she joined in the celebration when my acceptance letter came, she took no joy in having her older son move 600 miles away from our family’s Philadelphia-area home.

During those four years, most of our connections were by phone—weekly calls home on a Sunday evening when the phone rates for the then-expensive, long-distance calls significantly decreased after 6 p.m. on Sundays. And phone calls continued to be a primary source of staying connected after my graduation, as I’ve lived and made a home in Indiana for more than 45 years.

All through those years, the sound of her voice was a source of joy, comfort, support and love. And after my dad died in 2019, my phone calls with her increased even more, becoming daily—usually between the early evening times of 5:15 and 6, a good time for her before her dinner. Often, that connection involved rushing home from work as she said she heard the voices of me and my wife easier on our landline phones.

There was one other ritual tied to that connection—almost exclusively, I called her. A rare exception to that ritual involves one of my favorite memories of all time.

The moment happened on a late Saturday night in the fall of 2020, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Minutes before, Notre Dame’s football team had just upset the number-one-ranked Clemson University team with a dramatic, come-from-behind win in double overtime.

See RELECTION, page 9

Letters Policy

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

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

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

letters from readers as necessary based on space limitations, pastoral sensitivity and content (including spelling and grammar). In order to encourage opinions from a variety of readers, frequent writers will ordinarily be limited to one letter every three months. Concise letters (usually less than 300 words) are more likely to be printed.

Letters must be signed, but, for serious reasons, names may be withheld.

Send letters to “Letters to the Editor,” *The Criterion*, 1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367. Readers with access to e-mail may send letters to criterion@archindy.org. †

ARCHBISHOP/ARZOBISPO CHARLES C. THOMPSON



Christ the Cornerstone

Like the Good Shepherd, bring the gift of eternal life to all

The Fourth Sunday of Easter is known as Good Shepherd Sunday. In the Gospel reading from John, Jesus says:

My sheep hear my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish. No one can take them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one can take them out of the Father's hand. The Father and I are one. (Jn 10:27-30)

The image of a shepherd and the flock entrusted to his care is a prominent theme in the New Testament. Jesus uses this image to describe his relationship with his followers. He also takes this opportunity to establish clearly that his ministry as the *pastor bonum* (good shepherd) flows from the relationship between Jesus and his Heavenly Father.

Those who have chosen to follow Jesus, and to carry on his saving mission, are both sheep who follow Christ the Good Shepherd and shepherds who tend his flock. This dual responsibility is what characterizes missionary disciples of Jesus Christ as those who have given themselves wholeheartedly in devotion to their

Lord and in service to God's people. This dual responsibility of devotion to Jesus and service to his people was illustrated powerfully in the Gospel reading for last weekend, the Third Sunday of Easter (Jn 21:1-19). Recall the story of the Risen Jesus' confrontation with Peter:

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" Simon Peter answered him, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs." He then said to Simon Peter a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Simon Peter answered him, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Tend my sheep." Jesus said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was distressed that Jesus had said to him a third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep." (Jn 21:15-17)

Any disciple who claims to love Jesus must demonstrate this concretely through works of mercy and pastoral care. Words alone are not enough. Jesus demands that St. Peter (and, therefore,

his successors) "feed my sheep." And, in fact, all who seek to follow Jesus whether as ordained clergy, consecrated religious, or lay people have a responsibility that flows from their baptism to share in the Church's pastoral mission. We show our love for Jesus when we "feed his sheep" by caring for the spiritual and temporal needs of all his sisters and brothers in the one family of God.

Jesus the Good Shepherd tells us that what he alone can give his flock is "eternal life." This profound truth is illustrated in the second reading from the Book of Revelation, where we are shown the vision of "a great multitude which no one could count from every nation, race, people and tongue" (Rv 7:9).

St. John the Evangelist identifies this diverse crowd as all those who have been washed clean "in the blood of the Lamb" (Rv 7:14). This is an image of what happens to all of us who have been baptized into the death of Jesus, the Paschal Lamb:

For this reason they stand before God's throne and worship him day and night in his temple. The one who sits on the throne will shelter them. They will

not hunger or thirst anymore, nor will the sun or any heat strike them. For the Lamb who is in the center of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to springs of life-giving water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. (Rv 7:15-17)

We who follow Jesus, who is both the Good Shepherd and the Lamb who was sacrificed for our sins, are given the great gift of eternal life, but we dare not accept this gift passively or indifferently. We must share it with everyone we meet.

We, too, must be shepherds of God's love and goodness. Like Paul and Barnabas in the first reading from the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 13:14, 43-52), we must be missionary disciples who proclaim with our words and actions: "For so the Lord has commanded us, I have made you a light to the Gentiles, that you may be an instrument of salvation to the ends of the Earth" (Acts 13:47).

As we continue our observance of this season of Easter joy, let's recommit ourselves to following Jesus the Good Shepherd. And let's demonstrate our love for him by feeding his sheep. †



Cristo, la piedra angular

Como el Buen Pastor, llevemos a todos el don de la vida eterna

El cuarto domingo de Pascua se conoce también como el Domingo del Buen Pastor. En la lectura del Evangelio según san Juan, Jesús dice:

Mis ovejas oyen mi voz; yo las conozco y ellas me siguen. Yo les doy vida eterna, y nunca perecerán, ni nadie podrá arrebatarlas de la mano. Mi Padre, que me las ha dado, es más grande que todos; y de la mano del Padre nadie las puede arrebatar. El Padre y yo somos uno. (Jn 10:27-30)

La imagen de un pastor y del rebaño confiado a su cuidado es un tema que se destaca en todo el Nuevo Testamento. Jesús utiliza esta imagen para describir su relación con sus seguidores y aprovecha esta oportunidad para establecer claramente que su ministerio como *pastor bonum* (buen pastor) emana de la relación entre Jesús y su Padre Celestial.

Los que han elegido seguir a Jesús, y llevar a cabo su misión salvadora, son a la vez ovejas que siguen a Cristo, el Buen Pastor, y pastores que cuidan su rebaño. Esta doble responsabilidad es lo que caracteriza a los discípulos misioneros de Jesucristo como aquellos que se han entregado de todo corazón en devoción a su Señor

y en servicio al pueblo de Dios. En la lectura del Evangelio del pasado fin de semana, tercer domingo de Pascua (Jn 21:1-19), se ilustró poderosamente esta doble responsabilidad de devoción a Jesús y de servicio a su pueblo. Recordemos el relato del cuestionamiento de Jesús hacia Pedro:

Terminada la comida, Jesús preguntó a Pedro: —Simón, hijo de Juan, ¿me amas más que estos? Pedro le contestó: —Sí, Señor, tú sabes que te quiero. Jesús le dijo: —Apacienta mis corderos. Jesús volvió a preguntarle: —Simón, hijo de Juan, ¿me amas? Pedro respondió: —Sí, Señor, tú sabes que te quiero. Jesús le dijo: —Cuida de mis ovejas. Por tercera vez le preguntó Jesús: —Simón, hijo de Juan, ¿me quieres? Pedro se entristeció al oír que le preguntaba por tercera vez si lo quería, y contestó: —Señor, tú lo sabes todo, tú sabes que te quiero. Entonces Jesús le dijo: —Apacienta mis ovejas. (Jn 21:15-17)

Todo discípulo que pretenda amar a Jesús debe demostrarlo concretamente a través de obras de

misericordia y de atención pastoral; las palabras por sí solas no bastan. Jesús exige a san Pedro (y, por tanto, a sus sucesores) que "apacienten sus ovejas."

Y, de hecho, todos los que buscan seguir a Jesús, ya sea como clérigos ordenados, religiosos consagrados o laicos, tienen una responsabilidad que surge de su bautismo de compartir la misión pastoral de la Iglesia. Mostramos nuestro amor a Jesús cuando «apacientamos sus ovejas» atendiendo las necesidades espirituales y temporales de todos sus hermanos y hermanas en la única familia de Dios.

Jesús, el Buen Pastor, nos dice que lo único que él puede dar a su rebaño es "la vida eterna." Esta profunda verdad se ilustra en la segunda lectura del Apocalipsis, donde se nos muestra la visión de "una gran multitud, que nadie podía contar, de todas las naciones, razas, pueblos y lenguas" (Ap 7:9).

San Juan Evangelista identifica a esta variopinta multitud como todos aquellos que han sido lavados "en la sangre del Cordero" (Ap 7:14). Es una imagen de lo que nos sucede a todos los que hemos sido bautizados en la muerte de Jesús, el Cordero Pascual:

Por eso están ante el trono de

Dios, rindiéndole culto día y noche en su Templo; el que está sentado en el trono los protege. Ya no volverán a sentir hambre ni sed ni el ardor agobiante del sol. El Cordero que está en medio del trono será su pastor, los conducirá a manantiales de aguas vivas, y Dios mismo enjugará toda lágrima de sus ojos. (Ap 7:15-17)

Los que seguimos a Jesús, que es a la vez el Buen Pastor y el Cordero sacrificado por nuestros pecados, recibimos el gran don de la vida eterna, pero no osemos aceptarlo de forma pasiva o indiferente; debemos compartirlo con todos los que conozcamos.

También nosotros debemos ser pastores del amor y la bondad de Dios. Como Pablo y Bernabé en la primera lectura de los Hechos de los Apóstoles (Hch 13:14, 43-52), debemos ser discípulos misioneros que anuncian con nuestras palabras y acciones: "Te he puesto como luz de las naciones y como portador de salvación para el mundo entero" (Hch 13:47).

Mientras seguimos observando este tiempo de alegría pascual, volvamos a comprometernos a seguir a Jesús, el Buen Pastor y demostrémosle nuestro amor apacientando sus ovejas. †

Client stories prove St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities offers ‘hope of a better tomorrow’

By Natalie Hoefer

LOUISVILLE, Ky.—With the Ohio River more than 23 feet above normal in Louisville on April 10, the bottom level of The Galt House Hotel’s two parking garages were nearly submerged.

That evening, safe and dry two floors higher in the hotel, people shared stories of challenge, of hope, of lives changed.

But the stories had nothing to do with the flood.

Rather, they were the successful journeys of those helped by St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities (SECC) in New Albany. They were shared during the agency’s annual Giving Hope-Changing Lives gala—which fortunately did not have to be canceled despite the flood.

“Now we can *really* say The Galt House sits on the Ohio River,” agency director Mark Casper joked in his opening comments to 684 attendees—114 more than last year’s gala.

The annual event serves several purposes. It is the SECC’s largest fundraiser to ensure the continued support and growth of the agency’s nine life-changing programs. (*See accompanying article.*)

The event is also an opportunity to honor one or more individuals with the Spirit of Hope Award for outstanding, selfless service to the agency. Archbishop Charles C. Thompson assisted Casper in presenting the awards to this year’s winners, Karen Schueler and Phil Krue. (*Read more about them in The Criterion’s March 14 issue or at tinyurl.com/SchuelerKrue.*)

Perhaps the most impactful part of the annual event is the sharing of witness stories by those whose lives were made better by SECC and its compassionate cadre of volunteers, donors, supporters and staff.

This year’s three client stories “tell you a lot about who and what St. Elizabeth [Catholic Charities] is and how we help the vulnerable,” said Casper.

‘They’re good. They’re helpful.’

David Franklin has intellectual and developmental challenges. But that doesn’t stop him from living his best life—with the help of Rebecca Crum, his direct support professional through SECC’s Supported Living Program.

“She takes me out all the time,” Franklin said in a pre-recorded video displayed on large screens. “She is a good friend, a good listener and a good talker.”

The Supported Living Program provides services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities

in Floyd and Clark counties with a Medicaid program waiver. The goal is to empower them to lead more independent lives.

Direct support professionals like Crum work with each client to develop and achieve personal goals, manage various day-to-day responsibilities and foster their interests.

In the video, Franklin spoke enthusiastically of his interests, especially bowling and competing in walking races. The video included a photo of him proudly displaying a medal he won for a walking race at the state level through Special Olympics.

It also showed photos of Franklin enjoying events and outings hosted by SECC for its Supported Living Program clients. At this point in the video, he mentioned breakfast—a lot.

“It may have been the Christmas breakfast we had,” Supported Living Program director Emily Trinkle told *The Criterion* by e-mail after the event. “Or when we stopped at IHOP on the way to the aquarium, or Cracker Barrel on the way to the outlet malls.

“Or he may have been talking about when Rebecca and he and I go to breakfast monthly to rate biscuits and gravy at different restaurants. For David, every breakfast is a party,” Trinkle wrote, followed by “lol”—laughing out loud.

“We have a bunch of nice people at St. Elizabeth,” he said. “They’re nice. They’re good. They’re helpful.”

When the video finished, Franklin was invited to the podium on a platform at the front of the banquet hall.

“Thank you,” he said before tears of gratitude prevented him from saying more.

As he walked away from the podium, the crowd rose to give Franklin a standing ovation.

‘They helped me make a plan’

Behind the podium, Sarah Williams’ short stature belied her depth of strength and courage.

“Back in 2019, I had to make a choice about where me and my kids were living,” the single mother began. “We were going from couch to couch and family to friends.”

There came a time when the couches ran out “and we had nowhere else to go. I tried a few shelters, but they all turned us down. That was when I called St. Elizabeth’s.”

The family of four was welcomed into SECC’s women and children emergency shelter with open arms. The 90-day program provides housing for pregnant

and single mothers and their children facing homelessness, and case management to help these women achieve self-sufficiency and housing goals.

“They helped me get food and clothes and diapers,” said Williams. “They helped me make a plan. They made sure I knew everything was going to be OK.”

She and her three boys were also given a room with beds for each—no more couch surfing.

A case worker helped Williams apply for benefits for her children and for housing. Within two months, she was approved for an apartment.

Through a point-earning program for shelter residents, Williams was able to select new, donated items to help her get started, like “a bigger car seat for my son, [and] a Crock-Pot and pots and pans so I can cook for my family,” she said.

She also received two mattresses through SECC’s Marie’s Blessings Distribution Program “so my kids and I wouldn’t have to sleep on the floor.”

Williams took classes to be credentialed as a Child Development Associate (CDA). This nationally approved recognition “demonstrates competency in early childhood education for those working with children from birth to 5 years old,” Casper later explained to *The Criterion*. “The CDA credential is a valuable step in early childhood education careers.”

With her CDA, Williams now teaches at Floyd County Head Start, a federal school-readiness program for children up to age 4 from low-income families.

She is also working on earning a commercial driver’s license so she can “drive a little school bus to help the kids get to Head Start that can’t get there” while also adding to her income.

“I have a car to get around in and a nice apartment,” Williams said in closing. “I can provide for my kids and myself without worry.

“St. Elizabeth helped me get a start, and I would not be where I’m at today. They taught me to never give up no matter how hard life gets.”

Williams received the second standing ovation of the evening.

‘Placed in our arms forever’

Alyssa and Cory Cochran are the proud parents of three young children.

But there was a time when such a reality seemed impossible to believe.

“From the beginning, we knew that we wanted to adopt,” Cory told the crowd of nearly 700, with Alyssa by his side. “We knew that we could love any child.”

The couple had also tried to conceive, “but starting a family did not come easy,” he said.

So, the couple sought fertility treatment while seeking to adopt a child through SECC’s Adoption Bridges of Kentuckiana, the only non-profit, licensed adoption agency serving both Kentucky and Indiana.

In March of 2021, one year after completing the necessary home study, the couple received a call from Adoption Bridges saying the couple had a match. The baby was due in June.

In the meantime, they learned that Alyssa was pregnant.



A photo of the Cochran family—Alyssa, left, Oliver, Hazel May, Cory and Atticus—is displayed during a gala for St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities in New Albany on April 10. Alyssa and Cory, who adopted Atticus through the agency’s Adoption Bridges of Kentuckiana, spoke at the event. (Photos by Natalie Hoefer)



In a photo displayed during a gala for St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities in New Albany on April 10, David Franklin poses with Rebecca Crum. Franklin is a client of the agency’s Supported Living Program, and Crum is the program’s assistant director.

Soon to be the parents of two children, the couple was “ecstatic,” said Cory.

Then came two shocks: the birth mother decided to parent her child, and in August the Cochrans learned that there was a “high chance” their baby would be born with Down syndrome.

Overwhelmed, the Cochrans took a step back from the adoption process.

Oliver was born in December of 2021. He did have Down syndrome—but he “was perfect,” said Alyssa. “He still is. Our hearts were exploding with love we had never imagined.”

Realizing that “having a child with Down syndrome would not change anything about wanting more children or about wanting to adopt,” the couple re-engaged with Adoption Bridges.

In August of 2022, they were matched again, this time with a baby girl a few months older than Oliver.

A few weeks after receiving the call, their excitement once again turned to agony: the birth father had been identified, and he decided to raise his daughter.

Distraught, the Cochrans met with Adoption Bridges’ program director Stephanie Lowery.

“Stephanie acknowledged how difficult and emotionally devastating our adoption journey had been,” Cory said. “But she challenged us to remember why we were there, why we wanted to start this journey in the first place.

“And that reason had never changed.

We could love any child, and there was still a child out there somewhere that we would have the chance to love.”

Still, months passed with no potential

See CHARITIES, page 19

Services provided by St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities in New Albany in fiscal year 2023-24

Residential programs:

—177 women and children housed by four residential programs: maternity home, women and children emergency shelter, domestic violence transitional housing, and affordable supportive housing

Adoption Bridges of Kentuckiana:

—1,461 combined hours of professional services provided to birth parents and adoptive parents
—24 birth parent inquiries
—12 finalized adoptions (agency and assisted)
—seven matches
—three placements

Marie’s Blessings Distribution Program:

—1,082 families in need received free, gently used items, from clothing to

maternity and baby items to furniture and more
—214, or nearly 20%, of those families were first-time visitors

Supported Living Program:

—11 direct service professionals provided more than 8,100 hours of support to help 14 individuals in Clark and Floyd counties with intellectual or developmental challenges lead fuller, more independent lives

School Counseling:

—1,125 students assisted in five schools
—834 group counseling sessions
—833 acute counseling sessions
—402 ongoing counseling sessions

(To learn more about the programs offered by St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities or to donate, go to stcharities.org.) †

DAY

continued from page 1

transitional deacons Liam Hosty and Isaac Siefker as priests. Deacon Day will then begin ministry on July 2 as parochial vicar of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood.

Growing in faith in community

Deacon Day grew up as a member of Holy Spirit Parish on Indianapolis’ east side until he was a middle school student when his family moved to Westfield, Ind. There, he and his family became members of the nearby St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Carmel, Ind., in the Lafayette Diocese. “My parents were the first people to get me involved in the Mass. I still remember my dad telling a 5- or 6-year-old me that, at church, we have to ‘sing, pray, respond and listen,’ ” Deacon Day said. “They were also responsible for getting me to start altar serving at the age of 10.”

Looking back, he sees God’s providence at work when a few years later as a student at Westfield High School he randomly picked up off the shelf in the school’s library a battered old copy of the 20th-century British author C.S. Lewis’ *The Screwtape Letters*.

The book about the Christian faith is written in a humorously ironic way as a series of letters by a demon (Screwtape) to his nephew and underling named Wormwood, who increasingly fails in his efforts to tempt a young man away from the faith.

“I read it within three or four days,” Deacon Day said. “It was intense. This was what Christianity is about. I said to myself, ‘Why isn’t this the most important thing in my life?’ ”

He soon became friends with a group of fellow students at Westfield who took their Catholic faith seriously. They would meet in what Deacon Day called a “kind of accountability group” in which they helped each other live out their faith and grow in prayer.

“That was one of the most important things that’s ever happened to me in terms of my faith,” Deacon Day said. “It turned the faith from this problem I was trying to solve into a community.”

A ‘life-changing’ year of ministry

While a junior at Westfield, Deacon Day began to think that he might be called to the priesthood.

“I had begun to experience God in the Mass and in confession,” he said. “And my thought had been that, if this

is where I find God, I want to make sure that other people like me have the sacraments. I wanted to be able to give people these things because it was where I’d been able to find God.”

The vocations director for the Lafayette Diocese advised Deacon Day not to become a seminarian at that time, but to allow his faith to mature more in college.

That growth happened at St. Joseph’s as Deacon Day grew in his life of prayer and making friends with other Catholic students.

He also discerned a possible call to religious life with the Dominican friars of the Province of St. Joseph, based in Washington, D.C.

Because he was to graduate from St. Joseph’s after only three years, the Dominicans recommended that he do a year of volunteer work before entering their community. He did that by working at the shelter in the Bronx, which he described as “an incredible year, truly life-changing.”

The ministry he did helped Deacon Day see “different parts of people’s lives and being able to speak to that.”

Many of the people who came to the shelter where he served struggled with mental illness and drug addiction.

“I spent New Year’s Eve helping a friar get a guy to a mental clinic because he was suicidal,” Deacon Day said. “He was starving himself and we had to get him checked in.”

The priesthood’s double mystery

After his year in the Bronx, Deacon Day became a postulant and then a novice with the Dominicans at their novitiate at St. Gertrude Parish in Cincinnati.

The parish ministry that he and his eight fellow novices got involved in “really jumped out at me,” Deacon Day said. “It was an awesome thing to do, and very fulfilling.”

After professing temporary vows as a Dominican, Deacon Day moved to Washington where he was enrolled at the Dominican House of Studies. His busy days were filled with classes, praying in common several times a day with his fellow friars, ministry and community events.

The daily schedule grew increasingly difficult for him.

“As much as I enjoyed huge chunks of what I was doing, I was making myself miserable, trying to follow the schedule,” Deacon Day said.

So, in April 2020, during the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, Deacon Day left the Dominicans and returned to Indiana.



Archbishop Charles. C. Thompson ritually lays hands on seminarian Thomas Day on Oct. 26, 2024, during a diaconate ordination Mass at the Archabbey Church of Our Lady of Einsiedeln in St. Meinrad. (Photo courtesy of Saint Meinrad Archabbey)

He soon was hired as a religion teacher at St. Michael-St. Gabriel School and found a fruitful spiritual home at Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish, both in Indianapolis.

During this change in his life, he continued to hear God’s call in prayer. So, he applied to become an archdiocesan seminarian and was accepted in the spring of 2021.

As he’s gotten closer to the priesthood through formation at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad and ministry assignments in archdiocesan parishes, Deacon Day has pondered a double mystery in how priests are sacramental signs of Christ to the people they serve.

“In Christ you don’t become a generic replica or a factory machine model of Christ the priest,” he said. “It is Christ who transfigures you in who you are and with everything that you are, perfecting it. Somehow, that’s how Christ becomes present in the world.”

At the same time, Deacon Day, in his ministry at Our Lady of the Greenwood since December 2024, has come to realize that it’s really Christ who is acting in him.

“It’s all Jesus,” he said. “That’s the first truth. But right behind that truth is the truth that God is making you who you truly are.”

As he considers being able to celebrate the Eucharist after being ordained a priest, Deacon Day’s thoughts turn to a message he’s seen on the sacristy wall of chapels in convents of the Missionaries of Charity he’s come to know in various cities, including those who serve on Indianapolis’ near east side: “Priest of God, celebrate this Mass as if it was your first Mass, as if it was your last Mass, as if it was your only Mass.”

“That’s a reality that I’m beginning to understand,” he said. “When you’re working in a parish, as awesome and fruitful as it is to be working with the people of God day in and day out, the temptation can be to treat Mass as being on the back burner and not being the centerpiece of what you’re doing with your daily life.

“I never want that to happen. It

should be at the heart of my day and something that my heart jumps up and leaps up for.”

‘God is not a miserly God’

Katie Warren, the director of youth ministry at St. Joseph Parish in Corydon and St. Mary Parish in Lanesville, came to know Deacon Day when he ministered at the two New Albany Deanery faith communities.

She values that his wide knowledge of the faith doesn’t lead him to be “pretentious.”

“With him, there’s just a desire to share the knowledge and the passion and the love that he has for the faith,” Warren said. “That comes through.”

She also appreciates his humor. “I love to laugh, and he’s somebody who makes me laugh regularly,” Warren said. “I think that’s great, because I think priests should take their faith seriously, but not necessarily themselves seriously. That makes them relatable and enjoyable to be around.”

Deacon Day’s experience of discernment is valuable to Sophie Lorenz. A special education teacher at St. Mark the Evangelist School in Indianapolis, Lorenz, 24, came to know Deacon Day through a Catholic young adult group that meets at Our Lady of the Greenwood.

“He listens to you,” she said. “In our time of life, we have a lot of uncertainties. The experiences he’s had helps him empathize with our age group more.”

Deacon Day encouraged young men who might wonder if God is calling them to the priesthood.

“Discernment for the priesthood is a very long road, but no matter where it takes you, God will reward your zeal,” he said. “The gifts that God will give you and the people that you will meet and the experiences that you will have are so fulfilling.

“God is not a miserly God. If you give yourself to him with an open heart, he will give himself back to you.”

(For more information about a vocation to the priesthood in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, visit [HearGodsCall.com](https://www.heargodsCall.com).) †

About Transitional Deacon Thomas Day

Age: 29

Parents: Michael and Jeanette Day

Home Parish: Holy Spirit Parish in Indianapolis as a child; Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish in Indianapolis as an adult

Education: Westfield High School in Westfield, Ind.; St. Joseph’s College in Rensselaer, Ind.; Dominican House of Studies in Washington, D.C.; Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad

Favorite Scripture verse/passage: Psalm 73:25 (“Who else have I in heaven but you? Apart from you, I want nothing on Earth.”)

Favorite saint: “Too many to count, but all of the Thomases, plus St. Joseph and St. Mary Magdalene.”

Favorite prayer/devotion: The Divine Office (also known as the Liturgy of the Hours)

Favorite movie: *O Brother, Where Art Thou?*

Favorite authors: G.K. Chesterton, St. Augustine

Hobbies: Gardening, cooking, reading good books and hanging out with good friends, preferably with bourbon and cigars

Seniors will soon celebrate their Catholic high school graduations

By John Shaughnessy

As seniors prepare to graduate soon from Catholic high schools across the archdiocese, their emotions will be a blend of pride and relief, nostalgia and celebration.

They will draw even closer to their friends, remembering the times they’ve shared and promising to stay connected forever.

Many will thank the teachers and the coaches who have made a difference in their lives. They will also pose for photos in their caps and gowns with their parents, who will look at their children and wonder where the years have gone.

Amid all these rituals of graduation, there will also be an abundance of congratulations to the more than 1,300 members of the Class of 2025, including this one from Brian Disney, superintendent of Catholic schools in the archdiocese.

“We are proud of you for your accomplishments and are excited to see the continued impact you will make in our Church, communities, nation and world,” Disney said.

The superintendent also encouraged the graduates to take time to thank all the people who have supported them in this four-year high school journey.

“Remember the sacrifices and lessons of your parents within the domestic Church. Remember the support and dedication of your priests, teachers, coaches and other staff members,” he said. “Pray for the benefactors who helped make this excellent Catholic education a reality. Thank God for your many blessings today and always.”

He also hopes the graduates will embrace the message that Pope Francis shared in his homily during a Mass at the 2013 World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: “You too, dear young people, can be joyful witnesses of his love, courageous witnesses of his Gospel, carrying to this world a ray of his light.”

Disney noted, “Throughout your Catholic school education, you have been encouraged to encounter Jesus of the Gospels and to grow in your relationship with him. You have shared his light by celebrating in the sacraments, participating in community service projects, and being Christ to one another. Additionally, you have been developing your full human potential by excelling in academics, athletics, performing arts and other activities.

“Your entire Catholic school education has been focused on your formation as a human person and your relationship with Christ so that you will be pilgrims of hope who share Christ’s light with the world. “God bless the Class of 2025!”

Here is a listing of graduation-related information for the 12 Catholic high schools in the archdiocese.

Bishop Chatard High School in Indianapolis has a graduating class of 165 seniors.

The Baccalaureate Mass will be on May 15 at 6:30 p.m. at the school.

The graduation ceremony will be on May 18 at 1:30 p.m. at the school.

The class valedictorian is **Thomas O’Gara**, son of Thomas and Elizabeth O’Gara of St. Pius X Parish in Indianapolis.

The class salutatorian is **Alexander Paz**, son of Rob and Susan Paz of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Indianapolis.

The archdiocese will be represented at the graduation by Archbishop Charles C. Thompson.

Brebeuf Jesuit Preparatory School in Indianapolis has a graduating class of 209 seniors.

The Baccalaureate Mass will be on May 18 at 10:30 a.m. at the school.

The graduation ceremony will be on May 18 at 4:30 p.m. at Clowes Memorial Hall on the campus of Butler University in Indianapolis.

Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School in Indianapolis has a graduating class of 116 seniors.

The Baccalaureate Mass will be on May 29 at 7 p.m. at St. Monica Church in Indianapolis.

The graduation ceremony will be on May 30 at 7 p.m. at the school.

The class valedictorian is **Harley Campbell**, son of Cheryl Campbell of St. Christopher Parish in Indianapolis.

The class salutatorian is **Zita Eke**, daughter of Maclean and Ekwitosi Eke of St. Christopher Parish in Indianapolis.

The archdiocese will be represented at the graduation by Archbishop Thompson.

Cathedral High School in Indianapolis has a graduating class of 275 seniors.

The Baccalaureate Mass will be on May 18 at 6:30 p.m. at the school.

The graduation ceremony will be on May 19 at 6:30 p.m. at the Fishers Event Center in Fishers, Ind.

The student commencement speaker will be **Olivia Uskert**, daughter of Michael and Amanda Uskert of St. Simon the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis.

The archdiocese will be represented at the graduation by Archbishop Thompson.

Father Michael Shawe Memorial High School in Madison has a graduating class of 29 seniors.

The Baccalaureate Mass will be on May 23 at 7 p.m. at the school.

The graduation ceremony will be on May 25 at 1 p.m. at the school.

Numerous students are in contention for valedictorian and salutatorian honors as the school year draws to a close, according to school officials. The announcement of these honorees will be made close to graduation.

The archdiocese will be represented at the graduation by Christopher Walsh, chancellor.

Father Thomas Scecina Memorial High School in Indianapolis has a graduating class of 92 students.

The Baccalaureate Mass will be on May 22 at 7 p.m. at St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Church in Indianapolis.

The graduation ceremony will be on May 23 at 7 p.m. at the school.

The class valedictorian is **Mariangela Gascon**, daughter of Francisco and Laura Gascon of Holy Spirit Parish in Indianapolis.

The class salutatorian is **Peter Certo**, son of David and Megan Certo of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis.



Members of the Class of 2024 of Our Lady of Providence High School in Clarksville celebrate their graduation on May 19, 2024. (Photo courtesy of Charles Kraft)

The archdiocese will be represented at the graduation by Brian Disney, superintendent of Catholic schools.

Lumen Christi High School in Indianapolis has a graduating class of three seniors.

The Baccalaureate Mass and graduation ceremony will be on May 22 at 5:45 p.m. at Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Church in Indianapolis.

Oldenburg Academy of the Immaculate Conception in Oldenburg has a graduating class of 39 seniors.

The graduation ceremony will be on June 1 at 1 p.m. at the Chapel of the Sisters of St. Francis in Oldenburg.

The archdiocese will be represented by superintendent Brian Disney during a Senior Mass on May 15 at 1:30 p.m. at the Chapel of the Sisters of St. Francis in Oldenburg.

Three students are currently in contention for valedictorian and salutatorian honors, which will be announced after final exams end in late May. The students are listed in alphabetical order:

Ava Henry, daughter of Brad and Miranda Henry of Holy Family Parish in Oldenburg.

Christian Mack, son of Peter and Dr. Deborah Mack of St. Louis Parish in Batesville.

Annabelle Nunlist, daughter of Nathan and Susan Nunlist of Holy Family Parish in Oldenburg.

Our Lady of Providence High School in Clarksville has a graduating class of 86 seniors.

The Baccalaureate Mass will be on May 16 at 7 p.m. at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church in New Albany.

The graduation ceremony will be on May 18 at 6 p.m. at the school.

The class valedictorian is **Augustus Ernstberger**, son of Dr. Seth and Elizabeth Ernstberger of St. Mary-of-the-Knobs Parish in Floyd County.

The class salutatorian is **Molly Richards**, daughter of John and Anne Richards of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in New Albany

The archdiocese will be represented at the graduation by Archbishop Thompson.

Providence Cristo Rey High School in Indianapolis has a graduating class of 37 seniors.

The Baccalaureate Mass will be on May 29 at 6 p.m. at the school.

The graduation ceremony will be on May 30 at 7 p.m. at the school.

The class valedictorian is **Kayleigh Yelton**, daughter of Ciara Lucas and Kyle Yelton.

The class salutatorian is **Jerrion Rose**, son of Talisha Rose.

The archdiocese will be represented at the graduation by Msgr. William F. Stumpf, archdiocesan vicar general and pastor of St. Matthew the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis

Roncalli High School in Indianapolis has a graduating class of 262 seniors.

The Baccalaureate Mass will be on May 23 at 6 p.m. at the school.

The graduation ceremony will be on May 24 at 9 a.m. at the school.

The class valedictorian is **Audrey May**, daughter of William and Kim May of Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ Parish in Indianapolis.

The class salutatorian is **Mackenzie Krue**, daughter of Justin and Anne Krue of St. Jude Parish in Indianapolis.

The archdiocese will be represented at the graduation by Christopher Walsh, chancellor.

Seton Catholic High School in Richmond has a graduating class of 21 seniors.

The Baccalaureate Mass will be on June 1 at 1:30 p.m. at St. Andrew Church in Richmond.

The graduation ceremony will follow on June 1 at 3 p.m. at St. Andrew Church.

The class valedictorian is **Landry Cox**, daughter of Brian and Suzanne Cox of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Richmond.

There are three class salutatorians: **Kelsey Brim**, daughter of Jeff Lawrence and Shonda Brim of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish.

Jacqueline Clemente, daughter of Dr. Joseph and Julma Clemente of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish.

Jana Clemente, daughter of Dr. Joseph and Julma Clemente of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish.

The archdiocese will be represented at the graduation by Vince Aquila, assistant superintendent of Catholic schools. †

REFLECTION

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My wife and I were still hugging, high-fiving and dancing in our living room when the phone rang. I figured it was one of our children or one of my Notre Dame friends calling to share in the joy and the excitement.

Instead, it was the last person I expected to be calling—my mom, who was 92 then. The reason I say she was the last person I expected to be calling had little to do with her age. It’s because she had long been a charter member of that group of mothers who live their lives like the old U.S. Army slogan: “They do more by 9 in the morning than most people do in an entire day.” She

usually woke up at 5 in the morning and headed to bed at 8 at night. And her routine never included staying up to watch any kind of game.

Yet here she was near midnight, phoning me, talking excitedly about how she had watched the game, what a great game it was, and how much we all needed something so joyful like that to happen in the midst of a pandemic. Then her voice lowered as she mentioned my father, who had died 18 months earlier. “I hope your dad saw that game,” she said. When I assured her that he had, her joy returned. She ended the call by saying she just wanted to share that joy with me.

It wasn’t until later that I thought about the true extent of that gift from her. In all the years of my relationship with my dad, the tradition of calling each other after a

Notre Dame game never wavered. And my mom was doing her part to continue that ritual that I still miss.

I cherish that phone call even more now as I try to adjust to coming home from work and not being able to call her.

Those phone calls and especially “her voice” are part of my answer to the question, “What do I miss most about her?” At the same time, I know it’s much more than that.

Whether it’s the memory of a shared cup of coffee, an intimate embrace, a hidden coin, a treasured toy or a phone call, what we miss most is the love at the heart of it all.

(John Shaughnessy is assistant editor of The Criterion.) †

From first impressions to lasting ones, pope touched readers’ lives

(Editor’s note: The Criterion invited you, our readers, to share your thoughts, tributes and stories about how Pope Francis influenced your life of faith during his papacy from 2013-25. Here are some of your stories.)

By John Shaughnessy

When Pope Francis was elected in 2013, Lisa Eagleson-Roever had her doubts about the way he would lead the Church.

Yet even those doubts didn’t compare to some more serious ones she had.

“At the time of his election, I did not have good feelings about the future



Lisa Eagleson-Roever

of the Catholic Church, nor did I feel like I had much of a place in it,” she recalls. “How could I feel comfortable in an institution that refused to clean its own house and yet spent so much energy telling me to clean mine?”

Twelve years later, her doubts have given

way to hope, thanks to Pope Francis.

“Here was a man who appeared to be living out the edict of ‘Preach the Gospel always—use words if necessary.’ His words and actions reminded us that all of us are called to salvation—and also, always, God is merciful, and we need to be brave enough to accept that mercy and be healed. His response to a situation was often the answer to the question, ‘What would Jesus do?’ ”

Eagleson-Roever found herself becoming more and more focused on the actions and the teachings of Pope Francis.

“I started wanting to know what the pope had to say about things, because here was a man who prayed deeply and wasn’t so afraid to admit his mistakes that he would let injustice win,” she says. “He wasn’t afraid to be a human being. He smiled in public—and laughed.

“He understood the spiritual pitfalls of removing oneself from his spiritual family to ‘put on the trappings’ of the papacy. He understood his marching orders came from God, and that was a big load, and he needed to be around his spiritual family to stay grounded and to have their help to keep praying and keep listening to God and to keep saying ‘Yes, Lord, here I am.’ ”

The result is that Pope Francis had a profound impact on Eagleson-Roever,

a member of St. Michael the Archangel Parish in Indianapolis.

“The man gave me hope that the Catholic Church had a future, and there was a place for me in it.”

‘When our dreams were as small and pure as we once were’

It was a moment that took Pope Francis back to his childhood, a moment that touched the heart of Julie Young.

“A few years ago, I bought a book called *Dear Pope Francis*, a delightful title in which the pontiff answered some of the questions that were on the minds of children all over the world,” recalls Young, a member of St. Michael Parish in Greenfield. “One child asked [Pope]



Julie Young

Francis to reflect on his childhood and what he wanted to be ‘when he grew up.’ ”

His answer delighted Young.

“The pope quickly recalled a butcher that he and his mother used to visit in Buenos Aires,” she says. “Young Jorge

was fascinated by this man, who wore an apron with a pocket in front that was full of money and jingled while he worked. He thought it would be great fun to be a butcher and wear an apron full of money. I loved that answer because it was such a ‘kid’ thing to say.

“Who doesn’t have that kind of logic when they are a child? His response caused me to remember how I wanted to be a cashier when I was little because I liked the idea of pushing the buttons on one of those old-style cash registers.

“The idea that the pope had never lost touch with his inner child filled me with so much joy. It is a good reminder to us all. In a world where we are constantly told to ‘put aside childish things,’ it’s nice to go back and recall a simpler time when our dreams were as small and pure as we once were—and somewhere inside, we still are.”

‘God never closes his arms’

First impressions often last, and Holy Cross Father Geoffrey Mooney will never forget his first impression of Pope Francis.

“I was in the middle of teaching an Algebra II lesson when Jorge Mario Bergoglio walked out onto the balcony of St. Peter’s Basilica to be introduced to the world as the next Bishop of Rome,” recalls Father Mooney, who was a



Holy Cross Father Geoffrey Mooney often spends time in the chapel at Cathedral High School in Indianapolis, where he is a math teacher. (Photo courtesy of Tyler McClure)

lay teacher in a Catholic high school in Florida at the time. “My students and I found ourselves glued to the TV as we met Pope Francis for the first time, all of us humbled by his humility as he smiled, waved and asked for our prayers.”

That first impression became a lasting one for him through the 12 years of Pope Francis leading the Church.

In December of 2012, he took a vocations pilgrimage to Rome with an alumni group from the University of Notre Dame where he had graduated from in 2009. Being in that city captivated him. So did the start of Pope Francis’ papacy a few months later.

“It was quite the energizing time, both for me personally and for the Church at large,” says Father Mooney, a 2005 graduate of Our Lady of Providence High School in Clarksville who grew up as a member of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in New Albany. “From the start, Francis radiated joy and exuded hope, and I saw in him the kind of religious that I would want to be should God lead me to that vocation.”

In 2014, he embraced that call, entering into his formation as a Holy Cross priest.

“Over the next seven years, I continued to find inspiration in the defining features of Francis’ papacy—*Laudato Si’*, the Year of Mercy, his apostolic visit to the

United States, his closeness to the poor, and his blessing over the world at the start of the pandemic from St. Peter’s Square, the same place where those first serious stirrings of God’s call began to come into focus for me.”

Father Mooney was ordained a priest in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart at Notre Dame in 2021. Two years later, another moment crystallized his connection to Pope Francis.

He traveled to Lisbon, Portugal, to be in the pope’s presence during World Youth Day. He still remembers the pope exclaiming, “*Todos, todos, todos!*” (Everyone! Everyone! Everyone!)

“This was his rallying cry for the youths gathered in Lisbon. In the Church, there is room for everyone. The Church embraces all. God never closes his arms but always opens them to us,” says Father Mooney, who has returned to the archdiocese as a math teacher at Cathedral High School in Indianapolis.

As he reflects upon his four years as a priest, Father Mooney still turns to Pope Francis as his role model.

“I pray that my life as a religious, as an educator, as a Christian, as a member of the human family, will always be inclusive of all God’s children. Thank you, Pope Francis, for courageously and joyfully giving us this example.” †

Cardinal Tobin, at Rome parish, focuses on Eucharist, not conclave

ROME (CNS)—As Catholics in Rome await the election of their new bishop, the pope, some of them celebrated Sunday Mass at their parishes with the



Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin of Newark, N.J., gives a girl her first Communion during Mass at the Church of St. Mary of the Graces, the cardinal’s titular church in Rome, on May 4. (CNS photo/Kendall McLaren)

cardinals who were scheduled to enter a conclave on May 7.

When prelates are made cardinals, they are assigned a “titular” parish in Rome, which makes them members of the clergy of the Diocese of Rome. In the early days of the Church, the clergy of the diocese elected the pope.

Several cardinals chose to celebrate Mass at their titular churches on May 4, the last Sunday before they entered the Sistine Chapel to begin voting for a new pope.

Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin of Newark, N.J. (formerly archbishop of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis), was at St. Mary of the Graces Church where it was first Communion Sunday. There were prayers for the late Pope Francis, for Cardinal Tobin and for the new pope, but the focus was solidly on the children.

The cardinal and his priest secretary arrived at the parish by subway. Wearing a clerical suit with his pectoral cross tucked in his pocket, no one recognized him, he said.

Outside the church, journalists did know who he was and asked him how the pre-conclave meetings were going. “There is a growing consensus about the qualities needed for the next Holy Father, but not names. A lot depends on the Holy Spirit,” he responded.

Still, he was predicting a fairly short conclave “because the majority of cardinals, including me, are diocesan bishops and we need to get back.”

Cardinal Tobin said there is a desire “to have

continuity” with the papacy of Pope Francis, but not an “exact” replica. “There is no going back,” he added.

Father Antonio Fois, the parish’s pastor, welcomed Cardinal Tobin “home” to his Rome parish, saying, “In a few days, you and your brother cardinals will elect the new bishop of Rome. And we pray for you and with you that you will choose a pastor with the heart of Jesus.”

In his homily, Cardinal Tobin focused mainly on his “little brothers and sisters” who were about to receive Communion for the first time, and he prayed that their encounter with the risen Lord, who gives himself in the Eucharist, would lead them, like St. Peter in the day’s Gospel, to respond, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you” (Jn 21:17).

Cardinal Tobin told the children that he was the eldest of 13 children, and every day after school he and his friends would play ball in the street. “At a certain point, mom would come to the door with good news: ‘Dinner’s ready.’ ”

It was good news, he said, “not only because we were hungry,” but thinking about it more deeply, it also meant that it was time to gather around the table as a family. “It was a big table with a lot of people around it and a lot of noise, but we were a family.”

Jesus gathered his disciples and gathers believers today around a table, the cardinal said, “not only to nourish us but to show us that God wants to be with us, God wants to remain with us, God wants us to leave behind despair and discover the joy of being a family.” †

A gift from Pope Francis leads to a journey of hope for a family

By John Shaughnessy

On the morning that Scott and Elisabeth Williams planned to fly to Rome with their two small children, they woke up to the shocking news about the death of Pope Francis—the pontiff who had blessed their marriage and shared a rare wedding gift with them nine years ago.

Their original plan was to be in Rome for the April 27 canonization of Blessed Carlo Acutis, the 15-year-old Italian youth known for his dedication to the Eucharist who died of cancer in 2006.

“We had just seen Pope Francis [on TV] riding around in the popemobile the day before, celebrating Easter,” Scott recalls. “We’re thinking, ‘he’s feeling better, and maybe we’ll see him for the canonization.’ And then we’re shocked to learn he had passed. And then we’re trying to figure out our travel plans. Do we go? Is the canonization going to happen?”

“We quickly realized that either way, this is going to be an amazing pilgrimage and a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.”

After they settled into their plane seats with 6-year-old Dominic and 4-year-old Hannah, the couple thought of the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity they already had with Pope Francis—in the summer of 2016.

The rare gift and their meeting with Pope Francis connected with two long-standing traditions at the Vatican.

The first tradition holds that if a couple arrives for a Wednesday general audience with the pope within six months of their wedding and wears the clothes they were married in (or similar attire), they will be allowed to sit in a reserved section where they will receive a “blessing of newlyweds” from the Holy Father.

With Scott in a black tuxedo and Elisabeth in her wedding dress on that hot August day in 2016, the Indianapolis couple met with Pope Francis, talked with him and received a blessing. Even more astounding to them, they also left their meeting with the pontiff’s *zucchetto*, the white skullcap that a pope wears.

Scott had also learned that there’s another special papal tradition: If someone has the same size of *zucchetto* as the pope, the pope will make a trade. So, the couple had gone to Pope Francis’ personal tailor in Rome and bought a *zucchetto* of the same size. They were the only one of the 60 couples from around the world who arrived for the papal audience that day with a *zucchetto*. And when Scott offered him that one, Pope Francis tried it on and made the exchange.

It was an incredible moment in a wonderful week of adventures in Rome, a honeymoon moment that always leads to a smile for the couple, who are members of St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis.

Nearly nine years later, that special connection to Pope Francis has continued through their married life, including the births of their children—Dominic, Hannah and Simon—and the heartbreaking loss of Simon.



Elisabeth and Scott Williams smile in complete joy as they meet Pope Francis at the Vatican on Aug. 3, 2016. Married on May 28 in that year, the couple later traveled to Rome after they learned about the long-standing tradition of popes offering a blessing to newlyweds. (Photo courtesy of L'Osservatore Romano)

‘A very beautiful and powerful moment’

After arriving in Rome, one of the first visits the Williams family made was to St. Peter’s Basilica on April 23, the first day of the public viewing of Pope Francis, who was 88 when he died.

“The last time we were there was to see him and get his blessing,” Scott says. “This time, it was really beautiful because we got to bring our kids back there. Part of it was also preparing them for what they were about to see and encounter.”

“We waited for three hours,” Elisabeth adds. “They move you through really quickly. We got to spend more time at the altar of St. Joseph, to pray with the kids and just sit there and collect our thoughts.”

Once again, their thoughts and prayers also turned to Simon, who died a few hours after his birth two years ago.

“One day during the pope’s hospitalization, I looked at the *zucchetto* that Pope Francis generously traded us in 2016,” Elisabeth recalls. “I was reflecting on all that had happened in our marriage—the business we started, the adventures in travel we’ve had, the sleepless nights, the joys and the hardships—ultimately the journey of hope that we are on in our family.”

“We’ve welcomed children into our family and experienced the difficulty of giving one of those sons back to our Lord. That *zucchetto* is in our home,

sitting under an image of our Lady holding our son Simon—an image we feel encompasses the few hours he was with us in February of 2023.”

The heartbreak remains. At the same time, so does the overall feeling that the couple has for their lives.

“The gratitude over the last nine years is really the feeling,” Elisabeth says.

That feeling extends to getting to share their respect for Pope Francis at St. Peter’s.

“There’s a deep sense of gratitude that we felt for him,” Scott says. “It was a very beautiful and powerful moment.”

That combination of respect, gratitude and joy also permeated the entire experience of hundreds of thousands of people honoring Pope Francis during his viewing, his funeral and his procession to the Basilica of St. Mary Major, his burial place, Scott says.

“Something that came up a lot in our conversations was that there was still a lot of joy in Rome,” he says. “Part of that was that there were a lot of young people in Rome for the canonization. Also, as Catholics, we celebrate the lives of people at funerals. We celebrate the lives they’ve lived. And it’s indeed a celebration.”

“During the funeral procession, there still was energy there. There were still people lining the streets all along the processional route. The feeling was still gratitude and respect.”

‘Our family needed some hope’

Joy also marked the pilgrimage that the Williams’ family shared during their week in Italy.

“A pilgrimage across the world with young kids is a little daunting, but it surprised us in many ways,” Elisabeth says.

“Dominic is a 6-year-old kid, but he was teaching Hannah how to pray and reminding her how to do the sign of the cross on the chapel visits we had. It was neat to see him share those things in his silly ways. He would dance, pause and then pray. They really brought joy to the time. They did cartwheels in the street.”

While the canonization of Blessed Carlo Acutis was delayed because of Pope Francis’ funeral, the family still made the youth’s life a part of their trip by traveling to Assisi on April 27—Divine Mercy Sunday—to visit his tomb.

“There were many gelato trips and running through Assisi when we got to visit Blessed Carlo’s tomb,” Elisabeth says. “They couldn’t hold that joy in, even

in those solemn moments.

“It was interesting too, because we learned about Blessed Carlo through Pope Francis. We really enjoyed his story and started naturally sharing it with Dominic. ‘You can be yourself, but you can also live out the sacraments and live that fully and joyfully.’ So, Dominic now has someone to look up to and intercede for him as well.”

Being in Rome also gave the couple the opportunity to share some of the Church’s rich history with their children.

“We got to see the pillar where Jesus was scourged, the crib where Jesus was born,” Scott says. “We read about these things in the Bible, but seeing these things puts another level of reality on them. It was really interesting to do these things with them. It will be really beautiful to be able to reflect back on that and remind them of what we encountered there.”

Elisabeth adds, “I’m not sure what they’ll remember, but those seeds have been planted.”

As for the couple, there’s the certainty that Pope Francis has influenced their marriage, their family and their lives, from the joy of meeting him and trading *zucchettos* nine years ago to being in Rome again for his viewing and funeral.

“Pope Francis has obviously had a significant impact on the blessing of our marriage,” Scott says. “We pray for the pope every time we go to Mass. Reflecting back on the years, even as we watched news coverage of the funeral preparations, he simplified parts of that funeral Mass to be more of a pastor. Looking back, Pope Francis had the heart of a pastor, the heart of a shepherd. And while we had limited interactions with him, I think we can feel that presence.”

Elisabeth believes that Pope Francis has also given their family and the family of the Church one more gift—dedicating this Jubilee year to hope and encouraging people to become pilgrims of hope. Another highlight of their pilgrimage to Italy included passing through the Holy Door of St. Peter’s Basilica, which is only open during a Jubilee year in the Church, which ordinarily happens every 25 years.

“Our family needed some hope after losing our son,” Elisabeth says. “It was really impactful to bring our kids back to Rome during this Year of Hope, walk through the Holy Door, and help them live that hope again.” †



Elisabeth and Scott Williams pose for a family photo with their children, Dominic and Hannah, at St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican during their recent pilgrimage to Italy. (Submitted photo)

Gift to Gaza: Popemobile will be transformed into clinic for children

JERUSALEM (OSV News)—With the declining situation in Gaza always in his heart, Pope Francis bequeathed one of his popemobiles to Caritas Jerusalem in his final months and directed the agency to turn it into a mobile health station for the children in Gaza.



Pope Francis

Pope Francis readily agreed to the idea after Swedish Cardinal Anders Arborelius of Stockholm, Sweden, approached him, Brune told OSV News in a phone interview.

“There is an urgency in the need to help children in Gaza. There has been a full blockage of aid since March 2,” Brune said. “This is not the way we should treat our children.”

When access to food, water and health care is cut off, children are often the first and hardest hit, with infection and other preventable conditions putting their lives at risk, Caritas Sweden and Caritas Jerusalem said in a press release. Brune said in the release that the mobile clinic will be a “concrete, life-saving intervention at a time when the health system in Gaza has almost completely collapsed.”

The vehicle will be staffed by a driver and medical doctors and is currently being fitted with equipment for diagnoses, examination and treatment, including rapid tests for infections, suture kits, syringes and needles, oxygen supply, vaccines and a refrigerator for medicines, and will be ready for use once the humanitarian corridor to Gaza reopens.

“His Holiness for the most vulnerable, which he expressed throughout the crisis,” Asfar said in the press release.

Since the outbreak of the war, Pope Francis called Holy Family Parish in Gaza every night and spoke with the parish priests—including the parish’s pastor, Father Gabriel Romanelli—to express his support of the parish



Final work is being carried out to transform the popemobile used by Pope Francis during his 2014 Holy Land pilgrimage into a mobile health unit for the children of Gaza which will be ready for use once the humanitarian corridor is opened. In his final months, before his death on April 21, the pope approved and blessed the project. (OSV News photo/courtesy Caritas Jerusalem)

community sheltering at the compound. In his last “*urbi et orbi*” blessing on Easter, April 20, the pope called for a ceasefire and the release of the 59 Israeli hostages still held by Hamas, up to 24 of whom are believed to still be alive, and aid for “a starving people who aspire to a future of peace.”

The main message of the new health mobile is to assure that the children of Gaza are not forgotten, said Brune. The unit will be called “Vehicle of Hope,” he said.

“It will be conveying a message of hope,” he told

OSV News. “The children will be sitting on the chair of the Holy Father and treated as the miracles that they are. If nothing more symbolically the pope was interested in bringing attention to the situation of the children of Gaza.”

In the meantime, Israeli media reported that the Israeli cabinet approved plans which included the “conquering of Gaza and holding the territories” as well as a plan for the distribution of humanitarian aid that Israel says would prevent Hamas from controlling its distribution. †

MOTHERS

continued from page 1

toward his mother, Sylvia Rust, who at 27 left her home in Poland for a job in Seymour, Ind.—a move that eventually led to her marriage and her six children.

“My mom had to navigate practicing her English as well as maintaining her faith and cultural customs in a small, tight-knit, predominantly German Lutheran community,” recalls Rust, a member of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis.

“To help us kids learn, our home was often filled with her most-used catchphrase, ‘This is a Polish tradition!’”

“We definitely enjoyed hearing this when it came to meals. Even my dad got to try new recipes that soon became staples in our house—like pierogi, paczki for Fat Tuesday, and hemp soup on Christmas Eve. But we eventually realized some of her other ‘Polish traditions’ might



Born on Mother’s Day, Benedictine Sister Mary Luke Jones always had a special bond with her mom, Marie LaVerne Gionet Jones. (Submitted photo)

have been slightly exaggerated.”

Rust then listed some of the traditions that are embraced by his mom, a member of St. Ambrose Parish in Seymour.

“Kissing a lady on the hand? Polish! “A shot of vodka after a meal ‘for digestion’? Polish!

“Having a holy water font by the door? Polish!

“Blessing the home on Epiphany with the mark of the Three Kings? Polish!”

Yet as the six Rust children became older, they had a revelation.

“Imagine our surprise as we met more Catholic families and realized that some of these customs weren’t just Polish—they were part of the broader Catholic tradition, too,” Rust says. “Over the years, I’ve been able to slowly learn for myself which traditions come from our universal Church and which are unique to my mom’s 27 years of life in Poland.”

He has never doubted one reality about his mom.

“She has instilled in us a deep appreciation for our Church, which brings us closer to Christ through many traditions—whether they be Polish, Catholic or simply Rust family traditions.”

He also has one more tradition he hopes people will embrace.

“This Mother’s Day, may we all thank our moms for their great contributions to our faith lives and family traditions.

“After all, I was told that by doing so, we are honoring an old Polish tradition.”

A mail-order bride, ‘a giant in faith’

For generations, the stories about mothers have included how much they are able to do when they have so little.

They also have a legacy of inspiring their children to reach for a better life even as their own life has been humble.

“My mother was short in stature—standing at 5 foot, 4 inches—but a giant

in faith,” says Jim Welter of St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis. “The daughter of a drunken cotton picker in Alabama, she dropped out of school in the third grade to work the fields to help support her mother and siblings.

“Desperate for a better life, she responded to a newspaper ad and became a mail-order bride. She met my father at the 1933 World’s Fair in Chicago. They moved to a farm in Knox, Ind., and had seven children. When I was 5 years old, Dad was committed to a mental institution. Mom was left alone to raise seven of us in a broken-down, old farmhouse without indoor plumbing, running water, electricity or telephone.

“We lived on a monthly welfare check equivalent to about one week’s salary for working people. We often did not know where the next meal was coming from. One such time, when I was 10 years old, I was hungry, scared and crying. Mom put her arm around me and said: ‘Don’t cry, son, Jesus fed 5,000—and there are only eight of us!’”

That faith in God guided her life before she died in 1995 at the age of 88.

Her faith in her children inspired them, Welter says.

“Of the seven children raised by that mail-order bride with a third-grade education, five went to college, three became millionaires, all were productive members of society.”

Mother and child: growing up together

One of the realities of life is that a first-time mom and her first child often grow up together.

And both of them are changed forever by that bond.

Benedictine Sister Mary Luke Jones of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove shared that special connection with her mom, Marie LaVerne Gionet Jones.

“I was my mom’s first child and was born on Mother’s Day,” says Sister Mary Luke. “She was new to motherhood, and I was new to life. We grew into our lives, and from that day on always celebrated the two events together.

“My mom was a nurse and loved her nursing career until the day she died—July 9, 2014. She had a positive attitude, always seeing the bright side, putting people at ease in their direst moments and truly caring for her patients and their families. She honored her profession and spoke of it lovingly.”

Those qualities that defined her mom’s approach to life are also evident in Sister Mary Luke’s, including a deep faith and trust in God.

“Mom raised me in the Catholic faith and was not surprised when I told her I wanted to enter the monastic community at Our Lady of Grace,” Sister Mary Luke says. “The sisters had taught me in grade school, and I wanted to be one of them. Over the years, mom and dad were frequent visitors at the monastery and considered the sisters part of our family.

“My mom was not a preacher. She never actually told me what to do. She did the right, kind and generous thing, and let me watch her do it. One time she said to me, ‘When people ask me for something, I always try to say yes.’ That is what we call a rule of life, and I try to emulate it, learning from the best teacher.”

The bond is still strong for Sister Mary Luke even as 11 years have passed since her mom’s death.

“The day after my mom died, I realized it was the first morning in 66 years that I awoke without my mother. And I cried,” she says. “I still miss her and quote her often. Growing up with my mom was my greatest blessing. And I thank God.” †

Young Catholics in Dearborn County experience mock papal conclave

Special to *The Criterion*

When the newest successor of St. Peter is introduced to the city of Rome and to the world, many Dearborn County Catholics will feel like insiders. In fact, these Catholics had been taken inside the conclave through an innovative approach of Father Jonathan Meyer and Father John Hollowell, the priests who serve the parishes there.

At the St. Joseph campus of All Saints Parish in Dearborn County and at St. Lawrence School in Lawrenceburg, spaces often used for basketball were transformed into replicas of the Sistine Chapel, including an image of Michaelangelo’s “Last Judgment.” Like the cardinal electors at the Vatican, young men took their places and cast their votes for a new bishop of Rome.

The mock conclave at All Saints occurred on April 30, while the one at St. Lawrence School took place on May 1.

To the cheers of all who were present, that “new pope” was presented on a balcony to extend his papal blessing.

St. Lawrence School principal Randy Dennis commented, “It was an incredible and immersive experience for our young people. It was highly informative for the students and adults.

“I was so proud of all the seventh- and eighth-graders’ maturity, taking on the roles of the cardinals, Swiss Guard,

papal master of ceremonies, *camerlengo*, medical staff, tailors, the press and, of course, the pope. The students were educators as much as they were being educated.”

Father Meyer and Father Hollowell, who serve in the four parishes of Dearborn County, organized the mock conclaves that involved more than 40 young people of the parishes.

Father Meyer narrated the conclaves, carefully explaining the rituals that take place upon the death of a pope and the gathering of cardinals from around the world for the election of a new bishop of Rome.

While Father Meyer explained the significance of each step, young men—donning the red cassocks they wear while serving at Mass—demonstrated how the cardinals process into the Sistine Chapel, swear the solemn oath required of the electors and cast their votes until one of their number received the required two-thirds majority. Black and white “smoke” rose to signal the results of the balloting to the assembled spectators.

To Jay Sprague, a member of St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross Parish in Bright and a teacher at St. Lawrence School, the hour spent learning about the conclave left a lasting impression

“Everyone said it was phenomenal,” he noted. “Our parents were thrilled to see their children take on these important roles. People who have been Catholic



Youths from All Saints Parish in Dearborn County pose after taking part in a mock conclave on April 30 on the faith community’s St. Joseph campus. The event was a way for the youths and other parishioners to learn all the details of how a pope is elected. (Submitted photo)

their entire lives learned something new.”

For Caleb Weckenbrock of All Saints Parish and a high school junior who played the role of a cardinal, the experience was profound

“It was beautiful to see how the Church elects the pope,” he said. “I understand it more by living it out. It was powerful to say the actual prayer the cardinals recite while holding the ballot. Even though it was not real, it was a spiritual experience. The Holy Spirit was alive and working through us, as we played our roles.”

The purpose of the mock conclaves was for the participants and those watching to learn more about the faith in an engaging way.

By seeing a replica of the Sistine Chapel’s ceiling mural, hearing the bells, keeping track of the tally of votes and seeing the smoke, participants and witnesses got a sense of what cardinal electors experience when undertaking the great task of electing the next pope, and of what it must be like for the prelate who enters the Sistine Chapel as a cardinal and exits as the new pope.

“The election of the pope is huge,” said Father Meyer. “It is important and continues the tradition and timelessness of our Church. I want my people to experience this, not just as head knowledge but to realize it is tangible, real and authentically human.”

Whenever Catholics in Dearborn County

hear the name of the new pope, they will be able to remember the time when they were insiders at a mock papal conclave.

(To view a video of the mock conclave on April 30 at All Saints Parish Dearborn County, go to cutt.ly/MockConclave.) †



Students at St. Lawrence School in Lawrenceburg take part in and watch a mock conclave on May 1 in the school’s gym. The actual conclave at the Vatican began on May 7. (Submitted photo)



Gerard DuBoise, a member of All Saints Parish in Dearborn County, casts a ballot as a cardinal-elect in a mock conclave held on April 30 at the faith community’s St. Joseph campus. (Submitted photo)

St. Michael students analyze cardinals ahead of May 7 papal conclave

Criterion staff report

A group of fifth- through eighth-grade students at St. Michael School in Greenfield recently took part in an in-depth study to analyze the cardinals meeting in conclave at the Vatican to elect the next pope.

The study focused on understanding the backgrounds, theological perspectives, regional representation, and influence of each cardinal, offering a unique academic

lens on one of the most closely watched events in the Church.

“This is a rare opportunity for students to apply both scholarly rigor and contemporary analysis to a living moment in Church history,” said teacher Emily Capen, who oversaw the project. “Their work brings insight to a process that is both spiritual and deeply global in nature.”

The students presented their findings in a hallway to share with the rest of the school, highlighting potential trends and key figures to watch as the

cardinals entered the Sistine Chapel. Once a new pope is elected, the world will hear the ringing of bells and a verbal proclamation by a senior cardinal, who will appear on the balcony of St. Peter’s Basilica to declare “*Habemus papam*,” which translated means “We have a pope!” The new pontiff will take a papal name and be introduced to the world. After the announcement, St. Michael School will celebrate the election of the new pope with several activities. †



Students at St. Michael School in Greenfield sit in the hallways where they posted the results of their in-depth study analyzing the cardinals taking part in the papal conclave. (Submitted photo)

Vocations dinner

Priests, permanent deacons, seminarians and religious pose on April 7 at St. Thomas More Parish in Mooresville during an annual dinner the Indianapolis West Deanery faith community and the parish's Knights of Columbus Council #7431 host to honor and show gratitude for religious, clergy and those in formation for ordained ministry. (Submitted photo)



Wisconsin Marian shrines help faithful mark their Jubilee journey

(OSV News)—When you travel overseas, you take your passport along. It identifies who you are, while its many and varied stamps serve as a history of where you’ve been. Passports also lead us to look forward to where we are going.

That is also the idea behind a Pilgrim Passport for the Jubilee Year of 2025, developed by three Marian shrines in Wisconsin. Each is a designated pilgrimage site for the Jubilee Year:

—The Basilica and National Shrine of Mary Help of Christians in Hubertus, near Milwaukee. It is locally known as “Holy Hill.”

—The National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion, near Green Bay.

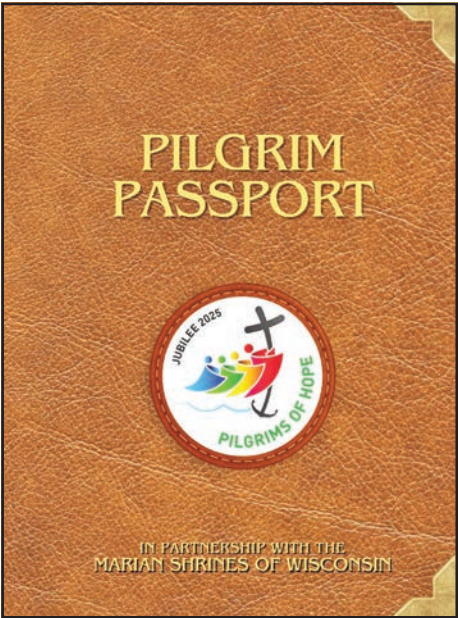
—The Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in La Crosse.

“Pilgrimage is, of course, a fundamental element of every Jubilee event,” the late Pope Francis wrote in announcing the Jubilee. “Setting out on a journey is traditionally associated with our human quest for meaning in life.”

Reflecting on this meaning brought the Pilgrim Passport idea to the staff at Champion.

“It was in response to ‘How can we make this a fun year for pilgrims who are traveling this Jubilee Year?’ ” explained Chelsey Hare, communications director at Champion. “Not everyone can make it to Rome. And so [we thought], there are these beautiful shrines in Wisconsin dedicated to Our Lady. And we’ve had such a beautiful response already [to the passports].”

Hare, who designed the passports, said that they reflect Pope Francis’ naming Mary as “Our Mother of Hope” in his 2024 bull of indiction announcing the Jubilee Year, “*Spes non confundit*” (“Hope does not disappoint”).



Three Marian shrines in Wisconsin—each a designated pilgrimage site for the Jubilee Year 2025—have developed a Pilgrim Passport as “a tangible way for the faithful to mark their journey and embrace the grace of this Holy Year.” (OSV News photo/Chelsey Hare, courtesy National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion)

“The Jubilee Year is a profound invitation for Catholics to deepen their faith through pilgrimage,” said Discalced Carmelite Father Mark-Joseph DeVelis, rector at The Basilica and National Shrine of Mary Help of Christians. “By uniting our shrines through the Pilgrim Passport, we are offering a tangible way for the faithful to mark their journey and embrace the grace of this Holy Year.”

Each shrine has free passports and pilgrims may get theirs stamped at each shrine’s gift shop. Each stamp bears the unique logo of its shrine for pilgrims to collect as they travel. The passports also include information and highlights about each shrine, as well as devotions and explanations about the Holy Year’s plenary indulgence. While the passports are currently in English, a Spanish version will be available soon.

The hope, Hare said, is to get the passports to people as they travel during the prime pilgrimage season—mid-April through October. Pope Francis, in his letter, had called upon Catholics to become “pilgrims of hope.”

In that vein, Father Anthony Stephens, a Father of Mercy, who is rector of The National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion, noted that, “We are delighted to partner in this meaningful endeavor to bring more pilgrims to Jesus through Our Lady.”

Pilgrims always travel in hope. This is as true today as it was for the Catholics who settled the area that became Wisconsin. The earliest came from Canada, arriving as 17th-century fur traders. They and their families spread the Catholic faith to the Indigenous people around Green Bay and the Fox River. Next came Europeans, such as the Irish and Germans who came in the 1840s through the 1890s.

The first diocese in Wisconsin was established in Milwaukee in 1843 under Bishop (later Archbishop) John Henni, himself an immigrant from Switzerland. Even today, Milwaukee has the largest population of German Americans in the United States.

Wisconsin also attracted Catholics from Poland and other East European countries, as well as Belgian and Dutch Catholics. In later days, the state became



The Eucharist is exposed for veneration at the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in La Crosse, Wis., on June 8, 2024, during the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage. The shrine, which was one of the stops on the pilgrimage’s Marian Route, is one of three Marian shrines in Wisconsin that have developed a Pilgrim Passport for the Jubilee Year 2025. Each shrine is a designated pilgrimage site for the Jubilee. (OSV News photo/courtesy Diocese of La Crosse)

home for Hispanic and Southeast Asian immigrants.

The faith of all led to the founding of churches and shrines, including the three Pilgrim Passport shrines:

—Holy Hill: The National Shrine of Mary Help of Christians traces its roots to the Irish immigrant farmers who first called it “Holy Hill” or “St. Mary’s Hill” in the mid-1800s. In the early 1860s, Francois Soubrio arrived from his native Quebec to live as the “Hermit of Holy Hill.” The first shrine church was dedicated in 1863. The present one was consecrated in 1931. Carmelites minister at the shrine.

—Our Lady of Champion: The National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion arose after a Belgian immigrant—Adele Brise—experienced three visions of the Queen of Heaven in October of 1859. The first chapel was built by her father, Lambert. The present chapel was built in 1940. In December 2010, Adele’s visions were designated as “worthy of belief,” and the site was named a national shrine in 2016. Fathers of Mercy minister at the shrine.

—Our Lady of Guadalupe in La Crosse: This shrine was begun by Cardinal Raymond L. Burke while bishop of La Crosse. Construction of the church began on May 13, 2004, with its dedication on July 31, 2008. The shrine, set on 100 acres, includes a Memorial to the Unborn. The Italianate-style church has a 100-foot dome.

As pilgrims travel to each of these shrines, their use of the Pilgrim Passports will be an aid in reflection during this Year of Hope.

“The Pilgrim Passport is more than a keepsake,” said Father Edward Nemeth,



Worshippers gather outside the Basilica and National Shrine of Mary Help of Christians in Hubertus, Wis., near Milwaukee, following Mass in this 2006 file photo. Locally known as “Holy Hill,” the shrine is one of three Marian shrines in Wisconsin that have developed a Pilgrim Passport for the Jubilee Year 2025. (OSV News photo/Allen Fredrickson, Catholic Herald)

a St. Louis archdiocesan priest, who is executive director of Our Lady of Guadalupe Shrine in La Crosse. “It is an invitation to prayer, reflection and spiritual renewal through the lens of Mary as our Mother of Hope.

“We pray that all who embark on this pilgrimage can draw inspiration from her unwavering hope and maternal guidance, knowing it will always lead us closer to the heart of her son, Jesus.” †

SIMPLY CATHOLIC

Ten popes have led the Church through the modern age

(OSV News)—The following is a snapshot of the papacies of the 10 popes that preceded Pope Francis, from Pope Leo XIII to Pope Benedict XVI.

They could be described as the popes who have led the Church thus far through the modern age. The years after their names in the following article are the years in which they served as pontiff.

Pope Leo XIII: Father of social doctrine (1878-1903)

Pope Leo XIII laid the foundation for modern Catholic social teaching with his landmark 1891 encyclical “*Rerum Novarum*,” addressing the rights and dignity of workers in the face of industrialization. Defending private property while affirming workers’ rights to fair wages, unions and humane conditions, Pope Leo positioned the Church as a moral voice in economic matters.

Born Gioacchino Pecci in 1810, Pope Leo had a long ecclesiastical career before becoming pope. Though elected as a transitional pope due to his age and health, he served for 25 years, the fourth-longest papacy in history. He encouraged a revival of Thomistic philosophy and warned against excessive nationalism and secularism, especially in his apostolic letter “*Testem Benevolentiae*,” which addressed concerns about “Americanism.”

While conservative in piety, Pope Leo’s leadership marked a shift toward engaging modern society with reasoned faith. His teaching legacy, especially “*Rerum Novarum*,” continues to shape Catholic social thought today.

Pope St. Pius X: Fighting a changing culture (1903-1914)

Pope St. Pius X is best remembered for his pastoral heart and resolute defense of the Church against rising secularism and modernist theology.

His motto, “*Instaurare omnia in Christo*” (“To restore all things in Christ”), guided a pontificate marked by courage and reform. He battled France’s aggressive secularism, resisting laws that stripped the Church of property and influence, while also taking a firm stand against modernist theology, which he condemned in the encyclical “*Pascendi Dominici Gregis*” and the decree “*Lamentabili Sane Exitu*.”

Though criticized for his harshness, his efforts were aimed at preserving orthodoxy in a rapidly changing world. Beyond controversy, Pope Pius X promoted catechesis, restored sacred music, encouraged frequent Communion and lowered the age for first Communion to the age of reason. He died shortly after World War I began and was canonized in 1954. His legacy is one of spiritual renewal and steadfast fidelity.

Pope Benedict XV: Forgotten pope of peace (1914-1922)

Pope Benedict XV, elected as World War I erupted, is often overlooked but was a compassionate and prescient leader during one of history’s darkest chapters.

A seasoned diplomat, he remained neutral during the war, calling it a “useless massacre” and urging peace through proposals emphasizing reconciliation over punishment.

Though ignored by world powers, his appeals laid the moral groundwork for future diplomacy. Pope Benedict’s humanitarian efforts included help for prisoners of war, wounded soldiers and civilians, straining Vatican resources.

He also reformed Church law by promulgating the first *Code of Canon Law* and issued the encyclical “*Maximum Illud*,” calling for indigenous clergy in missionary work.

His 1919 meeting with U.S. President Woodrow Wilson highlighted his commitment to peace, even as the Treaty of Versailles’ punitive actions against Germany ignored his warnings. Pope Benedict died in 1922, largely forgotten until Pope Benedict XVI hailed him as a “courageous and authentic prophet of peace.” His legacy endures as a voice of compassion amid global conflict.

Pope Pius XI: Stalwart witness to true order (1922-1939)

Pope Pius XI led the Church through turbulent years marked by the global Great Depression, rising totalitarian

regimes and fierce anti-Catholic persecution. Born Ambrogio Ratti in 1857 near Milan, he was a scholar and Vatican diplomat before becoming pope.

A strong, no-nonsense leader, he promoted the Catholic Action movement, defended marriage and education, and issued key encyclicals: “*Casti Connubii*” on family life, “*Quadragesimo Anno*” on social justice, and “*Mit Brennender Sorge*” condemning Nazi doctrines and Catholic persecution.

He also protested fascist repression in Italy and communism’s dehumanizing effects. Pope Pius XI helped resolve the Church’s relationship with the Italian state with the Lateran Treaty, making Vatican City a sovereign state. He established the feast of Christ the King, emphasizing Christ’s universal kingship, and canonized saints such as St. Thérèse of Lisieux and St. Thomas More.

As war loomed, he used diplomacy, moral authority and media to confront evil. He died in 1939 after years of resisting regimes addicted to violence and oppression.

Pope Pius XII: An age in arms (1939-1958)

Pope Pius XII, born Eugenio Pacelli in 1876, was elected pope on the eve of World War II. A skilled diplomat with deep experience in Vatican foreign affairs, he had helped shape Church policy in response to Nazism and communism.

Though maintaining wartime neutrality, Pope Pius XII condemned totalitarian ideologies, aided Jews and refugees and acted as a diplomatic channel between the Allies and anti-Hitler Germans. After the war, he resisted communist expansion in Eastern Europe and intervened in Italian elections to prevent a communist victory.

Doctrinally, he advanced biblical scholarship and liturgical reform, and in 1950 infallibly defined the dogma of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. His critics question whether he spoke out forcefully enough against the Holocaust, though many contemporaries—including Jewish leaders—praised his efforts to save lives. Despite controversy, Pope Pius XII is recognized for his moral leadership during a time of global crisis. He was declared “venerable” by Pope Benedict XVI in 2009.

Pope St. John XXIII: Joyful prophet of renewal (1958-1963)

Pope John XXIII, born Angelo Roncalli in 1881, was elected pope at age 77 and was widely expected to be a transitional figure. Instead, his humility, warmth and vision reshaped the Church through the Second Vatican Council, which he convened in 1962 to engage the modern world with renewed faith and clarity.

A peasant’s son and experienced diplomat, Roncalli had served in war zones and helped Jews during World War II. As pope, he broke with formality, welcomed diverse voices and promoted unity and peace. His

landmark encyclicals “*Mater et Magistra*” and “*Pacem in Terris*” advanced Catholic social teaching, emphasizing workers’ rights, human dignity and global cooperation.

During the Cuban Missile Crisis, he played a quiet but crucial mediating role. He died of cancer in 1963, having set the Church on a bold path of “*aggiornamento*” (updating) and “*ressourcement*” (return to sources). Canonized in 2014, he is remembered as a joyful, pastoral pope with a heart for justice and reform.

Pope St. Paul VI: Prophet for the modern world (1963–1978)

St. Pope Paul VI, born Giovanni Battista Montini in 1897, was a complex and dutiful leader whose papacy helped shape the modern Church amid turbulent times. A former Vatican diplomat and close aide to Pope Pius XII, Pope Paul VI brought deep institutional knowledge and pastoral experience to the role.

He guided the Second Vatican Council to its conclusion, championed global outreach through historic papal travels and sought unity with the Orthodox Churches. His 1968 encyclical “*Humanae Vitae*,” reaffirming the Church’s stance against artificial birth control, sparked widespread dissent.



Despite suffering from comparisons with his charismatic predecessor, Pope St. John XXIII, Pope Paul VI remained faithful to his mission, often torn between progressive and conservative impulses. He decried the spiritual confusion of the era, famously warning of the “smoke of Satan” entering the Church. Beatified in 2014 and canonized in 2018, his legacy is now viewed as prophetic, pastoral and foundational to the post-conciliar Church.

Blessed Pope John Paul I: The September pope (Aug. 26-Sept. 28, 1978)

Cardinal Albino Luciani took the name John Paul I to honor his two predecessors. Known for his humility, simplicity and radiant smile, he was seen as a pastoral figure who could lift the Church’s spirits after Pope St. Paul VI’s difficult final years.

Born in northern Italy in 1912, Luciani served as bishop of Vittorio Veneto, participated in Vatican II and became patriarch of Venice. A strong advocate for catechesis and social justice, he supported “*Humanae Vitae*” while emphasizing patience and compassion.

Though his papacy lasted only 33 days before his sudden death, he had outlined a six-point vision centered on renewal, unity and peace. His unassuming style and rejection of papal pomp won admiration, though confusion around his death fueled conspiracy theories. Despite his short tenure, Pope John Paul I left a legacy of gentleness and humility. His cause for sainthood was opened in 1990. He was beatified in 2002.

Pope St. John Paul II: Witness to the world (1978-2005)

Pope St. John Paul II, whose papacy was the third-longest in history, was a towering figure of faith, intellect and global influence. A charismatic philosopher, athlete, poet and determined opponent of communism, the Polish-born Karol Wojtyla brought vigor and vision to a world and Church in need of hope.

He championed orthodoxy, human dignity and moral truth, famously urging Catholics to “be not afraid.” His 104 international trips, his pivotal role in the fall of Soviet communism, efforts to strengthen Catholic-Jewish relations and the creation of World Youth Day marked his historic pontificate.

His stances on sexuality, women’s ordination and centralized authority received both celebration and criticism, yet his leadership reshaped the modern Church. He authored landmark encyclicals, advanced ecumenical dialogue and oversaw the publication of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

After recovering from an assassination attempt in 1981, he resumed his strenuous schedule. Starting in the early 1990s, though, he suffered visibly from Parkinson’s disease. He died on April 2, 2005. Canonized in 2014, he remains a defining figure of the post-Vatican II era.

Pope Benedict XVI: Brilliant humility (2005-2013)

Pope Benedict XVI, who died on Dec. 31, 2022, at 95, was far more than the pope who resigned, although he was the first to do so in nearly 600 years. A towering figure in the Church for more than half a century, Joseph Ratzinger shaped Catholic thought as an innovative theologian, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and ultimately as pope. A key architect of the Church’s post-Vatican II path, he championed continuity over rupture, resisting secular trends like relativism.

Ordained a priest in 1951, he rose to prominence during Vatican II and later helped draft the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Elected pope in 2005, Benedict emphasized the harmony of faith and reason and sought reform rooted in tradition.

Though criticized over the Church’s handling of clergy abuse scandals, he was among the first Vatican officials to take decisive action. After resigning in 2013, he lived in quiet prayer until his death. †



Joyful Witness/
Kimberly Pohovey

Like Jesus, Pope Francis embraced a mission of compassion and love

I’m not a fan of the word “woke” because I don’t think most people understand its definition. The term refers to when one is “awakened” to facts or issues they previously did not know or understand.



In my mind, that is a good thing, right? To be more aware? But in today’s culture, the word has become a political weapon used by many to denounce liberal thought. People use “woke” and “liberal” interchangeably, but they are not necessarily synonymous.

You can be woke and not be liberal. You can also claim to be liberal but

not woke.

In the days surrounding Pope Francis’ funeral, I read an article that called him the first “woke” pope. It also labeled him a radical.

At the end of the day, I don’t think the labels matter. Pope Francis’ enduring legacy will not be that he was woke, liberal or conservative, as some have also labeled him. It will be that he was kind. He provided a witness of kindness, love and mercy to the world. And

he begged us to do the same. Ultimately, his mission was one of compassion. For the life of me, I’ll never understand how people can feel threatened by kindness and compassion.

There are groups of Catholics who rejected the pope. For some conservatives, he went too far. For some liberals, he didn’t go far enough.

Pope Francis just strove to follow the path of another leader of the Church who had an enormous impact on all of humanity.

His name was Jesus, and he would definitely have qualified as woke. He treated others with dignity and equality, mercy and respect. He associated with Samaritans, lepers and women. He preached revolutionary ideas like “the last shall be first and the first shall be last.” He didn’t seek to preserve the status quo. He came to transform it. Jesus challenged oppressive structures and invited a new way of living rooted in love, equity and mercy.

I think you can draw a straight line from Jesus’ behavior to the same of Pope Francis. The late pope simply modeled Jesus and the ways of the early Church. He preached the values of the Gospel and ushered in

a new direction for the Church centered on pastoral accompaniment.

He greeted people with humility and modeled a Church that listens and reaches outward. He stressed economic justice, care for the environment and cajoled us to serve those on the margins—the poor, the imprisoned, the immigrant.

The Church does not exist to be conservative or liberal. It exists to bear witness to the kingdom of God. But if the Gospel instructs us to protect the vulnerable, eradicate injustice and live with radical openness to others, then perhaps we should not be afraid of the word “liberal” when it describes a Christ-like way of engaging the world.

Both Jesus and Pope Francis invite us to a wider mercy, a deeper bond and a more courageous faith. In this light, a liberal stance is not a threat to the Church—it’s a living expression of the Gospel.

Well done, good and faithful servant.

(Kimberly Pohovey is a member of Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ Parish in Indianapolis. She is the director of major and planned gifts for the archdiocese.) †

Our Works of Charity/
David Bethuram

Catholic Charities helped young mother break the cycle of poverty

At Catholic Charities, our mission is to break the cycle of poverty through comprehensive, person-centered programming. Poverty isn’t solved by addressing a single crisis—it takes a holistic approach that meets individuals and families where they are, supporting them through every step toward stability and hope.



As of 2025, the federal poverty level (FPL) in Indiana is set at \$15,650 per year for an individual and \$32,150 annually for a family of four. These thresholds are used to determine eligibility for various forms of public assistance and reflect the minimum income needed to cover essential living expenses.

According to data from the United Way of Indiana, approximately 13% of households in the state earn income below the FPL, placing them

in poverty. Beyond that, an additional 27% of households fall into a category often referred to as ALICE—asset limited, income constrained, employed. These are working households that earn above the poverty line, but still struggle to afford basic necessities such as housing, child care, food, transportation and health care within the communities they live.

Combined, these figures indicate that 40% of Indiana households face financial hardship, underscoring a widespread challenge in meeting the cost of living despite employment.

Let me introduce to you an incredible woman named Amanda—someone who has lived through poverty and now works every day to rise above it.

Amanda grew up surrounded by hardship. She remembers the smell of mold and mildew clinging to her clothes and belongings, watching as her most cherished items were ruined by the dampness.

She remembers living in houses with no heat or hot water, her stepfather wrapping duct tape around broken heater cords in a desperate attempt to keep them warm. It

was a fire hazard—but in those moments—warmth mattered more than safety. Still, they were cold.

Her childhood homes rarely had a working kitchen. Her mother cooked meals at her grandparents’ house and brought them back to wherever they were staying. Running water was often unavailable, and unsanitary conditions were the norm. She and her siblings would bathe at their grandparents’ house because there was no other option. Amanda says, “When you grow up like this, you think it’s normal. And then the cycle continues.”

Food was scarce. They didn’t starve, but hunger was constant.

Today, Amanda describes herself as “somewhat of a food hoarder,” always afraid she won’t have enough to feed her daughter. Though her circumstances have changed, the fear remains.

“I’m in my 30’s now, and I’m still haunted by the trauma and food insecurity,” she says. “The scars run long and deep.”

But Amanda didn’t let her past define her future. As a teen and young adult, she found support through Catholic Charities. She wasn’t shaped by the expectation that poverty would always be her reality. Instead, Catholic Charities helped her see that while she couldn’t rewrite her past, she could shape a new future.

Today, Amanda is far from the mold, the cold and the hunger of her childhood. While the trauma hasn’t disappeared, it no longer defines her. It fuels her. She’s a devoted mother, working hard to ensure her daughter has more opportunities than she did.

“Catholic Charities helped me take what I saw and experienced as a child,” she says, “and use it to become a better person—for myself, my family, and for others who are living through the trauma of poverty.”

Amanda’s journey is a powerful reminder that healing is possible, and that with the right support, cycles can be broken—one life, one family at a time.

(David Bethuram is executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Catholic Charities. You can contact him at dbethuram@archindy.org.) †

But Amanda didn’t let her past define her future. As a teen and young adult, she found support through Catholic Charities.

Media Mindfulness/
Sr. Hosea Rupprecht, F.S.P.

Carlo Acutis’ digital authenticity and how it should continue to inspire us

For someone for whom the idea of a celebrity culture putting people on an undeserved pedestal was distasteful, it’s a bit ironic that he’s been put on a pedestal himself.



In the case of soon-to-be-St. Carlo Acutis, however, the pedestal is well deserved.

Due to the death of Pope Francis on April 21, Carlo’s canonization—originally scheduled for April 27—has been delayed, and no date has yet been announced. Even so, Blessed Carlo continues to be “God’s influencer” for so many young Catholics throughout the world.

Carlo, in some respects, was a normal teenager like many of his contemporaries. In other ways, he might seem a bit strange to the contemporary world. In her book, *My Son Carlo*, Antonia Salzano, Carlo’s mother, remarks, “When I compare him to myself as a child and to my childhood friends, he seems like an alien, a boy from another planet!”

Why is it, then, that so many have been inspired by this “alien” kid who died at age 15 in 2006? Because, although he lived in the world, he was not of the world. He exercised digital authenticity and knew how to use the technology of the world to bring people closer to the most important person in the world: Jesus Christ.

Many parents and teachers today bemoan how much time kids spend on electronic devices. Glued to their screens, the young seem to be so connected, but they are also among the loneliest. A new documentary film about Carlo, *Carlo Acutis: Roadmap to Reality*, says that Carlo had the antidote to the isolation that many young people feel.

How so? Carlo knew the difference between digital/virtual connection and real connection. He knew that no electronic technology, as good as it can be, can take the place of in-person interaction, first with Christ in the Eucharist, and then with other people.

Having had a love of the Eucharist from an early age, Carlo and his family once visited the Italian town of Lanciano, where a eucharistic miracle had taken place in the eighth century. When he later told his classmates about the miracle, he noticed how they hung on every word of his story. This made him realize that if more people knew of the eucharistic miracles, they would be drawn to Jesus.

Thus began the work that Carlo is most famous for: his website chronicling the stories of eucharistic miracles from all over the world. People found it amazing that, at age 9, Carlo started reading university-level computer coding books, teaching himself coding. Then, he set off on the adventure of building his website, not to become an influencer, but to draw people closer to Christ in the Eucharist.

For young people today, Carlo is an example of digital authenticity, being who one truly is, even when interacting through digital technology. He knew the way a person can be drawn into media and be consumed by it, and he refused to let technology overtake him.

Digital authenticity isn’t only for the young. It’s for all of us who have, at one time or another, realized that we can tend to spend too much time with our devices to the detriment of our relationships. Here are some things Carlo practiced that can also help us to live authenticity even in our digital lives.

—Discipline and balance. We all need balance in

our lives. If our digital lives are out of balance, then our spiritual life will be out of balance as well. An avid gamer, Carlo once read that many kids, especially in the United States, had health problems because of excessive gaming. Therefore, he put limits on himself and his friends when they gamed with him: one hour per week!

—Responsibility. Take responsibility for the way you use your devices. If you have rules for your children, model those rules yourself. Carlo used technology responsibly, hoping to draw others closer to Christ through his website.

—Silence and listening. Periods of silence are so important for our mental and spiritual health. It’s difficult to find silence in a world with so much noise. Carlo knew how to find the silence he needed, making it a point to go to Mass and spend time—even if it was just a few minutes on the way to school—in eucharistic adoration.

By knowing and practicing digital authenticity, Carlo was able to make real connections with those around him, connections that deepened into relationships without the aid of technology.

He was present to the homeless poor he encountered as he went from place to place in his hometown of Milan, stopping to talk to them and bringing them blankets and sleeping bags. He was present to his friends, family and classmates. Most significantly, he was present to God.

May Carlo Acutis be an inspiration for us to make the same connections and practice digital authenticity in our own lives.

(Sister Hosea Rupprecht, a Daughter of St. Paul, is the associate director of the Pauline Center for Media Studies.) †

Fourth Sunday of Easter/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, May 11, 2025

- Acts of the Apostles 13:14, 43-52
- Revelation 7:9, 14b-17
- John 10:27-30

The Acts of the Apostles supplies the first reading for Mass this weekend. It gives a glimpse into the *modus vivendi* of



St. Paul as he moved across Asia Minor in his proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus. Paul first went to synagogues. It is not surprising. After all, he was of Jewish descent and background, and he was well educated

in the Jewish culture and religion of the time. He would have been comfortable among Jews, but also more likely to be heard when he spoke to them.

Even so, he obviously was not always met by universal acceptance. At the same time, he did attract some converts from among the Jews whom he met. He drew many of them into the ranks of Christians, and he attracted Gentiles as well.

These details are secondary to the story. The point of this reading is that the word of God, pronounced by Jesus, continued to be spoken and received long after the ascension. It was proclaimed by an Apostle, whom Jesus personally had called, and by Barnabas, a disciple of this Apostle.

So, salvation continued. Jesus still spoke through the Apostles..

The Book of Revelation furnishes the next reading. It is very symbolic in its language, but its meaning is clear. Among those saved by Jesus are people from every nation. Their number is great. They are baptized, wearing the white robes of baptism. Their sins have been washed away, precisely by the sacrificial blood shed by the Lord on Calvary.

They carry the palm branches of martyrs, as they have kept their faith despite persecution.

Interestingly, this passage says that these followers of Christ will be shepherded, not by a shepherd, but by the Lamb. He rescues them from the heat of the day and the dryness of earthly life.

St. John's Gospel provides the last reading. This Gospel reading presents

Jesus as the Good Shepherd. For an audience overwhelmingly agrarian, as was the audience to which Jesus preached, imagery built on shepherding, sheep and shepherds was familiar and instantly understood.

This reading states that the sheep know the shepherd. In turn, the shepherd knows them. It implies a relationship of closeness, total devotion and of trust. This shepherd gives eternal life. Following the shepherd, the sheep will never perish.

No one can snatch them away from the shepherd. The shepherd will protect them from all predators because the sheep belong to him. It is the will of the Father.

In a great testament of self-identity, Jesus proclaims oneness with the Father.

Reflection

This weekend, the Church calls us to celebrate the Resurrection once again. It begins the fourth week of proclaiming the exciting news that it first pronounced at Easter. He lives!

With the readings this weekend, and with those of the preceding weeks of Easter, the Church essentially makes two points.

The first point is that Jesus lives, literally, and the sublime act of the resurrection gives us evidence that Jesus is God, the Son of God, the eternal Father. As risen, Jesus is totally unique among humans. As God, Jesus is the bearer of life, truth, peace and joy. There is no substitute for the Lord.

The second point, made this weekend and in past weeks, is that the word of Jesus and the salvation given by him continue. They did not cease with the Lord's ascension. Jesus lived in the preaching and the good works of the Apostles and lives in their followers and successors.

As an example, through Paul and then through Barnabas, Jesus touched people needing hope and salvation, needing to know God.

By emphasizing these points, the Church presents us with its basic belief, that Jesus is God. In Jesus is truth and life. Jesus is with us still. †

Daily Readings

Monday, May 12
St. Nereus, martyr
St. Achilleus, martyr
St. Pancras, martyr
Acts 11:1-18
Psalms 42:2-3; 43:3-4
John 10:1-10

Tuesday, May 13
Our Lady of Fatima
Acts 11:19-26
Psalm 87:1b-7
John 10:22-30

Wednesday, May 14
St. Matthias, Apostle
Acts 1:15-17, 20-26
Psalm 113:1-8
John 15:9-17

Thursday, May 15
St. Isidore the Farmer
Acts 13:13-25
Psalm 89:2-3, 21-22, 25, 27
John 13:16-20

Friday, May 16
Acts 13:26-33
Psalm 2:6-11
John 14:1-6

Saturday, May 17
Acts 13:44-52
Psalm 98:1-4
John 14:7-14

Sunday, May 18
Fifth Sunday of Easter
Acts 14:21-27
Psalm 145:8-13
Revelation 21:1-5a
John 13:31-33a, 34-35

Question Corner/Jenna Marie Cooper

Catholics are obliged to confess mortal sins, receive Communion annually

What exactly are my Easter duties? My grandparents sometimes talk about "the Easter duty." But I'm not sure if this was just a pre-Vatican II thing, or something I still need to worry about. (United Kingdom)



In broad terms, "the Easter duty" usually refers to a fully initiated Catholic's obligation

to make a good sacramental confession and receive holy Communion every year around the time of Easter.

Before the Second Vatican Council, this duty seems to have held a great deal of cultural weight within the Church, and I have even heard stories about parish priests in the past issuing special cards or certificates so that Catholics could prove they had fulfilled their duty (despite this possibly being somewhat in conflict with the discretion required to protect the seal of the confessional!).

Today, the Church's law does not mandate an "Easter duty" as such. However, for the most part, the core obligations—namely, going to confession and receiving holy Communion at least once per year—are recognized in other places in the law.

In particular, Canon 920, 1 of the *Code of Canon Law* states: "Once admitted to the blessed Eucharist, each of the faithful is obliged to receive holy Communion at least once a year." This means that Catholics, after they have received their first holy Communion, are required to do so at least annually.

But of course, it should go without saying that annual reception of holy Communion is legislated as the bare minimum, and not as a blueprint for actively growing

in holiness. The code calls the Eucharist "the summit and the source of all worship and Christian life" (#897), and canon law encourages the faithful to receive holy Communion far more often, even "frequently" (#898).

Section 2 of Canon 920 goes on to specify: "This precept must be fulfilled during paschal time, unless for a good reason it is fulfilled at another time during the year."

Here we see some remnant of the concept of the "Easter duty," that the required annual reception of holy Communion should happen during the Easter season, which lasts 50 days from Easter Sunday until Pentecost.

Yet this seasonal timing is not an absolute requirement, as the faithful might fulfill this obligation at another time of the year if there is a "good reason" for doing so. The code does not spell out what a canonically "good reason" for this is, and so, like many things in the Church's law, is left to our good faith and common sense.

But a practical example of a good reason for receiving holy Communion outside of the Easter season might include something like residence in a remote area where the sacraments were not regularly available or some sort of serious health concern.

With respect to receiving the sacrament of penance, Canon 989 tells us that: "All the faithful who have reached the age of discretion are bound faithfully to confess their grave sins at least once a year." That is, all Catholics who have come to the stage in their psychological development where they can rationally make choices for themselves (a stage which is presumed in canon law to occur in normal circumstances at age 7) are obligated to confess any grave or mortal sins at least annually.

This canon does not tie confession specifically or explicitly to the paschal season. Although, since Catholics cannot receive holy Communion—either during the Easter season or at any other time if they are conscious of unconfessed grave sins—we might see a connection to the "Easter duty" insofar as this annual required confession would prepare a Catholic to receive Communion at Easter.

Note that, strictly speaking, canon 989 does not oblige Catholics to confess less serious or venial sins. Though, once again, this is meant as the bare minimum, and ideally, we would confess all of our sins much more often.

(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

I SPEAK

By Janine Schorsch

For the person who irritates you ...
"Do not judge, that power belongs to Me alone."

For someone who hurts you deeply ...
"Forgive them, forgive seventy times seven."

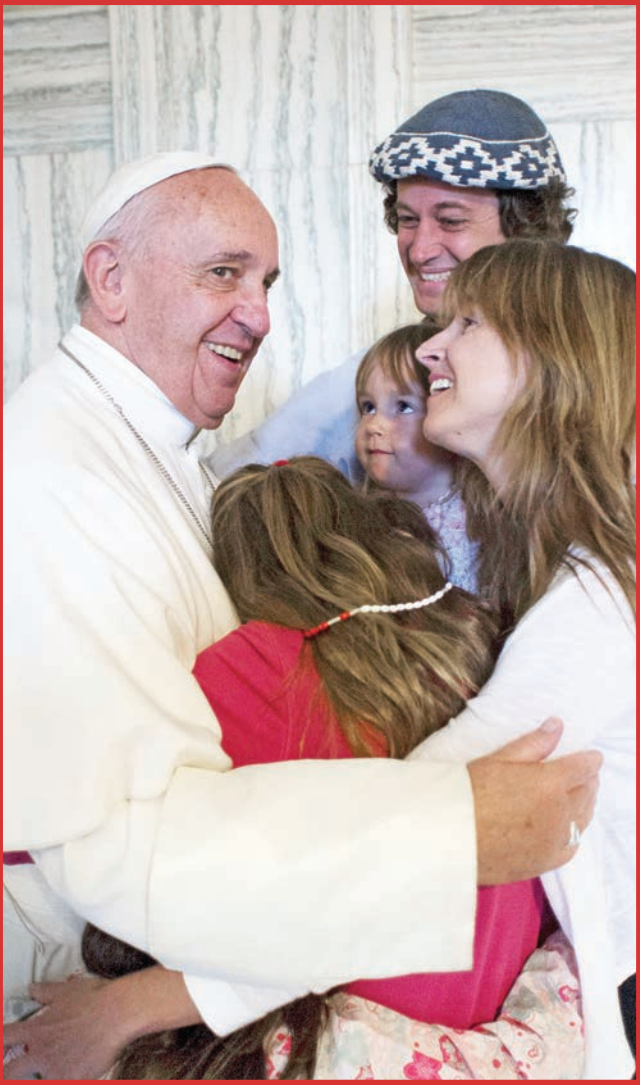
For the atrocities of this world ...
Pray for those who commit them. "Love your enemies."

For the beauty of this world ...
Rejoice! "I have created all things on heaven and on the Earth."

For those who are present in your life ...
Embrace them with all your heart. "Love others as I have loved you."

Listen to My voice.

(Janine Schorsch is a member of St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross Parish in Bright. Photo: Pope Francis embraces the Walker family of Buenos Aires, Argentina, on Sept. 27, 2015, in Philadelphia during the World Meeting of Families.) (CNS photo/L'Osservatore Romano via Reuters)



CHARITIES

continued from page 7

matches. And the continued fertility treatments had not been successful.

“Oliver had just turned 1, and we started to think he was going to be our only child,” said Cory.

Then, in the spring of 2023, he received a call from Stephanie.

“She explained there was a match—and that’s all I can remember,” he said.

The couple met the birth parents in May.

“We loved them, and we loved this baby,” said Alyssa—despite the couple’s decision to not get their hopes up this time.

On July 3, Atticus Cochran “was placed in our arms forever,” said Cory.

Nearly two years later, the birth parents “continue to be an important part of our lives,” he added.

By “our lives,” Cory was including Hazel May, the daughter the couple learned Alyssa was carrying just six weeks after Atticus was born.

“Watching our three children together, we will stop and stare, remembering when we believed this would never happen, remembering when it all felt impossible,” said Alyssa.

“Remembering that St. Elizabeth’s was with us every step of the way and never stopped believing in what our story could look like if we just kept going.

“Our entire family is here tonight, and they’re better because of Atticus.”

Chairs slid back, and the crowd offered a third standing ovation.

‘Opportunities for hope of a better tomorrow’

During the event, Casper announced that SECC once again “successfully passed our re-accreditation audit that certifies we are following best practices and meeting all of the standards of a quality social service agency.”

He noted that re-accreditation “is not only a box we have to check, but we see it as an opportunity to drive continuous improvement, to improve our quality, efficiency and client satisfaction.”

Funds raised by the gala will help accomplish those goals. Through an advance online auction, live—and lively—bidding at the gala and donations made that evening, the event raised nearly \$419,350.

“We remain very proud that 92.1 cents of every dollar from our donors goes directly to services for those in need,” Casper told the crowd.

But, he added, “Non-profit does not mean that we can lose money. Costs of providing services are growing. Costs are rising for utilities, operating supplies, maintenance materials and employee costs.”

In response, said Casper, the agency “successfully worked last year on cost reduction initiatives. Our staff and

[advisory] council looked under every rock to save money that will allow us to provide more services.”

Then there is the matter of a decrease in federal funding.

“No matter which side of the political divide you stand on, we all have to acknowledge there is and will be more people in need of help—and certainly less government funds to provide this help,” said Casper.

“Yet I can tell you now, St. Elizabeth will not walk away from this challenge, and we will figure it out with our supporters’ help how we do more with less to meet these growing needs.

“As I often say, St. Elizabeth has always [offered], and continues today to

offer, opportunities for hope of a better tomorrow.”

(To learn more about the programs offered by St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities or to donate, go to stcharities.org.) †



Mark Casper, agency director of St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities in New Albany, left, and Archbishop Charles C. Thompson pose with Phil Kreur, second from left, and Karen Schueler, this year’s recipients of the agency’s Spirit of Hope Award, during the Giving Hope-Saving Lives gala in Louisville on April 10. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)

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





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ARCHDIOCESE OF INDIANAPOLIS
The Church in Central and Southern Indiana

Love Heals What the Eyes Can't See

How Catholic Charities brings hope, healing, and Christ's love to those facing mental health challenges

May is Mental Health Awareness Month—a time when we're called to recognize the invisible burdens many carry and to respond with visible love. Every day, **Catholic Charities** walks alongside children, adults, and families facing the silent weight of anxiety, depression, trauma, and emotional distress.

Through the generosity of donors like you to the **United Catholic Appeal**, we are able to meet people where they are—offering not only professional, affordable counseling services, but something even more profound: a ministry of presence, of care, and of hope.

"I felt seen. I felt heard. I felt like someone finally understood me - and believed I could heal." - A client served through Catholic Charities

Thanks to your support, we provide:

- **Sliding-scale counseling**, so no one is turned away for inability to pay
- **Play therapy for children**, offering a safe space for young hearts to process what words can't express
- **EMDR and trauma-informed care**, helping those who have endured deep emotional wounds find peace and renewal

Mental health struggles can be invisible, but your compassion makes them impossible to ignore. Every counseling session, every comforting presence, every breakthrough begins with a simple act of generosity.

This is our call—to love our neighbors, to bind up the brokenhearted, and to accompany one another toward healing.

We're \$5.6 million toward our \$6.3 million goal for this year's United Catholic Appeal, and there's still time to give. **Your gift directly supports mental health programs and so much more.**

Together, we can offer more than therapy—we can offer Christ's love.

Scan the QR code to make your gift today and be part of the healing.

www.archindy.org/UCA

