

The

Criterion

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Be thankful every day

Moms share important questions, advice for women expecting first child, page 7.

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Father Michael Keucher, left, and Father Adam Ahern pose on Feb. 10 at the Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center in Indianapolis with equipment they use in producing the first season of their podcast "Priest Cast," which they posted on a daily basis from Holy Thursday last year through Holy Thursday earlier this month. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

Archdiocesan Catholics give voice to their faith through a growing number of podcasts

(Editor's note: A September 2025 report by the Pew Research Center showed that more than half of American adults have listened to a podcast during the past year. The number of podcasts on the Catholic faith produced by people in the archdiocese is increasing. This article is the first in an occasional series on this growing phenomenon in which archdiocesan Catholics explore and share the faith.)

By Sean Gallagher

For two years, Father Adam Ahern had been listening to his friend Father Michael Keucher, the archdiocese's vocations director, talk again and again about how he

wanted to produce a podcast to promote priestly vocations.

Finally, Father Ahern got tired of him talking so frequently about it.

"So, I finally said to him, 'OK. We're doing a podcast,'" Father Ahern recalled.

Did he say that just to stop the conversation?

"Yeah, pretty much."

It didn't work.

For almost an entire calendar year, the pair talked to each other every day for their podcast on the diocesan priesthood called "Priest Cast."

It began and concluded its first season on the day when the

See **PODCASTS**, page 8

'Christ hears the cry of the people,' pope says at Mass near Angola's largest diamond mine

SAURIMO, Angola (OSV News)—Pope Leo XIV traveled to the heart of Angola's diamond country on April 20, urging the tens of thousands gathered at



Pope Leo XIV

a papal Mass in the country's northeast to trust that "Christ hears the cry of the people" in the face of evil.

On the eighth day of Pope Leo's 11-day apostolic journey to Africa, he flew some 500 miles east of the Angolan capital

Luanda to Saurimo, a city located near the country's border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo and about 20 miles from Angola's largest diamond mine, Catoca.

Amid the exploitation long associated with Angola's diamond industry, the pope delivered a homily in Portuguese that did not shy away from the social realities of a region, previously a colony of Portugal, long marked by resource extraction and inequality.

"We can see today how the hope of many people is frustrated by violence, exploited by the overbearing and defrauded by the rich," Pope Leo said in his homily. "Consequently, when injustice corrupts hearts, the bread of all becomes the possession of a few."

"In the face of these evils, Christ hears the cry of the people and renews our history by lifting us up from every fall, comforting us in every suffering and encouraging us in our mission," the pope said.

Local authorities estimated approximately 40,000 people gathered on the Saurimo esplanade under the hot sun for the Mass, with an additional

See **POPE**, page 2

New downtown Indy Women's Care Center is part of 'God's perfect timing'

By Natalie Hoefler

Krystan was nine weeks pregnant when she and her mother visited the Women's Care Center (WCC) in Indianapolis.

"I didn't know if I wanted to keep [my baby]," says Krystan, whose last name is withheld for privacy.

But once she saw the images from the free ultrasound she received during that visit, "I knew that I would keep her," she says of the daughter she named Alyvia.

Tens of thousands of women like Krystan have been helped since WCC opened its facility on the city's northwest side in November 2014.

See **CARE CENTER**, page 8

With the help of Women's Care Center on the northwest side of Indianapolis, Krystan chose life for her daughter Alyvia. (Photo courtesy of Women's Care Center)





Pope Leo XIV leads the rosary at the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Muxima in Muxima, Angola, on April 19. (OSV News photo/Simone Risoluti, Vatican Media)

Pope Leo XIV leads rosary at beloved Muxima Marian shrine in Angola

MUXIMA, Angola (OSV News)—Pope Leo XIV led tens of thousands of Angolan Catholics in praying the rosary on April 19 at southern Africa’s most visited Catholic shrine, calling the pilgrimage site a place where “the heart of the Church” is “alive and beating.”

The pope traveled by helicopter from Angola’s capital Luanda to the Sanctuary of Mama Muxima, which means “Mother of the Heart” in the local Kimbundu language. Pope Leo made the pilgrimage to the beloved Marian shrine situated on the banks of the Kwanza River after celebrating morning Mass for roughly 100,000 faithful in Kilamba, a district near Luanda.

Local authorities estimated approximately 30,000 pilgrims gathered on the Muxima shrine’s esplanade for the recitation of the rosary, with even more gathered in surrounding areas. Many had camped at the site for two or three days in anticipation of the papal visit, enduring 90-degree heat in the hours before his arrival. The crowd greeted the pope with singing and dancing as he moved through the grounds in a golf cart.

Upon arrival, Pope Leo entered the historic church for a moment of private prayer, which was broadcast on large screens for the crowd, who cheered loudly when they saw Pope Leo kneel before Our Lady before presiding over the recitation of the glorious mysteries of the rosary and the Litany of Loreto.

As the sun set, casting orange light across the sky, the crowd joined the pope in singing the “*Salve Regina*.”

“We are in a sanctuary where, for centuries, many men and women have

prayed in times of joy and also in moments of sorrow and great suffering in the history of this country,” the pope said, speaking in Portuguese. “For a long time now, *Mama Muxima* has quietly worked to keep the heart of the Church alive and beating.”


The church, formally dedicated to Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, was first established in 1599 during the era of Portuguese colonial Angola. More than 1 million pilgrims visit the shrine during its largest pilgrimage alone, which occurs each year between Aug. 31 and Sept. 1.

Pope Leo reflected on how the faithful had over the centuries spontaneously renamed the shrine “*Mama Muxima*,” calling it “a beautiful title, which makes us reflect on the heart of Mary: a pure and wise heart, capable of treasuring and pondering the extraordinary events in the life of the Son of God.”

The pope also spoke one line in the local Kimbundu language, quoting a hymn the crowd had sung, “*Mama Muxima, tuezza kokué, Mama Muxima, tutambululé*,” meaning “Mother of the Heart, we come to you to offer you everything.”

Pope Leo underlined that praying the rosary commits us to loving every person with a mother’s heart and to “dedicating ourselves to the good of one another, especially the poorest.”

“We strive without measure so that no one may lack love ... that the hungry may have enough to eat, that the sick may receive the necessary care, that children may be guaranteed a proper education, and that the elderly may live their later years in peace,” he said.



Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

April 25–May 2, 2026

<p>April 25 – 4 p.m. Mass and altar blessing at St. Charles Borromeo Church, Bloomington</p> <p>April 26 – 10 a.m. Disabilities Awareness Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, followed by reception at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, both in Indianapolis</p> <p>April 28 – 10 a.m. Spring business meeting for priests and parish life coordinators at Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish, Greenwood</p> <p>April 28 – 2 p.m. Council of Priests meeting at Our Lady of the Greenwood</p> <p>April 29 – 10:30 a.m. Virtual Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis and Subcommittee on Catechism Chair meeting</p> <p>April 29 – 7 p.m. Confirmation Mass for the youths of Our Lady of Lourdes, St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower),</p>	<p>St. Joseph, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Ann and St. John the Evangelist parishes, Indianapolis; Mary, Queen of Peace Parish, Danville; and St. Thomas More Parish, Mooresville, at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral</p> <p>April 30 – 10 a.m. Leadership Team meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center</p> <p>April 30 – 1:30 p.m. Mass for Little Sisters of the Poor at St. Augustine Home for the Aged, Indianapolis</p> <p>May 1 – 1:30 p.m. CST Episcopal ordination and installation of Bishop Godfrey Mullen, O.S.B., at the Cathedral of St. Peter, Belleville, Ill.</p> <p>May 2 – 10 a.m. Commencement Mass at Marian University, Indianapolis</p> <p>May 2 – 1:30 p.m. Commencement ceremony at Marian University</p>
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Miriam Dos Santos, 25, of Luanda, said she had kept an all-night vigil at the shrine the evening before the pope’s arrival.

“We are very happy to receive our dear pope here,” she told OSV News. “*Mama Muxima* is our heart. *Mama Muxima* is the first Lady that we go to, we call her, we ask for her intercession.”

Denis Mayomona, a seminarian who attended the pope’s Mass in Kilamba earlier in the day, described the shrine as a place of total surrender.

“We surrender all our suffering, all our dreams ... because we have got many problems here,” he said. “And once we surrender our suffering in the hands of *Mama Muxima*, we know perfectly that she will solve our problems because she is beside her Son.”

The shrine carries a complex and painful history. For nearly 300 years, the

site along the Kwanza River served as a waypoint for enslaved Africans being marched to the Atlantic Coast for transport to the Americas. It is also intertwined with the legacy of Queen Nzinga (1582–1663), ruler of the kingdoms of Ndongo and Matamba in present-day Angola. Nzinga waged a 30-year war against Portuguese colonial forces, significantly disrupting the transatlantic slave trade, and eventually returned to the Catholic faith, signing a peace treaty with Portugal in 1656.

Angolan Catholic radio journalist Cornelio Bento, traveling with the Vatican press corps, told OSV News the shrine holds a special place in Angolan Catholic life, particularly for women hoping to conceive.

“If you go to Muxima Shrine, you will listen to a lot of history of miracles,” he said. †

POPE

continued from page 1

20,000 participating from beyond the boundaries of the liturgy’s secured area.

In Christ, the pope told the crowd, “the proclamation of our resurrection finds its voice.

“Just as the Eucharist is the living bread that he never ceases to give us, so, too, his history knows no end. For this reason, the Risen One opens up our lives through the power of his Spirit and removes the end of our history, that is death,” the pope said.

“We did not come into the world to die. We were not born to become slaves either to the corruption of the flesh or that of the soul: Every form of oppression, violence, exploitation and dishonesty negates the resurrection of Christ, the supreme gift of our freedom,” he added.

In his homily, the pope warned against replacing genuine faith with “superstitious practices, in which God becomes an idol that is sought only when it is advantageous to us and only for as long as it is” and “even the most beautiful gifts of the Lord, which are always for the care of his people, become a pretext, a prize or a bargaining chip, and are misinterpreted by those who receive them.”

Pope Leo said that there are “erroneous motives for seeking Christ, particularly when he is considered to be a guru or a good luck charm,” but quickly added that the Lord “does not reject this sincere search but encourages its conversion.”

“Christ calls us to freedom,” the pope proclaimed to the Angolan Catholics.

Before the Mass, Pope Leo visited a nursing facility that is home to 74 elderly residents ranging in age from 60 to 93. Many arrive in poor physical condition, brought by police who intervene after family members

abandon them, often accusing them of witchcraft.

Staff at the home have noted that such accusations are increasingly being used as a pretext to avoid the burden of caring for aging relatives. One caregiver at the residence told Vatican News she saw the pope’s visit as “an immense lesson” for a society she believes must rediscover the value of its elders.

The visit was marked by moments of joy. Several residents danced in celebration of the pope’s presence, including one elderly man who danced using a cane.

Pope Leo addressed the staff and residents directly, calling the care of the most vulnerable a measure of a society’s moral health.

“The care of the weakest is a very important sign of the quality of the social life of a nation,” the pope said.

He added: “Let us not forget that the elderly are not only in need of assistance, but first and foremost need to be listened to, because they preserve the wisdom of a people.” †



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Archbishop Thompson is among keynote speakers as grads receive degrees

Compiled by John Shaughnessy

As graduates receive their degrees from the three Catholic colleges in the archdiocese this May, Archbishop Charles C. Thompson will be the keynote speaker at one of the commencement ceremonies.



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

The archbishop will deliver a keynote address and receive an honorary degree during the undergraduate graduation ceremony at Marian University in Indianapolis on May 2, one of three graduation ceremonies that Marian will host during the weekend of May 1-3.

Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad will hold its graduation ceremony on May 9, the same day that Saint Mary-of-the Woods College in St. Mary-of-the-Woods will have two graduation ceremonies.

Here is a glimpse of these graduation ceremonies—landmark occasions in the lives of the students who have worked hard to earn their degrees.

MARIAN UNIVERSITY

Marian University in Indianapolis will award degrees in three commencement ceremonies on the weekend of May 1-3.

During the commencement weekend, 1,012 students will earn their degrees.

Students at Marian's Ancilla College campus in

Plymouth, Ind., will receive their degrees during a May 1 ceremony at 5 p.m. in the Ancilla Domini Chapel. The commencement address will be delivered by Martin Oosterbaan, board chair for the Marshall County Community Foundation.

A commencement Mass will be celebrated at 2:30 p.m. on May 1 in the chapel.

Undergraduates at Marian's Indianapolis campus will receive their degrees during a 1:30 p.m. commencement ceremony on May 2 in the university's Arena and Convocation Center in Indianapolis. The commencement speaker will be Archbishop Thompson.

A commencement Mass will be at 10 a.m. on May 2 in the Arena and Convocation Center, in which the archbishop will serve as the principal celebrant and homilist.

Graduate students and medical students will receive their degrees during a 10 a.m. ceremony on May 3 in the university's Arena and Convocation Center in Indianapolis. The commencement speaker is Indiana State Rep. Danny Lopez.

Graduation events will be livestreamed at tinyurl.com/MarianU2026.

SAINT MARY-OF-THE-WOODS COLLEGE

Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College in St. Mary-of-the-Woods will celebrate its commencement on May 9 for 350 graduates.

There will be two commencement ceremonies—one for on-campus students receiving their bachelor's degrees, while the other will be for graduates of Woods Online and graduate degree programs.

Both ceremonies will be in the college's Hamilton Arena in the Jeanne Knoerle Sports and Recreation Center.

The commencement ceremony for on-campus undergraduate students will be at 10 a.m. The speaker will be Elizabeth Wetzel, who is graduating with a triple major in pre-art therapy, psychology and art.

The commencement ceremony for graduates of Woods Online and graduate degree programs will be at 3 p.m. The speaker will be Emilee Roberts, who will receive her Ph.D. in Global Leadership. She is the director of strategy and impact for Chances And Services for Youth (CASY) in Terre Haute.

As part of the commencement, the college will also have a Mass at 1 p.m. in the Church of the Immaculate Conception on campus.

SAINT MEINRAD SEMINARY AND SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

Thirty-four students will earn master's degrees when Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad holds its graduation ceremony on May 9.

The ceremony will be at 11 a.m. Central Time in St. Bede Theater on the Saint Meinrad campus.

The commencement speaker is Angie Greulich, a charitable giving relationship manager for Catholic Relief Services.

As part of the commencement, a Mass for the graduates and their guests will be held at 9 a.m. Central Time on May 9 in the Archabbey Church of Our Lady of Einsiedeln. †

'ArchIndy Vox' episode highlights ways families can grow in faith this summer

Criterion staff report

With the school year and parish religious education programs nearing summer break, the latest episode of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis' "ArchIndy Vox" podcast encourages families to embrace simple, everyday moments as opportunities for continued faith formation.

The episode features archdiocesan staff members Ute Eble, director of catechesis; Anita Bardo, coordinator of evangelization and discipleship; and host Emily Mastronicola, social media coordinator. Their conversation focuses on how faith can grow outside structured settings, emphasizing the importance of integrating prayer and faith into daily life through small, consistent practices.

It doesn't have to be complicated or perfectly planned, the guests note,

pointing to conversations, shared meals and quiet moments of prayer as meaningful ways to nurture faith.

The episode also highlights opportunities available throughout central and southern Indiana to support families during the summer. Campference provides growth and support for youth ministers; Obaro Village offers faith-filled experiences for youths and families; and Theology on Tap gives young adults a setting for fellowship and discussion.

Links to these and other Catholic summer opportunities can be found at archindy.org/summerfaith. The page includes information on youth programs such as Totus Tuus and vacation Bible camps, parish-based initiatives and camps that combine recreation with faith formation, including CYO Camp at Camp Rancho Framasa in Brown County.

The episode is available on Spotify at archindy.org/archindyvox and airs on Relevant Radio at 1:30 p.m. on Saturdays. Listen to Relevant Radio by tuning in to 89.1 FM—west Indianapolis; 89.5 FM—south Indianapolis; 90.9 FM—Hamilton County, Ind.; or 94.3 FM—Lafayette, Ind., 98.3 FM—Anderson, Ind.

The next episode of "ArchIndy Vox" will feature Archbishop Charles

C. Thompson and Alexander Mingus, executive director of the Indiana Catholic Conference, discussing a new joint pastoral letter by Indiana's bishops. The letter outlines a Catholic vision of "integral ecology," connecting care for creation, human dignity and the Eucharist, while offering theological reflection and practical guidance rooted in Indiana's environmental and social realities. †

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The Criterion

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Editorial



Pope Leo XIV gives his homily during the Easter Vigil Mass at the Vatican on April 4. The Easter season lasts for 50 days and culminates with the feast of Pentecost, this year on May 24. (CNS photo/Lola Gomez)

Use Easter season as a time of personal encounter with the Lord

“Peace be with you” (Jn 20:19).

The first words that Jesus spoke to his disciples in his appearance to them after his resurrection sparked fear and trepidation. Yet he meant to calm their fears, confirm his identity and impart peace. It is an example of the risen Lord sharing his love and mercy.

We believe it was among the last things the disciples expected to hear from Jesus, whom they had abandoned a few days earlier in his hour of need.

We remember Peter’s denials and several other disciples who were nowhere to be found as Christ was nailed to a tree.

And yet, the first words that Jesus speaks to them after he rises from the dead demonstrate an unwavering love for those who, however imperfectly, had followed him and embraced the message of his ministry.

Like those first disciples, we are now in the midst of celebrating the Easter season, the most important of all liturgical times, in which we Catholics celebrate the Lord’s resurrection from the dead, culminating in his ascension to the Father and sending of the Holy Spirit upon the Church.

Our celebration of Easter does not end on Easter Sunday and is a season of personal encounter with the risen Lord.

It invites us to celebrate the 50 days between Easter and Pentecost, as the entire world is opened up by the power of the Holy Spirit and the Church is born in joyful hope and anticipation of the kingdom that is here now and yet to come.

Joy should be evident in our lives as we celebrate that Christ is indeed risen and has conquered sin and death!

As our former shepherd Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein shared with us in a “Seeking the Face of the Lord” column during Easter in 2007:

Easter is the feast of hope. For those who face death with fear, Jesus showed once and for all that in death, life is merely changed, not taken away. This life as we know it is only the

vestibule to something more beautiful.

Yet it is true, we do not understand birth and death, we do not understand rebirth and resurrection. Like Peter, as he stooped to look into the empty tomb, we can only be amazed. So, Easter is a sacred feast of happy faith and firm hope. Easter is the pre-eminent feast of hope! For those who face death with fear, Jesus showed once and for all that in death, life is changed and not taken away.

Once more with peaceful hearts, we thank God for the gift of our Easter faith! Thank God for the gift of his own Son and for Christ’s Easter victory! We thank God for the gift of our Church, which carries forward the Easter mystery in the life of the sacraments and our community of faith even in the midst of suffering that will pass away.

We all are charged with the mission of spreading the good news. So, during this Easter season, why not listen carefully to the way the Lord is opening Scriptures to you? Look for him in other ways, too—in the breaking of the bread, in times of stress and anxiety, in every situation that you face each day? Where do you see Jesus? What is he sharing, and what is your response? It is an invitation to give of ourselves more freely in living out our vocations.

We must remember that Easter is the ultimate celebration of life and a timely gift. The message of this season has always been timely, but it can be treasured even more in our day.

Each of us is responsible for passing on the good news of Jesus Christ and the teachings of the Church that offer hope to our world. This is our Christian mission.

Let us pray: Please Lord, help us to open our eyes and to see by Easter faith the wonders of your creation and the triumph of love over death. Be with us on our mission as your disciples, sharing with world that Christ indeed has risen! Alleluia!

—Mike Krokos

Reflection/Sean Gallagher

Greatness of the cosmos leads an astronaut—and all of us—closer to God and his creation

“When I see the heavens, the work of your hands, the moon and the stars which you arranged, what is man that you keep him in mind, mortal man that you care for him?” (Ps 8:4-5).



This poetic description in Psalm 8 of the awe experienced by a person looking up at the heavens in the night sky was composed 2,500 years ago or more.

It expresses a reality at the heart of the human condition in all times and places. The experience expressed in these verses was described in a heartfelt way, if not in as poetic a manner as the psalms, during an April 16 press conference in Houston of the astronauts who took part in the Artemis II mission around the moon, which returned to Earth on April 10.

During the press conference, mission commander Reid Wiseman recalled a moment when he and his fellow astronauts were brought onto a U.S. Navy ship after their splashdown and taken to a room for a medical evaluation.

But before the physical check-up took place, Wiseman asked for spiritual care to help him come to terms with what he had experienced in his flight around the moon.

“I’m not really a religious person, but there was just no other avenue for me to explain anything or to experience anything, so I just asked for the Navy chaplain to come visit us for a minute,” Wiseman said. “When that man walked in—I’d never met him before in my life, but I saw the cross on his collar, and I just broke down in tears.”

Why?

“It’s very hard to fully grasp what we just went through,” he said.

Wiseman and his fellow astronauts were the first humans to see the moon up close in more than 50 years. And while they were on the far side of the moon, they witnessed the kind of solar eclipse that people across Indiana experienced on April 8, 2024. Except then, the eclipse, as wondrous as it was, was a small disc in the mid-afternoon sky.

For the Artemis astronauts, the moon would have taken up much of what they were seeing from their Orion spacecraft.

Letter to the Editor

Stop weaponizing God’s name for political gain, reader says

To “invoke the name of the Lord, your God, in vain” (Ex 20:7) is grave matter.

The word *vain* describes a person with an oversized opinion of their own appearance, capabilities, worth or success.

To act *in vain* is to do something useless, worthless, to no avail.

To use God’s name *in vain* is to invoke God’s name pointlessly or unworthily, including for one’s own self-aggrandizement and the promotion of one’s own agenda. Politicians—some of strong faith, some of no faith—are shamelessly stage-managing God’s clout for their own vainglory.

Reverencing God’s name is serious business. Think about it. It’s the only one of the Ten Commandments for which God specifically pronounces penalty: “For the Lord will not leave unpunished anyone who invokes his name in vain” (Ex 20:7). God help us.

This happens on both sides of the aisle. This is not about finger-pointing nor judgment.

The moon, from their perspective, was five times larger than the sun. And the eclipse for the astronauts lasted nearly an hour, while the one that took place two years ago lasted between three and four minutes.

Wiseman recalled at the press conference that he turned to Victor Glover, Artemis II’s pilot, during the eclipse that the astronauts witnessed and said, “I don’t think humanity has evolved to the point of being able to comprehend what we are looking at right now, because it was otherworldly and it was amazing.”

He and his fellow astronauts were given the opportunity to fly further away from Earth than anyone in human history has ever flown, to witness Earth and the heavens in a way that no one has ever experienced.

It’s only natural, then, to say that their experiences are beyond their understanding. So, then, it was also only natural—or perhaps supernatural—for Wiseman to seek out a chaplain upon returning to Earth.

After he had seen “the heavens” and “the moon and the stars” which God arranged, Wiseman effectively came to the same awe-filled question the psalmist had thousands of years ago: “What is man that you keep him in mind, mortal man that you care for him?”

In acknowledging the transcendence of his experience, this astronaut, a self-confessed “not really ... religious person,” truly is a wise man.

And with the help of God’s grace, all of us can be wise like him. Another psalm tells us that “the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom” (Ps 110:10). Recognizing one’s smallness in the face of the enormity of God’s creation like Wiseman did, let alone God himself, is certainly a kind of fear of God that is an expression of wisdom.

Thankfully, none of us has to travel to the far side of the moon to grow in wisdom by experiencing the stunning beauty of God’s creation.

Open your heart to his grace and your eyes to the wonders of nature here on Earth below and in the heavens above, and that gift will be open to you.

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

Denise Roney McGonigal Indianapolis

Letters Policy

Letters from readers are welcome and should be informed, relevant, well-expressed, concise, temperate in tone, courteous and respectful.

The editors reserve the right to select and edit the letters based on space limitations, pastoral sensitivity and content. 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.

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Let us develop vibrant parishes within which missionary disciples are called, formed through a personal encounter with Jesus Christ, and sent out to proclaim the Gospel and minister to the needs of all God's people through word, sacrament, and service. (Pastoral charge, Archdiocese of Indianapolis 2026 Pastoral Plan)

Tomorrow, Saturday, April 25, is the feast of St. Mark, one of the four Evangelists along with Saints Matthew, Luke and John.

Referred to as "John Mark" in the Acts of the Apostles, St. Mark is the traditional author of the shortest and earliest Gospel (written AD 65-70). Although not one of the 12 apostles, he was a follower of St. Peter and a companion to Saints Paul and Barnabas on their missionary journeys. Tradition holds that St. Mark based his Gospel on the firsthand testimonies and teachings of St. Peter.

The Church calls Mark and the other three authors of the Gospels "evangelists." An evangelist, in the Christian understanding, is a person who proclaims the Gospel—the "good news" of Jesus Christ—and plays a significant role in evangelization, the Church's mission to spread the faith and bring others to a personal relationship

with Jesus Christ. The term "evangelist" derives from the Greek word "euangelion," meaning "good news."

All baptized Christians are called to be "Spirit-filled Evangelizers," a term favored by Pope Francis. Everyone who desires to be a missionary disciple of Jesus Christ has received the Great Commission given by Jesus to his disciples as he ascended into heaven: "Go into all the world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature" (Mk 16:15).

This is the mission of the Church in its simplest and most powerful expression. It is also the most effective standard by which we can assess the effectiveness and vibrancy of parishes and other Church institutions and ministries: Are we forming and empowering missionary disciples and Spirit-filled Evangelizers? Or are we simply maintaining the status quo?

In light of the Great Commission that we missionary disciples have received, all parishes, schools and ministries are called to be vibrant centers of worship, faith formation, pastoral care, responsible stewardship of all God's gifts and outreach to the poor and vulnerable.

Evangelization—sharing our faith in the person of Jesus Christ—is the key to vibrant parishes and, indeed, to the vitality of the Church as it is lived

concretely, day in and day out, here in our 38 counties of southern and central Indiana and throughout the world.

The 2026 Pastoral Plan for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, "Go Forth in Joy and Hope as Missionary Disciples," places strong emphasis on evangelization. This is the heart of who we are, and what we are called to do, as individual Christians and as an archdiocese.

As Spirit-filled Evangelizers, we are invited, and challenged, to collaborate with the Holy Spirit in proclaiming the good news of our salvation in Jesus Christ.

We carry out this sacred responsibility by our active participation in the Church's ministries of word, sacrament and service, which are designed to proclaim the Gospel to all our sisters and brothers everywhere and to facilitate the personal encounter with Jesus Christ that is God's supreme gift to all believers.

The 2026 Pastoral Plan, which was the result of extensive consultation with Catholics in all regions of our archdiocese over a two-year period, asks the question: *What is a vibrant parish?*

Of course, there are different ways that this question can be answered, but here is how a 2020 Vatican document titled "The pastoral conversion of the

Parish community in the service of the evangelizing mission of the Church" responds to this question using the words of three recent popes:

Saint John Paul II specified that: "Whilst the Parish is perfected and integrated in a variety of forms, it nevertheless remains an indispensable organism of primary importance in the visible structure of the Church whereby evangelization is the cornerstone of all pastoral action, the demands of which are primary, preeminent and preferential." Subsequently, Benedict XVI taught, "the parish is a beacon that radiates the light of the faith and thus responds to the deepest and truest desires of the human heart, giving meaning and hope to the lives of individuals and families."

Lastly, Pope Francis recalled how "the parish encourages and trains its members to be evangelizers" (#12).

To these reflections, we can easily add this insight of Pope Leo XIV: "To hope is to bear witness that the Earth can truly resemble heaven."

On the feast of St. Mark the Evangelist, we are right to bear witness to hope and to carrying out the Church's evangelizing mission. Through the intercession of St. Mark, may we always be faithful missionary disciples. †



Cristo, la piedra angular

Avancemos con alegría y esperanza como discípulos misioneros

Desarrollemos parroquias dinámicas en las que puedan surgir discípulos misioneros, formados a través de un encuentro personal con Jesucristo y enviados a proclamar el Evangelio y atender las necesidades de todo el pueblo de Dios a través de la palabra, los sacramentos y el servicio. (Responsabilidad pastoral, Plan Pastoral de la Arquidiócesis de Indianápolis 2026)

Mañana, sábado 25 de abril, celebramos la fiesta de san Marcos, uno de los cuatro evangelistas, junto con san Mateo, san Lucas y san Juan.

Conocido como "Juan Marcos" en los Hechos de los Apóstoles, san Marcos es considerado el autor del Evangelio más breve y más antiguo (escrito entre los años 65 y 70 d. C.). Aunque no fue uno de los doce apóstoles, fue seguidor de san Pedro y compañero de los santos Pablo y Bernabé en sus viajes misioneros. La tradición sostiene que san Marcos basó su Evangelio en los testimonios y enseñanzas que recibió de primera mano de san Pedro.

La Iglesia llama "evangelistas" a Marcos y a los otros tres autores de los Evangelios. Según la doctrina cristiana, un evangelista es una persona que proclama el Evangelio—la "buena nueva" de Jesucristo—y desempeña un papel importante en la evangelización, la misión de la Iglesia de difundir la fe y llevar a otros a una relación personal

con Jesucristo. La palabra "evangelista" deriva del griego *euangelion*, que significa "buena noticia."

Todos los cristianos bautizados están llamados a ser "evangelizadores llenos del Espíritu," una expresión que le gustaba al papa Francisco. Todo el que desee ser discípulo misionero de Jesucristo ha recibido la Gran Comisión que Cristo encomendó a sus discípulos al ascender al cielo: "Id por todo el mundo y proclamad la Buena Nueva a toda la creación" (Mc 16:15).

Esta es la misión de la Iglesia en su expresión más sencilla y poderosa. Es también el criterio más efectivo para evaluar la eficacia y el dinamismo de las parroquias y otras instituciones y ministerios de la Iglesia: ¿Estamos formando y capacitando discípulos misioneros y evangelizadores llenos del Espíritu? ¿O simplemente mantenemos el *statu quo*?

A la luz de la Gran Comisión que hemos recibido los discípulos misioneros, todas las parroquias, escuelas y ministerios están llamados a ser centros vibrantes de culto, formación en la fe, atención pastoral, gestión corresponsable de todos los dones de Dios y de atención a los pobres y vulnerables.

La evangelización—compartir nuestra fe en la persona de Jesucristo—es la clave para que las parroquias sean dinámicas y, de hecho, para la vitalidad de la Iglesia, tal y como se vive concretamente, día tras día, en nuestros

38 condados del centro y sur de Indiana y en todo el mundo.

El Plan Pastoral de la Arquidiócesis de Indianápolis 2026, "Avancemos con alegría y esperanza como discípulos misioneros" pone un fuerte énfasis en la evangelización. Esta es la esencia de lo que somos y de lo que estamos llamados a hacer individualmente como cristianos y como Arquidiócesis.

Como evangelizadores llenos del Espíritu, se nos invita y se nos desafía a colaborar con el Espíritu Santo en la proclamación de la buena nueva de nuestra salvación en Jesucristo.

Cumplimos con esta sagrada responsabilidad al participar activamente en los ministerios de la Iglesia: la palabra, los sacramentos y el servicio, los cuales están diseñados para proclamar el Evangelio a todas nuestras hermanas y hermanos en todas partes y para facilitar el encuentro personal con Jesucristo, el don supremo de Dios para todos los creyentes.

El Plan Pastoral 2026, fruto de una amplia consulta con los católicos de todas las regiones de nuestra arquidiócesis durante un período de dos años, plantea la siguiente pregunta: *¿Qué es una parroquia dinámica?*

Por supuesto, hay muchas formas de contestar esta interrogante, pero el documento publicado por el Vaticano en 2020 y titulado "La conversión pastoral de la comunidad parroquial al servicio de la misión evangelizadora de

la Iglesia a cargo de la Congregación para el Clero" responde a esta pregunta fundamentándose en las palabras de tres papas recientes:

San Juan Pablo II precisaba: "La parroquia ha de ser perfeccionada e integrada en muchas otras formas, pero ella sigue siendo todavía un organismo indispensable de primaria importancia en las estructuras visibles de la Iglesia, para «hacer de la evangelización el pivote de toda la acción pastoral, cual exigencia prioritaria, preminente y privilegiada." Luego, Benedicto XVI enseñaba que "la parroquia es un faro que irradia la luz de la fe y así responde a los deseos más profundos y verdaderos del corazón del hombre, dando significado y esperanza a la vida de las personas y de las familias."

Finalmente, el papa Francisco recuerda que "a través de todas sus actividades, la parroquia alienta y forma a sus miembros para que sean agentes de evangelización" (#12).

A estas reflexiones, podemos añadir fácilmente la perspectiva del papa León XIV: "Esperar es dar testimonio de que la Tierra puede realmente parecerse al cielo."

En la fiesta de san Marcos Evangelista, tenemos razón al dar testimonio de esperanza y al llevar a cabo la misión evangelizadora de la Iglesia. Que por intercesión de san Marcos seamos siempre fieles discípulos misioneros. †

Events Calendar

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

Every Wednesday;

St. John the Evangelist Parish, Corpus Christi Parish Hall, 126 W. Georgia St., Indianapolis. **Catholics in Recovery Support Group**, 7 p.m., meets every Wednesday, Catholic 12-step program serving those with addictions and unhealthy attachments. Information: 317-557-8888, jjdav887@gmail.com.

May 1-2

White Violet Center, Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, 1 Sisters of Providence, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Spring Plant Sale**, Fri. 11 a.m.-5 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m.-3 p.m., organically grown vegetables, flowers and herbs. Information: Events.SistersofProvidence.org, 812-535-2946, lrobinette@spsmw.org.

May 6, June 3

MCL Cafeteria, 5520 Castleton Corner Lane, Indianapolis. **Solo Seniors**, 5:30-8:30 p.m., Catholic, educational, charitable and social singles—separated, widowed or divorced—ages 50 and older, new members welcome, also call about regular Friday 1 p.m. lunch events. Information: 317-796-8605.

May 7-9

St. Ann Parish, 6350 S. Mooresville Road,

Indianapolis. **Church Festival**, Thurs. 5-10 p.m., Fri. 5-11 p.m., Sat. noon-11 p.m., rides, food, activities, casino, beer garden, free admission. Information: 317-821-2909, admin@stannindy.org.

May 9

White Violet Center, Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, 1 Sisters of Providence, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Lunch and Learn: Native and Invasives of Indiana Woods**, noon-3 p.m., lunch followed by guided hike with forester Stuart Haney, \$40. Information: Events.SistersofProvidence.org, 812-535-2932, lrobinette@spsmw.org.

May 15

Liter House, 5301 Winthrop Ave. Indianapolis. **Catholic Business Exchange**, rosary 6:35 a.m., Mass 7 a.m., buffet breakfast and program following, presenter TBD, \$20 members, \$25 non-members. Register by 4 p.m. May 12. Information, registration: cutt.ly/CBE-Reg.

May 16

St. Roch Parish, 3600 S. Pennsylvania St., Indianapolis. **Mayfest: A Taste of the Southside Festival**, 2-11 p.m., features Mexican, Irish, German, Italian and American cuisines, bounce houses, games, beer garden, food prices vary, free admission.

Information: 317-784-1763, church@strochindy.org.

St. Anthony of Padua Parish, 316 N. Sherwood Ave., Clarksville. **Living Rosary**, 2 p.m., rosary procession around the church (weather permitting), free. Information: 812-282-2290, a.macaluso@stanthony-clarksville.org.

May 18, June 15

Virtual Sister Thea Bowman Black Catholic Women's Prayer Group, 7 p.m., meets online monthly on third Monday, sponsored by archdiocesan Black Catholic Ministry, all women welcome. Meeting: tinyurl.com/SrTheaPrayerGrp. Information: iowhosomaddox@archindy.org, 317-261-3381.

May 22-24

Carmelite Monastery, 59 Allendale, Terre Haute. **Monastic Experience Weekend**, 3 p.m. Fri. -3 p.m. Sun., vocation discernment retreat for women ages 18-40, includes accommodations and meals, free. Information: 812-299-1410, ext. 214, vocations@heartsawake.org.

May 28-30

St. Simon the Apostle Parish, 8155 Oaklondon Road, Indianapolis. **St. Simon Festival**, Thurs. 5-11 p.m., Fri. 5 p.m.-midnight, Sat. 3 p.m.-midnight; food, beer garden, games, Vegas

room, rides, \$20 per family. Information: 317-826-6000, chair@saintsimonfestival.com.

May 29-30

St. Gabriel the Archangel Parish, 6000 W. 34th St., Indianapolis. **International Festival**, 5 p.m.-midnight, food, amusement rides, carnival games, \$5,000 raffle, live music, sponsor booths, evangelization station, free admission. Information: 317-291-7014, eesparza@stgabrielindy.org.

May 29-31

St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Parish, 4720 E. 13th St., Indianapolis. **Summerfest 2026**, Fri. 5-11 p.m., Sat. 3-11 p.m., Sun. 11 a.m.-5 p.m., \$4,000 raffle, Bingo Fri. and Sat., Monte Carlo Fri., rides, silent auction, live entertainment, food, beer, wine, games for kids and adults, \$10 admission for \$10 in event coupons. Information: 317-357-8352 ext. 102, lflsummerfest@littleflowerparish.org.

June 4-6

Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood.

Summer Festival, Thurs 5-11 p.m., Fri. 5 p.m.-midnight, Sat. 2 p.m.-midnight; rides, games, Monte Carlo, bingo, cake wheel, grand raffle, quilt raffle, children's games, live music, beer tent, fair food, free admission. Information: 317-888-2861, info@olgreenwood.org.

June 11-13

St. Anthony Parish, 337 N. Warman Ave., Indianapolis. **Crossroads of America Festival**, 4-11 p.m., carnival rides, food, live entertainment, raffle, free admission. Information: 317-742-0103, sandra@saintanthonyindy.org.

June 12-13

St. Mary Parish, 2500 St. Mary Dr., Lanesville. **Festville on the Hill**, Fri. 5:30-9 p.m., Sat. 4-10 p.m., fried chicken dinner, raffles, games for all ages, beer and wine garden, live music from Smokin' Joe and Midnight Radio, fireworks, free admission and parking. Information: 812-952-2853 ext. 24, makayla.mccarty@catholic-community.org.

Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish, 520 Stevens St.,

Indianapolis. **Italian Street Festival**, 5-11 p.m., Marian procession Sat. 6:45 p.m. prior to 7 p.m. Mass, Italian food, drinks, live entertainment, free admission and parking. Information: indyitalianfest.org, 317-636-4478, info@holynosaryindy.org.

June 19

Liter House, 5301 Winthrop Ave. Indianapolis. **Catholic Business Exchange**, rosary 6:35 a.m., Mass 7 a.m., buffet breakfast and program following, presenter TBD, \$20 members, \$25 non-members. Register by 4 p.m. June 16. Information, registration: cutt.ly/CBE-Reg.

June 20

Griffin Bike Park, 10700 Bono Road, Terre Haute. **Quick Quack 5K Trail Run**, 6:30-7:30 a.m. registration, 8 a.m. race, benefitting Catholic Charities Terre Haute, chip timing, refreshments, register by June 12 for T-shirt, \$25 through April 19, \$30 April 20-June 19, \$35 race day, team discount available: register with a team of four to receive \$5 off per participant. Information, registration: tinyurl.com/quickquack26. †

Retreats and Programs

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

May 11

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Talk Saves Lives**, 6:30-8 p.m., suicide prevention talk, Father James Farrell presenting, free. Registration: fjm.retreatportal.com/events, 317-545-7681, lcoons@archindy.org.

May 12

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Day of Silence**, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., \$55, includes room, lunch, Mass and use of common areas and grounds, overnight stay available for additional \$42, dinner additional \$14.40. Registration: fjm.retreatportal.com/events, 317-545-7681, lcoons@archindy.org.

May 13

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Our Lady of Fatima Feast Day Evening of Reflection**, 5-8 p.m., Jesuit Father James Kubick, spiritual director at the Milwaukee Archdiocesan Seminary and Fatima expert, presenting, freewill donations accepted. Registration: 317-545-7681, fjm.retreatportal.com/events, lcoons@archindy.org.

May 15-17

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Being "Eucharistic" People**, Benedictine Father Adrian Burke presenting, \$350 single, \$550 double. Registration: 812-357-6611, saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

May 16

Mother of the Redeemer Retreat Center, 8220 W. State Road 48, Bloomington. **The Broken Mary Project**, 9 a.m.-5:15 p.m., former radio broadcaster Kevin Matthew presenting, \$65, includes lunch. Information, registration: 812-825-4642, ext. 1, motheroftheredeemer.com.

May 22-24

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Healing Loneliness**, Benedictine Brother Zachary Wilberding presenting, \$350 single, \$550 double. Registration: 812-357-6611, saintmeinrad.org/retreats. †

Monte Cassino pilgrimages will be held in May in St. Meinrad

Pilgrimages to honor the Blessed Mother at the Our Lady of Monte Cassino Shrine, 13312 Monte Cassino Shrine Road, in St. Meinrad (on State Highway 62 one mile east of Saint Meinrad Archabbey, 200 Hill Dr., in St. Meinrad), are scheduled at 2 p.m. CT on the Sundays in May.

The pilgrimages, sponsored by Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad, begin with an opening hymn and a short sermon, followed by a rosary procession. The services end with the Litany of the Blessed Virgin and a hymn. Speakers and topics for the pilgrimages are:

—May 3: Benedictine Brother

Chrysostom Sica (Belmont Abbey, N.C.), "Mary: Like Us"

—May 10: Benedictine Brother Joel Blaize, "Regina Caeli: The Church's Easter Song to Mary"

—May 17: Benedictine Brother Francis de Sales Wagner, "Our Lady of Peace"

—May 24: Benedictine Brother Jude Angel Romero-Olivas, "Have You Discovered Your Gift from the Holy Spirit Yet?"

—May 31: Benedictine Brother Gregory Morris, "Mary, Spouse of the Holy Spirit"

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

Wedding Anniversaries

SHELDON AND MARY (HERBERT) HOEING, members of St. Mary Parish in Rushville, celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on April 16.

The couple was married in St. Mary Church in Rushville on April 16, 1966.

They have four children: Michelle Busald, Brenda Knecht, Darren and Gary Hoeing.

The couple also has 16 grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren.



THOMAS AND MARY JO (DAVEY) LOWE, members of St. Agnes Parish in Nashville, celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on April 16.

The couple was married in Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Indianapolis on April 16, 1966.

They have four children: Ann Alford, Theresa and the late Angela and Robert Lowe.

The couple also has four grandchildren.



ANDREW AND LORI (ROSENBERGER) ORSCHELL, members of St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on May 1.

The couple was married in St. Michael Church in Brookville on May 1, 1976.

They have two children: Amanda Bodart and Kari Whicker.

The couple also has four grandchildren.



JIM AND JANE (PRICKEL) TEKULVE, members of St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Morris, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on April 24.

The couple was married in St. Anthony of Padua Church in Morris on April 24, 1976.

They have three children: Heather Thomas, Elliott and Jared Tekulve.

The couple also has eight grandchildren.



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

Moms share important questions, advice for women expecting first child

(In anticipation of Mother's Day, The Criterion is inviting moms to share the advice you would give to a woman expecting her first child—and/or the best advice someone has ever given you about being a mom. Here is the second story in this series.)

By John Shaughnessy

Her advice for women expecting their first child comes with important questions to consider.

"You are expecting your child, and with that naturally come expectations of how your child will be, what kind of mother you will be, how you and your husband will parent together," says Ute Eble, a mother of four and the director of catechesis for the archdiocese.

"My advice is to move away from expectations to a discovery mindset. What kind of gift has God given me



Ute Eble shows her joy in being surrounded by her four children: Michael (in back), Katja, left, Joshua and Annika. (Submitted photo)

with this child? Who am I as a mother? What is easy for me, what is hard for me? How is my husband as a dad, and what does that mean for our relationship?"

Those questions are among the ones that she and her husband Joe have considered and lived as they've guided the lives of their children, who now range in age from 18 to 11.

A member of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Indianapolis with her family, Eble also offers this thought for all moms:

"Nothing is more stressful than the gap between our expectations and reality. But when you gradually and acceptingly discover who your baby really is in his or her personality and gifts—but also his or her needs—and how you and your husband are together as parents, you will develop a sense of gratitude for God's gift and the ability to respond trustingly to challenges.

"And no matter what life throws at you, remember: It is always just a phase!"

'Don't try to be perfect; just be present'

Grace Trahan-Rodecap offers equally valuable advice, from the perspective of parenting three children—ages 24, 22 and 20—with her husband Joe.

"You will make mistakes, and that's OK," says Trahan-Rodecap, the director of marketing at Cathedral High School in Indianapolis. "Don't try to be perfect; just be present. Spend time with your child—the years go by fast. Read, laugh and pray together every day."

A member of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis with her family, Trahan-Rodecap also shares an emphasis that she made with her children.

"Hug your child and tell them you love them. Don't assume they know; say the words. Remind them that God loves them, too.

"Children are precious gifts. Be thankful for them every day!"



Grace Trahan-Rodecap and her husband Joe pose with their children for a family photo at Christmas. In the front row are Grace, left, Christian and Rachel. In the back row are Nicholas, left, and Joe. (Submitted photo)

(The Criterion is continuing to invite our readers to share their thoughts, tributes and stories about motherhood from two perspectives. First, if you are a mom, what's one piece of advice you would give to a woman who is expecting her first child—and/or the best advice someone has ever given you about being a mom? Second, share your thoughts, tributes and stories about how your mother's influence has shaped you, your faith and your life—and/or share how you have strived to shape your children's faith and lives. 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.) †

Just war theory 'meant to make war ... a last resort defense,' says bishop

(OSV News)—On April 15, Auxiliary Bishop James Massa of Brooklyn, chair of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Committee on



Bishop James Massa

Doctrine, issued a statement clarifying the Catholic Church's teaching on just war.

The statement came as President Donald J. Trump, Vice President JD Vance and other Trump administration officials have

publicly challenged Pope Leo XIV's calls for peace amid the U.S.-Israel war on Iran and other conflicts.

OSV News spoke at length with Bishop Massa regarding just war doctrine.

This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

Q: Based on recent comments from Pope Leo XIV and various bishops, is it fair to say the Catholic Church's teaching on just war doctrine is at the heart a call for peace?

A: Absolutely. Just war theory is always meant to make war, the legitimate use of force, a last resort defense of people.

When an aggressor has caused some grave, lasting, certain harm, and then when all other options have failed—peaceful options, negotiations, diplomacy, etc.—and when there's a real chance of success, those are the criteria. And that's called "*jus ad bellum*," Latin for "just reasons for going to war."

And then the other big condition that's very important is that the fighting and the actual use of force will not cause worse evils than the harm you're trying to stop.

So clearly, going back to St. Augustine ... St. Ambrose and St. Thomas Aquinas—who brings it to another level—just war theory is never a blank check for violence.

Q: What are some common misconceptions about the Church's teaching on just war?

A: I think one is forgetting the use of violence, the use of war is always tragic. When anyone is the recipient of violence, it's always something terribly,

terribly tragic—one more manifestation of original sin in a broken world.

So, the Church urges governments to exhaust every other possible means before going to war and before using force to achieve a noble end.

And I think the other thing that's sort of missed right now is, if you're going to go to war, you have to have a very clear endgame in mind. What is the purpose of it? What's the goal?

Arguably, in this current conflict, that has not been stated with consistency and clarity.

Q: You're referring to the U.S.-Israel war on Iran?

A: Yes. The goal has been talked about in different ways. There is a repeated point made by the current administration that the goal is to have a denuclearized Iran.

But what else does it look like? Where do we end up in terms of relations among nations? And what's the path to peace in the region beyond this?

This all has to be stated clearly for there to be legitimacy in the use of force in such a high level of military engagement.

Q: Vice President JD Vance and others have cited World War II in defending the U.S.'s war on Iran. When people reference other wars in history in terms of just war theory, what are some things they need to keep in mind if they're trying to use the past as justification for the present?

A: One of the lessons of history—and clearly, this was the case with World War II—and especially in an age with weapons of mass destruction and with much more sophisticated technologies at play, is that we can't go it alone.

In World War II, the United States was part of a coalition, the Allied powers against the Axis powers, Germany, Italy and Japan. There was an endgame in view. The Allies were speaking about the United Nations, some international mechanism that would help to defuse conflict and prevent war from happening in the future. So, arguably there, the conditions of justified use of force were met.

But go back a little bit further, and I think we can put Pope Leo's comments of late against this backdrop: 110 years ago, we had a pope who was deeply,

deeply troubled by the war that was raging at the time, namely World War I.

It was Pope Benedict XV, and he was pleading for a cessation of the war to bring the various parties to the peace table. He pleaded for that. He was speaking about the need for an organization like the League of Nations before most of the leadership of the time, as [an] international means of preventing such a catastrophic war from happening again. In World War I, we saw such massive slaughter—and that slaughter was committed by largely Christian nations, with baptized Catholics killing each other in battle. And it was deeply troubling.

So, there you have kind of the first cry of the heart from a pope to speak to a global conflict. And I think that sets the stage for what other popes—from Pius XI through St. John Paul II, Pope Francis, and up until Pope Leo XIV now—are pleading for: the use of international bodies to arrive at solutions to conflict rather than going to war.

Q: What would you say to people who invoke papal support for the Crusades, and the Crusades themselves, as Christian justification for conflict? How does the Church look at that now from the present moment?

A: Very simply, and in four words: we repent of them.

That message was folded into Pope St. John Paul II's apologies, the "*mea culpas*" that he gave 26 years ago (both in his bull for the Great Jubilee Year of 2000 and in his "Day of Pardon" homily on March 12 of that year) in which the pope, at the turn of the millennium, was looking back at the sins of the sons and daughters of the Catholic Church, and asking for forgiveness and repentance.

Was there any legitimacy to the efforts of the Crusaders? Some historians might want to argue that we were trying to free up access to the holy sites in the Holy Land when the various [Muslim] caliphates were the aggressor in various historical moments. Some may want to make that argument, but a war that is justified by means of the logic of a crusade betrays false reasoning.

Q: You noted modern weapons of mass destruction, which pose

risks now accelerated by artificial intelligence, as multiple experts have warned. Talk about the need for a clear understanding of Catholic teaching on just war in the light of AI.

A: We're removing human agency from decisions about how to conduct war and specific decisions that are made in the waging of war. So, this applies to the criteria of "*jus in bello*" (the morality that governs combat, reflected both in Catholic teaching and in international humanitarian law).

So, we have the criteria we use to determine whether it's legitimate to go to war, and then the criteria for the waging of war.

What are the conditions for justly waging war? First of all, there has to be noncombatant immunity. Wounded soldiers, innocent civilians and prisoners have to be respected, treated humanely.

One cannot indiscriminately destroy whole cities and their populations. The Second Vatican Council condemned that in "*Gaudium et Spes*" at paragraph 80. You have to avoid indiscriminate destruction.

And with the introduction of AI, this becomes more and more precarious.

Q: What would you say to those who hold that Catholics can disagree as to whether the U.S.-Israel war on Iran is just or not?

A: The pope and the magisterium of the Church do not substitute for the conscience of individual Catholics. But for a Catholic to reason justly about the legitimacy of any war, he or she must be informed by the Church's teaching and what the pastors of the Church are currently saying.

As Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, later Pope Benedict XVI, argued—and he was drawing on the thought of St. John Henry Newman—the pope is the guardian of conscience.

And that was basically saying to us [that we should] read holy Scripture, look at what the Church has been saying through the voice of her pastors about warfare in the modern era.

Yes, each of us must come to a decision, each of us must take a position based on conscience—but make sure that our consciences are well informed by the Church's wisdom. †

PODCASTS

continued from page 1

Church celebrates the institution of the priesthood—Holy Thursday. It started on that feast on April 17, 2025, and concluded earlier this month with its 351st episode on April 2.

So, how does Father Ahern look back on agreeing to do a podcast with his friend just to make him be quiet?

“Well, best laid plans, you know,” he says with smile and a shrug.

The priests are among a wide variety of Catholics across central and southern Indiana who explore the faith in diverse ways through podcasts of their own and inviting others to dive in it more deeply with them.

The wide range of podcasts created by Catholics in the archdiocese can be seen in the three that are profiled in this article. There’s “Priest Cast,” which focuses on the diocesan priesthood.

Then there’s “ArchIndy Vox,” a relatively new podcast of the archdiocese’s Secretariat for Communications, which helps listeners learn about a wide variety of Catholic beliefs and practices, often related to liturgical seasons or events happening in the local Church.

Finally, “All Set for Sunday” sees two Catholic dads try to help, in the words of the description for their podcast, “busy or distracted Catholic parents be a little more prepared for Sunday Mass.”

See an accompanying article for a list of other podcasts produced by Catholics from central and southern Indiana. Even that list won’t include them all, since the list of such podcasts is growing.

‘All Set for Sunday’

Scott Williams and Jeff Traylor talked back in 2019 about creating a podcast about the Sunday Mass readings. At the time, Williams was a new father and



Jeff Traylor, left, talks during a March 19 recording session at the Indianapolis offices of Catholic Concepts for the “All Set for Sunday” podcast he co-hosts with Scott Williams, right. Father Andrew Syberg, center, is the guest priest for the episode. The podcast focuses on the Sunday Mass readings and features different priests from week to week. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

CARE CENTER

continued from page 1

Soon, women will have two Indianapolis WCC locations to choose from, as renovations of a building downtown begin this summer for a second center in the city.

When the northwest side Women’s Care Center opened, “I don’t think any of us would have imagined the need,” says Katherine Kelly, executive outreach director of the South Bend, Ind.-based nonprofit organization founded in 1984 by a Catholic professor at the University of Notre Dame. “That center is serving over 4,000 women a year.

“Today, no other center—not just the 38 Women’s Care Centers in 12 states but no other pregnancy care center in the United States—serves more women and saves more babies than Women’s Care Center in Indianapolis. So, the success of the first Indianapolis center is really what pointed to such a clear need for more.” Kelly says when the new center opens at a date to be determined, it is expected to serve 1,000 women in its first year, eventually rising to more than 2,500 women annually.

Locating the new WCC in the heart of the city was an intentional, strategic choice, says Kelly—and part of “God’s perfect timing.”

‘We knew this was it’

With the “changing landscape of abortion in Indiana,” Kelly says having convenient pregnancy care center locations is critical.

“It’s so important that we are easily visible and easily accessed so that women have that other opportunity to learn and make the best decision for themselves and for their future,” she says. “This downtown location really helps us do that in a few ways.”

First, the location at 705 E. Market Street is surrounded by four of the state’s zip codes identified by the Indiana Department of Health as having the highest concentration of pregnant women in need.

“That means low-income women, women of color, single women, single mothers and those who are on Medicaid,” Kelly explains. “These are also the women who are most at risk for abortion.”

Another benefit is the property’s location on a corner lot just one block from a highway exit, making it convenient and accessible to areas outside of the four zip codes.

Finally, the property purchased has a standalone building, making the new center



Katherine Kelly

“super visible, much more than if it were in some high-rise or big plaza,” says Kelly.

And at 5,300 square feet, the center should be able to offer seven counseling rooms and three ultrasound rooms like the northwest side facility.

As an added bonus, the property has a paved parking lot with 25 spaces—a tremendous asset in a city with little free parking.

Finding such a perfect spot was no accident.

“You really do have to let the Holy Spirit guide this process, it’s something you can’t force,” says Kelly. “We have been very patient, waiting, searching diligently, but knowing that when it was the right opportunity, when it was the optimal location, we would know.”

“When the property at 705 East Market [Street] became available last year, we knew this was it. It was perfect.”

‘It’s our job to walk with her’

At this new, “perfect” site, women experiencing an unplanned pregnancy will receive the same love, encouragement and accompaniment offered at every Women’s Care Center.

It’s a form of committed care that extends beyond the baby’s birth.

“It’s so important to walk with that woman from the moment she discovers she’s pregnant until she sends her little one off to kindergarten,” says Kelly.

would be the easiest thing to cross off the list. But I also think that that’s probably what the devil wants us to do. So, I think it’s even more of a reason to double down and say, ‘We are going to keep doing this.’”

Although “All Set for Sunday” has grabbed the attention of people far beyond the archdiocese, Traylor knows that the podcast isn’t nearly as important as what it points to.

“Is it the be all, end all? No. But the Eucharist is,” he said. “If what we’re doing is pointing in that direction, then I’m OK with it being important.”

“But if someone told me that they listen every week but don’t go to Mass, I’d say, ‘You should stop listening and just go to Mass.’”

‘ArchIndy Vox’

While many Catholics across central and southern Indiana have been producing podcasts about the faith for many years, the archdiocese just began its own podcast seven months ago.

Launched last September, “ArchIndy Vox” explores all facets of the faith through conversations that Emily Mastronicola, archdiocesan social media coordinator, has with ministry leaders across the archdiocese.

In just seven months, listeners have heard episodes, each about 30 minutes long, that cover topics as wide-ranging as Black Catholic ministry, ecumenism, Catholic schools, the Church’s social teaching and how to prepare for Christmas during the season of Advent.

“We’re able in the podcast to talk about the truth, beauty and goodness of the Church and how that’s being lived out today in events that are happening in the archdiocese,” Mastronicola said.

Mary King, the archdiocese’s assistant communications director, described the podcast simply as a way to reach more people with the Gospel in a time when the listening and viewing options for people are increasing.

“It’s like Jesus, meeting people where they’re at,” King said. “There are so many different options out there. Everything’s so fragmented in the way people get their information in the digital space.”

Because the potential listenership of the podcast could include people who have little or no knowledge of the faith, Mastronicola said she and her guests try to be “hospitable with the dialogue and what we’re conversing” and to avoid “insider language.”

King and Mastronicola talk with archdiocesan ministry leaders to develop episode topics, which sometimes are adapted to respond to events happening in the broader Church and society.

Shortly before the start of Lent this year, social unrest in Minneapolis related to federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement operations led “ArchIndy Vox” to focus on the Church’s social teaching during the season leading up to Easter.

“We were going to do something entirely different,” Mastronicola said. “But then we were just listening to the people around us in ministry and saw how this was a really big need. How could we fulfill this need and also still talk about this penitential season of Lent?”

In whatever direction “ArchIndy Vox” goes in the future, King and Mastronicola agreed that the podcast will be aimed at drawing listeners closer to Christ and the Church.

“I just want them to grow closer to Jesus Christ in any form, at any level, from wherever they’re at,” King said.

“The Gospel needs to be everywhere—on podcasts, on social media, in print, in our conversations,” Mastronicola added. “This is just another place where we can take the Gospel and present it to somebody.”

‘Priest Cast’

When they launched “Priest Cast” on Holy Thursday last year, Father Michael Keucher and Father Adam Ahern wanted to promote vocations to the diocesan priesthood through the topics they discussed on the podcast from day to day.

But even before that, they saw the podcast as a way to help listeners experience how priests live out their vocation every day.

In episodes that range from 10 to 40 minutes in length, the priests would chat about what was happening in their ministry and parishes.

In addition to serving as archdiocesan vocations director, Father Keucher leads St. Joseph Parish in Shelbyville and St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Shelby County.

Father Ahern ministers as pastor of the parishes of Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and St. Augustine, both in Jeffersonville. He also serves as an associate vocations director in the archdiocese.

So, they’re busy priests. But they’re also happy.

“We don’t pretend to be happy. We are happy,” Father Ahern said. “We’re not on the podcast trying to put rose-colored glasses on the priesthood. We don’t sit there and pretend that everything is great when it’s really not. But what we do is try to focus on the good that we have in our lives. And that’s very uplifting for me personally in my day in and day out life.”

“Naming grace in our priesthood, in a daily fashion, is really beautiful,” Father Keucher added. “Being able to name how God is working in the priesthood, in a lived way through us is really powerful.”

After concluding the first season of “Priest Cast” on Holy Thursday on April 2, the priests are taking a break. But they plan on starting the second season soon. It won’t be posted daily, though, and the format will change.

“We’re probably going to do more interviews with various priests, because the priesthood is lived out in a special way by each priest,” Father Keucher explained.

Other podcasts on the faith produced by Catholics across the archdiocese

By Sean Gallagher

Creating podcasts that in varied ways feature the Catholic faith is a growing phenomenon among the faithful in central and southern Indiana.

Below is a list of some of these podcasts. These and others may be featured in future installments in an occasional series in *The Criterion* on podcasts with ties to the archdiocese.

They are posted on most online platforms where podcasts can be found.

—“**Pizza and Side Hugs**” is a podcast produced by the archdiocesan Office of Youth Ministry. It is co-hosted by Rachel Gilman, archdiocesan director of youth ministry; Paul Sifuentes, senior director of the archdiocesan Department for Parish Leadership; and Julia Eckrich and Jake Teitgen, who are both on staff at Our Lady of Grace



Emily Mastronicola, left, and Mary King pose on March 25 in a recording studio at the Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center in Indianapolis. Mastronicola is the host of “ArchIndy Vox,” a podcast launched last September and produced by the archdiocesan Secretariat for Communications. King is assistant director of communications for the archdiocese and works with Mastronicola in developing podcast topics. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

The priests have heard from many listeners who are young men open to a possible call to the diocesan priesthood, an audience they particularly want to reach with “Priest Cast.”

“For so many people, discernment begins with just a quiet thought in their own mind that grows from there,” Father Ahern said. “In particular, the first stages of their discernment are very private and intimate and personal. So, in listening to a podcast, you’re not making a big public statement about your discernment. It’s a way for you to begin to enter into that discernment sphere in a private, personal way.”

Father Keucher describes good Catholic podcasts as “spiritual listening” that can “empower people to live holier and better lives.”

“We need to be where the people are,” he added. “And if the people are online, we need to be online.”

(“All Set for Sunday,” “ArchIndy Vox” and “Priest Cast” are available for listening on most online platforms such as Spotify and “Apple Podcasts” which make podcasts available.) †

Parish in Noblesville, Ind., in the Lafayette Diocese.

The podcast is geared toward people who work in and/or support youth ministry, which can include parish youth ministers and volunteers, pastors and parents. Its title refers to staples of youth ministry and its leaders: pizza at youth ministry meetings and giving teens “side hugs.”

Episodes vary in length from 20 minutes to an hour and are posted about every two weeks.

—“**Living the CLOVER Life**” is a podcast produced by St. Malachy Parish in Brownsburg and is co-hosted by pastor Father Sean Danda and Nathaniel Rea, the parish’s director of evangelization and catechesis.

The acronym “CLOVER” in the title is a reference to “Shamrocks” being the name of the parish’s athletic teams. It also stands for six principles of the Catholic faith: confession, life, Our Lady, vocations, Eucharist and the revealed word.

The topics for the weekly episodes, which usually range from 10 to 30 minutes in length, are often drawn from these principles.

—“**Echoes from the Bell Tower**” is a podcast produced by the Benedictine monks of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad. It had 33 episodes posted semi-regularly between 2016 and 2020 before going on a hiatus.

Recently, however, the monks have revived “Echoes from the Bell Tower” and plan on posting more episodes in the future.

The podcast initially explored many facets of the life of the monks at Saint Meinrad and their ministries. New episodes will feature interviews with alumni of the monastery’s primary ministry, Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad. †

says Krystan. “But coming here made me feel like I got things for my baby myself. I came to the classes and got the coupons all on my own. All the big stuff was taken care of from [Women’s Care Center]. Basically everything I have in use from the classes—car seats, stroller, clothes. ...

“The fact that you can come after the baby is born for classes or support or [items] is so helpful.”

The classes also help the women “build a little community,” says Kelly. “They build friendships, their kids build friendships, and that’s so important as a parent. It can be such an isolating time. “So, creating a space where there are other women in similar situations as you with children that are identical ages as yours, it really is a community, and it’s so important to continue that for years.”

This network of care, help and encouragement is offered at no charge to the women served. All of WCC’s services are free: pregnancy tests, ultrasounds, counseling pregnant women on options, help finding prenatal care, accompaniment from “cradle to kindergarten,” classes and post-abortion counseling.

WCC’s compassionate approach made choosing life possible for Krystan—and for tens of thousands other women as well.

‘It’s beautiful when women say yes’

As Kelly noted, WCC has 38 locations in 12 states. Together, those sites served

44,000 women in 2025, with 91% choosing life for their baby.

Through the compassionate care at the current WCC in Indianapolis, women in unplanned pregnancies chose life for nearly 2,600 babies in 2024.

“That means one in five of the [nearly 14,500] babies born in the entire [Marion] county got their beautiful start at Women’s Care Center in Indianapolis,” Kelly notes.

The center served more than 4,000 women in 2025—15% more than the year prior.

The WCC organization aims to serve a total of 100,000 women by 2032, says Kelly, “and the new Indianapolis location will be critical in achieving that goal.”

Donations of funds and items are always welcome, but there is another essential gift Kelly lists first among the organization’s needs: prayer.

“It seems so simple, and I think we oftentimes overlook it,” she says. “But it’s so critical to pray for the moms, pray for the babies, pray for the staff that are serving these women in really, really difficult situations.

“Those situations can sometimes make choosing life really hard. But it’s beautiful when women still say yes because they find the support that they need at Women’s Care Center, and have that courage and confidence in themselves to know that they can do it. It’s really beautiful.”



The new Women’s Care Center in downtown Indianapolis will have a Crib Club baby store, like this one at the Women’s Care Center on the northwest side of Indianapolis, where moms can use coupons earned through visits and classes to select new items for their baby. (File photo by Natalie Hofer)

(To learn more about Women’s Care Center or to donate to their efforts in Indianapolis, go to supportwomenscarecenter.org. To mail donations for the Indianapolis centers, checks made out to “Women’s Care Center” can be mailed to Women’s Care Center, 4901 W. 86th St., Indianapolis, IN,

46268. Donations of new or gently used items can be dropped off at that address between 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Call ahead at 317-829-6800 to confirm what items are accepted and to note when you’ll arrive so a staff member can meet you at the door on the north side of the building, facing 86th Street.) †

Pope Leo XIV honors Pope Francis on death anniversary, recalling his mercy and closeness to ‘the little ones’

ABOARD THE PAPAL PLANE (OSV News)—Flying over the west coast of central Africa on April 21, Pope Leo XIV paused to honor Pope Francis on the first anniversary of his predecessor’s death, remembering the Argentine pope’s witness to mercy and closeness to the poor.



Pope Leo XIV

On the papal flight from Luanda, Angola, to Malabo, the capital of Equatorial Guinea, Pope Leo spoke to journalists traveling with him, reflecting on the legacy of Pope Francis, who died on April 21, 2025.

“I would like to remember, on this first anniversary of his death, Pope Francis, who gave so much to the Church with his life, his testimony, his words, and his gestures,” Pope Leo told reporters, speaking in Italian. He recalled how Pope Francis truly lived with

See related story, page 15.

“closeness to the poorest, the little ones, the sick, the children, the elderly.

“We can also remember his message of mercy,” Pope Leo said, remembering in particular how his predecessor invited the entire Church to join in the “beautiful celebration of an extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy.”

Pope Francis, born Jorge Mario Bergoglio on Dec. 17, 1936, in Buenos Aires, led the Catholic Church from his election as bishop of Rome on March 13, 2013, until his death on Easter Monday 2025. He was the first Jesuit pope and the first pope from Latin America.

The late pope’s final public appearance was on Easter Sunday, April 20, 2025, when he unexpectedly came out on the central loggia of St. Peter’s Basilica, raising his hands to wave to thousands of faithful gathered below in the square.

“Happy Easter,” he told the crowd, before delivering what would be his last Easter blessing, “*urbi et orbi*,” to the city and the world. The visibly frail pope then boarded his popemobile for a final pass through the square to greet the faithful.

“We pray that he is already enjoying the mercy of the Lord and we thank the Lord for the great gift of Francis’ life to the whole Church and to the whole world,” Pope Leo said on the flight.

In Rome, the anniversary of Pope Francis’ death was marked with a Mass held in the Basilica of St. Mary Major, the final resting place of the late pope.

Pope Leo reflected on his predecessor’s legacy on the papal flight to Equatorial Guinea, the last African country on the pope’s 11-day apostolic journey to the continent.

After his tribute, the pope responded to



Pope Francis embraces a young woman during his general audience in the Paul VI hall at the Vatican on Feb. 9, 2022. Pope Francis, formerly Argentine Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio, died on April 21, 2025, at age 88. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

three questions from Angolan journalists about his experience in their country.

Pope Leo said that it was “a joy to see the places in the world where the Church is growing,” noting that is not the case in other parts of the world, underlining that this is “a call to evangelization, to continue to announce the Gospel and to try to invite others, not with proselytism as Pope Francis said so many times, but with the beauty, the attraction of faith.

“The joy of believers is one of the best announcements of faith, of the Gospel,” he added.

Speaking at roughly 30,000 feet, the pope also wished happy birthday to two journalists on the plane who are traveling as part of the Vatican press corps.

During the papal trip to four countries in Africa, Pope Leo has been flexing his language skills, preaching at Masses and giving speeches in French, English and Portuguese. On each flight to a new country, Pope Leo has spoken to journalists aboard the papal plane in either English or Italian.

In his final destination, the pope will add another language to that list, as Equatorial Guinea is the only Spanish-speaking country in Africa.

Pope Leo’s April 21–23 visit to Equatorial Guinea will be only the second papal visit to the country; the first was by St. John Paul II in 1982.

The papal visit coincides with the 170th anniversary of evangelization in the country, where roughly 75% of the 1.67 million population is Catholic.

In Equatorial Guinea, Pope Leo will stop at a psychiatric hospital in the capital Malabo, visit a prison in Bata, and pray at a memorial to victims of a 2021 military base explosion that killed more than 100 people. A papal Mass in Mongomo at the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception is expected to draw 100,000 Catholics.

Sister Francine Hien of the Missionary Sisters of Mary Immaculate told OSV News the Christian-majority country was awaiting the pope’s arrival with “enthusiasm, expectations, zeal and joy.” †

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SIMPLY CATHOLIC

Knights are a continuing sign of influence of Blessed Michael McGivney

(Editor's note: With 2026 being the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States, this story is part of a continuing series of occasional "Simply Catholic" articles about great Catholics who have called America their home.)

By Russell Shaw

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

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

That happened, largely unnoticed, in early February of 1882 in New Haven, Conn., in the basement of St. Mary Church. The young parish priest had assembled 80 Catholic laymen—Irish-Americans like himself—who voted to launch the new group. No one, least of all Father McGivney, suspected that 144 years later the Knights of Columbus would grow to be an international body of around 2 million Catholic men and a powerful force for good.

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

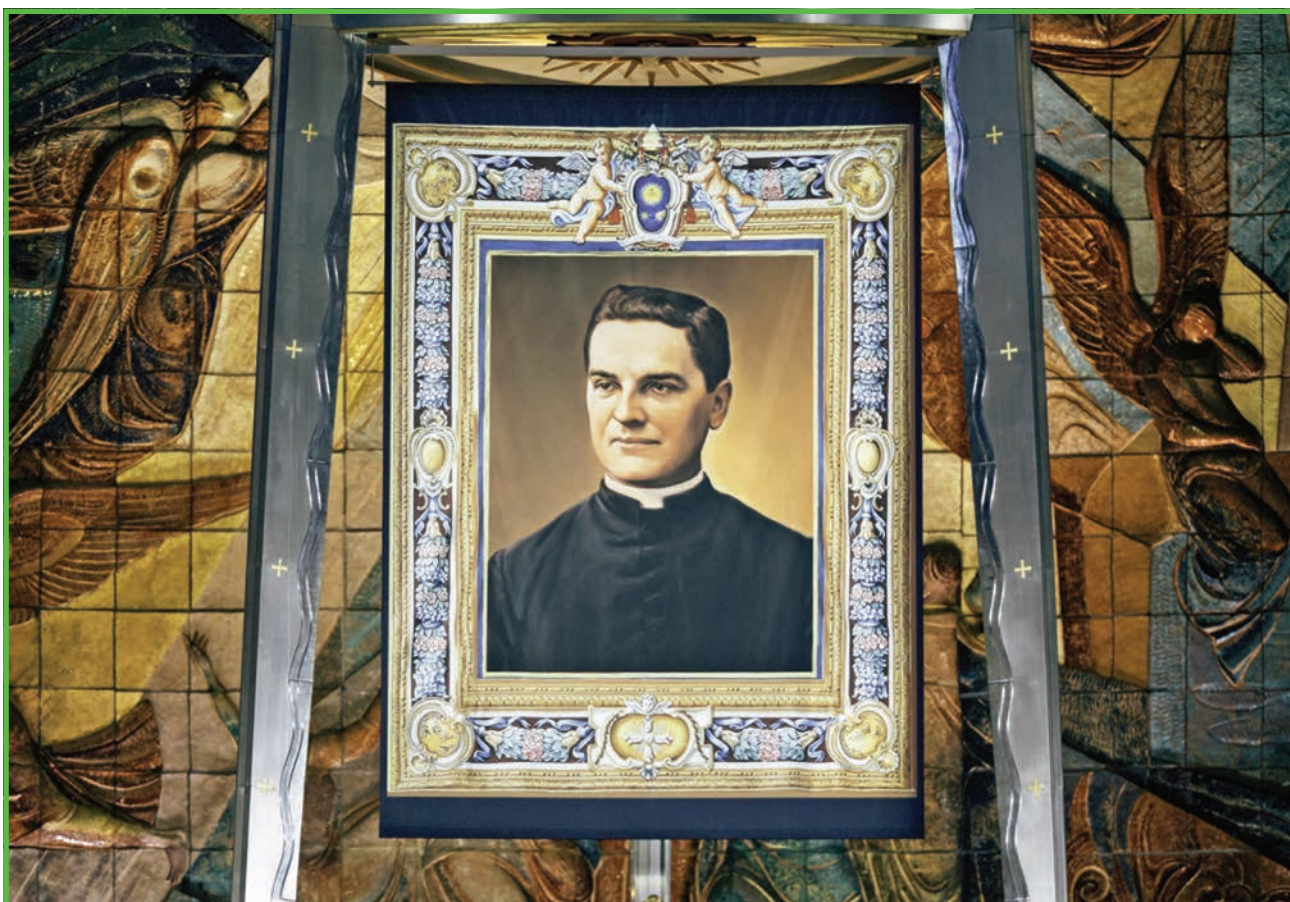
The priest's contribution to the United States was recently highlighted when St. Mary—where Father McGivney's remains are interred—was chosen to host a Pentecost Vigil Mass in 2024 that served as the launch for the eastern route of the first National Eucharistic Pilgrimage.

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

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

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

They struggled to put down roots but succeeded in



A giant tapestry with a portrait of Blessed Michael McGivney, founder of the Knights of Columbus, is seen during his beatification Mass on Oct. 31, 2020, at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Hartford, Conn. It was unveiled at the conclusion of the beatification rite at the start of the Mass. (CNS photo/courtesy Knights of Columbus)

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

In 1834, an Ursuline convent outside of Boston was burned to the ground by an angry mob. In the years that followed, anti-Catholic and anti-Irish violence flared in other cities. Launching a new anti-Catholic group in 1842, Protestant ministers summed up widely held sentiments in declaring Catholic principles to be "subversive of civil and religious liberty." When priests like Father McGivney sought to promote the interests of the Church and their people, they had their work cut out for them.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Two years after the founding, Father McGivney was named pastor of St. Thomas Parish in Thomaston, Conn. Responsibility for a second parish also came with the job. Working alone, he carried a backbreaking pastoral load while managing to stay active in defending and promoting the Knights.

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

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

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

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

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

Undoubtedly true, yet in recent years people familiar with the group have sensed a change, with fidelity to Catholic beliefs and values increasingly leading the Knights of Columbus to take a countercultural stance toward secular culture. This is especially true on issues like the defense of unborn life and traditional marriage. The Knights' strongly held commitment to human life and the family makes the Knights an important part of the pro-life and pro-family movements.

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

(Russell Shaw, a longtime journalist and writer, was the author of more than 20 books, including three novels. He died in January 2026.) †



Franciscan Sister Olivia Rico, who serves in the vocations office of the Diocese of Lubbock, Texas, prays before a relic of Blessed Michael McGivney on March 8, 2023, at Christ the King Cathedral in Lubbock. (OSV News photo/Lucas Flores, Diocese of Lubbock)

Faith and Family/Sean Gallagher

Even if a dad can't fix a faucet, he can turn on his children to faith

It was common in the past for sons to follow in the manual labor or profession of their father. This, of course, was in times when most who worked outside the home were men.



This longstanding trend in labor in society led to a whole series of surnames tied to lines of work. Here are some of the fairly obvious examples in English: Baker, Brewer, Gardiner, Mason, Miller, Shepherd and Weaver.

Others might come as more of a surprise today. The surname Kellogg referred in the medieval England to

butchers (bringing together Middle English words for “kill hog”).

That we live today in a society where the next generation's occupation isn't tied to that of the former has been brought home to me quite clearly.

Three of my sons are quite proficient in skills related to plumbing, electrical, carpentry and HVAC work. They're handy around the house and are either making a living with these skills or are considering work in one of those fields.

My son Raphael, now 21, works as an apartment complex maintenance technician, handling a wide array of tasks, from HVAC work to plumbing and electrical work. Victor, 19, is considering work as an electrician. And Philip, 16, is confident in taking on lots of jobs around our home. He's thinking about going into carpentry in the future.

None of these young men have been inspired to go into these fields by watching dear old Dad do similar work around the house. Why? Because I'm about the least handy person there is.

My dad, God rest his soul, was the handiest person that I've known. But he wasn't a great teacher. He'd try to show me how to do different jobs around the house. But if I had any trouble with it (which was often), he'd quickly take over and I'd end up as a spectator.

Maybe Raphael, Victor and Philip were better students than I was because they did learn some skills from their Papa and are still learning ways of working around the house from my father-in-law Steve. And, like many people today, they have also turned effectively to YouTube to learn how to install or fix lots of things.

All of this might leave me feeling inadequate in my life as a father. But that's not the case, even when I read

these words of our Lord: “A son cannot do anything on his own, but only what he sees his father doing for what he does, his son will do also” (Jn 5:19).

He's referring here to his relationship with his heavenly Father in explaining to the Jewish leaders of his day the miracles he was working.

While my sons haven't seen me install a new lighting fixture or clean out a clogged drain, they've hopefully seen me seeking, with the help of God's grace, to embody my faith in many little and sometimes big ways in the life of our family that we share.

Now I'm quick to confess that I fall short in this in various ways every day. But what's most important is that my sons over the years have seen me make faith a lived priority every day. I pray daily that they make it a priority in their own lives.

God calls parents to teach their children lots of things. At the top of that list is forming them by word and witness to be disciples of our Lord in prayer, service and sharing the faith with others.

That may be a taller task than teaching a young person how to fix a leaky faucet. But God gives grace to every parent to lead their children every day into an ever-closer relationship with him and his Church. †

That All May Be One/Fr. Rick Ginther

Learning about other religions without allowing prejudices to interfere

“I confess to almighty God, and to you, my brothers and sisters ... what I have done and what I have failed to do ...” (from the Penitential Act of Mass)

We move through this prayer and then on to other liturgy moments (the *Gloria*, the Collect). We are given little time to mentally name specific actions or failures to act.



Let's consider one action seldom named at this moment, let alone in daily life: religious prejudice evidenced by our words, attitudes and false conclusions.

These three have a generic behavioral cousin: gossiping, that is, bearing false witness in some instances, or the sin of detraction in others. These sins are often named during the sacrament of reconciliation.

But what we say, think or harbor about another religion or religious group reveals our deep, often hidden or masked, sinful attitudes.

For example, Jews, Judaism and antisemitism. They are not the same thing, but they are clearly related.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, in conjunction with the American Jewish Committee, published in December 2024 “Translate Hate: Stopping Antisemitism Starts with Understanding it.”

The work contains a glossary of 61 terms which have antisemitic roots. The glossary reveals that these have roots in and reveal antisemitic attitudes.

This document can be found through a simple online search: Translate Hate, Catholic Edition.

Christians often show their lack of understanding concerning Mormons, or the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS).

They are labelled “polygamists,” even though polygamy was doctrinally rejected in the latter 19th century. While the LDS rejected the practice, there continue to be splinter Mormon groups that accept and live out the practice.

“Magic underwear” is a derogatory term for the temple garment worn by adult members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They wear them as a reminder of sacred covenants they made in a temple.

And finally, the interior of LDS temples, considered “holy” upon dedication, are

closed to non-believers. This appears to many as inhospitable, even exclusionary, secretive. But by LDS understanding, access is limited to “temple recommend” members.

Some Christians also harbor a number of prejudicial misconceptions about Muslims.

For example, some believe Muslims wish to conquer the world and impose sharia law through *jihad*.

“*Jihad*” is an Arabic word for “striving” or “exertion.”

Greater *jihad* is the taming of oneself: words, attitudes, lower urgings, striving for greater faith and practice of Islam.

Lesser *jihad* is the struggle to defend Islam and the community from aggression and oppression. Sadly, the “lesser” has been co-opted by extremists, a scandal to most Muslims.

Then, there is the misconception that all Arabs are Muslims, forgetting that some Arabs are Christians and other smaller groups, such as the Yazidi and Druze. Or the misconception that all Muslims are Middle Eastern—when the majority are actually in Indonesia and sub-Saharan Africa.

Catholics can have short memories of the religious and ethnic prejudices we have borne over the centuries. We were, and still are, called fish eaters, mackerel snappers, Bible haters, statue worshippers, papists.

History has witnessed many Catholic immigrants to the U.S. suffering religious and ethnic prejudice—Irish, Italians, Eastern Europeans, Vietnamese refugees, Haitians, Latinos.

And don't forget the struggle in 1960 when a Catholic sought the highest office of our land. It was an uphill battle, but John F. Kennedy was elected to lead our country.

“... in what I have done, and in what I have failed to do ...”

Perhaps this reflection will lead us to admit how our religious prejudices exist, are hidden, and are sinful. Perhaps our failing to do the task of learning about the other may now be undertaken.

(Father Rick Ginther is director of the archdiocesan Office of Ecumenism and Interreligious Affairs. He is retired from full-time pastoral ministry but is still active as a priest of the archdiocese.) †

It Is Good/Elizabeth Scalia

Old lines, new thoughts: Pondering by writing out a Gospel by hand

Because my Lent took a nosedive about two-thirds of the way through, I am still immersed in a project I undertook in order to get my spiritual groove back:

Writing out the Gospel of Mark, in longhand.



It has been a very interesting, instructive and spiritually enlivening experience and I recommend the practice to anyone—in fact, I may spend the next three Lenten seasons writing out the other Gospels because the practice is opening up Scripture for me in a surprisingly thoughtful way.

Over-familiar lines that have washed past me for years are suddenly jumping out and forcing me into frequent and unexpected *lectio divina*, as I obey the nudge to stop and ponder, pray and (usually) journal over a word or phrase before I can move on.

Admittedly, the hand will cramp sometimes, but putting pen to paper is known to excite areas of the brain that go unused when we're at the keyboard, or endlessly scrolling our phones and computers.

In an era of predictable commentary from almost every side (being served up every day by stubborn, omnipresent algorithms), it seems jump-starting the synapses and refreshing one's own thought patterns with a bit of cursive writing can only be a good thing.

My own experience gives witness to the value

of picking up a pen. When dealing with writer's block, I will pull out the old legal pad and start laying my herky-jerky thoughts down by hand. If the effort is tentative to start, it doesn't take long for my thoughts to slip into fluid order as speedily as my Catholic school penmanship will permit. Very quickly, the logjam ends and the thoughts and structures flow unimpeded.

In writing out Mark's Gospel, old lines I've ceased to really hear have suddenly come alive, speaking to me in very personal ways. I read, “Who touched my garments?” (Mk 5:30) and must consider how my most hidden intentions are seen by God and can contribute to cooperation with heaven, if my own faith allows.

I see the Syrophenician woman boldly tell the Christ, “Lord, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs” (Mk 7:28) and recall that bringing our whole selves into prayerful dialogue means making a humble but rigorous stand before God, delivering reason to our supplications when God-permitted circumstances seem unreasonable.

I hear Jesus saying, “Come away by yourselves to a lonely place, and rest a while” (Mk 6:31) and realize how much I long for solitude with him, and how infrequently I actually pursue that ageless time and space.

A passage that has resonated with me these weeks, though, is “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth, have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God” (Mk 1:24). Singular

or plural, the opening question is profound. What *have* you to do with me, Jesus of Nazareth? Why do you care? Why am I here? What are you going to do with me?

“Have you come to destroy us” may seem an inapplicable question, but not when paired with the “dangerous prayer of blessing” we make when we sincerely pray, “Thy will be done”—a surrender which can sometimes feel like it translates to “go ahead, wreck my life.” He has come to save, not destroy. But that salvation doesn't always look benign.

And finally, the proclamation that is both presumptuous and permitted: “I know who you are—the Holy One of God!” It is presumptuous because none of us can wholly know the All-in-All, yet permitted because it is true—so true that even unclean spirits shout the fact of it aloud—“the Holy One of God!”

I've loved the phrase since I was a child; pondering it throughout Lent became a lasting gift, once more, as it reminds: “*Jesus est Dominus*”—“Jesus is Lord” (Phil 2:11).

I haven't quite finished Mark, but Philippians might be a good book to write out during the 50 days of Easter as they quickly pass; it is only four chapters long.

I can't wait to start it. Care to join me?

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

Fourth Sunday of Easter/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, April 26, 2026

- Acts 2:14a, 36-41
- 1 Peter 2:20b-25
- John 10:1-10



Readings from the Acts of the Apostles frequently serve as the first reading at weekend Masses during the Easter season. They clearly show the life of the early Church, including the special place of the Apostles among the first Christians and that St. Peter was the leader of the Apostles.

Inevitably, Peter speaks on behalf of all the Apostles. Such is the case in this weekend's first reading. Peter preaches. His sermon goes to the heart of the Gospel message. Jesus is Lord, the Savior. He came among humans as a human, but also as God's own Son. He died. He rose. He reconciled humanity with Almighty God.

Humans have an option. They can accept Jesus as Lord. They can follow the Gospel. Or they can reject Jesus.

The author of Acts, traditionally believed also to have been the author of Luke's Gospel, dates the sermon. It was preached on Pentecost, a Jewish holiday. Jewish holidays celebrated God's relationship with the Hebrew people. The holidays therefore celebrated the covenant and God's constant and uninterrupted mercy. In this case, the Jews recalled their special status as the people whom God protected and through whom God was revealed.

The First Epistle of St. Peter provides the second reading. Jesus died on the cross to bring God and humanity together forever and without any qualification. Individual persons affirm this reconciliation for themselves by freely accepting Jesus as Lord and, with the help of God's grace, by living as the Lord's true disciples, as children of God.

St. John's Gospel, the source of the last reading, presents a theme that was among the Lord's favorites and that always has been beloved by Christians, namely the theme of the Good Shepherd.

Today in our society, the imagery may

not be as immediately telling as in a rural society. Shepherding is not that often a livelihood in America, but at the time of Jesus in the Holy Land, everyone would have been familiar with shepherds and sheep.

The nature of sheep is important. They are docile and quiet, vulnerable to predators such as wolves. They need their shepherds. Also, young sheep, or lambs, were the preferred animals for sacrifice in the temple because lambs were gentle and innocent. The meat of lambs was ritually prepared for Passover.

Sheep may wander. The shepherd does not tie them to himself. He leads them, but they can turn away from him.

The Gospel's message is clear. All humans are apt to stray, to be in danger, as sheep without a shepherd to guide and protect them.

Jesus is the Good Shepherd, leading us to pastures rich with nutrition, protecting us from the predators that prowl in search of us, predators that literally kill us by succeeding in tempting us to sin.

Reflection

Several weeks have passed since Easter, but the Church still rejoices in the risen Lord. He lives! Giving us the words once preached by Peter, it calls us to repent, to turn away from sin and to turn to the only source of life, the Lord Jesus.

Preparing us for this message, the Church frankly reminds us of who and what we are. We are as vulnerable as sheep. Predators lurk on every side, waiting to assail us. The devil is the most vicious and crafty of these predators. The devil draws us to death, since sin is death.

Jesus is our Good Shepherd. He leads us to the nourishment we need for spiritual health. He guides us to the eternal fields of heaven.

The essence of this weekend's message is clear and simple. We need the Lord. Otherwise, we shall die.

We can follow the Lord, or we can go our own way, just as sheep may wander. But if we turn from Jesus, we walk into peril. †

Daily Readings

Monday, April 27

Acts 11:1-18
Psalm 42:2-3; 43:3-4
John 10:11-18

Tuesday, April 28

St. Peter Chanel, priest and martyr
St. Louis Grignon de Montfort, priest
Acts 11:19-26
Psalm 87:1b-7
John 10:22-30

Wednesday, April 29

St. Catherine of Siena, virgin and doctor of the Church
Acts 12:24-13:5a
Psalm 67:2-3, 5-6, 8
John 12:44-50

Thursday, April 30

St. Pius V, pope
Acts 13:13-25

Psalm 89:2-3, 21-22, 25, 27
John 13:16-20

Friday, May 1

St. Joseph the Worker
Acts 13:26-33
Psalm 2:6-11b
John 14:1-6

Saturday, May 2

St. Athanasius, bishop and doctor of the Church
Acts 13:44-52
Psalm 98:1-4
John 14:7-14

Sunday, May 3

Fifth Sunday of Easter
Acts 6:1-7
Psalm 33:1-2, 4-5, 18-19
1 Peter 2:4-9
John 14:1-12

Question Corner/Jenna Marie Cooper

Church alone sets forth the texts for prayers and responses in the liturgy

Q Is it ever acceptable to say something other than "amen" when receiving Communion? Would "thank you,"



"he's alive" or even "hallelujah!" ever work? (Indiana)

A The short answer is no, the one and only appropriate response when receiving holy Communion is to say "amen" after the

Communion minister says "the body of Christ."

As we read in the "General Instruction of the *Roman Missal*" (which sets forth directions for the celebration of the Eucharist) at the time when Communion is given to the faithful: "the priest raises the host slightly and shows it to each, saying, 'The Body of Christ.' The communicant replies, 'Amen'" (#161).

Although the "General Instruction of the *Roman Missal*" does go on to give some minor variations of this exchange, it never lists any other communicants' responses besides "amen," nor does it envision or provide for alternative responses as a possibility.

There are a few reasons why we should "stick to the script" when receiving Communion.

Very practically, if we get too creative in our responses, in some places that could cause the Communion minister to question whether we are Catholic and thus whether we are prepared and permitted to receive holy Communion.

But on a deeper level, the word "amen," while difficult to translate into English exactly, means something along the lines of: "I agree," "so be it" or "this is true." When the minister presents the host to the one receiving Communion with the words "the body of Christ,"

by saying "amen" the communicant is professing his or her belief in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

And it would seem that at the time of Communion, a moment where the communicant is about to interact with Christ present in the Blessed Sacrament in a very immediate and intimate way, an expression of belief in the real presence is what is actually called for at that instant. That is, reception of holy Communion is a less appropriate moment to express other sentiments, even otherwise good and pious sentiments like a belief in Christ's resurrection.

Finally, and most foundationally, it's important to remember that Mass is not a Catholic's private prayer, but is rather the cornerstone of the liturgy of the entire Church. Other kinds of liturgy include the celebration of other sacraments and the Liturgy of the Hours.

Unlike private or devotional prayer wherein we pray to God personally in our own voice, liturgical prayer is the voice of the Church itself. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* expresses this beautifully in paragraph 1071: "As the work of Christ, liturgy is also an action of his Church. It makes the Church present and manifests her as the visible sign of the communion in Christ between God and men."

Because the liturgy is the public prayer of the Church, it can only be changed or added to by the Holy See in Rome—by the pope's own authority—or in some well-defined and limited circumstances, by the diocesan bishop or the local bishops' conference.

As the Vatican II document "*Sacrosanctum Concilium*" tells us that "no other person, even if he be a priest, may add, remove or change anything in the liturgy on his own authority" (#22.3). Taking this to its logical conclusion, it would follow that a lay member of the faithful is likewise prohibited from inventing new responses for their reception of a sacrament.

That all being said, even while we are obligated to say the instructed "amen" response when receiving Communion, there is still room for expressing ourselves more personally to Jesus present in the Blessed Sacrament. The "General Instruction of the *Roman Missal*" calls for a "period of sacred silence after Communion," when the communicants who have just received can prayerfully offer the thoughts of their own hearts to the Lord (#43).

(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

UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

By Lynell Chamberlain

My heart sings with joy when I think of you,
My glorious God above,
Overcome by the power and tenderness
Of your all-embracing love.

I can't comprehend how such perfectness
Deigns to love even me,
A sinner fueled by selfishness,
Anger, fear, and greed.

But this unconditional love of God
Bathes me in its light,
And breaks the chains that sin has forged
With all its power and might.

(Lynell Chamberlain is a member of St. John Paul II Parish in Sellersburg. Photo: This image portrays the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which Christ revealed to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque on Dec. 27, 1673. As part of the celebration of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. bishops will consecrate the United States of America to the Sacred Heart of Jesus on June 11.) (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)



Rest in peace

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

BARRETT, Jr., Raymond J., 77, St. Joseph, Shelbyville, April 7. Brother of Kathie and Mike Barrett. Uncle of several.

COSGROVE, James T., 90, St. Luke the Evangelist, Indianapolis, March 26. Brother of Jennifer, Joe and John Cosgrove. Grandfather of four.

DAVIS, Robyn R. (Rochford), 65, St. Simon the Apostle, Indianapolis, March 20. Mother of Lauryn, Brian and Kevin Davis.

HILL, Susan E., 64, Prince of Peace, Madison, March 31. Mother of Sara Ackerman and Allison Stogsdill. Sister of Nancy Burkhardt and Charles Hill. Grandmother of two.

HOEHN, Dorothy A., 107, St. John Paul II, Sellersburg, March 22. Aunt of two.

KITCHIE, Carol, 87, St. Charles Borromeo, Bloomington, April 2. Mother of Susan Campbell and Neil Kitchie. Sister of Joseph and Robert Crouse. Grandmother of seven. Great-grandmother of two.

MAAS, Jr., John T., 72, St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Aurora, April 12. Husband of Angie Maas. Father of Andrew and John Maas III. Brother of Mary Lou Kern, Jerry, Joe and Tony Maas. Grandfather of one.

MATHIES, Doris J., 94, St. Joseph, Shelbyville, March 29. Mother of Marilyn



Celebrating Divine Mercy

Red, white and blue flowers are arranged in front of a statue of Christ on April 12, Divine Mercy Sunday, at St. John Paul II Church in Sellersburg. The statue is an image of Christ as he appeared in a vision in 1931 to St. Faustina Kowalska when she learned from him the message of Divine Mercy that would in the decades to come spread throughout the world. The vision featured red and pale rays emanating from the pierced side of the crucified Christ. The light symbolizes the Divine Mercy that flows from Christ around the world. Worshippers gathered on the afternoon of April 12 at St. John Paul II Church and parishes across the archdiocese to take part in Divine Mercy devotions. (Submitted photo)

Branstetter, Karen Bushfield, Angela File, Tamara Long, Sandra Mathies-Borden, Dana, Randy and Steve Mathies. Sister of Virlee Dedrick, Jerry and Jim Matheis. Grandmother of 16. Great-grandmother of 16.

RAY, Norma J., 85, St. Joseph, Shelbyville, March 27. Mother of Carmella Russell, Joe and Michael Leone and Todd Ray. Grandmother of 10. Great-grandmother of seven.

SHEPARD, Gary J., 74, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Richmond, April 2. Husband of Becky Shepard. Father of Cortney Palencia. Brother of May O'Maley, Billie Perry and Jane Woolwine. Grandfather of four.

SIMPSON, Kenneth L., 77, St. Paul, Tell City, April 4. Husband of Sandra Simpson. Father of Jennifer, David, Leo, Steven, Thomas and Will. Brother of Bill and Richard Simpson.

VENNEMANN, Ruth, 90, St. Luke the Evangelist, Indianapolis, March 19. Mother of Mary Beth, Joe and

Michael Venneman. Sister of Tom Koenig. Grandmother of seven. Great-grandmother of five.

WINGLER, Asa, 45, St. Michael, Bradford, April 9. Husband of Courtney Wingler. Father of Jaden Wingler and

Brady Benskin. Stepfather of Tynslee and Brogan. Brother of Teresa Limon and Debbie Parsons. Grandfather of three. †

Providence Sister Mary Lois Hennel served in Catholic schools and in administration in the archdiocese

Providence Sister Mary Lois Hennel, a member of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods in St. Mary-of-the-Woods, died on April 3 at Providence Healthcare at the motherhouse. She was 98.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on April 23 at the Church of the Immaculate Conception at the motherhouse in St. Mary-of-the-Woods. Burial followed at the sisters' cemetery.

Sister Mary Lois was born on April 18, 1927, in Evansville, Ind. She entered the Sisters of Providence on July 21, 1946, and professed final vows on Jan. 23, 1954.

Sister Mary Lois earned a bachelor's degree in education at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College and a master's degree in education at Indiana State University in Terre Haute.

During her 79 years as a member of the Sisters of Providence, Sister Mary Lois served as an educator in Catholic schools for 21 years in Illinois, Indiana, Massachusetts and New Hampshire.

In the archdiocese, in addition to serving at the motherhouse,

Sister Mary Lois ministered at the former St. Anne School in New Castle in 1954, and in Indianapolis at the former St. Andrew the Apostle School from 1954-60 and the former St. Joseph School from 1963-65.

From 1970 until her retirement from ministry in 2002, she served for different periods in administration for her religious community, at Mother Theodore Guérin High School in River Grove, Ill., and in the metropolitan tribunal of the Archdiocese of San Francisco.

Returning in 2002 to live at the motherhouse, Sister Mary Lois volunteered in her community's business office and at the Providence Food Pantry in West Terre Haute. She dedicated herself entirely to prayer beginning in 2022.

Sister Mary Lois is survived by a sister, Maggie Hennel of Avon, Ohio, and a brother, Joseph Hennel of Fort Wayne, Ind.

Memorial gifts may be sent to the Sisters of Providence, 1 Sisters of Providence Road, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN 47876. †

Supreme Court to hear clash between Catholic preschools, Colorado over 'universal' program

WASHINGTON (OSV News)—The U.S. Supreme Court on April 20 agreed to hear a case over a clash between Catholic preschools and the state of Colorado over whether those schools can participate in the state's universal preschool program.

Two Catholic parishes with preschools in the Archdiocese of Denver have alleged the state of Colorado excluded the religious preschools from participating in the program due to their religious beliefs.

The program provides funds—up to about \$6,000—to parents to send their child to the preschool of their choice, public or private, including faith-based schools. However, Colorado has argued the Catholic preschools ran afoul of a nondiscrimination rule in the program that prohibits participating schools from refusing admission to any child on the basis of the sexual orientation and gender identity of the child or the child's parents.

Both Catholic preschools ask families “to be supportive of the Catholic faith,” Becket, a religious liberty law firm representing the schools, said.

Nicholas Reaves, senior counsel at Becket and attorney for the families and preschools, said in an April 20 statement, “Colorado promised free preschool for all, then slammed the door on families who chose a religious education for their children.

“After three losses in religious freedom cases at the

Supreme Court, Colorado should know better,” Reaves said. “The Supreme Court has repeatedly held that states cannot exclude families from government benefits because of their faith. We're confident the court will say the same thing here and put a stop to Colorado's no-Catholics-need-apply rules.”

In response to Becket's request to the Supreme Court to hear the case, a March 2 filing from the state of Colorado argued, “Petitioners seek an exemption from this law to allow them to receive public funding while turning away preschoolers because of their, or their parents', gender identity or sexual orientation.”

Dan and Lisa Sheley, the Catholic parents of seven children and Becket clients in the case, said in an April 20 statement, “All we want is the freedom to choose the best preschool for our kids without being punished for our faith.

“Colorado promised families a universal preschool program, then cut out families like ours because we chose a Catholic education,” the couple said. “We pray the Supreme Court will remind Colorado that universal means everyone.”

The Archdiocese of Denver said on its website it is seeking “equal treatment under the law.”

The Supreme Court is expected to hear the case in the fall, Becket said. †

Online Lay Ministry Formation

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

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

For more information, please log on to www.archindy.org/layministry



REPORT SEXUAL MISCONDUCT NOW

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

- 1 Ethics Point Confidential, Online Reporting**
www.archdioceseofindianapolis.ethicspoint.com or 888-393-6810
- 2 Victim Assistance Coordinator, Archdiocese of Indianapolis**
P.O. Box 1410, Indianapolis, IN 46206-1410
317-236-1548 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1548
victimassistance@archindy.org

Investing with Faith/Jolinda Moore

Consider these types of gifts for your planned giving options

The term “planned giving” is frequently used by attorneys, accountants, financial advisors and charity executives to describe specific types of charitable gifts.



Simply put, planned giving is a catch-all term to describe gifts to nonprofit entities such as the archdiocesan Catholic Community Foundation that will be completed

at some point in the future rather than immediately.

Nearly anyone can make a planned gift. One of the most popular is a simple bequest, or gift, outlined in a will or trust. If utilizing a bequest to a nonprofit entity, upon one’s passing, the person’s will or trust dictates a specific gift is made to the organization of his or her choosing. If you are interested in this type of gift, there are a few considerations.

First, what do you feel called to support with your end-of-life gift and

how quickly do you want the nonprofit entity to have access to the funding? If you desire the gift to be used upon receipt, an outright bequest directly to a ministry makes sense. This will allow the archdiocese, parish, agency or school the ability to use the funds immediately, addressing the priorities of the ministry.

If you prefer the gift to be slowly released to the ministry of your choice, a bequest to an endowment is a good mechanism to consider. With more than 600 endowment funds in the Catholic Community Foundation, there is likely an existing fund that aligns with your goals and charitable wishes. To learn more about the funds that already exist, you can reference the Catholic Community Foundation annual report, which is available at archindy.org/CCF.

If you spend a little time with this document, you’ll be astonished by the depth and breadth these funds cover. You can also work with the archdiocesan Office of Stewardship and Development to discuss your charitable wishes and the existing funds that can help you accomplish them.

Second, you need to determine the type of bequest you will make from your will or estate. There are four main bequests to consider:

—**General**—naming a specific dollar amount of your estate (i.e., \$5,000, \$15,000 or another amount.)

—**Percentage**—naming a fixed percent of your estate (i.e., 5%, 10% or perhaps 20%.)

—**Specific**—naming a particular piece of property of your estate (i.e., proceeds from the sale of main residence, sale of a portion of the property.)

—**Residual**—naming any estate assets that remain after all other gifts, expenses and taxes are paid.

Finally, you will want to contact the Office of Stewardship and Development and talk with Peter Duncan, the newly appointed director of the Catholic Community Foundation, or any member of Catholic Philanthropic Advisor team—Cheri Bush, Mary Grace Inman or Nathan Seiler—to understand the formal language to include in your bequest documents to ensure your gift

is directed where it needs to go.

After understanding the formal language to include in your documents, the Office of Stewardship and Development asks you to please consult with your financial advisor or attorney, if applicable. We make this request as we want to partner with you on your journey and feel it is important for you to be surrounded by a full team of professionals who have your best interests in mind.

For more information, contact the archdiocesan Office of Stewardship and Development at 317-236-1425 or e-mail ccf@archindy.org.

(Jolinda Moore is a member of SS. Francis and Clare Parish in Greenwood and serves as the executive director of the archdiocesan Office of Stewardship and Development and the Catholic Community Foundation. Tax or legal information provided herein is not intended as tax or legal advice. Always consult with your legal, tax or financial advisors before implementing any gift plan.) †

Pope Francis remembered in Buenos Aires as ‘guiding light’ for the Church

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (OSV News)—María Rico ambled along a busy Buenos Aires boulevard as part of a caravan through Barrio Flores—



Pope Francis

the childhood neighborhood of the late Pope Francis—to commemorate the first anniversary of the Argentine pontiff’s death on April 21.

Rico, 66, recalled first meeting the future pope while he was a Jesuit priest. She fondly remembered

him routinely returning later as the then-Archbishop Jorge Mario Bergoglio of Buenos Aires to visit her modest *barrio*, or district, where he would walk the streets, celebrate parish feast days and share bowls of lentils with parishioners during the cold winter months.

She has clung to the memories, but also the pope’s teachings. “The important thing that he instilled in us was unity,” Rico said, “that we do not leave anyone on the outside.”

The caravan began with a Mass celebrated by Archbishop Gustavo Carrara of La Plata, who said at the Basilica of San Jose de Flores on April 11, “Just as you are is how you can shape life and begin to walk its paths. It’s about being there, side by side, about seeing reality so that the periphery is truly visible, seeing it through the eyes of the humble, the poor, the marginalized.”

He continued, “Enough of looking at ourselves from the center, enough of looking from a position of power, enough of looking at ourselves from a dominant position. The true view of reality comes from humility and from the periphery, from need and from encounter. Today we reaffirm this act of love.”

Pope Francis died on April 21, 2025, at the age of 88. His death drew outpourings of emotion around the world and in his native Argentina, too. Catholics in his homeland marked the first anniversary of Pope Francis’ death with events remembering his ministry and impact in the country, where he played a prominent role in Argentina’s public life and his image was drawn into its messy politics.

Familia Grande Hogar de Cristo, a

ministry for supporting addiction recovery founded by the *curas vileros*—the priests working in the shanties of Buenos Aires—organized an April 11 caravan through Barrio Flores to give thanks for his life and renew their commitment to serve the unprotected.

Other events included an homage to Pope Francis at the Plaza de Mayo—outside the Metropolitan Cathedral—with a performance by Portuguese DJ and priest, Father Guilherme Peixoto, and a Mass on the anniversary of the pope’s death at the Basilica of Our Lady of Luján.

His impact on Argentina and his legacy in the South American country remain complicated, however, with the country’s divisive politics coloring opinions, according to observers. Few murals around Buenos Aires portray the late pope—unlike soccer stars Diego Maradona and Lionel Messi, who led Argentina to World Cup championships.

Some still express bewilderment at why he didn’t visit Argentina after being elected pope in 2013—though not Rico, who participated in the anniversary caravan. “He had other things to do,” said

Rico, who coordinates a parish program for seniors. “But he was also in touch with us, always in touch with the people.”

The pope was pulled into what Argentines call “the crack,” the political division between Peronist and anti-Peronist camps.

“Unfortunately, his commitment to the poor and to social issues in general was viewed here in a politicized way,” Sergio Berensztein, an Argentine political analyst, told OSV News.


Priests say Pope Francis’ teachings continue to guide the Church in Argentina. They point to his magisterium being practiced in Buenos Aires: a missionary Church in a permanent state of mission and, in the words of the late pontiff, “a Church for the poor.”

“Pope Francis is like a beacon for us, a guiding light for the Church,” Father Ignacio Bagattini, pastor of the Christ the Worker Parish, told OSV News. “He is very important to everyone because he is the light that illuminates our path, showing us what the Church should be. It must be a place for everyone, a place where no one is forgotten.” †

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