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Collaborative effort

St. Mark Parish in Perry County hosts Fatima's pilot 'traveling retreat,' page 9.

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Transitional Deacon Sam Hansen proclaims the Gospel during the closing Mass of the National Catholic Youth Conference on Nov. 22, 2025, at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis. (File photo by Sean Gallagher)

Young woman embraces sharing her faith in pilgrimage tied to America's 250th year

By John Shaughnessy

When she saw the e-mail, Mary Carmen Zakrajsek couldn't stop smiling.

The 26-year-old woman with deep Indianapolis roots had prayed long and hard for this opportunity.



Mary Carmen Zakrajsek

The e-mail informed her that she had been chosen as one of the nine young adults from across the United States as a perpetual pilgrim for the third National Eucharistic Pilgrimage, a 2,000-mile journey

along the East Coast that ties in with the nation's 250th anniversary celebrations.

"When I saw I had been offered a spot, I was immediately filled with joy," says the 2021 graduate of Marian University and a former member of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish, both in Indianapolis. "For me, this pilgrimage is a tangible reminder that Jesus Christ still desires to walk the Earth with us. It's an opportunity for me to walk alongside him and have him transform me anew."

With the theme, "One Nation Under God," the 2026 National Eucharistic Pilgrimage route will feature major Catholic landmarks and moments in American Catholic history. It begins on May 24 in Florida, reaches Maine and then ends in Philadelphia on the weekend of July 4th for the country's anniversary celebrations.

While Zakrajsek is excited about the combination of the eucharistic pilgrimage and the country's celebration, she is also thoughtful about this time in American history.

"It may be obvious, but the most fitting posture for a 250th birthday like this is

See PILGRIMAGE, page 9

Scenes of grit, joy and presence capture Deacon Hansen's path to the priesthood

By John Shaughnessy

As a wrestler in high school and college, transitional Deacon Sam Hansen showed his physical and mental toughness repeatedly, but the best example of his grit may have come in a spiritual moment.

The challenging and potentially explosive moment unfolded in the summer of 2021 when Deacon Hansen was a seminarian serving at St. Joseph Parish in Shelbyville.

It's a moment that still impresses St. Joseph's pastor, Father Michael Keucher.

"There was a family with several children who, because

of very real and difficult circumstances, had not been able to complete their preparation for first reconciliation and first Communion," Father Keucher recalls. "I sent Sam to their apartment each week to teach the kids, who were with their mother during the day but had no car. Over time, he became part of the family.

"Next door to them lived a man who kept a statue of Satan outside his apartment. Sam, without hesitation, struck up a conversation with him and simply asked if he would consider removing it out of respect for the Catholic family next door who were trying to raise their children in the faith.

See HANSEN, page 8

Archbishop Thompson offers Christ-centered wisdom to Marian University graduates

By Sean Gallagher

The 1,012 undergraduates receiving degrees weren't the only people honored during the May 2 commencement ceremony at Marian University in Indianapolis.

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson was also on hand to receive an honorary doctorate in religious education, awarded to him by Marian's board of trustees.

He also delivered a commencement address during the ceremony.

The day began with the archbishop celebrating and preaching at a commencement Mass at the university.

See MARIAN, page 2

Chemistry assistant professor Dr. Patrick McVey, second from left (obscured), and Toby McClamrock, chair of the board of trustees of Marian University, place a hood over Archbishop Charles C. Thompson during a May 2 commencement ceremony at the school. Looking on is Marian president Daniel Elsener. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)





Sylvia Quezada, a graduate of Marian University in Indianapolis, gives an address during a May 2 commencement ceremony at the school. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

MARIAN

continued from page 1

Through it all, Archbishop Thompson and graduates who offered their own reflections invited all in attendance to look for a higher meaning of success and deeper ways of understanding their mission in the world.

‘No greater teacher than the person of Jesus Christ’

During his homily at the Mass, Archbishop Thompson spoke about how it was fitting to begin a day of graduation celebration with the Eucharist since it’s “within the context of the Mass, as Catholics, [that] we recognize in a spirit of gratitude that we owe all things to God, and we seek in turn to glorify God.”

“The celebration of Mass, the most holy Eucharist, reminds us of the need for grateful hearts if we are to experience true happiness and fulfillment in this life and the next,” he later added. “Success is not so much in the exteriors of salary, position, awards and status as in the interior peace and joy of the soul.”

During the liturgy, Archbishop Thompson shared with the graduates, families, Marian faculty and administration members advice that Pope Leo XIV has given about artificial intelligence (AI) in his first year as bishop of Rome: to “not let AI write your narrative” or “do your homework.”

“What he’s saying in all of this is not to let AI or anyone or anything rob you of your ability to critically think,” emphasized Archbishop Thompson, who went on to praise Marian for honing critical thinking skills in its students “in fidelity to its Catholic identity and mission, especially grounded in the charisms of the Franciscan Sisters of Oldenburg,” who founded the university.

Reflecting on the scriptural readings for the commencement liturgy, Archbishop Thompson invited the graduates, who he noted had done so

much work at Marian to grow in “human knowledge,” to also place a high value on growing in wisdom.

“Wisdom is a character trait of God,” he said. “It is that essence of Jesus showing us the way to eternal life. To obtain wisdom involves communion with a force greater than oneself. It is gained through experience, encounter, discernment and prayer, ... being Christ-centered rather than letting any personality, influencer or ideology rob us of our ability to recognize how we are called to be like Jesus in our way of living and being.”

Acknowledging that the graduates before him were understandably looking forward to applying the knowledge they gained at Marian to build a successful career, Archbishop Thompson also offered a different perspective on the meaning of success.

“The greatest sign of success is not to be discovered in the diplomas that may hang on our walls but in the Christ-centered manner in which we use our gifts and talents to glorify God and serve others,” he said. “Amid all the classes, research, studies and profs, there has been no greater teacher than the person of Jesus Christ.”


“May we never tire of looking to him as the way, the truth and the life of how we live the mission of bringing about the kingdom of God.”

In a reflection after Communion during the Mass, graduate Benjamin Moster, a member of St. Louis Parish in Batesville, invited his fellow graduates, as they go forth into the world, to reflect on how they can share Christ’s peace with others.

“How do you bring Christ’s peace into the world?” Moster asked. “We are all unique in what we do: engineers, teachers, nurses, philosophers, theologians and countless other professions. Yet, we are so similar in that we are all called to share the Lord wherever we go.”

‘Ambassadors of hope’

During the commencement ceremony, Marian graduate Sylvia Quezada, who



Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

May 16—24, 2026

<p>May 16 – 11 a.m. Chapel and altar dedication at Our Lady of Grace Monastery, Beech Grove</p> <p>May 16 – 5:30 p.m. Confirmation Mass for the youths of SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Parish, Greenwood, and St. Martin of Tours Parish, Martinsville, at SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Church</p> <p>May 17 – 1:30 p.m. Graduation ceremony at Bishop Chatard High School, Indianapolis</p> <p>May 17 – 6 p.m. Graduation ceremony at Our Lady of Providence High School, Clarksville</p> <p>May 19 – 11 a.m. Virtual Catholic Relief Services, Budget and Finance Committee meeting</p> <p>May 19 – 6 p.m. Mass for the Intercultural Certification for Pastoral Leadership Program at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, followed by dinner at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, both in Indianapolis</p>	<p>May 20 – 10 a.m. Department Heads meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center</p> <p>May 20 – 7 p.m. Confirmation Mass for the youths of St. Patrick Parish, Indianapolis, at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral</p> <p>May 21 – 9:30 a.m. Franciscan Health meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center</p> <p>May 21 – 12:30 p.m. Women’s Care Center Board luncheon meeting at the Women’s Care Center, Indianapolis</p> <p>May 21 – 3 p.m. Finance Council meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center</p> <p>May 24 – TBD Invocation for the 110th Indianapolis 500 at Indianapolis Motor Speedway, Speedway</p>
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majored in engineering, reflected on AI and the dangers of depending on technological development alone to solve social problems.

She said that the graduates of her generation are stepping into a world “being reshaped by artificial intelligence.”

“But we’re not just witnessing change,” Quezada noted, “we get to be part of building it through our careers.”

“And with that comes responsibility. Now more than ever, we’re called to make intentional decisions, lead with integrity, and uphold the Franciscan values that shaped our formation.”

Echoing themes Archbishop Thompson had spoken about in his homily at the commencement Mass, Quezada called on her fellow graduates to become “moral leaders ... who can act with integrity, leaders who choose courage over comfort.”

“Will we be a generation that follows progress, or one that leads with wisdom, compassion and faith?” she asked. “My prayer is that wherever we go, we don’t settle for passive belief or passive leadership, that we choose to act, that we choose to lead and that we never lose sight of what is truly essential.”

In his commencement address, Archbishop Thompson gave a stark description of the “wounded world” into which the graduates were going, a world “marked by various forms of addiction, racial division, scapegoating, abuse, violence, injustice and polarization, just to name a few.”

He exhorted the graduates to “be willing

to contribute to a viable solution that is rooted in the principles of the Catholic faith upon which Marian University is founded, especially those charisms of the Franciscans.”

“Marian University exists not just for the well-being of individuals, of its graduates, but for the sake of the larger community,” he continued. “Formation and education are the primary means of transforming lives, families, communities, nations and the world.”

If the graduates use the gifts of knowledge and wisdom they gained at Marian in this way, Archbishop Thompson said, they will become “ambassadors of hope to inspire healing, restoration of justice, a spirit of mercy and renewed confidence in both God and humanity.”

Concluding his commencement address, Archbishop Thompson offered a prayer for and an exhortation to the Marian graduates.

“We pray that you have the courage, humility and generosity to realize the potential of all that you are and have become to make a difference in your families, communities, places of worship and society itself,” he said. “Be not afraid to leave your mark—the mark in which you have been created in the image of God and claimed by the Lord—on the world.”

“Today is a day of celebration in hope. Against all odds, dare to hope, dare to be the cause of hope, dare to bring hope to the lives of others.” †

Official Appointment

Effective February 11, 2026

Deacon William Tribbey, permanent deacon of the Archdiocese of Louisville, Ky., appointed permanent deacon at St. John Paul II Parish, Sellersburg.

(This appointment is from the office of the Most Rev. Charles C. Thompson, Archbishop of Indianapolis.) †



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Father Clifford Vogelsang had ‘pastoral spirit’ in leading parishes

By Sean Gallagher

Father Clifford Vogelsang, a retired priest of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, died on May 7 at the Marquette Manor retirement community in Indianapolis.



Father Clifford Vogelsang

He was 89.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on May 14 at St. Luke the Evangelist Church in Indianapolis. Archbishop Charles C. Thompson was the principal celebrant of the liturgy. Retired Father James Bonke was the homilist. Burial will follow at a later date in the priests' garden at Our Lady of Peace Cemetery in Indianapolis.

After being ordained a priest in 1963, Father Vogelsang served for six years on the faculty of the Latin School of Indianapolis, the archdiocese's former high school seminary. From 1969 until his retirement in 2007, he led parishes across central and southern Indiana.

In a 2013 interview with *The Criterion* on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of his ordination, Father Vogelsang reflected on the challenges of being ordained just before the start of the Second Vatican Council.

In the years that followed, he said it was his lifelong love of learning and his knowledge of history in particular that helped him navigate the often choppy waters of life in the Church during the challenges of implementing the reforms of the council.

“I can see pretty well how things have come about and have a fairly good idea of how things are going,” Father Vogelsang said at the time. “Having that sense of history has been a big aid to me. I’ve been able to keep things in perspective without running off in one extreme or another.”

Msgr. Joseph Schaedel first came to know Father Vogelsang as a high school student when the priest was in residence at Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Beech Grove, where Msgr. Schaedel was a member at the time.

He described Father Vogelsang as “a scholar and a gentleman.”

“He was very well read and appreciated good art and

good music,” said Msgr. Schaedel, who retired in 2025. “I think that’s an example to all of us priests, to be cultured gentlemen.

“And he was always devoted to his ministry as a priest, taking great joy in celebrating the sacraments. He was a good homilist as well.”

Father Bonke spoke about how Father Vogelsang applied his intellect to the challenges of parish leadership in the wake of Vatican II, helping him to create an effective “pastoral spirit” in leading faith communities.

This happened especially, Father Bonke said, when Father Vogelsang served as pastor of St. Augustine Parish in Jeffersonville from 1993 until his retirement 14 years later in 2007.

“He found that he could really bring life to that community,” Father Bonke said. “His experience in Jeffersonville affirmed himself as a priest and a pastor with gifts to offer the community. He liked Jeffersonville and enjoyed his time there. He thought that he made a real contribution to the Church there.”

As intelligent as his friend was, Father Bonke said that it didn’t separate him from those whom he served.

“A priest can’t use his intellect to be superior in any sense of the term. And Cliff was never that,” Father Bonke said.

In the nearly 20 years following his retirement, Father Vogelsang continued to assist sacramentally in many parishes across the archdiocese.

In his 2013 interview, Father Vogelsang noted how busy he kept himself in his priestly life and ministry.

“I think sacramentally I probably do more work now than I did as a pastor,” he said.

Msgr. Schaedel said that his dedication to ministry after retirement showed Father Vogelsang’s “firm commitment to the Church and his joy in celebrating the sacraments.”

“He could have just packed up and moved to some warm climate,” Msgr. Schaedel said. “But he remained in Indianapolis and celebrated the sacraments as often as he could.”

That service continued after he moved to Marquette Manor about 10 years ago, where he served the pastoral needs of its residents until just weeks before his death.

“He was kind of the unofficial chaplain there,”

Msgr. Schaedel said. “And it gave great comfort to the people there, those especially who were chronically or seriously ill, to know that there was a priest in residence who would come and give them the anointing of the sick. He was faithful and as active as he could be until the very end.”

Clifford Ralph Vogelsang, Jr., was born on April 13, 1937, in Indianapolis to the late Clifford and Kathryn (Kalb) Vogelsang. Baptized at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral Parish, he grew up as a member of St. Joan of Arc Parish, both parishes being in Indianapolis.

After graduating from St. Joan of Arc School, Father Vogelsang became an archdiocesan seminarian, receiving priestly formation at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology from 1951-63, where he earned a bachelor’s degree and a master of divinity degree.

Father Vogelsang was ordained a priest on May 5, 1963, at the Archabbey Church of Our Lady of Einsiedeln in St. Meinrad by Archbishop Paul C. Schulte.

That same year, he ministered as associate pastor first at Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish in Indianapolis and then at Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood while also serving as an instructor at the Latin School of Indianapolis.

Father Vogelsang remained on the faculty of the Latin School until 1969. During that time, he also ministered as associate pastor of Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Beech Grove from 1964-69 and assisted as an instructor at the former Our Lady of Grace Academy, also in Beech Grove.

He first experience in parish leadership happened when he led St. Agnes Parish in Nashville as its administrator from 1969-72.

Father Vogelsang then led the former St. Andrew Parish in Richmond (now part of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish) from 1972-83.

He next served as pastor of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Indianapolis from 1984-93.

Beginning in 1993, Father Vogelsang led St. Augustine Parish in Jeffersonville for 14 years. During that time, he also served as dean of the New Albany Deanery from 2000-07.

After retiring in 2007, he served as a part-time sacramental minister at St. Andrew the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis from 2009-12. †

Pope Leo thanks Canary Islands as hantavirus-stricken ship arrives in Tenerife

(OSV News)—Pope Leo XIV thanked the people of Spain’s Canary Islands after passengers exposed to hantavirus aboard a cruise ship were allowed to disembark on the island of Tenerife.

“I would like to thank the people of the Canary Islands who, with the hospitality characteristic of them, welcomed the cruise ship MV Hondius and the passengers infected with the hantavirus,”

the pope said on May 10 after praying the *Regina Caeli* prayer with pilgrims gathered in St. Peter’s Square.

The pope, who is set to visit Spain in June, said he was looking forward “to seeing all of you next month during my visit to the islands.”

Hours earlier, the Dutch-operated cruise ship docked at the port of Granadilla in Tenerife, according

to BBC News. The World Health Organization (WHO) said eight cases of hantavirus have been reported aboard the ship, and three passengers have died.

Passengers were evacuated and repatriated to their home countries, where they will be quarantined and monitored for symptoms. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, or CDC, symptoms can appear one to eight weeks after exposure.

Hantavirus is a respiratory disease “primarily acquired through contact with the urine, feces or saliva of infected rodents or by touching contaminated surfaces,” the WHO stated.

The CDC said the Andes virus—a strain of hantavirus that causes severe respiratory illness—is the only hantavirus known to spread from person to person, though such transmission is rare. †

Have a favorite story about your father? What advice would you give a new dad?

After asking our readers for stories and thoughts about motherhood, *The Criterion* wants to provide the same opportunity concerning fatherhood.

First, share your thoughts, tributes and stories about how your father’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.

Second, if you are a dad, what’s one piece of advice you would give to a man who will be a father for the first time—and/or the best advice someone has ever given you about being a dad?

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. †

As America marks its 250th anniversary, share the story of someone whose spirit inspires you

This year marks the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States of America.

As our country celebrates this landmark moment and the American spirit, *The Criterion* is inviting you to share your favorite personal stories of someone among your ancestors, heroes or current relationships whose life in America has inspired you to pursue a life rooted in hope, faith and love.

Our hope is to share a collection of these stories in our issues leading up to the weekend of July 4th.

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



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Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, *Publisher* Sally Krause, *Associate Publisher*
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Editorial

Listening to the warnings of the Queen of Peace

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. (Mt 5:9)

Our Church celebrated the Memorial of Our Lady of Fatima on May 13.

This feast celebrates Mary's appearances in 1917 to three shepherd children—Lucia, Francisco and Jacinta—in Fatima, Portugal, warning of world-altering events, war and the need for prayer and conversion. The Blessed Mother's message to these young children and, through them, to the whole world focuses on praying the rosary for world peace.

This is an appropriate time to recall this miraculous occasion and to give prayerful consideration to Our Lady's message.

Regrettably, war is always with us, but there are moments in human history when it is particularly important for us to pray and work for peace.

The Blessed Mother's first appearance to three Portuguese shepherd children in May 1917 took place during another time when war demanded the intercession of the Queen of Peace. Europe was in the grip of the First World War, which would claim an astounding 20 million lives. Only eight days before Mary's apparition, Pope Benedict XV had begged the Blessed Mother to intercede for the war's end.

During her appearances, Mary predicted the devastation of future wars and the grave threat posed by tyrannical ideologies. Her message to the children and the world—then and now—was simple: Reform your lives and do penance for your sins. Pray the rosary every day.

Are we listening to our Blessed Mother's warning? How seriously do we take the Gospel witness of Pope Leo XIV and the bishops throughout the world who urge us to pray for peace, to practice nonviolence in all our affairs and to build communities and nations dedicated to justice and equality for all, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, economics or social status?

The recent military interventions by the United States in Venezuela and Iran have caused many Catholics, and other people who share our values, to ask for a clarification of the Catholic Church's teaching on just war. This is a profound and carefully articulated doctrine, developed through the centuries by theologians such as St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas, and further expanded by later scholars. It is rooted in the principles of natural law and the inalienable rights of every human being, aiming to balance the tragic necessity of war with the pursuit of justice and peace.

According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the Church judges a war to be just if four requirements are met. First, the war must have a grave and certain cause. Second, the war must only take place as a last resort. Third, force must only be used in it in a proportional manner. Finally, there must be a reasonable prospect of success (#2309).

War must seek to restore peace and justice, minimize harm to innocents, and be governed by natural law and respect



Pope Francis leaves a rosary before a statue of Mary in the Chapel of the Apparitions at the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima in Fatima, Portugal, on Aug. 5, 2023. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

for human dignity.

Wars of aggression are unequivocally condemned. Military personnel must act as agents of justice and peace, obeying natural law even over unjust orders. The Church advocates peace pursued through justice and charity as a fundamental Christian mandate.

To help us discern whether military actions (past, present or future) can be considered just, we must turn to Mary, Queen of Peace and ask her to help us understand the teaching and example of her Son, Jesus.

Mary's role as an intercessor places her in a position of bringing divine peace to our hearts and to our world by aiding us in our spiritual struggles. Jesus has taught us that there can be no peace without forgiveness.

Through Mary's intercession, we can learn to forgive even grievous wrongs and ancient hatred. We can learn to place dialogue, repentance and compassion ahead of the thirst for revenge or for simplistic views of justice that do not reflect the common good of all.

Marian devotion is a powerful pathway to peace. Practices such as praying the rosary frequently can deepen our relationship with Mary and lead us more deeply into the heart of her Son, Jesus.

The rosary and other Marian devotions encourage peaceful contemplation, prayer and reflection that help foster inner peace and spiritual tranquility. Mary's influence leads us away from sin and emptiness toward purity and holiness, which are foundational to true peace among individuals, families, communities and nations.

Let's ask the Queen of Peace to help us follow the teaching and example of Jesus, the King of Peace. Through her intercession, may we set aside our differences and make every effort to resolve conflicts peacefully.

—Daniel Conway

Be Our Guest/Effie Calderola

Let's take our prayers to the garden during spring

It was a little past 5 in the morning when I was jarred awake by a wet tongue licking my nose.



We were dog-sitting our daughter's pit bull and this was my morning wake-up call. Being quiet for my husband's sake, I grabbed my slippers and jacket and headed with Gus to our fenced-in backyard.

I am not an early riser. As Gus scurried off to do his business, I was stunned by the chill in the spring air and the realization that it was still eerily dark at 5 a.m. There was a stark beauty about the big trees silhouetted against the dark sky, an expectation at just the hint of light in the east. I experienced a sudden sense of peace and awe.

I suppose the fact that it was Holy Thursday had something to do with that. I had been reading the Passion and Easter narratives where dark gardens figure in the action. Now we're well into the joyful season of Easter—50 days of delight in the risen Lord and the stories of the early Church in the Acts of the Apostles.

But spring always brings us to gardens, and we can still go back in prayer to the gardens that featured in Jesus' passion and death.

Jesus retired to the garden of Gethsemane after the Passover meal to pray desperately over his fate, as the encroaching darkness and perhaps the dinnertime wine caused his oblivious disciples to nod off. Soon, the ominous sound of guards being led by Judas punctured the night.

Then there is the garden Mary of Magdala visited to find the tomb of Jesus and anoint him. How far, I wonder, was Golgotha, the site of crucifixion, from the garden and burial site where Nicodemus donated a grave for Jesus?

In my prayerful imagination, this garden, a gracious burial site, was a beautiful place with fresh grass.

In John 20:11-18, Mary turns from the tomb to see the risen Jesus but doesn't recognize him, "imagining him to be the gardener" (Jn 20:15), the text reads.

It was also, the text says earlier, "still dark" (Jn 20:1), like my backyard on an April morning. Would I recognize the Lord out here, I wonder, in the chilly darkness? Have I ever heard him call my name?

This month, we observe the feast of the Ascension (on May 17 in the Archdiocese in Indianapolis). This likely took place either in Bethany (Lk: 24:50-51) or nearby on the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:12), with the Garden of Gethsemane on its slopes. Jesus often prayed in these gardens.

Jesus' ascension seems so soon, only 40 days, after the resurrection. Our faith leads us to the Eucharist and to the real presence of Jesus still in our lives. But don't we all sometimes wish for the Jesus we can see and touch?

Gus is a rescue dog, and scars indicate a tough early life. He's a quiet dog. Our neighbor dog, Molly, barks at Gus when they meet through the fence, but Gus never barks back.

Gus barks only when he realizes someone is leaving the house. At the sound of keys being picked up, Gus goes on alert and barks by the door. I imagine it was early abandonment that instilled such acute fear of being left.

Aren't we all a bit like Gus sometimes, standing in the darkness, yearning for presence? It's spring. Let's take our prayer to the gardens where we hear the voice of someone who promises never to leave us alone, and who calls our name in the shadowy dawn.

(Effie Calderola is a wife, mom and grandmother who received her master's degree in pastoral studies from Seattle University.) †

Letter to the Editor

Living the faith means applying it to all aspects of life, reader says

In the recent letter to the editor section regarding a letter writer upset about the use or "weaponizing" of God's name in a political context, I would offer these reflections.

We are taught by Christ himself to say—and to live—the Lord's prayer daily, actually unceasingly.

"Hallowed [holy] be thy name" is stated imperatively, as a commandment or mandate, not a "be kind" platitude or suggestion. And that phrase starts that prayer, indicating its prime importance.

Whether the realm is political, social, moral, etc. is immaterial.

Living your faith means applying it to all aspects of life. It is irreverent and

sinful to reduce God's name to a curse, an exclamatory interjection, an expletive or an offhand color commentary. He is present in his name, and reverence in all contexts is simple respect that anyone of any faith situation can be sensitive to observe.

The reality is, there is very little reverence in action in the world, and people truly cannot control their language.

To try to "politicize" the use of God's name—or to draw a Catholic exception around its abuse or misuse—belabors what is simply a choice to sin; or not to sin. And that is the answer.

**Deborah Hals
Bloomington**

Letters Policy

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

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

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

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

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

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

ARCHBISHOP/ARZOBISPO CHARLES C. THOMPSON



Christ the Cornerstone

Jesus ascends to heaven, but stays close to us

Thursday, May 14, is the traditional date for our observance of the Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord, but like most dioceses in the United States, the Archdiocese of Indianapolis will observe this important feast day on Sunday, May 17, in order to allow more of our parishioners to participate in this particular celebration of Easter joy.

The Ascension is a joyful feast because it assures us that Christ remains close to us even while he ascends to heaven and sits at his Father's right hand.

The story of the Lord's ascension begins the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 1:1-11), and it rightly serves as the catalyst, for everything that follows, including the sending of the Holy Spirit and the disciples' acceptance of the commission received from Jesus "to be [his] witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the Earth" (Acts 1:8).

Jesus returned to heaven so that we who remain here on Earth can be faithful, Spirit-filled missionary disciples. His perceived absence motivates us to come closer to him

and be his witnesses to our sisters and brothers everywhere.

The paradox of the Lord's ascension is seen in the Gospel reading (Mt 28:16-20):

The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them. When they saw him, they worshiped, but they doubted. Then Jesus approached and said to them, "All power in heaven and on Earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age." (Mt 28:16-20)

The Apostles went to Galilee as they had been instructed. When they saw the Risen Jesus, they didn't recognize him at first and they were skeptical. The Lord reassured them by his Divine Presence, but he also refused to allow them to cling to him. They had to let go of their dependence on him so that they could be empowered by the Holy Spirit to "observe all that I have commanded you" (Mt 28:20).

The Apostles had to surrender their own power in order to accept a Higher Power—the gifts of the Holy Spirit that enabled them to be bold and courageous evangelists who did not hesitate to suffer and die for the sake of Jesus' holy name.

Jesus lets the disciples go. He commissions them to carry out his work in the world, but he does not leave them orphans. As St. Matthew tells us, he assures them (and all of us), "And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age" (Mt 28:20).

This is the paradox of the Ascension: The Lord's departure from earthly life allows him to be even closer to us. It makes possible the sending of the Holy Spirit, who fills our hearts with the fire of God's love and who allows us to say and do things that otherwise would not be possible.

In the second reading for the Ascension (Eph 1:17-23), St. Paul stresses "the surpassing greatness of [the Lord's] power for us who believe" (Eph 1:19). Just as the disciples had to let go of their dependence on their own power in order to allow the Holy Spirit to fill them with a greater power, we

who serve as missionary disciples of Jesus Christ are called to believe that in him we have everything we need to carry out our mission. As St. Paul says,

May the eyes of your hearts be enlightened, that you may know what is the hope that belongs to his call, what are the riches of glory in his inheritance among the holy ones, and what is the surpassing greatness of his power for us who believe, in accord with the exercise of his great might, which he worked in Christ, raising him from the dead and seating him at his right hand in the heavens, far above every principality, authority, power, and dominion, and every name that is named not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things beneath his feet and gave him as head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fullness of the one who fills all things in every way. (Eph 1:18-23)

As we celebrate the Ascension of the Lord this weekend, let's remember that Jesus remains close to us—especially in the Holy Eucharist—and that through the Holy Spirit he has given us everything we need to be his faithful witnesses "to the ends of the Earth." †



Cristo, la piedra angular

Jesús asciende al cielo, pero se mantiene cerca de nosotros

El jueves 14 de mayo es la fecha tradicional para nuestra celebración de la Solemnidad de la Ascensión del Señor, pero como la mayoría de las diócesis de Estados Unidos, la Arquidiócesis de Indianápolis celebrará esta importante solemnidad el domingo 17 de mayo, para que un mayor número de nuestros feligreses participen en esta celebración de la alegría pascual.

La Ascensión es una fiesta gozosa porque nos asegura que Cristo permanece cerca de nosotros incluso mientras asciende al cielo y se sienta a la derecha de su Padre.

El relato de la Ascensión del Señor da inicio a los Hechos de los Apóstoles (Hch 1:1-11) y sirve, con razón, de catalizador de todo lo que sigue, incluido el envío del Espíritu Santo y la aceptación por parte de los discípulos de la comisión recibida de Jesús de ser "[sus] testigos en Jerusalén, en toda Judea y Samaría, y hasta los confines de la Tierra" (Hch 1:8).

Jesús volvió al cielo para que nosotros, que permanecemos aquí en la Tierra, podamos ser discípulos misioneros fieles y llenos del Espíritu. Su ausencia percibida nos motiva a acercarnos más a él y a ser sus testigos ante nuestros

hermanos y hermanas de todo el mundo.

La paradoja de la Ascensión del Señor se refleja en la lectura del Evangelio (Mt 28:16-20):

Por su parte, los once discípulos marcharon a Galilea, al monte que Jesús les había indicado. Al verlo, lo adoraron, si bien algunos dudaron. Jesús se acercó a ellos y les habló así: "Me ha sido dado todo poder en el cielo y en la tierra. Id, pues, y haced discípulos a todas las gentes, bautizándolas en el nombre del Padre y del Hijo y del Espíritu Santo, y enseñándoles a guardar todo lo que yo os he mandado. Y estad seguros que yo estaré con vosotros día tras día, hasta el fin del mundo." (Mt 28:16-20)

Los Apóstoles fueron a Galilea como se les había ordenado. Cuando vieron a Jesús resucitado, al principio no lo reconocieron y se mostraron escépticos. El Señor los tranquilizó con su Divina Presencia, pero también se negó a que se aferraran a él. Tuvieron que dejar de depender de él para que el Espíritu Santo los empoderara a "guardar todo lo que yo os he mandado" (Mt 28:20).

Los Apóstoles tuvieron que renunciar a su propio poder para aceptar un Poder Superior: los dones del Espíritu Santo

que les permitieron ser evangelizadores audaces y valientes que no dudaron en sufrir y morir por el santo nombre de Jesús.

Jesús deja partir a los discípulos. Les encarga que lleven a cabo su obra en el mundo, pero no los deja huérfanos. Como nos dice san Mateo, les asegura (y a todos nosotros): "Y estad seguros que yo estaré con vosotros día tras día, hasta el fin del mundo" (Mt 28:20).

Esta es la paradoja de la Ascensión: La partida del Señor de la vida terrena le permite estar aún más cerca de nosotros. Hace posible la venida del Espíritu Santo, quien llena nuestros corazones con el fuego del amor de Dios y nos permite decir y hacer cosas que de otro modo no seríamos capaces.

En la segunda lectura de la Ascensión (Ef 1:17-23), san Pablo subraya "la soberana grandeza de su poder para con nosotros, los creyentes, conforme a la eficacia de su fuerza poderosa" (Ef 1:19). Así como los discípulos tuvieron que dejar de lado toda dependencia de sus propias fuerzas para permitir que el Espíritu Santo los llenara de un poder mayor, nosotros, que servimos como discípulos misioneros de Jesucristo, estamos

llamados a creer que en Él tenemos todo lo que necesitamos para llevar a cabo nuestra misión. Tal como reza san Pablo:

Que [Dios] ilumine los ojos de vuestro corazón para que conozcáis cuál es la esperanza a que habéis sido llamados por él, cuál la gloriosa riqueza otorgada por él en herencia a los santos, y cuál la soberana grandeza de su poder para con nosotros, los creyentes, conforme a la eficacia de su fuerza poderosa. Dios desplegó esta fuerza en Cristo, resucitándolo de entre los muertos y sentándolo a su diestra en los cielos, por encima de todo principado, potestad, virtud, dominación y de todo cuanto tiene nombre, no sólo en este mundo, sino también en el venidero. Sometió todo bajo sus pies y le constituyó cabeza suprema de la Iglesia, que es su cuerpo, la plenitud del que lo llena todo en todo. (Ef 1:18-23)

Al celebrar este fin de semana la Ascensión del Señor, recordemos que Jesús permanece cerca de nosotros—especialmente en la Sagrada Eucaristía—y que, por medio del Espíritu Santo, nos ha dado todo lo que necesitamos para ser sus fieles testigos "hasta los confines de la Tierra." †

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 18

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 21

St. Bartholomew Parish, 1306 27th St., Columbus. **Integral Ecology: A Sacramental Vision**, 7 p.m., discussion on pastoral letter released by Indiana bishops, free. Information: 812-379-9353, suzanneshaw@gmail.com.

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@heartssawake.org.

May 28-30

St. Mark the Evangelist Parish, Parish Life Center, 535 E. Edgewood Ave., Indianapolis. **Rummage Sale**, 8-5 p.m. Thurs. and Fri., 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Sat., early bird Wed. 5-8 p.m. with \$10 admission, enter through door #8. Information: 317-260-8034, annieberk@yahoo.com.

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, lfsummerfest@littleflowerparish.org.

May 31

Marian University, Bishop Chartrand Chapel, 3200 Cold Spring Road, Indianapolis. **Mass honoring Oldenburg Franciscan Sisters who served in Archdiocese of Indianapolis**, 2 p.m.

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.

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 6

St. Jude Parish, Theodore Guerin Room, 5353 McFarland Road, Indianapolis. **Gabriel Project Angel Training**, 9 a.m.-noon, training to support pregnant women in need through Gabriel Project, free, register by June 1. Information, registration: 317-213-4778, gabriel@goangels.org.

June 7

St. Paul Parish, 824 Jefferson St., Tell City. **Parish Picnic**, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. CT, pulled pork or BBQ chicken dinners \$12, live music and live raffle, free admission. Information: 812-547-7994, stpaulch@psci.net.

Virtual Prayer: Seeking Solace, 7-7:45 p.m., hosted by Sisters of Providence for single women ages 18-42 on seventh day of each month. Information, registration:

361-500-9505, events.sistersofprovidence.org, jluna@spsmw.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. **Festiville 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@holyroaryindy.org.

June 13-19

Holy Angels School, 2822 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. St., Indianapolis. **Obaro Village: Rooting and Rising Summer Youth Academy Session 1**, for students entering grade fifth-ninth grade in the fall, STEAM education, faith formation, leadership development, career exploration, Black Catholic spirituality and community building, \$100 per camper with \$25 discount for each additional sibling, \$50 discount for students who also attend session two July 11-17, scholarships available, register by June 8. Information, registration: tinyurl.com/Obaro2026, blackcatholicministry@archindy.org, 317-261-3381. Volunteers needed: tinyurl.com/ObaroVolunteer26. †

Events and retreats can be submitted to The Criterion by logging on to www.archindy.org/events/submission, or by mailing us at 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202, ATTN: Ann Lewis, or by fax at 317-236-1593.

Retreats and Programs

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

May 30-31

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Flourishing in Seasons of Surrender**, Sat. 11 a.m.-Sun. noon, Teresa Venatta presenting, includes overnight accommodations, lunch and dinner, \$175. Registration: ftm.retreatportal.com/events, 317-545-7681, lcoons@archindy.org.

June 5-6

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **The Treasure of Friendship**, Fri. 5 p.m.-Sat. 5 p.m., includes overnight accommodations, lunch and dinner, \$175. Registration: ftm.retreatportal.com/events, 317-545-7681, lcoons@archindy.org.

June 5-7

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Spirituality of Liturgical Architecture**, Benedictine Father Lorenzo Penalosa presenting, \$350 single, \$550 double.

Registration: 812-357-6611, saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

June 7-10, 11, 12 or 13

Mount St. Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Road, Mt. St. Francis. **Quilters Retreat**, three nights \$500, four nights \$600, five nights \$700, six nights \$800, commuters \$75 per day, \$100 non-refundable deposit required to hold spot, pay in one or two installments. Information, registration: mountsaintfrancis.org/quilters-retreat-1, 812-923-8817.

June 18

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

June 19-21

Mother of the Redeemer Retreat Center, 8220 W. State Road 48, Bloomington. **Archbishop Fulton Sheen Retreat**, teacher and tour guide at the Diocese of Peoria's Sheen Museum Katie Bogner presenting, \$290 for single, \$480 double, \$670 triple, \$860 quadruple, includes four meals and room for two nights, commuter \$90 includes lunches. Information, registration: 812-825-4642, ext. 1, motheroftheredeemer.com.

June 24-28

Mount St. Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Road, Mt. St. Francis. **In the Quiet, God Speaks: A Four-day Directed Retreat**, 7 p.m. Wed.-noon Sun., includes silent reflection time, morning and evening prayer, individual spiritual direction, lodging and meals for four nights, \$575. Information, registration: mountsaintfrancis.org/four-day-directed-retreat, 812-923-8817. †

Wedding Anniversaries

JOHN AND KATHLEEN (BEARD) ARMENTROUT, members of Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ Parish in Indianapolis, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on May 15.

The couple was married in St. Bartholomew Church in Columbus on May 15, 1976. They have one child: Joshua Armentrout.



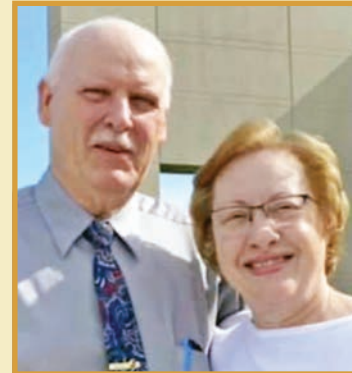
EUGENE AND PATRICIA (HARMEYER) LECHER, members of Holy Family Parish in Oldenburg, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on May 15.

The couple was married in the former St. Mary-of-the-Rock Church in Franklin County on May 15, 1976. They have six children: Jennifer McMahan, Aaron, Brad, Evan, Michael and Todd Lecher. The couple also has 18 grandchildren.



EDWARD AND JUDITH (BARHL) BECHER, members of St. Simon the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis, will celebrate their 55th wedding anniversary on May 15.

The couple was married in St. James Church in Haubstadt, Ind. (Diocese of Evansville), on May 15, 1971. They have three children: Laurissa Bray, Tena Ellis and Kendra Smith. The couple also has six grandchildren.



LARRY AND PAULINE (SCHUTTE) PRICKEL, members of St. Louis Parish in Batesville, celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on May 7.

The couple was married in St. Louis Church in Batesville on May 7, 1966. They have four children: Heidi Amberger, Gretchen Gutzwiller, Bridget Knecht and Doug Prickel. The couple also has six 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.

Information session on joining Indianapolis Catholic Charities Senior Choir will be held on May 27

An information session on joining the Indianapolis Catholic Charities Senior Choir will be held in the Franciscan Room at the Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., in Indianapolis, from 11 a.m.-noon on May 27.

The volunteer choir of adults ages 55 and older sings Gospel, classic, inspirational and "oldies" songs at

community events and gatherings. The choir offers a fun, uplifting environment of fellowship, laughter and music.

All adults age 55 and older are invited to come learn about the choir—no singing experience is required.

For more information, contact Joyce Beaven, senior services director for Catholic Charities Indianapolis, at 317-236-1552 or jbeaven@archindy.org. †

Pope Leo marks anniversary of election at Marian shrine in Pompeii

POMPEII, Italy (OSV News)—Pope Leo XIV marked the first anniversary of his May 8, 2025, election by making a pilgrimage to celebrate Mass at the Sanctuary of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary in Pompeii, one of Italy's most beloved Marian shrines, placing his pontificate under the protection of the Virgin Mary.

"Exactly one year ago, when I was entrusted with the ministry of the successor of Peter, it was precisely the day of the Supplication to the Virgin, this beautiful feast of the Supplication to the Virgin of the Holy Rosary of Pompeii," the pope said in his homily before an estimated 20,000 people gathered in the piazza in front of the basilica.

"I therefore had to come here to place my ministry under the protection of the Blessed Virgin," he said.

The pilgrimage brought Pope Leo XIV full circle: Moments after his election, the newly chosen pope led the crowd from the *loggia* in St. Peter's Basilica in praying a Hail Mary on what happened to be the feast of Our Lady of Pompeii. Now, a year later, the pope began his homily with words echoing Mary's "*Magnificat*": "My soul magnifies the Lord!" (Lk 1:46)

"Brothers and sisters, no earthly power will save the world, but only the divine power of love, this divine power of love that Jesus, the Lord, has revealed to us and given us. Let us believe in him, let us hope in him, and let us follow him," Pope Leo said in Pompeii.

The first pope born in the United States had a busy first year. The Augustinian pope presided over more than 65 public Masses, the canonization of nine saints, apostolic journeys across three continents, audiences with many world leaders, and led the Catholic Church in the celebration of the historic Jubilee of Hope.

On the morning of the May 8 anniversary, the pope traveled south by helicopter from the Vatican to the Sanctuary of the Blessed Virgin of the Holy Rosary in Pompeii, located near Naples.

The Basilica of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary in Pompeii

The Marian shrine has its roots in the remarkable conversion story of St. Bartolo Longo, an Italian lawyer and former Satanist who returned to the Catholic faith. He dedicated his life to promoting the rosary and built the Sanctuary of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary, near the ancient Roman ruins of Pompeii, with the cornerstone being laid on May 8, 1876. Bartolo Longo was

canonized in October as one of the first new saints of Pope Leo's pontificate.

"One hundred and fifty years ago, as he laid the cornerstone of this Shrine—on the very spot where the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 A.D. had buried the vestiges of a great civilization under ash, preserving them for centuries—St. Bartolo Longo, together with his wife, Countess Marianna Farnararo De Fusco, laid the foundations not only of a church, but of an entire Marian city," Pope Leo said.

In addition to the basilica, St. Bartolo also built up the extensive charity network around the shrine, welcoming orphans and the children of prisoners, and earning two nominations for the Nobel Peace Prize in the early 1900s.

"When St. Bartolo first arrived in the valley of Pompeii, he found a land plagued by great poverty, inhabited by a few very poor farmers and ravaged by malaria and bandits. He was able to see, however, the face of Christ in everyone: in the young and the old, and especially in the orphans and the children of prisoners, to whom he made the beating of God's heart felt through his tenderness," the pope said in a meeting with charity volunteers affiliated with the shrine before the Mass.

The name of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish in Indianapolis, founded in 1909 as a faith community for Italian immigrants to the city, was inspired by this shrine in Pompeii. The image of Mary and the Christ Child giving rosaries to St. Dominic and St. Catherine of Siena at the center of the shrine in Pompeii is also seen on the ceiling of the sanctuary of Holy Rosary Church in Indianapolis.

Pope Leo XIII and the rosary

On his anniversary, Pope Leo XIV reflected on how his choice of the papal name Leo connects him to Pope Leo XIII, who championed devotion to the rosary.

"Having chosen the name Leo places me in the footsteps of Leo XIII, who, among his other merits, also developed an extensive magisterium on the Holy Rosary," the pope said.

In his homily, Pope Leo XIV reflected at length on the importance of praying the rosary.

"The Hail Mary is an invitation to joy," he said. "It tells Mary—and through her, all of us—that upon the ruins of our humanity, tried by sin and therefore ever prone to oppression, abuse and war, God's caress has come, the caress of mercy, which takes on a human face in Jesus."



Pope Leo XIV arrives to celebrate Mass in Piazza Bartolo Longo in Piazza Bartolo Longo in front of the Pontifical Shrine of the Blessed Virgin of the Rosary of Pompeii near Naples, Italy, on May 8, the first anniversary of his election as the first American pontiff. (OSV News photo/Simone Risoluti, Vatican Media)

He described the repetition of Hail Mary in the prayer of the rosary as an echo of the angel Gabriel's greeting at the Annunciation, an echo "that spans the centuries and directs the believer's gaze to Jesus, seen through the eyes and heart of his Mother."

In the rosary, he said, "Jesus is adored, contemplated and assimilated in each of his mysteries, so that with St. Paul we may say: 'It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me' [Gal 2:20]."

A plea for peace

The pope closed his homily with an urgent appeal for peace, noting that "times have not improved" in the quarter century since St. John Paul II placed the Year of the Rosary under the patronage of Our Lady of Pompeii.

"The wars still being waged in so many regions of the world call for a renewed commitment, not only economic and political, but also spiritual and religious," Pope Leo said. "Peace is born in the heart. ... We cannot resign ourselves to the images of death that the news presents to us every day."

Invoking the intercession of the Virgin Mary, the pope prayed that "the God of peace would pour out an overflowing abundance of mercy, touching hearts, soothing grudges and fratricidal hatred, and enlightening those who bear special responsibilities of governance."

Veneration and liquefaction of St. Januarius' blood in Naples

From Pompeii, the pope traveled to the nearby city of Naples for the

afternoon leg of his pastoral visit, where he was greeted with the kind of exuberant the southern Italian city is known for with festive music, dancing, and a traditional Neapolitan pizza bearing his name.

At the Naples Cathedral of the Assumption of Mary, Pope Leo venerated and kissed the reliquary containing the blood of St. Januarius, the fourth-century bishop, martyr and patron saint of the city. As the pope held the reliquary, the saint's preserved blood liquified—an occurrence Neapolitans have long regarded as a miracle. The phenomenon has taken place in the presence of only two other popes in modern history: during the visit of Pope Pius IX in 1848 and of Pope Francis in 2015.

The pope then traveled by popemobile through Naples' streets before addressing a crowd of some 50,000 people in the Piazza del Plebiscito, the city's largest public square. There, he spoke frankly about the challenges facing Naples, including organized crime, poverty and inequality, warning of the dangers of "poor job prospects, a lack of adequate facilities and services, and pervasive crime."

"Peace starts from the heart of man, passes through relationships, takes root in neighborhoods and suburbs and expands to embrace the entire city and the world," Pope Leo said. "Peace is built by promoting an alternative culture to violence, through daily gestures, educational paths, and practical choices of justice." †

Illinois national shrine planned to honor Venerable Augustus Tolton

(OSV News)—The first U.S. Catholic priest publicly known to be Black—who has already had 40 potential miracles through his intercession investigated—is now getting his own national shrine in western Illinois where he grew up and once served.



Ven. Augustus Tolton

On April 29, the Diocese of Springfield, Ill., announced plans for a national shrine for Venerable Augustus Tolton (1854-1897), one of the "saintly seven," referring to the group of Blacks recognized as "servant of God" or "venerable" who have active sainthood causes.

The diocese launched a fundraising campaign for the renovation of a long-dormant church on the site where Father Tolton, who was

regarded in his day as the first Black priest of the country, celebrated his first Mass in the U.S. after his ordination in Rome in 1886.

Church leaders said plans would be underway for St. Boniface Church in Quincy, Ill., to get a \$5 million-plus makeover.

Bishop Thomas J. Paprocki of Springfield blessed a plaque from the city of Quincy—the place where Father Tolton grew up, ministered and is buried—designating the church a landmark property.

The bishop told OSV News a lot of work was needed on the future shrine—a church left completely unused since 2020—that he envisions will be a place for prayer and pilgrimages.

"We can't even go into the church because it's that bad," he said. "It needs repair [remediation] of a lot of

mold and has not had proper heating and ventilation for the last few years. And so, that's why it's going to cost so much to restore it. Since it was just recently designated with landmark status, we want to go ahead with creating the shrine there, renovating the building."

He said another \$5 million to \$7 million would be needed to include landmarks from Father Tolton's life and Catholic formation in Quincy as part of the planned pilgrimage experience in the area.

Quincy designated the "mid-century modern" structure designed by local architect John Benya as a landmark site at the end of 2024.

Father Tolton was born in Brush Creek, Mo., in 1854, to devout Catholic enslaved parents. When he was 9, his mother Martha Jane Tolton escaped with her three children across the Mississippi River during the Civil War, reaching the safety of Union Army lines, to save them from slave-traders. The family then settled in Quincy.

After one month at St. Boniface School where white parents threatened to remove their children, young Augustine (as he sometimes signed his letters) transferred to St. Peter's Parish where priests (including German Franciscans) and religious sisters happily mentored him and nurtured a vocation to the priesthood which they saw in him.

However, no U.S. seminary would accept a Black seminarian for priestly formation, so his mentors sent him to study in Rome, where he reportedly was very well liked and did not experience any prejudice. Father Tolton was ordained a priest at St. John Lateran Basilica, the cathedral of the Diocese of Rome, in 1886. He expected to serve as a missionary in Africa, but instead was sent to Quincy, where he became

pastor at St. Joseph Parish, a mission of St. Boniface Parish.

At St. Joseph, Father Tolton ministered to both Black and white Americans, many of whom were drawn to him and preferred his preaching to that of St. Boniface's pastor, one block away. Father Tolton endured bitter opposition from that priest, whom Father Tolton said in a letter "abuses me in many ways."

He successfully sought a transfer to Chicago in 1889, where he served Black Catholics, mostly at St. Monica Parish on Chicago's South Side, a part of the city now known for its ties to Pope Leo XIV. Father Tolton died there eight years later, aged 43, of heatstroke.

Retired Chicago Auxiliary Bishop Joseph N. Perry, vice postulator of Father Tolton's canonization cause, who is also Black, remarked on St. Boniface as the designated shrine site.

"It's something of a roundabout to see the shrine, established as the place that kind of rejected him as a school child," Bishop Perry told OSV News.

He said a shrine signals "the degree of intensity of interest that is out there, for him." He remarked how "absolutely remarkable" it is for a person still steps away from sainthood to have a designated shrine.

The bishop said on a weekly basis, since the late Chicago Cardinal Francis E. George assigned him as postulator of Father Tolton's cause in 2010, he has received requests for prayer cards and informational pamphlets on Father Tolton from around the country and the world.

To date, Bishop Perry said, 40 investigations of potential miracles attributed to Father Tolton's intercession have taken place. †

HANSEN

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“It was a bold thing to do, and most people wouldn’t have said anything. The man was pretty gruff; I’d seen him myself before. The man didn’t respond right away, but a few weeks later, the statue was gone. That’s Sam: confident, thoughtful, and always motivated by care for others.”

That moment offers a glimpse of the person Deacon Hansen is and the priest he will become when he is ordained at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis on June 6 with his close friends, transitional deacons Khaing Thu and Timothy Khuishing.

Then comes a moment that shows a different side of the 26-year-old Deacon Hansen, one that surprised even him.

‘It shows the Church valuing joy’

The moment occurred during a recent school Mass at St. Monica Church in Indianapolis, the parish where Deacon Hansen now serves.

Giving the homily on that April morning, Deacon Hansen added an unexpected touch to his message by breaking into song—something he’d never done before, he said later.

Amid making a point of how our lives go off-kilter when we turn away from God and don’t repent for our sins, Deacon Hansen smiled and started to sing a verse from the playful song, “If Ever I Cease to Love.”

If ever I cease to love, may the moon be turned to green cream cheese...

If ever I cease to love, may we all turn into cats and dogs.

“Does that ring a bell with anyone?” Deacon Hansen asked the children, who responded loudly, “Yeah!”

The school community sang that song together during a Mardi Gras prayer service leading into Lent.

Deacon Hansen told the children that the song has stuck in his head ever since. Then he shared a message that he hopes sticks with them—a message of loving God, choosing to do good, praying daily and asking for God’s forgiveness and mercy.

After the Mass, he stood in the vestibule, flashing a warm smile and exchanging handshakes and high-fives with the children. The way they beamed in return added a touch of sunshine for all on that rainy spring morning.

“I take prayer requests from the kids,” he says. “I’m asking how their day is going. It’s important to me that the kids know me. I get to learn their names, and they get to know mine. It shows the Church valuing joy, the Church valuing communion through joy.”

And Deacon Hansen exudes joy, says one of the people who knows the most about the parish.

‘We say it with love and respect’

There are certain truths about a parish, and one of them is this: The person who knows as much as anyone about a faith community is the parish secretary.

At St. Monica, one of the secretaries is Julia Arciniega-Gonzalez. She’s watched Deacon Hansen in action ever since he spent the summer of 2025 there, and since his return in December. She has particularly seen his connection with the large Hispanic community of the parish.

“In the Hispanic community, we call him *Casi Padrecito*, ‘Almost Priest,’” she says with a smile.

“We say it with love and respect for him. We have a multi-culture parish community, and he’s always willing to help everyone.

“We work side by side most of the time. He’s very joyful, very organized and he’s thoughtful about everything, not only for our Lord Jesus Christ but also for the ministries and the feelings of the people. He’s very friendly with everyone.”

That connection showed as a woman left the parish’s Blessed Sacrament chapel, saw him and started speaking to him in Spanish, a language he can speak fluently. The conversation ended with both smiling.

“It’s the most diverse parish in the archdiocese,” Deacon Hansen says about St. Monica, noting that more than 25 countries are represented there. “Every sort of ministry is here. Every age group.

“The great lesson for me has been humility. Realizing my limits and dedicating myself to what is most important and trusting God to the rest. And having conversations with the people around here. It’s an opportunity to learn the value of a person’s life, and how each one is a reflection of God’s glory.”

He’s also learned how to go deeper in his faith from the parish’s Hispanic community.

“My experience here with the Hispanic community has just been an overabundance of love, of affection, of food, of support,” he says. “They have this cultural humility, this reverence. It all goes back to this heart of devotion that isn’t afraid to be honest with God.

“They’ve taught me to include that into my own spiritual life. To show my emotions to God in a new way. To see heaven in a new light—being reunited with relatives. And the way they pray for the dead. All those help me to see what our faith stands for.”

Part of what *he* stands for could be seen during one of

his visits to a nursing home and his interaction with a woman named Gwendolyn.

‘It was just a good day’

“We have three nursing homes that we visit regularly,” Deacon Hansen says. “At one of them, we only have four residents who are Catholic, and we usually have three for our Communion service. This lady named Gwendolyn was sitting in the lobby, and she wheeled her way up to us and introduced herself to the group. In an incredibly mysterious way, our Catholic Communion group drew in this new member for just that moment.

“It’s so small, but it’s a hallmark of what we’re going for. It’s accompanying other people and giving them space where they can bring their struggles, their worries and their hopes so they can share them and have them seen by another person, by both a human person and a divine person. It’s experiencing a connection in a world that’s so isolated. The tragedy of nursing homes is that so many go unvisited, so many go untouched and unloved.”

Deacon Hansen brings a similar approach of accompaniment to the youths of St. Monica, according to Father Matthew Perronie, who also assists at the parish.

“Our youth group typically gets together on Sunday evenings,” Father Perronie says. “One night, we had been gathered together, playing different card games, talking and socializing. He led us around the property for a rosary walk. We came back, ate some food and then he took everyone over to the gym to play some basketball. I remember thinking this will be the end, and we’ll wrap up from here. Then someone asked if they could play soccer.

“So, he took everyone who wanted to play out to the soccer field. It was well past the allotted time for youth group. He’s not wrapped up in, ‘This is when it starts, and this is when it ends, and how are we going to fit everything into that time?’ He’s just content enjoying that time with the kids.”

Deacon Hansen also strives to show the youths the world beyond their parish.

On January 22, he led a group of youths to participate in a pro-life Mass, rally and the Indiana March for Life in downtown Indianapolis—an experience that led to an unexpected moment.

“We were walking up Meridian Street, and there was construction going on at the corner of Washington and Meridian,” Deacon Hansen recalls. “Someone had passed a bunch of the pro-life signs to a construction crew that was not involved in the march. They were on scaffolding, holding up these signs, and everyone was cheering. Our group cheered so loudly for these construction workers.

“It just showed them [the youths] that what our Church stands for is something that the common man and the common woman can connect with. The message of Jesus is speaking to people who don’t even know God yet. It was just a good day where they were able to realize they were part of something bigger than their community.”

Deacon Hansen felt the same way in connection to the first person who made him think about becoming a priest—someone who also gave him a memorable gift.

‘The two things I see as most important’

The moment occurred at St. Patrick Church in Indianapolis where his parents, Joseph and Gina, were married, and he and his two brothers were baptized.

“The late Franciscan Father Arturo Ocampo was one of the earliest people to encourage me about the priesthood,” Deacon Hansen recalls. “I showed him my kid’s missal when I was 5 years old, and he gave me a wooden practice chalice that I still have.”

The influences continued at St. Roch School and Parish in Indianapolis, where Father James Wilmoth served as a joyful, inspiring and good-hearted pastor for years.

“The message I got at St. Roch is that it’s never too early to start thinking about your vocation,” Deacon Hansen says. “I wrote an essay about wanting to be a priest in the seventh grade.”

His mother saw his faith grow deeper during his years at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis.

“He went to Mass every morning at Roncalli, and he loved eucharistic adoration,” Gina Hansen says. “He just loved the sacraments. It was very inspiring for me to see that.”

After two years at Wabash College in Crawfordsville, Ind.—where he served as the student president of the college’s Catholic center—he entered Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary in Indianapolis. His years of

Transitional Deacon Samuel Hansen

Age: 26

Parents’ names: Joseph and Gina Hansen

Home parish: St. Roch in Indianapolis

Education: St. Roch School, Roncalli High School in Indianapolis, Wabash College in Crawfordsville, Ind., Marian University in Indianapolis, and Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad

Favorite Scripture verse/passage: Romans 8:18: “I consider the sufferings of the present as nothing compared with the glory that is yet to come.”

Favorite saint: St. Benedict

Favorite prayer/devotion: Eucharistic adoration

Favorite movie: *Rudy*

Favorite book or author: *St. Vincent Ferrer* by Henri Gheon

Hobbies: Exercise, sports of all sorts, and reading



priestly formation at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad followed, leading to his approaching ordination.

“I am extremely excited to be able to celebrate Mass and hear confessions,” he says. “Those are the two things I see as most important for the world. It’s the medicine the sick world needs.”

‘They know where his heart is’

Like all defining moment in a person’s life, the ordination of a priest is a time of deep emotion for him, his parents and the people who have watched and followed his path to this momentous point.

“I had a good cry when he was ordained a deacon down at Saint Meinrad. I hadn’t cried that hard in a long time,” recalls Joe Hansen, Deacon Hansen’s dad and an assistant superintendent of Catholic schools for the archdiocese. “They were tears of joy. I’m sure it’s the same feeling when you have a son or daughter getting married. He’s essentially marrying the Church.

“It will be a beautiful day, an emotional day. We have so many people, so many friends and family who are excited. And they’re excited for the Church, too. They know Sam, and they know where his heart is. He’s very selfless, and he understands that by becoming a priest he is sacrificing his life for others.”

Hansen pauses, emotion filling him again.

“I get choked up saying that because he gets it. He’s going to live his life for others. He’ll connect with his parishioners. He’ll connect with kids, and he’ll do anything to bring God’s love to them.”

Deacon Hansen’s mom Gina nods at her husband’s words before sharing her own.

“He was always just a kind-hearted child,” she says. “He’s ready.”

Gina notes how Joe’s side of the family—with Puerto Rican roots—is thrilled to have one of their own becoming a priest. Her thoughts then turn to her late grandmother and her dad who passed away—and how they would have loved to be there for the ordination.

“I believe they’ll be there in spirit,” she says.

“Everybody in our family is so excited for Sam.”

So is Father Keucher.

“He’s a man of real faith and real presence. He’s a natural leader, with the great mix of humility and strength,” says Father Keucher, who is also the director of vocations for the archdiocese, pastor of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Shelby County and dean of the Batesville Deanery. “He works hard, he loves being with people, and he has a particular heart for Hispanic ministry and for bringing people together in Christ.”

As others look forward to his ordination and his priesthood, Deacon Hansen looks back on his journey to this point, a journey that began when a 5-year-old boy showed his child’s missal to a priest and the caring priest gave the boy a chalice.

“The hardest part of seminary is the amount of places and people that we move through,” says Deacon Hansen, who will continue his ministry at St. Monica following his ordination. “As I move into a place of greater stability, I’m thankful for every place I’ve been and every person I’ve met who have helped me on this long journey. Each has provided their own value and just given me this broader image of the Church.”

He then shares a thought that he keeps as a reminder for himself. It’s a reminder for all of us, too.

“This life goes by fast, and there’s a God that loves us and waits for us on the other side.”

(For more information about a vocation to the priesthood in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, visit HearGodsCall.com.) †

St. Mark Parish in Perry County hosts Fatima's pilot 'traveling retreat'

By Natalie Hoefler

Father Anthony Hollowell recalls the moment Sandi Patel approached him last year with an idea.

"She kind of had a look in her eye that someone gets when you know it's something you're not going to be able to say 'no' to," he says with a chuckle.



Sandi Patel

The idea was for Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House in Indianapolis to host a "traveling retreat" at St. Mark Parish in Perry County, where Father Hollowell serves as pastor.

The origins of the idea go back to May 2025 when Patel was hired as director of the archdiocese's new Office of Retreat and Renewal Ministry.

As part of her duties, Archbishop Charles C. Thompson "had a vision of bringing Fatima [retreats] to people wherever they are in the archdiocese, to look at ways our office could be a resource for parishes," she explains. "We have our beautiful retreat house, but we aren't limited by our walls. Everyone needs a chance to retreat with our Lord and hear him speaking to us."

When she approached Father Hollowell about St. Mark serving as a pilot parish for Fatima's first on-the-road retreat, he agreed.

His parishioners "hear from me all the time," he says. "It was great to have someone highly qualified help do that work of building up their spiritual life."

'It's a safe environment'

The pilot retreat was held at St. Mark on April 18, with some of the 24 participants attending from St. Paul Parish in Tell City, where Father Hollowell also serves as pastor.

"It was a women's retreat called 'Treasures of Friendship' about

developing spiritual friendships where Christ is at the center of the friendship," says Patel, who led the retreat.

The day, which included Mass and time for eucharistic adoration, was a success.

"It happened three weeks ago, and my heart is still full," she says. "It was lovely."

For several women, it was their first experience attending a retreat, she notes.

"When you say 'retreat,' I think some people panic if they've never been," says Patel. "But when you offer it in a parish and they don't have to travel, it's a safe environment for them and provides a way for them to build community. It provides people that safe spot to begin and encourages them to go, because Jesus would go away to a desolate place.

"And that experience [at their parish] might then pique their interest and make them think, 'I could go on a retreat someplace else,' get them to step out of their comfort zone."

Feedback from evaluation forms was "overall positive," says Patel.

One woman appreciated "learning more about the [parishioners] I knew and learning about the ones I just met today." Another called the experience "a great opportunity to reflect on my spiritual life," adding, "We need more of this."

To the question, "What did you enjoy most about the program?" one woman simply wrote, "Everything!"

One comment Patel heard that "meant a lot to me" was one of gratitude "that someone from the archdiocese would come all the way down to their parish and do this for them. Having been on the [archdiocese's] pastoral planning committee, I knew some people felt unseen if they weren't from the metropolitan area, so I was grateful that person saw that effort."

The pilot retreat at St. Mark was successful on another front as well.

'Empowering people at parishes'

One purpose of the pilot program was testing the collaborative planning approach with parishes Patel envisioned.

"Father connected me with Becky Hubert, a parish leader [at St. Mark], to handle the local logistics," she says. "She was terrific to work with."



Women from St. Mark Parish in Perry County and St. Paul Parish in Tell City pose in St. Mark Church during a women's retreat on April 18. They are joined by their pastor Father Anthony Hollowell in the back row, who celebrated Mass during the retreat. (Submitted photo)

Patel's "biggest takeaway from this first pilot is how important collaboration is with the pastor and a leader in the parish. Pastors don't have time to lead efforts like this. ... It's not just the work of one person but the work of a group of people to handle the details—the marketing, hospitality, helping people feel at ease."

Part of that collaboration includes helping a parish decide what type of retreat best meets its needs.

"My goal is that I can be a resource to parishes to help them brainstorm topics or presenters and help point them in the right direction," says Patel.

"That might be a prepared retreat they can replicate at the parish. It might be a list of local presenters and resources that can help them create and lead a retreat. It's empowering people at parishes to do what they want and providing resources to help them move forward."

And the initiative doesn't have to start with a parish's pastor.

"It can be anyone, because often someone steps up and says, 'I feel called to lead this at our parish,'" says Patel. "I wouldn't proceed without the proper leadership in a parish, but it can be started by anyone who wants to step up and lead the effort."

Patel is already working on a few more pilot efforts with other parishes in the fall.

Father Hollowell is glad he said 'yes' to having St. Mark host the first pilot "traveling retreat."

"It's a great gift to have what I would call like a local missionary come and share insights and perspectives that enrich faith life," he says.

"And there's definitely a desire to do it again. Even while it was happening, we were discussing, 'Hey, we could do a guided retreat,' and talking about what that could look like."

Father Hollowell appreciates the change an on-site retreat provides.

"You can get locked into a schedule week-in and week-out," he notes. "You're in church a lot in that schedule. It was nice to see something different come along."

"Being in the same place but experiencing it in a different way was very refreshing for me personally."

(For more information on traveling retreats through Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House and the Office of Retreat and Renewal Ministry, contact Sandi Patel at 317-545-7681, ext. 105, or spatel@archindy.org.) †

PILGRIMAGE

continued from page 1

thanksgiving," says Zakrajsek, the director of youth faith formation at St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Elkhart, Ind., in the Fort Wayne-South Bend Diocese.

"Gratitude is what carries a nation forward. Not a declaration of greatness, but a confession of dependence. Like every nation, we are dependent upon grace, upon God. This spiritual pilgrimage is a reminder of our dependence upon him. He desires to renew us, refresh us and bless us with his presence in the Eucharist."

She shared these thoughts and others in an interview with *The Criterion*. Here is an edited version of that exchange.

Q. What are you most looking forward to about the pilgrimage?

A. "To seeing the Gospel narratives come to life and watching the crowds encounter Jesus' healing presence, especially during the processions. I often wonder what that must have been like for the Apostles—to eat with

him, to travel with him. "It is a tangible reminder that the Gospel story is our story—Jesus desires to share our everyday moments of life just like he did with the Apostles, and convert them into something extraordinary, simply because we do them through him, with him and in him. He calls us to be his witnesses, and I look forward to sharing the transformative power he has wrought in my life through the Eucharist."



By scanning the QR code, people can share their prayer intentions with Mary Carmen, who says she will bring them to Christ during the pilgrimage.

Q. Talk about what led you to want to become a perpetual pilgrim for this third National Eucharistic Pilgrimage.

A. "I remember joining the last 3-mile downtown stretch of the eucharistic procession leading up to the National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis in 2024. I felt so internally free and joyful as I walked behind the Eucharist. I remember seeing the perpetual pilgrims at the time and thinking, 'Wow! This would be awesome to do what they have been doing and be a witness.' I felt like this pilgrimage would be an incredible opportunity to deepen my relationship with Jesus in the Eucharist."

Q. How do you hope the pilgrimage will deepen your relationship with Christ?

A. "My hope is that this pilgrimage deepens my ability to trust and receive Christ's love more fully. That is our first mission—to be loved by God. To receive his love and be reminded that the Lord has loved us first.

"Sometimes, more often than not, it's my pride that blocks this. Feeling like I'm too much of a sinner, too fickle, too ashamed. I hope that walking behind Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament this summer will set me free to live more fully in his love and boldly claim it as my inheritance. The Eucharist is proof of God's love for us. He desires to be close to us in the ordinary moments of our life.

"I hope this pilgrimage will strengthen the image of Jesus as a close friend, as someone who rejoices when I rejoice and weeps when I weep, and as someone who cares for me and wants to show me miracles when I put my faith in him."

Q. How do you think this pilgrimage will help you in your ministry with youths?

A. "One of the chaplains from last year's pilgrimage shared with our team that we are all called to be monstrances—bearing the image of Jesus exposed and sharing his radiance with others.

"I think about this in terms of my job, particularly with the youth. St. Pope Paul VI said, 'Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than he does to

teachers. And if he listens to teachers, it's because they are witnesses.'

"I hope that this pilgrimage will embolden me as his witness and give me the grace to radiate his presence with my catechists and students."

Q. Another young woman with Indianapolis roots, Cheyenne Johnson, will be the team leader of this year's pilgrims, after being a perpetual pilgrim in last year's eucharistic pilgrimage. What will it be like for you to share the experience with her, another former member of Holy Rosary Parish who also served as the Catholic campus minister at Butler University in Indianapolis?

A. "I am excited to experience this pilgrimage with Cheyenne. We went to different universities in Indianapolis, but we met on the same March for Life trip to Washington years ago. We reconnected after college and even more so after she became a parishioner at Holy Rosary. We have a lot of fun together. I'm looking forward to growing, laughing and witnessing alongside her. I'm excited to represent Indiana and the archdiocese together."

Q. How do you hope your pilgrimage connects to people in our archdiocese and across our country?

A. "Something that has been powerful in the months leading up to the pilgrimage is interceding on behalf of friends, family, personal donors and our country. The theme for this year's pilgrimage is 'One Nation Under God,' and I feel both humbled and honored to pray in a serious way for those who entrust their intentions to me and the team on this route.

"I would love for anyone who is reading this to share your prayer intentions with me. I will have plenty of hours in the van, in chapels and on foot this summer to bring these petitions before our Eucharistic Lord. You may scan the QR code at the [left] and upload as many as you would like."

(The story of perpetual pilgrim Cheyenne Johnson will be featured in a future issue.) †

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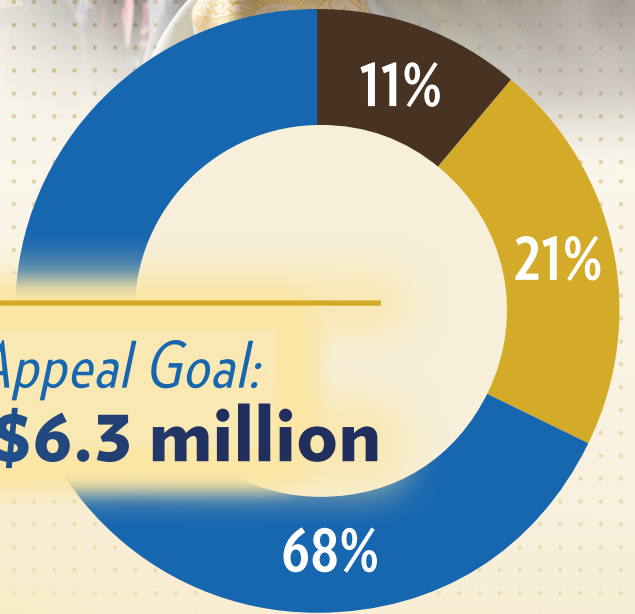
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SIMPLY CATHOLIC

Mary's appearances have helped people live the faith more fully

By Jeff Ziegler

(OSV News)—Even though God has already “said everything” through Jesus Christ, as the Church teaches, some Christians throughout the centuries have attested that they have seen or heard Jesus, the angels or the saints, and especially the Blessed Mother.

Thus “throughout the ages, there have been so-called ‘private’ revelations, some of which have been recognized by the authority of the Church,” as the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches (#67). “They do not belong, however, to the deposit of faith. It is not their role to improve or complete Christ’s definitive revelation, but to help live more fully by it in a certain period of history.”

What follows is a description of six of the most influential approved Marian apparitions of the past five centuries.

In this month of May, traditionally dedicated in the Church to Mary, it is good to learn how the Blessed Mother showed her love in special ways for her spiritual sons and daughters over the ages and around the world.

—Our Lady of Guadalupe (1531)

On Dec. 9-12, 1531, Our Lady appeared four times on the hill of Tepeyac near Mexico City to St. Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin (1474-1548), a member of the Chichimeca people and a convert.

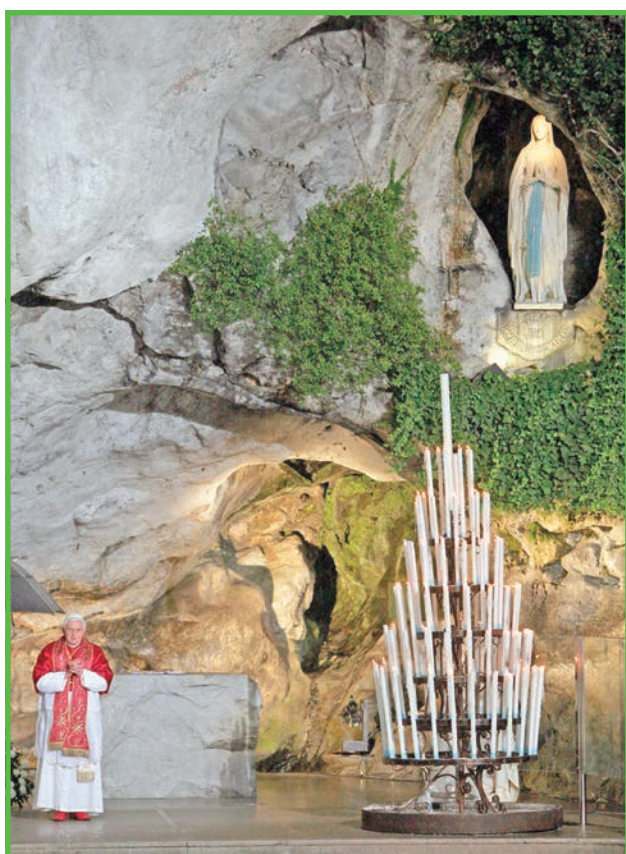
“Know for certain, least of my sons, that I am the perfect and perpetual Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus, the true God, through whom everything lives, the Lord of all things near and far, the master of heaven and Earth,” she said. “It is my earnest wish that a temple be built here to my honor. Here I will demonstrate, I will manifest, I will give all my love, my compassion, my help and my protection to the people.”

Our Lady asked Juan Diego to make known her request to Bishop Juan de Zumárraga. The bishop asked for a sign during a visit with Juan Diego. When he saw Our Lady again, she directed him to a hilltop where he saw roses in bloom, even though it was not the time of year for that to happen. Juan Diego cut the roses and placed them in his cloak, known then as a *tilma*. When he returned to the bishop, he opened his *tilma*. The roses fell to the floor, and the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe appeared miraculously on his *tilma*.

In 1754, Pope Benedict XIV approved Our Lady of Guadalupe as patroness of Mexico, and St. John Paul II named her “patroness of the Americas” in 1999. He visited her basilica in 1979, 1990, 1999 and 2002. Pope Francis visited in 2016.

—Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal (1830)

In 1830, the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared three times



Pope Benedict XVI prays on Sept. 13, 2008, at the Grotto of the Apparitions at the Marian sanctuaries of Lourdes, France. The pope traveled to Lourdes to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Mary’s appearances to St. Bernadette Soubirous. (CNS photo/Philippe Noisette, Catholic Press Photo)

to St. Catherine Labouré (1806-1876), a member of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul. The second time, she saw Mary crushing a serpent, with rays coming forth from her hands. She also saw the words, “O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to you,” and heard a voice say, “Have a medal made on this model. Those who will wear it with confidence will receive great graces.”

In time, the archbishop of Paris consented to the request.

In 1980, St. John Paul II made a pilgrimage to the chapel in Paris where St. Catherine saw the apparitions. “You obtain from God, for us, all these graces that the rays of light that radiate from your open hands symbolize, on the sole condition that we dare to ask them of you, that we ourselves approach you with the confidence, the boldness, the simplicity of a child,” he prayed.

—Our Lady of La Salette (1846)

In 1846, Our Lady appeared to two French children, Maximin Giraud (1835-1875) and Mélanie Calvat (1831-1904), in southeastern France. She deplored sins of blasphemy, the refusal of most villagers to attend Mass in the summer and the lack of fidelity to Lenten discipline.

“If my people do not obey, I shall be compelled to loose my son’s arm,” she warned. “It is so heavy I can no longer restrain it.” Bishop Philibert de Bruillard of Grenoble approved the apparition in 1851.

“Mary, Mother full of love, in this place showed her sadness at the moral evil of humanity,” St. John Paul II wrote in a letter marking the 150th anniversary of the apparition. “Through her tears, she helps us to better understand the painful gravity of sin, of the rejection of God, but also the passionate fidelity that her Son keeps toward her children—he, the Redeemer whose love is wounded by forgetfulness and refusal.”

—Our Lady of Lourdes (1858)

Our Lady appeared 18 times to St. Bernadette Soubirous (1844-1879) in Lourdes, a town in southwestern France.

“From Feb. 11 to July 16, 1858, the Blessed Virgin Mary was pleased, as a new favor, to manifest herself in the territory of the Pyrenees to a pious and pure child of a poor, hardworking, Christian family,” Pope Pius XII wrote in his 1957 encyclical “*Le Pelerinage de Lourdes*” (#10).

Our Lady said on one occasion to Bernadette, “Penance! Penance! Penance! Pray to God for sinners. Kiss the ground as an act of penance for sinners.” After a spring began to flow, Our Lady said, “Go, tell the priests to come here in procession and to build a chapel here.” When Bernadette asked her to identify herself, she declared, “I am the Immaculate Conception.”

Bishop Bertrand-Sévère Mascarou-Laurence of Tarbes-et-Lourdes approved the apparitions in 1862. In 1911, St. Pius X wrote that the Lourdes shrine “surpasses in glory, it seems, all others in the Catholic world.” St. John Paul made pilgrimages there in 1983 and 2004, as did Pope Benedict XVI in 2008.

—Our Lady of Knock (1879)

In 1879, 15 people of various ages from young to old in Knock, Ireland, witnessed an apparition of the Blessed Mother, St. Joseph and St. John the Evangelist on a rainy evening. The Blessed Mother was seen in prayer in the vision but did not speak. Within months, Archbishop John McHale of Tuam, Ireland, found the witnesses’ testimony credible and the site soon became a place of pilgrimage.



Pope Leo XIV incenses an image of Our Lady of Guadalupe during a Dec. 12, 2025, Mass on her feast day in St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican. Mary appeared to St. Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin as Our Lady of Guadalupe four times from Dec. 9-12, 1531, on Tepeyac Hill near Mexico City. (CNS photo/Lola Gomez)

In 1979, St. John Paul II celebrated Mass at Knock and dedicated the Basilica of Our Lady, Queen of Ireland. “For a whole century now, you have sanctified this place of pilgrimage through your sacrifice, through your penance,” he preached. “All those who have come here have received blessings through the intercession of Mary.”

“From that day of grace, 21 August 1879, until this very day, the sick and suffering, people handicapped in body or mind, troubled in their faith or their conscience, all have been healed, comforted and confirmed in their faith because they trusted that the mother of God would lead them to her son, Jesus,” he added.

Pope Francis visited the Shrine of Our Lady of Knock in 2018 and elevated it from a national to international shrine.

—Our Lady of Fátima (1917)

In 1917, Mary under the title of Our Lady of the Rosary appeared during a period of six consecutive months to three Portuguese children: Venerable Lúcia Santos (1907-2005), St. Jacinta Marto (1910-1920) and St. Francisco Marto (1908-1919). Her message was one of prayer, atonement and devotion to her Immaculate Heart.

“Say the rosary every day to bring peace to the world and an end to the war,” she said. “And after each one of the mysteries, my children, I want you to pray in this way: O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fire of hell. Take all souls to heaven, especially those who are most in need.”

“Make sacrifices for sinners and say often, especially while making a sacrifice: O Jesus, this is for love of Thee, for the conversion of sinners, and in reparation for offenses committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary,” she added.

Mary revealed to the children a three-part secret: a vision of hell, a request for the First Saturday devotion and consecration of Russia to the Immaculate Heart, and the killing of a bishop dressed in white, along with other clergy, religious and laity. Pope Pius XII, St. Paul VI, St. John Paul II and Pope Francis have consecrated the world to Mary’s Immaculate Heart. The Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith released the text of the third part of the secret in 2000, along with commentary.

During the final apparition on Oct. 13, 1917, Our Lady requested the construction of a chapel, and 70,000 onlookers witnessed the sun dance in the sky. Bishop José Alves Correia da Silva of Leiria-Fátima approved the apparitions in 1930, and St. Paul VI, St. John Paul, Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis all made pilgrimages there.

(Jeff Ziegler, who holds degrees in classics and sacred theology, writes from North Carolina.)

Evangelization Outreach/Andrew Motyka

Music at ordination Mass helps engage the mystery of the sacraments

Music at Mass has many functions. It makes liturgical actions and texts more beautiful, it engages the congregation in participation by singing and listening, and it accompanies other liturgical actions.



Music which accompanies liturgical actions and has its place on specific days or in particular liturgies is called “ritual music.” Singing the *Pange lingua* while reposing the Blessed Sacrament on Holy Thursday is an example of ritual music.

Ordination Masses have quite a bit of ritual music that helps us to understand the celebration more deeply. On June 6, the Archdiocese of Indianapolis will ordain three new priests, and the ritual music will reflect the beauty of this liturgy.

Beginning with the Entrance Antiphon, we explore not only the sacramental priesthood but the universal priesthood of all believers. The text of the antiphon is: “Priests of God, bless the Lord; praise and exalt him above all forever.” This excerpt from Daniel 3 is part of a long litany of the praise of all creation. We enter into this praise of God as all the priests of the archdiocese process into the Church.

Following the Liturgy of the Word, which looks just like an ordinary Sunday Mass (although the readings are proper to ordinations) begins the rite of ordination itself.

After the homily, the ordinands make their priestly promises and promise obedience to the archbishop. We then pray for the ordinands about to receive the sacrament. First, the Litany of Saints is sung. This is unlike the Litany of Saints that we are used to hearing during a baptismal liturgy. In the baptismal liturgy, the litany accompanies a procession to the baptismal font. At ordinations, the litany itself is the main liturgical action. We invoke the saints and offer intercessions while the ordinands lay prostrate at the front of the church.

The archbishop then calls on the Holy Spirit to come upon the ordinands, laying hands upon each of their heads individually. Every priest present at this Mass then comes forward and lays hands on the heads of the ordinands. There is no particular ritual music for this part, but at the ordination Mass on June 6 we will sing the *Veni Creator Spiritus*, a traditional hymn to the Holy Spirit.

After all the priests have laid hands upon the ordinands, the archbishop offers the prayer of ordination. Following this prayer, the newly ordained priests are assisted in switching their vestments from those of a deacon to those of a priest. This involves rearranging their

stoles and donning a chasuble.

After this, the archbishop anoints the palms of their hands with sacred chrism, and then the gifts of bread and wine are brought to the altar. Appropriately, the music during this time is adapted from Psalm 110: “Christ the Lord, a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek, offered bread and wine.”

Finally, the archbishop, and then in turn all the priests of the archdiocese, offer the newly ordained a sign of peace. A responsory is sung while this happens: “I call you servants no longer, but my friends, because you know all that I have done in your midst, alleluia. Receive the Holy Spirit, as an Advocate among you. He is the One whom the Father will send you, alleluia.” The Mass then proceeds as usual with the Liturgy of the Eucharist, which the newly ordained priests concelebrate.

Music at ordination Masses, like at all Masses, helps us to engage the mysteries of the sacraments in a way that plain speech does not. In a few weeks, we will offer the Mass in prayer and song as we welcome our newly ordained priests. Please pray for them as they begin their priestly ministry.

(Andrew Motyka is the director of Archdiocesan and Cathedral Liturgical Music for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.) †

Called to Holiness/Jaymie Stuart Wolfe

The Lord of life comes to do what no one else can—interrupt death

“Christ is risen! Alleluia!” We’ll be saying (and singing) that refrain and others like it until Pentecost, which is on May 24 this year.

And well we should! The resurrection of Jesus is the irreplaceable centerpiece of our faith. So much so that St. Paul devoted a substantial portion of his First Letter to the Corinthians addressing those who thought otherwise.



If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have died in Christ have perished. If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied” (1 Cor 15:17-19).

Pitiable indeed. The entire point of the cross is the empty tomb. The whole reason for Christ’s sacrificial death was to change death as we knew it—to make death a door instead of a wall, a bright beginning instead of a bitter end.

This was clear, if not explicit, in the public ministry of Jesus.

The raising of Jairus’ daughter early on in Galilee and the last great sign in John’s Gospel—the raising of Lazarus—show us where the rabbi from Nazareth intends to go. But the third recorded story of Jesus raising the dead—the son of the widow of Nain—rarely gets our attention. And that’s unfortunate, because the account has a lot to teach us about the mission of Christ in the world.

Recorded only in Luke’s Gospel, the raising of the widow’s son occurs before the other more famous miracles and less than 10 miles from Nazareth. The scene is sadly familiar and dominated by what we have been forced to accept as a non-negotiable fact of life: death. As Jesus, his disciples and a large crowd approaches Nain, they met a line of mourners in procession at the gates. “A man who had died was being carried out. He was his mother’s only son, and she was a widow; and with her was a large crowd from the town” (Lk 7:12).

I imagine that is not all Jesus saw. The procession of death had been going on, uninterrupted, since humanity’s exile from Eden. One by one, year after year and age after age, death came to every soul. The son of the widow of Nain was simply next in

a long line stretching before and after him; his widowed mother, yet another casualty consigned to loneliness and loss until the day she, too, would be carried out of town.

I think Jesus saw all of it that day, the entire and unending procession of death. Perhaps that was the source of his compassion and the reason he chose to intervene. “Then he came forward and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, ‘Young man, I say to you, rise!’ The dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother” (Lk 7:14–15).

Suddenly, the crowd who had accompanied Jesus and the crowd who had accompanied the corpse were at a loss. “Fear seized all of them” (Lk 7:16). Death, after all, is what we expect, and most of us live our lives in ways that accommodate it. Loss is sad, but inevitable. Life is short. All good things must come to an end.

But none of that is enough for Jesus. Christ does not accept the inevitability of death. He does not allow it to have the last word. Our Lord does not join the funeral cortege or stop to pay respects. Nor does he comfort or counsel the widow. Instead, Christ reaches out and commands the archenemy to retreat. He restores the young man to life and to his mother.

Jesus does this not simply to evoke the memory of Elijah and the widow of Zarith, but to begin the divine campaign that will vanquish the enemy. Ironically, he does this by dying himself, another only son of another (presumed) widow.

This stirring Gospel account is an icon of what Jesus intends to accomplish for every one of us. The Lord of life comes to do what no one else can—interrupt the procession of death. Whatever is dead or dying in us, Jesus comes to disrupt it. Sin, selfishness, fear, anger, addiction—all the works of death we have learned or chosen to accommodate—are destroyed by the risen Lord. Christ is risen! And so are we!

(Jaymie Stuart Wolfe is a sinner, Catholic convert, freelance writer and editor, musician, speaker, pet-aholic, wife and mom of eight grown children, loving life in New Orleans.) †

Media Mindfulness/Sister Hosea Rupprecht, ES.P

Preserving human voices and faces: World Communications Day 2026

Pope Leo XIV reflects on artificial intelligence in his inaugural World Communications Day message, which falls on May 17 this year. The Holy Father invites the faithful to look at artificial intelligence (AI) through the lens of “Preserving Human Voices and Faces.”



My recent journey into American Sign Language (ASL) via a mobile app highlighted a vital truth: While the app teaches vocabulary and other helpful things, it cannot replace the soul of communication, interacting with real people. Deeper understanding of the language only came when I

joined a “peer signing practice.” Navigating the clumsy, nerve-racking but rewarding reality of live interaction reminded me that communication is an embodied act.

In our AI-driven age, Pope Leo insists that we keep the human person at the heart of every digital interaction. He reminds us that our faces and voices are sacred, for through the face and voice of Jesus, God communicates his very self to us. To protect this sanctity, the pope issues three specific challenges.

—Exercise your mind

Thinking for ourselves defines our humanity. The Holy Father encourages us not to lean on AI as an all-knowing oracle or an instant font of advice. Algorithms often tell us exactly what we want to hear, creating an echo chamber that needs our critical questioning.

We want to prevent AI from stifling our creativity. As technology advances, AI-generated content becomes almost indistinguishable from human-created art. While we

naturally seek tools to increase efficiency—much like the invention of the wheel—what price are we willing to pay?

Pope Leo says that “renouncing creativity and surrendering our mental capacities and imagination to machines would mean burying the talents we have been given as individuals in relation to God and others. It would mean hiding our faces and silencing our voices.”

—Prioritize real relationships

The proliferation of generative AI brings to the fore a disturbing trend: the substitution of chatbots for real human intimacy. Our relationships with others constitute the core of what it means to be human. Think for a moment about what makes you feel most fulfilled in your life. I would bet that it has something to do with another human person—your spouse, your children, your best friend—rather than tasks or things you do alone.

Designers program AI chatbots to affirm whatever we input, yet allowing a machine to influence our emotions carries “painful consequences ... for the social, cultural and political fabric of society,” Pope Leo says.

I experienced the absurdity of this firsthand when an AI platform I used to draft a prayer service “told” me it would pray for me. My momentary “warm and fuzzy” feeling vanished into laughter at the idea of a machine communicating with the divine. When we let machines simulate relationships, they usurp our faces and voices.

—Educate and cooperate

Pope Leo does not merely warn; he offers a positive way forward. He calls for cooperation, especially between developers and legislators, to ensure AI respects human dignity. He specifically asks that we design algorithms to

seek the truth rather than simply capture every second of our attention.

Furthermore, he champions AI literacy. Understanding how these tools function, including what questions to ask when using AI, removes the element of fear. By educating ourselves, we ensure AI remains a tool rather than a master, protecting our images and voices from being used in “harmful content and behaviors.”

—Meeting the challenge: Three practical steps

Here are three ideas to meet the challenges Pope Leo puts forth:

1. Engage in raw creativity. Pick up a guitar, practice ASL with others or write a haiku. Use your God-given mind and imagination without technological intervention.

2. Invest in presence. Re-institute date nights or have that difficult, respectful conversation with a co-worker. Nurture the relationships that sustain your soul.

3. Pursue AI literacy. Research how algorithms work and why bias exists. Practice distinguishing AI-generated images from real photography. Talk to others about why “deepfakes” wound human dignity.

As artificial intelligence evolves, it continues to challenge us to employ it in an ethical and respectful manner.

Let us heed Pope Leo’s call: “We need faces and voices to speak for people again. We need to cherish the gift of communication as the deepest truth of humanity, to which all technological innovation should also be oriented.”

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

The Ascension of the Lord/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, May 17, 2026

- Acts 1:1-11
- Ephesians 1:17-23
- Matthew 28:16-20

In most dioceses in the United States, including the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, the Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord will be celebrated this weekend. Some dioceses observe this weekend as the Seventh Sunday of Easter.



These reflections will refer to the biblical readings for the Ascension of the Lord.

The first reading is from the beginning of the Acts of the Apostles. As with the Gospel of St. Luke, the author addresses Theophilus, whose identity is unclear. Was Theophilus his actual name? Perhaps it was. Perhaps it was not. "Theophilus," meaning "friend of God," could also be a title or a description of the person addressed.

In any case, this initial form of address recalls that Luke's Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles are inseparably linked. Acts simply continues the story begun in the Gospel. (At some point, editors divided these books and placed the Gospel of St. John between them. This arrangement remains today in biblical translations.)

This is important. It shows that, in the mind of the holy author, the process of salvation did not end with the Lord's ascension into heaven. After the Lord went to heaven, salvation continued as the Apostles proceeded with the mission accomplished by Jesus, ordained long ago by God.

A lesson to be learned is how important the Apostles were. In Acts, the text clearly reveals that the first Christians greatly revered the 11 surviving Apostles, that St. Peter led and spoke for the Apostles, that they performed miracles just as Jesus had done and that they exercised the authority of Jesus in calling St. Matthias to be an Apostle equal to the others.

Still, despite all these assertions as to their dignity, they were only humans. They needed the inspiration of God.

As its second reading, the Church presents a selection from St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians.

This reading is a prayer that all Christians might find true wisdom. True wisdom reposes only in the Lord. Earthly wisdom can be and often is faulty.

For the last reading, the Church gives us a passage from St. Matthew's Gospel. Again, the status of the Apostles is the point. The Apostles are with Jesus. They see and hear the risen Lord. They are witnesses of the resurrection of Christ.

Jesus tells them to go into the world. Excluding and ignoring no one, they are to bring all humanity into God's family by baptizing people in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

In this last instruction from Jesus is a clear and direct revelation of the Holy Trinity.

Reflection

The Church, having proclaimed the Resurrection, now calls us to look at ourselves and at our times as Christians. Christ still is with the Church and with us.

As the bond between Luke and Acts tells us, salvation, perfected in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, is still unfolding on Earth. Christ did not just come and go. He still lives, giving direction and focus, strengthening us, forgiving us, enlightening us. He is with us, even after he ascended to heaven.

He is with us now in the Church, because the Church stands on the foundation laid long ago by the Apostles. From them, it has received the message of Jesus. From them, it has received the commission to reach out to proclaim the Gospel to everyone, especially to the needy and the weak. From them and through Christ, it has received the authority to forgive sin and to bestow the new life of grace. From them, it received the sacraments, now offered to us.

The Church brings us to Jesus and it brings Jesus to us. As St. Paul in his Letter to the Ephesians tells us, only Jesus is the source of truth.

We are not dragged kicking and screaming to Jesus, however. We must turn to Jesus willingly and totally because we humbly realize our need for Jesus. †

Daily Readings

Monday, May 18

St. John I, pope and martyr
Acts 19:1-8
Psalm 68:2-3b, 4-5acd, 6-7b
John 16:29-33

Tuesday, May 19

Acts 20:17-27
Psalm 68:10-11, 20-21
John 17:1-11a

Wednesday, May 20

St. Bernardine of Siena, priest
Acts 20:28-38
Psalm 68:29-30, 33-36b
John 17:11b-19

Thursday, May 21

St. Christopher Magallanes, priest, and companions, martyrs
Acts 22:30; 23:6-11
Psalm 16:1-2a, 5, 7-11
John 17:20-26

Friday, May 22

St. Rita of Cascia, religious
Acts 25:13b-21
Psalm 103:1-2, 11-12, 19-20b
John 21:15-19

Saturday, May 23

Acts 28:16-20, 30-31
Psalm 11:4-5, 7
John 21:20-25

Vigil Mass of Pentecost, May 23

Genesis 11:1-9
or Exodus 19:3-8a, 16-20b
or Ezekiel 37:1-14
or Joel 3:1-5
Psalm 104:1-2a, 24, 35c, 27-28, 29bc-30
Romans 8:22-27
John 7:37-39

Sunday, May 24

Pentecost Sunday
Acts 2:1-11
Psalm 104:1, 24, 29-31, 34
1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13
John 20:19-23

Question Corner/Jenna Marie Cooper

Dating while seeking a declaration of nullity is 'very imprudent'

Q Can a Catholic date a person whose marriage has not been annulled, or is this a sin?

A For a few reasons, it's hard to determine in the abstract whether or not "dating" a divorced person who



has yet to receive a declaration of nullity is strictly speaking a sin per se. However, I would say that in general it is a bad idea.

For some background, we as Catholics believe that a valid, consummated,

sacramental marriage cannot be ended by anything other than the death of one of the spouses. Even though the Church is willing to tolerate civil divorce in some cases, at the end of the day it sees divorce as essentially a legal fiction. That is, even though divorced spouses may lead legally separated lives, in the eyes of God and in the view of the Church they are still bound by their marriage vows.

Our belief in the absolute permanence of marriage is rooted in what Jesus himself taught us in St. Matthew's Gospel: "Because of the hardness of your hearts Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, unless the marriage is unlawful, and marries another commits adultery" (Mt 19:8-9).

That caveat Jesus gives us—"unless the marriage is unlawful"—is the theological and scriptural foundation for the Church's marriage nullity process. That is, Jesus allows for the possibility that some apparent marriages may have been "unlawful," or that there may have been some problem at the time of the wedding that was of such a nature and severity that it prevented a true marriage from ever taking place.

For example, one or

both parties may have been lacking the proper intention or the psychological capacity necessary to consent to marriage.

The Church's nullity process, conducted through marriage tribunals in dioceses, exists as a way to determine whether one of these invalidating issues was in fact present at the time of the wedding.

Now, while the Church does have a well-established theology of marriage as well as a robust moral theology of chastity in general, it does not have a theology of courtship or "dating" as such. For instance, there is no official Catholic definition of what exactly constitutes "dating" versus a friendly or platonic interaction.

So, considering this more concretely, in and of itself it's not necessarily a sin for a man and a woman—even a man and woman who are married to other people—to, for example, have dinner or coffee together and enjoy a personal conversation.

But of course, this same couple would be guilty of the sin of adultery if they crossed the line into physical intimacy. And in real life, depending on specific circumstances, even a chaste one-on-one social engagement might be at least venially sinful if the couple is deliberately placing themselves into a situation where they know they will be tempted to be unchaste (what we would traditionally call a "near occasion of sin"), or if their relationship became a source of scandal within the community.

Apart from questions of whether or not this kind of dating is sinful, we should keep in mind that a fundamental principle undergirding the entire marriage nullity process is that "marriage enjoys the favor of the law" (*Code of Canon Law*, #1060), meaning that we presume a marriage is valid and binding unless and until it is proven otherwise.

Therefore, a divorced person, even a divorced person actively pursuing a declaration of nullity, is still seen by the Church as married. And engaging in a romantic relationship with a view toward marriage when one or both parties involved are not actually free to marry is very imprudent.

Declarations of nullity are never guaranteed, and a couple is setting themselves up for heartbreak in event of a negative decision that leaves the relevant party still bound to his or her original spouse and thus unable to remarry.

(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

Sitting in Heaven

By Janine Schorsch

God, Himself,
Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity.
In the guise of a wafer of bread,
exposed in the golden monstrance.

My feet, my knees, touch the Earth.
But You, Creator of the universe,
Savior of the world, Spirit that flows through us,
have invited me to enter into heaven.

In Your presence, my heart overflows with love,
my soul opens to wonder,
my hurried mind finds peace,
in the presence of angels, adoring our God.

(Janine Schorsch is a member of St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross Parish in Bright. Photo: A monstrance containing the Blessed Sacrament is seen during eucharistic adoration at the annual National Conference of Diocesan Vocation Directors at the Immaculate Conception Retreat & Conference Center in Huntington, N.Y., on Aug. 26, 2025.) (OSV News photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)



Mass with archbishop marks Little Sisters' Superior General's visit from France

Criterion staff report

On April 30, Archbishop Charles C. Thompson served as principal celebrant at a special Mass commemorating the canonical visit of Mother General Maria del Monte Auxiliadora, Superior General of the Little Sisters of the Poor, at the congregation's St. Augustine Home for the Aged in Indianapolis.

Mother María del Monte Auxiliadora resides at La Tour Saint Joseph, the Little Sisters' motherhouse in Saint-Pern in Brittany, France. Her presence in Indianapolis was part of a tour of three-day visits with sisters and residents at each of the congregation's homes in its Chicago Province.

She last visited the St. Augustine Home in 2023 to meet for a few hours with its Mother Superior, Mother Maria Christine. Former Superior Generals also visited Indianapolis in 2006 and 1952.

In his homily, the archbishop said the lives and ministry of the Little Sisters of the Poor "point not to themselves, but to the saving grace of the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. They show forth the path of salvation in him by encouraging us to face the cross of Good Friday while keeping before us the empty tomb of Easter Sunday."

At the end of the Mass, he noted that the day also marked the 50th jubilee of Mother Maria Christine as a professed member of the Little Sisters of the Poor. †



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson elevates a chalice and paten as Father Rob Waller of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, left, Msgr. Joseph Schaedel and Father David Hellmann of the Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana, concelebrate with him on April 30 during a special Mass in the chapel of the Little Sisters of the Poor's St. Augustine Home for the Aged in Indianapolis. The Mass was commemorating the canonical visit of Mother General Maria del Monte Auxiliadora, the congregation's Superior General from France. (Photos by Natalie Hoefler)



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson and 10 priests pose with professed women of the Little Sisters of the Poor in the chapel of the congregation's St. Augustine Home for the Aged in Indianapolis on April 30. To the left of the archbishop is Mother General Maria del Monte Auxiliadora, the congregation's Superior General, who was visiting from France. To his right is Mother Maria Christine, Mother Superior of the St. Augustine Home.

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.

BANET, Elizabeth A. (Goodyear), 95, St. Mary, New Albany, Feb. 27. Mother of Rebecca and Gerald Banet. Grandmother of seven. Great-grandmother of eight.

BORHO, Patrick K., 67, St. John Paul II, Sellersburg, April 22. Brother of Donna Adams, Diane Shaver and Randy Borho. Uncle and great-uncle of several.

BURGER, Tina M., 70, St. John Paul II, Sellersburg, April 19. Mother of Mallory Fox and Michael Pedigo. Daughter of Elta McDonald. Sister of William Runyon II. Grandmother of seven.

CARTER, Theodore, 88, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Richmond, April 20. Father of Linda Farlow, Laura Parker, Nancy Vanover, Jeff and Tim Carter. Grandfather of 19. Great-grandfather of two.

CLARK, Beatrice A. (Buergler), 96, St. Jude, Indianapolis, April 13. Mother of Linda Burchett, Suzanne Dearholt, Theresa Laker, Barbara Lock, Joyce Mappes, Diane Meadows, Jeanine Thompson, Kevin and Stephen Massing. Sister of Edwin Buergler. Grandmother of 22. Great-grandmother of 52. Great-grandmother of one.

GRAVES, Joyce C., 90, St. Barnabas, Indianapolis, April 16. Mother of Cindy Franz, Sheryl Lesem, Leslie Willsey, Kathy, Steven and William Stewart. Stepmother of

Lindy Smith. Grandmother of 13. Great-grandmother of 15.

HOFMEISTER, Jr., Joseph R., 93, St. Simon the Apostle, Indianapolis, April 16. Husband of Martha Hofmeister. Father of Joyce Jasper, Joan Webber, Jeff, John and Joseph Hofmeister III. Stepfather of Sharen Beattie, JoAnna Selig and Karen Woodall. Grandfather of 10. Step-grandfather of four. Great-grandfather and great-grandfather of several.

HUGUS, Rosalyn, 88, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, April 11. Mother of Kay and Fritz Hugus. Grandmother of two. Great-grandmother of one.

JUNKER, Patricia A., 91, St. Joseph University Parish, Terre Haute, April 18. Mother of Dorothy Mimms, Cecilia

Yoakum, Donald, Howard III and Stephen Junker. Grandmother of 13. Great-grandmother of 13.

MEHRINGER, Gerald, 79, St. Paul, Tell City, April 20. Husband of Barbara Mehringer. Father of Dr. Brian Behringer. Brother of Imelda Snyder and Elaine Streicher. Grandfather of two.

MILLER, Ralph, 89, St. John the Baptist, Osgood, April 17. Father of Terri Stein, Merri Stephens, Sheri Works, James and Jon Miller. Grandfather of 23. Great-grandfather of 41.

MILLICAN, Mari Anne, 99, St. Luke the Evangelist, Indianapolis, April 12. Aunt of several.

ROLLISON, Helen, 80, St. Ann, Indianapolis, April 5.

Mother of Adam. Sister of Jim. Grandmother of three.

SADTLER, Anna M. (Kraft), 97, St. Mary, New Albany, March 31. Mother of Susie Geswein, Carolyn Keefe, Fritz and Jim Sadtler. Grandmother of 11. Great-grandmother of 23.

YOVANOVICH, Alex, 83, St. Malachy, Brownsburg, April 21. Husband of Nancy Yovanovich. Father of Annette, Alex and Timmy Yovanovich. Brother of Debby Williams, Sue Ann and Denny Yovanovich. Grandfather of two.

ZAPPIA, Linda C., 79, Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Indianapolis, April 18. Sister of Irma McKeand and Laura Schreck. Aunt of two. †

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
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A monk of Saint Meinrad Archabbey, Benedictine Brother Andrew Zimmerman served in Peru and Guatemala

Benedictine Brother Andrew Zimmerman, a monk of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad, died on May 1 at the monastery's infirmary. He was 91.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on May 6 at the monastery's Archabbey Church of Our Lady of Einsiedeln. Burial followed at the Archabbey Cemetery.

Brother Andrew was a jubilarian of monastic profession, being in the 70th year of his monastic profession at the time of his death.

Brother Andrew was born on Dec. 23, 1934, in Richmond, Va., and was given the name William Henry at his baptism.

He entered the former St. Placid Hall at the monastery in 1953 to complete his high school education. Brother Andrew was invested as a novice on Feb. 9, 1955, professed simple vows on March 11, 1956, and perpetual vows on March 11, 1959.

In his early years in the monastic community, Brother Andrew worked in its tailor shop before being assigned in 1963 to San Benito Priory, a mission of Saint Meinrad in Huaraz, Peru. There, he served as director of the physical plant, business manager and treasurer.

He returned to Saint Meinrad in 1980 to work in the business office, mailroom and duplicating office. From 1992-96, Brother Andrew worked in the monastery's vestry and transportation office. He then served from 1996-2004 at San José Priory, a mission in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala, of Marmion Abbey in Aurora, Ill.

Upon returning to Saint Meinrad, Brother Andrew assisted at the Guadalupe Center in Huntingburg, Ind., in the Evansville Diocese, until 2023.

Memorial gifts may be sent to Saint Meinrad Archabbey, 200 Hill Drive, St. Meinrad, IN 47577. †

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

Pediatrician shares advice for women expecting their first child

(The Criterion has invited moms to share the advice they would give to a woman expecting her first child. Here is the last story in this series.)

By John Shaughnessy

In her 26 years as a pediatrician, Dr. Cheryl Ferguson offered advice to many mothers about their children, who ranged from newborns to teenagers.

At the same time, as a mother of two, Ferguson also gained insights about parenting from the women who came to her for their health care.

Those combined perspectives have led the now-retired physician to share the following advice for women expecting their first child, starting with a recommendation that she considers essential to a child's development.

"Parents with infants need to make eye contact with their infants and talk to them interactively and often," notes Ferguson, a member of St. Simon the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis. "Children learn communication long before they say their first word.

"It breaks my heart to see parents scrolling on their phones while feeding a baby. Talk to your baby, smile and make faces. You're stimulating their rapidly developing brain. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no screens for children under age 2, with the one exception of occasional FaceTime chats with family or other people."

As Ferguson continues her advice, she does it from the foundation that every child is a gift from God.

"My best advice is to respect your

children as individual children of God with their own needs, ideas and interests," she notes. "Encourage them to be who God made them to be.

"This may be nothing like either parent, and totally not what you envisioned your children to be. And that's OK. You may need a different parenting approach for each child, as personalities can be very different."

Ferguson also stresses the importance of teaching children the gift and the power of acceptance.

"They should learn to accept themselves, friends and their family," she advises. "Always encourage them to strive to be a better person, but accept who that person truly is in God's image."

That quality should also be embraced by parents.

"Accept your kids with their strengths and weaknesses. Love them unconditionally."

Parents should also remember that children pay close attention to the actions of their mom and dad.

"Kids will learn from your behavior," she says. "If you want kind, patient children who are polite, teach them by example. Say 'please,' 'thank you' and 'you're welcome' to each other at home."

For Ferguson, parenting all comes down to making your children a priority in your life.

"Show up as much as you can," she advises. "Kids will understand if you have to work or care for elderly parents, but make sure they know it is killing you to have to miss something. You want to be there for them. Go to the games, the recitals, the band concerts, the



Dr. Cheryl Ferguson always savors her time with her children, Julianne Ferguson, left, and Caroline Ferguson DeHaro. (Submitted photo)

art exposition, etcetera. Get to know their friends and their friends' parents. Be an active part in your children's lives. Spend time with them."

Most of all, Ferguson offers this reminder:

"Kids need to hear the words, 'I love you' and 'I am proud of you' often." †

Employment

President

Scecina Memorial High School

Scecina Memorial High School, an archdiocesan parochial Catholic high school serving grades 9-12, is currently accepting applications for the position of President to begin as soon as July 1, 2026 and as late as January 1, 2027. A vibrant anchor for the eastside of Indianapolis, the school is a co-educational Catholic college and life preparatory school that motivates our diverse and gifted community to attain educational excellence, be lifelong learners, and live as servant leaders in the inspiring footsteps of Father Thomas Scecina. Scecina Memorial is accredited by the State of Indiana and Lumen Accreditation at the Catholic University of America.

Applicants must foster a strong Catholic identity, value diversity, and possess strong leadership and interpersonal skills. Applicants must be practicing Roman Catholics who have demonstrated their commitment to servant leadership. Preferred candidates will have a master's degree and/or equivalent work experience and a track record of building community and serving others.

Please complete the online application at <https://archindy.applicantpro.com/jobs> and email cover letter, resume, and list of references, in confidence, to Dr. Brian Disney, Superintendent of Catholic Schools, at bdisney@archindy.org.

Director of Youth Ministry

St. John Paul II Catholic Church, Sellersburg

Saint John Paul II Catholic Church in Sellersburg, IN, a Divine Renovation Network Parish, is seeking a full-time Director of Youth Ministry for the parish. Responsibilities include overseeing of middle school, high school and young adult ministry in the parish. This role will support volunteers in these ministries, work hands on in development and implementation of programming for these ministries.

Applicants should have knowledge of and be willing to foster the Catholic Church's mission and an understanding of a comprehensive youth ministry program. Bachelor's degree or related field experience is required. Experience in Alpha for Youth is a plus. The ability to work effectively with young people, parents, employees and parishioners is necessary.

For additional information or to submit your resume please send to: employment@stjohnpaulparish.org.

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Employment



Muncie Catholic Job Opening Pastorate Finance Manager

The Muncie Catholic Pastorate is seeking a detail-oriented, mission-driven Finance Manager to join our team. This role supports the life of our pastorate by overseeing the accounting team, financial reporting, budgeting, and our daily financial operations.

Ideal candidates will have a Bachelor's degree in accounting, CPA preferred, with at least three years of experience. Nonprofit experience is a plus.

A full job description is available at munciecatholic.com/employment.

Interested applicants should send a resume and cover letter to Tara Edmondson, Director of Operations, at tedmondson@parish.dol-in.org.

Agency Director

St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities
Providing Help. Creating Hope. Serving All.

St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities, a non-profit human service agency, serving all of Southern Indiana and Metro Louisville is hiring for their Agency Director position. For more information, please scan the QR code.



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