



**The**

# Criterion

Serving the Church in Central and Southern Indiana Since 1960

# NCYC

*Called • Llamados*

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## Called!

### 'Young Church' responds with resounding joy!



Above, National Catholic Youth Conference participants do a line dance after the closing Mass at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis on Nov. 18. (Photos by Natalie Hoefler)

Right, Indianapolis Archbishop Charles C. Thompson offers Communion to a National Catholic Youth Conference participant during the closing Mass at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis on Nov. 18.



For full coverage of the 2017 National Catholic Youth Conference, see inside this special keepsake issue of *The Criterion*.



Youths and adult chaperones of the Vietnamese Eucharistic Youth Society in the U.S.A. process into Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis on Nov. 16 for the opening session of the National Catholic Youth Conference. (Photo by Natalie Hoefer)

## Want proof ‘that the young Church is alive’? NCYC offers it

It’s not very often that you get more than 20,000 teenagers on a unique journey of faith in downtown Indianapolis. If we’re being honest, we know it doesn’t happen a lot around the world.

But the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) is not about statistics or comparing young people from America, Europe or anywhere else on the globe: it is a pilgrimage of faith for its participants.

And what planners from the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry, local organizers and representatives of the city of Indianapolis have learned during the past several years is that the “Crossroads of America”—specifically the Indiana Convention Center and Lucas Oil Stadium—is a great place to host a three-day retreat

for young people eager to meet like-minded teenagers hoping to grow in their lives of faith. Not surprisingly, many of the young people make new, lifelong friends and have fun in the process, too.

NCYC has been a staple of our downtown landscape every two years since 2011, and the current plan is to continue hosting it here into the foreseeable future.

Scott Williams, the director of youth ministry for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, has witnessed firsthand the joy and excitement this biennial gathering leads to for thousands of teenagers.

“Young people are flooding into a single place to experience community in their Catholic faith,” he said in a recent interview.

“It reminds me that the young Church is alive, and young people are excited to participate in the faith community and to share in that faith with others.”

That faith, and the energy and excitement that result from it, offers so much promise for the present and the future of the Church. This year’s theme, “Called” (“*Llamados*”), encouraged teens to slow down and listen to where God wants to lead them as missionary disciples.

We hope the stories and photos featured on pages 1A-12A in this week’s special keepsake issue of *The Criterion* paint a portrait of a young Church that is serving as a beacon of light in a troubled world.

The regular Nov. 24 issue is included as the center 12 pages of this keepsake

edition. Although they are in the center, the pages are designed to be pulled out. The regular section is labeled page 1B to 12B.

Our regular features are included there: Archbishop Charles C. Thompson’s column, Faith Alive!, Calendar of Events, Opinion and Obituaries and other local news.

As Williams said, “NCYC is a place to prayerfully celebrate the community as a young Church.”

In this special issue, we celebrate our Catholic youths from across the country and their desire to draw closer to God. We hope you enjoy their stories, their enthusiasm and their passion for our shared faith.

—Mike Krokos, editor

## Archdiocese and Indianapolis rise again to welcome 20,000 Catholic youths



Scott Williams, archdiocesan director of youth ministry, prepares on Nov. 17 to take part in another NCYC session in Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

By John Shaughnessy

For the fourth straight time, the archdiocese and the city of Indianapolis hosted the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) on Nov. 16-18, welcoming 20,000 teenagers from across the country who hoped to deepen their faith and their relationship with God.

So how has the archdiocese and the city continued to be the host for this defining Catholic experience for young people?

Starting with the fact that the biennial gathering has usually been blessed with the commitment of nearly 1,000 volunteers from across the archdiocese and extensive planning from the archdiocesan staff that coordinates the local elements of the event.

“There is something about our archdiocese and the volunteer base that we have,” says Scott Williams, the director of youth ministry for the archdiocese who also leads the local steering committee for NCYC.

“We deploy over 1,000 volunteers, and people love it. Our vocations office,

our liturgy office and our youth ministry office have all worked on this seamlessly for the past several years. And we’ve had the same people in leadership roles, for the most part, implementing the key areas that we develop. It’s not something we just do; it’s something that we’re really passionate about.”

Geography and “the flow” of the city’s downtown area also make Indianapolis a desirable destination for the conference, according to Williams.

He notes that 75 percent of the country can travel to Indianapolis by bus within a day—a reality that helps cut down the travel costs of large groups of youths attending NCYC.

Downtown Indianapolis is also “one of the most walkable cities in the world,” he notes, and that attribute is enhanced by the largeness and the closeness of two first-class facilities that are the hubs for the conference—the Indiana Convention Center and Lucas Oil Stadium.

The stadium served as the gathering space for all the conference participants during general sessions and the closing

Mass.

The convention center was the conference’s meeting place for workshop sessions, reconciliation, eucharistic adoration and a huge “Thematic Village” where the youths enjoyed music, games, comedy shows and opportunities for service projects.

Add all the ingredients together, and it made for another memorable, faith-filled weekend for the more than 20,000 youths, including about 1,600 teenagers from the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

“Serving the young Church is something that we as an archdiocese are committed to,” Williams says. “It’s something that Archbishop Emeritus [Daniel M.] Buechlein initially championed. The first time Indianapolis hosted NCYC was in 2001. It came back in ‘11, and then for ‘13 and ‘15, and this year.”

“The conference is truly remarkable. We talk in youth ministry that we don’t always see the fruits of our labor. And we are planting a lot of seeds this week. But we also see some incredible fruit that grows in these three high-intensity days.” †

# Catholic youths seek God and meaning in their lives

By John Shaughnessy

One of the most poignant realities of the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) is that many of the 20,000 youths who participate are searching for something deeper in their lives: a connection with other teenagers who share their faith, a bond with adults they trust and respect, and a closer relationship with God.

Their search for faith, connection and meaning came through in the conversations that *The Criterion* had with a number of youths at the conference in Indianapolis on Nov. 16-18.

Several of the youths' stories are shared here. Read on to learn what their Catholic faith means to them during this defining stage of their lives.

## 'My faith allows me to think I can make a difference'



Payton Dethy saw the pain that was crushing her friend and knew she had to do something.

"I recently had a family friend die who was in high school," recalls Payton, 17, a member of St. John

Paul II Parish in Sellersburg. "His sister was having a tough time with it and fell away from the faith. I talked to her and had teachers from my youth class talk to her—to let her know we were there for her.

"She goes to church regularly now. It's

helped her have the faith she needs—that there's something greater in store than the event that happened."

Payton's efforts to reach out to a friend in need of support and faith flow from her own experiences of needing support for her faith—a support she's found in attending the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) in Indianapolis with about 20,000 Catholic youths in 2015 and 2017.

During the 2015 conference, she was in her first year of high school at a place that was different from the Catholic background in which she grew up.

"There are maybe three families in the whole school who are Catholic," she

says. "Going to NCYC let me reach out to people who had that background in a strong Catholic community. A lot of them are from Indianapolis. I talk to them on the phone and text them about things that are happening, things I'm going through. Having people I can have these deep conversations about my faith makes a big difference in my faith."

And sometimes, it helps her to use her faith to make a difference, including to a friend devastated by a tragic loss.

"My faith is something I can fall back on, something I can rely on, a community I can count on when I am having a hard time," she says. "My faith allows me to think I can make a difference in helping other people."



## 'I hope God gives me the power to persevere'

In one moment, Gabriella Campuzano radiates joy as she poses for a photo with her fellow youth group members from the Archdiocese of Los Angeles—all of them wearing fluffy, white halos representing the "City of Angels."

In the next moment, the smile of the 17-year-old high school senior gives way to a nervous look as she talks about her

future—and her desire to attend college in New York City.

"When I came to NCYC in 2015, it was a life-altering experience," she says. "I want to have that same spiritual connection that I felt two years ago because I'm looking to start the next chapter of my life, to go off to college.

"I'm hoping that throughout these

conferences of the Church, it will shape all my views and attitudes going into college—because I know it will be a confusing and challenging time.

"I'm nervous. I hope God gives me the power to persevere through the tough times. And I hope he helps me understand he has a plan for me, because I want to follow his plan."

## 'There are always people in my church who support me'



Wil Zinkan still remembers it as one of the hardest moments of his young life.

At the time, he was in the middle of his seventh-grade year when his

parents told him their family was moving to a new city.

"That was hard for me," Wil says. "I loved where I lived and the friends I had."

As difficult as that time was, the welcome he received at his new Catholic school—St. Charles Borromeo in Bloomington—made a huge difference.

So did his Catholic faith.

"Prayer and coming to church helped me get through that move," recalls Wil, who is now 16. "It was great when I came to St. Charles. Everyone was open and welcoming. Now, no matter what I'm going through, I know I have a support system. There are always people in my church who support me."

Wil had the same feeling as he stood in the midst of the thousands of teenagers congregating inside the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis for the second day of the National Catholic Youth Conference on Nov. 17.

"Looking around here and seeing all these people and knowing we share the same faith and values is really cool." †



## 'I can't get to where God wants me to be without him'

For 15-year-old Mynais Collins, his first experience at the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) in Indianapolis started with a desire to meet other Catholic teenagers from across the country—and to make trades for some of the crazy hats that have become a staple part of the three-day celebration that connects 20,000 youths from across the country.

Still, there was an even deeper connection that Mynais hoped to make during the conference in Indianapolis on Nov. 16-18.

"I want to get closer to the Lord because I haven't been having a great relationship with him," said the member of St. Rita Parish in Indianapolis.

"I want to have a stronger bond with him because I believe that throughout my

life, God will lead me to success."

The conference was a start for him in that direction.

"I can't get to where God wants me to be without him."

## 'I've had to stand my ground to keep my Catholic values'



For Emma Land, there was a time when living her Catholic faith was just a natural part of life. She grew up in a Catholic family, and attended a Catholic school for her first eight years of education. Then the changes

and challenges came when she became a student at a public high school.

"I didn't see the Catholic faith every day in my life. It was a shock to me," says Emma, a 16-year-old sophomore. "I found it a struggle to stick to my faith."

Yet change has come again as the member of St. Patrick Parish in Terre Haute has become more involved in the youth group for the Terre Haute Deanery.

"Going to youth group and retreats really helps me realize there are a bunch of other people in the same situation. There have been times when my friends in high school don't share the same values I do, and I've had to stand my ground to keep my Catholic values. It's kept me grounded, and I'm thankful for that."

Coming to the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) marked

another step for Emma in her journey of faith.

"I'm still trying to figure out what God wants me to do with my life. It's awesome coming here to NCYC to see 20,000 young people living their faith. You think you're alone, but you're really not. It's great to see so many people supporting you in your Catholic journey. That means a lot to me."

## 'I wouldn't be the same person I am without my Church and my faith'



At 17, Sam Bleisch kept attracting smiles and laughs during the first two days of the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC)—a natural reaction considering that he spent that time wearing a cow costume that extended from his head to his feet.

"Our parish always has one person in the cow costume at NCYC," said Sam, a member of Our Lady of Grace Parish in Noblesville, Ind., in the

Lafayette Diocese. "It gets passed down from someone who wore it at the last conference. The past cow watched at NCYC last time to see who was fun and outgoing."

Sam milked the suit for all it was worth, but it couldn't disguise the feelings of joy and love that he has for his Catholic faith.

"It's a great experience when you get to learn about your faith while having

fun. And the chance to meet other Catholics from across the country is amazing.

"The Catholic faith has really been great to me. The people I've met through my Church and the bonds I've formed have been life-changing. I wouldn't be the same person I am without my Church and my faith."



# 'Have fun, enjoy, keep Christ at the center' of NCYC, Archbishop Thompson tells youths

By Natalie Hoefler

The call and response echoed back and forth: "NC!" "YC!"

It's a chant familiar during the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC), but not one typically heard within the confines of a church.

But it's how Father Patrick Beidelman, executive director of the archdiocesan Office of Worship and Evangelization, helped the more than 1,100 youths from across central and southern Indiana kick off the opening of NCYC after Mass at St. John the Evangelist Church in Indianapolis.

"We're going to get really loud and really rowdy!" he told the congregation. "But then we're going to get very quiet and very prayerful as we take the eucharistic presence of Christ into the streets of Indianapolis."

And so after the calling of the chant—the right side of the church calling out "NC!" followed by the left side responding with "YC!"—the 1,100 youths, chaperones and parents then reverently knelt as the Blessed Sacrament was placed in a monstrance and incensed before being processed across the street to the Indiana Convention Center.

The chanting and procession were the culmination of a special Mass for archdiocesan NCYC participants celebrated at St. John on Nov. 16. The Mass was concelebrated by Archbishop Charles C. Thompson and 17 priests of the archdiocese in the afternoon prior to the first general session of NCYC.

In his homily, Archbishop Thompson told the youths that the NCYC experience "is about keeping God at the center."

"We seek to be motivated by God's Spirit," he said. "When we fall away from God, that's when we get chaos."

He then spoke of wisdom, referring to the day's first reading from the Book of Wisdom.

"Wisdom comes on God's time," the archbishop said. "That's why we have to be people of prayer."

He noted that true wisdom does not follow the wisdom of the world.

"Remember who we follow—one who was humiliated, rejected, killed, despised. That's our leader. To the world's wisdom, that makes no sense. But to true wisdom, that's where happiness is to be found—by embracing the sufferings of Jesus."

Archbishop Thompson outlined six ways to embrace true wisdom: by employing faith, trust, hope, confidence, love and a Christian attitude.

"This weekend, let us allow the truth of God to permeate our hearts as we witness those six ways. ... [Then] we can achieve what Pope Francis calls for: to continue to cultivate a culture of encounter, of accompaniment.

"Have fun, enjoy, but keep Christ at the center and take the wisdom of a Christ centered life back to your homes, your churches, your schools. Christ has called us here because he believes in us to bring about the Kingdom of God."

The opening Mass set the right tone for the conference, said Stephen Darda, a youth from St. Luke the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis.

"It was good to start NCYC with the Mass because it brings everyone together," Stephen said. "We'll end with it, too, so it's great to start and end it with everyone coming together."

And as for the chanting?  
"You never yell in a church like that, so it was cool," he said with a grin. †



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, left, prays the eucharistic prayer during a Mass for archdiocesan participants at the National Catholic Youth Conference at St. John the Evangelist Church on Nov. 16. He was assisted by 17 priests of the archdiocese. Shown in this photo are kneeling, Father Patrick Beidelman, left, executive director of the archdiocesan Office of Worship and Evangelization, Fathers Joseph Rautenberg, Douglas Hunter, Jonathan Meyer, Kyle Rodden and Eric Augenstein. (Photos by Natalie Hoefler)



As dusk falls, Archbishop Charles C. Thompson carries a monstrance with the Blessed Sacrament from St. John the Evangelist Church in Indianapolis across the street to the Indiana Convention Center during the National Catholic Youth Conference on Nov. 16.

## Youths experience God's mercy in sacrament of penance at NCYC

By Sean Gallagher

The opportunities seemed endless.

The National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) held on Nov. 16-18 in Indianapolis offered 20,000 youths from across the country a host of speakers to be inspired by, games to play, musical artists to hear, service projects to take part in and booths of exhibitors to visit.

Among this broad array of opportunities, though, many youths made it a priority to experience God's mercy in the sacrament of penance.



Bishop William F. Medley of Owensboro, Ky., speaks on Nov. 17 with a National Catholic Youth Conference participant during the sacrament of penance celebrated in a large conference room in the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis. Dozens of priests and bishops heard confession for hours during the conference. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

Youths filling Lucas Oil Stadium and the halls and conference rooms of the Indiana Convention Center could be seen wearing colorful stickers that read, "I'm forgiven," which they received after leaving the large room in which dozens of priests and bishops heard confession for several hours during the conference.

"This is important for me, because I felt that a lot of my sins were weighing me down and keeping me away from God," said Fatima Agredano, a Catholic youth from Elgin, S.C., in the Diocese of Charleston, S.C. "Having the sacrament of penance helped relieve that. Having so many priests there for us helps me realize that I'm not the only one and makes me feel more welcome."

Fatima comes from a state where Catholics are a distinct minority, making up only about 3 percent of its population. She said coming to NCYC in Indianapolis two years ago was a starting point for embracing her faith through her own choice.

"That's where it all started," she said. "So I just wanted to come back, relive that and grow in faith more. My Catholic faith is the center of my life. I at least try my hardest to keep it that way. It's really important to me and has been for a while now."

Cole Kreinbring experienced the sacrament of penance at NCYC for only the second time since he and his family were received into the full communion of the Church earlier this year in his hometown of Davenport, Iowa.

"It was a big deal for me to kind of cleanse myself," said Cole as he left the room where the sacrament of penance was celebrated.

Coming to NCYC as a newcomer to the Church, Cole experienced the conference as a great boost to his faith.

"It is truly incredible," he said. "I can't really explain the experience. It's amazing to feel like you're part of something much, much bigger than yourself, especially at such a young age. I never had that before, so it's really mind-blowing to me. I feel like it's going to improve my relationship with God very dramatically."

Coming out of the room a little later was Bishop Joseph G. Hanefeldt of Grand Island, Neb. He was attending NCYC for the first time, and was impressed by the number

of youths who were attending and taking the opportunity to experience God's mercy in the sacrament of penance.

"How beautiful this is and how powerful God is to not just forgive the past sins of the youths and all those who



Bishop Joseph G. Hanefeldt

come, but also in how much grace is being poured out for their days to come," he said. "It's exciting. There's so much good out there. In the news, we always hear about the bad and tragic. I wish the average person at home could see how there is so much good in the young people here and see how kids who really want to live their faith."

Karen Romero is a high school senior in Perry, Iowa, attending her first NCYC. She chose to go to confession

in part to prepare herself for the closing Mass of the conference celebrated on Nov. 18 in Lucas Oil Stadium.

"It's really important for me to go in with a clean soul," Karen said. "As teenagers, it's so hard. We're surrounded by sin. We love God and we show that love by having clean souls."

"All these people share the same faith that I have. It makes me want to go to confession even more, because I know that I'm not alone in this. I've gone through some struggles in my life and the only thing that has kept me going in a good, positive attitude is God."

Caelan Murphy from Ithaca, N.Y., was attending her first NCYC. She said celebrating the sacrament of penance would help her focus more on the good she was receiving at the conference.

"It will definitely make it easier to remember the highlights of the trip and the things that really spoke to me, because I'm not worrying about all the other stuff that's been weighing me down," she said. "I can then go back and share that with everyone else in my parish and town."

"I have more time to think about that and do something about that instead of worrying about stuff that I brought with me here. I'll leave it here, and go back and talk about what I learned." †

# Youths urged to remember they're 'called by name'

By Natalie Hoefler

The sound of more than 20,000 teens screaming and singing along with the raucous music of Christian hip-hop band TobyMac was loud.

The sound of the same number of youths in silent prayer was deafening.

These external and internal forms of praise formed bookends to the opening general session of the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) on Nov. 16 at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis.

After two hours of music, entertainment—including cultural dancing by the Vietnamese Eucharistic Youth Movement—and an entrance procession of banners from each diocese present, the participants were greeted by Indianapolis Archbishop Charles C. Thompson.

Although each person came “from many dioceses, many states ... and with many titles,” he said, “we are first and foremost, children of God. And that God who knows us desires to be known by us. ... God wanted us to know him ... through a personal relationship with a human being, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

“We are beloved children of God, called by name, claimed by Christ,” he continued, referring to the conference theme of “Called.” “We begin this NCYC weekend by embracing that reality of who we are.”

Chris Stefanick, an internationally acclaimed author, speaker and founder of Real Life Catholic, used humor and life

experience to speak about the reality of who we are and of God’s love for each person.

He spoke of the “love story” upon which the Catholic faith is founded.

“When you remove the love story, what are you left with?” he asked. “Rules that we have to follow. Rituals that we’re not sure why we keep them alive but they take a lot of time. Doctrines that have nothing to do with your life. That’s how the world has come to see Catholicism. ... The world has forgotten the love story, and so often we’ve forgotten the love story.”

That story, he said, “begins very simply with the words ‘[I] believe in one God.’”

So many youths today chose not to believe, he said, including an atheist who once told him that belief that God created the universe “is as stupid as a kid coming down on Christmas morning and, seeing presents under the tree, thinks, ‘There are presents, therefore there must be a Santa.’”

“You say there’s no God?” Stefanick asked. “That’s like a flea not believing in the dog. That’s like a kid coming down on Christmas morning and seeing presents under the tree and saying, ‘Oh look! Presents! They must have exploded themselves here!’ ... Just so, the universe did not put itself here, and the more we learn about the universe, the more it shouts to us about the existence of God.”

And because God’s love created us, he said, no other form of love will satisfy.

“We feel so small in this world,” he told the crowd that came from as far away as Hawaii and Alaska. “We feel so insignificant in this universe.

“I think God looks down from heaven and says, ‘You are huge next to all this.’ As big as a mountain is, can it know someone? As big as an ocean is, can it make a choice? As big as a galaxy is, can it choose to love? No, but you can. ... You’re a huge deal!”

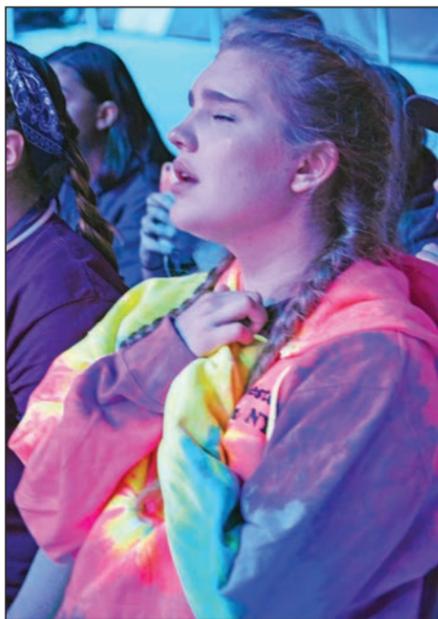
But because of human rejection of God, Stefanick continued, sin and brokenness entered the world. To applause and shouts of “Amen!” he modified the words of John 3:16 to note that therefore, “‘God so loved you that he gave his only Son.’ Whoa. ...”

This love story—which continues in the sacraments, Stefanick noted—“doesn’t just show you who God is. It shows you who you are.”

“‘Who am I?’ ‘I’m precious.’ ‘What am I worth?’ ‘I’m worth dying for,’” he said in a solo dialogue. “... Sin is not



The young crowd delights in the music of Christian hip-hop band TobyMac on the opening night of the National Catholic Youth Conference on Nov. 16. (Photos by Natalie Hoefler)



A tear traces the cheek of Isabelle Hunzek of the Diocese of Rochester, N.Y., during prayer time at the end of the first general session of the National Catholic Youth Conference at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis on Nov. 16.



Internationally acclaimed speaker and author Chris Stefanick addresses the more than 20,000 participants of the National Catholic Youth Conference at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis on Nov. 16.



Participants from the Archdiocese of Los Angeles process into Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis on Nov. 16 for the opening general session of the National Catholic Youth Conference.

your name—Jesus gives you your name. And what is your name? ‘Beloved.’ I don’t matter because of who I am—I matter because of whose I am. I’m not somebody, I’m somebody’s. I’m precious and I’m worth dying for. This is the best news ever.”

He encouraged the crowd to use their will to “say ‘yes’ to the love that created space and time and perpetually invites us to himself.”

Father Joseph Espallat II, a priest of the Archdiocese of New York, who was one of the evening’s emcees, led the more than 20,000 present through a period of silent prayer to close. He suggested using the word “pray” as an acronym to guide their prayer—“P” for praising God, “R” for repenting of sins, “A” for asking God for needs rather than wants, and “Y” for yielding to his will.

It was this prayer time more than any of the evening’s other events that most affected Abby White of the Diocese of Covington, Ky.

“I thought it was really powerful,” she said of the quiet time. “I like saying that you’re sorry to God. It’s been awhile

since I’ve been to confession, and I really want to go to confession this weekend. I felt like that [prayer time] empowered me to want to go.”

While Abby has attended NCYC before, Garrett Randel of Seneca, Kan., was exuberant with the joy of one experiencing the event for the first time.

“I thought it was really cool,” he said of the opening session. “The speaker was really inspiring. I thought it was one of the best experiences I’ve had in my Catholic faith.”

Caitlin Dusenbury of the Diocese of Lansing, Mich., couldn’t agree more. The NCYC first-timer’s eyes lit up and a smile brightened her face when she spoke of her experience that evening.

“I really like it so far,” she said. “It’s impacted me a lot. I”

“The highlight for me was Chris speaking. It’s not who you are, but whose you are—that quote stuck with me.”

(A video to accompany NCYC coverage can be found at <https://youtu.be/YOPMzpz8MIOY>.) †

## Diverse workshops lead Catholic youths to consider their lives of faith

Compiled by John Shaughnessy

The National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) in Indianapolis offered two days of faith-related workshops for the 20,000 youths from across the country to attend. Here is a selection of some of the 100 workshops and the descriptions from the conference guidebook.

### Church Isn’t Boring, You Are!

“As a teen, Paul Kim went to church for two reasons: girls and donuts. Through a miraculous intervention, God revealed to him that the Catholic faith offered more than he could ever hope.”

### When God Wrecks Your Romance

“Discover how God wants to work everything for good in our lives, even relationships that are broken, and how sometimes the best blessings come through the worst heartache.”

### Love Yourself

“The biggest lie today, which underlies so many bad decisions, sins and dysfunctions is that we’re only lovable IF...The Gospel shows us we’re lovable BECAUSE.”

**An Attitude of Gratitude: Exploring the Spiritual Practice of Being Grateful**

“It’s easy to get caught up with having the newest and best material things: phones, shoes, cars and the like. Sadly, many times these things don’t satisfy our desires. They hold us only until the next newest and best things are available. Let’s take a look at the spiritual practice of gratitude. It’s a simple yet profound practice that can change our world and our relationship with God.”

### PB&J: Patience, Balance and Joy

“At every Mass, we are being fed in body, mind and spirit. We are being fed PB&J: Patience, Balance and Joy. We know we need and hunger for more PB&J

in our lives. If we allow God to feed us, we are supposed to become what we eat.”

### Real Love is For Real

“God is love! Our confusion and/or obsession with the sexual part of who we are, and its perceived power over us, has made it difficult to find or to believe in real love. We will be better at loving God, ourselves and others when we grow in the virtue of chastity. Then we can find the love, peace and joy God desires for us. Come discover the truth: sex without love is empty and not the sacred, awesome gift God designed for us.” †

# Called! Scenes from 2017 NCYC



Above, priests, including many from the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, process into the closing Mass for the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) in Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis on Nov. 18. Archdiocesan priests include Fathers Eric Augenstein, left, Matthew Tucci, third from left, and Douglas Hunter, far right. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)



Above, artist Eric Santos works on his caricature of Emily Warnimond of the Diocese of Toledo, Ohio, in NCYC's Thematic Village in the Indiana Convention Center on Nov. 18. (Photo by Mike Krokos)



Left, Osyon Jones of the Orlando, Fla., Diocese receives Communion during the NCYC closing Mass on Nov. 18 in Lucas Oil Stadium. (Courtesy of the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry, [www.nfcym.org](http://www.nfcym.org))



Above, archdiocesan transitional Deacon Jeffrey Dufresne, left, seminarian Eamonn Daily, Los Angeles Archbishop José H. Gomez, Father Patrick Beidelman, transitional Deacon David Farrell of Louisville, Ky., and seminarian Michael Praksam take in the view of the congregation of more than 20,000 people at the beginning of the NCYC closing Mass in Lucas Oil Stadium on Nov. 18. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)



Above, youths from the Archdiocese of Indianapolis help prepare pre-packaged meals to be sent to Burkina Faso in West Africa as part of Catholic Relief Services' 'Helping Hands' project during NCYC in the Indiana Convention Center on Nov. 18. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)



Above, youths, youth ministers and chaperones pray the rosary aloud together during NCYC in the Indiana Convention Center on Nov. 17. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)



Above, youths from the Archdiocese of Atlanta kneel in prayer on Nov. 17 during eucharistic adoration in Lucas Oil Stadium. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)



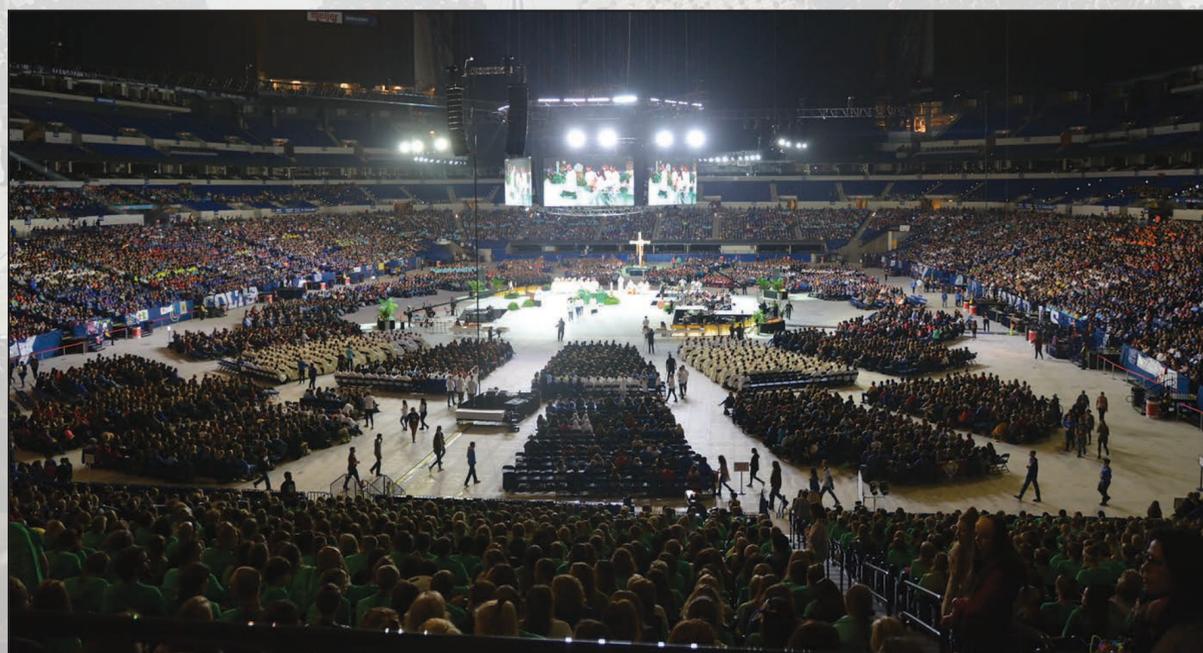
Above, Liv Phillips of St. Rita Parish in Indianapolis sings during NCYC's Top Talent Finale on Nov. 18 in the Indiana Convention Center. (Photo by Mike Krokos)

Left, Catholic singer and musician Matt Maher shakes the outstretched hands of youths during an NCYC general session on Nov. 17 in Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis. (Courtesy of the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry, [www.nfcym.org](http://www.nfcym.org))



Left, members of the youth group from St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Bloomington share their smiles in the Indiana Convention Center on Nov. 17. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

Right, more than 20,000 NCYC participants fill the lower levels of Lucas Oil Stadium during the closing Mass on Nov. 18. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)



Above, youths from the Diocese of Rochester, N.Y., participate in a line dance during the opening session of NCYC at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis on Nov. 16. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)



The

# Criterion

Serving the Church in Central and Southern Indiana Since 1960



## Emmaus Walk

God knows what we need before we even know, writes columnist Debra Tomaselli, page 8B.

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Kristi Potts, executive director of Pregnancy Care Center of Southeast Indiana in Lawrenceburg, discusses the agency's baby store of donated items, where young women can earn credit for the store by completing educational sessions. (Photo by Natalie Hoefer)

## Expansion is 'a huge, huge blessing' for Lawrenceburg pregnancy care center

By Natalie Hoefer

LAWRENCEBURG—Two things are consistent as Kristi Potts shows off the expanded Pregnancy Care Center of Southeast Indiana facility: her beaming smile, and her praise of God.

"We're in a unique situation here in southeastern Indiana," says Potts, executive director of the Lawrenceburg organization which serves Dearborn, Franklin, Ohio, Ripley and Switzerland counties. "We are the only medical pregnancy center for these five counties."

"In the last five to six years, we've just had tremendous growth in size, in reach, in services and the number of clients we've been seeing."

But, she says, with only 1,500 square

feet, "we were very limited in space, which limited our number of services and the number of clients we could serve. ... When the opportunity for the space next door came up, God just made it all happen."

### Reach more, serve more, save more lives

The 28-year-old organization had been in a commercial building for about 10 years. They were not looking to expand.

But in the spring of 2016 when the space adjoining the pregnancy care center became available, says Potts, their landlord hoped the organization would be able to lease it.

Their landlord is Don Townsend,

owner of Townsend Properties, Inc., and a member of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Parish in Aurora along with his wife, Carolyn. Both are supporters of the pregnancy care center.

"I can't talk highly enough of them," he says. "Where else can a young girl and her boyfriend or husband go [in the area] and seek counseling and get help for nothing? I'm very, very proud that they are a tenant of mine. It's the biggest blessing we have in [the area]."

Potts, 35, said the board met, looked at their budget, prayed—and decided God was calling the center to expand.

The project was completed in January of this year.

"Donors and construction companies

See PREGNANCY, page 2B

## U.S. bishops take on immigration, racism at fall assembly

BALTIMORE (CNS)—At the start of their annual fall assembly in Baltimore on Nov. 13, U.S. Catholic bishops faced some big issues—immigration and racism—straight on, and zeroed in on how to raise the national level of discussion on these topics starting in the church pews.



Cardinal Blase J. Cupich

They acknowledged the current polarization in the country and divides within the Church, and stressed their responsibility as Church leaders to promote immigration reform, educate parishioners on justice issues and listen to those affected by "sins of racism."

On immigration, Bishop Joe S. Vasquez of Austin, Texas, who is chairman of the Committee on Migration of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, said there needs to be a "path to legalization and citizenship for the millions of our unauthorized brothers and sisters who are law-abiding, tax-paying and contributing to our society."

The bishops responded with applause and an agreement by voice vote to issue a statement calling for comprehensive immigration reform.

The bishops were keenly aware that their defense of immigrants was not necessarily the view of the Church in the U.S. at large. For example, Chicago Cardinal Blase J. Cupich spoke of the dangers of Catholics falling prey to and believing "poisoning rhetoric" about immigrants that demonizes them.

"There's something wrong in our churches, where the Gospel is proclaimed, and yet people leave our worship services, our Masses on weekends, with that rhetoric still echoing in their hearts," he said.

Several bishops also brought up the

See BISHOPS, page 3B

## Blessed Solanus Casey lived out faith, hope, charity every day, says cardinal at beatification Mass

DETROIT (CNS)—Blessed Solanus Casey always said that "as long as there is a spark of faith," there can be no discouragement or sorrow, said Cardinal Angelo Amato, head of the Vatican's Congregation for Saints' Causes.

His words were accompanied by "the concrete practice of faith, hope and charity in his everyday life," said the cardinal in his homily during the Nov. 18 beatification Mass for the beloved Capuchin Franciscan friar who was known for his cures and wise counsel.

"He came from an Irish family of profound Catholic convictions. Faith for him was a very precious inheritance for facing the difficulties of life,"

Cardinal Amato said. "When the young Bernard [his given name] Casey, entered the Capuchins, he passed from one community of faith to another."

Blessed Solanus "focused on the poor, the sick, the marginalized and the hopeless," Cardinal Amato said. "He always fasted in order to give others their lunch. For hours upon hours, he patiently received, listened and counseled the ever-growing number of people who came to him."

The friar saw people "as human beings, images of God. He didn't pay attention to race, color or religious creed," the cardinal said.

See SOLANUS, page 10B



Cardinal Angelo Amato, prefect of the Vatican's Congregation for Saints' Causes, uses a thurible at the beatification Mass of Blessed Solanus Casey on Nov. 18 at Ford Field in Detroit. At least 60,000 attended the beatification of the Capuchin Franciscan friar. (CNS photo/Jeff Kowalsky, courtesy Michigan Catholic)



Staff of the Pregnancy Care Center of Southeast Indiana in Lawrenceburg pose with Father Shaun Whittington, pastor of St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Morris and St. Nicholas Parish in Ripley County, after he blessed a new ultrasound machine donated to the organization by Knights of Columbus Council #1231 in Lawrenceburg in this August 2014 photo. A recent expansion of the pregnancy care center included a larger room where pregnant mothers can see the image of their unborn child via the ultrasound machine. (Submitted photo)

## PREGNANCY

continued from page 1B

from the area funded everything you now see,” says Potts, while providing a tour of the expansion. “It doubled our space. It was a huge, huge blessing. ... Our whole motto for this expansion project was to reach more, serve more, which would equal more lives saved.”

### An alternative to providers who offer abortion

Among the new features which will help accomplish the goal of saving lives are an additional counseling room that doubles the number of clients able to be seen, an extra bathroom for pregnancy testing, and a new conference room that allows for group-style classes and events with speakers.

And with the expansion, the center is able to offer two new services: testing for sexually transmitted diseases for both men and women, and a men’s mentoring program.

“Our goal is to reach those women and men who are most at risk for an abortion, but it also helps address the sexual health concerns maybe before they even end that unplanned pregnancy,” says Potts. “We consider it not just, ‘Let’s just reduce your risk and give you condoms or birth control,’ but ‘Let’s eliminate that risk and say you’re worth it, and that God has a plan for your life, and that there is a better way out there.’”

“We also know that providing relevant medical services, things that men and women in our community are really needing, they’re going to see us as a provider of those kinds of services and care instead of other providers that might

be offering abortion services.”

As for the men’s mentoring program, says Potts, “We can’t forget how important that father is in that child’s life. If we only focus on the woman and her abortion decision and forget about him, then we just missed a big piece of that puzzle.”

That puzzle includes more than assisting pregnant women and mentoring men. The pregnancy care center also offers an abstinence education program in local middle schools and high schools, substance abuse education and referrals to community resources.

With the new space and the existing and new services, the pregnancy care center is growing. The number of clients seen so far this year exceeds the number of clients seen by this time last year.

### ‘A lot of hopeful stories’

Nestled within the five-county area the care center serves is All Saints Parish in Dearborn County. The faith community, like many others in the area, supports the organization.

“The parish has been just imperative for us to do what we do, very influential and just great doers in the community,” says Potts.

Two women of the parish are particularly involved at Pregnancy Care Center of Southeast Indiana—client services director Jennie Chafin and board president Teresa Ward.

“I just love this ministry,” says Ward, 62. “This is the most compassionate, loving place. Everyone who walks through those doors is welcomed and made to feel loved. They’re given hope.”

While she has been president of the board for the last several years, Ward has volunteered with the organization for



## Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

November 24-Dec. 8, 2017

November 27 — 8:45 a.m.  
Leadership Team Weekly Meeting

November 28 — 9:30 a.m. - 3 p.m.  
Clergy Advent Day of Prayer,  
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House,  
Indianapolis

November 29 — 10:00 a.m.  
Mass with High School Seniors of  
the Archdiocese, SS. Peter and Paul  
Cathedral, Indianapolis

November 29 — 4:30 p.m.  
Mass for the Franciscan Friars  
Province Assembly, Mount St. Francis  
Center, Mount St. Francis

December 2 — 5:30 p.m.  
Mass with installation of pastor,  
St. Simon the Apostle Church,  
Indianapolis

December 3 — 3:00 p.m.  
Mass for the African Community,  
St. Rita Church, Indianapolis

December 5-6 — 3 p.m. - 2 p.m.  
Indiana Bishops’ Province Meeting and  
Indiana Catholic Conference Meeting,  
Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara  
Catholic Center, Indianapolis

December 7 — 10 a.m.  
Catholic Center Connection meeting,  
Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara  
Catholic Center, Indianapolis

December 7 — 6:00 p.m.  
Catholic Community Foundation  
Tree Lighting and Prayer Service,  
Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara  
Catholic Center, Indianapolis

December 8 — 3:30 p.m.  
Mass for the Feast of the Immaculate  
Conception, Marian University Chapel,  
Indianapolis

(Schedule subject to change.)

12 years. She worked with clients who participated in the center’s earn-and-learn program where, by attending education classes on such topics as childbirth, breast feeding and healthy relationships, women can earn points to spend in the organization’s baby store of donated items.

“I have seen a lot of hopeful stories,” Ward says. “The earn-and-learn programs are so important. It helps the girls know that they can take care of a baby. They’re learning new thought processes and breaking that cycle [of the environments in which they were raised].”

Chafin, 33, agrees. “A lot [of the women who visit] have grown up in foster care, so haven’t had a stable home life,” she notes.

Through the nearly 30 volunteers Chafin coordinates and the nearly 100 types of classes she organizes, “We work with them through the pregnancy and after the baby comes, connect them to other resources, and make it a healthy and safe pregnancy for the baby and them,” she says.

### ‘It’s his ministry, not ours’

All Saints Parish is not the only Catholic community supporting the pregnancy care center. In August 2014, Lawrenceburg Knights of Columbus Council #1231 donated a new ultrasound machine to the facility.

“We had this archaic dinosaur of a machine,” says Potts, who is trained to use the equipment. “We didn’t have the budget for a new machine.”

“The day we got the call that we’d been approved [to receive the new machine from the Knights of Columbus], we were in tears and just praising God!”

“It has completely transformed our ministry. It really seals ... that this is not

just a blob of tissue as [they’ve] been led to believe. This is a baby, and there’s the heartbeat.”

It is through the generosity of organizations and individuals in the community that the pregnancy care center is able to operate, says Potts. But there is one other key factor.

“Our doors would not be open without God. It’s his ministry, not ours,” she notes.

The centrality of God to the organization comes through in its mission, which Potts says is “to use our services and our skills and our different opportunities to educate [the clients] and empower them to choose life for their baby.”

“It’s our mission to share the Gospel with every man and woman that walks through our door, because we do want that young woman to choose life for her baby, but we know that the only thing that’s going to stop that cycle of whatever it is that’s led her down that path is going to be God.”

“Sharing our faith with our clients is our number one mission. We hope by showing her love and compassion that she chooses love and compassion for her child.”

(Pregnancy Care Center of Southeast Indiana, 62 Doughty Road, Suite 5, in Lawrenceburg, is currently in need of medical volunteers, diapers, baby wipes, baby formula and financial donations, which can be made online at [www.helpimpregnant.org](http://www.helpimpregnant.org). Checks can also be made out to Pregnancy Care Center SE and mailed to 62 Doughty Road, Suite 5, Lawrenceburg, IN 47025. For more information on the pregnancy care center, its services or needs, contact Kristi Potts at 812-537-4357.) †



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# BISHOPS

continued from page 1B

notion of prudential judgment—referring to the view Catholics could take on immigration that differs from the bishops—since it is not a specific matter of Church teaching.

The bishops who spoke on the floor didn't buy that argument, and said Catholics can't use it to push aside the need to care for immigrants. Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone of San Francisco took this a step further, saying prudential judgment can't be "taken lightly" on a "justice issue like immigration."

Archbishop Thomas G. Wenski of Miami said the bishops' defense of immigrants, as brothers and sisters, not problems, is not only right for immigrants but "for our society as a whole."

"We can make America great, but you don't make America great by making America mean," he added, referring to a slogan of President Donald J. Trump without naming him.

On racism, Bishop George V. Murry of Youngstown, Ohio, head of the bishops' Ad Hoc Committee Against Racism, said the Church must recognize "and frankly acknowledge" its failings. He said the issue has found a "troubling resurgence" in recent years, referring particularly to a white supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Va., this year where he said racial hatred was "on full display."

"Racism isn't going to be conquered by speech, but by actions," said Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory of Atlanta, adding that this was a watershed moment where the Church could play a leadership role.

He spoke about discussions happening at diocesan and parish levels, and several bishops commented about them as well, noting that these discussions are not easy, but so necessary to bring about healing.

Other key issues of the day where Church leaders are responding include health care, taxes and abortion, mentioned

by Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston in his address as USCCB president.

"We are facing a time that seems more divided than ever," Cardinal DiNardo said. "Divisions over health care, conscience protections, immigration and refugees, abortion, physician-assisted suicide, gender ideologies, the meaning of marriage and all the other headlines continue to be hotly debated. But our role continues to be witnessing the Gospel."

He explained that the National Catholic War Council, created by the U.S. bishops in 1917 in response to the world refugee crisis that emerged from World War I and the forerunner to the USCCB, was formed to address great national and international needs at a time not unlike today.

The cardinal emphasized other modern challenges such as recent natural disasters and mass shootings.

But the problems of the day should not overwhelm Church leaders who should recognize signs of new hope in the Church, mentioned by the apostolic nuncio, Archbishop Christophe Pierre, who addressed the bishops at the start of the meeting, and encouraged them to make time for prayer amid "burdens of the office."

He told them to be adventurous in the "new frontier of faith" and to make a strong effort to accompany young people who often question their faith.

The bishops also heard from the Vatican secretary of state, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, at a Nov. 12 Mass where he was the principal celebrant and the homilist, and at a dinner celebrating the USCCB's 100th anniversary.

The cardinal told the bishops that the Church needs them today to "bring not only material assistance, but also the spiritual balm of healing, comfort and hope to new waves of migrants and refugees who come knocking on America's door."

He also urged them to follow the pope's call to accompany the modern Church.

The second public day of meetings did not tackle major societal issues, but approved a new translation of the rite of baptism. The bishops also discussed the review of catechetical materials and a pastoral plan for marriage and family life that will give Catholic couples and families resources to enable them to live out their vocation.

They also voted to move forward the sainthood cause of Nicholas W. Black Elk, a 19th-century Lakota catechist who is said to have introduced hundreds of Lakota people to the Catholic faith.

They highlighted past events such as the Convocation of Catholic Leaders in Orlando, Fla., this summer and spoke about tapping into the energy that came from that national gathering at diocesan and parish levels.

They also previewed upcoming events such as the Fifth National *Encuentro*, or "V *Encuentro*," next September in Grapevine, Texas, and World Youth Day on Jan. 22-27, 2019, in Panama City.

The bishops identified key issues they are addressing with Congress, including health care, the federal budget and tax reform, and concluded their assembly by mentioning the impact of recent disasters such as hurricanes and wildfires.

Bishop Curtis J. Guillory of Beaumont,



Atlanta Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory consults with Bishop Christopher J. Coyne of Burlington, Vt., as they speak from the podium on Nov. 14 at the fall general assembly of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in Baltimore. (CNS photo/Bob Roller)

Texas, a region hard hit by Hurricane Harvey, said often when tragedies occur, "you just feel very much alone and wonder how you are going to move forward."

He thanked the bishops for their support, in prayers, phone calls and donations, which he described as a "wonderful sign of solidarity" and sign of unity of our faith. This will be a long and costly recovery, he noted, but added that "people have deep, deep faith." †

30

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# The Criterion

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## Editorial



Syrian refugee children scream as they sit in front of Macedonian riot police at the Greek-Macedonian border, near the village of Idomeni, Greece, on Aug. 21. A Day of Prayer for Persecuted Christians will be observed on Nov. 26, with a Week of Awareness following it. (CNS photo/Yannis Behrakis, Reuters)

## Help for persecuted Christians

*“You will be hated because of my name, but whoever endures to the end will be saved. When they persecute you in one town, flee to another” (Mt 10:22-23).*

*“If they persecuted me, they will persecute you as well” (Jn 15:20).*

Jesus predicted that his followers would be persecuted, and they continue to be today. The organization Open Doors reports that each month 322 Christians are killed for their faith, 214 churches and Christian properties are destroyed, and 772 forms of violence are committed against Christians.

The Pew Research Center says that more than 75 percent of the world’s population lives in areas with severe religious restrictions. And the U.S. State Department says that Christians in more than 60 countries face persecution from their governments or surrounding neighbors.

Therefore, it certainly is appropriate that a Day of Prayer for Persecuted Christians will be observed on Nov. 26, with a Week of Awareness following it. This day and week are being sponsored by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) in cooperation with the Knights of Columbus.

Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo, USCCB president, said on Nov. 9, “The solemnity of Christ the King is a fitting time to reflect on religious freedoms and persecution.”

The Open Doors World Watch List says that extreme persecution is taking place in North Korea, Somalia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Sudan, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Yemen and Eritrea.

In many of those countries, there is little that we Christians in the United States can do. However, there is some promise in Syria and Iraq now that the Islamic State (also known as ISIS and Daesh) has suffered many setbacks.

This is an area of the world where Christianity can be traced back to the time of the Apostles. As recently as 2003, there were 1.5 million Christians in Iraq, but it is believed that now there are fewer than 200,000. We can recall video of Christians fleeing the country, doing what Christ said: “When they persecute you in one town, flee to another” (Mt 10:23).

On the USCCB website a report titled “Persecuted and Forgotten?” says, “Governments in the West and the UN failed to offer Christians in countries such as Iraq and Syria the emergency help they needed as genocide got underway. If Christian organizations and other institutions had not filled the gap, the Christian presence could already have disappeared in Iraq and other parts of the Middle East.”

Now, at least in theory, Christian families can return to their homes in Iraq. However, as the Knights of Columbus’ supreme knight, Carl Anderson, wrote to the U.S. bishops, “In most cases, they lack the financial resources to do so.”

Anderson said that the Knights have pledged \$2 million to move families back to their homes in Karamles, a town on the Ninevah Plain and the traditional Christian homeland in Iraq. He said that the Knights hope to be able to assist other towns as well.

Furthermore, the Knights are asking its councils to contribute \$2,000 as an initial goal to help families return. Anderson urged that other Catholic groups join this drive. He wrote, “If just half of America’s 17,651 parishes contributed \$2,000, it would produce more than \$17 million—roughly the same amount the Knights has pledged so far.”

This is an effort that those who don’t want Iraqi and Syrian refugees coming to this country could support.

Archbishop William E. Lori of Baltimore has written this Prayer for Persecuted Christians: “O God of all nations, the One God who is and was and always will be, in your providence you willed that your Church be united to the suffering of your Son. Look with mercy on your servants who are persecuted for their faith in you. Grant them perseverance and courage to be worthy imitators of Christ. Bring your wisdom upon leaders of nations to work for peace among all peoples. May your Spirit open conversion for those who contradict your will, that we may live in harmony. Give us the grace to be united in truth and freedom, and to always seek your will in our lives.”

—John F. Fink

Be Our Guest/St. Constance Veit, L.S.P.

## Are you ready to be a child again?

This time of year always brings me back to my childhood. With fond nostalgia, I remember the pinecone turkeys we made in Girl Scouts, the pilgrim costumes my mother painstakingly sewed, and the necklaces made of painted pasta that my sisters and I managed to pull apart, scattering raw macaroni all over the back seat of the car on our way to grandmother’s house for Thanksgiving.



Once the holiday arrived, we would spend all morning watching the Thanksgiving Day parades. After dinner, we’d gather around the television again to enjoy one of our favorite Christmas specials. With Black Friday just hours away, we knew that Thanksgiving meant that even better things were to come!

Oh to be a child again, especially as we journey toward Thanksgiving, Advent and Christmas! Still, we *can* return to the simplicity of childhood—at least spiritually.

Caryll Houselander, a popular 20th-century spiritual author and poet, wrote, “To become a child is a challenge to our courage. It demands, first of all, that we dare to grow up, to give ourselves to life, to accept life as it is—and above all, to accept ourselves as we are.”

Houselander suggested that going back to childhood means rediscovering “true values, instead of those that are based on materialism, public opinion and snobbery; that we must regain simplicity and humility ... and, above all, we must regain the courage that is partly a boundless zest for living and partly an unquestioning trust in an all-powerful love.”

Although these words were penned in 1949, they could have been written today. So much in our lives is driven by materialism and public opinion. Our attention is fragmented by constant multi-tasking and the incessant flow of information, which prevent us from fully experiencing the activities in which we are engaged at any given moment. This is especially true in the holiday season that begins with Thanksgiving.

According to a national survey provided by New Dream, an organization that promotes simplicity, more than 75 percent of Americans wish the holidays were less materialistic. Nearly nine in 10 believe that holidays should be more about family and caring for others than exchanging gifts.

Recent studies in social neuroscience have found that loneliness causes serious health risks. Yet more than a third of U.S. senior citizens experience frequent or intense loneliness, and 94 percent of people with disabilities feel that they lack meaningful community participation.

New Dream suggests that we create holiday traditions “that instill more meaning into the season and encourage more sharing, laughter, creativity and personal renewal,” rather than the accumulation of material goods and credit card debt.

For adults like you and me, our childhood holidays are often our most precious memories. Yet many of us get caught up in the frenzy of materialism, rushing around so much that we never really appreciate the heart and soul of Thanksgiving, Advent and Christmas.

While we still have time, let’s resolve to become children again. Let’s rediscover true values of faith and family, the love of humble things and simple pleasures, gratitude and a commitment to nurturing relationships—especially with those who are at risk of being marginalized or who are in need of special attention.

Let’s ask for the grace to recover the ability to live in the present moment and to fully experience whatever we are doing, a boundless zest for living and an unquestioning trust in the power of our loving God to provide for all our needs.

In this journey back to childhood, we can count on the assistance of the saints, especially those who particularly exemplified simplicity and spiritual childhood. Among these are St. Francis of Assisi, St. Thérèse of Lisieux and the foundress of the Little Sisters of the Poor, St. Jeanne Jugan, who frequently counseled her spiritual daughters to “be very little before God.” We can also count on two of the Church’s newest saints, Jacinta and Francisco of Fatima, who were just young children when God called them to a vocation of historic proportions for the Church and the modern world.

Finally, in our journey back to childhood we are always accompanied by Mary, whose littleness drew down the gift of God, and who constantly sang of her gratitude and her sense of wonder at the marvels God was accomplishing in her. She is eager to help us to become, anew, children of a loving God.

*(Little Sisters of the Poor Sister Constance Carolyn Veit is director of communications for the Little Sisters of the Poor in the United States.) †*

## 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](mailto:criterion@archindy.org).

Letters may be submitted online by logging on to [www.CriterionOnline.com](http://www.CriterionOnline.com), click on “Send Us Information on the left side, then choosing “Letters to the Editor.” †



# Christ the Cornerstone

## Thanksgiving reminds us that we are a blessed people

*“We Catholics celebrate the holy Eucharist (whose name comes from the Greek word for ‘thanksgiving’) every day, but on this day, Thanksgiving, we give special thanks to God for all his abundant blessings. That includes the gift of life itself, our parents and families, the love that we share with spouses and children, our friends, our freedom as Americans, our vocations as disciples of Jesus Christ, our material possessions, our intellectual gifts and talents, and much, much more.”*

—Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, Thanksgiving Day 2016

The publication date for this column is on Nov. 24, the day after Thanksgiving. It’s unfortunately known as “Black Friday,” a day when consumerism and greed threaten to overshadow the warmth and good feelings of the day before.

As Christians, we shouldn’t buy into the temptation to spend this day shopping for the best possible bargains, fighting elbow to elbow with other half-crazed consumers. Shop if you choose—today or any other day—but do it with a strong sense of gratitude, the thankful spirit we celebrate on Thanksgiving Day. And as we shop for “extras,” let’s always keep

in mind the people here in Indiana and throughout the world who can barely afford life’s necessities.

Pope Francis has challenged us to get up off our comfortable couches and “go to the peripheries” where the poor, the strangers and the outcasts dwell.

The peripheries are generally not physical places. They are made up of states of mind. We too often choose to stay in our own “neighborhoods” (the pope calls them our “comfort zones”).

These “neighborhoods” are sometimes psychological and sometimes geographical enclaves or gated communities where we feel safe because we are surrounded by our own kind.

Pope Francis urges us to break down these barriers and “build bridges.” He challenges us—always in a loving way—to accept our Lord’s invitation to “Go, sell what you have, give it to the poor, and come follow me” (Mt 19:21). Like the rich young man in the Gospel, we hesitate—especially those of us who have many possessions!

The Thanksgiving holiday reminds all Americans regardless of race, creed, economic or social standing that we are a blessed people. We have been given many gifts, including political freedom, economic opportunity and religious

liberty. We dare not take these gifts for granted or abuse them by neglect or through arrogant selfishness toward those who are less fortunate than we are.

A true spirit of gratitude helps us keep our perspective. Our material and spiritual blessings aren’t owned by us. They are gifts we are called to take care of and share as responsible stewards of God’s generosity.

Baptism is one of the invaluable gifts we have been given. The privilege of membership in the Body of Christ, the Church, carries with it serious obligations. We are called to “be Christ” for others, to spread the good news of his kingdom and to love our neighbors—even our enemies—with a generous and grateful spirit.

The gift of baptism compels us to be missionary disciples, not in a grudging or halfhearted way, but as eager, zealous followers of Jesus Christ, the greatest missionary who ever lived. If we walk in Christ’s footsteps with a grateful heart, we will be like our Blessed Mother Mary and all the saints. We will recognize even strangers and enemies as brothers and sisters in the one family of God. We will want to be instruments of unity and healing in a broken, wounded world.

The Eucharist is the source of

Christian thanksgiving. It is the great prayer of grateful remembrance that celebrates in word and sacrament God’s gifts of creation, redemption and sanctification. Every day that Mass is celebrated is a day of thanksgiving. And every time we participate actively in the eucharistic banquet, we give the greatest possible thanks for God’s abundant blessings in our lives.

In truth, there is only one “Black Friday.” It’s the one day in the year that Mass is not celebrated, the day we commemorate Jesus’ passion and death.

But we don’t call this day “Black Friday.” We call it “Good Friday” because we acknowledge that even in humanity’s darkest hour, the light of Christ shone brightly, transforming the blackness of sin into the brightness of God’s love and mercy.

That is certainly something to be thankful for as we enter into the Advent and Christmas seasons. We give and receive many gifts during this time of year. Some are material gifts and others—like being with people we love and serving the needs of others—are spiritual gifts. Both are important, and both should be given and received with a deep sense of gratitude.

Happy Thanksgiving! †



## Cristo, la piedra angular

### El Día de Acción de Gracias nos recuerda que somos un pueblo bendecido

*“Los católicos celebramos la Santa Eucaristía [nombre que se deriva de la palabra griega ‘agradecimiento’] todos los días, pero en este en particular, el Día de Acción de Gracias, le agradecemos especialmente a Dios por sus abundantes bendiciones. Esto incluye el don de la vida misma, nuestros padres y familiares, el amor que compartimos con cónyuges e hijos, nuestros amigos, nuestra libertad como estadounidenses, nuestras vocaciones como discípulos de Jesucristo, nuestras posesiones materiales, nuestros dones y talentos intelectuales, y mucho, mucho más.”*

—Cardenal Joseph W. Tobin, Día de Acción de Gracias 2016

La fecha de publicación de esta columna es el 24 de noviembre, el día después del Día de Acción de Gracias. Desafortunadamente, este día se lo conoce como “viernes negro,” una fecha en la que el consumismo y la codicia amenazan con opacar la calidez y los buenos sentimientos que reinan en el día anterior.

Como cristianos, no debemos sucumbir a la tentación de pasar este día buscando las mejores ofertas, luchando codo a codo con los consumidores enardecidos. Salga de compras, si así lo desea, hoy o cualquier otro día, pero con un profundo sentido de agradecimiento, el espíritu con el que celebramos el Día de Acción de gracias. Mientras buscamos

esos “artículos de lujo” tengamos siempre presente a las personas que, tanto en Indiana como en otras partes del mundo, escasamente pueden atender las necesidades más básicas de la vida.

El papa Francisco nos ha desafiado a que nos levantemos de la comodidad del sofá y nos aventuramos “a la periferia” donde habitan los pobres, los extraños y los marginados.

Por lo general, la periferia no es un lugar físico sino una actitud mental. Muy a menudo elegimos quedarnos en nuestro propio “entorno” (el papa lo denomina nuestra “zona de comodidad”).

Estos “entornos” a veces son psicológicos y otras veces son sitios geográficos o comunidades delimitadas en las que nos sentimos seguros porque estamos rodeados de nuestros semejantes.

El papa Francisco nos exhorta a romper estas barreras y a “construir puentes,” así como también, de un modo muy amoroso, nos reta a aceptar la invitación del Señor que nos dice: “vende todo lo que tienes y dalo a los pobres: así tendrás un tesoro en el cielo. Después, ven y sígueme” (Mt 19:21). Al igual que el joven rico del Evangelio, dudamos, ¡especialmente quienes tenemos muchas posesiones!

La celebración del Día de Acción de Gracias nos recuerda a todos los estadounidenses, sin importar nuestra raza, credo, situación económica o social, que somos un pueblo bendecido. Hemos recibido muchos dones, inclusive

la libertad política, oportunidades económicas y libertad de culto. No nos atrevemos a dar por hecho estos dones ni abusamos de ellos desperdiándolos o mediante el egoísmo arrogante hacia los menos afortunados que nosotros.

Un verdadero espíritu de agradecimiento nos mantiene centrados. No somos dueños de nuestros dones materiales y espirituales; son obsequios que estamos llamados a cuidar y a compartir como administradores responsables de la generosidad de Dios.

El bautismo es uno de esos dones de valor incalculable que hemos recibido. El privilegio de formar parte del Cuerpo de Cristo, la Iglesia, conlleva obligaciones importantes. Estamos llamados a “ser Cristo” para el prójimo, a difundir la buena nueva de su reino y a amar al prójimo, inclusive a nuestros enemigos, con un espíritu generoso y agradecido.

El don del bautismo nos llama a hacer discípulos misioneros, no a regañadientes ni por obligación, sino como seguidores entusiastas y fervorosos de Jesucristo, el gran misionero de todos los tiempos. Si seguimos los pasos de Cristo con un corazón agradecido, seremos como nuestra Santísima Virgen María y todos los santos. Reconoceremos a los extraños e incluso a nuestros enemigos como nuestros hermanos en la única familia de Dios. Estaremos deseosos de ser instrumentos de unidad y sanación en un mundo fragmentado y herido.

La Eucaristía es la fuente del agradecimiento cristiano; es la oración suprema de agradecimiento conmemorativo en la que se celebra a través de la palabra y el sacramento el don de la creación de Dios, su redención y santificación. Cada día que se celebra la misa es un día de agradecimiento y cada vez que participamos activamente en el banquete eucarístico le damos las gracias más sinceras a Dios por sus abundantes bendiciones en nuestras vidas.

En realidad, solo existe un “viernes negro”: el único día del año en el que no celebramos la misa y recordamos la pasión y muerte de Jesús.

Pero no lo llamamos “viernes negro,” sino Viernes Santo porque reconocemos que inclusive en el momento más oscuro de la humanidad, la luz de Cristo brilló intensamente, transformando la oscuridad del pecado en la claridad del amor y la misericordia de Dios.

Esto es algo por lo que debemos sentirnos agradecidos conforme nos adentramos en la temporada de Adviento y de Navidad. Durante esta época del año damos y recibimos muchos regalos. Algunos de ellos son materiales y otros, como estar en compañía de nuestros seres queridos y atender las necesidades del prójimo, son regalos espirituales. Ambos son importantes y deben darse y recibirse con un profundo sentido de agradecimiento.

¡Feliz Día de Acción de Gracias! †

# Events Calendar

For a list of events for the next four weeks as reported to The Criterion, log on to [www.archindy.org/events](http://www.archindy.org/events).

## November 27

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Serra Club Dinner Meeting**, Father Anthony Hollowell presenting on his vocation journey, 5:40 p.m. rosary, followed by dinner, \$15. Information: 317-748-1478 or [smclaughlin@holyspirit.cc](mailto:smclaughlin@holyspirit.cc).

## November 30

St. Michael the Archangel Church, 3354 W. 30th St., Indianapolis. **Monthly Ecumenical Taizé Prayer Service**, sung prayers, meditation and readings. 7-8 p.m. Information: 317-926-7359 or [rectory@saintmichaelindy.org](mailto:rectory@saintmichaelindy.org).

## December 1

Women's Care Center, 4901 W. 86th St., Indianapolis. **First Friday Mass**, 5 p.m., Father Thomas Haan presiding, optional tour of center to follow. Information: 317-829-6800, [www.womenscarecenter.org](http://www.womenscarecenter.org).

SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral chapel, 1347 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **Lumen Dei Catholic Business Group**, 6:30 a.m. Mass, 7:15-8:30 a.m. breakfast at Lincoln Square

Pancake House, 2330 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. Information: 317-435-3447 or [lumen.dei@comcast.net](mailto:lumen.dei@comcast.net).

Our Lady of the Greenwood Church, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. **First Friday** celebration of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Mass, 5:45 p.m., exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, following Mass until 9 p.m., sacrament of reconciliation available. Information: 317-888-2861 or [info@olgreenwood.org](mailto:info@olgreenwood.org).

St. Lawrence Church, 6944 E. 46th St., Indianapolis. **First Friday Charismatic Renewal Praise and Mass**, praise and worship 7 p.m., Mass 7:30 p.m. Information: 317-546-7328, [mkeyes@indy.rr.com](mailto:mkeyes@indy.rr.com).

St. Mary-of-the-Knobs Church, 5719 St. Marys Road, Floyd County. **The Vigil Project "To Save Us All Tour,"** presented by New Albany Deanery Catholic Youth Ministries, all-Catholic musicians focusing on prayer, reflection and community through music and media, all ages welcome, no admission, freewill offering, reception in Assumption Hall afterward. Information: Sandy Winstead,

812-923-8355, [sandy@nadyouth.org](mailto:sandy@nadyouth.org) or [www.thevigilproject.com](http://www.thevigilproject.com).

## December 2

St. Michael Church, 145 St. Michael Blvd., Brookville. **First Saturday Marian Devotional Prayer Group**, Mass, prayers, rosary, confession, meditation, 8 a.m. Information: 765-647-5462.

**Terre Haute Helpers of God's Precious Infants**, 7:30 a.m. Mass at the Carmelite Monastery, 59 Allendale, Terre Haute; 8:45 a.m. car pool from St. Patrick Parish, 1807 Poplar St., Terre Haute, to Bloomington Planned Parenthood, 421 S. College Ave., arriving 10:15 a.m.; return to St. Patrick Parish around noon. Information: Tom McBroom, 812-841-0060, [mcbroom.tom@gmail.com](mailto:mcbroom.tom@gmail.com).

Benedict Inn Retreat & Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **Shop Inn-Spiced Christmas Sale**, deals for your holiday shopping needs, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., have your picture taken with Santa for \$5 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Information:

317-788-7581.

## December 3

St. Matthew the Apostle Church, 4100 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Advent Evening of Reflection**, music, readings, prayer and reflections, 6 p.m., refreshments to follow. Information: 317-257-4297, [bulletin@saintmatt.org](mailto:bulletin@saintmatt.org).

St. Rita Church, 1733 Dr. Andrew J. Brown Ave., Indianapolis. **African Catholic Mass**, Archbishop Charles C. Thompson presiding, celebrated with African music, language and dance, 3 p.m., reception to follow featuring African and African-American foods, all are welcome. Information: 317-236-1474 or [pspringer@archindy.org](mailto:pspringer@archindy.org).

Holy Name of Jesus Parish Gymnasium, 21 N. 16th St., Indianapolis. **Altar Society Christmas Bazaar and Chili Luncheon**, exhibitors and vendor booths, cookie decorating, crafts, white elephant booth, homemade desserts, noon-4:30 p.m., Santa and Mrs. Claus visit 2-3 p.m. Information: [p108cmaster@sbcglobal.net](mailto:p108cmaster@sbcglobal.net).

## December 5

Mission 27 Resale, 132 Leota St., Indianapolis. **Senior Discount Day**, every Tuesday, seniors get 30 percent off clothing, 9 a.m.-6 p.m., ministry supports Indianapolis St. Vincent de Paul Society Food Pantry and Changing Lives Forever program. Information: 317-687-8260.

## December 6

Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **Solo Seniors**, Catholic, educational, charitable and social singles, 50 and over, single, separated, widowed or divorced. New members welcome. 6 p.m. Information: 317-243-0777.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, Parish Hall, 1125 S. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **St. Nicholas Celebration**, German style dinner, beer and wine, concert featuring the Indianapolis Maennerchor, doors open 5:30 p.m., adults \$15, children 3-12 \$7, 2 and under free, nonperishable food donations accepted to benefit the David S. Moore Food Pantry. Advanced reservations only by Nov. 30. Tickets and information: 317-638-5551, or

[www.sacredheartindy.org](http://www.sacredheartindy.org), click on donate.

## December 9

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5333 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Black Catholic Women's Advent Day of Retreat**, sponsored by archdiocesan Black Catholic Ministry, Dr. Kathleen Dorsey Bellow and Divine Word Missionaries Father Charles A. Smith presenting, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. with Mass following, \$25 includes lunch. Registration encouraged by contacting Pearllette Springer, 317-236-1474, 800-382-9836, x. 1474 or [pspringer@archindy.org](mailto:pspringer@archindy.org). Online registration available on the Black Catholic Ministry of Indianapolis Facebook page.

## December 10

St. Thomas Aquinas Church, 4625 N. Kenwood Ave., Indianapolis. **Mass in French**, 12:30 p.m. Information: 317-627-7729 or [acfadi2014@gmail.com](mailto:acfadi2014@gmail.com).

St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Church, 4720 E. 13th St., Indianapolis. **Class of '63 monthly gathering**, 6 p.m. Mass, optional dinner afterward. Information: 317-408-6396. †

## Retreats and Programs

For a complete list of retreats as reported to The Criterion, log on to [www.archindy.org/retreats](http://www.archindy.org/retreats).

## November 30

Benedict Inn Retreat & Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **Biblical Scenes: The Artwork of Sieger Koder**, week three, Benedictine Sister Angela Jarboe and Patty Moore, 7-9 p.m., \$25. Information and registration: 317-788-7581, [www.benedictinn.org](http://www.benedictinn.org).

## December 1-2

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Pre-Cana Preparation Conference**, \$255 with overnight accommodations (two rooms), \$185 for commuters, includes meals, snacks and materials. Information, registration: [archindy.org/precana](http://archindy.org/precana).

## December 4

Benedict Inn Retreat & Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **Advent (an "FBI" program: Faith Building Institutions)**, in partnership with Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, archdiocesan director of catechesis Ken Ogorek presenting. Join the sisters for evening prayer followed by dinner, presentation and discussion, 5-9 p.m., \$35. Information and registration: 317-545-7681, ext. 107 or [www.archindy.org/fatima](http://www.archindy.org/fatima).

## December 9

Benedict Inn Retreat & Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **Advent Reflection: Listening**, Benedictine Sister Antoinette Purcell, 9-11:30 a.m.,

\$35. Information and registration: 317-788-7581, [www.benedictinn.org](http://www.benedictinn.org).

## December 13

Benedict Inn Retreat & Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **Spend a Day with God: Personal Retreat Day**, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., \$35 includes room and lunch; spiritual direction \$30 (optional). Information and registration: 317-788-7581, [benedictinn.org](http://benedictinn.org).

## December 15-17

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guest House and Retreat Center, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Sing Ye Noël**, Benedictine Father Noël Mueller, \$255 single, \$425 double. Information: 812-357-6585 or [mzoeller@saintmeinrad.edu](mailto:mzoeller@saintmeinrad.edu). †

## VIPs



**Richard A. and Edwina M. (Veseling) Dolack**, members of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood, celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary on Nov. 22. The couple was married at St. Frances Xavier Cabrini Church in Springfield, Ill., on Nov. 22, 1962. They have four children: Regina Geeser, Rita, Richard, Jr. and Robert Dolack. The couple also has five grandchildren. They celebrated with family on Thanksgiving Day. †



**Mike and Donna (Hilbert) Gansert**, members of St. Gabriel Parish in Connersville, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Oct. 21. The couple was married at St. Gabriel Church in Connersville on Oct. 21, 1967. They have two children: Christopher and James Gansert. The couple celebrated with a Mass with family and friends. †



**George and Dolores (Jolissaint) Schulte**, members of St. Joseph Parish in Corydon, will celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary on Nov. 28. The couple was married at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church in New Albany on Nov. 28, 1957. They have five children: Denise Kifer, Frances Lasley, Patricia Mersmann, Jean Wolfe, and the late Valerie Ann Schulte. The couple also has nine grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren. †

## St. Bartholomew Parish to present 'A Jazzy Christmas' concert on Dec. 16

The music ministry of St. Bartholomew Parish, 1306 27th St., in Columbus, will present "A Jazzy Christmas" concert in the parish's church at 7 p.m. on Dec. 16.

The concert will feature the St. Bartholomew Adult and Children's Choir, and the Brass Choir under the direction of Bogdan Minut, the parish's music director.

The program will include secular selections as well as works in celebration of the birth of Christ.

There is no admission, although a freewill offering will be accepted.

A complete list of the St. Bartholomew Concert Series can be found under Music Ministry at [www.saintbartholomew.org](http://www.saintbartholomew.org).

For more information, call 317-379-9353 or e-mail [bminut@stbparish.net](mailto:bminut@stbparish.net). †

## St. Agnes Academy Class of 1968 looking for alumnae for June reunion in Indy

Members of the Class of 1968 of the former St. Agnes Academy in Indianapolis are in the planning stages of organizing a 50th reunion, set for June 3, 2018.

They are searching for alumnae of their class in hopes of having as many classmates as possible attend the reunion.

For more information, call 317-340-7550 or e-mail [padouglass@gmail.com](mailto:padouglass@gmail.com). †

## Sisters of Providence to host annual Christmas Fun at the Woods on Dec. 9

The Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, in St. Mary-of-the-Woods, will host Christmas Fun at the Woods from 1-4 p.m. on Dec. 9. The doors will open at 12:30 p.m.

The event will feature rides by carriage, bus, wagon and trolley; a display of Nativity sets, a Christmas doll house and village; plus cookie decorating, face painting, Christmas sing-a-longs,

Mrs. Claus and her elf, Christmas bingo, a bake sale, arts and crafts and the opportunity to visit with Santa at the While Violet Center for Eco-Justice.

Tours of the Saint Mother Theodore Guérin Shrine will also be available throughout the day.

The cost is \$5 per person, and free for children 3 years and younger.

Pre-registration is not required. For more information, call 812-535-2952 or e-mail [jfrost@spsmw.org](mailto:jfrost@spsmw.org). †

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

## Thanksgiving can be marked by holiness, unity and gratitude

By Fr. Herbert Weber

Michael celebrated his first Thanksgiving as a married man at the home of his wife Maria's parents. Gathered for the huge midday meal were her parents and Maria's siblings with their spouses. All the traditional foods were served, and the conversation was good.

After the meal, Michael went into his in-laws' living room, turned on the television and sat down to watch football games. He was just settling in when Maria came into the room and asked what he was doing.

His answer was that he was planning to spend the afternoon watching games or allowing the turkey-induced tryptophan to bring on a nap. In defense, Michael said that is what his dad and brothers and he always did at their house after the Thanksgiving Day meal.

Maria's quick answer was, "Well, we don't do that in our family." Then she added that everyone helps clean up so they can all relax.

Michael shared his faux pas in Maria's presence, and both of them assured me that they would continue to learn from each other.

With perhaps the exception of Christmas, it seems no holiday has as much tradition as Thanksgiving. But it soon becomes clear that those traditions vary from house to house.

One family may have unique ethnic foods at their meal, while another has an afternoon game of touch football. One family I know always starts with a 5K run. In my previous parish where we offered a free community meal, many parishioners volunteered to serve the food first before going to their own homes to celebrate.

Thanksgiving Day holds a special place for pastors. I have come to find this is a legal holiday that can also easily be experienced as a holy day. I don't mean a holy day in any official sense, but a day where a spirit of holiness pervades.

It is found in the elements of giving thanks, discovering unity and reaching out to others. In truth, it is not that hard to infuse the Christian element of these qualities into a day already special in

many people's minds. Holiday traditions can easily become holy traditions.

Beginning with giving thanks, people already know that this harvest festival has roots in appreciation for the bounty of the Earth. At the same time, many 21st-century people struggle to associate the food on the table with its agricultural source.

Thanking God for food is just the tip of the iceberg of showing appreciation on Thanksgiving Day. With a few reminders, faith communities can help people learn the goodness of expressing gratitude. People can be reminded to set aside time for prayers of gratitude, especially before the big meal. This can easily draw attention to the many blessings received every day and throughout the year.

For most Catholic parishes, a morning Mass has become an expected event on Thanksgiving Day. At our parish, we have consciously worked to make this eucharistic celebration a focal point. It is a Mass that emphasizes all the blessings of the year. Furthermore, we work to provide a warm setting where people have a feeling of family.

Celebrating the Eucharist itself makes sense on this day. Giving thanks is at the heart of the Mass. Thanksgiving Day Mass flows from a faith that is filled with gratitude, connecting with every Mass celebrated throughout the year. Giving thanks becomes a prayer of admission of our dependence on a gracious and loving God, a major step of spirituality.

The act of prayerfully giving thanks also helps us celebrate unity. Although private prayer is good, communal prayer in church or at the dinner table draws people together. We not only thank God for each other, we thank God with each other.

When we started this parish some 12 years ago without property or building, a small Lutheran Church allowed us use of their worship space on a regular basis, a kindness for which I remain grateful.

When the first Thanksgiving was nearing, the pastor asked me what my thoughts were. I knew I wanted to have



Hailey Burt, a pre-kindergarten student at St. Gabriel School in Neenah, Wis., folds her hands in prayer before enjoying a Thanksgiving meal on Nov. 23, 2015. Although a civic holiday, Catholics can find many ways to suffuse it with faith. (CNS photo/Sam Lucero, *The Compass*)

a parish gathering for prayer. He said his congregation desired to invite us to join them on the Wednesday evening before the holiday for a joint prayer service.

And to sweeten the offer, he said they have a tradition of having "all things pumpkin" to share afterward—pumpkin pies, cakes, breads and more. That evening's gathering reminded me of the traditional image of Pilgrims and Native Americans feasting in unity.

Finally, the tradition of Thanksgiving Day for many people is to reach out to others, sharing and including those alone or overlooked. Sharing is always an expression of gratitude for what we have. Besides serving free meals at a parish or

community center, many have found other ways to share.

Over the years, I have brought refugees from other countries to my family's Thanksgiving meal. Exchange students have been present as well. And an elderly neighbor of my brother was always a special guest. All were graciously included.

By expressing gratitude in prayer, by finding expressions of unity and by sharing with and including others, we can help people create new traditions as we find this holiday becomes even more holy to us.

(Father Herbert Weber is the founding pastor of St. John XXIII Parish in Perrysburg, Ohio.) †

## The psalms teach ways to be grateful to God in both good times and bad

By Nancy de Flon

A wise person once observed that "gratitude is the aristocrat of attitudes." Gratitude not only shows consideration for the one who gave a gift or did a favor—it also promotes mental health if we cultivate the habit of gratefulness for things great and small.

In giving thanks, we mustn't overlook God! Gratefulness to God is at the heart of this attitude, for God has created everything for which we are grateful.



Holy Cross School fifth-graders Joseph Ashmead, left, and Marguerite Kasinge join classmates in bringing Thanksgiving offerings to the altar during a Nov. 24, 2015, Thanksgiving Mass at Holy Cross Church in Rochester, N.Y. The Book of Psalms shows ways to thank God in many of life's circumstances. (CNS photo/Mike Crupi, *Catholic Courier*)

Several psalms offer invaluable guidance for cultivating this "aristocratic attitude." In modeling how to express our gratitude in prayer, the psalms suggest two major reasons for doing so.

First, in several psalms of petition the psalmist promises to tell others of the favors received—to thank the Lord "before the assembly." In voicing our thanks to God for his goodness, we evangelize others.

For centuries, Christians have reflected on Christ's passion with Psalm 69, which is a cry from the depths of distress. In it, the psalmist promises to praise God in song and adds, "The poor when they see it will be glad and God-seeking hearts will revive" (Ps 69:33). The author of Psalm 142, begging for rescue from perfidious friends, says: "Around me the just will assemble because of your goodness to me" (Ps 142:8).

This theme is reflected in a reading from St. Mark's Gospel. The man from whom Jesus had driven out many demons begs to be allowed to follow him. Instead Jesus, who prayed the psalms regularly, tells him, "Go home to your friends, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you." The man does so, and "everyone was amazed" (Mk 5:19-20).

Gratitude psalms range from those composed for a king's victory to psalms of private individuals for unspecified favors. Psalm 18 rings out King David's praise for God, who snatched him from a powerful enemy whose strength he could not match. It closes with the promise: "I

will praise you, Lord, among the nations" (Ps 18:50).

In contrast, Psalm 116 fulfills the promise of an anonymous, grateful petitioner to praise God before all the people. Perhaps this psalm was composed by an "official" psalmist at a grateful person's request, much as we might request a Mass to be celebrated for our intentions.

Second, expressing gratitude to God increases our confidence that he will hear our prayers again. Psalms of petition often recall God's previous favors and thank him.

Even Psalm 22, which begins with "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" is suffused with confidence based on God's favors to Israel and on the fact that God has always "heard the poor when they cried" (Ps 22:1, 25). Whatever the person's present trials, the Lord is greater still.

Communal laments, too, juxtapose the memory of God's favors with pleas for help. Psalm 44 recalls how God "uprooted the nations" to settle the Israelites in the Promised Land. Faced now with new disaster, the people invoke the memories of God's love and beg: "Redeem us!" (Ps 44:3, 27).

A prayer for Thanksgiving or any time: "God, giver of all that is good, unite us in our gratitude to you, to one another and for your countless gifts."

(Nancy De Flon is editor-at-large at Paulist Press and the author of *The Joy of Praying the Psalms*.) †

From the Editor Emeritus/John F. Fink

## Bill Buckley: The most important Catholic conservative

Whether or not you agree with his politics, William Francis Buckley Jr. was an amazing multitasking man. He was



undoubtedly the most important U.S. Catholic political conservative during the second half of the 20th century.

He was born in 1925, the sixth of 10 children in a wealthy Catholic family. He was to say, "I grew up in a large family of

Catholics without even a decent ration of tentativeness among the lot of us about our religious faith." However, he didn't think much of the Second Vatican Council's liturgical reforms and regularly attended a Latin Mass near his home in Connecticut.

Buckley wrote more than 50 books: 32 non-fiction, eight fiction, 11 spy novels, and five about sailing. Sailing was his favorite, but hardly only, pastime. He sailed across the Atlantic Ocean three times and the Pacific Ocean once in addition to sailing in the Caribbean.

His first book was *God and Man at*

*Yale*, a critique of his alma mater. He argued that Yale University had strayed from its original educational mission. The book spurred him on to become the leading conservative writer in the country.

He was the founder of the conservative *National Review* magazine in 1955 and served as its editor in chief until 1990; he continued to write for it until his death. Beginning in 1962, he wrote 5,600 twice-weekly newspaper columns, called "On the Right," that were distributed to 320 newspapers across America.

During World War II, he served in the Army. Then he went to Yale, where he excelled on the debate team. After his graduation, he was recruited by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), where he served for two years.

His experiences with the CIA led eventually to his 11 spy novels, written over a period of 30 years, for which he invented the character Blackford Oakes, a CIA agent during the Cold War with the Soviet Union.

From 1966 to 1999, he was host of 1,429 episodes of the PBS show "Firing Line," where he demonstrated his remarkable multisyllabic vocabulary and biting wit as

he debated with liberals. He had a celebrated feud with Gore Vidal, but the best debates were with novelist Normal Mailer, whom he respected. He also kept up a speaking agenda that usually included about 70 talks a year throughout the country.

Buckley was also a musician. He was an accomplished pianist, but the harpsichord was his favorite instrument. He played it with a classical orchestra.

While somehow doing all this, Buckley found time to spend most of the winters in a chalet in Switzerland. He would write in the mornings, ski in the afternoons, and, with his wife Pat, entertain guests in the evening. The Buckylys were also celebrated for their parties in New York. Bill was a wine connoisseur with an extensive wine cellar.

Buckley defined what the conservative movement was all about, determining who was and who wasn't conservative. He rejected people like George Wallace and Robert W. Welch Jr., but strongly supported Ronald Reagan. He was credited for laying the groundwork for Reagan's American conservatism.

Bill Buckley died in 2008 at age 82. †

Faith and Family/Sean Gallagher

## Make your home a kingdom of 'justice, love and peace'

It is understandable that we Americans might not fully appreciate the significance of the feast that the Church celebrates this weekend—the Solemnity of Our Lord

Jesus Christ, King of the Universe.

After all, democracy is at the heart of our identity as Americans. Our nation came to be because our founding fathers rebelled against a tyrannical king.



In the Declaration of Independence, they proclaimed that "the laws of nature and of nature's God" had endowed all humanity with "certain unalienable rights," and that all governments derive "their just powers from the consent of the governed."

So viewing Christ as a king whose authority comes from his divine nature and not by our vote can be abstract for us, not a part of our ordinary daily life.

There are other ways, though, of understanding Christ's kingship that might resonate with us better.

We might not describe it in so many words, but the life of our families is closer to a monarchy than a democracy.

While parents should allow their children as much freedom of choice and say in how family life is organized as is prudent for their stage of development and the good of the family, the degree of their freedom in the home is still determined by those parents. It isn't derived from the consent of the governed.

And the role of parents as quasi-monarchs in their homes didn't come to be simply because of social customs that may have come about in a period when justice was disrespected and can be discarded in later, more enlightened times.

No, we believe that "the laws of nature and of nature's God" endow parents with authority over their children for the good of those children, so that they will have the best chance to grow, thrive and become the people that God has created them to be.

In addition to being inscribed in the laws of nature, we Catholics also see this belief about family life confirmed in sacred Scripture and Tradition.

Still, it is understandable that parents in this culture might at times feel uncomfortable with this kind of authority, or be tempted to make their homes more of a democracy than is ultimately wise.

It's just kind of ingrained into our cultural mindset that kings are bad and ballot boxes are good.

But all of this presumes that Christ's kingship and those of parents, which are derived from his, are like the kings of the past and the tyrants of the present who, in the words of Jesus, "lord it over" their people and "make their authority over them felt" (Mt 20:25).

Jesus' instruction to his disciples about how they were to shepherd his followers can apply to civic leaders as well: "Whoever wishes to be great among you shall be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave" (Mt 20:26-27).

Parents are called by God to exercise authority in their homes in order to serve their children and promote their good.

And I certainly know from trial and error—with an emphasis on the error—that this authority will have a better chance of being received by children when parents don't "lord it over them," and instead serve them in love as Jesus said and witnessed in his own life among us.

When, with the help of God's grace, parents lead their children like this, their homes will become kingdoms like the kingdom of God described in the preface to the eucharistic prayer on the feast of Christ the King: "a kingdom of truth and life, a kingdom of holiness and grace, a kingdom of justice, love and peace." †

Cornucopia/Cynthia Dewes

## Thank God for Thanksgiving, which reminds us to be grateful

It's that time again when Americans gather to thank God for their blessings. Even atheists give thanks—even if they aren't sure who to thank. Luckily, the Pilgrims knew that they should thank God, and we continued to do so up until



Thanksgiving was declared a national holiday, and beyond.

Most of us are thankful for the same things, such as having a job and enough to eat. Some can be thankful for children who behave and who know what to do in

school. And some can be grateful for good health, a happy marriage, or lots of friends. In any case, most of us are thankful for something or other.

Of course I am thankful for these things, but there are many more that I try to itemize every year. For one, I'm thankful that I lived in a time when I could be proud of my country. As a second-generation American, I understood and valued the joy and opportunities offered to people from other countries. We took immigration seriously, and approved the idea that

America is a melting pot of races, cultures and ideas. And we felt a responsibility to help maintain these values.

Another thing I am grateful for is that most of my life was free from worrying about political correctness. Naturally, I did not approve of racism or sexism or abuse of anyone in any form, but I didn't have to worry that an innocent word or action would be criticized or even criminalized. I was surprised when common sense was routinely eclipsed by fear of the latest trend.

All my life I've been grateful for the opportunities for travel that I had. The first was in high school when my baby-sitting employer took me along to help with her children on a trip to Connecticut. We flew from Minnesota on a Stratocruiser, which was so huge it was like riding a bus. On the way there, we stopped over in New York City and my employer took me to see the sights, including the roof of the Rockefeller Center building and the Central Park Zoo.

In later years, I was fortunate to travel with my husband and friends, sometimes on inexpensive tours and later to visit our daughter in Germany. When our kids were young, we traveled all over the U.S. on our two-week summer vacation, visiting natural

and historic sites by day and camping out at night. We never believed that we had to be wealthy in order to go somewhere new.

Another of the top 100 on my thankful list is humor. I think almost everything has a funny side. This is very American, too. Consider homemade artifacts on people's front lawns, like the homemade tin man sitting in front of a house, or the cheerful pot of plastic flowers decorating the porch of a rundown shack on a back street. Or how about those huge, floppy plastic critters waving their arms in front of car dealerships or grocery stores, urging customers to appear.

Thank God for funny people, too. People who amuse me almost every day range from the subtle remark wielders to the actual joke tellers to the impressionists who make us laugh with hilarious versions of Donald Trump or Donald Duck. Whatever their schtick, their humor certainly is divinely inspired, since only God could come up with some of this stuff.

So, on this Thanksgiving Day as on every day, I thank God.

(Cynthia Dewes, a member of St. Paul the Apostle Parish in Greencastle, is a regular columnist for The Criterion.) †

Emmaus Walk/Debra Tomaselli

## Doctor's visit reveals God knows what we need before we even know

"I wish I hadn't made this doctor's appointment," I told my husband Joe as we sat in the waiting room.

Moments later, the nurse led us to an exam room. "The doctor will be with you shortly," she said, before slipping away.

I looked at Joe.



"This isn't where I want to be," I grumbled. "I've never been to this doctor. I have one simple question for him, and it doesn't matter anymore. My problem is much bigger than this."

I cradled my head. "Maybe I really

need to be back at the oncologist's office," I said. "I don't feel well. This doctor can't help with that. He knows nothing of my health history. Cancer isn't his specialty."

Joe listened, knowing there were no easy answers.

Although I was here at the recommendation of one of the surgeons handling my care, I suddenly felt that adding another specialist would complicate things.

I wanted to leave.

"Let's pray," I said. Frustration punctuated every word.

"Dear Lord," I said, "please guide

this doctor. Please give him wisdom ... because I sure don't have any."

Moments later, the doctor, a tall, blond-haired man with a thick South American accent arrived and introduced himself.

Although his job wasn't to address my overall health issues, I advised him of my medical history, the ongoing cancer treatments, and the awful debilitation. Then I asked the question I'd come there for, which he aptly answered.

As we prepared to leave, he paused.

"When you say you don't feel well," he said. "What do you mean? What bothers you?" He was referring to my debilitating cancer treatments, the problem I was sure he couldn't help me with.

I waved my hands around my head.

"Mostly, I feel disoriented," I said. "Something's just off. I don't feel right. It's like ..."

"OK, OK," he said, stepping back. "I understand."

I stopped. Of course, he didn't want to hear it. This had nothing to do with his specialty.

"I understand," he said again. "I had that treatment. I'm all done now though. No more. It was a different diagnosis, but the same drug. I understand [how you feel]."

My eyes widened. I cocked my

head, remembering how my oncologist suspected my debilitation may be caused by the treatments.

"I'm fine now," he said. "I work all day, I exercise at the gym, I can do everything. ... I'm fine."

He picked up his clipboard, paused and looked at me.

"You're going to be fine, too," he said. "You're going to be fine."

Chills ran through me.

Just minutes ago, I'd been wishing I'd never made this appointment. I was sure this doctor couldn't help.

But God was in control. He knew exactly who I needed. Not only could this doctor answer questions regarding his specialty, but he was, indeed, qualified to address my overall struggle. After all, he'd once been the patient, standing in my shoes.

"It's nice to have a doctor who understands how you really feel," he said, "isn't it?"

I nodded. "Yes, it is."

As he exited, he looked back at me. His message resonates deep within.

"You're going to be fine."

(Debra Tomaselli writes from Altamonte Springs, Florida. She can be reached at [dtomaselli@cfl.rr.com](mailto:dtomaselli@cfl.rr.com).) †

**Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe/**  
 Msgr. Owen F. Campion

# The Sunday Readings

Sunday, November 26, 2017

- Ezekiel 34:11-12, 15-17
- 1 Corinthians 15:20-26, 28
- Matthew 25:31-46

On this weekend, the Church concludes its liturgical year. Next week, a new year will begin with the First Sunday of Advent.



This weekend the Church closes the year with an excited and fervent proclamation of Christ as the king of the universe.

The first reading for this great feast comes from the Book of Ezekiel. In this reading, God speaks in the first

person, promising protection of the flock, in other words, the people of God. He is the shepherd, seeking the lost, caring for the injured, rescuing the imperiled. God will also distinguish between the sheep and others who assume other identities because of their choice to be unfaithful to him.

St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians provides the second reading. This selection is a proclamation of the resurrection, and of the role of the Lord as redeemer of humanity. He is the risen Lord, the first of those who will rise to everlasting life. Those who will follow Jesus in being raised from the dead are "those who belong" to Christ, in other words, those persons who have admitted God, through Jesus, into their lives, and who have received from the Lord the gift of grace, eternal life and strength (1 Cor 15:23).

Paul frankly admits in this reading that forces are at work in the world that are hostile to God. These forces cannot be dismissed as insignificant or timid, although they are by no means omnipotent. In and through Jesus, the power and life of God will endure. God will triumph over all evil. No one bound to God should fear the powers of evil, although all must resist these powers.

For its final reading on this great feast, the Church offers us a passage from St. Matthew's Gospel. It is a glance forward, to the day when God's glory will overwhelm the world, to the day when Jesus will return in majesty and glory.

This expectation was a favorite theme

in the early Church, in the community of believers in which the Gospels, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, were formed.

The reading repeats the description given in Ezekiel. In Ezekiel, God the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, the good from the unfaithful. In this reading from Matthew, Jesus promises a final judgment to separate the faithful from the sinful.

The Lord beautifully defines in this passage who will be judged as faithful, and who will be seen as unfaithful. The faithful will not be those who only give lip service to their belief in God, but those who, following the model of Jesus, give themselves totally to the will of God.

## Reflection

A popular motion picture a few years ago, and a true story at that, was *The King's Speech*. It was about Britain's King George VI (1895-1952), on the throne from 1936 until his death, focusing on his determined efforts to overcome a serious speech impediment.

The king and his wife, known for decades until her own death in 2002 as Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, were great figures as the British struggled against enormous odds in the Second World War.

At the height of the war, with the German blitz or bombing relentlessly tearing British life apart, the rumor spread that the royal family, as well as the government, would flee the country.

One day, arriving on the scene of a horrendous bombing attack, Queen Elizabeth was confronted with the question of whether or not she and her husband would send their young daughters to Canada. Indeed, would she and the king flee?

The queen answered, "My daughters will not leave without me. I shall not leave without the king, and, the king will never, ever, ever leave you!"

For us Christians, our king will never, ever leave us. He is with us now and always, guiding, healing and strengthening us. †

## Daily Readings

### Monday, November 27

Daniel 1:1-6, 8-20  
 (Response) Daniel 3:52-56  
 Luke 21:1-4

### Tuesday, November 28

Daniel 2:31-45  
 (Response) Daniel 3:57-61  
 Luke 21:5-11

### Wednesday, November 29

Daniel 5:1-6, 13-14, 16-17, 23-28  
 (Response) Daniel 3:62-67  
 Luke 21:12-19

### Thursday, November 30

St. Andrew, Apostle  
 Romans 10:9-18  
 Psalm 19:8-11  
 Matthew 4:18-22

### Friday, December 1

Daniel 7:2-14  
 (Response) Daniel 3:75-81  
 Luke 21:29-33

### Saturday, December 2

Daniel 7:15-27  
 (Response) Daniel 3:82-87  
 Luke 21:34-36

### Sunday, December 3

First Sunday of Advent  
 Isaiah 63:16b-17, 19b; 64:2-7  
 Psalm 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19  
 1 Corinthians 1:3-9  
 Mark 13:33-37

## Question Corner/Fr. Kenneth Doyle

### The Church does careful research in evaluating possible sainthood causes

**Q**A friend told me recently that the cause of Father Patrick Peyton had been sent to the Vatican for sainthood.



Do you know how it stands and when he might be declared a saint? I hope and pray that it will be in my lifetime. Also, what are the stages for someone to be declared a saint? (New York)

**A** Father Patrick Peyton's cause for canonization rests right now with the Vatican's Congregation for the Causes of Saints. In April 2015, the "*positio*" for his cause was presented formally to that congregation.

That document, a 1,300-page report, is a compilation of research on his life and ministry for signs of heroic virtue and sanctity. It had been prepared over four years, gathering testimony from people in 35 dioceses around the world.

The congregation is now in the process of reviewing that documentation. Following a favorable review by the bishops and cardinals who are members of the congregation, the cause would then be presented to the Holy Father. With the pontiff's approval, Father Peyton would then be declared "venerable."

In order to be declared "blessed," evidence of miracles attributed to his intercession would be studied and subjected to rigorous medical scrutiny. One documented miracle would be needed for beatification and another one for canonization.

Father Peyton, hailed throughout the world as the "Rosary Priest," was a member of the Congregation of the Holy Cross. He died in 1992 at age 83. He promoted family prayer and coined the oft-heard slogan, "The family that prays together stays together." He organized rosary crusades in 40 nations that drew 28 million people, and was a pioneer in using modern media to advance religious values, producing 600 radio and television programs featuring Hollywood stars and other celebrities.

There is no way to forecast exactly when his beatification and canonization might take place, but I, too, would feel a personal thrill in witnessing it. I was honored when Father Peyton invited me to write the foreword for one of his final

books, and once, when he was then in his late 70s and in failing health, I ran into him in Rome.

He asked about my mother, whom he had known when he first began the Family Rosary organization in the 1940s. I told him that she was, in fact, visiting me that very week in Rome. Though I pleaded with him not to, he insisted on climbing the steep set of stairs to my apartment to see my mother and give her a blessing. I will always remember "Father Pat" not only as a very holy man, but a kind man as well.

**Q**Does it make sense to pray for salvation for Judas Iscariot, the Apostle who betrayed Jesus? It seems that throughout the history of Christianity, he has been vilified and no one has mentioned that, hopefully, he could have been forgiven for his sin. (Indiana)

**A**It does no harm to pray for the salvation of Judas, and I admire your compassion. The Church has never said definitively that any particular person is now in hell. It is possible, I suppose, that Judas repented for his sin and, in the silence of his heart, sought God's forgiveness.

Matthew's Gospel says, in fact, that following the betrayal, Judas "deeply regretted what he had done," and returned the 30 pieces of silver to the chief priests, saying "I have sinned in betraying innocent blood" (Mt 27:3-4). Of course, he then "went off and hanged himself" (Mt 27:5), but even that does not translate automatically to the loss of eternal salvation.

Note that the Church now offers a funeral Mass for a suicide victim—on the possibility that the person's desperate state of mind may have precluded full responsibility.

The problem, though, with Judas is that Jesus did say of him (both in Mt 26:24 and Mk 14:21) that "it would be better for that man if he had never been born"—which suggests to me that Judas never did achieve eternal happiness. I believe, though, that prayers are never wasted—and if the Lord cannot apply your prayers to Judas Iscariot, he will surely find someone else who will be grateful for your efforts.

(Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at [askfatherdoyle@gmail.com](mailto:askfatherdoyle@gmail.com) and 30 Columbia Circle Dr., Albany, New York 12203.) †

## My Journey to God

### FED

By Sonny Shanks

Some walked in with a limp.  
 Some walked in with a cane.  
 Some walked in with a walker.  
 Some couldn't walk.  
 We had only a small bowl of chili to give each,  
 along with some crackers.  
 I saw smiles all around as people ate and talked and laughed.  
 No one was left out.  
 Towards the end of the meal a lone voice broke out,  
 at a rear table.  
 It was an elderly, disabled lady.  
 "Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so,"  
 she sang slow and true.  
 Others joined in, and more after that.  
 Soon the whole place was full of the song.  
 Then it got quiet, and people started praying for each other.  
 No one was left out.  
 I couldn't believe such meager and humble circumstances could produce such love and gratitude and devotion.  
 After it was all over I walked home, feeling warm and well fed.  
 And I hadn't had any chili; we ran out.



(Sonny Shanks is a member of St. Joseph Parish in Corydon. Volunteer Steve Hurst distributes bowls of soup to guests at St. Patrick Parish soup kitchen in Bay Shore, N.Y., in 2016.)  
 (CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)

# 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.

**EDER, Betty J.**, 89, St. Mary, Rushville, Nov. 11. Mother of Karen Harpring, Lisa Ruttenberg and Steve Eder. Grandmother of seven. Great-grandmother of eight.

**GEHL, Ruth A.**, 83, St. Maurice, Napoleon, Oct. 27. Wife of Phil Gehl. Mother of Mary Franke, Jim, Ron and Tony Gehl. Sister of Marlene Griewe, Jo Ann Holzer, Ben and Carl Federle. Grandmother of

11. Step-grandmother of four.  
**GERVELIS, Mary K.**, 97, St. Martin of Tours, Martinsville, Nov. 8. Mother of Ann Ramey, Donna Whitford, Maureen and Eric Gervelis. Grandmother of eight.

**GOOTEE, Eric M.**, 33, St. Vincent de Paul, Bedford, Nov. 6. Husband of Bethany Godsey-Gootee. Father of River and Wilder Gootee. Son of Carl and Judy Gootee. Brother of Emily Eagan and Scott Gootee.

**MCMULLEN, Paul**, 58, St. Vincent de Paul, Bedford, Oct. 24. Brother of Kathleen Hirons and Greg McMullen. Uncle of several.

**PLUCKEBAUM, Roger**, 85, St. Luke the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Nov. 10. Husband of Maryann Pluckebaum. Father of AnneMarie Cottrell, Dave, Mike, Paul and Steve Pluckebaum. Brother of Jack Pluckebaum. Grandfather of 11. Great-grandfather of three.

**SCHEIDLER, Anthony L.**, 95, Immaculate Conception, Millhousen, Nov. 15. Husband of Rosemary Scheidler. Father of Julie Beck, Martha Craig,



## Honoring the dead

An Indian Christian woman prays on Nov. 2, All Souls' Day, at a cemetery in Bhopal. November is traditionally a month in which Catholics honor the dead and pray for the repose of their souls. (CNS photo/Sanjeev Gupta, EPA)

Ann Hermesch, Karen Hewitt, Dale, Daniel, James, Michael and Patrick Scheidler. Brother of Franciscan Sister Janice Scheidler. Grandfather of 20. Great-grandfather of three.

**SCHIPP, Louis**, 73, St. Boniface, Fulda, Nov. 8. Husband of Carol Schipp. Father of Dean and Philip Schipp. Brother of Norma Jerger, Alma Kreilein, Vernita

Williams, Frank and Harold Schipp. Grandfather of five.

**THIBAUT, Michael A.**, 45, St. Monica, Indianapolis, Nov. 5. Husband of Lisa Thibault. Father of Genevieve, Lucille and Sophia Thibault. Son of Tom and Ann Thibault. Brother of Catherine Thacher, Janet and Stephen Thibault.

**VANDERPOHL, Gilbert D.**,

89, St. Mary, Greensburg, Nov. 12. Father of Julie Deer and Gerald Vanderpohl. Brother of Dorothy Land, Marilyn Preston, Elizabeth Schroeder and Vernon Vanderpohl. Grandfather of nine. Great-grandfather of six.

**WEBB, Josephine M.**, 86, St. Vincent de Paul, Bedford, Nov. 2. Mother of Judy Ypsilantis, Jim Chorley and

Dino Moler. Sister of Angie Gempka. Grandmother of seven. Great-grandmother of six.

**WILLIAMS, Ann M.**, 55, St. Bartholomew, Columbus, Nov. 8. Sister of Sharon Cocuzza. Aunt of two.

**YOUNG, Arthur**, 91, St. Maurice, Napoleon. Husband of Carol Young. Uncle of several. †

## SOLANUS

continued from page 1B

A congregation of more than 60,000 filled Ford Field, home of the NFL's Detroit Lions, which was transformed for the Mass. The altar, placed at midfield, was created originally for St. John Paul II's visit to the Pontiac Silverdome in 1987. To the right of the altar was a large painting of Blessed Solanus. It was unveiled after the beatification rite, which took place at the beginning of the Mass.

Dozens of bishops, priests and deacons processed into the stadium for the start of the liturgy. The music was provided by a 25-member orchestra and a choir of 300 directed by Capuchin Franciscan Father Ed Foley. The singers were members of parish choirs from across the Detroit metro area.

Cardinal Amato was the principal celebrant, joined at the altar by Detroit Archbishop Allen H. Vigneron, Archbishop Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the United States, Boston Cardinal Sean P. O'Malley, himself a Capuchin Franciscan, and Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin of Newark, N.J., a Detroit native who also previously served as shepherd of

the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

In the congregation were 240 Capuchin friars and at least 300 members of the Casey family from across America and their ancestral country of Ireland. The Casey family's Irish roots were reflected in the Irish hymns chosen as part of the music for the liturgy.

"What a witness was our beloved Solanus," said Father Michael Sullivan, provincial minister of the Capuchin Franciscan Province of St. Joseph based in Detroit, as the ceremony began. "He opened his heart to all people who came to him. He prayed with them, he appreciated them, and through him, God loved them powerfully again and again."

"For decades, countless faithful have awaited this moment," said Archbishop Vigneron before asking Cardinal Amato to read the decree from Pope Francis declaring Father Solanus "Blessed."

He is the second American-born male to be beatified. Blessed Stanley Rother, a North American priest from Oklahoma who in 1981 was martyred while serving the people of a Guatemalan village, was beatified on Sept. 23 in Oklahoma City.

As a fellow Capuchin, Cardinal O'Malley was inspired that one in

his ranks is now "Blessed." "It's very encouraging to see the first American to be beatified in our community [the Capuchins]. It's a great honor for us," he told *The Michigan Catholic* following the liturgy.

Among the hundreds, if not thousands, of healings attributed to Blessed Solanus during and after his lifetime, Pope Francis recognized the authenticity of a miracle necessary for the friar to be elevated from venerable to blessed after a review by the Vatican's Congregation for Saints' Causes was completed earlier this year.

The miracle involved the healing—unexplained by medicine or science—of a woman with an incurable genetic skin disease, Paula Medina Zarate of Panama. She was only recently identified publicly and she was at the Mass. As it began, she walked up to the altar with a reliquary holding a relic of Blessed Solanus.

Zarate was visiting friends in Detroit and stopped at Father Solanus tomb to pray for others' intentions. After her prayers, she felt the strong urging to ask for the friar's intercession for herself, too, and received an instant and visible healing.

The miraculous nature of her cure in 2012 was verified by doctors in her home country, in Detroit and in Rome, all of whom confirmed there was no scientific explanation. Father Solanus himself died of a skin disease on July 31, 1957.

Born on Nov. 25, 1870, in Oak Grove, Wisconsin, Bernard Francis Casey was

the sixth of 16 children born to Irish immigrants Bernard James Casey and Ellen Elizabeth Murphy. He enrolled at St. Francis High School Seminary near Milwaukee in 1891 to study for the diocesan priesthood. But because of academic limitations, he was advised to consider joining a religious order instead.

He went to Detroit to join the Capuchin order in 1897. He was given the religious name Solanus.

He continued to struggle academically but was finally ordained in 1904 as a "simplex priest," meaning he could celebrate Mass but could not preach doctrinal sermons or hear confessions.

He went to New York and served for two decades in friaries and churches there and was transferred back to Detroit in 1924, where he began working as the porter, or doorkeeper, of St. Bonaventure Monastery.

Father Solanus co-founded the Capuchin Soup Kitchen in 1929, and today it serves the Detroit metro area by providing food, clothing and human development programs to the people of the community. In addition to preparing and serving up to 2,000 meals a day, the facility has an emergency food pantry, service center and a tutoring program for children.

He spent his life in the service of people, endearing himself to thousands who would seek his counsel. From 1946 to 1956, he was at the Capuchin novitiate of St. Felix in Huntington, Ind., then was transferred back to Detroit for what was the last year of his life. †

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# 'Invest in love,' pope says on first World Day of the Poor

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—People have a basic choice in the way they live: either striving to build up treasures on Earth or giving to others in order to gain heaven, Pope Francis said.

"What we invest in love remains, the rest vanishes," the pope said in his homily on Nov. 19, the first World Day of the Poor.

Between 6,000 and 7,000 people attended the Mass in St. Peter's Basilica as special guests, the Vatican said. While almost all of them live in Europe, they include migrants and refugees from all over the world.

Among the altar servers were young men who are either poor, migrants or homeless. The first reader at the Mass, Tony Battah, is a refugee from Syria. Those presenting the gifts at the offertory were led by the Zambardi family from Turin, whom the Vatican described as living in a "precarious condition" and whose 1-year-old daughter has cystic fibrosis.

In addition to the bread and wine that were consecrated at the Mass, the offertory included a large basket of bread and rolls that were blessed to be shared at the lunch the pope was offering after Mass. Some 1,500 people joined the pope in the Vatican's audience hall for the meal, while the other special guests were served at the Pontifical North American College—the U.S. seminary in Rome—and other seminaries and Catholic-run soup kitchens nearby.

Preaching about the Gospel "parable of the talents" (Mt 25:14-30), Pope Francis said the servant in the story who buried his master's money was rebuked not because he did something wrong, but because he failed to do something good with what he was given.

"All too often, we have the idea that we haven't done anything wrong, and so we rest content, presuming that we are good and just," the pope said. "But to do no wrong is not enough. God is not an inspector looking for unstamped tickets; he is a Father looking for children to whom he can entrust his property and his plans."

If in the eyes of the world, the poor they have little value, he said, "they are the ones who open to us the way to heaven; they are our 'passport to paradise.' For us, it is an evangelical duty to care for them, as our real riches, and to do so not only by giving

them bread, but also by breaking with them the bread of God's word, which is addressed first to them."

Where the poor are concerned, the pope said, too many people are often guilty of a sin of omission or indifference.

Thinking it is "society's problem" to solve, looking the other way when passing a beggar or changing the channel when the news shows something disturbing are not Christian responses, he said.

"God will not ask us if we felt righteous indignation," he said, "but whether we did some good."

People please God in a similar way to how they please anyone they love. They learn what that person likes and gives that to him or her, the pope said.

In the Gospels, he said, Jesus says that he wants to be loved in "the least of our brethren," including the hungry, the sick, the poor, the stranger and the prisoner.

"In the poor, Jesus knocks on the doors of our heart, thirsting for our love," he said. True goodness and strength are shown "not in closed fists and crossed arms, but in ready hands outstretched to the poor, to the wounded flesh of the Lord."

Before joining his guests for lunch, Pope Francis recited the *Angelus* prayer with thousands of people in St. Peter's Square.

The previous day in Detroit, he told the people, Capuchin Father Solanus Casey was beatified. "A humble and faithful disciple of Christ, he was known for his untiring service to the poor. May his witness help priests, religious and lay people live with joy the bond between the proclamation of the Gospel and love for the poor."

Pope Francis told the crowd that he hoped "the poor would be at the center of our communities not only at times like this, but always, because they are at the heart of the Gospel. In them, we encounter Jesus who speaks to us and calls us through their suffering and their needs."



Pope Francis eats lunch with the poor in the Paul VI hall after celebrating Mass marking the first World Day of the Poor at the Vatican on Nov. 19. Some 1,200 poor people joined the pope for the meal. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)



People look on as Pope Francis arrives to celebrate Mass marking the first World Day of the Poor in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican on Nov. 19. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

Offering special prayers for people living in poverty because of war and conflict, the pope asked the international community to make special efforts to bring peace to those areas, especially the Middle East.

Pope Francis made a specific plea

for stability in Lebanon, which is in the middle of a political crisis after its prime minister announced his resignation. He prayed the country would "continue to be a 'message' of respect and coexistence throughout the region and for the whole world." †

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- Organize Bingo volunteer schedule and managing registration, payment and seating for Bingo events
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# Advent penance services are scheduled at archdiocesan parishes

Parishes throughout the archdiocese have scheduled communal penance services for Advent. The following is a list of services that have been reported to *The Criterion*.

## Batesville Deanery

Dec. 1, 10 a.m.-10 p.m. at All Saints, Dearborn County, at St. Martin Campus  
 Dec. 6, 7 p.m. at Immaculate Conception, Millhouses  
 Dec. 11, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Greensburg  
 Dec. 12, 7 p.m. for St. Catherine of Siena, Decatur County, at St. John the Evangelist Church, Enochsburg  
 Dec. 13, 6:30 p.m. at St. Vincent de Paul, Shelby County  
 Dec. 13, 7 p.m. at St. Maurice, Napoleon  
 Dec. 15, 10 a.m.-10 p.m. at All Saints, Dearborn County, at St. Martin Campus  
 Dec. 18, 7 p.m. at Holy Family, Oldenburg  
 Dec. 18, 7 p.m. at St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Aurora  
 Dec. 19, 6 p.m. at St. Michael, Brookville  
 Dec. 20, 6:30 p.m. at St. Peter, Franklin County  
 Dec. 20, 7 p.m. at St. Louis, Batesville

## Bloomington Deanery

Dec. 6, 7 p.m.-9 p.m. for St. Charles Borromeo and St. Paul Catholic Center, Bloomington, at St. Paul Catholic Center  
 Dec. 12, 7 p.m. for St. Mary, Mitchell, and St. Vincent de Paul, Bedford, at St. Vincent de Paul  
 Dec. 13, 7 p.m. at St. Agnes, Nashville  
 Dec. 14, 6 p.m. at Our Lord Jesus Christ the King, Paoli  
 Dec. 18, 7 p.m. at St. Martin of Tours, Martinsville  
 Dec. 20, 6:30 p.m. at St. Jude the Apostle, Spencer  
 Dec. 21, 6 p.m. at Our Lady of the Springs, French Lick

Dec. 21, 6 p.m. at St. John the Apostle, Bloomington

## Connersville Deanery

Dec. 12, 7 p.m. at St. Anne, New Castle  
 Dec. 13, 6 p.m. Mass, 6:30 p.m. confession, at St. Gabriel, Connersville  
 Dec. 14, 6 p.m. Mass, 6:30 p.m. confession, at St. Mary, Rushville  
 Dec. 19, 6 p.m. for St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Richmond, at St. Mary Campus

## Indianapolis East Deanery

Dec. 6, 7:30 p.m. at Holy Spirit  
 Dec. 11, 7 p.m. for Our Lady of Lourdes and St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) at Our Lady of Lourdes  
 Dec. 14, 6:30 p.m. at St. Philip Neri  
 Dec. 14, 6:30 p.m. at St. Thomas the Apostle, Fortville  
 Dec. 18, 7 p.m. for St. Rita and Holy Angels (West Deanery) at St. Rita  
 Dec. 21, 6:30 p.m. at St. Michael, Greenfield

## Indianapolis North Deanery

Dec. 10, 2 p.m. deanery service at St. Pius X  
 Dec. 11, 7 p.m. deanery service at St. Pius X  
 Dec. 12, 7 p.m. deanery service at St. Pius X

## Indianapolis South Deanery

Dec. 5, 7 p.m. at St. Jude  
 Dec. 11, 6:30 p.m. at Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ  
 Dec. 13, 7 p.m. for St. Barnabas, St. Mark the Evangelist and St. Roch, at St. Mark the Evangelist  
 Dec. 14, 7 p.m. at Holy Name of Jesus, Beech Grove  
 Dec. 16, 9 a.m. at SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi, Greenwood  
 Dec. 18, 7 p.m. at Our Lady of the Greenwood, Greenwood  
 Dec. 19, 7 p.m. at St. Ann

## Indianapolis West Deanery

Dec. 6, 7 p.m. at Mary, Queen of Peace, Danville  
 Dec. 6, 7 p.m. at St. Michael the Archangel  
 Dec. 7, 9-11 a.m. at Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School  
 Dec. 9, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. at St. Monica  
 Dec. 14, 6:30 p.m. for St. Anthony and St. Christopher at St. Christopher  
 Dec. 14, 7 p.m. at St. Malachy, Brownsburg  
 Dec. 18, 7 p.m. for Holy Angels and St. Rita (Indianapolis East Deanery) at St. Rita  
 Dec. 18, 7 p.m. at St. Gabriel the Archangel  
 Dec. 19, 7 p.m. at St. Thomas More, Mooresville  
 Dec. 20, 7 p.m. at St. Susanna, Plainfield

## New Albany Deanery

Dec. 5, 6-7 p.m. at St. Anthony of Padua, Clarksville  
 Dec. 5, 6:30-7:30 at St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd County  
 Dec. 6, 6:30 p.m. at St. Michael, Bradford  
 Dec. 8, 4-6 p.m. at Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Jeffersonville  
 Dec. 9, 8-10 a.m. Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Jeffersonville  
 Dec. 12, 6-7 p.m. at St. Anthony of Padua, Clarksville  
 Dec. 12, 6:30-7:30 at St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd County  
 Dec. 13, 7 p.m. at Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany  
 Dec. 13, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Navilleton  
 Dec. 14, 6:30 p.m. for St. John Paul II, Sellersburg, at St. Paul Campus  
 Dec. 15, 4-6 p.m. at Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Jeffersonville  
 Dec. 15, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Lanesville  
 Dec. 16, 8-10 a.m. Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Jeffersonville  
 Dec. 18, 1 p.m. at St. John the Baptist, Starlight  
 Dec. 19, 6-7 p.m. at St. Anthony of Padua, Clarksville



(CNS photo/Lisa Johnston, St. Louis Review)

Dec. 19, 6:30-7:30 at St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd County  
 Dec. 19, 7 p.m. at Holy Family, New Albany  
 Dec. 22, 4-6 p.m. at Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Jeffersonville  
 Dec. 23, 8-10 a.m. Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Jeffersonville

## Seymour Deanery

Dec. 5, 7 p.m. for Most Sorrowful Mother of God, Vevay, and Prince of Peace, Madison, at Prince of Peace  
 Dec. 6, 7 p.m. at St. Ambrose, Seymour  
 Dec. 13, 6 p.m. at St. Patrick, Salem  
 Dec. 13, 7 p.m. at St. Rose of Lima, Franklin  
 Dec. 14, 6 p.m. at Church of the American Martyrs  
 Dec. 14, 7 p.m. for St. Bartholomew, Columbus, and Holy Trinity, Edinburgh, at St. Bartholomew  
 Dec. 19, 6:30 p.m. for St. Ann, Jennings County; St. Mary, North Vernon; and St. Joseph, Jennings County, at St. Mary

## Tell City Deanery

Dec. 6, 6:30 p.m. at St. Meinrad, St. Meinrad  
 Dec. 17, 2 p.m. at St. Paul, Tell City

## Terre Haute Deanery

Dec. 7, 1:30 p.m. at St. Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods  
 Dec. 12, 1:30 p.m. at St. Margaret Mary, Terre Haute  
 Dec. 14, 7 p.m. at St. Benedict, Terre Haute  
 Dec. 20, 7 p.m. at Sacred Heart, Clinton †

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Archbishop Charles C. Thompson



# Thousands enter into silence in eucharistic adoration at NCYC

By Sean Gallagher

Early on the evening of Nov. 17, Lucas Oil Stadium throbbed with the music of popular Catholic music artist Matt Maher while youths rushed to get near the stage on the center of the stadium's floor.

Further out on the floor, multi-colored lights flashed back and forth while youths danced in long conga lines, giving high fives and free hugs to perfect strangers in a joyous expression of faith.

Later that evening, though, the cavernous stadium quietly echoed with the centuries-old Gregorian chant sung by Benedictine monks of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad and participants in its One Bread One Cup youth liturgical leadership program.

Then the stadium was enveloped in a deep, prayer-filled silence as more than 20,000 youths and adults adored the Blessed Sacrament exposed in a monstrance on an altar on the stage.

Father Joseph Esparillat II, a priest of the Archdiocese of New York who served as an emcee of the conference's general sessions, blessed the thousands present with the Blessed Sacrament in solemn benediction.

The monks and One Bread One Cup youths also led the conference participants in praying Compline, also known as Night Prayer, from the Liturgy of the Hours, much as such liturgies occur in the monks' Archabbey Church of Our Lady of Einsiedeln.

The liturgy concluded as the monks and youths processed to a statue of Our Lady of Fatima where they and all in the stadium chanted "Salve Regina" ("Hail Holy Queen"), an ancient antiphon that praises the Blessed Virgin Mary.

"It was mesmerizing," said Andrew Yock, an NCYC participant from the Archdiocese of Chicago, of the silent prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. "I broke down in tears during adoration. It was unbelievable. Having the silence, that atmosphere of peace and tranquility just made it really feel like God was present."

Benedictine Brother John Mark Falkenhain spoke afterward about leading 20,000 youths into silent prayer and a quiet chanting of psalms in the Liturgy of the Hours.

"Because this sort of prayer is so ancient, it speaks to everybody immediately," he said. "Not that there's anything wrong with the noise and sound, but the silence is the perfect complement,

and when we pray the word of God and then leave room for silence, then it resounds within us and we realize how much the word has become a part of us."



Br. John Mark Falkenhain, O.S.B.

Other youths in Lucas Oil Stadium on Nov. 17 were drawn into the atmosphere of prayer created by the monks and One Bread One Cup youths.

"You don't see men cry much, but myself, I teared up," said Kyle Zimmerman of the Archdiocese of Dubuque, Iowa, who said the time of adoration was his favorite NCYC moment.

"You see 25,000 people all quiet. You could hear a pin drop. It's just amazing to see that, and then you feel something. You feel the spirit of Christ."

Beth Wimsatt, a member of St. Mary-of-the-Knobs Parish in Floyd County, also valued the silent prayer.

"You can really get a feel for what the whole Catholic faith is about in the silence," she said. "God truly speaks to us in the silence as we're sitting there listening to him."

Tammy Becht, a member of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in New Albany, has seen many youths enter more deeply into the Church's rich liturgical tradition in her ministry as director of One Bread One Cup.

"It's such a gift to be able to do what I do, to minister to the young Church in a way that brings the love of God through the liturgy, through the prayer of the Church, to the young people," she said. "They need stability and love silence when it's offered to them. And they respond to it. That was so powerful tonight."

Since it was started in 1995, more than 4,600 youths from more than 40 dioceses have participated in One Bread One Cup. Witnessing 20,000 youths enter into quiet,

prayerful liturgy in one night was powerful for Becht.

"I have a cold chill all over myself right now," Becht said moments after the evening session ended. "When I think about [20,000] people in this stadium, with the Blessed Sacrament exposed, and not a sound came from any place—it was complete silence."

"I kept waiting for that still, small voice to whisper in my ear. And it was like, 'Tammy, this is what I want. This is what I desire. I desire the hearts of the young people, the



Father Joseph Esparillat II blesses thousands in Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis on Nov. 17 in solemn Benediction during a general session of the National Catholic Youth Conference held in Indianapolis on Nov. 16-18. Kneeling in prayer on the stage during the liturgy are monks of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad and youth participants in its One Bread One Cup youth liturgical leadership program. They joined more than 20,000 other conference participants in prayer.

(Photos by Sean Gallagher)



National Catholic Youth Conference participants kneel in prayer during eucharistic adoration in Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis on Nov. 17.

hearts of everyone who calls themselves my follower."

One of the youths who has given his heart to the Lord that helped lead the liturgy in Lucas Oil Stadium was Nolan Snyder, a member of St. Boniface Parish in Fulda, a few miles from Saint Meinrad Archabbey.

A high school senior and four-time One Bread One Cup participant, Nolan gave a reflection in the stadium about eucharistic adoration, something that he had difficulty appreciating until he had a special experience in the summer of 2016 at Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary in Indianapolis. In that moment, he was given a powerful awareness of the presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

"This is our God reaching out to us, speaking to us," Nolan said. "This is the same God that sacrificed himself at the Last Supper, the same God that offered himself as a sacrifice on the cross, the same God that is present at Mass when the presider holds up the body and blood and says, 'Behold, the Lamb of God.'"

He then invited all present in the stadium to enter into the silent prayer that was about to begin.

"Tonight, as we celebrate adoration, we are called to listen," Nolan said. "Keep in mind, though, that this isn't just silence. Even in the silence, God's voice speaks to us. Let us pray that tonight we hear God's call and reach out to his extended hand."

That prayer was answered for Noah Tyler, 17, an NCYC participant from Lake Charles, La., who said that the time of adoration was "the climax" of the conference for him.

"It's where you can fully open your heart to God, to be fully present with him," said Noah. "It's just an awesome feeling to see him right in front of you, so vulnerable and so raw. It's amazing."

(Criterion reporter Natalie Hoefler and freelance reporter Katie Rutter contributed to this article.) †



Monks of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad and youth participants in its One Bread One Cup youth liturgical leadership program gather around a statue of Our Lady of Fatima to chant the "Salve Regina" ("Hail Holy Queen") Marian antiphon at the end of a liturgy on Nov. 17 in Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis during the National Catholic Youth Conference.



Morgan Thomson of the Nashville, Tenn., Diocese kneels in prayer during eucharistic adoration in Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis on Nov. 17 during the National Catholic Youth Conference.



**'This is our God reaching out to us, speaking to us. This is the same God that sacrificed himself at the Last Supper, the same God that offered himself as a sacrifice on the cross, the same God that is present at Mass when the presider holds up the body and blood and says, "Behold, the Lamb of God."'**

—Nolan Snyder, a high school senior and member of St. Boniface Parish in Fulda

# Youths, religious, priests encourage each other at conference

By Sean Gallagher

The theme of the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) on Nov. 16-18 in Indianapolis was “Called.”

So it was appropriate that the more than 20,000 Catholic youths from across the country gave a bit more attention to the many priests and men and women religious who prayed with them, listened to inspiring presentations with them and had fun with them during the conference.

Maybe God was using that interaction to call the youths to give prayerful reflection to a religious vocation.

“Here we’re able to see their real personalities come out,” said Lillieyne Thompson of the Gary, Ind., Diocese. “They’re seen more as real people and not just as a holy figure. You see how they’re cool and do normal things like everyone else does.

“It helps me realize that I can follow God. You can have a fun life, be yourself without the peer pressure of high school. Seeing how cool all the priests are is so inspiring.”

The priests and religious present at NCYC also represented more dioceses and religious communities than any of the young participants could know in their homes.

“There’s a lot of not knowing what’s out there,” said Oliver Severance of the Archdiocese of Anchorage, Alaska. “Coming to a place like this, you get to realize that they’re not super far away, stuck in an abbey somewhere. It makes them more accessible. Once you get that realization, it’s easier to go from not knowing what your vocation is to starting to discern and then choose one.”

Salesian Brother Damien Ho of Orange, N.J., agreed.

“A lot of young people don’t recognize that they have a vocation or might not even want to know what it is unless they get exposed to different religious groups or missionary groups,” he said. “People here are willing to share about their vocations. The best way to get more vocations is to share about each other’s vocations.

“It’s encouraging, because, as Salesians, we work with young people. So when we see young people see that they have a potential to be better, to become saints, then that’s when our mission gets fulfilled.”

Other religious at NCYC shared

the encouragement experienced by Brother Damien.

“Young people today are so open to their faith and seem to have a passion for living it, not only in the Church, but also in service,” said Daughter of Charity Sister Jean Rhoads, who lives in Evansville, Ind., and serves as a vocations director for her order. “I am hope-filled and encouraged by that. Is this not the most exciting thing in the Church today?”

Conventual Franciscan Father John Bamman came to the conference from Mount St. Francis, where he serves as the vocations director for his order’s Our Lady of Consolation Province.

He reflected on how the encouragement he gives youths at NCYC to consider a religious vocation often happens simply through being present to them during the conference.

“You never know the effect you have,” said Father John. “I see this as planting seeds. We’re kind of throwing seeds into the wind, and see where they’ll settle. There’s a lot of soil here. For them to see a joyful friar, that’s perfect. That’s enough.”

Seminarian Liam Hosty can speak to the effect that NCYC can have on young people trying to hear God’s call in their lives.

He attended two of the conferences while a student at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis. At the time, he was thinking that God might be calling him to the priesthood, but he wasn’t sure about it.

“I told a couple of priests at NCYC that I was thinking about going to seminary,” said Hosty, a sophomore at Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary and Marian University, both in Indianapolis. “I’d say to them, ‘I’m thinking about going to seminary. What do you think?’ Each time, the answer was, ‘Yes. I think you’d be a great fit.’

“It definitely ramped up my faith. It was absolutely incredible to witness 20,000 youths on fire from all across the



Conventual Franciscan Brother Joseph Martin Huang takes a photo of a National Catholic Youth Conference participant from the Covington, Ky., Diocese standing beside life-size cutouts of St. Francis of Assisi and St. Thérèse of Lisieux on Nov. 16 in the conference’s Thematic Village in the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis. Looking on are Conventual Franciscan Fathers John Bamman, second from left, and Jijo Thomas. (Photos by Sean Gallagher)



Salesian Brother Damien Ho speaks with National Catholic Youth Conference participants from the Savannah, Ga., Diocese on Nov. 16 in the conference’s Thematic Village in the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis.

country, seeing amazing speakers and having the sacraments available.”

As a seminarian, he participated in his third straight NCYC, but this time as a volunteer, assisting at liturgies and in the room in the Indiana Convention Center where dozens of priests and bishops

heard confession.

“It’s life-giving just seeing the young Church alive,” Hosty said. “It’s incredible. It’s really cool to be on the other side of the fence trying to help out and kind of give back what all the seminarians and priests gave to me in NCYC.” †

## Sister shares heartbreaking story to lead youths to the heart of God

By John Shaughnessy

It wasn’t the story that the 20,000 Catholic youths were expecting to hear from a religious sister.

And the audience of young people inside Lucas Oil Stadium on the morning of Nov. 17 became more quiet and riveted as Sister Miriam James Heidland shared the hard, heartbreaking chapters of her life story.

She told how she was sexually assaulted when she was 11, how she began drinking alcohol on her 12th birthday, how she was raped when she was 13, and how she was an alcoholic at 21.

“I woke up one morning when I was 21, and I remembered two things,” recalled Sister Miriam, a member of the Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity. “Number one, I remembered what I had done the night before, and it was awful. Secondly, I remember something that was so much deeper in the area of shame.

“I remembered I had promised myself that I wasn’t going to do that anymore. At that moment, I realized I couldn’t stop, that I was sick. I crawled up in a ball on the floor of my room in college, and I just wished for death. And I didn’t know what to do.”

God did, she told the youths.

“He started sending people into my life to speak the truth to me,” she said as she walked across the stage set up in the middle of the stadium floor.

One of the people God sent to her was a priest who challenged her to change her life.

“He would say, ‘You’re called for more. What are you doing with your life? I know you want more. You have a great destiny for your life. Have you thought about saying ‘yes’ to it?’

“That man loved Christ, and he let Christ try to re-form him to the core of his being. And one of the reasons I’m here before you is because of the power of one person who said ‘yes’ to Christ. And how often do you and I think we can’t make a difference? But your ‘yes’ matters. Your life matters. When you say ‘yes,’ the world is changed.”

So has the life of Sister Miriam. “I’ve been sober for many years now, through a lot of people’s love for me and a lot of grace. So I can tell you that wherever you find yourself today, it’s not the end of the story. Jesus is already waiting for you. He’s waiting for you in the areas that are incredibly painful for you. He’s waiting for you in the areas of your deepest dreams and your deepest desires.

“I don’t know what your choice is, but I can tell you that there is nothing in your

life that disqualifies you from his love. So what do you want to choose?”

Earlier in her talk, Sister Miriam told the story of two other choices that continue to define her life.

“My biological parents were high school students, 17 years old, obviously not married,” she shared. “To this day, I’ve never seen her face, but I have a deep intuition that at one point my mother thought of aborting me, but she didn’t. And I stand here before you today because a scared 17-year-old girl said ‘yes’ to life and to the child in her womb.”

Then there was the choice of the couple who became her mother and father when they adopted her.

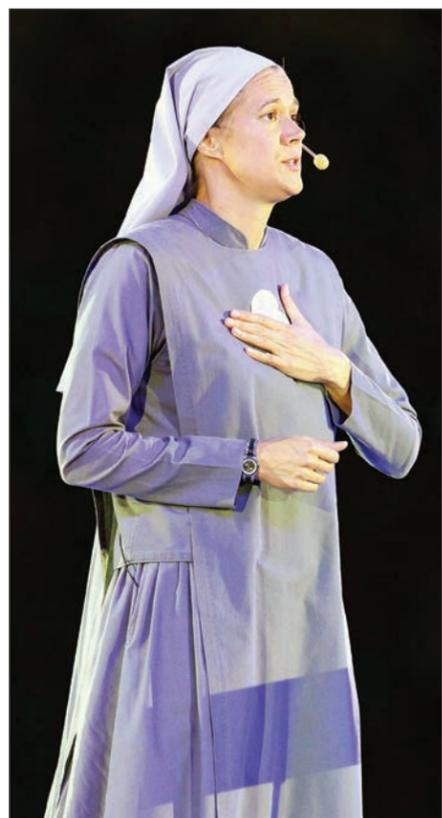
“One of the first pictures my parents have of me was at Christmas time. My mom put me under the Christmas tree and said I was the gift to the family that year.”

God also offers people a gift, she said, his gift of love.

“We don’t understand his heart for us. We don’t understand his love for us. We don’t understand the call that we have in our life, how his heart is always seeking you out, he’s always drawing near to you.

“God longs to heal you because you are made for more. He looks at you, and he just loves you. And he’s doing for you the same thing he did for me.

“God has no other ulterior motive than for you to share in his own beautiful life.” †



Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Sister Miriam James Heidland addresses NCYC participants during the Nov. 17 morning session at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis.

(Photo by Bob Nichols)



# Service project helps ‘impact a country in Africa from Indiana’

By Natalie Hoefler

Eric Devine stood in the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis carefully measuring scoops of rice for pre-packaged meals.

Someday, more than 5,300 miles away in Burkina Faso, someone will not starve because of the meals he helped prepare.

“I think it’s really cool that we can impact a country in Africa from where we are in Indiana,” said the teen of St. Christopher Parish in Indianapolis. “We’ll probably never be able to see them, but we’ll be able to know that we were able to help.”

He and other members of his parish’s youth group were among the 3,000 youths, chaperones and youth ministry leaders who prepared bagged meals for the Helping Hands program—formed of a partnership between Catholic Relief Services and Rise Against Hunger—during the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) in Indianapolis on Nov. 16-18.

By the end of NCYC, 100,000 meals were prepared to send to the West African country.

Why Burkina Faso?

“It’s very arid there, so people trying to grow food there, it makes it really difficult,” said Rachael Holmes, program manager for Helping Hands. “So we try to send relief, which is the meals that people are packaging ... and that’s going to directly impact the people in Burkina Faso.”

But the assistance doesn’t stop with sending meals.

“We’re doing long term development projects, so hopefully they’ll have a future free from hunger,” Holmes explained. “We want them to be sustainable on their own.”

The funds are used for purchasing seeds and water infrastructure for irrigating fields. Helping Hands also offers job skill training such as sewing, raising livestock and how to grind grain—“ways that they can make money on their own,” says Holmes.

An example she cites is a project the program initiated in a town in Burkina Faso.

“We got a group of 120 farmers—men and women—and taught them how to



In the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis during the National Catholic Youth Conference, volunteers prepare to make pre-packed meals on Nov. 18 to be sent to Burkina Faso as part of a conference-long service project to help Catholic Relief Services’ Helping Hands program. (Photos by Natalie Hoefler)

plant a crop that was better during the dry season, and that was actually onions. We worked with them to bring in a water pump and piping so they could pipe the water into their land. The first crop was like four tons of onions they were able to harvest.

“From the funds that came from the U.S., all the people we were able to work with had an impact on this whole community. They’re sending all their kids to be educated, and that impacts their future.”

Participants at NCYC took to the concept of making a difference as they gathered around bag-filling and -sealing stations in 45-minute shifts, including 10 minutes of education about the project, whom it serves, why and how.

“It was a really great opportunity to help people out,” said Mary Snyder of the Diocese of Trenton, N.J. “This service project is helping other people, not just giving them food ... so it’s like the whole ‘teach a man to fish’ versus ‘give a man a fish’ thing.”

Julia Galate of the Diocese of Orlando, Fla., said she participated in a service

project recently, “and I fell in love with the idea of being able to be hands-on and do some work, not just talking about doing good. This was a great opportunity to do so.”

Jessica Watson of the Archdiocese of Washington couldn’t agree more.

“I get to do something good—I love it!” she said enthusiastically. “I really love doing something for the community, and knowing that I’m helping people outside my small community is the best feeling!”

Comments like these are rewarding to Holmes.

“We love to hear that response!” she said. “We hope they leave thinking about the people in Burkina [Faso], and the fact that they don’t have food every day.

“It’s a fun energetic thing, and it shows just how much service you can give in a little amount of time.”

(For more information on the Helping Hands project or how to conduct one in your school or parish, go to [helpinghands.crs.org](http://helpinghands.crs.org).) †



Moises Larregui of the Diocese of Scranton, Pa., lines up pre-packaged meals destined for Burkina Faso, prepared by volunteers during the National Catholic Youth Conference in the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis on Nov. 18.

# Bishops find a reason to believe and hope in faith, gifts of young Church

By John Shaughnessy

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson smiled as he considered the energy and the enthusiasm of 20,000 young Catholics from 125 dioceses across the country coming together to embrace their faith.

“Young people are like anyone else. They’re looking for a sense of meaning, a sense of purpose in their lives,” the

archbishop said as he stood amid the whirlwind of the Indiana Convention Center, one of the main sites of the National Catholic Youth Conference in Indianapolis on Nov. 16-18.

“Coming here shows that young people are looking to where true happiness is, and that’s in relationship to God. It just shows that people are realizing we belong to something greater than ourselves. Young people are finding it in Christ and in this Church. It just shows a sense of hope and vibrancy for our Church for today and for tomorrow.”

The Church needs “the giftedness of young people, their energy and their wonderful insights,” the archbishop said. “They’re essential to our Church and to who we are as people of God.”

Archbishop Thompson was one of about 30 bishops who attended the conference in Indianapolis, after a busy few days of meetings with the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops earlier in the week in Baltimore.

The extra effort to be in Indianapolis was more than worthwhile to Archbishop Paul D. Etienne of Anchorage, Alaska.

“I want to do all that I can to build a relationship with our youths so they know of my support for them,” said

Archbishop Etienne, a former priest of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis who also served as the bishop of Cheyenne, Wyo.

“I travel around to all of the parishes to confirm them, and I’ve been meeting with the young adults as well. I want to know what their story is, and I want to know how they relate to God, how they relate to Christ and how I can do a better job as a shepherd relating the message

of the Gospel and the Good News to them.”

Archbishop Etienne shared his comments shortly after witnessing the enthusiasm of the 20,000 youths in an early morning faith gathering at Lucas Oil Stadium on Nov. 17.

“It’s inspiring,” he said. “We hear how we’re losing this generation. This tells me there’s hope; we’re not.”

Hope also drew Bishop Christopher J. Coyne of the Diocese of Burlington, Vt. He noted that this was the first time that a group of youths had come from Vermont for the national conference.

“A lot of our young people are kind of adrift,” said Bishop Coyne, former auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. “So anything that can get

them active in a good way within the faith and within the Church is good. And NCYC sure can do that. You’re with so

many other young people and adult chaperones and people with beliefs, and you hear great talks and wonderful music.

“When they come to an event like this, they leave with an experience of the Church that’s much greater than their little parish. And hopefully they leave more committed to being a member of the Catholic Church and also maybe to inviting others to be part of it.”

Simple math and an opportunity for connection led to the presence of Bishop William F. Medley of Owensboro, Ky., at the conference.

“If I get 300 youths together in one place, I ought to be there as their shepherd,” Bishop Medley said on Nov. 17. “The theme this morning was about holiness and wanting to become saints. I want them to know I’m trying to speak that to them as well.”

He was also energized by what he witnessed, calling the faith gathering of 20,000 youths as “countercultural.”

“The Spirit is moving,” Bishop Medley said. “Twenty thousand is a lot of youth. They’ve chosen to be here, to see the vitality of the Church and participate in eucharistic adoration and the Mass. I still run into adults who came here two, four, six, eight years ago. I know good seeds are being planted for a bountiful harvest.” †



Mia Roberts, a member of the Archdiocesan Youth Council and St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis, introduces Archbishop Charles C. Thompson during the Nov. 17 morning session of the National Catholic Youth Conference. (Photo by Bob Nichols)



Archbishop Paul D. Etienne



Bishop William F. Medley



Bishop Christopher J. Coyne



# Church's future 'in good hands,' declares Archbishop Gomez during NCYC closing Mass

By Natalie Hoefler

When Indianapolis Archbishop Charles C. Thompson thanked Los Angeles Archbishop José H. Gomez for celebrating the closing Mass of the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) on Nov. 18, a cheer broke out from the Los Angeles youths in attendance.

And when he mentioned the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops meeting in Baltimore, that archdiocese's contingent of teens shouted and clapped.



Virginia Partlow of the Diocese of Albany, N.Y., prays during the closing Mass of the National Catholic Youth Conference on Nov. 18. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)

He proceeded to receive shouts and standing ovations when he thanked the National Federation of Catholic Youth Ministers, and then when he thanked the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, and then when he thanked all of the religious, deacons, priests and bishops who helped with NCYC...and then when he wished everyone safe travels.

He just shook his head and laughed. "A guy going to a Catholic wedding told me he didn't know if he should wear a dress suit or a warmup suit because Catholics stand up and sit down so much!" he joked. And that line too received a thunderous standing ovation.

It was the kind of spirited joy that only 20,000 youths could exude at the end of the three-day NCYC gathering.

Not long before the revelry, the very same youths had knelt in solemn prayer after receiving the most holy Eucharist during the convention's closing Mass in Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis.

Thirteen bishops, including Archbishop Thompson, concelebrated the Mass with its primary celebrant, Archbishop Gomez, who wove into his homily another auspicious Catholic event that happened earlier that day.

"Blessed Solanus Casey was just beatified today in Detroit ...," he said. "[God] gave him many gifts. He was a good listener, and he had a deep faith and deep heart for Jesus. He wanted above all to serve God."

But that is not why the Capuchin Franciscan was beatified, said the archbishop. Rather, he was beatified "because he tried to serve God in every moment. ... He used his gifts to help others.

"This is how God wants us to live, to make your whole life a life of giving. ...

"Try to do little things for God. Try to be a little miracle in someone's life. Give hope.

"Yes, we can strive for holiness because it is ... doing God's will in the little things of daily life."

Such was the message of the day's Gospel reading from Matthew, he said of the parable of the servants and the talents.

"The parable of the talents is a plan for life," Archbishop Gomez said. "Jesus is talking to us about our relationship with God. How are we



An NCYC participant receives Communion during the closing Mass of the National Catholic Youth Conference on Nov. 18. (Photo by Mike Krokos)



Members of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis hold hands for the Our Father during the closing Mass of the National Catholic Youth Conference at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis on Nov. 18. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)



Archbishop Jose H. Gomez waves as he processes out of the closing Mass of the National Catholic Youth Conference on Nov. 18. (Photo by Mike Krokos)



Deacon David Farrell from the Archdiocese of Louisville, left, and Los Angeles Archbishop José H. Gomez elevate the Eucharist during the closing Mass of the National Catholic Youth Conference at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis on Nov. 18. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)

using the gifts God gives us? ...

"The words we hear in the Gospel from Matthew is what God wants for each of us: 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. ... Come, share your master's joy.'"

The archbishop gave specific advice to help the youths do God's will and to become holy: "The most important thing ... is to pray," he said.

"When I was your age, I made a decision ... to spend some time in prayer daily, and it has made an extra difference in my life.

"If you make time for prayer every day, you will see a difference. ... Listen to [Jesus], even for just a few minutes. ... Be consistent. Do it every day. I promise you, if you spend time in prayer every day ... you will start to see that Jesus is with you and how much he loves you." Elizabeth Murillo

of the Diocese of Dallas, who attended NCYC for the first time, experienced such a moment earlier during the conference.

"One of the things that stood out to me is that someone said to let God speak to me, and [God] said to me, 'You're not alone, you have me. You can count on me anytime you want,'" she recalled.

Several youths cited the time adoring the Blessed Sacrament as a group of 20,000 teens on Nov. 17 in the stadium as the most impactful moment of NCYC.

"I've been to adoration before many times at different retreats," said Elisha Mix of the Orlando Diocese. "But to see [20,000] youths adoring the Lord is something amazing."

Daniel Linn of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis agreed.

"I've never celebrated it that way before, with so many people being so sacred," he said.

Overall, said Daniel, NCYC was "just mind blowing. It was very powerful to see all these people come together and celebrate their faith together. The Church is a lot stronger than it seems in the world."

Based on a comment he made in his homily, it would seem that Archbishop Gomez agrees.

"You inspire us bishops," he told the 20,000 youths. "You give us hope. The future of the Church is in good hands with you." †



# Chaperones, youth ministers are energized by young people's faith

By Mike Krokos and Natalie Hoefler

While the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) focuses on giving 20,000 teenagers the opportunity to deepen their relationship with God, it's a focus that youth ministers—and many adults—strive for all the time.

Knowing that commitment, *The Criterion* asked adult chaperones and youth ministers at the conference why they attended, and what they hoped the teenagers gained from their pilgrimage of faith to Indianapolis.

**Jeff Scott, a chaperone from St. Malachy Parish in Brownsburg, attending with his son and daughter.**

"It shows these guys there are other kids here celebrating their faith at the same time, and making it fun. ... There's incredible energy.

"[I hope] the kids come away understanding the message that they're trying to share—that they're called, that they're chosen, that God's in them, and that they too need to live up to that higher purpose."

**Joi Hunter, St. Charles Lwanga Parish in Detroit, in the Archdiocese of Detroit. She is a youth minister, and she first attended NCYC in Indianapolis as a chaperone in 2001.**



Joi Hunter

"Now that I'm a youth minister myself and we have a pretty large youth group at our parish, I thought, 'They have to experience this.'

"I hope the kids come away with a bigger sense of the Church, that it's not just us alone in our little urban parish, that it increases their faith."



Sarah Medford

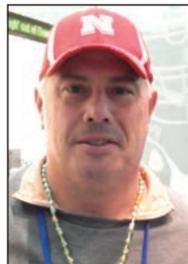
**Sarah Medford, 7-12th-grade youth leader at her church, St. Pius X Parish in Moberly, Mo., in the Diocese of Jefferson City, Mo. She attended with her younger daughter.**

"Two years ago, my oldest daughter and I came, and we were so inspired and moved by the whole process, that it just ignited us that we had to come back.

"It's very powerful to see this many Catholics worshipping together. It really drives home the fact that we're part of something bigger than ourselves. We come together, and we all believe the same thing, and there's so much power in that.

"I hope the kids get the sense that they are loved, that they truly are called, if nothing more than just called to be a child of God."

**Daniel Gaskill, St. Francis Borgia Parish in Blair, Neb., in the Archdiocese of Omaha, Neb. He attended with his 15-year-old son.**



Daniel Gaskill

"It's just incredible. It's been very moving, very emotional. I might start crying right now. Just to see the youths and the way they're absorbing these different events is something I've never witnessed at this magnitude in my entire life.

"I think our deacon, Jeff Zurek, and our priest, Father James [Netusil], said it best: 'We're coming here to absorb and learn about Jesus, and take it back home to our families and friends and our community, and that's what I hope the kids do.' From what I've seen, I think they will."

**Willie St. Pierre, youth minister in the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux, La.**

"There are so many things in their lives pulling them away from the Church, I think that anytime they can see other youths their ages and them being able to express their faith, that it gives them an opportunity to do the same thing. We can definitely see from coming to NCYC before that when we come back they're more involved in the Church, taking on more projects. ... You can see their faith starting to develop and grow as they come to NCYC."

**Todd Levitas, a youth minister for the Archdiocese of Washington, at NCYC for the first time.**

"Just in private conversations, some of these youths are saying they're growing in their faith—not just emotionally growing but doctrine-wise, knowledge-wise. They said they're getting a lot out of the talks, a lot about gratitude and a lot about growing in self-knowledge. That's the best." †

(To see photo galleries from NCYC, go to [criteriononline.com](http://criteriononline.com).) †



NCYC participant Nick Nachreiner of the Diocese of Winona, Minn., wears his sporty headgear in the Indiana Catholic Convention Center on Nov. 16. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

## YOUTHS

continued from page 3A



### 'I like spending time with people who value their faith'

Nearly everywhere she turned, 16-year-old Minh-Tam Le glowed as she took in all the sights of the festive atmosphere at the Thematic Village of the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC).

She laughed as she watched two of her friends from the Diocese of Santa Rosa, Calif., compete in a giant version of the

childhood game, Connect-Four.

She smiled as she watched other teenagers from across the country wear funny and funky hats that ranged from pizzas to cornstalks and from halos to birthday cakes complete with lit candles.

"This energizes my faith," Minh-Tam said, flashing another smile. "I get to be

around people I love, and connect with other teens of my faith. I like spending time with people who value their faith as much as I do."

They're exactly the qualities that make her Catholic faith so important to her.

"My Catholic faith means love and unity and sacrifice. It shapes my life and my values."

### 'I know I will have God to be there with me'



At 18, Makenna Kohner-Thesing has made it a point to try to talk to God as much as possible during her four years of high school. She especially needed to talk with him as she prepared for her final exams at the end of her junior year.

"I was extremely stressed, and didn't know where to turn," recalls the high school senior from the Diocese of Winona, Minn. "I talked to God about my worries and fears, and asked him to strengthen me during those times."

The approach worked, but Makenna has embraced a different plan in her senior year.

"Lately, I've been backing off from

doing the talking. I'm letting him do the talking and the guiding—to let me know what he wants. I'm just trying to continue trusting in him and allowing him to work in my life in ways I might not expect."

For Makenna, it all adds up to how significant her Catholic faith is for her: "It guides my everyday life." Still, she came to NCYC wanting to go even deeper.

"I want to expand my relationship with God, and hopefully meet people who will strengthen my faith in him. When I go away to college next year, one of the hardest things will be leaving my family, but I know I will have God to be there with me.

"It's comforting to know that through talking with God, I'll feel closer to my family even though we're miles apart."



### 'My parents would agree it was a big, life-changing experience for me'

Noah Streit thought it was more than cool when someone at the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) noticed his youth group from the Archdiocese of Anchorage, Alaska, and dubbed the group "The Frozen Chosen."

That moment of fun and faith reminded Noah of the heart-warming and soul-stirring experience that he had two years ago at NCYC—an experience that

made him want to return to Indianapolis for the conference on Nov. 16-18.

"It was a life-changing experience for me," said Noah, who is 18. "I wasn't as huge into the Church when I came here two years ago. But after that, I started to go to church a lot more, I was part of the youth group a lot more, and I helped with service projects and Sunday school.

"It was awesome. My parents would agree it was a big, life-changing experience for me. I wanted to come back to re-energize my faith.

"I love the Catholic faith. I love church. I love God. And I like to do things like this. I definitely feel I'm a lot more into the Church and my faith." †