



The

# Criterion

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## State champs

Bishop Chatard, Cathedral and Roncalli win football titles, page 8A.

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## New archdiocesan pastoral plan 'provides a means for a shared vision' for the years ahead

By Natalie Hoefler

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson issued a pastoral letter on Dec. 3 titled "Proclaiming the Gospel of Joy: Living Christ's Mission" along with a new pastoral plan for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

The plan will guide the vision and focus of the Church in central and southern Indiana for the next three years and will be a resource for parishes for updating their individual parish strategic plans.

Archbishop Thompson says it is his hope "that the implementation of this plan will enhance our Catholic identity, mission and presence throughout the archdiocese."

The document is the result of several years of prayer, research, consultation, input and effort by a 25-member team of priests, religious

and lay Catholics of different demographics throughout the archdiocese.

It addresses five critical areas: prayer and worship; stewardship; family and community; evangelization and catechesis; and clergy life and ministry.

"The advantage of a pastoral plan is to provide a means for a shared vision and coordinated, intentional effort of evangelization and catechesis throughout the archdiocese," the archbishop says.

Planning team member Father Rick Ginther, pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Indianapolis, says the document "is not meant for the shelf." Rather, it is to be "enacted through the various secretariats of the archdiocese, by pastors, associate pastors, parish life coordinators, pastoral associates—but more so to be enacted in the very reality of our parishes, the people of God."

Archbishop Thompson explains that "faith and hope" are the ultimate goal of this reality.

"Our ministries and services, while providing care and outreach to the spiritual and corporal needs of individuals as well as communities—families, parishes, schools, marginalized groups, etc.—ultimately exist with the eye of faith and hope in salvation of souls," he says. "Together, through a common rootedness in word, sacrament and service, we carry on the mission of Jesus Christ as entrusted to the Church, ... drawing ever closer to him and providing a credible witness that leads others to a personal encounter with our Savior." †

Read the pastoral plan in English and Spanish on pages 1B-8B, or at [www.archindy.org/pastoral](http://www.archindy.org/pastoral).

Pastoral Letter and Plan

## Pope at Angelus: No pandemic can extinguish Christ's light

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—No pandemic and no kind of crisis can extinguish the light of Christ, Pope Francis said.

May people let his light into their heart, "and let us lend a hand to those who need it most. In this way, God will be born anew in us and among us," the pope said in his remarks after praying the *Angelus* with visitors gathered in St. Peter's Square on Dec. 6.

From his studio window of the apostolic palace, the pope indicated the 92-foot-tall spruce tree already standing in the square and the work underway setting up this year's Nativity scene.

"These two signs of Christmas are being prepared, to the delight of children and adults, too," in many homes around the world, he said.

"They are signs of hope, especially in this difficult time," the pope said.

However, it is essential that people go beyond the symbols and embrace their meaning, which is Jesus—"the infinite

See PANDEMIC, page 2



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson places chrism oil on the forehead of Taylor Borden in the sacrament of confirmation during a Nov. 1 Mass at St. Paul Church in Tell City. Taylor is a member of St. Isidore the Farmer Parish in Perry County. (Submitted photo by Danny Bolin)

## Parents overcome challenges in pregnancy to see their daughter confirmed in the faith

By Sean Gallagher

On Nov. 1, Ryan and Sheila Borden witnessed their daughter Taylor receive the sacrament of confirmation during a Mass at St. Paul Church in Tell City.

Such a milestone in a child's life of faith is an important moment for any parent.

But, for Ryan and Sheila, this moment in Taylor's life was especially moving, rooted in a courageous decision they made while she was still growing in Sheila's womb.

"All parents are proud of their children," Sheila said. "But I feel extra blessed because, looking back, we may not have had this opportunity.

"A lot of times in life we take things for granted. We just assume that everything is going to be picture perfect. But it always isn't."

### 'The ultimate moment'

In October 2004, Sheila was five months pregnant with her daughter Taylor when blood test results indicated that her unborn child had trisomy 18, a genetic disorder that results in severe birth defects and often a life span of less than a year.

A subsequent ultrasound confirmed for Sheila's doctors the blood test's results. A later amniocentesis test showed no signs of the disorder.

But Ryan and Sheila were still faced with a choice that would put their pro-life convictions to the test.

After all, pre-natal diagnoses of trisomy 18 and Down syndrome have historically led to many abortions. But Ryan and Sheila held firm in their beliefs.

"We already knew what our decision was going to be," Ryan said. "We weren't going to have an abortion."

See DAUGHTER, page 2



Ryan and Sheila Borden pose on Nov. 1 with their daughter Taylor in St. Paul Church in Tell City after Taylor received the sacrament of confirmation. The Borden are members of St. Isidore the Farmer Parish in Perry County. (Submitted photo)

## DAUGHTER

continued from page 1

Still, the future of Ryan, Sheila and their unborn child was shrouded in darkness and doubt. They needed spiritual support.

So, they asked their family, friends and fellow members of St. Isidore the Farmer Parish in Perry County to pray for them. Their pastor at the time, Benedictine Father Guy Mansini, said he would ask his fellow monks at Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad to add their prayers.

"We asked the monks and family and friends to pray to give us strength, and to have God give us what he had planned for us with Taylor," Ryan said.

For months, Ryan and Sheila waited to find out what that plan would be. Would Taylor be born with a condition that would cause her to suffer and live a short time? Or would she be born as a healthy baby?

As it turned out, the plan did not include trisomy 18. Taylor was perfectly healthy when she was born in February 2005.

Sheila had a terrific weight lifted off her shoulders when the nurses and doctor told her that Taylor was a healthy baby. It was a weight that had laid heavily on her and Ryan ever since they had gotten the results of the blood test and ultrasound.

"It was definitely a relief," said Sheila of Taylor's birth. "It's one of those things that I look back on now and think, 'How did I ever survive?'"

"That was the ultimate moment," Ryan recalled with emotion.

### 'Now when I say I'm pro-life, I speak from my heart'

As anxious as those months were for Ryan and Sheila before Taylor's birth, their experience of that time had a positive effect on them.

Raised as a Catholic, Sheila had taken the Church's teachings on the sanctity of life for granted. Not any more.

"Now when I say I'm pro-life, I speak from my heart," Sheila said.

Ryan was received into the full communion of the Church at the time that he married Sheila. The test he faced a few years later in the months leading up to Taylor's birth helped him embrace the faith even more.

"It really strengthened my faith in God," he said. "I knew he would lead us in the right direction."

It also was a tremendous support for him when he didn't know how he would go on.

"The Church has taught basically from the foundation of Jesus' teachings that life is precious," Ryan said. "It really kept me from breaking down at that point in time."

In the 15 years since Taylor's birth, the Borden have put their pro-life beliefs more at the center of their lives.

Ryan became a member of the Knights of Columbus and has worked to promote its support of the pro-life movement.

"The Knights, being as pro-life as they are, have helped me to keep that going on in my life," said Ryan, who oversees programs for the Knights' Indiana State Council that strengthens families.

A few years ago, they also attended the



## Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

December 12-24, 2020

<p><b>December 12 – 10 a.m.</b> Mass of Confirmation for youths of Holy Spirit Parish in Indianapolis, at Holy Spirit Church (second of two)</p> <p><b>December 13 – 9 a.m.</b> Mass at Sacred Heart Church in Clinton</p> <p><b>December 15 – 10:30 a.m.</b> Priest Personnel Board meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis</p> <p><b>December 16 – 10 a.m.</b> Department Heads meeting at</p>	<p>Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center</p> <p><b>December 17 – 11 a.m.</b> Employee Advent Gathering at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center</p> <p><b>December 20 – 8:30 a.m.</b> Mass at St. Vincent de Paul Church in Shelby County</p> <p><b>December 24 – 10 p.m.</b> Christmas Eve Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis</p>
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March for Life in Washington with Taylor and her younger sister, Regan.

"The Church, the Knights of Columbus and our faith community has poured this into us," Ryan said. "We try to push it along to everybody else in the archdiocese and in especially in the [Tell City] Deanery."

Ryan and Sheila want to encourage parents who are told that their unborn children might have Down syndrome or trisomy 18 because the abortion rate in such cases is high.

"My mom has always told me that God gives you nothing that you can't handle," Ryan said. "So, ask God for him to give you what he wants you to have. Don't ask for what you want. God will make it happen the way it needs to happen."

"Pray a lot," Sheila said. "Tell your story so that other people will pray for you also. We had strangers praying for us. We probably had more people praying for us than we'll ever know or understand."

### 'I knew they already showed me so much love'

It was around the time that the Borden family participated in the March for Life

that Ryan and Sheila told Taylor about the decision they faced when she was an unborn child.

"I wanted to make sure that she was mature enough to understand," Sheila said. "It was hard. She and her sister were in tears, knowing what choice we could have made that we didn't make."

Taylor was grateful to learn how much her parents loved her when she was growing in Sheila's womb.

"I knew that they already showed me so much love before any of this happened," Taylor said of the time before her parents learned of the test results. "I know it [grew] stronger when they heard about it, and they were already so protective of me."

Since receiving the sacrament of confirmation from Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, Taylor now is thinking of how she might live out her faith like her parents have.

"That day [holds] a special place in my heart," she said of the day when she was confirmed. "I was very blessed to receive this special sacrament [that will help me] keep close to God, always go to church and lead my kids to do the same someday." †

## PANDEMIC

continued from page 1

goodness" that God revealed and made shine on the world, he added.

"There is no pandemic, there is no crisis that can extinguish this light," he told the visitors who held umbrellas or were wearing rain gear under cloudy skies and alternating rain and drizzle.

Before the *Angelus* prayer, the pope spoke about Advent being a time to prepare for receiving the Lord at Christmas and, therefore, the need for conversion.

Conversion requires a change in "direction and orientation" as well as a change in one's way of thinking.

One must be sorrowful for one's sins and want to turn "from evil to good, from sin to love of God" forever, he said.

"To exclude sin, it is also necessary to reject everything that is connected to sin; the things that are connected to sin and that need to be rejected—a worldly mentality, excessive esteem for comforts, excessive esteem for pleasure, for well-being, for wealth," he said.

Along with being detached from sin and worldliness, one must also be focused on searching for God and his kingdom, and seeking communion and friendship with God, he said.

"But this is not easy," Pope Francis said.

"Temptation always pulls down, pulls down, and thus the ties that keep us close to sin: inconstancy, discouragement, malice, unwholesome environments, bad examples," he said.

People may be tempted to become discouraged and believe it is impossible to truly convert.

"But it is possible," and people must avoid these discouraging thoughts as if they were "quicksand," which will quickly mire one into a "mediocre existence."

People must remind themselves that "no one can convert by his or own strength," the pope said.

"It is a grace that the Lord gives you, and thus we need to forcefully ask God for it" and "open ourselves up to the beauty,

the goodness, the tenderness of God.

"God is not a bad father, an unkind father, no. He is tender. He loves us so much, like the Good Shepherd, who searches for the last member of his flock," the pope said.

"You begin to walk, because it is he who moves you to walk, and you will see how he will arrive. Pray, walk, and you will always take a step forward." †



Pope Francis

## How has your Catholic education had an impact on your life?

As part of our coverage for the upcoming Catholic Schools Week supplement in late January, *The Criterion* is inviting our readers to share their thoughts and stories about how their Catholic education has had an impact on their lives and their families.

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



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# Trump, Barr urged to stop executions, recall God's mercy during Advent

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Federal executions are at odds with Advent as a season “of anticipated redemption” and must be stopped, said the chairmen of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ (USCCB) domestic policy and pro-life committees.

“This Advent, the Lord comes to love us even though we don’t deserve it. Let us repent and embrace his gift,” the committee chairmen said in a Dec. 7 statement.

They called on President Donald J. Trump and Attorney General William Barr to “stop these executions” in “recognition of God’s unmerited gift of self-giving love.”

“Executions solve nothing,” they said. The statement was issued jointly by Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City, chairman of the USCCB’s Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, and Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kan., chairman of the USCCB’s Committee on Pro-Life Activities.

They noted three bishops’ committee chairmen issued a similar statement in Advent 2019, and that the bishops as committee chairs and as a body have urged the Trump administration to halt federal executions since they resumed them in July 2019.

“We’ve asked many times to stop the federal executions,” Archbishops Coakley and Naumann said. “In fact, last Advent, three bishops wrote that the resumption of federal executions was at odds with this season of anticipated redemption.”

“But the executions resumed. Eight since July. Two more this week [of Dec. 7]. Three [planned] in January. A new regulation will permit federal execution by

means other than lethal injection, such as the electric chair.”

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson has asked Catholics in central and southern Indiana during Advent to pray and fast for the victims who have been killed, the families of the victims, and the inmates who face the death penalty.

In his message, the archbishop reflected on the sanctity of all human life.

Indiana’s bishops in October of 2019 issued a statement calling for a renewed moratorium on the death penalty. ([www.archindy.org/archbishop/deathpenalty2019.html](http://www.archindy.org/archbishop/deathpenalty2019.html)) Archbishop Thompson reiterated the Church’s stance in opposition to the death penalty in June. ([www.archindy.org/archbishop/deathpenalty2020.html](http://www.archindy.org/archbishop/deathpenalty2020.html)).

As *The Criterion* went to press, the executions scheduled to take place in December at the U.S. Penitentiary in Terre Haute, are:

- Brandon Bernard on Dec. 10. He was convicted of murdering married youth ministers Todd and Stacie Bagley in 1999.

- Alfred Bourgeois on Dec. 11. He was convicted of abusing, beating and torturing his 2-year-old daughter to death in 2002.

They called on Trump and Barr, who is Catholic, to recall God’s mercy during Advent.

“What does the birth of our Lord say to this? The Lord comes not to destroy, but to save,” Archbishops Coakley and Naumann said. “For the Second Sunday of Advent, we hear St. Peter counsel that the Lord ‘is patient with you, not wishing that any should perish but that all should come to

repentance’ [2 Pt. 3:9]. Can we follow the Lord’s example?”

They added: “We are all sinners. Some have done terrible things. Victims need help. Justice is needed for peace. But executions solve nothing.”

On Nov. 27, the Justice Department published a final rule change, effective on Dec. 24, to add to the execution methods it uses for federal death sentences, permitting it to use “any other manner prescribed by the law of the state in which the sentence was imposed.”

The proposed change was announced in August and posted on the Federal Register for public comment. It calls for alternative means for federal executions if the lethal injection drug is not available in the state where the defendant is given the death sentence.

In July 2019, the Trump administration announced the resumption of federal executions and Barr ordered the Bureau of Prisons to schedule executions for five federal inmates, with all taking place in Terre Haute.

That month, Bishop Frank J. Dewane of Venice, Fla., then-chairman of the Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, called on the administration to abandon its plans to resume federal executions.



The Federal Corrections Complex in Terre Haute, Ind., is seen on May 22, 2019. Orlando Hall, 49, was executed at the facility shortly before midnight on Nov. 19. A day earlier a federal appeals court refused to delay the execution of Hall, one of five men convicted in 1994 of kidnapping and raping a teenager before burying her alive. (CNS photo/Bryan Woolston, Reuters)

Eight federal inmates have been executed this year. The most recent was Orlando Hall, who was put to death by lethal injection just before midnight on Nov. 19, about an hour after the Supreme Court denied him a stay.

In a response issued that same day, Archbishops Coakley and Naumann called on Trump and Barr to stop federal executions “as an act of witness to the dignity of all human life.”

Lisa Montgomery was scheduled to be put to death on Dec. 8 for being convicted of strangling a pregnant woman then cutting her open and kidnapping her baby. On Nov. 23, a judge ruled to postpone her execution until Jan. 12. She would be the first female to be executed in almost six decades.

Barr also said Nov. 23 that the Justice Department plans to carry out more executions before president-elect Joe Biden takes office on Jan. 20. †

## Summer ministry needs college students eager to share the faith

The archdiocesan Office of Catechesis is recruiting to fill its team for Totus Tuus ministry this summer.

Totus Tuus (Latin for “totally yours”) is an initiative in which a small team of college students and seminarians go from parish to parish conducting an energizing catechetical program similar to a vacation Bible school. The program includes the rosary, daily Mass and additional Catholic content, delivered in a fun way.

Sean Hussey, archdiocesan coordinator of evangelization and discipleship, said team members receive a modest stipend in return for about nine weeks of life-changing work

as missionaries of faith.

Besides planting seeds to recruit prospective team members, Hussey is encouraging members of the Church in central and southern Indiana to pray for the success—especially via Mary’s intercession—of this summer’s Totus Tuus ministry.

(To apply to be a 2020 Totus Tuus missionary, go to [www.archindy.org/totustuus](http://www.archindy.org/totustuus). For more information, contact Sean Hussey, archdiocesan

coordinator of evangelization and discipleship, at [shussey@archindy.org](mailto:shussey@archindy.org), or call 317-236-1542.) †



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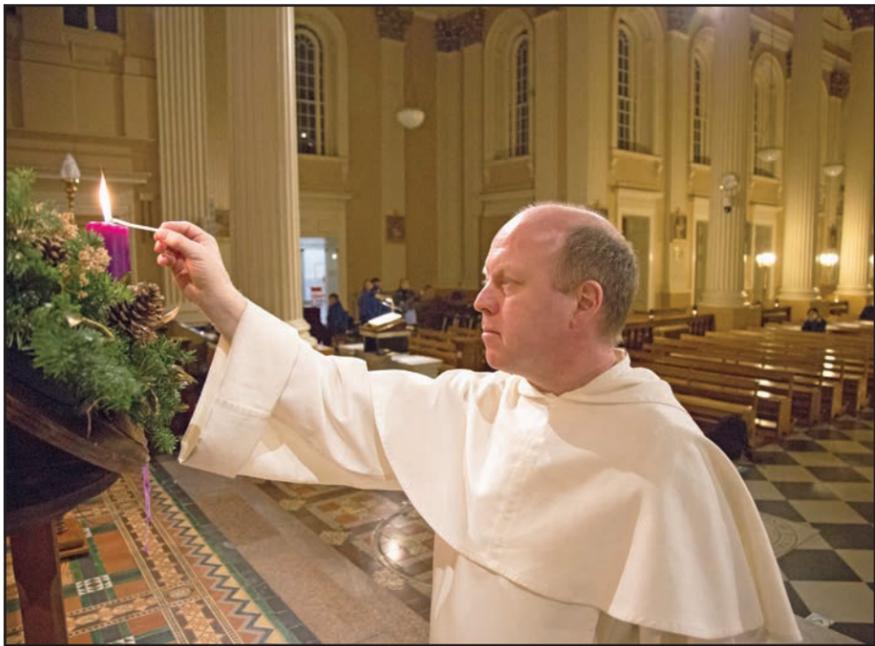


# The Criterion

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## Editorial



Dominican Father Maurice Colgan, prior of St. Mary's Church in Cork, Ireland, lights a candle on the Advent wreath during a Mass on Dec. 5. (CNS photo/Cillian Kelly)

## Events before Christmas

As we prepare for Christmas, perhaps a meditation on events leading up to that event, as told in the Gospels, will give us a few new insights.

When we pick up the story, Mary is betrothed to Joseph, a descendent of King David. Unfortunately, by this time, 1,000 years after the time of David, his house had fallen into obscurity. Joseph was a carpenter.

To say that Mary and Joseph were betrothed means that they were married. Betrothal was not just an engagement. Marriage for the Jews at that time consisted of two parts. The first part was the consent of both parties in the presence of at least two competent witnesses, the actual wedding. But they continued to live apart while a celebration was planned for the solemn entry of the bride into the groom's home.

After the betrothal but before Mary moved into Joseph's home, the archangel Gabriel appeared to Mary. He had earlier appeared to Zechariah to announce the conception of John the Baptist. Gabriel probably had a human appearance because Luke's Gospel said that Zechariah could see him (Lk 1:12).

Gabriel told Mary that she would conceive a son who "will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father" (Lk 1:32-33). Mary would have known, as all Jews did, that this was a description of the long-awaited Messiah.

But Mary was still puzzled because she had taken a vow of virginity. "How can this be," she asked, "since I have no relations with a man?" (Lk 1:34).

We have to wonder what Mary thought about Gabriel's answer: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you" (Lk 1:35). She had never heard of the Holy Spirit, although she probably knew of the various references to the "Spirit of the Lord" in Hebrew Scriptures. Mary probably thought the angel meant that the power of God would make this possible.

Whatever she thought, it was enough for her to give her consent: "I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word" (Lk 1:38). And with those words, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity entered her womb—

and, indeed, into our human race. Or, as St. John put it, "The Word was made flesh" (Jn 1:14).

Gabriel also told Mary that her relative Elizabeth was six months pregnant. We marvel at the confidence that Mary had in Gabriel's words, because she at once made arrangements to join a caravan for the 90-mile trip from Nazareth to Elizabeth's home in Ein Kerem, near Jerusalem. Did she tell Joseph that she was making the trip? If so, how did she explain how she knew about Elizabeth's pregnancy? All we can do is speculate.

Mary was gone for three months. By the time she returned to Nazareth, she was at least three months pregnant. We presume that this is when Joseph learned about the pregnancy. How did Mary tell him? How does a woman tell her husband that an angel appeared to her and she became pregnant without having had sex with a man?

Matthew's Gospel makes it clear that Joseph was "her husband" (Mt 1:19) but also that Mary was found to be with child "before they lived together" (Mt 1:18). It was, therefore, during that period between the actual marriage and the time that Mary moved into Joseph's home.

Joseph obviously believed that Mary was carrying another man's child—which meant that she had committed adultery. He didn't want to expose Mary to shame though (or subject her to death by stoning, the penalty for proved adultery), so he decided to divorce her quietly.

That would have been difficult to do in a small village. Nevertheless, that was his intention until he had a dream in which an angel told him, "Do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her" (Mt 1:20).

Joseph did what the angel said "and took his wife into his home" (Mt 1:24), the second part of the wedding process.

We are now ready for Jesus' birth. As we continue on our Advent journey and approach Christmas, may we reflect on Mary's "yes" to God and Joseph's response to the angel and have the courage to listen to God's messengers when they speak to us.

—John F. Fink

Amid the Fray/Greg Erlandson

## For unto us a child is born

There is nothing like the birth of a child to make one appreciate Christmas. Four times, I have experienced such



Christmases. Now I am experiencing my fifth. It was the birth of my first grandchild. He was named after my father, Theodore, who died 25 years ago.

The arrival of a child is a moment of great joy and great hope. With his birth, I feel as if I have a presence in a new generation that will long outlast me. I'm invested in a future I will not share. This is strangely comforting.

And though he was born in August, he is helping my experience of Advent. In prayer, I am awaiting the birth of the Savior, but the arrival of Theo makes this anticipation more real to me. In fact, a new birth is not just about arrival, but anticipation of what is to come next, what this tiny new birth will become. Birth is a moment to revel and yet to dream.

Advent is a time of anticipation too. The daily Mass readings are meant to accompany us, to focus us, to prepare us. We are asked to make ourselves ready. We wait, marking the passage of time with our Advent candles, counting the days. Drawing closer to Bethlehem.

This year has felt more Lent than Advent, but it has been a time of waiting, a year of mandated patience. We have not all done this equally well. Many of us have grown impatient at the long austerity of the COVID crisis. We don't all feel we are sharing the same burden.

Those untouched by illness may shrug off the risks or disbelieve them. Others try their best to abide by the rules, but even after months, the death toll continues to climb, the surges come in waves. The waiting seems hopeless sometimes.

Be Our Guest/Mary Ann Etling

## We cannot be silent when it comes to the injustice of the death penalty

Growing up in Terre Haute, it always felt disconcerting to me to have the shrine of St. Mother Theodore Guérin just miles away from the only sanctioned prison to execute federal death-row inmates.

However, the Sisters of Providence protesting outside of the death chamber was just a photo in my history book. There had not been a federal execution in 17 years. This year, Attorney General William Barr has issued eight executions already. There are five more scheduled between now and President-elect Joe Biden's Inauguration Day on Jan. 20, 2021.

The Church has declared that the death penalty is inadmissible. In his most recent encyclical "*Fratelli Tutti*," Pope Francis calls for an abolition of capital punishment worldwide. He quotes St. Augustine, "Do not let the atrocity of their sins feed a desire for vengeance, but desire instead to heal the wounds which those deeds have inflicted on their souls" (#265).

I have had a few friends reach out, asking what urged me to get involved with these death-row cases. I believe it is the same thing that urges each one of us when we encounter evil.

As long as there is a government-sanctioned death chamber in our archdiocese, we cannot be silent. Our faith fundamentally requires us to stand against injustices that target the most vulnerable.

The hospitals are full of suffering madonnas, nurses in an endless Pietà, stand-ins for families who cannot be at the deathbeds of their loved ones. Trailers fill with bodies and mortuaries are overwhelmed. It may be easier this Advent for some of us to believe in Good Friday than to anticipate Christmas.

Yet when I said that a new birth is not just about arrival, but anticipation of what is to come next, that is a part of Christmas. This babe that is born to us is destined to suffer and to die. This is true of every human life.

Christmas implicitly contains within it Good Friday, visualized in the Eastern icon of the manger scene nested in a cave under Golgotha. The baby in the manger, like my grandson in my arms, is not immune to this reality.

And yet this painful realization is tempered by our faith that death has been defeated once and for all by that child whose birth we anticipate now. This is our message; this is our joy. It is why so much of the Christmas season seems unsatisfying. So much of the commercial celebration is a distraction. It misses the point, really.

We celebrate the birth of our Savior because we know it to be the harbinger of the story's end. This is God become man. This is death on the cross, yes, but it is the final victory of Easter.

So when I hold my grandchild, I hold someone who has been saved by that sacrifice, saved by that babe born so long ago.

We are waiting now. Waiting for Christmas. Waiting for the end of the pandemic. Waiting for my grandchild to become a boy, to become a man. And while we wait, we give thanks that we know how the story ends.

(Greg Erlandson, director and editor-in-chief of Catholic News Service, can be reached at [gerlandson@catholicnews.com](mailto:gerlandson@catholicnews.com).) †

(Mary Ann Etling is a second-year medical student at Indiana University School of Medicine.) †



# Christ the Cornerstone

## Gaudete Sunday invites us to rejoice in the Lord's nearness

*"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice. Indeed, the Lord is near"* (Phil 4:4-5).

The Third Sunday of Advent is traditionally known as *Gaudete* Sunday from the Latin word which means "rejoice."

The longing we experience during this special season of the Church's year can no longer be contained. It erupts into shouts of joy, confident that the blessed hope is nearer to us than we thought possible. In fact, he is here with us now even as we wait for his coming again.

In the Collect for *Gaudete* Sunday, we pray:

*O God, who sees how your people faithfully await the feast of the Lord's Nativity, enable us, we pray, to attain the joys of so great a salvation and to celebrate them always with solemn worship and glad rejoicing.*

We celebrate this midway point of Advent "with solemn worship and glad rejoicing" because we are confronted with one of the Church's most profound "both/and" mysteries. Christ is *both* present with us now, *and* he is coming again—this Christmas and at the end of time.

In a way, this teaching is mind-boggling. How can someone be already here and yet be coming? It's as if we spent our days yearning for the return of a loved one only to discover that she or he is already with us.

In the first reading for the Third Sunday of Advent, the prophet Isaiah (Is 61:1-2a, 10-11) describes the anticipation we feel even as we rejoice in the Lord's presence:

*"I rejoice heartily in the Lord, in my God is the joy of my soul; for he has clothed me with a robe of salvation and wrapped me in a mantle of justice, like a bridegroom adorned with a diadem, like a bride bedecked with her jewels. As the earth brings forth its plants, and a garden makes its growth spring up, so will the Lord God make justice and praise spring up before all the nations"* (Is 61:10-11).

The Lord who is present among us now acts like a gardener, planting seeds that will grow to fruition over time. We rejoice in his presence, but we also long for the day when he will harvest what he has planted in us.

In the second reading, St. Paul (1 Thes 5:16-24) tells us to "rejoice always" (1 Thes 5:16), to "pray

constantly" (1 Thes 5:17) and in all circumstances to "give thanks" (1 Thes 5:18).

We are not supposed to be gloomy or impatient. We are to wait in joyful hope for the one who will make us "perfectly holy" (1 Thes 5:23), which is another way of saying that we're waiting for the seeds planted in us by the Holy Spirit at our baptism to bear their final fruit. We rejoice because we know that the garden of our souls will one day "make its growth spring up" (Is 61:11). Our job is to tend the garden—keep it free from weeds and vermin—and to wait patiently for the fruits of God's labor "to make justice and praise spring up before all the nations" (Is 61:11).

This Sunday's Gospel reading (Jn 1:6-8, 19-28) tells us that John the Baptist, was sent by God to prepare a way for the Lord's coming. His role 2,000 ago was to "testify to the light" (Jn 1:7) and to "baptize with water" (Jn 1:26). John was not the Messiah; he was his messenger. Even now, his words ring out: Make straight the way of the Lord. Remove all the obstacles, and smooth out all the rough patches, so that the Lord's coming again can fill our hearts with everlasting joy.

The responsorial psalm for *Gaudete* Sunday is taken from the *Magnificat*, the Blessed Virgin Mary's exuberant canticle of joyful praise:

*My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked upon his lowly servant.*

*From this day all generations will call me blessed:*

*the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name.*

*He has mercy on those who fear him in every generation.*

*He has filled the hungry with good things,*

*and the rich he has sent away empty.*

*He has come to the help of his servant Israel*

*for he has remembered his promise of mercy.*

Let's join Mary in rejoicing at the nearness of her Son, Jesus. He who is already with us is coming again to bring healing, hope and lasting joy to our troubled world. And let's heed the warnings of St. John the Baptist by doing everything in our power to prepare for the Lord's coming again. †



# Cristo, la piedra angular

## El domingo *Gaudete* nos invita a regocijarnos en la cercanía del Señor

*"Regocijaos en el Señor siempre. Otra vez lo diré: ¡Regocijaos! El Señor está cerca"* (Fil 4:4-5).

El Tercer Domingo de Adviento se conoce tradicionalmente como domingo *Gaudete* por la palabra latina que significa "regocijarse."

El anhelo que sentimos en esta época especial del año litúrgico ya es imposible de reprimir y estalla en gritos de alegría, confiados en que la Bendita Esperanza está más cerca de nosotros de lo que creíamos. De hecho, está aquí con nosotros ahora, incluso mientras esperamos su regreso.

En la colecta del domingo *Gaudete*, rezamos:

*Oh Dios, que ves cómo tu gente espera fielmente la fiesta de la Natividad del Señor, te pedimos que nos permitas alcanzar las alegrías de una salvación tan grande y celebrarlas siempre con solemne adoración y alegre regocijo.*

Celebramos este punto medio del Adviento "con solemne adoración y alegre regocijo" porque nos enfrentamos a uno de los misterios "del tanto y el como" más profundos de la Iglesia. Cristo está, *tanto* presente con nosotros ahora, *como* que vendrá de

nuevo, esta Navidad y al final de los tiempos.

En cierto modo, esta enseñanza es alucinante: ¿cómo puede alguien estar ya aquí y aún así estar viniendo? Es como si pasáramos nuestros días anhelando el regreso de un ser querido, únicamente para descubrir que ya está con nosotros.

En la primera lectura del tercer domingo de Adviento, el profeta Isaías (Is 61:1-2, 10-11) describe la anticipación que sentimos incluso cuando nos regocijamos en la presencia del Señor:

*"En gran manera me gozaré en el Señor, mi alma se regocijará en mi Dios; porque Él me ha vestido de ropas de salvación, me ha envuelto en manto de justicia como el novio se engalana con una corona, como la novia se adorna con sus joyas. Porque como la tierra produce sus renuevos, y como el huerto hace brotar lo sembrado en él, así el Señor Dios[h] hará que la justicia y la alabanza broten en presencia de todas las naciones"* (Is 61:10-11).

El Señor que está presente entre nosotros ahora actúa como un jardinero, plantando semillas que crecerán con el tiempo. Nos regocijamos en Su presencia, pero también anhelamos el día en que coseche lo que ha plantado en nosotros.

En la segunda lectura, san Pablo (1 Te 5:16-24) nos dice que debemos estar "siempre gozosos" (1 Te 5:16), orar "sin cesar" (1 Te 5:17) y en toda circunstancia "dar gracias" (1 Te 5:18).

Se supone que no debemos ser pesimistas o impacientes sino esperar con alegre esperanza a aquel que nos "santifique por completo" (1 Te 5:23), que es otra forma de decir que estamos esperando que las semillas plantadas en nosotros por el Espíritu Santo en nuestro bautismo rindan su fruto final. Nos regocijamos porque sabemos que un día el jardín de nuestras almas hará "brotar lo sembrado en él" (Is 61:11). Nuestro trabajo es cuidar el jardín, mantenerlo limpio de malas hierbas y alimañas, y esperar pacientemente los frutos de la labor de Dios para "que la justicia y la alabanza broten en presencia de todas las naciones" (Is 61:11).

La lectura del Evangelio de este domingo (Jn 1:6-8, 19-28) nos dice que Juan el Bautista, fue enviado por Dios para preparar un camino para la venida del Señor. Su papel hace 2,000 años era "testificar de la luz" (Jn 1:7) y bautizar "en agua" (Jn 1:26). Juan no era el Mesías, era su mensajero, e incluso ahora, sus palabras resuenan: enderecen el camino del Señor. Remuevan todos los obstáculos, y suavicen todas las

asperezas, para que la venida del Señor pueda llenar nuestros corazones de alegría eterna.

El salmo responsorial del domingo *Gaudete* está tomado del *Magnificat*, el exuberante cántico de alabanza de la Santísima Virgen María:

*Proclama mi alma la grandeza del Señor;*

*se alegra mi espíritu en Dios, mi salvador;*

*porque ha mirado la humillación de su esclava.*

*Desde ahora me felicitarán todas las generaciones,*

*porque el Poderoso ha hecho obras grandes por mí:*

*su nombre es santo,*

*y su misericordia llega a sus fieles de generación en generación.*

*A los hambrientos los colma de bienes*

*y a los ricos los despide vacíos.*

*Auxilia a Israel, su siervo, acordándose de la misericordia.*

Unámonos a María en el regocijo por la cercanía de su Hijo, Jesús. Aquel que ya está con nosotros viene de nuevo para traer sanación, esperanza y alegría duradera a nuestro atribulado mundo. Y prestemos atención a las advertencias de san Juan Bautista haciendo todo lo que esté a nuestro alcance para prepararnos para la nueva venida del Señor. †

# 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).

## December 13-23

Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **BIG Sale in the Little Shop**, Mon.-Fri. 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Saturdays 9 a.m.-noon (Dec. only), items marked 50% off original prices, mention seeing this in *The Criterion* and receive an additional 15% off purchases of \$50 or more. Information: 317-788-7581.

## December 16

Calvary Mausoleum Chapel, 435 W. Troy Ave., Indianapolis. **Christmas Mass**, 2 p.m. Information: 317-784-4439 or [www.catholiccemeteries.cc](http://www.catholiccemeteries.cc).

## December 17

St. Joseph Parish, 1401 S. Mickley Ave., Indianapolis. **Third Thursday Adoration**, interceding for women experiencing crisis pregnancy, 11 a.m.-7 p.m., with Mass at 5:45 p.m.

Our Lady of Peace Cemetery and Mausoleum, 9001 Haverstick Road, Indianapolis. **Christmas Mass**, 2 p.m.

Information: 317-574-8898 or [www.catholiccemeteries.cc](http://www.catholiccemeteries.cc).

## December 27

**Airing of "To Know Your Neighbor: Celebrating Religious Diversity in Indiana"** documentary on **WFYI Channel 20**, includes archdiocese, sponsored by Center for Interfaith Cooperation, 4-5 p.m. Information: 317-318-5304.

## 2021

### January 6

MCL Cafeteria, 5520 Castleton Corner Lane, Indianapolis. **Solo Seniors**, 5 p.m., Catholic, educational, charitable and social singles—separated, widowed or divorced—age 50 and older, new members welcome, also call about regular Friday night dinner events. Information: 317-796-8605 or 317-243-0777.

### January 12

**Monthly Virtual Taizé Prayer Service**, 7-8 p.m., silent and spoken prayers, simple music, silence. Link: [Taize.SistersofProvidence.org](http://Taize.SistersofProvidence.org).

Information: 812-535-2952, [provctr@spsmw.org](mailto:provctr@spsmw.org).

### January 20

Calvary Mausoleum Chapel, 435 W. Troy Ave., Indianapolis. **Monthly Mass**, 2 p.m. Information: 317-784-4439 or [www.catholiccemeteries.cc](http://www.catholiccemeteries.cc).

### January 21

St. Joseph Church, 1401 S. Mickley Ave., Indianapolis. **Third Thursday Adoration**, interceding for women experiencing crisis pregnancy, 11 a.m.-7 p.m., with Mass at 5:45 p.m.

Our Lady of Peace Cemetery and Mausoleum, 9001 Haverstick Road, Indianapolis. **Monthly Mass**, 2 p.m. Information: 317-574-8898 or [www.catholiccemeteries.cc](http://www.catholiccemeteries.cc).

### February 3

MCL Cafeteria, 5520 Castleton Corner Lane, Indianapolis. **Solo Seniors**, 5 p.m., Catholic, educational, charitable and social singles—separated, widowed or divorced—age 50 and older, new members welcome, also

call about regular Friday night dinner events. Information: 317-796-8605 or 317-243-0777.

## February 4

**The Third Option virtual marriage crisis/enrichment class**, "Building a Climate of Respect," 7-8 p.m., Thursdays bi-weekly through May 20, viewing all sessions recommended but not required. No registration needed, free. Log on: [carmelthirddoption.org/web](http://carmelthirddoption.org/web) then click on link at top of page. Information: [carmelthirddoption.org/web](http://carmelthirddoption.org/web), or Keith Ingram, [kingram@aicinvest.com](mailto:kingram@aicinvest.com) or 317-324-8446.

## February 5

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

Our Lady of the Greenwood Church, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. **First Friday bilingual celebration of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus**, Mass, 5:45 p.m., exposition

of the Blessed Sacrament, following Mass until 9 p.m., sacrament of reconciliation available. Information: 317-750-7309, [msross1@hotmail.com](mailto:msross1@hotmail.com).

## February 6

John Paul II Parish, St. Paul Chapel, 216 Schellers Ave., Sellersburg. **First Saturday Marian Devotion**, 8 a.m. rosary, meditation, prayer; 8:30 a.m. Mass with confessions prior. Information: 812-246-3522.

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

## February 9

**Monthly Virtual Taizé Prayer Service**, 7-8 p.m., silent and spoken prayers, simple music, silence. Link: [Taize.SistersofProvidence.org](http://Taize.SistersofProvidence.org). Information: 812-535-2952, [provctr@spsmw.org](mailto:provctr@spsmw.org).

## February 11

**Sisters of Providence White**

**Violet Center for Eco-Justice Virtual Workshop: Baking Sourdough Bread**, via Zoom, 6:30-8 p.m., \$45 includes instruction materials and sourdough bread starter, register by Feb. 4. Registration and information: 812-535-2952, [provctr@spsmw.org](mailto:provctr@spsmw.org) or [www.spsmw.org/event](http://www.spsmw.org/event).

**The Third Option virtual marriage crisis/enrichment class**, "Responsibility and Blame Game," 7-8 p.m., Thursdays bi-weekly through May 20, viewing all sessions recommended but not required. No registration needed, free. Log on: [carmelthirddoption.org/web](http://carmelthirddoption.org/web) then click on link at top of page. Information: [carmelthirddoption.org/web](http://carmelthirddoption.org/web), or Keith Ingram, [kingram@aicinvest.com](mailto:kingram@aicinvest.com) or 317-324-8446.

## February 17

Calvary Mausoleum Chapel, 435 W. Troy Ave., Indianapolis. **Monthly Mass**, 2 p.m. Information: 317-784-4439 or [www.catholiccemeteries.cc](http://www.catholiccemeteries.cc). †

## 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).

## December 26

Sisters of St. Francis, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **Audubon Bird Count**, 7:30 a.m.-1 p.m., meet at Michaela Farm, no experience necessary, \$10 for lunch. Information, registration: [center@oldenburgosf.com](mailto:center@oldenburgosf.com) or [oldenburgfranciscancenter.org/programs.html](http://oldenburgfranciscancenter.org/programs.html).

## December 28

**Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality virtual "Mondays at the Mount,"** 30-minute study by Conventual Franciscan Father Vince Petersen and Andrew Hennessey on upcoming Sunday Scripture readings, saints and liturgical seasons, posted on Monday mornings at [m.facebook.com/pg/MountStFrancis](http://m.facebook.com/pg/MountStFrancis).

## 2021

### January 4

**Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality virtual "Mondays at the Mount,"** 30-minute study by Conventual Franciscan Father Vince Petersen and Andrew Hennessey on upcoming Sunday Scripture readings, saints and liturgical seasons, posted on Monday mornings at [m.facebook.com/pg/MountStFrancis](http://m.facebook.com/pg/MountStFrancis).

### January 6

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **Contemplative Prayer**, 3-4:30 p.m., Franciscan Sister Olga Wittekind facilitating, freewill donation. Information, registration: [center@oldenburgosf.com](mailto:center@oldenburgosf.com), [oldenburgfranciscancenter.org/programs](http://oldenburgfranciscancenter.org/programs).

Providence Spirituality & Conference Center, Foley Room, 1 Sisters of

Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Art and Soul Creation Guild**, 9:30 a.m.-noon, annual membership \$30 per person plus \$5 for each additional monthly session. Information, registration: 812-535-2952, [provctr@spsmw.org](mailto:provctr@spsmw.org), [spsmw.org/event](http://spsmw.org/event).

### January 7

Providence Spirituality & Conference Center, Havlik Center at Providence Hall, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Art and Soul Creation Guild**, 6:30-8:30 p.m., annual membership \$30 per person plus \$5 for each additional monthly session. Information, registration: 812-535-2952, [provctr@spsmw.org](mailto:provctr@spsmw.org), [spsmw.org/event](http://spsmw.org/event).

### January 9

**Virtual Forgiveness Retreat via Zoom**, offered by Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 9:30-11:30 a.m., Franciscan Sister Bernice Stenger facilitating, \$25. Information, registration: [center@oldenburgosf.com](mailto:center@oldenburgosf.com), [oldenburgfranciscancenter.org/programs](http://oldenburgfranciscancenter.org/programs).

### January 11

**Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality virtual "Mondays at the Mount,"** 30-minute study by Conventual Franciscan Father Vince Petersen and Andrew Hennessey on upcoming Sunday Scripture readings, saints and liturgical seasons, posted on Monday mornings at [m.facebook.com/pg/MountStFrancis](http://m.facebook.com/pg/MountStFrancis).

### January 18

**Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality virtual "Mondays at the**

**Mount,"** 30-minute study by Conventual Franciscan Father Vince Petersen and Andrew Hennessey on upcoming Sunday Scripture readings, saints and liturgical seasons, posted on Monday mornings at [m.facebook.com/pg/MountStFrancis](http://m.facebook.com/pg/MountStFrancis).

### January 12

Benedict Inn Retreat & Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **Personal Day of Retreat**, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., includes private room for the day and lunch, \$40, spiritual direction for additional \$30 (must be scheduled in advance). Registration: [cutt.ly/benedictinn\\_reg](http://cutt.ly/benedictinn_reg). Information: [benedictinn@benedictinn.org](mailto:benedictinn@benedictinn.org), 317-788-7581.

### January 20

**A Good Book and a Glass of Wine virtual event via Zoom**, offered by Providence Spirituality & Conference Center, 6:30-8 p.m., part one of four (Jan. 27, Feb. 3 and 10) on *Abounding in Kindness* by Elizabeth Johnson, \$25 for all four sessions, book not included, register by Jan. 16. Registration, information: 812-535-2952, [provctr@spsmw.org](mailto:provctr@spsmw.org), [spsmw.org/event](http://spsmw.org/event).

### January 22

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **A Quiet Day of Renewal**, self-guided retreat, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., \$20 includes private room, \$70 with spiritual direction. Information, registration: [center@oldenburgosf.com](mailto:center@oldenburgosf.com), [oldenburgfranciscancenter.org/programs](http://oldenburgfranciscancenter.org/programs).

### January 23

**Mindfulness Retreat**, Oldenburg Franciscan Center via Zoom, 9:30-

## Fatima Retreat House will offer online reflections and prayer before Christmas

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House in Indianapolis will offer several online reflections via Zoom and Facebook in preparation for Christmas. All events are free, although donations are welcome for the reflections offered via Zoom.

- **Advent Traditions Reflections:** Dec. 11 and 18, 10 a.m., [m.facebook.com/OLF5353](http://m.facebook.com/OLF5353), no registration required.
- **Advent Wreath Reflections:** Dec. 13 and 20, 10 a.m., [m.facebook.com/OLF5353](http://m.facebook.com/OLF5353), no registration required.
- **Scripture Reflections:** Dec. 14 and 22, 10 a.m., [m.facebook.com/OLF5353](http://m.facebook.com/OLF5353), no registration required.

• **Evening of Reflection with Father Keith Hosey:** Dec. 15 from 7-8 p.m. via Zoom, register at [cutt.ly/FrHosey](http://cutt.ly/FrHosey).

• **Evening of Reflection with Bree Ballard:** Dec. 17 from 7-8 p.m., register at [cutt.ly/BreeBallard](http://cutt.ly/BreeBallard).

• **Fireside Spirituality-Tea Reflections with Cheryl McSweeney and Haley Mosson:** Dec. 21 from 7-8 p.m. via Zoom, register at [cutt.ly/Fireside](http://cutt.ly/Fireside).

For more information, go to [www.archindy.org/fatima](http://www.archindy.org/fatima) or call 317-545-7681. †

## Twenty people join Sisters of Providence as Providence Associates

On Nov. 14, 20 individuals made their commitment as Providence Associates through the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods in St. Mary-of-the-Woods.

Due to the coronavirus, the ceremony took place online via Zoom this year.

Providence Associates are adults of varying faith traditions who choose to enter into deeper relationship with the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods.

Before committing to become a Providence Associate, individuals are paired with a Sister of Providence or Providence Associate companion for

a year of study, prayer and reflection. Commitments are made for one, three or five years at a time, and can be renewed thereafter.

Nearly 300 Providence Associates hail from throughout the United States and Taiwan. Of the new Associates, 13 are from Indiana, with others from California, Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska and North Carolina.

For more information about Providence Associates, go to [spsmw.org/join-us/providence-associates](http://spsmw.org/join-us/providence-associates) or contact Debbie Dillow at [ddillow@spsmw.org](mailto:ddillow@spsmw.org), or Providence Sister Sue Paweski at 312-909-7492 or [spaweski@spsmw.org](mailto:spaweski@spsmw.org). †

11:30 a.m., Franciscan Sister Olga Wittekind facilitating, \$25, \$40 with CEUs. Information, registration: [center@oldenburgosf.com](mailto:center@oldenburgosf.com), [oldenburgfranciscancenter.org/programs](http://oldenburgfranciscancenter.org/programs).

### January 24

**Virtual "Mystics & Prayer" Coffee Talk via Zoom:** Caryl Houslander, offered by Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 10:45 a.m.-noon., Amy Kistner presenting. Information, registration:

[center@oldenburgosf.com](mailto:center@oldenburgosf.com), [oldenburgfranciscancenter.org/programs](http://oldenburgfranciscancenter.org/programs).

### January 25

**Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality virtual "Mondays at the Mount,"** 30-minute study by Conventual Franciscan Father Vince Petersen and Andrew Hennessey on upcoming Sunday Scripture readings, saints and liturgical seasons, posted on Monday mornings at [m.facebook.com/pg/MountStFrancis](http://m.facebook.com/pg/MountStFrancis). †

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: Ann Lewis, or by fax at 317-236-1593.

# St. John the Apostle Parish celebrates its 50-year focus as a faith family

By John Shaughnessy

There's no doubt that other parishes will challenge the claim, but people who have worshipped at the present location of St. John the Apostle Parish in Bloomington are quick to say it's "the prettiest parish in the archdiocese."

Yet even with its location on a hill spanning more than 40 scenic acres, the parish has a more defining quality as it marks its 50th anniversary this year, according to parishioners. What stands out most to them is its reputation as a "people's parish," "a family parish."

"It's just been a family to us, and I don't know a better way to describe it," says Ed Timperman, who has been a member of the parish with his wife Liz since 1977. "It's been a family that we've always gone to and enjoyed being a part of."

The Timpermans credit that "family" and "people" focus to the parish's founding pastor, Father Francis "Frank" Buck, who once shared this insight: "Being a member of a parish family means having all the joys and frustrations, all the responsibilities and anxieties of belonging to any family. Our faith, not blood, is the bond that unites us."

Father Buck immediately stressed that bond from the day that St. John the Apostle Church was dedicated on Oct. 21, 1970. With no school at this new parish, Father Buck made a strong religious education program a priority, says Denise Sawyer, who has written a history of the parish's 50 years.

"Parishioners had been encouraged from the beginning to become actively involved in the religious education program, with the result that most children attended classes regularly and many parents were teachers," Sawyer notes.

"Working together had brought parishioners together. They worshipped together, they learned together, and they

played together. They began to call their parish 'the People's Parish.' "

That emphasis continued when the parish had to relocate.

Originally built on the land of a quiet horse farm, the first church found itself in the midst of a booming commercial area by the mid-1990s. As a parish committee searched for a new location, committee member Ann Floyd followed a "for sale" sign that led her to "this beautiful, big, wildflower-covered, flat meadow" atop a hill. It's where the new church would be built and dedicated on Dec. 20, 1998.

A dedication booklet noted, "Look closely at the 14 narrow, floor-to-ceiling windows of multi-colored, faceted glass. Each depicts a Station of the Cross, Christ's agonizing path to Calvary.

"Also, note the three large stained-glass windows behind the altar. These and the Stations of the Cross windows were removed from the original church and incorporated into the design of the new building as symbols of the continuity of our parish life."

The continuity of "the People's Parish" prevailed, too.

"The people intimately involved in the building of the new church had a very deep commitment to the maintenance of the facilities, the grounds," says Father Michael Fritsch, the parish's pastor from 2001 to 2013. "There was the sense, 'This is ours. We're going to take care of this.' It was a real part of their family."

Now the pastor of Mary, Queen of Peace Parish in Danville, Father Fritsch says about his 12 years at St. John's: "A fun place and nice people. They took an interest in the life of the parish. When I was there, we started a young married couples' group. I got them together and they eventually took over the social events of the parish. Really nice families. And that definitely continues."



Members of Bloomington Deanery faith communities bow their heads in prayer during a Jan. 31, 2013, liturgy celebrated by then-Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin at St. John the Apostle Church in Bloomington. The parish is celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2020. (Criterion file photo by Mike Krokos)

The Timpermans have experienced that family feeling through the years. Their two daughters, Sarah and Emily, were baptized and married in the parish church. Ed has been a constant in his 43 years at the parish, doing a lot of everything from parish council president to maintenance committee chair. Liz served snacks in the religious education program and was a member of the parish's board of education.

"It's always nice to see friendly faces, people you have known for a long time and you've watched their children grow up," Liz says. "It's a family place."

Just as Father Buck noted years ago, it's a family bound by faith, says Sawyer, the parish's most recent historian and its 50th anniversary chairperson. She also writes stories about the faith journeys of her fellow parishioners for the Sunday bulletin.

Her own faith journey is directly tied to the parish. A member of the Methodist faith earlier in her life, she was drawn to the Catholic faith by St. John's and was received into the full Communion of the Church in 2005.

"This parish has meant everything to me. It's transformed my life," she says. "It's because of the people I've gotten to know, the priests I've gotten to know, and all I've learned in the process about the Church."

Her own transformation connects to the prediction that then-Archbishop George J. Biskup made when he dedicated the first parish church in 1970: "This church will be a blessing to all people. Treasure it. Be with God in it. And as you leave, take God with you."

Fifty years later, that blessing still guides "the People's Parish." †



Father Francis "Frank" Buck, the founding pastor of St. John the Apostle Parish in Bloomington, poses for a photo with the children of the parish who received their first Communion in 1979. (Photo courtesy Archdiocesan Archives)

## My Journey to God

### GAUDETE - ROSE - Haiku

By Sister Jean Kenny, S.P.

Their voices cried out  
Ransom captive Israel  
Comfort my people

Be strong, fear not  
Bind up the broken-hearted  
One heart and one mind

The Lord is so near  
Make straight the way of the Lord  
Rejoicing in deed



(Providence Sister Jean Kenny is a member of St. Matthew the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis. Photo: A Christmas cactus blooms during Advent.) (Submitted photo by Sister Jean Kenny, S.P.)



**MERRY**  
*Christmas*

Advent and Christmas seasons are a time when we are invited to place an emphasis on spiritual growth and renewal. This might seem difficult in light of the current dispensation from Sunday Mass, a decision made with an abundance of caution.

Please know that resources are available to you for spiritual growth and renewal through your parish and online at [www.archindy.org/JoyOfChristmas](http://www.archindy.org/JoyOfChristmas).

Please know that I hold you in prayer and welcome any special prayer requests to be shared with me at [www.archindy.org/PrayerRequest](http://www.archindy.org/PrayerRequest).

I pray that we will all be back together soon. Until then be assured of my prayers for you.

With assurance of my prayers and best wishes for you, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,  
*+ Charles C. Thompson*  
Most Reverend Charles C. Thompson  
Archbishop of Indianapolis



ARCHDIOCESE OF INDIANAPOLIS  
The Church in Central and Southern Indiana

*"Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!"*  
**2 Corinthians 9:15**

# Bishop Chatard, Cathedral, Roncalli win state football titles

By John Shaughnessy

Their football teams have been fierce rivals through the years—teams that challenge and motivate each other like brothers often do when bragging rights hang in the balance.

Yet on this most recent post-Thanksgiving weekend, the football teams of Bishop Chatard, Cathedral and Roncalli high schools all shared the glory as they each convincingly earned a state championship in the Indiana High School Athletic Association state finals at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis.

Roncalli started the championship streak for the three Indianapolis Catholic schools with a 49-7 win over the team from Hobart High School on Nov. 27, earning its 10th state championship in football, this one in Class 4A.

A day later, the communities of Bishop Chatard and Cathedral both joined in the celebration. Bishop Chatard defeated Danville High School 42-14 in the Class 3A championship game, marking the 15th time the Trojans have won a football state championship—more than any other high school in the state.

And Cathedral earned its 13th state championship in the sport as the Irish beat the team from Zionsville High School in the 5A title game, 46-28.

While each of these teams will be remembered for the championships, their coaches note that this football season will also be defined by the challenge of COVID-19.

“It was more than constant,” said Rob Doyle, head football coach of Bishop Chatard. “We had numerous close calls. COVID was an issue we talked about every day. It kept us focused. Football was our sanctuary. It was a place where we could be together and do the things we love to do. This group remained focused and kept driving through this bizarre time.”

Roncalli’s first-year head coach John Rodenberg also praised his players’ focus through the COVID challenge.

“They were asked to not hang out with their friends, to be more disciplined in school and out in public,” Rodenberg said. “They wanted to have a football season. Their willingness to sacrifice and persist through this was impressive.”

Beyond the challenges of a pandemic, players and coaches at Cathedral also had to deal with the heartbreaking loss of



Bishop Chatard football players raise their helmets in celebration after the archdiocesan Indianapolis North Deanery high school won the Class 3A Indiana High School Athletic Association championship at Lucas Oil Stadium on Nov. 28. (Submitted photo by Mia Todd)

a teammate. Mario McCullough—who would have been a senior on the team—was shot and killed on March 29.

“This has been a special group,” said Bill Peebles, Cathedral’s head coach. “Everybody has had to overcome COVID, and that’s been difficult, but the seniors lost one of their teammates, their classmates. The team rallied around it. They were able to use it as a motivating factor to play well, to stay focused.”

Each team had defining moments during the season.

Rodenberg pointed to back-to-back games in the middle of its regular season schedule that let him know his Roncalli team had the potential to do something memorable this year.

“In both games, we were trailing in the fourth quarter, and we came back to win those games,” he said. “It really unified our team and brought us together. It really

helped me understand the type of team I was coaching. You understand their toughness, their fortitude, that they’re able to overcome adversity. If you’re going to win a championship, you’re going to have to overcome tough situations.”

Doyle focused on Bishop Chatard’s seventh game of the season against Merrillville High School, a team ranked second in Class 6A at the time. The Trojans won 45-28.

“Our kids played great that night,” Doyle recalled. “It was a turning point for us—that you’re not going to roll anyone out there that we can’t play with. It was awesome to see.”

For Cathedral, its defining moment came during the team’s bus ride to Lucas Oil Stadium for its state championship game. Peebles had the bus make a stop at the location where Mario was killed.

“We say the rosary on the way to every

game,” Peebles recalled. “We parked our buses, put our flashers on. I thought it would be appropriate for us to start our rosary there. It was emotional.”

Hours later, Cathedral players danced across the Lucas Oil Stadium field, celebrating their state championship as many of them held up two fingers, signifying Mario’s jersey number.

In the days since the championship weekend, the players, coaches and school communities of Bishop Chatard, Cathedral and Roncalli have continued to celebrate and savor the moment. Peebles talked about that feeling in relation to Cathedral, but his comments also applied to the two other teams.

“That’s the most special part—to know they get to have that feeling,” Peebles said. “This group of kids, this is a defining moment to them. They get to make this part of their history.” †



Players on the Roncalli High School football team raise the Class 4A Indiana High School Athletic Association state champions’ trophy after the team’s 49-7 win over the team from Hobart High School on Nov. 27. (Submitted photo)



As part of their celebration of winning the Class 5A Indiana High School Athletic Association title in football on Nov. 28, players on the Cathedral High School team raise two fingers in memory of their late teammate Mario McCullough, whose jersey number was 2. (Submitted photo)

# Proclaiming the Gospel of Joy: Living Christ's Mission

*We, the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Indianapolis, joyfully proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all people by living his mission of mercy, hope and salvation.*



## Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

In his 2013 Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii gaudium* ("The Joy of the Gospel"), Pope Francis invited the entire Church "to embark on a new chapter of evangelism." He also challenged us to understand ourselves as a "community of missionary disciples" who are "permanently in a state of mission" (EG #1-3). This state of mission defines our Church's ministry in both good times and hard times. As our Holy Father observes:



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

*Though it is true that this mission demands great generosity on our part, it would be wrong to see it as a heroic individual undertaking, for it is first and foremost the Lord's work, surpassing anything which we can see and understand. Jesus is "the first and greatest evangelizer." In every activity of evangelization, the primacy always belongs to God, who has called us to cooperate with him and who leads us on by the power of his Spirit. The real newness is the newness which God himself mysteriously brings about and inspires, provokes, guides and accompanies in a thousand ways. The life of the Church should always reveal clearly that God takes the initiative, that "he has loved us first" (1 Jn 4:19) and that he alone "gives the growth" (1 Cor 3:7). This conviction enables us to maintain a spirit of joy in the midst of a task so demanding and challenging that it engages our entire life. God asks everything of us, yet at the same time he offers everything to us (EG #12).*

Even in challenging times such as these, God takes the initiative, and he gives us everything we need to carry out his work. Our responsibility as disciples and missionaries is to gather around the Lord to pray, to listen to God's Word and to encounter him in the sacraments and the liturgy. Then, we must accept his commission to "go out to the whole world" in our proclamation of the Gospel and in service to others.

This state of mission, that is the essential nature of the Church, has taken different forms at various times and among diverse communities in the Church's 2,000-year history. What the Church looked like in its earliest days during the Roman Empire was far different from the forms it took in the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the Counter-Reformation and the succeeding periods of Church history. As she

remains the *one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church* that we profess in the Nicene Creed, our Church today must be attentive to "the signs of the times" and adapt her organization and ministries to the needs of people today—while always remaining faithful to her core teaching and practices.

This is why popes convene councils and synods to assess issues that confront the People of God. It's also why bishops and pastors periodically engage in pastoral planning to help identify needs and respond appropriately to the demands of our permanent state of mission in a rapidly changing world.

"Christ the Cornerstone" is my episcopal motto. St. Peter uses this expression, "the stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone," in his first letter to the Gentile converts in Asia Minor (cf. 1 Pt 2:7). He is quoting Psalm 118, verse 22. "The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone." St. Peter and other New Testament writers interpreted this verse as referring to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the one who was rejected by the political and religious leaders of his time but is now the foundation on which our lives are built. All our planning initiatives in the Church must have the person of Jesus Christ as their foundation or cornerstone.

More than 20 years ago, Pope St. John Paul II outlined the task that the Church faced as we prepared to enter into a new millennium:

*We are certainly not seduced by the naive expectation that, faced with the great challenges of our time, we shall find some magic formula. No, we shall not be saved by a formula but by a Person, and the assurance which he gives us: I am with you!*

*It is not therefore a matter of inventing a "new program". The program already exists: it is the plan found in the Gospel and in the living Tradition, it is the same as ever. Ultimately, it has its center in Christ himself, who is to be known, loved and imitated, so that in him we may live the life of the Trinity, and with him transform history until its fulfillment in the heavenly Jerusalem. This is a program which does not change with shifts of times and cultures, even though it takes account of time and culture for the sake of true dialogue and effective communication. This program for all times is our program for the Third Millennium. But it must be translated into pastoral initiatives adapted to the circumstances of each community.*

*What awaits us therefore is an exciting work of pastoral revitalization—a work involving all of us (Pope St. John Paul II, *Novo Millennio Ineunte* #29).*

Pope Francis echoes this teaching when

he speaks about the importance of "pastoral conversion" which is much more than restructuring our parishes, schools and diocesan institutions. The "exciting work of pastoral revitalization" that St. John Paul says awaits us all is what Pope Francis means when he talks about "pastoral ministry in a missionary key."

According to Pope Francis, pastoral planning challenges us to abandon the complacent attitude that says: "We have always done it this way." It invites us to be bold and creative in this task of rethinking the goals, structures, style and methods of evangelization in our respective communities. Planning that seeks to translate the permanent mission of the Church into pastoral initiatives that can effectively address the challenges and opportunities of our contemporary situation must reflect deeply on the Gospel and the essential teachings and practices of the Church. As Pope Francis makes clear: "A proposal of goals without an adequate communal search for the means of achieving them will inevitably prove illusory." The Holy Father goes on to say that "the important thing is to not walk alone, but to rely on each other as brothers and sisters, and especially under the leadership of the bishops, in a wise and realistic pastoral discernment" (EG #33).

As Archbishop of Indianapolis, it is my responsibility to lead this archdiocese in assessing the needs of the Church in central and southern Indiana and planning for the future. This is not something I can, or should, do all by myself. Successful planning requires broad consultation and teamwork. It requires a profound sense of openness to the guidance of the Holy Spirit—as this is manifested both through the rich history of the Church in this region and in the present circumstances. Ultimately, sound pastoral planning demands that we be willing to trust that although we cannot predict the future, Divine Providence will show us the way to carry out God's will for us in the years ahead.

## A Future Full of Hope

On 19 February 2020, before the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic compelled us to suspend temporarily all public gatherings including Mass and the sacraments, I accepted as proposed by the planning committee a new archdiocesan pastoral plan that will guide the way we carry out the Church's mission in central and southern Indiana for the next three years. This plan is the result of several years of surveys, assessments and research beginning during the interim between the appointment of Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin as archbishop of Newark, N.J., and my installation as archbishop of Indianapolis on 28 July 2017.

At the conclusion of my first year of episcopal ministry here, I commissioned a planning team of 25 members from around the archdiocese who represent different walks of life—lay people, priests, religious, people

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who work in archdiocesan and parish ministries, as well as people of different ethnicities and of various ages. The planning team's first task was to read *The Joy of the Gospel* by Pope Francis and to reflect on its teaching in light of the opportunities and challenges we face as we seek to proclaim the Gospel in our current situation. We wanted our future plans to be rooted in the Holy Father's vision for the Church of yesterday, today and tomorrow as this is expressed in sacred Scripture: "For I know well the plans I have in mind for you—says the Lord—plans for your welfare and not for woe, so as to give you a future of hope" (Jer 29:11).

I am deeply grateful for the pastoral plan's coordinating committee: Annette "Mickey" Lentz, chancellor; Msgr. William F. Stumpf, vicar general; David Bethuram, executive director of Catholic Charities; and Greg Otolowski, executive director of communications. They worked tirelessly to oversee the plan's development and to ensure that the plan itself reflects the themes identified in *The Joy of the Gospel*, our guiding document.

I also want to acknowledge gratefully the other 21 members of the Archdiocesan Pastoral Planning Committee:

- Julie Alberston
- Loraine Brown
- J. Patrick Byrne
- Oscar Castellanos
- Christine Eppert
- Matt Faley
- Father Rick Ginther
- Steven Goebel
- Kara Gresh
- Amy Higgins
- Deacon Stephen Hodges
- Erin Jeffries
- Deacon Marc Kellams
- Sister Joanita Koors, OSF
- Father Doug Marcotte
- Bernie Paradise
- Leticia Pasillas
- Richard Pohlman
- Pearlette Springer
- Sue Weber (facilitator)
- Lynne Weisenbach

Their prayerful dedication to the task they were given was an inspiration and a significant source of hope for the future of our archdiocese. No matter what obstacles we may face, we are a faith-filled community determined to hear the Word of God, discern the Lord's Will for us, and act with wisdom, courage and confidence in the Holy Spirit. My thanks to these pastoral leaders and to all who participated in the surveys and assessments that prepared the way for this pastoral planning process.

### Mission and Goals

Especially as we return to full engagement in the mission and ministries of our archdiocese, there are many advantages to having a pastoral plan that can serve as a practical guide for all our ministries. Our pastoral plan provides a means for shared vision and coordinated, intentional efforts. The plan also identifies particular goals and objectives that need to be addressed in this moment of our archdiocese's history. Finally, the plan makes it possible for us to work

together as a family of faith rather than trying to address each issue as isolated individuals.

The Archdiocesan Pastoral Planning Committee has proposed, and I have approved, the following **Mission Statement** for our archdiocese:

*We, the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Indianapolis, joyfully proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all people by living his mission of mercy, hope and salvation.*

As Pope Francis reminds us in *The Joy of the Gospel*, the call to faith and salvation in Jesus Christ, which is at the heart of our Mission Statement, is God's work. By his grace, we, the Church in central and southern Indiana, are sent out into the world to proclaim the Gospel joyfully by our living witness to his mission of mercy, hope and salvation.

In *The Joy of the Gospel*, our Holy Father writes:

*The salvation which God offers us is the work of his mercy. No human efforts, however good they may be, can enable us to merit so great a gift. God, by his sheer grace, draws us to himself and makes us one with him. He sends his Spirit into our hearts to make us his children, transforming us and enabling us to respond to his love by our lives. The Church is sent by Jesus Christ as the sacrament of the salvation offered by God. Through her evangelizing activity, she cooperates as an instrument of that divine grace which works unceasingly and inscrutably (EG #112).*

We carry out our mission as the Church in central and southern Indiana by our cooperation with the grace of Jesus Christ, and, in the process, we commit ourselves to accomplishing the five overarching goals listed below. By committing our archdiocese to this "permanent state of mission," we strive to "live the life of the Trinity" and by the grace of God to transform the history of this time and place "until its fulfillment in the heavenly Jerusalem."

### Goals and Objectives

The Archdiocesan Pastoral Planning Committee was responsible for prayerfully considering the results of the assessments, surveys and other research conducted in preparation for pastoral planning. This was truly a process of prayerful discernment using Sacred Scripture, the teaching and practice of the Church during the past two millennia, and Pope Francis's recent teaching, especially *The Joy of the Gospel*, as guides. The result was a series of Goals and Objectives in the following areas:

- Prayer and Worship
- Stewardship
- Family and Community
- Evangelization and Catechesis
- Clergy Life and Ministry

These five areas do not encompass all aspects of the Church's life and ministry here in central and southern Indiana, but they do provide us with a broad framework for pastoral planning that can address the key issues and concerns that we are confronting as we continue to carry out our mission. Each of the five areas identified above includes an overarching

goal (what we want to do) and a series of specific objectives (how we plan to accomplish each goal). These goals and objectives, which have been approved, have now been given to the appropriate archdiocesan offices and agencies that will develop detailed plans for implementation, including accountability (measures for success, persons responsible, timelines, and budget implications).

For the purposes of this pastoral letter, I would simply like to offer some brief reflections on the five goals and their importance for carrying out our mission—yesterday, today and tomorrow.



### Goal 1:

#### ~ Prayer and Worship ~

The first goal of our Archdiocesan Pastoral Plan is: **Foster a personal encounter with Jesus Christ through a rich and vibrant liturgical, sacramental and devotional, and personal prayer life.** Prayer and Worship are at the heart of our identity as Catholic Christians. They prepare us to encounter Jesus in Word, Sacrament and Service, and they nourish and sustain us as we carry out our mission to joyfully proclaim the Gospel and live Christ's mission of mercy, hope and salvation. The encounter with Jesus Christ that our liturgy and the sacraments foster is never a purely private affair. Mass and the sacraments, especially, are meant to be communal celebrations which both unite us in worship and strengthen us as individuals and communities in love of God and love of neighbor.

Goal I objectives specify cultivating a sense of belonging through liturgical experiences that honor our archdiocese's growing cultural and ethnic diversity; offering resources to parishes to encourage full, active, and conscious participation in the liturgical life of the Church; enriching and complementing our understanding of the Gospel, Scripture and Liturgy through music and song that honors and celebrates our cultural and ethnic diversity; fostering the spiritual life of God's people through "popular piety" devotions; and promoting sacramental preparation as a tool of new evangelization, and as an encounter for candidates, families and sponsors with the risen Lord.

Pope Francis continually reminds us that the Church's ministry must always be grounded in prayer and worship. "It is important for us to regain our confidence that by the power of God and our cooperation with Him, we can face and meet any challenges." The Holy Father also tells us all—beginning with those of us who are bishops—that "prayer is not a devotion but a necessity; it is not one task among many, but an indispensable ministry of intercession" (Pope Francis, Audience with participants in a seminar organized by the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, 8 September 2018).

### Goal 2:

#### ~ Stewardship ~

Our second goal is: **To cultivate a culture of stewardship responding to our baptismal call through the giving of one's time, talent and treasure in the service of God and others.** We understand stewardship to be the awareness that all we have and are come to us from God as gifts to be developed responsibly and then shared generously with others. Stewardship is essential to our mission because it is a way of living Gospel values in the concreteness

of daily life. There is no opposition between "authority" and "mission" when we accept the fundamental truth that we are stewards, not owners, sent by God to share His gifts in the building up of His Kingdom.

Goal 2 objectives include: Fostering an increased sense of discipleship among the people by helping them identify the gifts that God has given them and how those gifts can be put into service to build up His kingdom through the Church; designing and implementing an archdiocesan-wide system that connects/coordinates the faithful's gifts/talents with the needs of the archdiocese, wider-community, and the parish and invites and actively engages the faithful into service of others; conducting a comprehensive assessment or audit of all capital assets and facilities within the archdiocese regarding short/long-term maintenance and usability (building on previous audits/assessments) and developing standardized methods and reports to assess resources and pastoral needs throughout the archdiocese; and continuing to use the tools and resources gained from the archdiocese's *Empowering Pastoral Leaders* project as a means to build up the leadership capacity, skills and talents of all.

In his inaugural Mass on 19 March 2013, Pope Francis said, "In the end, everything has been entrusted to our protection, and all of us are responsible for it. Be protectors of God's gifts!" This is the call to responsible stewardship, to care for and generously share all God's gifts. We protect God's gifts when we acknowledge that God is their owner and we are called to be his trustworthy stewards.

### Goal 3:

#### ~ Family and Community ~

Our third goal is: **Support and engage families and communities in the archdiocese.** Assessments, surveys and research conducted in preparation for pastoral planning show clearly that the family, which is the most fundamental unit of civil society, and which we recognize as "the domestic church," needs encouragement, support and direction in its efforts to flourish and grow in our contemporary culture. Recent popes have emphasized that the family is the primary place where catechesis, evangelization and social awareness are nurtured, developed and put into action to carry out our Church's mission in the world.

Goal 3 directs us to: Recognize the family as the core of our evangelization and pastoral ministry; offer resources and experiences to Catholic households in fostering and discerning vocations; cultivate communities that are centered on invitation and evangelization for people in all phases of life; affirm and promote the role of parents as the primary teachers and formators of their children's faith; and design outreach programs and resources to actively invite and welcome inactive Catholics, to extend hospitality to first-time visitors, and to warmly receive those seeking a church home.

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In the Introduction to his apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* (On Love in the Family), Pope Francis says, “It is my hope that, in reading this text, all will feel called to love and cherish family life, for families are not a problem; they are first and foremost an opportunity.” Our pastoral plan’s emphasis on the preeminence of family and community reflects this perspective of Christian optimism. We believe with all the assurances of our faith that families and communities today have the power (born of God’s grace) to serve as seeds of hope, centers of formation and places where the theological and cardinal virtues can be lived concretely in our daily lives.

#### Goal 4:

### ~ Evangelization and Catechesis ~

Our fourth goal is: **Live with an attitude of missionary discipleship of all people, reaching out to the peripheries of our diocese, parishes and communities.** In *The Joy of the Gospel*, and throughout his preaching and teaching, Pope Francis reminds us that we are called to be missionary disciples, men and women who leave behind what is familiar and comfortable in order to proclaim the Gospel and live Christ’s mission of mercy, hope and salvation as a witness to all people, especially those on the margins of society. This is the mission we have embraced as the Church in central and southern Indiana, and we commit ourselves to reaching out to others wherever they can be found.

Goal 4 objectives include: Fostering a sense of belonging through an attitude of encounter; restoring the meaning of joy by proclaiming and evangelizing the Good News; creating a culture of intentional discipleship; making youths’ and young adults’ participation in all levels of pastoral ministry a priority; and promoting effective instruments of evangelization through solid catechesis.

In the opening paragraph of *The Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis outlines the plan of the Gospels, what St. John Paul II called, “a program which does not change with shifts of times and cultures, even though it takes account of time and culture for the sake of true dialogue and effective communication.” According to Pope Francis:

*The Joy of the Gospel fills the lives and hearts of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. With Christ, joy is constantly born anew* (EG #1).

This is the precise meaning of our fourth goal: To facilitate the same attitude that missionary disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ have had since the first Pentecost. We know that this “program” never changes, but we also know that it is our responsibility as pastoral leaders to present this program to the people of



today and tomorrow in a spirit of true dialogue and effective communication.

#### Goal 5:

### ~ Clergy Life and Ministry ~

Our final goal is: **Ensure the spiritual and physical well-being of the clergy by spiritual vitality, organizational efficiency, and sound stewardship principles and practices.** All of the goals in our pastoral plan are vitally important, but this goal is especially significant today as we emerge from decades of crisis and humiliation resulting from the heinous crimes and grave sins of some bishops, priests and church leaders. As a Church, we love our clergy and we want them to succeed in the vocation given them by Christ to serve as pastors and ministers of all God’s people. We know that the prayerful help and support of the entire archdiocesan family is needed to nurture, affirm and guide our deacons, priests and bishops as we strive to grow spiritually and mature as effective pastoral ministers.

Healthy, happy priests and deacons, who are full of hope and joy, and who are fulfilled by the grace of Christ in their pastoral ministry, can inspire and lead parishes that are vibrant centers of prayer, faith formation and service. By dedicating ourselves to nourishing and supporting our clergy, we commit ourselves to building and sustaining happy, healthy parish communities.

Goal 5 objectives seek to: Ensure the spiritual and physical well-being of the clergy; and create a framework identifying the necessary components of a thriving parish as we prepare for the existing and future changes of clergy, religious and lay leadership in the archdiocese. A variety of strategies and methodologies are called for in the plan to accomplish this important goal. These will be spelled out in greater detail as the plan is implemented.

Pope Francis has pointed out that each bishop has a duty to have a strong, close relationship with his priests. He has also warned us that episcopal aloofness and favoritism weakens the mission of the Church. “The relationship between us bishops and our priests is, unquestionably, one of the most vital issues in the life of the Church,” the pope teaches. “It is the backbone on which the diocesan community is based” (Pope Francis, meeting with the Italian bishops gathered at the Vatican for their annual meeting May 20–23, 2019).

I take this admonition from the Holy Father quite seriously, and I invite the entire archdiocesan family to join me in forming strong, close relationships with the clergy, religious and lay leaders who are so important to the spiritual health and vitality of the Church in central and southern Indiana.

### Mary, the first Missionary Disciple

Our reflections on the mission of the Church as it is lived here in central and southern Indiana naturally lead us to the Blessed Virgin Mary who inspires and guides us as we seek to proclaim the Gospel of Joy and to live her Son’s mission of mercy, hope and salvation. Mary was the first missionary disciple. Her entire life was dedicated to fulfilling the promise she made when the Archangel Gabriel shared with her the unique vocation she had been given by God the Father through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Mary’s “yes,” in her lifelong commitment to accompany her Son, is the model we strive to follow as an archdiocese. Her closeness to Jesus encourages us to draw nearer to him through her. Her fidelity to



Jesus’ teaching and example make Mary the perfect image of the Church—truly the Mother of Mercy, Mother of Holy Hope and Mother of our Savior.

Each of our pastoral plan’s five goals are of special importance to Mary. Through our prayer and worship, we invoke our Blessed Mother’s intercession and her unfailing help. Through responsible stewardship of her Son’s abundant gifts, we follow her example of gratitude, accountability and generosity. Through Mary’s intercession, we strive to form holy families and communities that bear witness to the dignity of human life and the common good of all. Through our acceptance of the baptismal call to evangelization and catechesis, we say “yes” to God’s will as Mary did, and we rely on the grace of her Son to successfully carry out our mission. Finally, when we call on our Mother to intercede for all clergy and lay leaders, we affirm her special love for all who share in her Son’s mission of mercy, hope and salvation.

Recent months have seen a tragic resurgence of the COVID-19 virus, as well as the scourge of racism, bigotry and violence in our communities. We pray that Mary, Mother of the Church, will guide us as we plan for the future of our Archdiocese, and help us all to be conscious that we are all one in Christ, sisters and brothers in the one family of God.

As we move beyond the demands of social distancing and physical isolation, and work to achieve true equality and justice for all, let’s turn to our Blessed Mother and ask her to help us move closer to Jesus and to one another. Let’s ask Mary to encourage and guide us as we proclaim the Gospel of Joy and strive to live Christ’s mission of mercy, hope and salvation.

### Conclusion

Entrusting all of our efforts in the endeavor of carrying out this archdiocesan pastoral plan, echoing the words of blessing by St. Paul upon the Thessalonians, let us pray:

May the God of peace himself make you perfectly holy and may you entirely, spirit, soul, and body, be preserved blameless for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will accomplish it. Brothers and Sisters, pray for me too (1 Thes 5:23–25).

Given in Indianapolis at the Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, on 3 December in the year of Our Lord 2020.

**The Most Reverend Charles C. Thompson, D.D., J.C.L.**  
*Archbishop of Indianapolis*

### Archdiocese of Indianapolis: A Brief History

Catholic identity and mission have a rich history in Indiana. Pope Clement X

established the Diocese of Quebec, in 1674, which included the territory known today as Indiana. Sacramental records began being kept at St. Francis Xavier Church, in Vincennes, in 1749. In 1770, Father Pierre Gibault became the pastor at Vincennes.

The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 guaranteed religious freedom throughout the territory. In 1789, Vincennes came under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Diocese of Baltimore. The Indiana Territory was established in 1800, with Vincennes being designated as its capital. The Diocese of Bardstown, in Kentucky, was established on 8 April 1808, which included all of the Indiana Territory. Flaget Elementary School, the current Catholic grade school in Vincennes, is named after the first Bishop of Bardstown, Joseph Benedict Flaget. Bishop Flaget was the first known Catholic bishop in the Indiana Territory, in 1814, administering the sacrament of confirmation in Vincennes. In 1816, Indiana became the nineteenth state.

The Diocese of Vincennes—now the Archdiocese of Indianapolis—was established by Pope Gregory XVI on May 6, 1834. The territory then comprised the entire state of Indiana and the eastern third of Illinois. The latter was separated from the Diocese of Vincennes upon the establishment of the Diocese of Chicago, November 28, 1843.

Fr. Simon Bruté, trained as a physician in France, was named the first bishop of Vincennes. Bishop Bruté served for five years until his death in 1839. There would be four more bishops appointed and several parishes established until the diocesan see was transferred to Indianapolis in 1898. The first four bishops are buried in the crypt of St. Francis Xavier Basilica, in Vincennes.

By decree of Pope Pius IX, January 8, 1857, the northern half of the state became the Diocese of Fort Wayne, the boundaries being that part of the state north of the south boundaries of Fountain, Montgomery, Boone, Hamilton, Madison, Delaware, Randolph, and Warren counties. The remaining southern half of the state made up the Diocese of Vincennes, embracing 50 counties. It covered an area of 18,479 square miles extending from the north boundaries of Marion and contiguous counties to the Ohio River and from Illinois to the west to Ohio on the east.

The second bishop of Vincennes was permitted by apostolic brief to establish his residence at Vincennes, Madison, Lafayette, or Indianapolis; Vincennes was, however, to remain the see city. This permission, with the subtraction of Lafayette, was renewed to the fourth bishop.

Upon his appointment in 1878, Bishop Francis Chatard, the fifth bishop of Vincennes, was directed to fix his residence at Indianapolis. Although the site of the cathedral and the title of the see were continued at Vincennes, Bishop Chatard used St. John the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis as an unofficial cathedral until the Cathedral of SS. Peter and Paul was completed in 1907. St. John the Evangelist Parish,

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE

established in 1837, was the first parish in Indianapolis and Marion County.

By apostolic brief dated March 28, 1898, the title of the diocese was changed to that of "Diocese of Indianapolis," with the episcopal see in the city of Indianapolis. Although the bishop's official residence was changed, the patron of the diocese remained St. Francis Xavier, the title of the Old Cathedral at Vincennes. In 2006, following the canonization of Mother Theodore Guérin, the first canonized saint from the archdiocese, the Holy See proclaimed her as patroness of the archdiocese along with Francis Xavier.

An apostolic decree of His Holiness Pope Pius XII, creating the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, was issued on October 21, 1944. On December 19, 1944, by executorial decree of the papal delegate, the Most Reverend Amleto Giovanni Cicognani, apostolic delegate to the United States, the papal decree of Pope Pius XII was solemnly proclaimed in SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, elevating Indianapolis to the status of an archdiocese, the state of Indiana becoming the metropolitan area. The dioceses of Evansville and Lafayette-

in-Indiana were created by the same decree and, along with the Diocese of Fort Wayne, made suffragan sees of Indianapolis. Upon establishment of the Diocese of Gary on February 25, 1957, it too became a suffragan see.

The current size of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis is 13,757.7 square miles, according to 1990 measurements from the Indiana State Library Reference Division, and comprises the counties of Bartholomew, Brown, Clark, Clay, Crawford, Dearborn, Decatur, Fayette, Floyd, Franklin, Hancock, Harrison, Hendricks, Henry, Jackson, Jefferson, Jennings, Johnson, Lawrence, Marion, Monroe, Morgan, Ohio, Orange, Owen, Parke, Perry, Putnam, Ripley, Rush, Scott, Shelby, Switzerland, Union, Vermillion, Vigo, Washington, and Wayne and the township of Harrison in Spencer County, in the southern part of Indiana.

Today the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Indianapolis comprises 126 parishes, 68 schools, six Catholic Charities agencies and many offices of ministry across central and southern Indiana. There is a strong presence of consecrated women and men, including



Benedictines, Franciscans, Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Carmelites and Jesuits. Two Catholic colleges, Marian University and Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College, serve students from Indiana and many other regions of the United States and the international community. Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary in Indianapolis was opened in 2004 to prepare college

seminarians for major seminary. Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology, founded in 1861 in St. Meinrad, Indiana, provides formation for priests, deacons and lay ministers.

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson was appointed the seventh archbishop of Indianapolis on June 13, 2017, by Pope Francis. He was installed in SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral on July 28, 2017. †

## Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Indianapolis: Strategic Goals, Objectives and Strategies

January 2020

We, the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Indianapolis, joyfully proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all people by living His mission of mercy, hope and salvation.

### Prayer and Worship

**GOAL 1: Foster a personal encounter with Jesus Christ through a rich and vibrant liturgical, sacramental and devotional, and personal prayer life.**

**Objective 1.1** Cultivate a sense of belonging for all God's people through liturgical experiences that honor our growing cultural and ethnic diversity.

**Objective 1.2** Offer resources to parishes to encourage the full, active, and conscious participation of all the faithful in the liturgical life of the Church.

**Objective 1.3** Enrich and complement the faithful's understanding of the Gospel, scripture and liturgy through music and song that honors and celebrates our cultural and ethnic diversity.

**Objective 1.4** Foster the spiritual life of God's people through "popular piety" devotions.

**Action 1.4.1** Identify and design resources as necessary to deepen the faithful's understanding and use of Catholic prayers and devotionals.

**Objective 1.5** Promote sacramental preparation as a tool of new evangelization, as an encounter for candidates, families and sponsors with the risen Lord.

### Stewardship

**GOAL 2: Cultivate a culture of stewardship responding to our Baptismal call through the giving of one's time, talent and treasure in the service of God and others.**

**Objective 2.1** Foster an increased sense of discipleship among the people by helping them identify the gifts that God has given them, and how those gifts can be put into service to build up His kingdom through the Church.

**Action 2.1.1** Issue a call to action for a plan to evangelize/catechize the faithful.

**Objective 2.2** Design and implement an archdiocesan-wide system that connects/coordinates the faithful's gifts/talents with the needs of the archdiocese, wider-community, and the parish and invites and actively engages the faithful into service of others.

**Action 2.2.1** Assess communication structures within the archdiocese and respond with the development of effective models that utilize a variety of methods and address needs.

**Objective 2.3** Conduct a comprehensive assessment or audit of all capital assets and facilities within the Archdiocese regarding short/long term maintenance and usability (building on previous audits/assessments) and develop standardized methods and reports to assess resources and the pastoral needs throughout the Archdiocese.

**Objective 2.4** Continue to utilize the tools and resources gained from Empowering Pastoral Leaders as a means to build up the leadership capacity, skills and talents of all.

### Family and Community

**GOAL 3: Support and engage families and communities in the Archdiocese.**

**Objective 3.1** Recognize the family as the core of our evangelization efforts and pastoral ministry.

**Action 3.1.1** Nurture Catholic marriages and Catholic family life through experiences that deepen encounters with Jesus Christ.

**Action 3.1.2** Develop ways to engage and support the needs of families.

**Action 3.1.3** Encourage the use of a spiritual gifts assessment or inventory in our parishes, agencies, schools, and organizations.

**Objective 3.2** Offer resources and experiences to Catholic households in fostering and discerning vocations.

**Objective 3.3** Cultivate communities that are centered around invitation and evangelization for people in all phases of life.

**Objective 3.4** Affirm and promote the role of parents as the primary teachers and formators of their children's faith.

**Objective 3.5** Design outreach programs and resources to actively invite and welcome inactive Catholics, to extend hospitality to first time visitors, and to warmly receive those seeking a church home.

### Evangelization and Catechesis

**GOAL 4: Live with an attitude of missionary discipleship of all people, reaching out to the peripheries of our diocese, parishes, and communities.**

**Objective 4.1** Foster a sense of belonging in our archdiocese through an attitude of encounter.

**Objective 4.2** Restore the meaning of joy by Proclaiming and Evangelizing the Good News.

**Objective 4.3** Create a culture of intentional discipleship.

**Objective 4.4** Make youth and young adults participation in all levels of pastoral ministry a priority.

**Objective 4.5** Promote effective instruments of evangelization through solid catechesis.

**Action 4.5.1** Develop an understanding that evangelization is not limited to Sunday liturgies.

**Action 4.5.2** Accompany and support small ecclesial groups within the parish.

**Action 4.5.3** Foster the integration of ethnic communities and people with disabilities into the parish and diocesan structures.

**Objective 4.6** Identify and develop catechetical training models with an emphasis on the use of technology and social media.

**Objective 4.7** Promote comprehensive life-long formation in the faith by facilitating emotional, spiritual and intellectual conversion.

### Clergy Life and Ministry

**GOAL 5: Ensure the spiritual and physical well-being of the clergy (priests and deacons) by spiritual vitality, organizational efficacy, and sound stewardship principles and practices.**

**Objective 5.1** Ensure the spiritual and physical well-being of the clergy.

**Action 5.1.1** Identify opportunities for clergy and lay sabbaticals and professional development.

**Action 5.1.2** Foster a culture of priestly identity and support through local and archdiocesan-wide opportunities and gatherings that promote and affirm the priestly vocation.

**Objective 5.2** Create a framework identifying the necessary components of a thriving parish as we prepare for the existing and future changes of clergy, religious and lay leadership in the Archdiocese.

**Action 5.2.1** Create new and innovative strategies, structures, and systems that respond to the needs in changing parish life and at the same time support the well-being of our parish leadership.

**Action 5.2.2** Develop standardized methods and reports to assess resources (human, material and financial) and the pastoral needs throughout the Archdiocese.

**Action 5.2.3** Review existing strategic and pastoral plans to coordinate needs and human resources.

**Action 5.2.4** Conduct and analyze a comprehensive assessment of Mass times, clergy availability, staffing and parishioners in every deanery.

**Action 5.2.5** Examine the current deanery structure in light of emerging trends and assumptions regarding future clergy.

**Action 5.2.6** Develop a comprehensive communications plan to educate the local Church and promote awareness and understanding of future changes.

**Action 5.2.7** Identify, call forth and clarify lay ecclesial leadership to serve the needs of changing parish and diocesan structures. (For example: what do we need to do to train PLC's, pastoral associates, youth ministers, etc.?)

# La Proclamación del Evangelio de la Alegría: Vivir la misión de Cristo

*Nosotros, la Arquidiócesis Católica Romana de Indianápolis, proclamamos con alegría el Evangelio de Jesucristo a todas las personas que viven su misión de misericordia, esperanza y salvación.*



## Queridos hermanos y hermanas en Cristo:

En su Exhortación Apostólica *Evangelii gaudium* (La alegría del Evangelio), publicada en 2013, el papa Francisco invitó a toda la Iglesia a embarcarse en “a una nueva etapa evangelizadora.” También nos desafió a concebirnos como una “comunidad de discípulos misioneros” que se esfuerzan “cada día sin descanso” (*Evangelii gaudium*, #1-3). Este estado misionero define el ministerio de nuestra Iglesia tanto en los buenos como en los malos tiempos. Tal como nuestro Santo Padre señala:



Arzobispo Charles C. Thompson

*Si bien esta misión nos reclama una entrega generosa, sería un error entenderla como una heroica tarea personal, ya que la obra es ante todo de Él, más allá de lo que podamos descubrir y entender. Jesús es “el primero y el más grande evangelizador.” En cualquier forma de evangelización el primado es siempre de Dios, que quiso llamarnos a colaborar con Él e impulsarnos con la fuerza de su Espíritu. La verdadera novedad es la que Dios mismo misteriosamente quiere producir, la que Él inspira, la que Él provoca, la que Él orienta y acompaña de mil maneras. En toda la vida de la Iglesia debe manifestarse siempre que la iniciativa es de Dios, que “Él nos amó primero” (1 Jn 4:19) y que “es Dios quien hace crecer” (1 Co 3:7). Esta convicción nos permite conservar la alegría en medio de una tarea tan exigente y desafiante que toma nuestra vida por entero. Nos pide todo, pero al mismo tiempo nos ofrece todo (Evangelii gaudium, #12).*

Incluso en tiempos difíciles como estos, Dios toma la iniciativa, y nos da todo lo que necesitamos para llevar a cabo su obra. Nuestra responsabilidad como discípulos y misioneros es reunirnos en torno al Señor para orar, escuchar la Palabra de Dios y encontrarlo en los sacramentos y la liturgia. Seguidamente debemos aceptar su encargo de “ir por todo el mundo” en nuestra proclamación del Evangelio y en el servicio a los demás.

Este estado misionero, que es la naturaleza esencial de la Iglesia, ha adoptado distintas formas en determinados momentos y en diversas comunidades a lo largo de sus 2,000 años de historia. En sus primeros tiempos, durante el

Imperio Romano, la Iglesia era muy distinta a aquella de la Edad Media, el Renacimiento,

la Contrarreforma y los períodos sucesivos de la historia de la Iglesia. Puesto que la Iglesia sigue siendo una, santa, católica y apostólica, tal como lo profesamos en el Credo de Nicea, nuestra Iglesia de hoy debe estar atenta a “los signos de los tiempos” y adaptar su organización y sus ministerios a las necesidades de la gente de hoy, permaneciendo siempre fiel a sus enseñanzas y prácticas fundamentales.

Por eso los papas convocan consejos y sínodos para evaluar los asuntos que enfrenta el Pueblo de Dios, y también es el motivo por el que los obispos y pastores se comprometen periódicamente en la planificación pastoral para ayudar a identificar las necesidades y responder adecuadamente a las demandas de nuestro estado permanente de misión en un mundo en constante cambio.

“Cristo, la piedra angular” es mi lema episcopal y san Pedro usa la expresión “la piedra que los constructores desecharon, en piedra angular se ha convertido,” en su primera carta a los gentiles conversos en Asia Menor (cf. 1 Pe 2:7), en la que cita el salmo 118, versículo 122: “La piedra que desecharon los albañiles se ha convertido en la piedra angular.” San Pedro y otros escritores del Nuevo Testamento interpretaron este verso como una alusión a la muerte y la resurrección de Jesucristo, aquel que fue rechazado por líderes políticos y religiosos de su tiempo pero que ahora es la fundación sobre la cual se erigen nuestras vidas. Todas nuestras iniciativas de planificación en la Iglesia deben tener la persona de Jesucristo como su fundamento o piedra angular.

Hace más de 20 años, el papa san Juan Pablo II esbozó la tarea que la Iglesia enfrentaba al prepararse para entrar en un nuevo milenio:

*No nos satisface ciertamente la ingenua convicción de que haya una fórmula mágica para los grandes desafíos de nuestro tiempo. No, no será una fórmula lo que nos salve, pero sí una Persona y la certeza que ella nos infunde: ¡Yo estoy con vosotros!*

*No se trata, pues, de inventar un nuevo programa. El programa ya existe. Es el de siempre, recogido por el Evangelio y la Tradición viva. Se centra, en definitiva, en Cristo mismo, al que hay que conocer, amar e imitar, para vivir en él la vida trinitaria y transformar con él la historia hasta su perfeccionamiento en la Jerusalén celeste. Es un programa que no cambia al variar los tiempos y las culturas, aunque tiene cuenta del tiempo y de la cultura para un verdadero diálogo y una comunicación eficaz. Este programa de siempre es el nuestro para el tercer milenio. Sin embargo, es necesario que el programa formule orientaciones pastorales adecuadas a las condiciones de cada comunidad.*

*Nos espera, pues, una apasionante tarea*

*de renacimiento pastoral. Una obra que implica a todos* (Papa San Juan Pablo II, *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, #29).

El papa Francisco se hace eco de esta enseñanza cuando habla de la importancia de la “conversión pastoral” que es mucho más que la reestructuración de nuestras parroquias, escuelas e instituciones diocesanas. La “apasionante tarea de renacimiento pastoral” que san Juan Pablo dice que nos espera a todos es lo que el papa Francisco quiere decir cuando habla de “la pastoral en clave de misión.”

Según el papa Francisco, la planificación pastoral nos desafía a no escudarnos en la actitud acomodadiza de que “siempre lo hemos hecho así.” Nos invita a ser audaces y creativos en esta tarea de repensar las metas, la estructuras, el estilo y los métodos de evangelización en nuestras respectivas comunidades. Una planificación que busque traducir la misión permanente de la Iglesia en iniciativas pastorales que puedan abordar eficazmente los desafíos y las oportunidades de nuestra situación contemporánea se debe realizar en el marco de una profunda reflexión sobre el Evangelio y las enseñanzas y prácticas esenciales de la Iglesia. Tal como el papa Francisco deja en claro: “Una postulación de los fines sin una adecuada búsqueda comunitaria de los medios para alcanzarlos está condenada a convertirse en mera fantasía.” El Santo Padre continúa diciendo que “lo importante es no caminar solos, contar siempre con los hermanos y especialmente con la guía de los obispos, en un sabio y realista discernimiento pastoral” (*Evangelii gaudium*, #33).

Como arzobispo de Indianápolis, es mi responsabilidad dirigir esta Arquidiócesis en la evaluación de las necesidades de la Iglesia en el centro y el sur de Indiana y la planificación para el futuro. Esto no es algo que yo pueda o deba hacer por mi cuenta. Para que tenga éxito, la planificación requiere una amplia consulta y trabajo en equipo. Esto implica un profundo sentido de apertura a la guía del Espíritu Santo, como se manifiesta, tanto a través de la rica historia de la Iglesia en esta región, como en las circunstancias actuales. En definitiva, una planificación pastoral sólida exige que estemos dispuestos a confiar en que, aunque no podemos predecir el futuro, la Divina Providencia nos mostrará el camino para llevar a cabo la voluntad de Dios para nosotros en los años venideros.

## Un futuro lleno de esperanza

El 19 de febrero de 2020, antes de que la propagación de la pandemia de COVID-19 nos obligara a suspender temporalmente todas las reuniones públicas, incluyendo la misa y los sacramentos, acepté un nuevo plan pastoral arquidiocesano, tal como lo propuso el comité de planificación. Dicho plan guiará la forma en que llevaremos a cabo la misión de la Iglesia en el centro y el sur de Indiana durante los próximos tres a cinco años. Este plan es el resultado de

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varios años de encuestas, evaluaciones e investigaciones que se iniciaron durante el intervalo entre el nombramiento del cardenal Joseph W. Tobin como arzobispo de Newark, en Nueva Jersey, y mi investidura como Arzobispo de Indianápolis el 28 de julio de 2017.

Al final de mi primer año de ministerio episcopal aquí, comisioné un equipo de planificación conformado por 25 miembros de toda la Arquidiócesis que representan a diferentes sectores de la vida: laicos, sacerdotes, religiosos, personas que trabajan en ministerios arquidiocesanos y parroquiales, así como personas de diferentes etnias y de diversas edades. La primera tarea del equipo de planificación fue leer *La alegría del Evangelio* del papa Francisco y reflexionar sobre sus enseñanzas a la luz de las oportunidades y desafíos que enfrentamos al tratar de proclamar el Evangelio en nuestra situación actual. Deseábamos que nuestros planes futuros emanaran de la visión del Santo Padre para la Iglesia de ayer, hoy y mañana, tal y como se expresa en las Sagradas Escrituras: “Porque yo sé los planes que tengo para vosotros— declara el Señor—planes de bienestar y no de calamidad, para daros un futuro y una esperanza” (Jer 29:11).

Estoy profundamente agradecido por el comité de coordinación del plan pastoral: Annette “Mickey” Lentz, canciller; Mons. William F. Stumpf, vicario general; David Bethuram, director ejecutivo de Caridades Católicas; y Greg Otolski, director ejecutivo de comunicaciones. Todos ellos trabajaron incansablemente para supervisar la formulación del plan y para asegurar que el plan mismo reflejara los temas identificados en *La alegría del Evangelio*, nuestro documento guía.

También quiero reconocer con gratitud a los otros 21 miembros del Comité de Planificación Pastoral de la Arquidiócesis:

Julie Alberston  
Loraine Brown  
J. Patrick Byrne  
Óscar Castellanos  
Christine Eppert  
Matt Faley  
Padre Rick Ginther  
Steven Goebel  
Kara Gresh  
Amy Higgins  
Díacono Stephen Hodges  
Erin Jeffries  
Díacono Marc Kellams  
Hermana Joanita Koors, OSF  
Padre Doug Marcotte  
Bernie Paradise  
Leticia Pasillas  
Richard Pohlman  
Pearlette Springer  
Sue Weber (facilitadora)  
Lynne Weisenbach

Su dedicación piadosa a la tarea que se les encomendó fue una inspiración y una considerable fuente de esperanza para el futuro de nuestra Arquidiócesis. Independientemente de los obstáculos que enfrentemos, somos una comunidad llena de fe decidida a escuchar la Palabra de Dios, a discernir la Voluntad del Señor para nosotros y a actuar con sabiduría, coraje y confianza en el Espíritu Santo. Mi agradecimiento a estos líderes pastorales y a todos los que participaron en las encuestas y las evaluaciones que allanaron el camino para este proceso de planificación pastoral.



## Misión y metas

Especialmente ahora que retomamos el compromiso pleno con la misión y los ministerios de nuestra Arquidiócesis, existen muchas ventajas de tener un plan pastoral que pueda servir como guía práctica para todos nuestros ministerios. Nuestro plan pastoral constituye un medio para compartir una visión, así como también los esfuerzos coordinados e intencionales. El plan también identifica metas y objetivos específicos que se deben abordar en este momento de la historia de nuestra Arquidiócesis. Por último, gracias al plan podemos trabajar juntos como una familia de fe, en lugar de tratar de abordar cada tema como individuos aislados.

El Comité de Planificación Pastoral de la Arquidiócesis ha propuesto, y yo he aprobado, la siguiente **Declaración de Misión** para nuestra Arquidiócesis:

**Nosotros, la Arquidiócesis Católica Romana de Indianápolis, proclamamos con alegría el Evangelio de Jesucristo a todas las personas que viven su misión de misericordia, esperanza y salvación.**

Tal como nos lo recuerda el papa Francisco en *La alegría del Evangelio*, el llamado a la fe y la salvación en Jesucristo forma parte de la obra de Dios y esto constituye el núcleo de nuestra Declaración de Misión. Por Su gracia, nosotros, la Iglesia en el centro y el sur de Indiana, somos enviados al mundo para proclamar el Evangelio con alegría por nuestro testimonio vivo de su misión de misericordia, esperanza y salvación.

En *La alegría del Evangelio*, nuestro Santo Padre escribe:

*La salvación que Dios nos ofrece es obra de su misericordia. No hay acciones humanas, por más buenas que sean, que nos hagan merecer un don tan grande. Dios, por pura gracia, nos atrae para unirmos a sí. Él envía su Espíritu a nuestros corazones para hacernos sus hijos, para transformarnos y para volvernos capaces de responder con nuestra vida a ese amor. La Iglesia es enviada por Jesucristo como sacramento de la salvación ofrecida por Dios. Ella, a través de sus acciones evangelizadoras, colabora como instrumento de la gracia divina que actúa incesantemente más allá de toda posible supervisión (Evangelii gaudium, #112).*

Llevamos a cabo nuestra misión como Iglesia en el centro y el sur de Indiana mediante nuestra cooperación con la gracia de Jesucristo y, en el proceso, nos comprometemos a cumplir las cinco metas generales que se enumeran a continuación. Al comprometer a nuestra Arquidiócesis a este “estado permanente de misión,” nos esforzamos por vivir la “vida trinitaria” y por la gracia de Dios para transformar la historia de este tiempo y lugar “hasta su perfeccionamiento en la Jerusalén celeste.”

## Metas y objetivos

El Comité de Planificación Pastoral de la Arquidiócesis se encargó de considerar en oración los resultados de las evaluaciones, las encuestas y demás investigaciones realizadas como preparativos para la planificación pastoral. Este fue realmente un proceso de discernimiento piadoso en el que se emplearon como guías las Sagradas

Escrituras, las enseñanzas y las prácticas de la Iglesia durante los últimos dos milenios y las enseñanzas recientes del papa Francisco, especialmente *La alegría del Evangelio*. El resultado fue la formulación de una serie de metas y objetivos en las siguientes áreas:

- Oración y adoración
- Corresponsabilidad
- Familia y comunidad
- Evangelización y catequesis
- Vida y ministerio del clero

Estas cinco áreas no abarcan todos los aspectos de la vida y el ministerio de la Iglesia aquí en el centro y el sur de Indiana, pero nos proporcionan un amplio marco para la planificación pastoral capaz de abordar las cuestiones clave y las preocupaciones que estamos enfrentando a medida que continuamos llevando a cabo nuestra misión.

Cada una de las cinco áreas identificadas anteriormente incluye una meta general (lo que queremos hacer) y una serie de objetivos específicos (cómo planeamos lograr cada meta). Estas metas y objetivos, que han sido aprobados, se han entregado a las oficinas y agencias arquidiocesanas correspondientes, las cuales diseñarán planes detallados para su implementación, incluyendo la rendición de cuentas (formas de medir el éxito, personas responsables, plazos e implicaciones presupuestarias).

A los efectos de esta carta pastoral, me gustaría simplemente ofrecer algunas breves reflexiones sobre las cinco metas y su importancia para llevar a cabo nuestra misión: ayer, hoy y mañana.

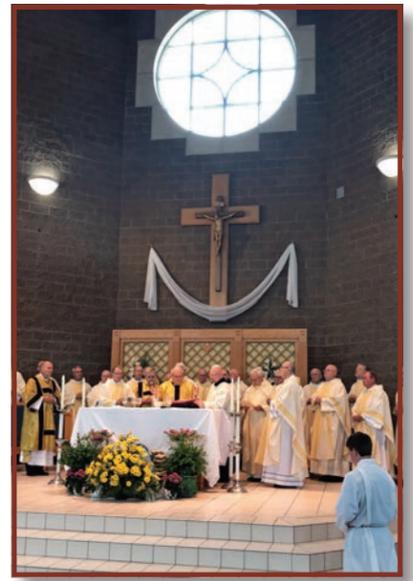
### Meta 1:

#### ~ Oración y adoración ~

La primera meta de nuestro Plan pastoral arquidiocesano es: **Fomentar un encuentro personal con Jesucristo a través de una vida litúrgica, sacramental, devocional y de oración personal rica y dinámica.** La oración y la adoración representan el corazón de nuestra identidad como cristianos católicos ya que nos preparan para el encuentro con Jesús en Palabra, los sacramentos y el servicio, y nos alimentan y sustentan mientras llevamos a cabo nuestra misión de proclamar con alegría el Evangelio y vivimos la misión de Cristo de misericordia, esperanza y salvación. El encuentro con Jesucristo que se promueve en la liturgia y los sacramentos nunca es un asunto puramente privado. En especial la misa y los sacramentos son celebraciones comunitarias que nos unen en el culto y nos fortalecen como individuos y comunidades en el amor a Dios y al prójimo.

Los objetivos de la meta 1 especifican cultivar el sentido de pertenencia a través de experiencias litúrgicas que honren nuestra creciente diversidad cultural y étnica; ofrecer recursos a las parroquias para fomentar la participación plena, activa y consciente en la vida litúrgica de la Iglesia; enriquecer y complementar la comprensión del Evangelio, las escrituras y la liturgia a través de la música y el canto que honra y celebra nuestra diversidad cultural y étnica; fomentar la vida espiritual del pueblo de Dios a través de las devociones de “piedad popular”; y promover la preparación sacramental como instrumento de la nueva evangelización, como un encuentro para candidatos, familias y padrinos con el Señor resucitado.

El papa Francisco nos recuerda continuamente que el ministerio de la Iglesia siempre debe basarse en la oración y la adoración. “Es importante que recuperemos la confianza en que por el poder de Dios y nuestra cooperación con Él, podemos enfrentar y hacer frente a cualquier desafío.” El Santo Padre también nos dice a todos, comenzando por los obispos, que “la oración no es para el obispo devoción, sino necesidad; no es un compromiso entre tantos, sino un indispensable ministerio de intercesión” (papa Francisco, audiencia con los participantes en un seminario organizado por la Congregación para la Evangelización de los Pueblos, 8 de septiembre de 2018).



### Meta 2:

#### ~ Corresponsabilidad ~

Nuestra segunda meta es: **Fomentar una cultura de corresponsabilidad en respuesta a nuestro llamado bautismal a través de la entrega de nuestro tiempo, talentos y tesoros en el servicio de Dios y de los demás.** Por corresponsabilidad entendemos la conciencia de que todo lo que tenemos y somos nos viene de Dios como dones para ser desarrollados responsablemente y luego compartidos generosamente con otros. La corresponsabilidad es esencial para nuestra misión porque es una forma de vivir los valores del Evangelio en lo patente de la vida diaria. Cuando aceptamos la verdad fundamental de que somos corresponsables, no propietarios, enviados por Dios para compartir sus dones en la construcción de su Reino, desaparece todo contraste entre “autoridad” y “misión.”

Los objetivos de la meta 2 comprenden: Fomentar un mayor sentido de discipulado en la gente ayudándola a identificar los dones que Dios les ha dado, y de qué manera pueden ponerlos al servicio para construir Su reino a través de la Iglesia; diseñar e implementar un sistema a nivel arquidiocesano que conecte y coordine los dones y talentos de los fieles con las necesidades de la Arquidiócesis, de la comunidad en general y de la parroquia, e invite y comprometa activamente a los fieles al servicio de los demás; realizar una evaluación o auditoría integral de todos los bienes de capital y las instalaciones dentro de la Arquidiócesis en relación con el mantenimiento y la utilidad a corto y largo plazo (sobre la base de auditorías y evaluaciones anteriores) y desarrollar métodos e informes estandarizados para evaluar los recursos y las necesidades pastorales en toda la Arquidiócesis; y seguir utilizando las herramientas y recursos obtenidos del programa “Empoderamiento de líderes pastorales” (*Empowering Pastoral Leaders*) como medio para aumentar la capacidad de liderazgo, las aptitudes y los talentos de todos.

En su misa inaugural del 19 de marzo de 2013, el papa Francisco dijo: “En el fondo, todo está confiado a la custodia del hombre, y es una responsabilidad que nos afecta a todos.

Sed custodios de los dones de Dios.” Este es el llamado a una corresponsabilidad comprometida a cuidar y compartir generosamente todos los dones de Dios. Protegemos los dones de Dios cuando reconocemos que Él es su dueño y estamos llamados a ser sus administradores de confianza.

### Meta 3:

#### ~ Familia y comunidad ~

Nuestra tercera meta es: **Apoyar y fomentar la participación de las familias y comunidades de la Arquidiócesis.** Las evaluaciones, las encuestas y las investigaciones realizadas como preparación para la planificación pastoral muestran claramente que la familia, que es la unidad más fundamental de la sociedad

CONTINUA EN LA SIGUIENTE PAGINA

civil y que reconocemos como “la iglesia doméstica,” necesita estímulo, apoyo y dirección en sus esfuerzos por florecer y crecer en nuestra cultura contemporánea. Los últimos papas han subrayado que la familia es el lugar principal donde se alimenta, desarrolla y pone en práctica la catequesis, la evangelización y la conciencia social para llevar a cabo la misión de nuestra Iglesia en el mundo.

La meta 3 nos exhorta a: reconocer a la familia como el núcleo de nuestros esfuerzos de evangelización y del ministerio pastoral; ofrecer recursos y experiencias a los hogares católicos en el fomento y el discernimiento de las vocaciones; cultivar comunidades centradas en la invitación y la evangelización de las personas en todas las fases de la vida; afirmar y promover el papel de los padres como los principales maestros y formadores de la fe de sus hijos; diseñar programas de divulgación y recursos para invitar y acoger activamente a los católicos inactivos, para extender la hospitalidad a quienes visitan la Iglesia por primera vez, y para recibir calurosamente a aquellos que buscan un hogar en la iglesia.

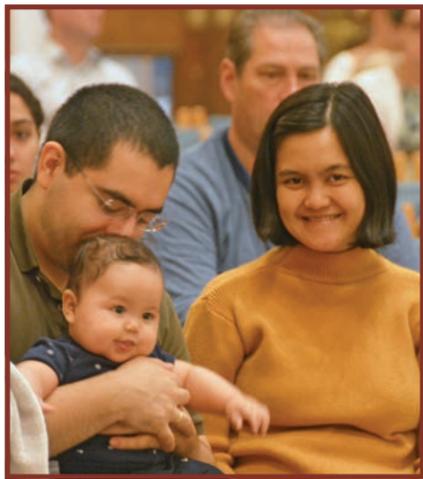
En la introducción de su exhortación *Amoris laetitia* (Sobre el amor en la familia), el papa Francisco dice: “Espero que cada uno, a través de la lectura, se sienta llamado a cuidar con amor la vida de las familias, porque ellas “no son un problema, son principalmente una oportunidad.” El énfasis de nuestro plan pastoral en la preeminencia de la familia y la comunidad refleja esta perspectiva de optimismo cristiano. Creemos con todas las seguridades que nos brinda nuestra fe, que las familias y las comunidades de hoy tienen el poder (nacido de la gracia de Dios) de servir como semillas de esperanza, centros de formación y lugares donde las virtudes teologales y cardinales pueden ser vividas concretamente en nuestra vida cotidiana.

#### Meta 4:

##### ~ Evangelización y catequesis ~

Nuestra cuarta meta es: **Vivir con una actitud de discipulado misionero hacia todas las personas, llegando a las periferias de nuestra diócesis, parroquias y comunidades.** En *La alegría del Evangelio*, y a lo largo de su predicación y enseñanza, el papa Francisco nos recuerda que estamos llamados a ser discípulos misioneros, hombres y mujeres que dejan atrás lo que les resulta conocido y cómodo para proclamar el Evangelio y vivir la misión de Cristo de misericordia, esperanza y salvación como un testimonio para todas las personas, especialmente las que están en los márgenes de la sociedad. Esta es la misión que hemos acogido como Iglesia en el centro y el sur de Indiana, y nos comprometemos a llegar a los demás dondequiera que se encuentren.

Los objetivos de la meta 4 comprenden: fomentar el sentido de pertenencia mediante una actitud de encuentro; restaurar el significado de la alegría mediante la proclamación y la evangelización de la Buena Nueva; crear una cultura de discipulado intencional; convertir en prioridad la participación de los jóvenes y los adultos jóvenes en todos los niveles del ministerio pastoral; y promover instrumentos eficaces de evangelización mediante una catequesis sólida.



En el párrafo inicial de *La alegría del Evangelio*, el papa Francisco esboza el plan de los Evangelios, lo que san Juan Pablo II llamó, “un programa que no se transforma con los cambios de los tiempos y las culturas, aunque tiene en cuenta el tiempo y la cultura en aras de un verdadero diálogo y una comunicación eficaz.” De acuerdo con el papa Francisco:

*La alegría del Evangelio llena el corazón y la vida entera de los que se encuentran con Jesús. Quienes se dejan salvar por Él son liberados del pecado, de la tristeza, del vacío interior, del aislamiento. Con Jesucristo siempre nace y renace la alegría (Evangelii gaudium, #1).*

Este es el significado exacto de nuestra cuarta meta: facilitar la misma actitud que los discípulos misioneros de nuestro Señor Jesucristo han tenido desde el primer Pentecostés. Sabemos que este “programa” nunca cambia, pero también sabemos que, como líderes pastorales, es nuestra responsabilidad presentar este programa a la gente de hoy y de mañana en un espíritu de verdadero diálogo y de comunicación efectiva.

#### Meta 5:

##### ~ Vida y ministerio del clero ~

Nuestra última meta es: **Asegurar el bienestar espiritual y físico del clero mediante la vitalidad espiritual, la eficacia organizativa y principios y prácticas coherentes de corresponsabilidad.** Todas las metas de nuestro plan pastoral son de vital importancia, pero esta es especialmente significativa hoy en día a medida que emergemos de décadas de crisis y humillación producto de los atroces crímenes y graves pecados de algunos obispos, sacerdotes y líderes de la Iglesia. Como Iglesia, amamos a nuestro clero y deseamos que tengan éxito en la vocación que Cristo les otorgó de servir como pastores y ministros de todo el pueblo de Dios. Sabemos que la ayuda y el apoyo en oración de toda la familia arquidiocesana son necesarios para nutrir, afirmar y guiar a nuestros diáconos, sacerdotes y obispos mientras nos esforzamos por crecer espiritualmente y madurar como ministros pastorales eficaces.

Los sacerdotes y los diáconos sanos y felices, llenos de esperanza y de alegría, que se sienten realizados en su ministerio pastoral por la gracia de Cristo, pueden inspirar y dirigir parroquias que sean centros vibrantes de oración, formación en la fe y servicio. Al dedicarnos a alentar y a apoyar a nuestro clero, nos comprometemos a construir y mantener comunidades parroquiales felices y sanas.

Los objetivos de la meta 5 buscan: asegurar el bienestar espiritual y físico del clero; y crear un marco que identifique los componentes necesarios para tener parroquias prósperas, mientras nos preparamos para los cambios actuales y futuros del clero, los religiosos y el liderazgo laico en la Arquidiócesis. El plan exige diversas estrategias y metodologías para lograr esta meta tan importante y estas se explicarán con mayor detalle a medida que se implemente el plan.

El papa Francisco ha señalado que cada obispo tiene el deber de mantener una relación fuerte y estrecha con sus sacerdotes. También nos ha advertido que la distancia y el favoritismo episcopal debilitan la misión de la Iglesia. “La relación entre los obispos y nuestros sacerdotes es, sin duda, una de las cuestiones más vitales en la vida de la Iglesia,” explica el Papa. “Esta es la columna vertebral sobre la cual se yergue la comunidad diocesana” (papa Francisco, reunión con los obispos italianos en el Vaticano en ocasión de su reunión anual del 20 al 23 de mayo de 2019).

Me tomo muy en serio esta advertencia del Santo Padre, e invito a toda la familia arquidiocesana a unirse a mí para entablar relaciones fuertes y estrechas con el clero, los religiosos y

los líderes laicos que son tan importantes para la salud espiritual y la vitalidad de la Iglesia en el centro y el sur de Indiana.

### María, la primera discípula misionera

Nuestras reflexiones sobre la misión de la Iglesia, tal como se vive aquí en el centro y el sur de Indiana, nos llevan naturalmente a la Santísima Virgen María que nos inspira y guía mientras buscamos proclamar el Evangelio de la Alegría y vivir la misión de misericordia, esperanza y salvación de su Hijo. María fue la primera discípula misionera; toda su vida la dedicó a cumplir la promesa que hizo cuando el Arcángel Gabriel compartió con ella la vocación única que le había sido dada por Dios Padre a través del poder del Espíritu Santo.

El “sí” de María, en su compromiso de por vida de acompañar a su Hijo, es el modelo que nos esforzamos por seguir como Arquidiócesis. Su cercanía a Jesús nos anima a acercarnos a Él a través de ella; su fidelidad a las enseñanzas y al ejemplo de Jesús hacen de María la imagen perfecta de la Iglesia, la Madre de la Misericordia, la Madre de la Santa Esperanza y la Madre de nuestro Salvador.

Cada una de las cinco metas de nuestro plan pastoral es de especial importancia para María. Mediante nuestra oración y adoración, invocamos la intercesión de nuestra Madre Santísima y su ayuda infalible. Mediante la corresponsabilidad con respecto a los abundantes dones de su Hijo, seguimos su ejemplo de gratitud, responsabilidad y generosidad. Mediante la intercesión de María nos esforzamos por formar familias y comunidades santas que den testimonio de la dignidad de la vida humana y del bien común de todos. Mediante nuestra aceptación del llamado bautismal a la evangelización y la catequesis, decimos «sí» a la voluntad de Dios como lo hizo María, y confiamos en la gracia de su Hijo para llevar a cabo con éxito nuestra misión. Por último, cuando pedimos a nuestra Madre que interceda por todo el clero y los líderes laicos, afirmamos su amor especial por todos los que comparten la misión de misericordia, esperanza y salvación de su Hijo.

En los últimos meses se ha producido un trágico resurgimiento del virus de la COVID-19, así como el azote del racismo, la intolerancia y la violencia en nuestras comunidades. Rezamos para que María, la Madre de la Iglesia, nos guíe en la planificación del futuro de nuestra Arquidiócesis, y nos ayude a ser conscientes de que todos somos uno en Cristo, hermanas y hermanos en la única familia de Dios.

Conforme avanzamos más allá de las exigencias del distanciamiento social y el aislamiento físico, y nos esforzamos por lograr una verdadera igualdad y justicia para todos, acudamos a nuestra Madre Santísima y pidámosle que nos ayude a acercarnos a Jesús y a los demás. Pidámosle a María que nos anime y nos guíe mientras proclamamos el Evangelio de la Alegría y nos esforzamos por vivir la misión de misericordia, esperanza y salvación de Cristo.

### Conclusión

Volcando todos nuestros esfuerzos en la labor de llevar a cabo este plan pastoral arquidiocesano y repitiendo las palabras de bendición que pronunció san Pablo sobre los Tesalonicenses, recemos:

Y que el mismo Dios de paz os santifique por completo; y que todo vuestro ser, espíritu, alma y cuerpo, sea preservado irreprensible para la venida de nuestro Señor Jesucristo. Fiel es el que os llama, el cual también lo hará. Hermanos, orad por nosotros (1 Tes 5:23-25).

Dado en Indianápolis, en el Centro Católico Arzobispo Edward T. O’Meara, el 3 de diciembre de 2020 A.D.

**Reverendísimo Charles C. Thompson, D.D., J.C.L.**  
*Arzobispo de Indianápolis*



### La Arquidiócesis de Indianápolis: Historia Breve

La identidad y la misión católica en Indiana tiene una rica historia. El papa Clemente X fundó la Diócesis de Quebec, en 1674, que incluía el territorio conocido hoy como Indiana. Los registros sacramentales comenzaron a guardarse en la Iglesia de San Francisco Javier, en Vincennes, en 1749. En 1770, el padre Pierre Gibault se convirtió en el pastor de Vincennes.

La Ordenanza del Noroeste de 1787 garantizaba la libertad religiosa en todo el territorio. En 1789, Vincennes pasó a formar parte de la jurisdicción eclesiástica de la Diócesis de Baltimore. El Territorio de Indiana se fundó en 1800 y se designó a Vincennes como su capital. El 8 de abril de 1808 se fundó la Diócesis de Bardstown, en Kentucky que abarcaba todo el territorio de Indiana. La Escuela Primaria Flaget, la actual escuela católica de Vincennes, lleva el nombre del primer obispo de Bardstown, Joseph Benedict Flaget. Hasta donde se sabe, el obispo Flaget fue el primer obispo católico en administrar el sacramento de la confirmación en el Territorio de Indiana, en Vincennes, en 1814. En 1816, Indiana se convirtió en el decimonoveno estado.

La Diócesis de Vincennes, ahora la Arquidiócesis de Indianápolis, fue fundada por el papa Gregorio XVI el 6 de mayo de 1834. En aquel entonces, el territorio de la diócesis comprendía todo el estado de Indiana y el tercio oriental de Illinois. Este último se separó de la Diócesis de Vincennes con la fundación de la Diócesis de Chicago, el 28 de noviembre de 1843.

El padre Simon Bruté, médico graduado en Francia, fue nombrado primer obispo de Vincennes y sirvió a la comunidad durante cinco años hasta su muerte en 1839. En 1898 la sede de la diócesis se transfirió a Indianápolis, luego de cuatro obispos designados y de que se fundaran varias parroquias. Los primeros cuatro obispos están enterrados en la cripta de la Basílica de San Francisco Javier, en Vincennes.

Por decreto del papa Pío IX, el 8 de enero de 1857 la mitad norte del estado se convirtió en la Diócesis de Fort Wayne, siendo los límites la parte del estado al norte de la frontera sur de los condados de Fountain, Montgomery, Boone, Hamilton, Madison, Delaware, Randolph y Warren. La otra mitad sur del estado conformaba la Diócesis de Vincennes, que abarcaba 50 condados. Cubría un área de 18,479 millas cuadradas que se extendía desde los límites norte de Marion y los condados contiguos hasta el río Ohio y desde Illinois al oeste hasta Ohio al este.

Al segundo obispo de Vincennes se le permitió, por mandato apostólico, establecer su residencia en Vincennes, Madison, Lafayette o Indianápolis; Vincennes, sin embargo, seguiría siendo la ciudad sede. Este permiso, excluyendo Lafayette, se extendió al cuarto obispo.

Tras su designación en 1878, al obispo Francis Chatard, el quinto de Vincennes, se le ordenó fijar su residencia en Indianápolis. Aunque la sede de la

CONTINUA EN LA SIGUIENTE PAGINA

catedral y la sede continuaban en Vincennes, el obispo Chatard usó la Parroquia de San Juan Evangelista en Indianápolis como catedral no oficial hasta que culminaron las obras de la Catedral de San Pedro y San Pablo en Indianápolis, en 1907. La Parroquia de San Juan Evangelista, fundada en 1837, fue la primera en Indianápolis y el condado de Marion.

Por mandato apostólico de fecha 28 de marzo de 1898, el título de la diócesis cambió a “Diócesis de Indianápolis” con sede episcopal en la ciudad de Indianápolis. Pese al cambio de residencia oficial del obispo, el patrón de la diócesis siguió siendo san Francisco Javier, el título de la antigua catedral de Vincennes. En 2006, tras la canonización de la Madre Teodora Guérin, la primera santa canonizada de la Arquidiócesis, la Santa Sede la proclamó patrona de la Arquidiócesis junto con Francisco Javier.

El 21 de octubre de 1944, Su Santidad el papa Pío XII emitió un decreto apostólico mediante el cual se creó la Arquidiócesis de Indianápolis. El 19 de diciembre de 1944, por decreto ejecutivo del delegado papal, el Reverendísimo Amleto Giovanni Cicognani, delegado apostólico de Estados Unidos, proclamó solemnemente el decreto papal del papa Pío XII en la Catedral de San Pedro y San Pablo, a través del cual Indianápolis fue elevada a arquidiócesis y el estado de Indiana se convirtió en el área metropolitana. Mediante el mismo decreto se crearon las diócesis de Evansville y Lafayette-in-Indiana y, junto con la Diócesis de Fort Wayne, se convirtieron sedes sufragáneas de Indianápolis. Al establecerse la Diócesis de Gary el 25 de febrero de 1957, también se convirtió en sede sufragánea.

El área actual de la Arquidiócesis de Indianápolis es de 13,757.7 millas

cuadradas, según las mediciones de 1990 de la División de Referencia de la Biblioteca del Estado de Indiana, y comprende los condados de Bartholomew, Brown, Clark, Clay, Crawford, Dearborn, Decatur, Fayette, Floyd, Franklin, Hancock, Harrison, Hendricks, Henry, Jackson, Jefferson, Jennings, Johnson, Lawrence, Marion, Monroe, Morgan, Ohio, Orange, Owen, Parke, Perry, Putnam, Ripley, Rush, Scott, Shelby, Switzerland, Union, Vermillion, Vigo, Washington y Wayne, y el municipio de Harrison en el condado de Spencer, en el sur de Indiana.

Hoy en día la Arquidiócesis Católica Romana de Indianápolis comprende 126 parroquias, 68 escuelas, seis agencias de Caridades Católicas y muchas oficinas ministeriales en el centro y el sur de Indiana. Hay una fuerte presencia de mujeres y hombres consagrados, incluyendo

benedictinos, franciscanos, hermanas de la Providencia de Santa María de las Madres, carmelitas y jesuitas. Dos universidades católicas, Marian University y el St. Mary-of-the-Woods College, brindan educación a estudiantes de Indiana y de muchas otras regiones de los Estados Unidos y a la comunidad internacional. El Seminario Universitario Obispo Simon Bruté de Indianápolis se inauguró en 2004 para preparar a los seminaristas universitarios para el seminario mayor. El Seminario y la Escuela de Teología de Saint Meinrad, fundados en 1861 en St. Meinrad, Indiana, ofrecen formación a sacerdotes, diáconos y ministros laicos.

El 13 de junio de 2017, el papa Francisco nombró al arzobispo Charles C. Thompson como séptimo arzobispo de Indianápolis. Su ceremonia de investidura se realizó en la Catedral de San Pedro y San Pablo el 28 de julio de 2017. †

## Arquidiócesis Católica Romana de Indianápolis:

### Metas estratégicas, objetivos y acciones de implementación

#### Enero de 2020

Nosotros, la Arquidiócesis Católica Romana de Indianápolis, proclamamos con alegría el Evangelio de Jesucristo a todas las personas que viven su misión de misericordia, esperanza y salvación.

#### Oración y adoración

**META 1: Fomentar un encuentro personal con Jesucristo a través de una vida litúrgica, sacramental, devocional y de oración personal rica y dinámica.**

**Objetivo 1.1** Cultivar el sentido de pertenencia de todo el pueblo de Dios a través de experiencias litúrgicas que honren nuestra creciente diversidad cultural y étnica.

**Objetivo 1.2** Ofrecer recursos a las parroquias para fomentar la participación plena, activa y consciente de todos los fieles en la vida litúrgica de la Iglesia.

**Objetivo 1.3** Enriquecer y complementar la comprensión de los fieles del Evangelio, las escrituras y la liturgia a través de la música y el canto que honra y celebra nuestra diversidad cultural y étnica.

**Objetivo 1.4** Fomentar la vida espiritual del pueblo de Dios a través de las devociones de “piedad popular.”

**Acción 1.4.1** Identificar y diseñar los recursos necesarios para profundizar en la comprensión y el uso de las oraciones y las devociones católicas por parte de los fieles.

**Objetivo 1.5** Promover la preparación sacramental como instrumento de la nueva evangelización, como un encuentro para candidatos, familias y padrinos con el Señor resucitado.

#### Corresponsabilidad

**META 2: Fomentar una cultura de corresponsabilidad en respuesta a nuestro llamado bautismal a través de la entrega de nuestro tiempo, talentos y tesoros en el servicio de Dios y de los demás.**

**Objetivo 2.1** Fomentar un mayor sentido de discipulado en la gente ayudándola a identificar los dones que Dios les ha dado, y de qué manera pueden ponerlos al servicio para construir Su reino a través de la Iglesia.

**Acción 2.1.1** Emitir un llamado a la acción para un plan de evangelización y catequización de los fieles.

**Objetivo 2.2** Diseñar e implementar un sistema a nivel arquidiocesano que conecte y coordine los dones y talentos de los fieles con las necesidades de la Arquidiócesis, de la comunidad en general y de la parroquia, e invite y comprometa activamente a los fieles al servicio de los demás.

**Acción 2.2.1** Evaluar las estructuras de comunicación dentro de la Arquidiócesis y responder con la elaboración de modelos eficaces que utilicen diversos métodos y atiendan las necesidades.

**Objetivo 2.3** Realizar una evaluación o auditoría integral de todos los bienes de capital y las

instalaciones dentro de la Arquidiócesis en relación con el mantenimiento y la utilidad a corto y largo plazo (sobre la base de auditorías y evaluaciones anteriores) y desarrollar métodos e informes estandarizados para evaluar los recursos y las necesidades pastorales en toda la Arquidiócesis.

**Objetivo 2.4** Seguir utilizando las herramientas y recursos obtenidos del programa “Empoderamiento de líderes pastorales” (*Empowering Pastoral Leaders*) como medio para aumentar la capacidad de liderazgo, las aptitudes y los talentos de todos.

#### Familia y comunidad

**META 3: Apoyar y fomentar la participación de las familias y comunidades de la Arquidiócesis.**

**Objetivo 3.1** Reconocer a la familia como el núcleo de nuestros esfuerzos de evangelización y del ministerio pastoral.

**Acción 3.1.1** Alimentar los matrimonios católicos y la vida familiar católica a través de experiencias que profundicen el encuentro con Jesucristo.

**Acción 3.1.2** Desarrollar formas de involucrar y apoyar las necesidades de las familias.

**Acción 3.1.3** Fomentar el uso de una evaluación o inventario de los dones espirituales en nuestras parroquias, agencias, escuelas y organizaciones.

**Objetivo 3.2** Ofrecer recursos y experiencias a los hogares católicos en el fomento y el discernimiento de las vocaciones.

**Objetivo 3.3** Cultivar comunidades centradas en la invitación y la evangelización de las personas en todas las fases de la vida.

**Objetivo 3.4** Afirmar y promover el papel de los padres como los principales maestros y formadores de la fe de sus hijos.

**Objetivo 3.5** Diseñar programas de divulgación y recursos para invitar y acoger activamente a los católicos inactivos, para extender la hospitalidad a quienes visitan la Iglesia por primera vez, y para recibir calurosamente a aquellos que buscan un hogar en la iglesia.

#### Evangelización y catequesis

**META 4: Vivir con una actitud de discipulado misionero hacia todas las personas, llegando a las periferias de nuestra diócesis, parroquias y comunidades.**

**Objetivo 4.1** Fomentar el sentido de pertenencia en nuestra Arquidiócesis mediante una actitud de encuentro.

**Objetivo 4.2** Restaurar el significado de la alegría mediante la proclamación y la evangelización de la Buena Nueva.

**Objetivo 4.3** Crear una cultura de discipulado intencional.

**Objetivo 4.4** Convertir en prioridad la participación de los jóvenes y los adultos jóvenes en todos los niveles del ministerio pastoral.

**Objetivo 4.5** Promover instrumentos eficaces de evangelización mediante una catequesis sólida.

**Acción 4.5.1** Crear conciencia de que la evangelización no se limita a las liturgias dominicales.

**Acción 4.5.2** Acompañar y apoyar a los pequeños grupos eclesiales de la parroquia.

**Acción 4.5.3** Fomentar la integración de las comunidades étnicas y las personas con discapacidades en las estructuras parroquiales y diocesanas.

**Objetivo 4.6** Identificar y desarrollar modelos de formación catequética con énfasis en el uso de la tecnología y las redes sociales.

**Objetivo 4.7** Promover la formación integral de toda la vida en la fe facilitando la conversión emocional, espiritual e intelectual.

#### Vida y ministerio del clero

**META 5: Asegurar el bienestar espiritual y físico del clero (sacerdotes y diáconos) mediante la vitalidad espiritual, la eficacia organizativa y principios y prácticas coherentes de corresponsabilidad.**

**Objetivo 5.1** Asegurar el bienestar espiritual y físico del clero.

**Acción 5.1.1** Identificar oportunidades para el desarrollo profesional y los años sabáticos para el clero y los laicos.

**Acción 5.1.2** Fomentar una cultura de identidad y apoyo al sacerdocio a través de oportunidades y reuniones locales y arquidiocesanas que promuevan y afirmen la vocación sacerdotal.

**Objetivo 5.2** Crear un marco que identifique los componentes necesarios para tener parroquias prósperas, mientras nos preparamos para los cambios actuales y futuros del clero, los religiosos y el liderazgo laico en la Arquidiócesis.

**Acción 5.2.1** Crear estrategias, estructuras y sistemas nuevos e innovadores que respondan a las necesidades cambiantes de la vida parroquial y al mismo tiempo apoyen el bienestar de nuestros líderes parroquiales.

**Acción 5.2.2** Desarrollar métodos e informes estandarizados para evaluar los recursos (humanos, materiales y financieros) y las necesidades pastorales en toda la Arquidiócesis.

**Acción 5.2.3** Examinar los planes estratégicos y pastorales existentes para coordinar las necesidades y los recursos humanos.

**Acción 5.2.4** Realizar y analizar una evaluación exhaustiva de los horarios de las misas, la disponibilidad de clérigos, la dotación de personal y los feligreses en cada decanato.

**Acción 5.2.5** Examinar la estructura actual de decanato a la luz de las nuevas tendencias e hipótesis relativas al clero en el futuro.

**Acción 5.2.6** Elaborar un plan de comunicaciones global para educar a la Iglesia local y promover la conciencia y la comprensión de los cambios futuros.

**Acción 5.2.7** Identificar, hacer un llamamiento y aclarar la función de los líderes laicos de la Iglesia para servir a las necesidades de las estructuras parroquiales y diocesanas en constante cambio. (Por ejemplo: ¿qué debemos hacer para capacitar a los PLC, los asociados pastorales, los ministros de la juventud, etc.?)

# Pandemic causes shift in liturgical music expectations for Christmas

By Ann Margaret Lewis

During the Christmas season, we expect to hear and sing carols at Mass as an expression of joy in the birth of Christ. With the COVID-19 pandemic, however, one of the Church's complex liturgical challenges has been with its music.

Due to the pandemic, some common safety accommodations have included removing hymnals from pews, forgoing choirs and wind instruments, and discouraging congregational singing. This will likely alter what people will experience musically in the liturgy at Christmas.

## 'Congregational singing ... would be risky'

In July, while churches were re-opening after the lockdown, Andrew Motyka, director of archdiocesan and cathedral liturgical music, provided guidelines to archdiocesan parish musicians on how to deal with the pandemic in their ministries.



Andrew Motyka

"While we didn't forbid congregational singing," Motyka says, "even at that time we

put it on people's radars that, especially in smaller spaces, that would be risky."

Since COVID-19 spreads through droplets emitted from sneezing, coughing, yelling and even speaking and breathing, singing especially becomes an issue with trained singers who can expel droplets and aerosols up to 20 feet

As a result, the choirs one would normally hear singing at Christmas Masses simply cannot rehearse.

For example, in March, a 2.5-hour choir rehearsal in Skagit County, Wash., made up of 61 choir members, resulted in 32 confirmed and 20 likely secondary COVID-19 cases. Three of these people were hospitalized, and two died.

Transmission of the disease in this case, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, was linked to singers performing within 6 feet of each other during practice, augmented by the physical act of singing.

It is the potential for this type of spread that led Motyka to advise parish music leaders to also discourage congregational singing. Many parishes are using a single cantor or exploring different musical options.

"They're starting to rediscover the antiphons," Motyka said. "Every Mass of the year has a proper text that can be sung during the entrance procession, offertory and communion. As someone who has always been a proponent of using the antiphons and a greater use of the different options that the Church provides, it makes me a little happy to see that this is maybe an opportunity to grow a bit in a difficult time."

Joseph Chrisman, pastoral associate for music and faith formation at Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Beech Grove, is one parish music leader who has incorporated the antiphons as part of his music planning.

"We have a great tradition in the Roman Liturgy of using antiphons and psalms," he said. "Our music is not only inspired by the word, it is the word, the psalms. In many parishes, the psalms and antiphons have been supplanted by the use of hymns and songs."

## 'Balance between singing ... and safety'

Chrisman said he has "tried to hold a balance between singing the liturgy and public safety."

He described it as the difference between "singing the liturgy" rather than "singing at the liturgy."

"The principle refers to the component parts of the Mass rather than singing songs at various stages during the Mass," Chrisman explained. "This has given me the opportunity to look at many of the different options that the 'General Instruction of the Roman Missal' allows for singing."



Joseph Chrisman, pastoral associate for music and faith formation at Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Beech Grove, conducts Holy Name's annual Christmas concert in 2019. (Submitted photo by Robert Parsons)

After consulting Holy Name pastor Father Robert Robeson, it was decided to aim for a "simple and balanced approach," he said. "We would continue to sing the ordinaries of the Mass—*Gloria*, the Holy, Holy, etc.—as a community, but we would do something a little less familiar with the other parts, for instance the entrance, offertory and Communion [antiphons]," he continued.

Dealing with the Christmas season, however, has required Chrisman and his parish to make some painful musical sacrifices. One of the greatest was canceling its annual Christmas concert, "which would have been our 57th," Chrisman said.

"The concert is more than just a concert. It is a whole community event, a fixture in our community, that marks the beginning of Christmas for many people. It is months of hard work that culminates in a magical evening of song and praise that we have sacrificed this year in the name of public safety."

All of this, he added, "makes the musical questions of Christmas all the more relevant."

## 'Music directors are creative people'

Planning for Christmas, therefore, calls for thoughtful planning that respects safety and the expectations of the season.

"As a director," Chrisman said, "I have to ask myself, is it prudent for a church full of people to sing out 'O Come All Ye Faithful?'"

He also noted the liturgical issue of the spirit of Advent versus the spirit of Christmas.

"Christmas is the culmination of Advent," he explained. "In Advent, we curb our enthusiasm and prepare our hearts for the coming of the Savior. We finally get the 'Glory to God' back after four Sundays of eager anticipation to proclaim with the angel choirs the joyous announcement of Christ's birth. And, we somehow have to hold a balance between Christmas joy and public safety."

He said the parish is anticipating the usual increase in attendance for the Christmas Masses. Therefore, in addition to mask-wearing and social distancing, the Christmas Masses will also involve less communal singing.

"You can expect some of the traditional Christmas carols, or parts of carols, used in conjunction with the psalms. You can also expect some less familiar music as we continue to limit congregational singing."

Motyka believes that, like Chrisman, all archdiocesan musicians will be resourceful with their Christmas plans.



Andrew Motyka, director of archdiocesan and cathedral liturgical music, conducts the archdiocesan choir and instrumentalists during a priestly ordination liturgy in SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis in 2018. (Criterion file photo by Mike Krokos)



Joseph Chrisman, pastoral associate for music and faith formation at Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Beech Grove, plays the organ during the First Sunday of Advent liturgy on Nov. 29. (Photo by Ann Margaret Lewis)

"I find that music directors in the Church are extremely creative people. Because we work in an idiom that has a strict form to it, you always have to be creative to follow those forms in a beautiful way and in a way that your parish, choir and musicians can handle.

"So, the creative juices are always flowing on that front," he said. "And I

look forward to seeing how people are going to approach it."

(Ann Margaret Lewis is executive assistant in the archdiocesan Office of Communications and the author of several books. E-mail her at [alewis@archindy.org](mailto:alewis@archindy.org). Criterion reporter Sean Gallagher also contributed to this article.) †

# Pope Francis proclaims year dedicated to St. Joseph

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Marking the 150th anniversary of St. Joseph being declared patron of the universal Church, Pope Francis proclaimed a yearlong celebration dedicated to the foster father of Jesus. It began on Dec. 8 and will conclude on Dec. 8, 2021.

In a Dec. 8 apostolic letter, *“Patris Corde”* (“With a father’s heart”), the pope said Christians can discover in St. Joseph, who often goes unnoticed, “an intercessor, a support and a guide in times of trouble.”

“St. Joseph reminds us that those who appear hidden or in the shadows can play an incomparable role in the history of salvation. A word of recognition and of gratitude is due to them all,” he said.

As Mary’s husband and guardian of the son of God, St. Joseph turned “his human vocation to domestic love into a superhuman oblation of himself, his heart and all his abilities, a love placed at the service of the Messiah who was growing to maturity in his home.”

Despite being troubled at first by Mary’s pregnancy, he added, St. Joseph was obedient to God’s will “regardless of the hardship involved.”

“In every situation, Joseph declared his own *‘fiat,’* like those of Mary at the Annunciation and Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane,” the pope said. “All this makes it clear that St. Joseph was called by God to serve the person and mission of Jesus directly through the exercise of his fatherhood and that, in this way, he cooperated in the fullness of time in the great mystery of salvation and is truly a minister of salvation.”

St. Joseph’s unconditional acceptance of Mary and his decision to protect her “good name, her dignity and her life” also serves as an example for men today, the pope added.

“Today, in our world where psychological, verbal and physical

violence toward women is so evident, Joseph appears as the figure of a respectful and sensitive man,” he wrote.

Pope Francis also highlighted St. Joseph’s “creative courage,” not only in finding a stable and making it a “welcoming home for the son of God [who came] into the world,” but also in protecting Christ from the threat posed by King Herod.

“The Holy Family had to face concrete problems like every other family, like so many of our migrant brothers and sisters who, today, too, risk their lives to escape misfortune and hunger. In this regard, I consider St. Joseph the special patron of all those forced to leave their native lands because of war, hatred, persecution and poverty,” the pope said.

As a carpenter who earned “an honest living to provide for his family,” Christ’s earthly guardian is also an example for both workers and those seeking employment and the right to a life of dignity for themselves and their families.

“In our own day, when employment has once more become a burning social issue, and unemployment at times reaches record levels even in nations that for decades have enjoyed a certain degree of prosperity, there is a renewed need to appreciate the importance of dignified work, of which St. Joseph is an exemplary patron,” he said.

The Apostolic Penitentiary, a Vatican tribunal that deals with matters of conscience, also issued a decree on Dec. 8 stating that plenary indulgences will be granted to Catholics not only through prayer and penance, but also through acts of justice, charity and piety dedicated to the foster father of Jesus.

Among the conditions for receiving an indulgence are a spirit detached from sin, receiving sacramental confession as soon as possible, receiving Communion as



A statue of St. Joseph is visible on May 1, 2019, at St. Joseph’s Seminary in Yonkers, N.Y. In a Dec. 8 apostolic letter, Pope Francis proclaimed a yearlong celebration dedicated to St. Joseph, foster father of Jesus. (CNS photo/Chaz Muth)

soon as possible and praying for the Holy Father’s intentions.

However, the decree also highlighted several ways to obtain the indulgence throughout the year, including to those who “meditate on the prayer of the ‘Our Father’ for at least 30 minutes or take part in a spiritual retreat of at least one day that includes a meditation on St. Joseph.”

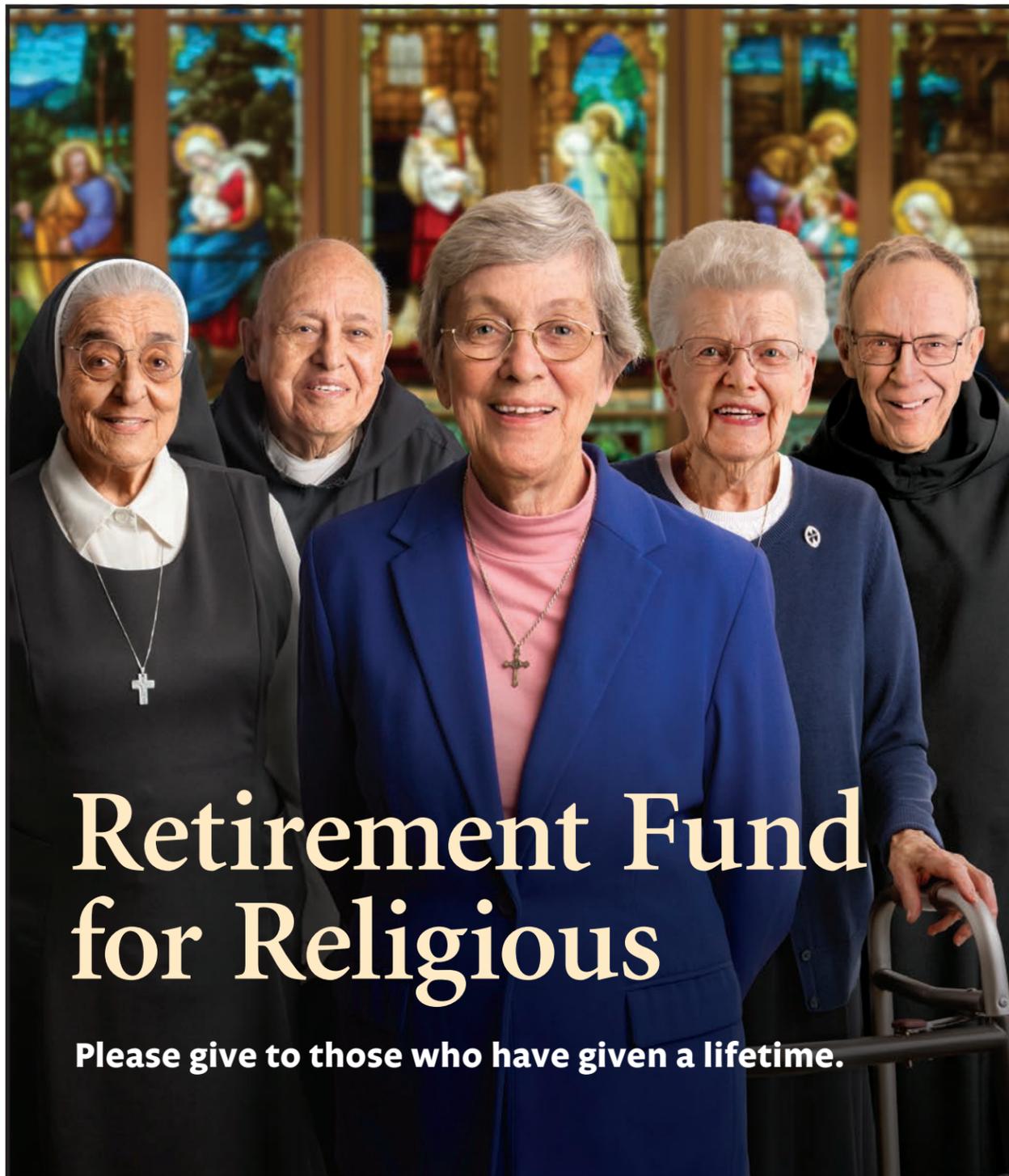
As a “just man,” the document continued, who guarded “the intimate secret that lies at the bottom of the heart and soul,” St. Joseph practiced the virtue of justice in “full adherence to the divine law, which is the law of mercy.

“Therefore, those who, following the example of St. Joseph, will perform a corporal or spiritual work of mercy, will also be able to obtain the gift of the plenary indulgence,” it said.

Indulgences will also be granted to families and engaged couples who recite the rosary together and thus imitate the “same climate of communion, love and prayer lived in the Holy Family.”

Other acts of devotion include entrusting one’s daily activities and prayers for dignified employment to St. Joseph, reciting the litany or any “legitimately approved” prayer to St. Joseph.

During this time of pandemic, the Apostolic Penitentiary also decreed that special indulgences will be granted to the elderly, the sick and all those who “for legitimate reasons are prevented from leaving their home” by “reciting an act of piety in honor of St. Joseph and committed to fulfilling the conditions as soon as possible.” †



“We don’t know what the future holds, but it’s all God’s work,” says Sister Theresa McGrath (center), 86, a member of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, San Antonio. In good times and bad, she and the religious shown here have devoted themselves to God’s work. They are among nearly 30,000 senior sisters, brothers, and religious order priests who benefit from the Retirement Fund for Religious. Your gift helps provide medications, nursing care, and more. Please be generous.

**Please donate at your local parish  
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Above, from left: Sister Alice Garcia, SSCJ, 91; Brother Martin Gonzales, OCSO, 95; Sister Theresa McGrath, CCVI, 86; Sister Anne Cecile Muldoon, OSU, 93; Abbot Emeritus Peter Eberle, OSB, 79. ©2020 United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington DC • All rights reserved • Photo: Jim Judkis

## Retirement Fund for Religious

**Please give to those who have given a lifetime.**

# Faith *Alive!*

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## Advent can help believers discover joy in bleak times

By Effie Caldarola

The 19th-century English poet Christina Rossetti never heard of COVID-19, climate change or many of the woes that beset us in the bleak midwinter of 2020.

Yet, in her poem, "In the Bleak Midwinter," she paints a Christmas scene that endures and brings an odd, consoling joy into these troubled times.

She sets the stage for Jesus's appearance into our chaotic world with these sobering lines, "In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan,/ Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone."

Not everyone celebrates Christmas in the middle of a hard winter, but for many in the northern hemisphere, there are Advent days when ice forms on window panes and chilly winds whip through sullen grey skies.

And for all of us, the challenges of this particular Advent can make life seem hard as stone.

Many have experienced the death of loved ones from COVID. Some of us are unemployed, face food insecurity or homelessness. Shelters are overflowing. Many will not travel to see loved ones this season.

Some ache to see new grandchildren they've never met, or regret missing family weddings, funerals and reunions.

Into the midst of these dark times come the bright lights of Christmas and the beautiful celebration of *Gaudete* Sunday, the Third Sunday of Advent.

Rose-colored vestments and a rose candle on the Advent wreath remind us that the very word *Gaudete* is our Advent command: Rejoice!

So how do we rejoice in this crazy world of 2020?

One fundamental lesson of the spiritual life is that joy and consolation are not predicated on possessions, wealth or the perfect situations that we dream of for our life. Those tidy Hallmark Christmases make good fictional stories and colorful advertisements, but they are far from the heart of the real Christmas story, the one



A health care worker, clothed for protection from COVID-19, cares for a homeless man at the Pope Francis Center in Detroit in May. This Advent, spend time in prayer embracing the marginalized. Pray with the poor, the victimized, the lonely and the ill. (CNS photo/Jim West)

that brings us joy and a peace the world cannot give.

The incarnation of Jesus and his coming among us into this world drives this point home. The Hebrew people were looking and hoping for a Savior, but the one they most often envisioned would come with power, majesty and entitlement.

Instead, the birth of Jesus happened in the most humble of circumstances. This is a powerful lesson for us about our own aspirations in life. In the Gospel of St. Luke, Jesus' first visitors were shepherds, a despised and denigrated group of laborers among the people of Israel.

An exhausted Mary, who had gone through all the difficulties, hardship and pain of childbirth, probably greeted them with warmth.

No doubt she was aware of the presence of angels that surrounded her labor and her child.

Sometimes we forget that we, too, are called to welcome the weary and be aware of the angels that surround our Advent and Christmas, no matter the circumstances.

On *Gaudete* Sunday, a reading from St. Paul's First Letter to the Thessalonians instructs us: "Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks" (1 Thes 5:16-18).

Joy, peace, grace and consolation can come, and perhaps most usually come, in moments of quiet and thoughtfulness.

Maybe this *Gaudete* Sunday, and this strange year, is beckoning us to quiet down, do less, be more prayerful, take intentional time to count our blessings and give thanks for the fundamental things.

Maybe we can find room to rejoice when we won't be exhausted by constant parties, obligatory entertaining, harried travel, frenzied gift buying.

Will we miss some of it? Of course. But can we find joy in what Christ is offering us in this unique and unusual Advent of 2020? Yes.

St. Paul tells us to pray constantly. Make time and space to pray. Count, each day, the things for which you are grateful.

Call someone you love. Be intentionally joyful.

And spend time with those shepherds. Jesus spent his entire life with those on the margins, so it was no accident that a group of shepherds got the first peek at God's arrival.

It was a foretelling of the Savior who would befriend the sinner and tax collector, touch the leper and humiliate those who wanted to stone a woman accused of sin.

Spend time in prayer embracing the marginalized. Be with those seeking asylum at our border who have been turned away without a hearing or separated from their children. Pray with those condemned to die on death row. Pray with the poor, the victimized, the lonely and the ill.

The refrain for the responsorial psalm for Mass on Tuesday of the Third Week of Advent reminds us that "the Lord hears the cry of the poor." Place yourself with the poor and struggling.

In Rossetti's poem, she shares a line both joyful and a good companion to prayer: "Our God, Heaven cannot hold him."

Here, we have the image of our Creator, so eager to join us in our humanity and our earthly struggle, that in the person of Jesus, God literally bursts the bounds of heaven to be with us in our lives. This is the incredible joy we feel on *Gaudete* Sunday.

This is our invitation to the kingdom of God, where shepherds and sinners are welcomed. This is the joy that spills into our current history.

(Effie Caldarola is a freelance writer and a columnist for Catholic News Service.) †



Pope Francis arrives in procession to celebrate Mass during a visit to St. Joseph Parish in Rome on Dec. 14, 2014. On the Third Sunday of Advent, rose-colored vestments and a rose candle on the Advent wreath remind us that the very word *Gaudete* is our Advent command: Rejoice! (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

## Joyful Witness/Kimberly Pohovey

## Family donation makes a significant impact to those in need



I vividly remember the boxes of fruit lining the entire perimeter of our garage and towering nearly to the ceiling. Every Christmas, Dad would have the fruit delivered directly to our home which became a make-shift fruit basket-assembling business. As part of my Dad's fruit and meat market, he would sell hundreds of festive fruit baskets during the holiday season.

The whole family was part of the operation. My parents and siblings all participated in the assembly line, packing the fruit into baskets, wrapping them in cellophane and topping it off with a beautiful bow.

I was assigned bow-making duty. This was back in the day before you could purchase pre-made bows with sticky backs. We had an industrial bow-making machine in which you would thread the ribbon through a crazy contraption which would zigzag back and forth until its product resembled a perfectly tied bow. I would release the bow from the machine and stab the back with a pointy plastic piece to adhere a stick-on back.

I'm sure my older siblings grumbled

at having to pack fruit baskets one more year, but as a youngster, I reveled in this enterprise. Not only did I love the sense of purpose it provided to me at a young age, it was a time when our whole family gathered together to work on a common project. It felt like a magical time, and I eagerly awaited the fruit delivery each year. I think that feeling was only enhanced by the purpose.

Dad proudly sold those baskets at his store, but he also loved giving away quite a few of them to people throughout our community—sometimes as thank-you gifts, but also to folks who were struggling financially. He was a generous man.

At some point, as my siblings and I aged and our family grew quite large, we decided to stop our family gift exchange and instead pool our monies and donate the entire amount to a charitable cause. My five siblings and I take turns each year organizing our donations and selecting the cause. When we gather for our annual Christmas party, whomever organized the donation that year gives a brief update about the cause we supported and the impact of the gift.

Through the years, we have made donations to groups like the Arthritis Foundation—since many of my family suffer from this ailment. In past years,

we have bought toys for a local hospital, coats for homeless people, helped send underprivileged Catholic school students on a trip to Washington, D.C., and so much more.

My favorite was the Christmas after Dad passed away. I was in charge of the family donation that year, so I used the money to purchase as many fruit baskets as possible and donated them to a local food pantry to be distributed to folks in need. It felt so good to make this donation in memory of my Dad, but I was also able to involve my husband and two young sons in the process and share with them the fruit basket experience I had as a child.

I know many of us make generous donations to worthy non-profits, especially at Christmas. I have found that my family's idea of pooling our money affords us the opportunity to make a more significant impact.

How can you gather with others, be it family, friends, neighbors or other groups, to share your God-given abundance with those in need? I guarantee you will feel not only the warmth of giving, but the sense of community which unites us.

*(Kimberly Pohovey is a member of St. Jude Parish in Indianapolis. She is the director of major and planned gifts for the archdiocese.) †*

## Our Works of Charity/David Bethuram

## Good Samaritan's response demonstrates how to love our neighbor

One of the most familiar and well-loved stories in the Bible is that of the good Samaritan. However, we must ask ourselves whether we leave it in the past, thinking of it as merely a good story, or look at it from a modern-day perspective. We certainly live in days when the spirit of the good Samaritan is needed, and the place it should be displayed is in our lives.



The Church's vision and that of Catholic Charities awaken in us the parable of the good Samaritan as it is lived out in our world today. In this passage, Jesus is instructing the lawyer as to who is neighbor to the victim.

*"Jesus replied, 'A man fell victim to robbers as he went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. They stripped and beat him and went off leaving him half dead' "* (Lk 10:30).

*"But a Samaritan traveler who came upon him was moved with compassion at the sight. He approached the victim, poured oil and wine over his wounds and bandaged them. Then he lifted him up on his own animal, took him to an inn and cared for him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper with the instruction 'Take care of him. If you spend more than what I have given you, I shall repay you on my way back' "* (Lk 10:33-35).

*"Jesus then asked the lawyer, 'Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robbers' victim?' He answered, 'The one who treated him with mercy.' Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise' "* (Lk 10:35-37).

Our country has no shortage of needy people, but are we as God's people willing to help? Our Christianity should be on display in our daily lives. Therefore, we must ask ourselves if we are merciful and compassionate to those in need.

Let's examine the following characteristics of the good Samaritan and ask if these qualities are true of us.

**He saw the need.** Although all three men physically saw the critically wounded man, only the Samaritan looked and stopped to help. Before we can meet needs, we must be aware of them.

**He responded with his heart.** The Samaritan saw the helplessness and suffering of the dying man, and his heart went out to him.

**He opened his hands.** The Samaritan didn't just feel sorry for this poor man, he relieved his suffering by pouring oil and wine on his wounds and bandaging them. He didn't leave him behind, but lifted him onto his donkey, brought him to the nearest inn, and took care of him.

**He shared his treasure.** Since the Samaritan was on a journey, he needed to continue traveling even though the injured man needed time to recover. Instead of simply dropping him off and leaving, the Samaritan paid the innkeeper to look after him. Then he promised to return and repay the innkeeper for whatever more he had to spend for this man's care.

**He offered his time.** The Samaritan was willing to have his trip interrupted to offer aid to a man in need of help. He put his journey on hold for a while to do that which was more important—show compassion and care to someone in need.

Today we don't lack opportunities to be good Samaritans, but we must first see the needs, feel compassion and be willing to be inconvenienced in order to give of our time and resources to help. As we allow the love of Jesus to flow through our hearts, we will understand more and more what it means to love our neighbor.

*(David Bethuram is executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Catholic Charities. E-mail him at [dbethuram@archindy.org](mailto:dbethuram@archindy.org).) †*

## Guest Column/Richard Etienne

## Invite God into your pain, ask him to begin process of healing

Grief is an inevitable part of life. If we are blessed to live long enough, we will suffer some experience of loss.



The death of a loved one is the greatest form of grief, but there are many other smaller forms of loss that are part of life—a loss of a job, loss of a home, loss of a close friendship, loss of our own health, and so on.

How are we as Catholic Christians supposed to deal with these losses in life? In the Book of Psalms, we hear, "Listen, God, to my prayer; do not hide from my pleading; hear me and give answer. I rock with grief" (Ps 55:2-3). And in another Psalm, "Lord, rescue me! Come quickly to help me, Lord!" (Ps 40:14)

When we are suffering the deep pangs of grief, it is difficult to imagine that we will ever feel happiness again. It is hard to place our trust in God and be hopeful that we will get through this period. But we must be patient.

In Psalm 40, it states, "I waited, waited for the Lord; who bent down and heard my cry" (Ps 40:2). God will act on his timetable. We live in a world of Chronos—clock time. God lives in Chiros—his time.

Our oldest son was born 10 days before my wife's due date as a result of a head-on automobile accident. I remember the grief that I felt after his birth from an emergency cesarean section and asking my spiritual director if that grief would ever subside.

When a person is in the middle of a severe grief experience, it can seem like it will never heal. I was told that in time the pain would begin to diminish if I allowed it some "space." I had previously thought that giving

pain "space" might allow it to overwhelm me. I was also encouraged to invite God into the process of healing. And if I am being honest, I was pretty angry during this time.

But with time, God began to heal me.

In the Book of Jeremiah, we read, "Oh Lord, my strength, my fortress, my refuge in the day of distress!" (Jer 16:19) And in Psalm 46, we read, "God is our refuge and our strength, an ever-present help in distress" (Ps 46:2).

I eventually began to feel joy again.

Are you experiencing grief from a recent experience, or something that happened many ago that still hurts when you remember it? Have you invited God into your pain and asked him to begin the process of healing? Would now be a good time to do that?

*(Richard Etienne is a member of St. John the Baptist Parish in Newburgh, Ind., in the Evansville Diocese.) †*

## Twenty Something/

Christina Capecchi

## Of mice and men: a saint for our times

"Synchronicity." That's the word one journalist used in a Nov. 3 Instagram post to describe the fact that Election Day fell on the



feast day of St. Martin de Porres, the patron saint of social justice. It was a timely reminder, he felt, to vote with those ideals in mind, to imagine the kind of world the 17th-century Dominican lay brother was trying to bring about.

The icon caught my eye: a robed Peruvian man with a broom at his side and a mouse at his feet. I was intrigued. Who was this saint? And what could he teach us today?

I texted my aunt Jan, my own personal Catholic Wikipedia. "I just finished a novena to St. Martin," she wrote.

Now I was hooked.

After some reading, it became clear how uniquely suited this saint is for our times. St. Martin de Porres is the patron saint for public health workers, for multi-racial people and for all those seeking racial harmony. If that doesn't say 2020, I don't know what does. All he's missing is a Zoom app.

St. Martin was called an "illegitimate son," born of a Spanish nobleman who quickly abandoned the boy, and of a freed slave of African and Native descent. She did laundry to make ends meet, but had to send him to foster care with a barber. The lonely child spent hours a night in prayer, a great solace.

St. Martin longed to enter religious life, but Peruvian law banned descendants of Africans and Native Americans from becoming full members of religious orders.

St. Martin was undeterred. There was another way, he learned. He could apply to become a Dominican volunteer—someone to do the grunt work.

At 15, the Dominican Convent of the Rosary in Lima accepted him as a servant boy, letting him to stay at the monastery and wear its habit. Just as his mother had done, St. Martin took on the laundry. He cleaned, managed the kitchen and worked as a barber.

After eight years of faithful service, St. Martin received incredible news: The prior had decided to turn a blind eye to the law and allow St. Martin to take his vows as a member of the Third Order of St. Dominic. While he was scorned by some fellow brothers, he was unfazed. His dream had come true.

St. Martin devoted himself to work in the infirmary, being recognized for his care of the sick and credited for miracles.

His gift was that he could see Jesus in anyone.

Once, when an elderly beggar approached the convent, St. Martin gave the stranger his own bed. The man was nearly naked and covered in ulcers, but he looked like Jesus to St. Martin.

When a fellow Dominican reprimanded him, St. Martin responded: "Compassion, my dear brother, is preferable to cleanliness. Reflect that with a little soap I can easily clean my bed covers, but even with a torrent of tears I would never wash from my soul the stain that my harshness toward the unfortunate would create."

In these polarizing times, when wearing a mask is not merely a public health measure but a political statement, St. Martin speaks to us. He exhorts us to stop judging our neighbors and our Facebook friends. He stands for compassion.

Amid this resurging virus, he calls us to persistence and prayer.

Perhaps the best response to our big problems is to focus more intensely on the little things. The littlest things. Now is a time to bolster our own domestic Church, making like the "saint of the broom"—to fold the laundry, to talk to the mice and to pray without ceasing.

*(Christina Capecchi is a writer from Inver Grove Heights, Minn.) †*

Third Sunday of Advent/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

# The Sunday Readings

Sunday, December 13, 2020

- Isaiah 61:1-2a, 10-11
- 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
- John 1:6-8, 19-28

This weekend, the Church celebrates *Gaudete* Sunday. The title comes from the opening word of the original Latin text of the entrance antiphon for this weekend's Mass. In Latin, "*gaudete*" means "rejoice." It is the Church's liturgical invitation for the faithful to rejoice because Christmas is nearer.

Another reason for rejoicing is that, hopefully, all feel closer to God as a result of observing Advent with prayer, reflection and penance. If we have used Advent as intended by the Church, we are nearer to a fuller communion with the Lord, the "light of the world."

The third part of Isaiah furnishes the first reading. When this passage was written, God's people were weary and frustrated.

They, or their forebears, had undergone the humiliation, uncertainty and misery of exile in Babylon. When allowed finally to leave Babylon and return to their homeland, they understandably were overjoyed.

A sterile and parched land, hardly flowing with milk and honey, awaited them. Had God tricked them, providing for their release from Babylon only to subject them to worse trials at home? Did God even exist?

Typically for this section of Isaiah, this reading glows with optimism. Whatever may be the reality of the moment, for those loyal to God, a wondrous future awaits.

St. Paul's First Epistle to the Thessalonians provides the second reading. Belief in the Lord's second coming, and impatience to see it occur, filled the first generations of Christianity. This reading catches well this mood.

Longing for the second coming among the early Christians is easy to explain. They had much to endure. Cruel, severe persecution had developed. The culture all around the Christians was hostile. Temptations to renounce the Gospel abounded.

Paul reassured the Christians of Thessalonica, urging them to be true to

the Gospel. God and his goodness would one day prevail.

St. John's Gospel is the source of the last reading. The reading is a story about John the Baptist, whose own identity puzzled many of his contemporaries. Some assumed that John was the Messiah. Others wondered if he were Elijah or another prophet who had returned to Earth.

Replying to these questions, John was firm. Another would follow him, he insisted. He was to prepare the way for this future representative of God and was not worthy even to untie the straps of his sandals.

## Reflection

Clergy may wear rose-colored vestments on this weekend, symbolizing the dark violet of Advent already being lightened by the forthcoming light of the Lord's coming into the world.

Why rose? As day breaks, the sky does not suddenly change from black to brilliant gold. Light creeps over the horizon, its first rays showing a rosy color, a blending of dark purple with gold.

In calling us to rejoice this *Gaudete* weekend, the Church either presumes that we have spent the first part of Advent pondering the meaning of salvation, or it urges us to use the remaining time in this season to seek God with all our hearts.

Excitedly, the liturgy proclaims how wonderful it will be when the Lord's kingdom comes! "*Gaudete!*" Rejoice! When the Lord's kingdom comes, death and evil indeed will end.

Still, we must make a choice to turn to God, admitting him into our hearts. We wholeheartedly must reject our own sin.

Many influences will weaken our determination to reject sin. Holy resolve will require conviction, discipline and focus.

Always the good teacher, the Church, through this reading from John's Gospel, instructs us to look for Jesus, realistically, never creating our own false versions of the messiah.

Repentance and rededication are hard, but the gold of the new day of Christ will reward our efforts. The remaining time of Advent gives us time to go to the light. †

## Daily Readings

### Monday, December 14

St. John of the Cross, priest and doctor of the Church  
Numbers 24:2-7, 15-17a  
Psalm 25:4-5ab, 6, 7bc, 8-9  
Matthew 21:23-27

### Tuesday, December 15

Zephaniah 3:1-2, 9-13  
Psalm 34:2-3, 6-7, 17-18, 19, 23  
Matthew 21:28-32

### Wednesday, December 16

Isaiah 45:6b-8, 18, 21c-25  
Psalm 85:9ab, 10-14  
Luke 7:18b-23

### Thursday, December 17

Genesis 49:2, 8-10  
Psalm 72:3-4, 7-8, 17  
Matthew 1:1-17

### Friday, December 18

Jeremiah 23:5-8  
Psalm 72:1-2, 12-13, 18-19  
Matthew 1:18-25

### Saturday, December 19

Judges 13:2-7, 24-25a  
Psalm 71:3-4a, 5-6b, 16-17  
Luke 1:5-25

### Sunday, December 20

Fourth Sunday of Advent  
2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16  
Psalm 89:2-5, 27, 29  
Romans 16:25-27  
Luke 1:26-38

## Question Corner/Fr. Kenneth Doyle

### God desires to forgive all sins in the sacrament of penance

**Q**I have done something terrible. I committed a mortal sin, and then I received the Eucharist. Am I going to be condemned? I am very worried. I am 17, and I was baptized just two months ago. If I go to confession, will I be forgiven?



I was afraid that my parents would question me if I did not receive Communion, so I went up to receive even though I knew it was wrong. Please help me to know what to do at this point. (City and state withheld)

**A**Please be at peace. You are not going to be condemned, and you will surely be forgiven in the sacrament of penance. It strikes me that some of our best-known saints made their way back from moral wrongs to find healing and joy in God's forgiveness.

I'm thinking of St. Paul, who once persecuted those who believed in Jesus; of St. Peter, who during Christ's Passion denied that he even knew Christ; of St. Augustine, who had fathered a child out of wedlock. God can forgive

anything—and he wants to. His very purpose in creating us was so that we could share eternal happiness in his presence.

Just go to confession and tell the priest of your sin and the fact that you received holy Communion despite recognizing the gravity of doing so in that situation. And congratulations on your recent baptism.

**Q**Recently, you answered a question on distraction in prayer, which I found to be helpful. You mentioned that even some of the best-known saints struggled to remain focused while they were praying. If you don't mind, I have a further question on that topic.

For some months now, due to the COVID crisis, my family and I have been attending Mass virtually, as two of the four of us have high-risk health issues. We miss attending in person, but we have created certain rituals at home to make the Mass sacred—including dressing appropriately, responding to the prayers and standing and kneeling at the appropriate times.

However, I find it difficult to turn off my "Mom brain" and focus on the Mass when I look around my house at things that need to be done—cleaning, laundry, etc. (I have a shortened attention span due to a brain injury some years ago.)

I have found that it helps me now to focus my attention on Jesus if I knit when I pray; I started doing that with the Divine Mercy Chaplet and the rosary, and lately I have been knitting while we view the Mass.

But my teenage daughter thinks that this is inappropriate. Since the Mass is a sacrament, she feels that my knitting is disrespectful to God. I would be grateful for your advice. (Pennsylvania)

**A**I am impressed by your family's efforts to keep the Mass sacred despite being forced to view it at home. And I am sure you are aware that, during the current pandemic, you are not under obligation to watch the Mass on television; you are doing it not because you are bound to, but because you want to. If knitting while you watch helps you to focus your thoughts on Jesus, then I would say: By all means, knit away!

Your daughter's concerns about your knitting during times of prayer might be a good opportunity for you to have a conversation with her about God's mercy and his love for us despite our personal brokenness and limitations.

(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

### Timber

By William LeCroy

From this barred window,  
Browning at the edge of a grass field,  
I behold those crooked pines,  
Lines of sap oozing freely  
Down the barkless spots on their trunks,  
Perhaps weeping, remembering a time  
In youth when they were green.  
Orange bands bright like nooses  
Strangle them, condemn them.  
No longer part of the living eco-system,  
Different somehow – infested, an eyesore,  
Or carriers of fungus or death rot contagion –  
They are marked for death, quarantined,  
Anxiously awaiting their executioners.  
Do they contemplate that fate?  
Are they conscious, struggling to breathe,  
Senses atwitter, ever vigilant,  
Listening for the thwack! Of looming axes,  
Whose vibrations tremble every dry, brown needle?  
And when they have joined the fallen  
Paralyzed and prone on the forest floor,  
Lingering in death unbeknownst to others  
To be hacked in pieces and hauled off,  
Do they scream sharply when heaped upon the pyre?

Finally consumed. Just ashes. Dead and gone.  
Will there be something more for them  
Than numbing oblivion, finality?  
Is there someplace eternal, fertile,  
Beside a tranquil river with lots of sunshine  
Waiting to greet the roots of their spirit?  
Or can they focus only upon the culling  
Coming along today or tomorrow, or the next,  
To all living things eventually,  
Even the men here on death row,  
Isolated, graying, dying like those pines?  
Perhaps they are resigned in knowing  
That much too soon, to even the mighty,  
Something comes along to cut us all down.  
And maybe they dread only the arbitrary waiting.

(William LeCroy was a federal death-row inmate at the United States Penitentiary in Terre Haute who was executed on Sept. 22. He wrote this poem in 2011 while on death row. As of this issue going to press, the federal executions of Brandon Bernard and Alfred Bourgeois were set for Dec. 10 and 11, respectively.)

# Rest in peace

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

**BANET, Kathryn**, 79, Holy Family, New Albany, Nov. 14. Mother of Kelly Condra, Kim Nunley, Doug and Rick Banet. Sister of Jettie Bowling. Grandmother of 10. Great-grandmother of four.

**BISCHOFF, Ruth A.**, 83, All Saints, Dearborn County, Nov. 21. Mother of Susan Jones, Debbie Spade, Patty Steinmetz, Lawrence and Roger Bischoff. Grandmother of nine. Great-grandmother of 10.

**BIZZELL, Rosemary**, 93, Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Jeffersonville, Nov. 8. Mother of Albert, Christopher, Jeffrey, Kevin and Timothy Bizzell. Sister of Lucy Tierney. Grandmother of 11. Great-grandmother of seven.

**BRIDGES, Elizabeth A.**, 77, St. Joseph, Jennings County, Nov. 27. Wife of Jerry Bridges. Mother of Jane Bridges, Ann Colaco and Mark Lee. Sister of Kathleen Baurley, Coleen Gerth, Jeanette Heckman, Marie Laymon, Anna Mae Raver, Maria Tempest, Joyce Vogel, Henry Carr, Paul Leonard and Tom Vogel. Grandmother of four.

**BUCKLEY, Mary Lou**, 90, St. Mary, Greensburg, Nov. 28. Mother of Susan Lister, Bob and Tim Richards. Sister of Ann Hall, Bill, Carl and Jim Hellmich. Grandmother of nine. Great-grandmother of seven.

**DAVIS, Katherine F.**, 90, St. Jude, Indianapolis, Nov. 23. Mother of Kathy Allen, Diane, Bill, Cary, Joe, John, Rick and Tom Davis. Grandmother of 21. Great-grandmother of nine.

**ERTEL, Rebecca A.**, 74, St. Mary-of-the-Rock, St. Mary-of-the-Rock, Nov. 30.

Sister of Cathy Kaiser, Marianne Lambert, Donna McDanel, Bill, Jerry, Ken and Ron Ertel. Aunt of several.

**FLANARY, Pippa R.**, infant, St. Mary (Immaculate Conception), Rushville, Nov. 27. Daughter of Jonathan and Morgan Flanary. Sister of Anya Flanary. Granddaughter of J.D. and Kristine Herbert and James and Jennifer Flanary.

**HEMBREE, Lawrence J.**, 81, St. Michael, Greenfield, Nov. 29. Husband of Barbara Hembree. Father of Lisa Jordan, Lori, John and Lawrence Hembree, Jr. Grandfather of five. Great-grandfather of three.

**HESSEN-VECCHIO, Erica**, 51, St. Jude, Indianapolis, Nov. 18. Mother of Emiko and Tomás Vecchio. Daughter of John, III and Tsuseko Takahashi Hessen. Sister of Jeremiah Hessen.

**HOLLORAN, Theresa M.**, 55, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, Oct. 14. Wife of Brian Zustovich. Daughter of Edward, Jr. and Mildred Holloran. Sister of Angela Ogawa and Edward Holloran, III. Aunt of one.

**JACKSON, Charles**, 86, St. Barnabas, Nov. 29. Husband of Mary Jackson. Father of Kathleen Able and Teresa Moore. Grandfather of five. Great-grandfather and great-great-grandfather of several.

**NICHOLSON, Margaret**, 79, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Richmond, Nov. 17. Mother of Carla White, Julia, Karen, David and Steven Nicholson. Sister of Linda Hays and John Habing. Grandmother of four. Great-grandmother of six.

**PAGE, Gerald M.**, 79, St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Aurora, Nov. 24. Husband of Susan Page. Father of Cheryl Ogle Lowry and Michael Page. Brother of Patricia Kircher. Grandfather of two. Great-grandfather of three.

**PAGEL, Kenneth**, 88, Prince of Peace, Madison, Nov. 27. Father of Jennifer Fretland, Kelly Morgan, Donna Walton, Mark and Stephen Fitzpatrick and Kenneth Pagel. Grandfather of eight. Great-grandfather of eight.

**PARTIPILO, Anita L.**, 81, St. John Paul II, Sellersburg, Oct. 27. Mother of Frank, Jr., and Tom Partipilo. Sister of Tommy Reese. Grandmother of three.

**ROSEBERRY, Mary C.**, 83, St. Mary, Greensburg, Nov. 27.

Mother of Kim Hubbard, Lisa and Pat Roseberry. Sister of Gladys Catron, Joyce Hahn, Betty Hudnall, Helen Robbins, Diane Roberts, Sharon, Charles and Dale Veerkamp. Grandmother of 15. Great-grandmother of several. Great-great-grandmother of two.

**RUDOLPH, Maurice**, 103, St. Barnabas, Indianapolis, Nov. 26. Father of Patrick Rudolph. Grandfather of one.

**SAUERLAND, Julian W.**, 94, Holy Guardian Angels, Cedar Grove, Nov. 26. Brother of Agnes Ertel. Uncle of several.

**SCHEIDLER, James R.**, 90, St. Mary, Greensburg, Nov. 29. Father of Ann Couch and Mark Scheidler. Brother of Dottie Hoeing, Kate Meyer, Barbara Wamsley and Mary Ann Welage. Grandfather of one.

**SCHEIDLER, Jean M.**, 88, St. Mary, Greensburg, Nov. 30. Wife of Robert Scheidler. Mother of Teresa Buell, LuAnn Cain, Susan Colson, Joannette Wright, Daniel, Lawrence and Roger Scheidler. Sister of Margie Fisse. Grandmother of 26. Great-grandmother of 23.

**SMILEY, Katherine**, 99, St. Mary (Immaculate Conception), Rushville, Nov. 24. Mother of Curtis and Robert Smiley. Sister of Marie Kuswa. Grandmother of six. Great-grandmother of one.

**VOYLES, Patricia**, 79, St. Augustine, Jeffersonville, Nov. 11. Wife of William Voyles. Mother of Shannon Middleton, Elizabeth Turk and Susan Voyles Garr. Sister of Martha Wilkinson, Mary Jean Williams, Michael and Tom Boone. Grandmother of six. Great-grandmother of seven.

**WALDEN, Jeffrey W.**, 68, St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower), Indianapolis, Nov. 12. Father of Kimberly Hall, Amy Harris and Nichole Williams. Brother of Carol Henson. Grandfather of nine. Great-grandfather of six.

## Christmas in New York



A Christmas tree at Rockefeller Center in New York City is seen on Dec. 2. (CNS photo/Eduardo Munoz, Reuters)

**WALSMAN, Dorothy M.**, 98, St. Louis, Batesville, Nov. 27. Wife of Robert Walsman. Mother of Robert and Thomas Walsman.

Grandmother of five. Great-grandmother of seven.

**WHITE, William D.**, 75, St. Michael, Brookville, Nov. 25. Husband of Judy

White. Father of Jessica Whitfield, Lisa Wilkerson, Josh and Lance White. Son of Fannie White. Brother of Judith Sparks and Richard White. Grandfather of 16. †

## Providence Sister Mary Lee Mettler served in parishes, schools

Providence Sister Mary Lee Mettler, a member of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods in St. Mary-of-the-Woods, died on Nov. 24 at Signature Health Care in Terre Haute. She was 88.

Because of the coronavirus pandemic, a virtual funeral service was held. Burial followed at the sisters' cemetery.

Sister Mary Lee was born on Aug. 7, 1932, in Fort Wayne, Ind. She entered the Sisters of Providence on July 22, 1951, and professed final vows on Jan. 23, 1959.

Sister Mary Lee earned a bachelor's degree at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College and master's degrees at Indiana University in Bloomington and the University of Dayton in Dayton, Ohio.

During her 69 years as a member of the Sisters of Providence, Sister Mary Lee ministered as an educator for 19 years in schools in Illinois, Indiana, Maryland and Texas.

She also served in parish ministry in Indiana, Mississippi and Tennessee. Sister Mary Lee returned to the motherhouse in 1998, serving in various capacities there before dedicating herself entirely to prayer in 2018.

In the archdiocese, Sister Mary Lee served at Our Lady of the Greenwood School in Greenwood from 1957-59, at the former Archbishop Schulte High School in Terre Haute from 1968-69, in Indianapolis at the former St. Agnes Academy from 1969-70, the former Ladywood-St. Agnes Academy from 1970-73 and as a clerical assistant for her community's St. Gabriel Province from 1973-75. She also served at St. Mary Parish in Mitchell from 1993-95.

She is survived by a sister, Connie Rurka of Coldwater, Mich. Memorial gifts may be sent to the Sisters of Providence, 1 Sisters of Providence Road, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN 47876. †

### Online Lay Ministry Formation

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

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### REPORT SEXUAL MISCONDUCT NOW

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

- 1 Ethics Point**  
Confidential, Online Reporting  
[www.archdioceseofindianapolis.ethicspoint.com](http://www.archdioceseofindianapolis.ethicspoint.com) or 888-393-6810
- 2** Carla Hill, Archdiocese of Indianapolis, Victim Assistance Coordinator  
P.O. Box 1410, Indianapolis, IN 46206-1410  
**317-236-1548 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1548**  
[carlahill@archindy.org](mailto:carlahill@archindy.org)

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## Pope plans to visit Iraq in March

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Barring any obstacles caused by the global pandemic, Pope Francis is set to begin international travel again in 2021 by visiting Iraq in March, which would make him the first pope to visit this nation.

“Pope Francis, accepting the invitation of the Republic

of Iraq and of the local Catholic Church,” will visit Iraq on March 5-8, said Matteo Bruni, head of the Vatican press office.

“He will visit Baghdad, the plain of Ur, linked to the memory of Abraham, the city of Irbil, as well as Mosul and Qaraqosh in the plain of Ninevah,” Bruni wrote on Dec. 7.

Details about the trip “will be made known in due course and will take into consideration the evolution of the worldwide health emergency,” he added.

It would be the pope's first international trip since his journey to Thailand and Japan in November 2019.

From Baghdad, Iraqi Cardinal Louis Raphael Sako, patriarch of Chaldean Catholics, told Catholic News Service that news of the papal visit was a “huge hope.”

“We are so thirsty for hope,” he said of the Iraqi people.

“People are suffering, dying, because of conflicts and also because of the pandemic. So this visit is a big source of joy for all the population of this region,” Cardinal Sako said. †

# Federal judge orders full restoration of DACA program

WASHINGTON (CNS)—A federal judge on Dec. 4 said the Trump administration must fully restore the



Chad Wolf

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, after the program that protects qualifying young adult immigrants from deportation was suspended this summer by Chad Wolf, acting Homeland Security secretary.

Judge Nicholas G. Garaufis of the U.S. District Court in Brooklyn, N.Y., said the program must be reopened for first-time applicants and the period of protection for DACA recipients must be reinstated to its initial two-year extension not one year, as Wolf's memo specified.

"Great news to end the week!" tweeted Jill Marie Bussey, director

of advocacy for Catholic Legal Immigration Network Inc., or CLINIC. She said her office would "monitor and advise" DACA recipients once they saw U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services "comply with the posting requirements."

Garaufis said the federal government had to post a public notice by Dec. 7 that new DACA applications were being accepted.

Other immigration advocacy groups similarly reacted on social media. "This is a major victory for immigrant youth, led by immigrant youth," tweeted the National Immigration Law Center. The group added that it looked "forward to working with the incoming Biden administration to create a permanent solution for immigrant youth and communities."

And on a practical level, it urged "all eligible immigrant youth who hoped to file an initial DACA application to consult with an

immigration attorney to consider filing as soon as possible."

The judge's ruling follows one he gave in November which said Wolf's suspension of DACA was invalid because he did not legally hold his position when he issued the order.

In July, Wolf issued a memorandum rejecting first-time applications for DACA and limiting DACA renewals to one-year extensions instead of two. The memo drew criticism from immigrant advocates and Catholic officials. Leaders of the U.S. Conference of

Catholic Bishops said they were "deeply disappointed" by it, and Bishop Jaime Soto of Sacramento, Calif., said it was "irresponsible and recalcitrant."

The memo was issued more than a month after the Supreme Court ruled against efforts by the Trump administration to end DACA. President-elect Joe Biden said he plans to reinstate DACA, and he also is expected to use executive orders to reverse other immigration policies of President Donald J. Trump. †

## Classified Directory

### For Sale

**FOR SALE:** One crypt entombment. Our Lady of Peace Cemetery, 9001 Haverstick Road, Indianapolis, IN 46260. Our Lady of Peace Mausoleum. Location: Corridor C, Crypt #48, Tier A. \$9,950.00. Call or text 816-529-4150.

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### Employment

## Associate Director, Young Adult and College Campus Ministry

The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Indianapolis is seeking a full-time Associate Director of Young Adult and College Campus Ministry (YACCM). The opening is for a full-time, lay minister to assist the Director in essential leadership duties for outreach to the 18-39 demographic in central and southern Indiana. The Associate Director has an integral role in the day-to-day operations of the ministry but also the authority to create and implement vision and practice that serves the young adults in our parishes, 15 colleges and universities, and young adult programs throughout the entire archdiocese. The Associate Director will assist the Director in the support and formation of Campus Ministry and parish staff and volunteers. Specifically, the Associate Director will lead the expansion of Emmaus Group (small group) ministry and the ongoing formation of Emmaus Group Leaders, as well as assisting in the launch of a regional, Deanery Young Adult Ministry program.

Since its inception in 2008, IndyCatholic and The Office of Young Adult and College Campus Ministry (YACCM) has seen the Lord work in tremendous ways among the 18-39 demographic in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. We are blessed to lead a vibrant, ever-growing community of young adults around Central and Southern Indiana with a mission to seek, find and invite young adults to authentic life in Jesus Christ and to spiritually equip them to become lifelong, missionary disciples.

Candidates must be professed and practicing Catholics with a love for and understanding of the teachings of the Catholic Church. A minimum of a bachelor's degree in theology, religious education, or a related field is required. Previous paid or volunteer ministerial experience with young adults and/or college students is preferred.

Please e-mail cover letter, resume, and list of references, in confidence, to:

Ed Isakson  
Director, Human Resources  
Archdiocese of Indianapolis  
1400 N. Meridian St.  
Indianapolis, IN 46202  
E-mail: [eisakson@archindy.org](mailto:eisakson@archindy.org)

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### Employment

## Ecclesiastical Notary

The Tribunal is seeking a full-time Ecclesiastical Notary. Responsibilities include clerical duties, assembling marriage cases according to canonical and office procedures and interacting with clients on the telephone or in person.

Qualifications include strong typing skills, experience using personal computers, ability to maintain a high level of confidentiality and well-developed interpersonal and organizational skills. A college degree or commensurate work experience is required.

Canon law requires that the person in this position be a baptized Catholic and, if married, be validly married according to the laws and teachings of the Catholic Church.

The position is an opportunity to work directly in Church ministry that serves people's human and spiritual needs. Please e-mail cover letter, resume, and list of references, in confidence, to:

Ed Isakson  
Director, Human Resources  
Archdiocese of Indianapolis  
1400 N. Meridian St.  
Indianapolis, IN 46202  
E-mail: [eisakson@archindy.org](mailto:eisakson@archindy.org)

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## Office and Events Coordinator, Office of Marriage and Family Life

The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Indianapolis is seeking a full-time Office and Events Coordinator to assist the Director of Marriage and Family Life with administrative and professional support. Responsibilities include the development and implementation of programs and events, including regular marriage preparation retreats, annual divorce ministry retreats, and Archdiocesan events for marriage enrichment. Office administrative duties include overseeing the production and maintenance of electronic, social, and print media, and facilitating office communication with clergy, Archdiocesan agencies, parishes, and individuals who are seeking information or resources from the office.

Applicants should be practicing Catholics with an enthusiasm for and deep commitment to their faith, especially Church teachings on marriage and family life. A bachelor's degree in a related area is preferred. Initiative, organizational ability, interpersonal skills, and proficiency with Microsoft Word and Excel are all essential. Graphic design experience is preferred. The ability to communicate verbally and in writing in Spanish is a plus. The position involves access to confidential information which must be safeguarded. Some evening and weekend work is involved.

The Office of Marriage and Family Life exists to promote the vocation of marriage and family life, to assist individuals facing difficulties in their marriage and family, and to accompany families on their mission to build the Kingdom of God. We accomplish this mission through marriage preparation formation, retreats and support groups for Catholics who are separated or divorced, opportunities for marriage enrichment, and resources for family discipleship.

Please e-mail cover letter, resume, and list of references, in confidence, to:

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Archdiocese of Indianapolis  
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