Honoring lives aborted since 1973 still ‘crucial’ despite COVID-19 challenges

By Natalie Hooter

CARMEL, Ind.—As often seems to be the case, Jan. 22 was the coldest day of the week this year. And as always is the case, weather did not prevent advocates from standing up for life in solemn observance of the Jan. 22, 1973, U.S. Supreme Court Roe v. Wade decision legalizing abortion throughout the nation.

“If standing in this cold is just one thing we can do to save a baby today, let’s do it all day long,” said recently sworn-in Indiana Attorney General Todd Rokita.

He spoke at a rally that concluded several events sponsored by the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, the Diocese of Lafayette and Right to Life of Indianapolis (RTL) to mark the solemn occasion, including an archdiocesan-sponsored Mass celebrated by Archbishop Charles C. Thompson on Jan. 22.

‘We must begin with ourselves’

In the pro-life battle, “Our opponent is not a particular person or group of persons,” the archbishop said in his homily during the Mass at St. John the Evangelist Church in Indianapolis.

“Our opponent is with the evil that underlies what Pope Francis has referred to as a ‘throwaway society’ … that readily discards anything that is deemed useless or undesirable, including … human life.”

Discrediting persons can take many forms, the archbishop explained. Among such forms are abortion, racism, human trafficking, capital punishment, disregard for creation, greed and more, including gossip.

“All these, with abortion at the forefront, contribute to a culture of death,” he said.

To change society to a culture of life, “The first person we must begin with is ourselves,” Archbishop Thompson noted.

“When confronted with differences of opinions or opposition to our values, do we respond in a Christian manner or react in a defensive or threatened mode? Are we able to recognize those that oppose or disagree with us as created in the image of God?”

Each person is a child of God and a sinner in need of salvation, the archbishop said.

Therefore, pro-life efforts “must be rooted in a holistic commitment to defending the dignity of all persons—

See LIFE, page 11A

U.S. bishops’ pro-life chairman calls plan to codify Roe v. Wade in federal law ‘tragic’

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The chairman of the U.S. bishops’ pro-life committee called it “deeply disturbing and tragic” that any U.S. president would mark the Jan. 22 anniversary of the Roe v. Wade decision that legalized abortion by praising it and committing to codifying it in law.

The U.S. Supreme Court’s 1973 ruling “denies unborn children their most basic human and civil right, the right to life, under the euphemistic disguise of a health service,” said Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kan., chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ (USCCB) Committee on Pro-Life Activities.

“I take this opportunity to remind all Catholics that the catechism states, ‘Since the first century, the Church has affirmed the moral evil of every procured abortion. This teaching has not changed and remains unchanged’ ” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, #2271), the archbishop said in a statement released late on Jan. 22 in response to a statement on Roe by President Joe Biden, a Catholic, and Vice President Kamala Harris.

Biden and Harris said their administration “is committed to codifying Roe v. Wade and appointing judges that respect foundational precedents like Roe.” They did not use the word “abortion,” but talked about “reproductive health” and protecting women’s access to “health care.”

“In the past four years, reproductive health, including the right to choose, has been under relentless and extreme attack,” they said on Jan. 22. “We are deeply committed to making sure everyone has access to care—including reproductive health care—regardless of income, race, ZIP code, health insurance status or immigration status.

They added: “Now is the time to reeducate ourselves to ensuring that all individuals have access to the health care they need.”

See BISHOPS, page 11A

Love is clearest sign of faith, pope says in homily for Christian unity

ROME (CNS)—Abiding in God’s love means nurturing one’s relationship with him and with all those whom God loves, Pope Francis wrote in his homily for the conclusion of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

“If our worship is genuine, we will grow in love for all those who follow Jesus, regardless of the Christian communion to which they may belong, for even though they may not be ‘one of ours,’ they are his,” the pope wrote for the prayer service on Jan. 25 at Rome’s Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls.

While a flare-up of sciatica, a painful nerve condition, prevented the pope from presiding over the ecumenical vespers, his homily for the service was read by Cardinal Kurt Koch, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

The theme for the 2021 celebration, chosen by the World Council of Churches and the Vatican, was “Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit.”

Because of COVID-19 precautions, only invited guests—Catholic, Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, Anglican, Lutheran, Methodist, Waldensian, Salvation Army and other Christian representatives—were able to gather for the prayer at the basilica built over the tomb of St. Paul.

In his homily, Pope Francis noted that Jesus’ adhesion to his disciples, “abide in my love” (Jn 15:9), is part of Jesus’ discourse “on the vine and the branches.”

“The Lord himself is the vine, the ‘true’ vine, who does not betray our expectations, but remains ever faithful in love, despite our sins and our divisions,” the pope said. And all people who are baptized are grafted on to that vine.

Each Christian, he said, is called to maintain and strengthen his or her adherence

See UNITY, page 10A

While stopped at a light near the Indiana Statehouse, a woman in a mini-van sporting pro-life messages takes a photo of the vehicles behind her during the Indiana March-turned-caravan for Life in Indianapolis on Jan. 22. (Photo by Natalie Hooter)
Pregnancy accommodations under consideration again

By Victoria Arthur

From the governor’s office to a growing grassroots effort around the state, momentum is building for Indiana to join more than half the nation in providing reasonable accommodations for pregnant women in the workplace.

Companion bills introduced in the Indiana House of Representatives and the Indiana Senate would require employers with at least 15 full-time employees to provide reasonable adjustments for the safety and well-being of workers who are pregnant. These types of accommodations would include longer and more frequent prenatal medical appointments, providing a reasonable number of weeks of leave, taking reasonable breaks, providing appropriate seating and temporary transfers to less strenuous or hazardous environments.

During a hearing on similar pregnancy accommodation legislation last year, Espada shared her own story of being born two months prematurely to a mother who worked long hours in an industrial laundry facility. The ICC and other advocates were dismayed when companion bills ultimately stalled in the 2020 General Assembly in the face of opposition from the Indiana Chamber of Commerce, the Indiana Manufacturers Association and others who raised questions about the impact of the legislation, particularly on small businesses.

This year, the ICC and its allies are hopeful that updates to that legislation will result in passage of the current bills. “This year’s bills are a result of legislation that passed unanimously in Tennessee last year,” said Erin Macey, senior policy analyst for the Indiana Institute for Working Families. “While in substance they are still very similar in their aim to last year’s bills, we hope to have some of the modest changes will help ease objections. Now there is further clarity around who has the burden of proof, especially for small businesses, and it moves administration of the process to the Indiana Department of Labor.”

Pregnancy accommodation efforts are perhaps more critical than ever now, Macey said, as younger women have been disproportionately affected by job losses due to the COVID-19 pandemic. “They seek to pass new or re-enter the workplace, there may be an increased fear of reporting a pregnancy or requesting accommodation due to high unemployment and a need to recover financially,” Macey said.

The organization is among those partnering with the Grassroots Maternal and Child Health Leadership Training Project, concentrating efforts in areas of Indiana with persistently high maternal and infant mortality rates. This coalition, associated with the Richard M. Fairbanks School of Public Health at Indiana University and the University of Indianapolis, is mentoring women to become community leaders and policy advocates on these issues.

“Many of these women had difficult experiences working low-wage jobs while pregnant, so this issue means a lot to them,” Macey said.

Among these advocates is Destiny Faeceon, who has been working with other grassroots leaders to support HB 1358 and SB 246. Several years ago, a first-time mother during her third trimester of pregnancy, she lost her retail job because she was penalized for too many prenatal medical appointments.

“The closer it came to my due date, the more stress and uncertainty experienced,” Faeceon said. “The pregnancy accommodation legislation is important because it would relieve the stress factors that cause preterm births, miscarriages and other health factors that not only affect the child but the mother’s health, including mental health.”

The pope expressed hope that the legislation would be enacted as the Church nationwide moves toward the conclusion in late March of its yearlong effort to draw attention to the challenges of mothers, especially the poor. “Walking with Moms in Need: A Year of Service” began in March 2020 to coincide with the 25th anniversary of St. John Paul II’s groundbreaking encyclical “Evangelium Vitae.”

“It would be wonderful if we could pass this legislation this year,” Espada said.

To follow this and other priority legislation of the ICC, visit www.indiacc.org

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis prayed that President Joe Biden would work to heal the divisions in U.S. society and promote human dignity and peace around the globe.

“Under your leadership, may the American people draw on the strength from the lofty political, ethical and religious values that have inspired the nation since its founding,” the pope wrote in a congratulatory message on Jan. 20 as Biden was inaugurated as the 46th president of the United States.

Popes traditionally have sent such messages and assurances of prayer to a new U.S. president upon his inauguration, and have included mention of issues of concern, particularly about the dignity of every human being.

“At a time when the grave crises facing our human family call for foresighted and united responses,” Pope Francis wrote to Biden, “I pray that your decisions will be guided by a love for the poor, a society marked by authentic justice and freedom, together with unflagging respect for all rights and duties of every person, especially the poor, the vulnerable and those who have no voice.”

“I likewise ask God, the source of all wisdom and truth, to guide your efforts to foster understanding, reconciliation and peace within the United States and among the nations of the world in order to advance the universal common good,” he said.

Biden, the nation’s second Catholic president after John F. Kennedy, has often publicly opposed legislation in line with all the Church’s teachings, particularly when it comes to abortion. But his faith has been reflected in a range of other issues, especially concern for the poor, care for the environment, immigration policy and international peace.

Pope Francis already had a phone conversation with Biden on Nov. 12 to congratulate him on winning the election.

“The president-elect thanked His Holiness for extending blessings and congratulations and noted his appreciation for His Holiness’ leadership in promoting peace, reconciliation and the common bonds of humanity around the world,” said a readout on the call released by Biden’s transition team in Wilmington.

Biden, it said, “expressed his desire to work together on the basis of a shared belief in the dignity and equality of all human persons on issues such as caring for the marginalized and the poor, addressing the crisis of climate change, and welcoming and integrating immigrants and refugees into our communities.”

The pope and Biden have met on several occasions: as vice president, Biden attended Pope Francis’ inaugural Mass in 2013 and the two met briefly afterward; when Pope Francis visited the United States in 2015, Biden was present for several events, but he and his wife also had a private meeting with the pope; and in the 2016 meeting when Pope Francis was speaker of the House of Representatives.

The pope and Biden Press

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Benedictine Father Bonaventure Knaebel was former Saint Meinrad archabbot

By Sean Gallagher

Benedictine Father Bonaventure Knaebel, who served as archabbot of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad from 1955-66, died in the monastery on Jan. 22. He was 102.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Jan. 27 at the Archabbey Church of Our Lady of Einsiedeln, Burial followed in the Archabbey Cemetery.

Father Bonaventure was a jubilarian of monastic profession of vows and ordination. He lived 82 years as a monk and 77 years as a priest.

Benedictine Archabbot Kurt Stasiak spoke with The Criterion about one of his predecessors who, at the time of his death, was the oldest member of the monastic community.

“It’s amazing to realize that everyone at Saint Meinrad—monks, staff, co-workers—doesn’t know a Saint Meinrad Archabbot without Father Bonaventure,” Archabbot Kurt said. “While he is no longer with us, we have not lost him. We have memories and stories that will continue to share and enjoy. He is an anchor in our history, having been a monk for 82 of the 150 years we’ve been an abbey.”

The stories that filled the 102-year life of Father Bonaventure were wide and varied. Born in New Albany while World War I was still being fought and the Spanish flu pandemic was sweeping the world, he went on to become a monk at the age of 24 in 1930. He ultimately became the oldest member of the monastic community.

“While you may not know Father Bonaventure’s legacy, his thoughts. Father Bonaventure also taught me how to think with the Church and to question what others have that great education which is available in Catholic schools. For me, it was my parents—my grandfather was a priest for six years, stepping down from leadership of the faith community when he was 85. Returning to live at Saint Meinrad, Father Bonaventure assisted in the monastery’s development office and provided occasional sacramental assistance in nearby parishes. Memorial gifts may be sent to Saint Meinrad Archabbey, 200 Hill Drive, St. Meinrad, IN 47577.

Under his leadership, Saint Meinrad constructed its first guest house and St. Bede Hall. It also founded the new monastic community at Corpus Christi Abbey in Sandia, Texas, for two years and as administrator of St. Michael Parish in Charlestown from 1981-86.

Father Bonaventure’s international ministry resumed in 1986 when he served for two years as administrator of Monasterio Benedictino in Morelia, Mexico.

Returning to the U.S. again, Father Bonaventure served as chaplain at the St. Paul Hermitage in Beech Grove for six years, serving as assistant spiritual director in the major monastery (now Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology). On June 3, 1955, the monastic community elected Father Bonaventure as coadjutor archabbot to succeed Benedictine Archabbot Ignatius Eiser. Father Bonaventure was installed and blessed as the fifth abbot and second archabbot of Saint Meinrad on Aug. 31, 1955. He was the first Hoosier native elected to lead the monastery.
The path to unity, one step at a time

In spite of the fact that 2021 was heralded as “a new beginning” after the horrors of 2020, the new year got off to a bad start. Raging and violence broke out in our nation’s capital, our former president was impeached by the U.S. House of Representatives for a second time, and our new president was impeached by the Senate. Unless we show each other the respect that are due to women and men made in the image and likeness of God, there is no path to unity or peace.

As Pope Francis said in his message for the 54th World Day of Communications, which will be celebrated in most countries on May 16: “We think of how much empty rhetoric abounds, even in our time, in all areas of public life, in business as well as politics. This or that ‘speaks an infinite deal of nothing’. His reasons are as two grains of wheat hid in two bushes of chaff: you shall seek all day all the year you find them, and when you have them, they are not worth the search. ‘The blustering words of the English playwright [William Shakespeare] also apply to us as Christian communicators,’” the pope wrote. “The good news of the Gospel spread throughout the whole world as a result of person-to-person, heart-to-heart encounters with men and women who accepted the invitation ‘come and see’ and were struck by the ‘surplus’ of humanity that shone through the gaze, the smile, and the gestures of those who bore witness to Jesus Christ. To achieve unity, we must engage in genuine dialogue with those who disagree with us. We must be able to listen and learn and not simply to argue and accuse each other. Above all, we must give witness to the truth by our words and actions, by the light of Christ that shines in us, and by the authenticity of our efforts to find, and follow, the path to unity.

Pope Francis says that in the effort to achieve unity, “Every tool has its value, and that great communicator who was Paul of Tarsus would certainly have made use of e-mail and social messaging.” But more is needed. St. Paul’s faith, hope and charity are what impressed “those who heard him preach or had the good fortune to spend time with him, to see him during an assembly or in individual conversations.” Watching St. Paul in action wherever he was, people saw for themselves “how true and fruitful for their lives was the message of salvation that, by God’s grace, he had come to preach,” the pope wrote.

During the 11 months that are left in this new year of grace, may we embrace the path to unity, one step at a time.

—Daniel Conway

Reflection

Retiring quarterback shared Gospel values on large stage

I have to admit that I was decidedly not a fan of recently retired Indianapolis Colts quarterback Philip Rivers in the early part of his 17-year career. He and his then-San Diego Chargers made a habit of beating my beloved Colts, including twice in the playoffs. In one such postseason game played in Indianapolis in 2007, Rivers was injured during the contest. As he walked back to his team’s locker room, Colts fans jeered at him. Rivers, then just 26, didn’t hesitate to talk trash right back to them. It was then that I thought, “This kid is a punk. I don’t like him.”

Time and knowledge can heal all wounds, though. Through the years, I saw how gifted an athlete he was. I could respect that. I also learned about his dedication to his Catholic faith and his vocation as a husband and father of nine children. That was something I could get behind. (It didn’t hurt that the short-lived rivalry between the Chargers and Colts had faded with time.)

Last year, at the tail end of his career, Rivers signed as a free agent with the Colts and led them to an 11-win season and a birth in the playoffs. Although his athletic skills had diminished that much and he could easily have played another season with Indianapolis, Rivers announced Jan. 20 that he was retiring as a professional football player.

The next chapter in his life will be as head football coach of St. Michael Catholic High School in Fairhope, Ala., the state in which he grew up.

In a statement announcing his retirement, he thanked God “for allowing me to live out my childhood dream of playing quarterback in the NFL.”

Rivers didn’t live out that dream merely for himself—the worldwide attention that the NFL receives to share Gospel values with millions around the world.

One way he did that was through his frequent talking about a Latin motto that guides his life: “Nunc coepi.” It means in English, “Now, I begin.”

It’s a statement of humility. No matter what triumphs we have had in the past, we must always start again and give our best in each moment, for past results do not guarantee future success.

It’s also a statement of determination. No matter how many failures we have had in the past, we must always start again, trusting that God can help us to follow his will more completely, despite our past difficulties.

It’s finally a statement about living fully in the present, not being a prisoner of our past or fearful of the future. When we live in the present, our hearts are open to the many blessings God offers to us here and now, which we might miss if we are focused instead on the past or future.

Such an attitude surely helped a gunslinger like Rivers, who threw more than his fair share of interceptions throughout his career. That never kept him from finding amazing touchdowns passes afterward.

The attitude behind “Nunc coepi” can keep spouses and parents focused on the daily living out of their vocations. God’s will for husbands and wives, fathers and mothers is often crystal clear in daily family life. But I know from experience that it’s still easy to choose less than our best, less than our preferences instead of what God is asking of us in any one moment.

But even when we fail in those moments, we can say “Nunc coepi” in our hearts and, with the help of God’s ever-present grace, start anew.

At the same time, some veteran parents might think they’ve gotten parenting down pat. But the “Nunc coepi” attitude can help them give of themselves as if they were the parents of their first newborn. Such an attitude for longtime moms and dads can also keep their hearts open to the joys of parenting that they might have taken for granted.

Philip Rivers might not be suiting up to throw passes on Sunday afternoons anymore, but the attitude that he brought on the field will also serve in his coaching career. Having a “Nunc coepi” attitude will contribute to shape lives well into the future.

(Sean Gallagher is a reporter and columnist for The Criterion.)

Letter to the Editor

Reader lauds USCCB president for statement challenging administration

I want to recognize the statement from Archbishop Jose H. Gomez, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), on the inauguration of President Joe Biden.

Expecting the same kind of feeble announcement of congratulations common of our Church leaders during the November election, I was astonished as Archbishop Gomez wrote at length about the incoming administration’s radical support of abortion.

It’s about time our Church leaders speak such truth to political power, particularly in cases of self-identified Catholic politicians promoting “certain policies that would advance moral evils and threaten human life and dignity,” to use Archbishop Gomez’s language.

I pray that more of our Church leaders will display this kind of courage and strength. We will publicly defend our faith against what I fear will be an administration hostile to religious liberty.

Dr. Patrick Knerr
Plainfield, Ill.

Letters Policy

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

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

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

Send letters to “Letters to the Editor,” The Criterion, 1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367.

Readers with access to e-mail may send letters to criterion@archindy.org.
Los cristianos creemos en que el Verbo Eterno de Dios se hizo carne y habló cariñosamente con nosotros a través de estos profetas y maestros como Moisés y Juan el Bautista. Sin embargo, inicialmente, Dios habló a través de profetas y personas que entenían el lenguaje de Dios en Jesús de Nazaret, y les explicaba sus enseñanzas. Dios continúa hablando a través de la Palabra de Dios en Jesús de Nazaret, y a través de sus profetas y maestros. 

El Señor tu Dios te levantará un profeta como yo de en medio de ti, de entre tus hermanos. A él escucharás” (Dt 18:15).

“Esto significa que la Palabra de Dios implica a los demás en el discipulado. A través del lenguaje que el profeta y el maestro usa, nos habla a nosotros, a través del lenguaje del hombre. 

“El Señor tu Dios te levantará un profeta como yo de en medio de ti, de entre tus hermanos. A él escucharás” (Dt 18:15).

Departure line: “Estamos preguntándonos” (Rom 1:19). El lenguaje de la Palabra de Dios no es sólo un lenguaje de Dios que habla y nos habla, sino que es un lenguaje que escuchamos y entendemos. La Palabra de Dios es la voz del mundo, y escuchamos la voz del mundo para entender nuestra propia situación.
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: carmelthirdoption.org/web then click on link at top of page. Information: carmelthirdoption.org/web or Keith Ingram, kirgma@ aicinvest.com or 317-324-8446.

February 6  
St. John Paul II Parish, St. Paul Chapel, 216 Schellers Ave., Sefrsford. First Saturday Marian Devotion, 8 a.m. rosary, meditation, prayer. 8:30 a.m. Mass with confessions prior. Information: 317-842-3562.

February 7  

February 8  
St. Joseph Church, 1401 S. Mickey Ave., Indianapolis. Third Thursday Adoration, interceding for women experiencing crisis pregnancy, 11 a.m.-7 p.m., with Mass at 5:45 p.m.

February 11  
White Violet Center for Eco-Justice Virtual Workshop: Baking Souffle 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 or www.spsmw.org/event.

February 12  
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: carmelthirdoption.org/web then click on link at top of page. Information: carmelthirdoption.org/web or Keith Ingram, kirgma@ aicinvest.com or 317-324-8446.

February 27  
White Violet Center “Virtual Alpaca Encounter,” via Zoom, 10-11 a.m., $15 plus optional $10 per alpaca ornament felting kit, register by Feb. 19. Registration and information: 812-355-2952, provctr@spsmw.org or www.spsmw.org/event.


Announcements can be submitted using the form below, or electronically at www.archindy.org/events/submission, or by mailing us at 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202, ATTN: Cindy Clark, or by fax at 317-236-1593.

Richard and Darlene (Heidelberger) Lame, members of St. Mary Parish in Greensburg, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Jan. 28. The couple was married in Immaculate Conception Church in Millhousen on Jan. 22, 1966. They have six children: Barb Bohman, Gail Guzek, Deb, Greg, Paul and Tony Greiwe. The couple also has nine grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. ↓

Stephen and Margaret (Schottmuller) Greiwe, members of St. Mary Parish in Greensburg, celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary on Jan. 22. The couple was married in Immaculate Conception Church in Millhousen on Jan. 22, 1966. They have six children: Barb Bohman, Gail Guzek, Deb, Greg, Paul and Tony Greiwe. The couple also has 12 grandchildren and one great-grandchild. ↓

Mike and Linda (Doyl) Wyciszkalla, members of St. Mark the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on Jan. 30. The couple was married at Holy Spirit Church in Indianapolis on Jan. 30, 1971. They have four children: Carrie Cissiher, Kim Schaefer, Doug and Father Tim Wyciszkalla. The couple also has nine grandchildren. ↓

John and Barbara (Kahn) May, members of St. Mary Parish in Indianapolis, will celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary on Feb. 26. The couple was married in Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood, celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on Jan. 28. The couple was married in Immaculate Conception Church in Indianapolis on Jan. 28, 1961. They have three children: Donna Caldwell, Susan Howie and Michael Lime. The couple also has nine grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. ↓

Be a part of our Spring Marriage Edition  
February 26 issue of The Criterion  
Couples who are planning to be married between Feb. 26 and July 9 in a marriage that is recognized as a valid sacramental or valid natural marriage, or couples who were wed between July 1, 2020, and Feb. 12, 2021, in such a recognized marriage and do not have their engagement announcement in The Criterion, are invited to submit the information for the upcoming Feb. 26 Spring Marriage Edition. Announcements can be submitted using the form below, or electronically at www.archindy.org/engagements.

E-mailed photos  
Photos should be saved in .jpg format and be at least 500 kb. Color photos are preferred. We recommend sending a photo where the couple’s faces are close to each other. Please send the photo as an attachment to the e-mail: alewis@archindy.org. Subject line: Spring Marriage (Last name). In the e-mail, please include the information in the form located below. If it is not possible to e-mail a photo, a photo can be mailed with the bottom form. Please no photocopy photos. To have the photo returned, please include a return addressed envelope with a postage stamp on it.

Deadline  
All announcements and photos must be received by 10 a.m. on Friday, Feb. 12. Information needs to be submitted no later than Feb. 10 for the upcoming Feb. 26 Spring Marriage Edition.

Wedding  
60 Years  
Richard and Darlene (Heidelberger) Lame, members of St. Mary Parish in Greensburg, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Jan. 28. The couple was married in Immaculate Conception Church in Millhousen on Jan. 22, 1966. They have six children: Barb Bohman, Gail Guzek, Deb, Greg, Paul and Tony Greiwe. The couple also has nine grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. ↓

55 Years  
Richard and Darlene (Heidelberger) Lame, members of St. Mary Parish in Greensburg, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Jan. 28. The couple was married in Immaculate Conception Church in Millhousen on Jan. 22, 1966. They have six children: Barb Bohman, Gail Guzek, Deb, Greg, Paul and Tony Greiwe. The couple also has 12 grandchildren and one great-grandchild. ↓

50 Years  
Richard and Darlene (Heidelberger) Lame, members of St. Mary Parish in Greensburg, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Jan. 28. The couple was married in Immaculate Conception Church in Millhousen on Jan. 22, 1966. They have six children: Barb Bohman, Gail Guzek, Deb, Greg, Paul and Tony Greiwe. The couple also has nine grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. ↓

Advertisements for a list of events for the next four weeks as reported to The Criterion, log on to www.archindy.org/events.
Catholic schools prepare students as citizens of Earth, heaven

Dear Friends in Christ,

Catholic Schools Week is a wonderful means of highlighting the incredible impact of our Catholic schools on the lives, families and communities throughout the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, encompassing 39 counties in central and southern Indiana. In addition to two Catholic seminaries and two Catholic universities, we are blessed in the archdiocese with 68 Catholic grade and high schools.

Catholic schools have a specific mission. The holistic focus of our Catholic schools includes formation and education. Amid all the curricular and extracurricular activities, our schools seek to form character as well as educate the mind. The intent is to prepare each student for the two-fold citizenship of Earth and heaven.

We want our students to grow in their moral and faith development as both contributing members of society and saints in heaven. Thus, at the heart of the mission of any Catholic school is the transmission of Catholic teaching in transforming individuals and communities. The ultimate task of any Catholic ministry or service is salvation of souls.

I invite you to join me in acknowledging and thanking all those whose dedication and sacrifice make our schools so successful in enabling the Church to carry out its mandate to proclaim the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ. Special thanks go to our school administrators (presidents and principals), faculty members (teachers, counselors, librarians), coaches and staffs.

Of course, we are also grateful for the wonderful team in our archdiocesan Office of Catholic Schools. It is ultimately about the witness of living rather than mere words that has the greatest influence on those entrusted to one’s care.

Finally, I want to express my deepest gratitude and admiration for our students and their families. Both on and off campus, you serve as the most effective ambassadors of our Catholic schools.

Indeed, there is much to celebrate in Catholic Schools Week. All for the glory of God!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Charles C. Thompson
Archbishop of Indianapolis
Schools in archdiocese find ‘grace to tackle, move forward’ from pandemic challenges

By Natalie Hoefer

Steve Beyl wasn’t feeling well as the school year ended in May 2020. He went to the doctor and was told he had a viral infection. “When the doctor asked me if I was stressed, I just laughed,” said Beyl, principal of Our Lady of Perpetual Help School in New Albany. At that point, he—and school staff throughout the archdiocese—had been dealing since mid-March with the challenges of a sudden school shutdown to slow the spread of the coronavirus. And the school year didn’t end in May.

“There’ve been a lot of sleepless nights, a lot of stress” since the shutdown began, said Beyl. Even now, he said, his cell phone “blows up from 6 a.m. to 10 or 11 [o’clock] at night.”

For nearly 11 months, principals, teachers, students and parents have faced many challenges to continue the vital role of Catholic education in the midst of a global pandemic. Few principals spoke with The Criterion about those struggles—and the blessings and benefits that have risen from them.

“We were not in this alone’’

The challenges began with Archbishop Charles C. Thompson’s March 12 letter announcing the closure of schools “until at least April 5” to slow the continued spread of COVID-19. State mandates extended the closures through the end of the 2019-20 academic year. “From March to May, we had to essentially design a whole new school,” said Beyl. The same was true for St. Susanna School in Plainfield.

“Our biggest challenge was remote learning,” said Janet Abdoulye, the school’s principal. “We hadn’t made moves to be an e-learning school.” But within a week of the March 12 announcement, “our teachers were using [e-learning technology] and they were ready to go,” she said proudly. “That was enormous. Whether their schools had a remote-learning plan in place or not, all administrators faced the challenge of this catch-22.

“It was beneficial that the archdiocese had weekly Zoom meetings with all the principals,” said Sherri Kirschner, principal of St. Nicholas School in Ripley County. “We were able to get information, clarifications and affirmation we were not in this alone.”

“A little bit of everything”

During the summer, several plans had to be made for the start of the next school year. Each plan offered a different learning format to provide the safest environment for students based on the status of the pandemic.

“We had hybrid and virtual plans, but in-person was our preference,” said Kirschner. That preference meant more than students and teachers simply returning to school. There were myriad tasks to complete and new procedures to implement, most involving ways to meet state and local COVID-19 social-distancing and safety requirements.

“We had to move the cafeteria to the gym, rethink recess, move furniture out of classrooms to make room for social distancing, create a new

disability procedure,” said Kirschner. “Everything you do during the day, you had to go back and think, ‘Is this safe?’” Ultimately, most of the 68 Catholic schools in the archdiocese began the new school year offering learning in-person, with a virtual option for sick or quarantined students.

“With virtual learning, it’s almost like kids are looking out the building are here,” said Beyl. “They’re on the screen, they can hear the teacher, they can interact with kids in the room. We’ve got kids at home and kids in class working on the same group document.”

Some schools, like Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School in Indianapolis, implemented a hybrid approach: a rotation of in-person and offsite days varying by grade level, plus an all-online option for those who request it.

“We’re doing a little of everything” to maximize social distancing and safety, said school principal Kari Jost.

“What we’re asking them to do is kind of crazy”

The option of virtual learning has allowed schools to continue teaching and forming students “without skipping a beat,” said Kirschner.

In fact, at St. Anthony School in Indianapolis, virtual learning and the quick reaction of a teacher even led to a 911 call to save a student, his family and their home from a fire on Jan. 20 (2/28/21). While it hasn’t led to a 911 save in New Albany, “Having all this technology is nice,” said Beyl. But it also provided different challenges as well.

“Those unfamiliar with it needed training,” he said, like learning how to connect to and use social meeting platforms. Or getting a white board to display virtually as they do in the room. Or making and posting videos and other material to a learning management system.

“Teachers are now doing two to three jobs at once,” said Abdoulye. “They’re making sure in-person kids are learning, coordinating home learners, and then becoming tech wizards.”

Add the task of finding and learning to use tools “to see what our students are comprehending,” said Jost, and teachers are left with “quite a balancing act.”

“The flexibility I’ve asked of my staff is not fair,” Beyl admitted. “In reality, what we’re asking them to do is kind of crazy.

More than one principal noted the challenges have brought their staff closer.

“I watched teachers step up and help other teachers learn how to use technology,” said Jost. “For me, it was like this organic professional development.”

The profound gratitude for and pride in their teachers’ response to the challenges rang through from each principal.

And each principal identified the same driving factor behind their education efforts:

“One of the blessings of teaching in a Catholic school is that teachers will work so tirelessly for our kids,” said Jost. “Our educators put a child’s well-being before anything.”

“Seeking out that community feeling”

Part of that well-being includes staying connected. Continuing a sense of school community was especially important in the first months of the shutdown. But it required some creativity.

“One thing we did was photo challenges,” said Abdoulye. For example, St. Susanna students were asked to hold a Mary crowning service in their home, then submit a picture of the event. Parish pastor Father Robert Hausladen placed the pictures in the church pews to create room for social distancing.

“So people knew where to sit, and they can see the photos of the kids,” said Abdoulye. Soon after the shutdown began, Beyl used the “like” feature on Our Lady of Perpetual Help School’s Facebook page each evening “just to chat with families,” he said.

At a virtual evening gathering “caught on,” he said, Soon, the chats turned into time for playing games, trivia quizzes and other types of fun. Eventually, faculty members adopted certain nights to lead virtual activities.

“I couldn’t believe so many people were tuning in,” said Beyl. “We realized our families were seeking out that community feeling that had been so quickly removed from our lives.”

When the academic year ended, the connections continued. A caravan of school staff stopped outside the home of each graduate to deliver a package and wish them well. In July, the kindergarten teachers visited their new students to present them a school pride T-shirt.

Staying connected became easier as more students returned to school for the 2020-21 academic year.

And each of the principals interviewed agreed: If there’s one thing students wanted, it was to return to school.

From ‘shock and scramble’ to ‘seamless’

At Our Lady of Perpetual Help School, “Kids were so eager and excited to be back,” said Beyl. “That’s been a huge motivation to our staff to continue to give their best effort, because the kids made clear from day one they want to be here.”

Jost recalled the change in response of Ritter’s students to the school’s closing.

“When we first shut down and thought it would be two weeks, kids were like ‘Yay!’” she said. “Now kids say, ‘I want to be in the building every day.’”

The feeling is mutual.

When Jost sees students in the building, “it’s wonderful!” she said. “It’s this ‘Yay’ feeling. Students and teachers have a new appreciation for each other.”

Beyl agreed. Before the pandemic, he said, “Having the ability to come together as a school community, having the ability to go to Mass together—it had become routine. We realize how important they are now.”

Kirschner sums up St. Nicholas School’s journey since March 2020 in one word: “Wow!”

“We have come so far,” she said. The change from the Ripley County school’s “initial shock and scramble [in March] to what is now a pretty seamless academic day is amazing. … All the changes and new guidelines now seem like we have always done them.”

Kirschner’s final assessment could be said of each of the 68 Catholic schools in the archdiocese:

Whatever we do, we do our best and let God take care of rest,” she said. “I truly feel the Holy Spirit filled all of us with grace to tackle any challenge and move forward.”
By John Shaughnessy

She had the same fear and hope that nearly all students have when they attend a new school. Fear that she wouldn’t fit in with the other students. Hope that she would find a home, friends and a community that would help her grow as a person—all the things Deisy García-Vázquez wanted when she left her public high school in Venezuela to Bishop Chatard High School in Indianapolis as a sophomore.

“Not only were the teachers and staff welcoming, but the students as well,” notes Deisy, now a senior.

“This is when I knew that the education here would be life-changing. The thing I noticed was how dedicated both the students and teachers are toward each other and the education.”

Now in her third year at the school, she has also learned more about herself and what she sees as her place in the world.

“Being part of a Catholic school not only taught me to be closer to God, but my faith has grown. Catholic education is ‘a sign from God’—a decision that will continue to be a part of my life as God in my everyday life.”

One particular influence stands out to Trey from his education at both Pope John XXIII School and Father Michael Shawe Memorial Jr./Sr. School in Richmond, Olivia Howard finds herself focusing on the people who have touched her life during her 12 years of Catholic education.

“I am filled with gratitude remembering the teachers, friendships and experiences which have helped to mold me into the person I am today,” says Olivia, who plans to major in elementary education in college.

“The love, support and example of my teachers through the years have matured me, challenged me and supported me as I learn to think critically, to dedicate myself to achieving my best, and to developing the talents God has given me.”

She places a special emphasis on how her faith has grown.

“The greatest gift of these years has been the nurturing of my spiritual journey, and my relationship with Jesus, and the nurturing in my Catholic faith,” says Olivia, a member of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Richmond.

“It is faith which will be my strength, my comfort and my joy going forward through all the seasons of my life. I will be forever grateful for the role Catholic education has played in the formation of that greatest gift.”

By Mary McCoy

Interim superintendent of Catholic schools for the archdiocese

National Catholic Schools Week has been the annual celebration of Catholic education across the country since 1974. It always begins on the last Sunday in January and runs all week. In a typical year, our Catholic schools celebrate this week with Masses, open houses and other activities for students, families, parishioners and community members. It is safe to say this is not a typical year as we continue to navigate through a pandemic that none of us has ever experienced in our Catholic faith.

Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis are truly special places of academic excellence, spiritual formation, families, parishioners and community members. It is safe to say this is not a typical year as we continue to navigate through a pandemic that none of us has ever experienced in our Catholic faith.

As we celebrate our Catholic schools across the archdiocese, we also take this opportunity to recognize the true heroes during this pandemic—our teachers. It has been amazing and energizing to witness more than 2,000 teachers continue to provide a Catholic education to young people throughout the archdiocese. Sometimes in-person, sometimes remotely, and sometimes both, and in many cases all three at the same time.

Our teachers have creatively met the needs of students spiritually, academically, emotionally and physically, while at the same time keeping the safety of all students a priority. To quote St. Theodora Guérin, “Show kindness to them [children] and be attentive to their spiritual and physical needs.” Our teachers have done just this during these challenging times, and for this we commend them.

Please take time to visit the center pages of this year’s Catholic Schools Week Supplement, where 185 Catholic school teachers are recognized for 25 years or more of service in Catholic education. These amazing teachers have dedicated their careers to such an important ministry in the Catholic Church, and for that we say, “thank you!”

As we pray and have hope for brighter days, thank you for your continued prayers and support of our Catholic schools across the archdiocese, especially during this special week. They are true beacons in our communities and, for some, the brightest spots during these challenging times.

Happy Catholic Schools Week— RCSW21

Students share how Catholic education has changed their lives for the better

(Edited note: The Criterion asked four high school seniors from across the archdiocese to share how their Catholic education has had an impact on their lives. Here are their stories.)

Trey Suggett

As he prepares to graduate from high school, Trey Suggett talks affectionately about how his 12 years of Catholic education has changed his life for the better. The thing I noticed was how dedicated both the students and teachers are toward each other and the education.”

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Happy Catholic Schools Week— RCSW21

Safety: the priority of every Catholic school during the pandemic

Masks are one of the many safety precautions that Catholic schools have taken during this school year to protect students and educators from COVID-19 while they are in the classroom. Readers of this Catholic Schools Week Supplement will notice that this special section is displayed showing teachers and students not wearing masks. Most of these such photos were taken in a previous school year and are featured here to show the interactions of a Catholic school community in a “normal” year. A few of these such photos were taken this year while other safety precautions were in place, such as safety dividers between students’ desks.

The safety of everyone involved in a school community is the priority of every Catholic school in the archdiocese, according to Mary McCoy, interim superintendent of Catholic schools in the archdiocese.
By Sean Gallagher

Beginning in the mid-19th century, classrooms in Catholic schools across the U.S. began to be filled with the children of immigrants who sought freedom and economic opportunity in America. During the past decade, this has begun to happen again in parish schools across central and southern Indiana, including St. Mark the Evangelist School in Indianapolis and St. Bartholomew School in Columbus.

In 2009, St. Mark had about 165 students. Today, it has an enrollment of 455, with more than 250 of those students being the children of Burmese refugees who fled religious persecution and conflict in their native Myanmar in southeast Asia.

“We had a lot of extra room in 2009,” said Rusty Albertson, St. Mark’s principal, with a laugh. “Now we have no extra room.”

St. Bartholomew’s enrollment has also increased and become more ethnically diverse. In the 2011-12 school year, about 11% of St. Bartholomew’s students were Hispanic. Today, that number stands at 45%. There are also children enrolled whose parents came from many Asian and African countries to work in Columbus for employers there.

“We’ve always been a welcoming community,” said Helen Hickman, St. Bartholomew’s principal. “But even more so now, because we are so diverse. People can see that we’re welcoming.”

Here, we are treated equally. Angela Dim is grateful for the welcome that she and her fellow Catholics and other Christians in the Chin state of Myanmar have received at St. Mark.

“Before I came to St. Mark, I didn’t have an education,” she said.

About a decade ago, many Burmese refugees fleeing such persecution began to be re-settled on Indianapolis’ southside where St. Mark is located. About 20,000 Burmese now live on the southside.

Father Timothy Wyciskalla, St. Mark’s pastor, grew up in the area at a time when it did not nearly have the ethnic diversity it has gained in recent years.

“The southside went from having a very small number of Burmese residents to having one of the largest Burmese communities in the United States in a relatively short time,” he said. “To see this added level of diversity and vibrancy on the southside has really been remarkable.”

It also called for a response by St. Mark Parish, one that Father Wyciskalla is proud to have witnessed and helped lead during the past two years.

“Though our cultures are very different, the faith unites us all,” he said. “Along with the universal nature of the Church, we have also always had a preferential option for the refugee, the immigrant and those in need. When the Burmese community first arrived here on the southside, they fit that description and found a community at St. Mark willing to welcome them. This is fundamental to who we are, and this beautiful aspect of the Church has been on full display at St. Mark.”

Albertson has led St. Mark School since 2009. He presented challenges to its staff. Albertson recalled veteran teachers coming to him about them.

“‘What are we going to do? They don’t speak English,’ ” Albertson recalled them saying. “I said, ‘We’re going to teach them.’ ”

St. Mark soon hired a part-time English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher. It now has a full-time ESL teacher and three other teachers called interventionists who work full time with ESL students to help them with particular subjects.

Overall, St. Mark went from having 15 staff members in 2009 to 45 now. It had one classroom per grade in 2009. Now it has two.

The southside has really been remarkable.

The quick change in demographics at St. Mark presented challenges to its staff. Albertson recalled veteran teachers coming to him about them.

“In the past 26 years, Roncalli students have collected more than $22 million in college scholarships. The Class of 2020 included 6 National Merit Scholars. Roncalli is the home to 18 Indiana Academic All Stars since the program’s inception in 1997. The Class of 2020 completed over 51,711 hours of community service during their four years at Roncalli, which averages over 168 hours per senior. In the past 25 years, Roncalli students have collected more than $2.2 million canned food items for the poor. Over 130 students participate in our comprehensive special needs resource program STARS — that addresses the needs of students with learning and physical disabilities.
That led to the challenge of finding space for all the students.
St. Mark Parish is now in the midst of a capital campaign that, among other things, will fund the addition of two classrooms to its school.

"The growth that this parish has seen over the last 10 years or so is incredible, both in parish families and in the school," Father Wyciskalla said. "The introduction of the Burmese community to St. Mark was like a shot in the arm for the parish."

Although Indiana’s voucher program has played a key role in the growth of St. Mark School, Albertson said that a number of parents of Burmese students who came to Indiana as refugees have now secured such well-paying jobs that they don’t qualify economically for a voucher.

In any case, he said, the high value that Burmese place on a Catholic education for their children is what is driving the enrollment changes at St. Mark.

"Even if the vouchers went away, I don’t think the Burmese students would go away," Albertson said. "I think they would find a way to keep them here."

Having moved to the southside when the Burmese community there was small, Dim is now glad to see her children and so many others from Myanmar enrolled as students at St. Mark.

"I’m hoping that the future for my children will be very good," she said. "They have the opportunity to go to a Catholic school. They can learn good from bad and become smart. When they grow up, they’ll be someone."

‘We feel safe in a Catholic school’

Like St. Mark, the demographic changes at St. Bartholomew have in part been affected by the state’s voucher program.

"Parishioners have stepped up, because they know [the school] is important," she said. "They want to give anyone who values a Catholic education a chance to come to St. Bartholomew."

Paula Lamadrid placed a high value on Catholic education when she and her husband enrolled their eldest child at St. Bartholomew in 2007.

She had attended a Catholic school in her native country that we love so much." Heckman said. "Anytime we had the chance, we’d show them the Burmese students would go away," Albertson said. "I think they would find a way to keep them here."

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She had attended a Catholic school in her native Mexico. Her husband, an employee of the Columbus-based Cummins, was transferred from Mexico to Columbus 20 years ago. Their two sons were born here, and the spouses became naturalized U.S. citizens three years ago.

Lamadrid’s oldest child became a student at St. Bartholomew long before there was a large presence of Hispanic students there. She arranged for speakers to come to the school to help the students and teachers appreciate the particular cultural and religious traditions of the Hispanic community.

"I wanted to show them more diversity and to help them learn more from other countries," Lamadrid said. "Anytime we had the chance, we’d show them our traditions and also embrace the traditions of this country that we love so much."

Among the Hispanic traditions now observed at St. Bartholomew are Dia de los Muertos (which happens on All Souls Day), Las Posadas (a novena in the days leading up to Christmas) and a special emphasis on the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Many Hispanic families felt drawn to enroll their children at a Catholic school, Lamadrid said, because of their high reputation in their home countries.

"If you can make the effort to send your kids to a Catholic school, it means they’re going to get the best learning experience and be prepared the best to go to college," she said. The fact that the schools are rooted in the Catholic faith is also key for Hispanic families, Lamadrid said. "It’s a comfort for so many of our international families and perhaps especially for our Hispanic families," she said. "We feel safe in a Catholic school because it’s the faith that we know and share."

The introduction of many students from countries around the world during the past decade to St. Bartholomew has been a challenge to the school’s staff. But it’s one that Heckman has embraced with enthusiasm.

"It’s amazing to see teachers welcome a family and not give a second thought to who they might be or whether or not they speak English," Heckman said. "They just accept whoever is in front of them and make them feel welcome."

Retired Father Clement Davis was pastor of St. Bartholomew Parish when the faith community’s school began experiencing a significant growth in the diversity of its student body, and saw it on display in a special way at school Masses.

“Anytime we had the chance, we’d show them our traditions and also embrace the traditions of this country that we love so much.” †

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Hispanic students at St. Bartholomew School in Columbus dress in festive costumes on the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe on Dec. 12, 2019. The Seymour Deanery faith community has seen a large growth in Hispanic students during the past decade. (Submitted photo)
Teacher’s ‘codes to live by’ inspire her students

By John Shaughnessy

After she says a prayer with her students, Angela Toner sometimes shares one of her “CODES TO LIVE BY” with them.

“Some of them are simple,” says Toner, a math teacher at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis. “Open the door for others. Call your grandparents. Never look down on another unless you are giving them a hand up. And some are fun quips. If God is your co-pilot, swap seats. Do not let your worries get the best of you, remember Moses started out as a basket case. Forbidden fruits create many jams.”

Toner’s inspiration for sharing such codes each Monday started a few years ago when she decided, “If I want students to make solid decisions, then I should tell them exactly what I mean.”

“Students become excited about the code each week, and I’ve often had college students e-mail me and tell me that they have their CODES posted in their dorm rooms,” she says. “Knowing one can make a difference in kids’ lives through prayer fulfills Roncalli’s mission to ‘make God’s love complete among us.’”

That’s also been Toner’s mission in her 35 years of teaching in a Catholic school. She’s even been known to make “house calls” as a teacher, bringing students their homework and tutoring them when they’ve had to stay at home because of an injury or an illness. She’s also come to Riley Hospital for Children in Indianapolis to tutor a student who has been hospitalized there for cancer.

Downplaying such efforts, she says, “When I see how appreciative the parents and kids are, that is a gift to me.”

Even after 35 years, her passion for teaching and trying to influence young people’s lives still burns.

“Having the opportunity to impact kids is paramount,” says Toner, a member of St. Mark the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis. “I pray that every teacher gets to hear from a student at least once in their lives. ’You were my favorite teacher.’ This is extremely powerful and makes one want to continue to excel and thrive in the classroom in order to allow children to do the same. Honest, however, I receive equivalent satisfaction from students who say, ‘Your class was so fun,’ and even, ‘Mrs. Toner, you made math tolerable.’ This is because I truly believe Maya Angelou’s adage that people may not remember what I said, but they will never forget how I made them feel.”

That focus complements her educational goals to help students “understand the material, become a good problem solver, and be prepared for the next level of math.”

Tying all those components together, Toner says she tries to model the wisdom that St. Theodora Guérin offered about the education of young people: “Love the children first, and then teach them.”

Toner considers that approach as her own personal code to live by.
Moments.
Milestones.
Memories.
By John Shaugnessy

Ten-year-old Eli Connolly laughs as he talks about Father Michael Keucher driving a school bus full of students on a field trip, honking the horn and waving hellos to people along the way.

Eleven-year-old Macey Robbins enjoys how energetic Father Keucher gets during his homilies at Mass, including when “he jumps up and down” to make a point.

And both fifth-grade students at St. Joseph School in Shelbyville love the way their parish priest makes learning about the Catholic faith fun when he teaches religion to their class and the fourth-grade class.

As for Father Keucher—who has a bus driver’s license—he’s driven to making a lasting impact on the students, especially when it comes to their faith.

“I believe our students are not just the future of our Church, but the present,” he says. “It’s important to teach them the traditions that have been handed down to us from our ancestors, from the Apostles. I want to help children get excited about Jesus, the Blessed Mother and the Church.”

To help create that connection, he works on building bonds with the students.

“It’s important that the kids have a good relationship with the priest and know him,” he says. “I love doing things with the kids in religion class, activities and trips. I find it very rewarding and fun.”

So do the children.

“Every time we see him, he asks us a question about something holy,” Eli says. “I’ve learned a lot of stuff that way this year. When we were learning about the books of the Bible, he made up songs about them.”

Marcy chimes in, “When we started learning the Ten Commandments, he made hand signs to help us remember. He makes learning about our faith a lot more fun.”

He brings that same approach to the school’s rosary club, meeting once a month with members from the third, fourth and fifth grades. The students get to use their creativity in making rosaries that they then share with loved ones and other people who are homebound, in hospitals and in nursing homes.

The children also enjoy it when he brings his dog, Sister Glory, to club meetings.

“They get to pick the colors and make the rosary the way they want,” Father Keucher says. “I love it. These kids love the rosary, and they love to pray the rosary with their families. There’s a relationship going between these kids and the Blessed Mother that is very beautiful.”

The students at St. Joseph School have a similar bond with him, according to Eli, Macey and the school’s principal, Beth Borland.

“Relationships are a two-way street,” Borland says. “As much as the kids adore Father Mike, he adores them. He’s so full of joy and enthusiasm in all that he does. And he weaves the lessons of our faith into everything he does.

“He’s so fun loving that they want to be around him. He plays dodge ball with them, eats lunch in the cafeteria with them, rides scooters through the school. That builds that connection. He’s open with his joy and his love. He’s open with his mistakes. The kids can identify with that. And they all know his love of donuts, chicken wings and pizza. I don’t know who gets more out of the relationship—him or the kids.”

Father Michael Keucher led the fourth- and fifth-grade students of St. Joseph School in Shelbyville on an All Souls Day visit to St. Vincent Cemetery in Shelby County and St. Joseph Cemetery in Shelbyville. Father Keucher led a prayer service at each cemetery where students performed the spiritual work of mercy of praying for the dead. Many students knew where some of their relatives are buried so their pastor blessed those graves. (Submitted photo)

As the pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Shelbyville, Father Michael Keucher leads the rosary club at the parish’s school, guiding students to a closer relationship with the Blessed Mother. (Submitted photo)
Valuable lessons from her students touch a teacher’s life

By John Shaughnessy

The story is profound in its innocence and its faithfulness, and it speaks volumes about what Lillian Kelley has always valued in her 34 years of teaching her students.

“I have enjoyed many visits and comments from former students, but I recall a time that one of my preschool students caused diners at Red Lobster to quiet themselves as she prayed over her meal,” Kelley recalls.

She also shares another story of a small child, a story that helps explain why she has dedicated so much of her adult life to Catholic education by teaching pre-school and kindergarten students at such places as the former St. Andrew Academy and Holy Cross Central School in Indianapolis.

“As a young child growing up in rural Mississippi, I was made aware of the fact that Catholic schools were the ‘good schools,’” she notes. “I liked the idea that the schools taught religion, required discipline and they expected students to excel academically.”

Influenced by her own Catholic education, Kelley says she has been “blessed” to live her dream to “teach in this wonderful faith community.”

At the same time, she has never stopped being a student. She initially gives credit to the knowledge she has gained from administrators, priests and parishioners through the years. Still, she says, her most valuable lessons have come from her students. “They are the ones who taught me the following approaches: First, get to know the child. Second, help the child to feel that you care. Third, develop a relationship with parents. Finally, but most importantly, teach the child the Good News about Jesus Christ. Children will learn academically, grow spiritually and develop a way to see God in all things.”

Keeping that focus on the children, Kelley has one more story to share about a former student, one more story about the joy she’s experienced from teaching in Catholic schools. “I was at Indiana University in Bloomington when a former student gave me a hug and thanked me for being her preschool teacher,” Kelly recalls. “She is a college professor.”

In her 34 years of dedication to Catholic education, Lillian Kelley has always felt blessed to live her dream of teaching “in this wonderful faith community.” Here, she teaches in her current school, Holy Cross Central School in Indianapolis. (Submitted photo)
Our Teachers, The True Heroes of Catholic Education

This year’s Catholic Schools Week Supplement is dedicated to the more than 2,200 Catholic school teachers in the archdiocese who continue to go above and beyond in their efforts—especially during this challenging time of the COVID-19 pandemic—to educate the nearly 21,000 students in our 68 schools across central and southern Indiana.

As part of this tribute to our teachers, the Office of Catholic Schools in the archdiocese particularly wants to salute the 105 educators who have devoted 25 years or more to Catholic education.

Bishop Chaterd High School, Indianapolis

Greg Miller, 30 years

Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School, Indianapolis

Mary Pat O'Connor, 25 years

Rosina Smith, 25 years

Cathedral High School, Indianapolis

Greg Bamrick, 31 years

Linda Bamrick, 25 years

Marc Beltring, 25 years

Lambeth Boudreau, 25 years

Melinda Bundy, 47 years

Lisa Frey, 48 years

Ken Kaufman, 35 years

Laurie O'Brien, 37 years

Bolinda Speck, 35 years

Gary Sprung, 32 years

Sister Mary Ann Stewart, S.P., 41 years

Central Catholic School, Indianapolis

Margaret McHugh, 39 years

Patty Walt, 29 years

Christ the King School, Indianapolis

Donna Araujo, 38 years

Karen Wagner, 38 years

Father Michael Shawe Memorial High School, Indianapolis

Alino Curnow, 43 years

Lou Ann Center, 36 years

Father Thomas Scicca Memorial High School, Indianapolis

Anthony Golden, 39 years

Sister Sheila Hackett, O.P., 47 years

Ollie Hurdle, 44 years

Elizabeth Williams, 25 years

Holy Angels School, Indianapolis

Linda Douma, 26 years

Holy Cross Central School, Indianapolis

Lillian Kelley, 29 years

Slythe Kleinschmidt, 27 years

Caren Stinegar, 38 years

Annie Thibert, 32 years

Holy Family New School, New Albany

Bryan Cooper, 27 years

Kimberly Bluff, 28 years

Caroline Summers, 25 years

Kathleen Weiser, 45 years

Holy Name School, Beech Grove

Sister Nicoletta Eklund, O.S.B., 32 years

Ellen Taylor, 25 years

Holy Spirit School, Indianapolis

Brenda Alwine, 27 years

Linda Eagan, 26 years

Cherie Eastridge, 35 years

Lisa Eichemich, 25 years

Heather Hackett, 26 years

Immaculate Heart of Mary School, Indianapolis

Patty Kosar, 30 years

Nativity School, Indianapolis

Rose Hallton, 44 years

Chris Pisk, 38 years

Oldenbourg Academy of the Immaculate Conception, Oldenburg

Silver Maple, 25 years

Ken Warning, 44 years

Our Lady of Perpetual Help School, New Albany

Lori Dayton, 35 years

Anne Woods, 37 years

Our Lady of Providence High School, Indianapolis

Lizzy Dunton, 27 years

Kerry Gerber, 46 years

doi Herring, 42 years

Scott Herring, 35 years

Scott Hitchcock, 25 years

Kathleen Jacobs, 30 years

Mary Alice Kurth, 28 years

Karen Schmelter, 35 years

Our Lady of the Greenwood School, Greenwood

Paula Howard, 44 years

Mary Schmelter, 34 years

Jan Sexton, 26 years

Pam White, 36 years

Cheri Hurdle, 44 years

Elizabeth Williams, 25 years

Our Lady of Providence, Indianapolis

Roncalli High School, Indianapolis

Pat Cronin, 28 years

Donnie Joseph, 45 years

Ruth Karuza, 33 years

Kathy Pushe, 38 years

Jim Radfill, 35 years

Kathy Schoenbrun, 40 years

Mark Stretten, 35 years

Gerald Slevin, 37 years

Angie Sloan, 35 years

Laura Williams, 36 years

Sacred Heart School, Jeffersonville

Lynne Emansky, 37 years

Ronda Jackson, 25 years

Yvonne Smith, 36 years

Our Lady of Providence, Indianapolis

St. Andrew School, Seymour

Angie Craig, 32 years

Theresa Joray, 30 years

St. Anthony of Padua School, Clarksville

Nancy McGarvey, 38 years

Mary Pickrell, 43 years

Jan Sexton, 26 years

Pam White, 36 years

Cheri Hurdle, 44 years

Elizabeth Williams, 25 years

St. Anthony School, Indianapolis

St. Anthony School, Indianapolis

LeAnn Patterson, 28 years

Theresa Stifter, 43 years

St. Barnabas School, Indianapolis

Terry Collins, 45 years

St. Barnabas School, Indianapolis

Mary Martha Hoefling, 39 years

Karin Miller, 40 years

Ronald Pittman, 34 years

St. Bartholomew School, Columbus

Diana Grunam, 25 years

John King, 25 years

Shannon Reyer, 25 years

Mindy Quinlan, 25 years

Angie Sloan, 35 years

Laura Williams, 36 years

St. Christopher School, Indianapolis

Chris Evans, 45 years

Tracy McKee, 27 years

St. Francis and Clare of Assisi School, Greenwood

Pam Wells, 25 years

St. Gabriel School, Connersville

Angie Fuller, 26 years

Sara Epton, 34 years

St. Joan of Arc School, Indianapolis

Theresa Stifter, 45 years

St. John Paul II School, Sellersburg

Amy Barber, 26 years

Doris Burnett, 30 years

St. Lawrence School, Indianapolis

Julie Calahan, 26 years

Marcia Ehrmanberger, 26 years

Ronda Hobbs-Jackson, 27 years

Katie Solomon, 26 years

St. Jude School, Indianapolis

Sally Meyer, 36 years

Julie Rasm, 38 years

Jill Schultz, 40 years

St. Lawrence School, Indianapolis

Chara Battatelli, 29 years

Christine Hummel, 32 years

St. Louis School, Batesville

Joan Bonsert, 36 years

Beth Emmelhuber, 36 years

Diane Jones, 26 years

Mary Beth Lavarell, 36 years

Tammy Rosi, 30 years

Amy Weigel, 27 years

St. Luke the Evangelist School, Indianapolis

Carl King, 27 years

Kathleen Frizer, 27 years

Pam Scheck, 31 years

St. Malachy School, Brownsburg

Michelle Craner, 36 years

Mary Frenny, 41 years

Lori McFarland, 38 years

Mary Nil, 34 years

Pamela Ottesen, 33 years

Tracy Prakash, 26 years

Gail Strahle, 32 years

Jackie Svitlick, 36 years

St. Mark School, Indianapolis

Cathy Berlio, 44 years

Marina Domen, 27 years

Tim Lauten, 43 years

Karen Kosters, 32 years

Tina Vaildson-Brunner, 35 years

St. Mary School, Aurora

Ann Marie Grove, 25 years

Amy Dennis, 25 years

Surc Rice, 25 years

Jim Widms, 42 years

St. Mary School, Greenburg

Kathleen Paul Murray, 35 years

Susan Mierz, 31 years

Jennifer Smith, 26 years

St. Mary School, North Vernon

Sister Maryrae, 26 years

St. Mary School, Rushville

Mollie Cull, 25 years

St. Matthew School, Indianapolis

Mary Beth Kneuer, 26 years

Sister Bonita Marie Krack, O.S.B., 46 years

St. Michael School, Indianapolis

Mary Mars, 27 years

Brian Meyer, 25 years

Rita Nadby, 36 years

St. Michael-St. Gabriel School, Indianapolis

Patricia Guarino, 43 years

St. Michael School, Brookville

Mollie Buhler, 29 years

Pam Kolb, 37 years

Kerri O'Brien, 40 years

St. Monica School, Indianapolis

Lyn Goldsberry, 25 years

Elaine Waddell, 29 years

St. Nicholas School, Ripley County

Mary Beld, 27 years

Joni Doerr, 33 years

St. Patrick School, Terre Haute

Dallas Wright, 27 years

St. Philip Neri School, Indianapolis

Kelly England, 25 years

St. Pius X School, Indianapolis

Maryda Austin, 35 years

Chris Boldt, 36 years

Allie Altshulger, 40 years

Jennie Bittner, 25 years

Jill Stover, 36 years

St. Rock School, Indianapolis

Mary Anne Chambourn, 32 years

Mary Donoven, 25 years

Mary Foltis, 25 years

Sister Anne Marie, O.S.B., 34 years

Dick Gallant, 36 years

Sister Jordan, 35 years

Sister Mary Saint, O.S.B., 36 years

Anna Robert, 25 years

Kevn Wadson, 25 years

St. Rose of Lima School, Franklin

Kim Dutton, 36 years

Mary Tukun, 37 years

St. Simon the Apocllyte School, Indianapolis

Cindy Cappel, 26 years

Pete Frederick, 32 years

Kerry O'Brien, 26 years

Sister Monica, O.S.B., 32 years

St. Susanna School, Plainfield

Karen Villanueva, 30 years

St. Therese Little Flower Catholic School, Indianapolis

Gary Asher, 46 years

Theodore Mayton, 46 years

St. Thomas Aquinas School, Indianapolis

Sandy Beery, 37 years

Seton Catholic Elementary School, Richmond

Ruth Brown, 40 years

Seton Catholic High School, Richmond

David Brown, 28 years

Mary Cooper, 27 years

Mary Cooper, 27 years

Mary Cooper, 27 years

Mary Cooper, 27 years

Mary Cooper, 27 years

Mary Cooper, 27 years

Mary Cooper, 27 years

Mary Cooper, 27 years

Mary Cooper, 27 years

Mary Cooper, 27 years
**Catholic Schools**

**Archdiocese of Indianapolis**

### Deanery Schools

**Batesville Deanery**
- St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception School (K-6)
  - 211 Fourth St.
  - Aurora, IN 47001
  - 812-926-1558

**Bloomington Deanery**
- St. Vincent de Paul School (PK-8)
  - 921 16th St.
  - Bedford, IN 47421
  - 812-279-2540
- St. Charles Borromeo School (PK-8)
  - 224 E. Third St.
  - Bloomington, IN 47401
  - 812-336-5853

**Connersville Deanery**
- St. Gabriel School (PK-6)
  - 224 W. Ninth St.
  - Connersville, IN 47331
  - 765-825-7951

**New Albany Deanery**
- Our Lady of Providence High School (9-12)
  - 707 Providence Way
  - Clarksville, IN 47129
  - 812-945-2538
- St. Anthony of Padua School (PK-8)
  - 320 N. Sherwood Ave.
  - Clarksville, IN 47129
  - 812-282-2144

**Terre Haute Deanery**
- St. Patrick School (PK-8)
  - 449 S. 15th St.
  - Terre Haute, IN 47803
  - 812-232-2157

**Seymour Deanery**
- St. Ambrose School (PK-8)
  - 301 S. Chestnut St.
  - Seymour, IN 47274
  - 812-522-3522

### Columbus Diocese

**Archdiocese of Indianapolis**

### Deanery Schools

**Bloomington Deanery**
- Our Lady of Providence High School (9-12)
  - 707 Providence Way
  - Clarksville, IN 47129
  - 812-945-2538

**Connersville Deanery**
- St. Joseph School (K-8)
  - 524 Walnut St.
  - Lawrenceburg, IN 47025
  - 812-537-3690

**New Albany Deanery**
- Holy Family School (PK-8)
  - 217 W. Daisy Lane
  - New Albany, IN 47150
  - 812-944-6090
- Our Lady of Perpetual Help School (PK-8)
  - 1752 Scheller Lane
  - New Albany, IN 47150
  - 812-944-7676

**Terre Haute Deanery**
- St. John Paul II School (PK-8)
  - 105 St. Paul St.
  - Terre Haute, IN 47802
  - 812-232-2157

**Seymour Deanery**
- St. John Paul II School (PK-8)
  - 105 St. Paul St.
  - Terre Haute, IN 47802
  - 812-232-2157

**Private High School**
- Oldenburg Academy of the Immaculate Conception (9-12)
  - 1 Toulier Circle
  - Oldenburg, IN 47036
  - 812-934-4440
By John Shaughnessy

Sandi Kirchner has always approached her teaching career with the attitude, “Anything God wants me to do”—an approach that was tested to its limits one day when she saw a car veering out of control as she helped monitor an after-school pick-up line of cars.

The car was headed right toward the spot where a boy in the first grade was talking to her about his grandparents’ dog. Seeing the car’s driver slumped over the wheel and a little girl inside the car, Kirchner pushed the boy to safety.

As the car bounced off the curb in front of Kirchner, it ricocheted toward the center of a busy street. Kirchner ran toward the car, opened the front passenger door, jumped inside the car and stretched her left foot toward the brake—stopping the car. No one was hurt, including the driver who later recovered from the seizure that caused the car to veer out of control.

That scene from 2009 was a moment of drama in the 38-year teaching career of Kirchner—a teacher who has made it her mission to have a dramatic impact on the lives of her students, albeit in a much more calm and constant way. She tries to make that impact on her third-grade students at St. Mary School in North Vernon by asking them to do the one thing she demands of herself.

“I’m trying to be the best person I can be every day, and I’m trying to be better every day,” she says. “And that’s what I try to instill in my students. I try to instill in them that we’re not perfect and God knows that, but he wants us to try to be better.

“We talk a lot about bullying and peer pressure. We talk about how God calls us to stand up for a classmate or to help an elderly person when all our classmates rush by. And we talk about doing the right thing because God is there, and he’s sent us the Holy Spirit to help us do that.”

Kirchner has shared that message with two generations of students in her 38 years of teaching, which have all been done in the third grade at St. Mary School. Even with that longevity and continuity, she strives to add a fresh approach to every school year. She also strives to view every student as a child of God.

“Whether I’m talking about our spirituality or academics, I always try to identify where the students are in their lives. I have students being raised by their grandparents, by single parents, by parents who are at the poverty level and by parents who have more money than you and I will ever have.

“I identify where the students are, help them to become a better person and acknowledge we are all gifts from God and we’re all in God’s family. That’s the foundation where I start from, and we go from there. It’s all driven by my faith. This is the call God has given me, and he’s entrusted me with these children.”

As she works with her students, Sandi Kirchner of St. Mary School in North Vernon encourages them to follow her lead in “trying to be the best person I can be every day.” Here, she helps one of her students, Kennedei Roll. (Submitted photo)
Teacher cherishes the joy and wonder of her students

By John Shaughnessy

When Ruth Brown shares special moments from her nearly 40 years of teaching students in the first grade, it’s easy to understand why she considers that grade to be “the Wonder Year!”

“Often, they seem so tiny—gone in a flash—but celebrated in the heart,” says Brown, a teacher at Seton Catholic School in Richmond. “Maybe it’s hearing a student use a courtesy word unprompted, or seeing a child allow another to go in front for the first time, or having a student say they want to write a letter to someone who’s sad.”

Then there are the moments when the influence of a teacher on a child goes deeper.

“I remember one time when a first-grader who was usually a motivated and capable student showed signs of slipping and then was late to school and grumpy one day,” Brown recalls. “My first questions were rebuffed with ‘I’m fine’ and ‘Nothing’s wrong.’ Later, I was walking with her back to the classroom and she started to say something. I invited her to sit down right there on the steps with me, to talk or just sit quietly.

“Afer a few minutes, she poured out a story about her very dysfunctional home life and how she had ended up caring for a younger brother, alone in her home for several hours not knowing where her mom was. At that moment, I could only offer her my loving presence and understanding, and the promise that, although I couldn’t fix things at home, our classroom would stay the same place of safety, respect and caring for her every day. I hope it gave her a secure spot in her life.”

Even in such challenging situations, Brown regards teaching at Seton as an “opportunity to practice living in the presence of God in every moment.”

“My beliefs about God and God’s people inform my approach to students and to teaching,” Brown says. “If one starts with the belief that each child brings worth and a unique, special wisdom to the classroom, then the job of the teacher is to affirm and support what’s already there and then nurture the child’s spiritual, intellectual, social and emotional growth.”

She’s also a firm believer in teaching her students through her actions and her interactions with them.

“I hope they absorb the atmosphere of a classroom where God and God’s creation are cherished and where people lift each other up.”

Brown cherishes the joy and wonder that her students have brought to her life through the years: “Teaching first grade gloriously suits my mind, heart and soul.

“My hope for all my students is that they will fondly remember a time and place where they were nurtured and celebrated for who they were and who they might become.”

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Shared values of Catholic schools shape students

The Office of Catholic Schools strives to educate the nearly 21,000 Catholic school students in the archdiocese with a three-pronged approach of vision, mission and shared values.

Here is a closer look at the approach that guides the Office of Catholic Schools and the 68 Catholic schools in the archdiocese.

**Our Shared Values**

- We believe that Catholic school communities are enriched by the unique image and likeness of Church teachings.
- We believe that Catholic schools serve as a vital ministry of the greater Church.
- We believe that Catholic schools should be accessible and affordable.
- We believe that “excellence” is defined by and achieved through the growth and holistic development—spiritual, intellectual/academic, social, emotional and physical—of the individual within the context of community.
- We believe that Catholic schools should be part of the evangelizing mission of the Church, forming disciples through the intentional integration of faith, culture and life.
- We believe that parents are the primary educators of each young person and that it is the responsibility of Catholic schools to support the domestic Church.
- We believe that formation best occurs within faith-filled cultures of learning that are inclusive.
- We believe that professional educators in Catholic schools support the domestic Church.
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**Our Mission**

Our Mission

With open doors, open arms and open hearts, the Office of Catholic Schools supports the formation of professional work experience, PCR students can gain upon graduation, and a wide variety of extracurricular activities, PCR students can be sure that they are ready to succeed in college and beyond.

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**Our vision**

Open Doors:

- We believe that Catholic schools serve as a vital ministry of the greater Church.
- We believe that Catholic schools should be accessible and affordable.
- We believe that the viability and vitality of Catholic schools are the responsibility of all the faithful.
- We believe in sharing leadership with pastors, school leaders and commissions/boards under the direction of the archbishop and guidance of Church teachings.

Open Arms:

- We believe in fostering positive relationships that exemplify the love of God.
- We believe that Catholic school communities are enriched by the unique image and likeness of God that is present in each individual.

Open Hearts:

- We believe that formation best occurs within faith-filled cultures of learning that are inclusive.
- We believe that parents are the primary educators of each young person and that it is the responsibility of Catholic schools to support the domestic Church.

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**Our Office of Catholic Schools**

Founded in 1833, the Office of Catholic Schools is the Ministry of Catholic Education of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

The Office of Catholic Schools is a support office designed to assist all Catholic schools to provide faith-filled and academically rich education. The Office of Catholic Schools offers a variety of services through its supports teams, and a wide variety of community resources, PCRHS isn’t just a school—it’s a family.

With 13:1 student teacher ratio, full counseling, academic, and behavioral support teams, and a wide variety of community resources, PCRHS isn’t just a school—it’s a family.

Our students receive 1,000 hours of professional work experience through our unique Corporate Work Study Program! Work at one of our 70+ partner companies in Indianapolis and gain valuable experience that will help prepare you for your future career.

With a 100% college acceptance rate, an average of 17 college credit hours gained upon graduation, and a wide variety of extracurricular activities, PCR students can be sure that they are ready to succeed in college and beyond.

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**Our students**

Their mission and shared values, our vision and mission are enriched by the unique image and likeness of Church teachings. We believe that Catholic school communities are enriched by the unique image and likeness of Church teachings. We believe that Catholic schools serve as a vital ministry of the greater Church. We believe that Catholic schools should be accessible and affordable. We believe that the viability and vitality of Catholic schools are the responsibility of all the faithful. We believe in sharing leadership with pastors, school leaders and commissions/boards under the direction of the archbishop and guidance of Church teachings.
Scecina High School’s capital campaign succeeds despite challenges of pandemic and economic crisis

By Sean Gallagher

Bringing a $6 million capital campaign to a positive conclusion in the middle of a worldwide pandemic with a related economic downturn is usually not a recipe for success. But Father Thomas Scecina Memorial High School not only met the ambitious goal amid the coronavirus pandemic, the school added another $600,000 to the campaign’s goal.

Facing and overcoming challenges is not new to the archdiocesan high school for the Indianapolis East Deanery since it was founded more than 60 years ago. Scecina president Joseph Therber has seen many of these challenges. He served as a teacher and assistant football coach there from 1986-98 before returning as its president in 2009.

He credits the campaign’s success to the “base of people that are extremely generous with their time and resources and who believe in the mission of the school.”

“We have alumni from all decades of the school’s history who believe the same and want to help in ways large and small to make it happen,” Therber said.

One of those alumni is George Newhart, a 1960 Scecina graduate. When he grew up on Indianapolis’ eastside, it was, as he remembered it, “a center of industrial activity for the Midwest.” Factories for Chrysler, Ford, Western Electric and RCA dotted the corridors along Shadeland and Sherman avenues and other locations.

“In my day, most of the kids were from blue-collar families,” Newhart recalled. “Our parents worked in the factories. My dad worked at the fire department and police department. It was a much different world.”

In the decades that followed, most of the factories on the eastside closed. But while many employers disappeared from the eastside, Scecina remained, serving as an anchor for the community.

“All those companies went away,” Newhart said. “But the amazing thing is, Scecina has been able to stay where it’s always been and still contribute to the academic and personal development of the eastside kids. And they’ve expanded [the student body] well beyond the eastside.”

An added recent challenge to the eastside is that many who live there now have jobs in the service industry that has been severely affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

Newhart, who serves as the chair of Scecina’s board of directors and on the campaign’s executive committee, was at first anxious about the pandemic’s effect on the school’s fundraising efforts.

“In any kind of economic downturn—and this was more of an economic disaster—you fear for those kinds of things,” he said. “Bills can’t be paid as quickly or as efficiently as before. But we have done very well. Our families and the Scecina community are so loyal and dedicated.”

Therber said that, for many in the Scecina community, getting behind the effort to provide a positive future for the school has been a source of relief during the present time with its many challenges.

“Hope is energizing,” Therber said. “It’s brought optimism, purpose and a vision for the future at a time when we could have shrunk or turned inside of ourselves.”

The campaign, which is the first in Scecina’s history to have such an ambitious goal, has already funded the construction of a new weight room in the main building of the school. It is hoped that a new chapel in the main building will be completed in time for the start of the 2021-22 school year.

Other projects to be funded by the campaign include reworking its main entrance, construction of an athletic and activity fields, and endowments to ensure future academic excellence at the school, tuition assistance and the maintenance and improvement of facilities.

“We tried to do something extraordinary, and we have,” Therber said. “That should give us confidence for even more in the future.”

(To learn more about Father Thomas Scecina Memorial High School, visit scecina.org.)

Special moment shows teacher how God is using him

By John Shaughnessy

Jim Waldon sums up one of the great mysteries of life and teaching when he says, “As you live your life, you never know how God is using you.”

Waldon then shares a favorite story of how God has used him during his 33 years of teaching at St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception School in Aurora.

“We had a student come to us from a public school as a seventh grader,” Waldon recalls. “His parents could see he was slipping through the cracks. At the time, if a student didn’t keep up his schoolwork, one of the consequences was they’d lose recess and have to clean up the cafeteria. This student chalked up a remarkable number of clean-up days.

“Rather than resenting me, he came through for his own sake and his parents. He went on to serve in the Navy on a submarine. And to this day, when he comes home to see his family, he looks me up and invites me to dinner. In an experience like that, you realize God did use you. Those are the moments when you know you’ve touched them beyond what you hoped. It’s very humbling.”

Waldon has taught mostly English and religion during his years at St. Mary, the school that he attended from first to eighth grade.

“As I look back, I realize what a blessing it is to me to be in a place where I was so strongly impacted and where I’ve worked with so many wonderful teachers and students through the years. It’s been my privilege to dedicate my life to working with so many fine people to keep the mission of our parish school alive. I’ve experienced the blessing of teaching two generations of many families. The greatest reward is seeing the successes achieved by so many of my past students.”

“My goal with the students is simply that I want them to remember that God loves them and hears every prayer they offer. If they don’t learn anything else from me, I hope they remember that I encourage them to pray constantly.”

Scecina is your pathway to achieve college, career, and life success. Learn more about becoming a Crusader at scecina.org/admissions

You Can Go Anywhere From Here.

Scecina Memorial High School • 5800 Newland Avenue, Indianapolis, IN 46201

An artistic rendering portrays the new chapel to be constructed at Father Thomas Scecina Memorial High School in Indianapolis. The archdiocesan high school for the Indianapolis East Deanery is completing a $6.6 million capital campaign to fund various projects, including the chapel construction. (Submitted photo)
Catholic education provides a life-changing foundation for many people in the archdiocese

(EDITOR’S NOTE: The Criterion invited Catholics across the archdiocese to share how their Catholic education has had an impact on their lives. Here are some of their stories.)

By John Shaugnessy

The slogan for his children’s Catholic school represents everything that Richard Shagley wants for them: “Building Saints and Scholars.” That slogan at St. Patrick School in Terre Haute also reminds Shagley of the impact that people at that school tried to have on him when he was a student there.

“I don’t know if that was their slogan then, but it was the motto of the school when I was there,” the 46-year-old father of four says. “It wasn’t a big school, but there were good kids, a good education and good people around you who wanted you to succeed. And it wasn’t just the teachers and administrators. It was the parents as well. As a child, I didn’t see that, but that’s what my wife Alice and I want for our children—a good education provided by people who care about you. I’m very grateful that our kids are getting that start in life.”

Shagley also appreciates the foundation of faith that the school has provided for him and their children: George, Eleanor, William and Harriet.

“You get that early foundation—all the teachings about treating each other like you would want to be treated,” he says. “I’ve noticed my oldest child [16-year-old George] doesn’t resist going to church. He still sees the value. I’d like to say it’s what he sees in his parents, but I’d be foolish to think it wasn’t St. Patrick School, too. I’m thankful that they get that element of faith throughout the day.”

He’s also thankful for the influence that Father Daniel Bedel, the pastor of St. Patrick Parish, has on the school children.

“We’re fortunate that our kids have Father Dan. He’s a terrific priest. I’ve been to the children’s Mass and saw his magic. I credit my increased participation in the Church to him. I’m on the parish council because of him.”

A lawyer, Shagley also credits his parents for giving him the gift of a Catholic education, a gift he and his wife share with their children, too.

“Growing up Catholic, I learned about giving back. I’m lucky in my job that I’m able to give back to our [parish] Church. I got a lot of that from my father, Rick Shagley, who is also an attorney. I’ve seen the way he gives back and helps the community. I hope I can instill that in our children.”

‘We became Catholic as a result of their kindness’

One of the worst times of JoAnn Johnson’s life led her to Catholicism. Johnson, who grew up as a Baptist. “My husband and family were members of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis,” she says. “Something happened to me there that has made all the difference in my life. I fell in love. The object of my affection was my teacher. Her name was Sister Mary Hubert. She was a Benedictine sister.

“That love affair has lasted to this very day. The sisters who taught me were beautiful, kind and caring. I thought in the hierarchy of things, God was first and then there was them. Obviously since I have been a Benedictine for over 50 years, their impact on me was great. Even at age 6, I knew they possessed something that I wanted.”

Her eight years of Catholic education also led to another deep pursuit of her life.

“St. Ambrose prepared me for life, but also for the afterlife,” says Sister Mary Luke, a member of the Benedictine community of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove.

“I learned all the basic subjects, but also the importance of caring for others and the importance of honesty and hard work. We loved it when sister rolled up the sleeves of her long habit to wash desks since we got a glimpse of something other than her face and hands.”

“I can trace a direct line from my religious vocation to sitting in that first-grade classroom. The romance endures!”

Mom’s victory is a win for her sons, too

When Bert Leffel considers the way he met his wife and his lifelong friends, he’s ever thankful that his mother cast the deciding vote in his parents’ decision to send him and his two brothers to Catholic schools for their education.

Leffel’s dad had attended a Catholic school as a child, but the cost of a Catholic education and the quality of public schools in the family’s Indianapolis neighborhood made him think about sending his sons to the less-costly option. At the same time, Leffel’s mother, a product of public schools, saw how a Catholic school’s emphasis on faith, family values and education had strongly influenced her husband’s life.

“Long story short, Mom won,” Leffel recalls. He has no doubt that he and his brothers won, too.

“Catholic education has been a life-changing experience for my children, family and myself,” Leffel says, referring to his education at St. Pius X School and Cathedral High School, both in Indianapolis.

“I played baseball, basketball and football in grade school, and my friends were all there with me. I’m 42, and this group of teammates and classmates are still my closest friends. Friendship was at the heart of my school years and my main reason for sending my children to St. Pius to follow in my footsteps.”

For Leffel, what makes those friendships so deep is the connection of faith.

Benedictine Sister Mary Luke Jones, right, poses with her second grade teacher, Benedictine Sister Louise Hoeing, who also served for many years as a guidance counselor at Bishop Chatard High School in Indianapolis. (Submitted photo)
At the core of our friendships was Jesus and God. We were altar boys, and we attended Mass regularly all of my childhood. St. Pius as a church and an institution became my dear friend as well. Every priest we were fortunate to come into contact with was a blessing and a true friend. Father Jim Farrell has helped my family through our hardest times. We love him.

Catholic schools also led Leffel to the love of his life. He first met his wife Tiffany, a graduate of St. Matthew the Apostle School in Indianapolis, at a Catholic Youth Organization dance. They continued to date during their time together at Cathedral.

“Friendship and family are the impact the Catholic school system has played in my life,” he says. “It is one of the most important and treasured parts of my life. If anyone is on the ledge, like my dad once was, trust in knowing that once you are a part of this wonderful world it will truly change your life and your loved ones’ lives for the better.”

A prescription for a long, happy life
Joanne McKinley believes she has the prescription for anyone who wants to live a long, happy life.

“I’m 88 years old, and I attribute my good, happy life to my good, sound Catholic education,” says McKinley, a member of St. John Paul II Parish in Sellersburg.

“For eight years, I was taught by the wonderful Franciscan nuns from Oldenburg. They taught me so much about life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. We were taught how to dress and act appropriately for church, how to be respectful to our elders and how to understand that the Ten Commandments gave us the rules that God wants us to live by. Wouldn’t it be a wonderful world if everyone did live accordingly?”

McKinley learned those lessons while she was a student at the former St. Mary School in New Albany, the school where a classmate of hers, Thomas, later became her husband of nearly 67 years, leading to a family of six children, 19 grandchildren and 20 great-grandchildren.

Her thoughts of her Catholic education also take her back to another defining moment in her life—her first Communion.

“Sister Mary Omer, my first Communion instructor, had a huge influence on my moments of my life. Sister Mary Omer, my first Communion instructor, had a huge influence on my moments of my life. I often heard my father boast about the fact that he always stop and reflect on her words.”

She was soon developing: charity toward all, an open heart, service to my community, and acceptance of any person I would meet.”

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### How do I apply for an Indiana school Voucher?

To see how much tuition assistance you are eligible for, first register at our Catholic school of choice. To register, please visit www.doe.in.gov/choice.

### My child is enrolled at a Catholic school.

**I meet these eligibility requirements:**
- Indiana resident
- My family is between 100% and 200% of the Federal Free and Reduced Lunch Income Level (see chart).

### My family is at or below 200% of the Federal Free and Reduced Lunch Income Level (see chart).

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<thead>
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<th>Household Size</th>
<th>Income Limit for 50% Choice Scholarship</th>
<th>Income Limit for 90% Choice Scholarship</th>
<th>Income Limit for 50% Tax Credit Scholarship</th>
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<td>$114,000</td>
<td>$168,044</td>
<td>$179,516</td>
<td>$195,544</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Note: Income levels are determined in accordance with the Income Verification Rules document available at www.doe.in.gov/choice.

For a household size of 11 or more:

- **Add $5,719 to the annual limit for each additional member for a “50%” scholarship.**
- **Add $8,288 to the annual limit for each additional member for a “90%” scholarship.**
- **Add $12,432 to the annual limit for each additional member for a “50%” scholarship.**
- **Add $16,576 to the annual limit for each additional member for a “90%” scholarship.**

### I’m moving my child in grades K-12 to a Catholic school from a public school.

**I meet these eligibility requirements:**
- Indiana resident
- Apply before September 1, 2021
- My child attended public school the previous year (two semesters) OR received a Tax Credit Scholarship or Voucher the previous school year.

### What is an Indiana School Voucher?

A Voucher is a state-funded scholarship that helps cover the cost of tuition at a private school. Qualifying students in grades K-12 can receive up to 90% of the local per-student state funding amount.

#### Who qualifies for a Voucher?

- A student whose family meets the income eligibility guidelines for Federal Free and Reduced Lunch Program (see chart), AND
- A student in grades K-12 who is coming to a Catholic school after attending at least one year (two semesters) in an Indiana public school, AND/OR
- A sibling received a Tax Credit Scholarship or Voucher, AND/OR
- A student who qualified for an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

### Why should I apply now?

If your family qualifies for assistance, but you do not apply when your child first enters school, you may lose the opportunity for a Voucher or Tax Credit Scholarship for the next 12-13 years. Current Catholic school students CAN receive a Tax Credit Scholarship, making them eligible for a Voucher the following year.

### How do I apply for an Indiana school Voucher?

1. To see how much tuition assistance you are eligible for, first register at your Catholic school of choice.
2. To apply for funding, visit www.doe.in.gov/choice.

Additional local scholarships may also be available. Contact your local Catholic school.
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Preferential option for the poor promotes the common good

By Father Herbert Weber

A man in our parish Bible study expressed his disinterest in the Church’s outreach programs to those in need. He capped off his little speech by reminding everyone, “Even Jesus said ‘the poor you will always have with you’” (Mt 26:11). His intent, I suspect, was to say that’s just the way it is.

For me, this statement was jarring in that it failed to take into account all the other times Jesus emphasized reaching out to those in need (especially Mt 25:31-46). As the leader of the Bible study, my work was cut out for me.

More significantly, however, the man’s words were a reminder that many people have trouble figuring out how to respond to the poor. More than once, I have heard it said that if people are poor in a country of opportunity and resources, then it is their own fault.

Consequently, for some it simply does not make sense that the Church would go so far as to say that there has to be a preferential option for the poor and vulnerable. Adding the word “vulnerable” may help some. Yet the preferential option phrase is what stops lots of people in their tracks.

Almost any parish has some program for the poor, even if it is simply collecting food for a local pantry at Thanksgiving time. Not to make light of such efforts, but a preferential option for the poor and vulnerable must go way beyond donating instant potatoes and canned ravioli.

The call is for our Church to consciously and intentionally bring those on the margins into the full membership of society. That means people have to work for justice that fixes broken systems as well as advocating for the voiceless and powerless.

What’s more, all of humanity can be renewed by this form of inclusion. In his book, Let Us Dream, Pope Francis recently wrote, “You have to make for the margins to find a new future.”

After a recent homily in which I used an example of visiting a man in the county jail after he had confessed to a brutal murder, I was surprised to receive a number of supportive e-mails regarding my outreach.

One woman wrote that her nephew works with inmates because he has come to realize they, too, are among God’s children. In the same note, she apologized that she was not yet that open, but she wanted to be. Maybe that is the starting point—wanting to be open to the fact that people on the edges of our society are still worth our time, still humans. Worth is not based on innocence, or lack of it, nor on accomplishments. Worth comes from the love of God for each person.

The bishops in the U.S., in their 1986 “Economic Justice for All” pastoral letter, added the element of the common good as both a reason for and a result of focusing on the poor. It’s not simply that the poor and vulnerable need assistance, but working to help them is a way to allow for the good of everyone in society. They, too, can be contributing members of society.

Even when people agree with the Church’s option for the poor, the question is where to allow this position to take them. Simply put, people begin with awareness of who is vulnerable and who are the poor. A growing consciousness can lead to action, but people have to get beyond news headlines and political talking points.

For several years, our parish has conducted mission trips to the U.S.-Mexico border. With the help of parishes in southern Texas, our volunteers have worked with refugees as they were released from detention centers. Most were incredibly traumatized from both the journey to this country and the detention center itself.

Those who went on these trips often were following an unspecified inner desire to reach out to families in crisis. Participants often came back desiring to do more than simply helping for a week.

They were moved in profound ways to support immigration reform and to articulate the need for humane treatment of refugees. They had opportunities to talk about their experiences; some have become active in community groups.

It also became clear that the whole parish community needs to be reminded of the plight of refugees around the world. Consequently, we often have included petitions at Mass for the millions of immigrants fleeing violence and war. We have consistently brought this population to people’s attention.

In addition to awareness, there has to be the development of a new attitude toward others. In a world where many people create us-vs-them divides, this new way of looking at life tries to see others as sisters and brothers. It takes more than clever phrases to help people get beyond biases, but humor examples, parish hospitality plans and ongoing outreach efforts can help.

Whatever a congregation chooses to do, it has to integrate into its very fabric this awareness and response to the poor and vulnerable. It cannot simply settle for an occasional collection or activity.

(Father Herbert Weber is founding pastor of St. John XXIII Parish in Perrysburg, Ohio. His weekly podcast can be found at church.org)
At the start of 2020, I became a visitor/volunteer at the Federal Correction Complex in Terre Haute through the Prison Visitor Support (PVS) organization. Two of the prisoners I have visited, “George” and “Reggie,” have been on death row for about 10 years. Each has said that unless someone has been in a similar situation for at least five years, they really don’t know what it’s like to be a prisoner. Both have undergone awakening in their spiritual self-awareness that has led to a conversion in their personal lives. Their conversion is educational, but he is the best person I have met at being able to vocalize and write about his personal prayer life and about his relationship with the Almighty. He doesn’t proselytize, but he has a strong conviction that each person can make a difference in the world, regardless of their station. Being a prisoner, he has added, with some irony, how hard is that nobility or is that stupidity?

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity concluded on Jan. 25. Our annual event, central to the church calendar, which was recorded this year because of the pandemic, has celebrated the theme “Abide in my love.” To abide in love. A challenge in Jesus’ time. And our own. To abide in love. To dwell, literally, “pitched his tent” among us, as the tabernacle of the Lord was “tented” (Ex 25:8-9) among God’s people.

By Jesus’ life, ministry, death, resurrection and ministry, all Christians are called to love as he did. It is to be an “abiding love,” a love of and for oneness. My contact with the bishops of the Center for Interfaith Cooperation (CIC) have taken up this challenge. To be sensitive to the many forms of faith dialogue. But recently, they embraced an invitation to “digital dialogue.” The idea sprang from a conversation during the December meeting of the advisory board of the archdiocesan Office of Ecumenism and Interreligious Affairs. Two members of that board also sit on the CIC board. The advisory board had been discussing how, after COVID-19, we can help and encourage Catholics to begin a relationship with a person of another Christian tradition. We had each begun such a relationship. The two CIC members realized that for all the work we do for interfaith cooperation, the Christians on that board did not know each other’s faith journeys well. Nor did they know why each was so dedicated to the work of interfaith cooperation.

Members of both boards were invited to begin a digital dialogue. Days before the annual Week of Prayer, we met virtually. One faith journey was the focus. We shared.

The Disciples of Christ have a bedrock principle of seeking unity, stated a member. A Catholic with a Lebanese background in the Melkite Catholic Church spoke of his experience with his Arabic-speaking grandfather’s journey of faith and tradition.

Another spoke of his upbringing in the Assemblies of God faith. Through a search among other faith traditions, he finally embraced Presbyterianism.

A member of the United Church of Christ noted that his church is a merger of the Brethren and Evangelical churches in the mid-20th century. Yet another spoke to his family roots — one parent Lutheran, the other Catholic — and his journey each weekend to both churches for worship, instruction and inspiration. This allowed for an openness in college to the diversity of religions encountered. His commitment to dialogue and reconciliation remained strong.

And another spoke of encountering in his life so many people seeking the divine. He promised to do this, that we might “abide in love.” We hope to dwell upon what emerged in our personal prayer.

May such relationship building make us better ministers of Christ, of Christian unity. And if this example inspires you to abide so in love, then we have done what we are called in Christ to do.

(Father Rick Ginther is director of the archdiocesan Office of Ecumenism and Interreligious Affairs. He is also the pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Indianapolis.) +
The Book of Deuteronomy furnishes the first reading for Mass this weekend. Deuteronomy appears in modern Bibles as the fifth book in the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Old Testament, all of them attributed to Moses.

In this reading, Moses addresses the chosen people whom he has led with God’s help from Egypt where they were enslaved. He promises that God will send prophets with whom the people can relate. If anyone presumes to take the role of prophet upon himself or herself, without having been called by God, then this impostor will die.

God takes care of his people. St. Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians is the source of the second reading. From the earliest days of Christianity, virginity has been treasured. Christians have never been forbidden to marry, although all Christians are bound to be chaste according to their state in life. Through the centuries, however, Christians have chosen lifelong virginity for religious reasons.

Corinth in the first century was a city notorious for its sexual immorality. It was a busy commercial center. Visitors often availed themselves of the pleasures of the flesh provided in Corinth. Indeed, Aphrodite, the goddess of love and carnal desire, was the city’s special deity.

Paul saw virginity as a powerful Christian value, and from a more pragmatic point of view he thought that Christians not obligated by marriage and parenthood should devote their time to God’s service.

St. Mark’s Gospel is the source of the third reading. St. Luke’s Gospel contains an almost exact parallel story. Matthew treats this event only glancingly.

In herum has never required weekly attendance by Jews at synagogue services. However, going to synagogue to pray together and to learn the teachings of the Torah was definitely a priority for Jews during the time of Jesus, as indeed it is even among Jews today.

That Jesus went to a synagogue, and on the Sabbath at that, reveals how seriously the Lord took the Law of Moses.

As Jesus spoke, the people were spellbound at the knowledge of things relating to God that the Lord presented. In the synagogue that day was a man “with an unclean spirit” who recognized Jesus as the “Holy One of God” (Mk 1:23-24). Furthermore, the man believed that Jesus had the power to do anything.

The Lord’s power pierces the darkness even of Satan. Jesus orders the unclean spirit to leave the man, and the unclean spirit obeys.

Again, the people are amazed. The message, however, is not in their amazement, but that Jesus could command this unclean spirit and be obeyed, and that the man, albeit harboring this evil spirit, recognized Jesus as the Son of God. No bondage to sin or evil can overcome the power of God.

Reflection

Few people today say that many people are possessed by the devil, although the Church still teaches that such possessions occur.

All people, in a sense, unclean spirits within them since everyone sins and sin is the mark of the devil’s involvement to some extent in any person’s spiritual life.

People may be aware of how and when they turn away from God and harm themselves or others. The allurement of sin overpowers them, as it overtook people in wide-open Corinth. For many, this realization produces the cynical lurch that virtue is impossible for them to attain. They are mistaken.

For them, these readings are especially comforting and encouraging. God will never leave us. Such was the promise of Moses and of Paul. The Son of God can conquer any evil and dull any temptation, if asked. No sin can obscure the reality of the Lord. His light shines. His strength is mighty.

In his descent ‘into hell,’ Jesus freed the just who died before the crucifixion

What does it mean when we say in the Apostles’ Creed that Jesus “descended into hell”? That statement is not used in the Nicene Creed, which we often say at Mass. It bothers me so much that when I say the rosary, I substitute “limbo” for “hell.” (Virginia)

Since Advent in 2011, when the third edition of the Roman Missal was put into use in the United States, parishes have had the option at Sunday Mass of using the Nicene Creed or the Apostles’ Creed.

I am not surprised that the words in the Apostles’ Creed about Christ’s descent into hell bother you, because the common word “hell” denotes the permanent abode of the devil and the damned, a place of eternal punishment from which there is no escape.

I’m not sure, though, that you’d want to substitute “limbo,” since limbo has a different meaning, has never been a fixed article of belief in the Church and I, as far as I can remember, are more questionable today.

In years past, it was thought by most Catholics that children who died without being baptized went, not to be with God in heaven, but to a state of natural happiness called limbo. But in 2007, with the approval of Pope Benedict XVI, the Church’s International Theological Commission concluded that “there are theological and liturgical reasons to hope that infants who die without baptism may be saved.” As to the phrase “descended into hell,” it may help to know that, in early Christian writings, the Hebrew word for hell (“Sheol”) was ambiguous; it could mean the place of the damned, but it was also used to describe the place where the righteous awaited redemption.

Until Jesus had completed his death and resurrection, the just could not yet know the joy of being in God’s presence. So, when the Apostles’ Creed says that Jesus “descended into hell,” it means that he went to rescue the just who had already died, to take them with him to heaven.

We have just read several accounts of the birth of Christ during Mass this Christmas. In reading Luke 2:39-40 and Matthew 2:13-15, it appears that there is a difference as to what happened after Jesus was born. My question is this: Did the Holy Family flees to Egypt, or did they return to Nazareth? (Indiana)

My answer would be that both things happened. Following the birth of the Christ child, Joseph and Mary fled to Egypt. On Joseph’s death, the Holy Family fled to Egypt to avoid Herod’s persecution and then they eventually returned to Nazareth, which was their family’s home.

Attempts to find a contradiction in Luke’s and Matthew’s infancy accounts are based on a false understanding of the Gospels. None of the evangelists claimed to have written an exhaustive chronological account of every event in the life of Christ. They wrote for different audiences (Jewish Christians and gentile Christians) and highlighted different things.

My own view of the sequence of events—and this seems to harmonize the Gospel accounts of both Matthew and Luke—is that Jesus was presented in the Temple a few weeks after his birth, then the Holy Family fled to Egypt and, after the death of Herod, returned to Palestine and settled in Nazareth.

Nowhere does Luke say that they returned to Nazareth “immediately” after the birth of Jesus. The Gospel of Luke simply says Jesus, Mary and Joseph: “When they had fulfilled all the prescriptions of the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth” (Lk 2:29).

Each Gospel writer was selective about the details of Jesus’ life, according to his purposes. Matthew, for example, doesn’t mention the presentation or the finding of Jesus in the Temple.

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

Daily Readings

Monday, February 1
Hebrews 11:32-40
Psalm 31:20-24
Mark 5:1-20

Tuesday, February 2
The Presentation of the Lord
Malachi 3:1-4
Psalm 24:7-10
Hebrews 2:1-18
Luke 2:22-40
or Luke 2:22-32

Wednesday, February 3
St. Blaise, bishop and martyr
Psalm 103:1-2, 13-14, 17-18a
Mark 6:1-6

Thursday, February 4
Hebrews 12:18-19, 21-24
Psalm 48:2-4, 9-11
Mark 6:7-13

Question Corner

Fr. Kenneth Doyle

In his descent ‘into hell,’ Jesus freed the just who died before the crucifixion

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

Light in the Darkness

By Sandy Bierly

We are called to be a light

In this darkened world.

To bring love, joy, peace, and hope,

Through Christ who lives in us.

A little spark that becomes a flame,

That quickly spreads to all we meet,

Bringing Christ into the world,

Through our love, joy, peace, and hope.

(The Sandy Bierly is a member of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in New Albany. Photo: Holding candles, young Catholics from around the country encircle the floor of Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis on Nov. 21, 2019, during the National Catholic Youth Conference.) (File photo by Natalie Hoefer)
Placing in writing to submit in time for publication Thursday before the week of publication; be sure to state date of death. Obituaries of archdiocesan priests serving our archdiocese are beset obliviously. Order priests and religious sisters and brothers are included here, unless they are the archdiocese of notre dame or hoosier catholic. These are those obituary nhịt.
Investing with Faith/Jolinda Moore

Easy-to-implement gift options can offer tax savings

During challenging times, people find creative ways to meet needs and goals—ways to reassert control and find safety in a world full of uncertainty. As we enter a new year, it is a great time to reflect on how you may have responded to supporting the charitable needs of the Church as a result of the pandemic. So many have given generously, going above and beyond their typical giving to fill the void that job loss has created for many.

As you consider ways in which to give, the following are three easy-to- implement gift options to consider which likely offer tax savings. Each of the gifts that follow can be used to support your parish, an archdiocesan Catholic school or an archdiocesan ministry.

—Stock: When compared to making a gift of cash, a gift of appreciated stock provides a very important benefit: you pay no capital gains tax on the appreciated value of the stock. In addition, when you receive your tax return, the gift qualifies for a deduction equal to the stock’s current value, even though no tax has been paid on the appreciation. Remember, a gift of stock must be a direct transfer of the stock to the charity to avoid capital gains tax. Do not sell the stock, but instead contact our office to discuss the steps needed to transfer the funds.

—Donor-advised funds: Donor-advised funds have become an increasingly popular way to realize personal philanthropic goals in recent years. If you have a donor-advised fund account, we invite you to remember us and the ways you can support the Church at this important time. The archdiocesan Catholic Community Foundation (CCF) serves as a single point of contact for making monies to your parish, school or an archdiocesan ministry area. If you do not have a donor-advised fund account, you can also assist in creating one. With a gift of $5,000 or more, the CCF has the ability and expertise to manage your donor-advised fund that is invested using socially responsible investment guidelines as outlined by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

—IRA: If you are an IRA owner age 70½ or older, making a gift through a qualified charitable distribution (QCD) is an option worth considering. While there is no tax deduction, the amount transferred is excluded from your income for federal tax purposes—you owe no tax on the transfer! The amount you give counts toward your required minimum distribution (RMD) when one is due. (Under the SECURE Act passed in 2019, RMD’s must begin at age 72.)

You are always encouraged to check with your advisors and account representatives to ensure that your personal and charitable objectives are being met.

The CCF is glad to assist you in making a meaningful contribution to the Church. More information on these types of gifts, including a simplified process for notifying us of such gifts is available at www.archindy.org/CCF. Questions can be e-mailed to ccf@archindy.org, and calls can be directed to 317-236-1482.

(Jolinda Moore serves as executive director of the archdiocesan Office of Stewardship and Development. Contact her at 317-236-1462 or the office at www.archindy.org/CCF.)

But the crowd was sober when Grillot noted Indiana’s “terrible” ratio of one in 13 pregnancies ending in abortion. Tuttle, too, cited a sobering statistic, stating that Indiana averages 8,000 abortions every year.

“Because of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, ‘We had to quickly pivot’

Usually after the Mass, the congregants spill out of the church to join others already lining up for the Indiana March for Life. Holding signs, praying and chanting pro-life messages, they process through the center of Indianapolis to the Statehouse lawn for a rally.

“Ultimately, we march and pray to cultivate a culture of life that culminates in life eternal.”

Archbishop Thompson noted that, for Catholics, “The Eucharist, as source and summit of our identity and mission, provides the sustenance for this call.”

One change was to switch this year’s march route, horns honking and students and rally leaders, youth leaders and others who spoke at the rally.

“A growing pro-life state”

Many of the rally’s estimated 450 participants gathered outside and on an outdoor sound stage. Others listened in their cars via livestream or Catholic Radio Indy. Their excitement combined to form a cacophony of cheers and horns-honking in response to the speakers.

Such an outburst erupted when Grillot, speaking amid gusts that dropped the wind-chill factor into the low 20s, said, “Today is not a time to complain about life. Today is a time to sacrifice for life.”

Even more noise was raised when he announced the event had both the most participants and the largest number of donated diapers up to that point on the tour. The last stop took place in Chicago on Jan. 23.

Employees

Roncalli High School—Principal

Roncalli High School, Indianapolis, Indiana

Roncalli High School, the South Deeney Catholic high school of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, is seeking to fill the position of principal beginning with the 2021-22 school year. The school operates under the President-Principal model of administration and as such the principal is directly responsible to the President and, by extension, the Board of Directors and the Archdiocesan Office of Catholic Schools.

As Christ has called upon each of us to “go make disciples of all nations” and to the extent that our name sake, St. John XXIII (Angelo Cardinal Roncalli) was committed to that task, it is Roncalli High School’s intention to create disciples of Jesus in the image of St. John XXIII. The successful candidate will possess the skills and enthusiasm of the Catholic mission of Roncalli High School. He/she should have a solid background in curriculum and instruction and possess strong leadership skills with a passion for assisting students and teachers in their pursuit of an exceptional education.

Applicants for this position must possess an administrator’s license, be a practicing Catholic, and have a minimum of three years of educational administrative experience. For more information and/or to submit supporting documentation (i.e., resume, cover letter, references), please contact Rob Rush, Office of Catholic Schools, Archdiocese of Indianapolis, 1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202, or call 317-236-1454 or email rash@archindy.org. Deadline for submission of materials is February 19, 2021. All applications and inquiries are confidential.
continued, noting that Americans United for Life recently ranked Indiana fifth on its list of most pro-life states in the country.

Looking at ratios, said Tuttle, “A woman is less likely to receive an abortion now than a woman was in 1973 when Roe v. Wade came down.”

The statistic is just one indication that “our movement is growing,” he said. “We’re changing hearts and minds. A lot of that is credited to you,” he told the crowd, whose faces from young to old represented the face of the pro-life movement in Indiana.

He also credited “great leadership” in the Statehouse.

Not just illegal, but ‘unthinkable’

One such leader is Rokita, whom Tuttle introduced as “a brother in the Knights of Columbus” and “strongly pro-life.”

“This practice of killing unborn children is a direct contradiction of America’s founding principles,” said the state’s new attorney general, who is a member of St. Malachi Parish in Brownsburg. “The abortion industry totally rejects the idea that God gave all people—all people—the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.”

The goal of the pro-life movement “is not just to make abortion illegal, but to make it unthinkable” by changing hearts and minds, said Rokita. It is a change wrought by showing compassion not only for the unborn, but also “toward every woman who finds herself overwhelmed, unprepared, ill equipped for a major life change,” he said. “Perhaps she’s scared, perhaps jobless, perhaps in an abusive relationship. … Whatever the case, let’s commit to providing an abundance of love and support.”

He closed his address with words of encouragement from Scripture: “Let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not” (Gal 6:9).

“We must hold this event every year”

Tuttle admitted the ongoing pandemic posed challenges for this year’s Indiana March for Life and rally.

But in his mind, not holding the annual event was not—and never can be—an option.

“We must hold this event every year,” he said. “It’s important to take a day like today to remember and mourn the 62 million lives that were lost to abortion.”

The statistics on abortions each year since 1973 “are more than numbers,” he said. “For those of us born after 1973, they represent classmates, missing friends, parts of our community.”

“When we talk about the numbers involved in abortion, we lose sight of the individual tragedies, not just for the babies but for the women as well, who were often coerced and who’ve undergone abortion against their will.

“As long as abortion is legalized and our brothers and sisters are perishing, we must hold this event every year to remember and to honor them as human beings, to make sure that no one ever forgets these [statistics] were people.”

Effort results in 32,000 diapers for three Indianapolis pregnancy care centers

Right to Life of Indianapolis registered this year’s Indiana March for Life and rally, held on Jan. 22, to be one of six stops of the Chicago March for Life’s “Moving the Movement” Midwest tour through Illinois, Indiana, Nebraska and Wisconsin.

At each of the stops, tour sponsor weDignity held a diaper drive to benefit three local pregnancy care centers of the host’s choosing.

The Indiana March for Life event brought in more than 32,000 diapers.

They will be distributed to Birthline, Life Centers and Women’s Care Center, all in Indianapolis.

Overall, weDignity set a goal of collecting a grand total of 130,094 diapers—one for each of the average number of annual abortions in the Midwest.

Through participants’ generosity, they exceeded the goal. As of Jan. 24, the total number of diapers collected—either actual or to be purchased by weDignity through funds donated online or on-site—was more than 156,500. †