Being a catechist is a vocation, pope says in establishing formal ministry

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Calling for formal recognition of “those lay men and women who feel called by virtue of their baptism to cooperate in the work of catechesis,” Pope Francis has instituted the “ministry of catechist.”

“The Spirit is calling men and women to set out and encounter all those who are waiting to discover the beauty, goodness and truth of the Christian faith,” the pope wrote in “Antiquum Ministerium” (“Ancient Ministry”), his apostolic letter released at the Vatican on May 11.

In addition to releasing texts of the document in Italian, French, English, German, Spanish, Portuguese and Polish, the Vatican distributed a video of the text translated into Italian sign language.

Pastors must support laypeople in answering the Spirit’s call and “enrich the life of the Christian community through the recognition of lay ministries capable of contributing to the transformation of society through the ‘penetration of Christian values into the social, political and economic sectors,’” the pope said, quoting what he had written about the vocation of laypeople in his 2013 apostolic exhortation, “The Joy of the Gospel.”

Bishops’ conferences will need to determine the “process of formation and the normative criteria for admission to this ministry,” and devise “the most appropriate forms for the service which these men and women will be called to exercise,” the pope said.

The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, he said, “will soon publish the Rite of Institution of the lay ministry of catechist.” The congregation already is working on revised rites for the ministries of lector and acolyte, which Pope Francis opened to women in January.

Adventure, faith and nature are connected in archdiocese’s Outdoor Sacred Spaces

By John Shaughnessy

As Julie Reyes put together the list of “Outdoor Sacred Spaces” in the archdiocese, the mother of two small children had a revelation that these sites would be wonderful places for families to visit.

“I was immediately thinking of families during the pandemic,” says Reyes, a member of the archdiocese’s Creation Care Commission. “As a family, we would often go to the Children’s Museum or the Indianapolis Zoo. I never thought about going to Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House or the EcoLab at Marian University [both in Indianapolis].”

When we started putting together this list, I thought families are going to love it. Then I started sharing it with people around my age, and they said, ‘This is great. I didn’t know these places existed.’ ”

For the 38-year-old Reyes, the list of sacred places across central and southern Indiana offers a trinity of terrific qualities: They’re fun places to explore, beautiful settings and opportunities to grow in faith.

“You get to enjoy the beauty of the outdoors, and you can learn about the beauty of God’s creation. As Franciscan Sister Joan Miller and Kenny Zaus prepare to plant trees on the grounds of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Shelby County, where she is the parish life coordinator and he is a member. (Submitted photo)

Pope’s call to care for creation plants seeds among archdiocesan parishes to grow their efforts

By John Shaughnessy

As Franciscan Sister Joan Miller roams through her parish’s grounds marked by bird houses, recently planted trees and wildflowers that attract bees and butterflies, she believes that she and her fellow parishioners are preserving the beauty of God’s creation.

When Cliff Burk talks about the solar panels that his parish has added to its buildings, he calls it “a gift to the next generation.”

And when Paige Kervan gives a tour of the conservation efforts her parish has undertaken, she says, “The way we’re supposed to live our Catholic faith is to respect all life, including respect for our planet.”

This year, the pope has proclaimed May 16-24 as “Laudato Si’ Week.” The week is dedicated to the “celebration of the great progress the whole Church has made on its journey to ecological conversion.”

The week is dedicated to the “celebration of the great progress the whole Church has made on its journey to ecological conversion,” since the pope’s 2015 encyclical, “Laudato Si’: On Care of Our Common Home.” The package of stories in this issue of The Criterion features the bold and grassroots efforts that some parishes in the archdiocese have made toward care of the environment, opportunities that connect faith and nature for individuals and families, and fun, easy tips for making the world a better place to live.

Readers share how the Blessed Mother has impacted their faith, page 7.
Judge dismisses lawsuit against archdiocese by former Cathedral teacher

By Sean Gallagher

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis won a significant freedom of religion victory on May 7 in Marion County Superior Court. On that day, Judge Lance Hamner dismissed a lawsuit by the archdiocese claiming that it illegally interfered in its employment agreement with Cathedral when it sought to ensure that teachers at Cathedral and in Catholic schools in central and southern Indiana were faithful to Church teaching.

In arguing that the case should be dismissed, Goodrich cited a number of rulings of the U.S. Supreme Court that, in accord with religious liberty enshrined in the First Amendment, establish a religious organization’s freedom to ensure that its mission is carried out faithfully by those who minister in it free also from governmental and judicial interference.

Richard Garnett, Paul J. Schierl/ Fort Howard Corporation professor of law and director of the Notre Dame Program on Church, State and Society at the University of Notre Dame in northern Indiana, said the dismissal is encouraging for those who value religious liberty.

This order [of dismissal] is consistent with the principle of church-state separation, correctly understood, and also with the constitutional right of religious communities to pursue their religious missions, even when doing so is unpopular,” Garnett said. “Religious freedom necessarily includes the right of religious communities, schools, hospitals, and social-welfare agencies to be distinctively religious.”

In a tweet posted on the day of the dismissal, Goodrich emphasized how the order ensures religious organizations remain free from governmental interference when choosing who will teach the faith.

“It is important that courts consistently uphold the right of religious groups to operate by their religious principles,” he said. “Choosing who teaches in a religious school is a religious decision. Today’s order ensures that those decisions will be made by churches, not governments.”

According to an article published by the Indianapolis Star, Payne-Elliot is considering appealing the dismissal of his lawsuit.

Christians leaders in Jerusalem express concern over growing violence

JERUSALEM (CBS) — The patriarchs and heads of Christian Churches of Jerusalem expressed deep concern over the growing violence in Jerusalem, which increased with 331 Palestinians reportedly wounded at the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound during clashes with Israeli police on May 10.

“We...are profoundly disappointed and concerned about the recent violent events in East Jerusalem. These concerning developments, whether at the Al-Aqsa Mosque or in Sheikh Jarrah, violate the sanctity of the people of Jerusalem and of the City of God,” the church leaders said in the May 10 statement. Sheikh Jarrah is a neighborhood in East Jerusalem.

At least 21 Israeli police reportedly were injured during the confrontations, which began early in the morning as Israelis prepared to celebrate Jerusalem Day, commemorating what Israel views as the 1968 reunification of Jerusalem and Palestinians see as the start of the Israeli occupation.

Police say they were forced to respond when Palestinians attacked a police post, hurling rocks, fireworks and other objects at police from the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, a Muslim holy site. The site also is considered holy by Jews, who call it the Temple Mount after the two Jewish Biblical temples that stood there.

“The special character of Jerusalem, the holy City, with the existing status quo, compels all parties to preserve the already sensitive situation in the Holy City of Jerusalem. The growing tension, backed mainly by right-wing radical groups, endangers the already fragile reality in and around Jerusalem,” the Christian leaders said in their statement.

In a separate statement on May 10, the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem also denounced the violence.

“The violence used against the worshippers undermines their safety and their rights to have access to the holy places and worship freely,” the patriarch said. “The forced eviction of Palestinians from their homes in Sheikh Jarrah is also an unacceptable violation of the most fundamental human rights, the right to a home.”

Throughout April and into May, Jerusalem has been engulfed in the worst violence in years as police prevented Palestinian youth from gathering at the Damascus Gate square during the evenings of the holy month of Ramadan as usual. Police said they were responding to TikTok videos showing Palestinians attacking religious Jews in the area. Tensions have also flared over pending evictions of Palestinians from Sheikh Jarrah.

The Latin Patriarchate said it opposed any attempt to make Jerusalem an exclusive city for anyone.
In uncertain year, graduation offers touches of normalcy for Class of 2021

By John Shaughnessy

The past 14 months have been unusual, uncertain and unnerving in many ways for the seniors who are preparing to graduate this spring at Catholic high schools across the archdiocese.

Still, their upcoming graduations offer touches of normalcy, too. Friends will promise to stay close forever. Seniors will seek out the teachers who have made a difference in their lives. Parents of the graduates will look at their children and wonder where the years have gone.

For the graduates and their families, it will be a time of looking back—and looking forward—with a mixture of pride, relief, nostalgia and celebration.

It will also be a time for congratulations to the Class of 2021, including this one from Mary McCoy, interim superintendent of Catholic schools in the archdiocese.

“Congratulations to all of our high school graduates throughout the archdiocese, who are achieving this milestone under such unusual circumstances and during the most memorable years in our history,” McCoy says. “As our graduates head to a new place in the future, they have each received the tools and resources necessary to continue a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. May that always be a priority for whatever the years to come may hold.”

Note: Most graduations and Baccalaureate Masses at the Catholic schools across the archdiocese require a ticket to attend these events this year.

Here is a listing of graduation-related information for the 12 Catholic high schools in the archdiocese:

Bishop Chatard High School in Indianapolis has a graduating class of 171 seniors.

The Baccalaureate Mass will be at 6:30 p.m. on May 20 at the school.

The graduation ceremony will be at 2:30 p.m. on May 23 at the school.

The class valedictorian is Liam Murphy, son of Brian and Tracy Murphy of St. Pius X Parish in Indianapolis.

The class salutatorian is Owen Teed, son of Andy and Carmen Teed of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Indianapolis.

The archdiocese will be represented at the graduation by Msgr. William F. Stumpf, vicar general.

Brebeuf Jesuit Preparatory School in Indianapolis has a graduating class of 193 seniors.

The Baccalaureate Mass will be 10:30 a.m. on May 23 at the school.

The graduation ceremony will be at 7:30 p.m. on May 23 at the school.

Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School in Indianapolis has a graduating class of 116 seniors.

The Baccalaureate Mass will be at 7 p.m. on June 3 at St. Malachy Church in Brownsburg.

The graduation ceremony will be at 7 p.m. on June 4 at the school.

The class valedictorian is Ethan Lettich, son of Damon and Joanne Lettich.

The class salutatorian is Mark Baker, son of Bill and Amy Baker of St. Malachy Parish.

The archdiocese will be represented at the graduation by Annette “Mickey” Lentz, chancellor.

Cathedral High School in Indianapolis has a graduating class of 256 seniors.

The Baccalaureate Mass will be at 5 p.m. on May 21 at the school.

The graduation ceremony will be at 1 p.m. on May 23 at the school’s Brunette Park. In case of inclement weather, graduation will be moved to 6 p.m. on May 24 at the same location.

The commencement speaker will be Cathedral senior Lauren Alexandra Dubbink, daughter of Lynn Murphy-Dubbink and Kevin Dubbink of St. Louis de Montfort Parish in Fishers, Ind., in the Lafayette Diocese.

The archdiocese will be represented at the graduation by Chris Walsh, vice chancellor.
Mary and Joseph, models for Christian living

One of the most devastating effects of the pandemic—suffering—has been the fact that millions of people have been denied full access to the sacraments—especially the Eucharist, although thankfully that number is now growing smaller as more people are vaccinated and parishes grow in knowledge of how to protect worshippers from the virus. Mary shows us the way to her Son. She is a sacrament of God’s presence in the world, the gateway to grace and a model for the Church’s prayer and worship. Those who, for various reasons, continue to be deprived of access to the sacraments and to nourishment with our sisters and brothers, understandably turn to Mary in the rosary and other devotional prayers to help fill the spiritual gaps that exist in their lives. By proclaiming this Year of St. Joseph, Pope Francis has encouraged an increase in devotion to her faithful husband, Joseph, as well.

In this time of worldwide crisis, and in the midst of the violence and social unrest we are experiencing here in Indiana and throughout the U.S., we need wise, pro-life and compassionate leadership—now more than ever. Mary and Joseph show us the way to follow their Son, the Good Shepherd. His teaching and example beautifully illustrate the meaning and vital importance of servant leadership.

Now more than ever, we should ask the Holy Family—Jesus, Mary and Joseph—to help all our leaders in society and in the Church set aside their personal and political agendas so that they can place the needs of others first and foremost.

In his letter announcing the Year of St. Joseph, Pope Francis offered the following prayer: Beul, Guardian of the Redeemer, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary. To you God entrusted his only Son; in you he placed his trust; with you Christ became man. Blessed Joseph, to see, so show yourself a father and guide us in the path of life. Obtain for us grace, mercy and courage, and defend us from every evil. Amen.

We are blessed to have Mary and Joseph, who are first among all the holy women and men who have given their lives throughout the centuries to follow Jesus, as our sure guides in these troubled times. May their intercession give us the serenity, courage and compassion to follow God’s will for us and to remain faithful to our baptismal calling to follow Jesus without counting the cost.

—Daniel Conway

Letters from readers are published in The Criterion as part of the newspaper’s commitment to the “responsible exchange of freely-held and expressed opinion among the People of God” (Communio et Pro progressu, 116). Letters from readers are welcome and every effort will be made to include letters from as many people and representing as many viewpoints as possible. Letters should be brief, well-written and relevant. Letters should be mailed to: Letters to the Editor, The Criterion, 1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367. Readers with access to e-mail may send letters to criterion@archindy.org.

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The Holy Family of St. Joseph, Mary and Jesus is depicted in a stained-glass window at St. Joseph Church in Ronkonkoma, N.Y. (CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)

The solution is denouncing self-rejecting the world and returning to docility and discernment of the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the spiritual prudence of God. We as Catholics need to enthusiastically open ourselves to the spirit of life receiving God, having his mysterious mercy to once again enter in us. The solution for spiritually devout Catholics is not illusive; it is interior. Being Catholic is about being of the kingdom. Being Catholic is about imitating Jesus and embracing our intimacy with him; embracing our adoption into the world of the divine. Being Catholic encourages all of us to seek Mary’s loving presence and sensing the supernatural. Being Catholic is our confidence in being connected to the Church’s succession, the origin of the Church Jesus instituted. Being Catholic is our being informed and understanding the truths of the faith. Being Catholic is our life-giving vision inspired and infused from our inner life with the divine Holy Spirit.

The prophecies from holy Scripture warn us that our faith will undergo great challenges. God will send the Antichrist—coming of the man of sin, and of the days of desolation. There will be a grave apostasy within our Church. The holy word of God informs us that God will allow this time of desolation to test our faith.

The Catholic Church will encounter a great apostasy; a gradual cultural overtake and a severe persecution. All the infidels, heretics, sectarians and depraved men that are scattered over the surface of the Earth, will unite with the Antichrist to make war on the saints and to persecute those who are faithful to God.

The solution is in the reading and response to God’s Book: The End of the Present World and the Mysteries of the Future Life.

(Gary Taylor is a member of St. Mary Parish in North Vernon.)

Letters Policy

Opinion

Be Our Guest

Gary Taylor

We must strengthen our interior lives to overcome challenges to our faith

This is in response to John F. Fink’s editorial “Why Catholics are leaving” in the April 30 issue of The Criterion.

Since Jesus, we have been in the last times. We simply do not know when it will climax, but we do know what it will entail. Scripture and the Fathers of the Church have unveiled that understanding. Too many Catholics are indifferent, lethargic, ignorant or uninterested in their love of sensual pleasures. These common habits of Catholics make it easy for devil to delude the fully initiated disciples within the Catholic Church. The immense need for their spirit, which has been neglected and darkened. To undertake a soul requires grace, the Holy Spirit and the habit of denouncing the ways of the world and receiving the new resurrected life gifted and offered to all Catholics from Jesus.

The solution is denouncing self-rejecting the world and returning to docility and discernment of the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the spiritual prudence of God. We as Catholics need to enthusiastically open ourselves to the spirit of life receiving God, having his mysterious mercy to once again enter in us. The solution for spiritually devout Catholics is not illusive; it is interior. Being Catholic is about being of the kingdom. Being Catholic is about

Editorial

Mary and Joseph, models for Christian living

During the month of May, the Church gives us the unique opportunity to honor both the woman who gave birth to our Lord and the man who cared for him as his own son.

Each year, we celebrate the Feast of St. Joseph the Worker on May 1, and we dedicate the entire month of May to the Blessed Virgin Mary. This year, we are observing a special Year of St. Joseph proclaimed by Pope Francis to call attention to the singular role that this righteous man played in the life of Jesus and Mary.

Mary and Joseph, together and individually, are models for every Christian living. They show us how to respond to God’s call in our lives with humility and courage, and they help us accept the challenges and obstacles that we must face as missionary disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ. Especially in this time of pandemic, social unrest and economic hardships, we are wise to turn to Mary and Joseph with confidence in their ability to inspire and strengthen us in every difficulty.

Throughout the Church’s history, Christians have sought to find a link in time between us and others in a time of serious illness, including pestilence and plagues. As a loving mother, Mary always responds with comfort and the healing grace of her Son. The Church encourages all of us to seek to live in faith and intervention in times of grave crisis, and to seek her help in every trusting circumstance no matter how insignificant it may seem to us. Mary’s loving presence offers courage and hope during frightening times, especially when we are isolated from family and friends. She reassures us and reminds us that we are never alone, never without the consolation and hope won for us by her Son’s suffering, death and resurrection to new life.

Many people today are either out of work or afraid they will lose their jobs because of the wide-ranging effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. St. Joseph is the patron of all who labor to support themselves and their families. As a carpenter, he knew both the blessings and the hardships of daily work. Because he understands how important work is for individuals, families and society as a whole, he is in unique position to intercede for all who are poor, unemployed or struggling to survive in these hard times. He also reminds all of us to be good stewards of all God’s gifts and to share generously with others, especially the poor.

One of the most devastating effects of the pandemic—suffering—has been the fact that millions of people have been denied full access to the sacraments—especially the Eucharist, although thankfully that number is now growing smaller as more people are vaccinated and parishes grow in knowledge of how to protect worshippers from the virus. Mary shows us the way to her Son. She is a sacrament of God’s presence in the world, the gateway to grace and a model for the Church’s prayer and worship. Those who, for various reasons, continue to be deprived of access to the sacraments and to nourishment with our sisters and brothers, understandably turn to Mary in the rosary and other devotional prayers to help fill the spiritual gaps that exist in their lives. By proclaiming this Year of St. Joseph, Pope Francis has encouraged an increase in devotion to her faithful husband, Joseph, as well.

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We are blessed to have Mary and Joseph, who are first among all the holy women and men who have given their lives throughout the centuries to follow Jesus, as our sure guides in these troubled times. May their intercession give us the serenity, courage and compassion to follow God’s will for us and to remain faithful to our baptismal calling to follow Jesus without counting the cost.
Uno de los momentos culminantes de nuestra celebración del tiempo de Pascua es la solemnidad de la Ascensión del Señor. Aquí en nuestra Arquidiócesis, como en la mayoría de las diócesis de Estados Unidos, celebraremos esta gran fiesta el domingo 16 de mayo. La ascensión del Señor al cielo se relata en la primera lectura del domingo 16:1-11:

“Después de haber dicho esto, ellos lo vieron elevarse y ser recibido en el cielo. A este que nos ha sido guíado y fue elevado al cielo, vended de la misma manera que lo han visto partir” (Hechos 1:9-11).

Como se desprende de esta cita de la Sagrada Escritura, los discípulos no estaban preparados para manejar la partida del Señor de esta manera. Temían que una vez más quedaran solos para enfrentarse a un mundo que era hostil a Jesús y a ellos, y que fueron efectivamente paralizados mirando al cielo. Los dos ángeles (hombres vestidos de blanco que de repente se pusieron a su lado) les reprodujeron diciendo que Jesús vendrá de la misma manera que lo han visto partir (Hechos 1:11).

Así, la ascensión del Señor al cielo es tanto un retorno a la derecha del Padre y una ida y una venida; es a la vez una comunión, el estado de estar por siempre cerca de nosotros. El papa Benedicto XVI ofrece la siguiente reflexión sobre la ascensión del Señor en su libro Jesús de Nazaret (Parte Ii, Epílogo):

“El Jesús que parte no se dirige a una estrella lejana. Entra en comunión de poder y vida con el Dios viviente, en el dominio de Dios sobre el espacio. Por eso no se ha “ido,” sino que ahora y siempre, por el propio poder de Dios, está presente con nosotros y para nosotros. “El cielo” no es un lugar geográfico sino una comunión, el estado de estar unido a Dios y a todos los ángeles y santos que comparten la vida divina, la visión beatífica. Cuando decimos que Jesús “ascendió,” utilizamos una imagen espacial para describir un misterio trascendental, algo que está más allá de los límites del espacio y del tiempo. Jesús no se fue sino que se acercó más. Está tanto sentado a la derecha de Dios como con nosotros aquí y ahora por el poder del Espíritu Santo. La lectura del Evangelio para la solemnidad de la Ascensión del Señor (Mc 16:15-20) deja muy claro que, incluso después de que “fue recibido en el alto cielo y se sentó a la derecha de Dios” (Mc 16:19), él colaboró con sus discípulos, trabajando con ellos y “confirmando la palabra con las señales que la acompañaban” (Mc 16:20).

Los hechos de abandonarlos (or abandonamos), Jesús está realmente presente ahora y siempre en la Palabra, los sacramentos y el servicio a todos los miembros de la familia de Dios. Una vez más, el papa Benedicto afirma que “la ascensión no significa la partida hacia una región remota del cosmos, sino más bien la continuación cercana que los discípulos experimentan tan fuertemente que se convierte en una fuente de alegría duradera.” El papa Francisco ha dicho repetidamente que la “cercanía” y el “acompañamiento” conducen a la alegría de Cristo resucitado.

Si caminamos con él y reconocemos en el rostro de todos nuestros hermanos y hermanas, especialmente de los pobres y marginados, encontraremos una felicidad que supera las expectativas de nuestro corazón. El Señor no nos abandonará con su ascensión al cielo: permanece con nosotros, en formas nuevas y poderosas, para acompañarnos en las alegrías y las penas de nuestro viaje individual y comunitario hacia nuestro hogar celestial.

En la segunda lectura de la Asunción (Ef 1:17-23), san Pablo reza: “Pido también que les sean iluminados los ojos del corazón para que sepan a qué esperanza él los ha llamado, cuál es la riqueza de su gloria herencia entre los santos, y cuán incomparable es la grandeza de su poder a favor de los que creemos. Ese poder es la fuerza grandiosa y eficaz que Dios ejerció en Cristo cuando lo resuci-"
May 17, 24, June 7, 14
St. Therese of the Child Jesus (Little Flower) Parish Center, St. Therese Room, 4720 E. 17th St., Indianapolis. SoulCare Rosary Workout, 6:30-7:15 p.m., prayer and exercise. Free. Information: 317-572-1677, soulcareindy@yahoo.com or soulcareindy.org

May 19
Calvary Mausoleum Chapel, 435 W. Troy Ave., Indianapolis. Monthly Mass, 2 p.m. Information: 317-784-4439 or www.catholiccemeteries.com

May 20
St. Joseph Church, 1401 S. Mckivy Ave., Indianapolis. Third Thursday Adoration, interceding for women experiencing crisis pregnancy, 11 a.m.-7 p.m., with Mass at 5:45 p.m.
Our Lady of Peace Cemetery and Mausoleum, 901 Harvard respondent Road, Indianapolis. Monthly Mass, 2 p.m. Information: 317-574-0898 or www.catholiccemeteries.com

The Third Option virtual marriage crisis/environment class, “Rebuilding Trust,” 7-10 p.m., no registration needed, free. Go to CarmelTheology.org/ with click on link at top of page. Information: CarmelTheology.org/web or Keith Bregen, kimmelkrentz email.com or 317-324-8446.

Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Church, 520 Stevens St., Indianapolis. Faithful Citizens Rosary Walk, 10:45-11:45 a.m., meet in front of church. Information: faithful citizens2016@gmail.com


May 31
Knights of St. John Hall, 520 S. Wilder St., Greensburg. May 31st Dinner and roll, ticket required, $24 non-members. Register by May 18. Information and registration: cbt@ stjosephchurch.org

May 22

Sidewalk Advocates for Life training, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., 84 materials for call. Information and registration: Sheryl Dyo, sm地中海@gmail.com

May 25
Plan Creek Golf Club, 1204 Lynnwood Blvd., Carmel, Ind. Catholic Radio Indy’s Annual Golf Outing, check-in 10:30 a.m., Mass 11:30 a.m., lunch hour, shotgun start 1 p.m., 1525 individual, $45 fourosome, prizes, drawings, open religious free Registration: catholicradioindy.org. Information: 317- 870-8400 or valesky@catholicradioindy.org

May 29-30
St. Agnes Parish, 1008 McIlroy Rd, Nashville, Ind. Blue Weekend at St. Agnes Church, all weekend Masses, Father Joseph Moriarty, rector of Bishop Simon Brant College Seminary, will celebrate Mass and share how the seminary forms future priests. Information: Ellen Sanders, 217-236-1501 or e Sanders@archindy.org

May 31

June 2
MCL Cafeteria, 5520 College Center Lane, Indianapolis. Solo Seniors, 5:30 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.

June 3-5

St. Simon the Apostle Parish, 8155 Oaklandon Rd., Indianapolis. Parish Festival, Thurs. 5-11 p.m., Fri. 5 p.m.-midnight, Sat. 5 p.m.-midnight, live music. Thurs. Jason and Joy, Fri. Naui Yachty, Sat. Stella Luna and the Satellites, new rides, Kids’ Zone, free entry with purchase of $10 in food and beverage tickets, early-bird family package available. Information: saintsimonfestival.com.

June 4-6

Our Lady of the Greenwood Cemetery, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. Free birthday celebration of the Most Holy Body of Jesus, Mass, 5:45 p.m., exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, following Mass until 9 p.m., sacrament of rector, mortization available. Information: 317-750-7309, smm@lspostual.org

June 10
Ed and Judy (Baehl) Becher, members of St. Simon the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on May 15.

The couple was married in St. Patrick Church in Haustadt, Ind. (Evansville Diocese) on May 15, 1966.

They have three children: Laurissa Bray, Tena Ellis and Kendra Smith. The couple also has six grandchildren.†

Joseph and Maryann (Luebbery) Skowron, members of Christ the King Parish in Indianapolis, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on May 15.

The couple was married in Sacred Heart Church in Madison (now a campus of Prince of Peace Parish in Madison), on May 22, 1971.

They have two children: Alison Foxkos and Brian Bellen.

The couple also has six grandchildren.†

Mike and Melanie (Kendall) Kreamer, members of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Richmond, will celebrate their 55th wedding anniversary on May 21.

The couple was married in Holy Family Church in Richmond (now a campus of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish) on May 21, 1966.

They have three children: Jesuit Brother Joseph, Matthew and Mitchell Kreamer.

The couple also has four grandchildren.†

Mike and Melanie (Baehl) Becher, members of St. Simon the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on May 15.

The couple was married in St. Patrick Church in Haustadt, Ind. (Evansville Diocese) on May 15, 1966.

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Mary has been ‘at the center’ of couple’s 30-year relationship

By Natalie Hoefer

Lisa and Craig Whitaker have dedicated their marriage to helping the Church and spreading the faith. They were raised on Catholicism and novenas. The other was a non-practicing Protestant who later converted to the Catholic faith.

What follows is a story of the Whitakers, members of Holy Family Parish in New Albany. Both were seeking to live their faith more deeply when God crossed their paths through a specific medium: the Blessed Mother.

Trusting the ‘intercession of the Mother of God’

Lisa was born into a family with a generational devotion to Mary through parish novenas, starting with Lisa’s great-grandmother at what is now the Basilica of St. Anne-de-Beaupre near Quebec, Canada.

Lisa was in seventh grade when her parish established weekly prayer in the church to Mary under the title of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. The prayer time included eucharistic adoration.

It was during those sessions, along with “what my mother taught me,” that she says she “developed my love for Our Lady of Perpetual Help. The prayer time included eucharistic adoration.”

More than a decade passed. Some unwelcome choices were made, and Lisa was a struggling single mother in 1989 when she realized she needed help.

“I asked Jesus to help me,” she recalls.

“He took a corporate job, ‘climbing the ladder of success,’” Craig says.

All the while, Craig drew closer to his faith. “The journey impacted him,” says Lisa. When she and her sister joined Craig on a pilgrimage to Medjugorje, he told her, “I want to share what we are experiencing.”

Craig asked Linda to pray with him in his bedroom, dating but not having gone on a date—many years “by the grace of God,” Craig notes.

Craig served in administration. The donor-funded school was able to operate for 10 years “by the grace of God,” Craig notes.

“We all said we’d work to help the Church and spread the faith. And that’s what we’ve done for 30 years,” Lisa says, who served as director of religious education at the former St. Joseph Parish in Corydon from 2011 until her retirement last December.

“When I came to it, and I’m thankful I met you, and I’m trying to live the messages” from Medjugorje (still unverified by the Vatican), “the apparitions are reported to still be occurring,” she says.

“I gave him my phone number,” says Lisa. Then she adds with an audible smile and bubbly joy, “That man is my husband! Craig!”

The couple began corresponding in June of 1989. Lisa formed a prayer group in her parish and invited Craig to the weekly sessions. By August, they decided to date.

Their first date, however, did not occur until after they were engaged. Lisa says, “Our relationship started on a spiritual level first, then friendship, then we realized, ‘There’s something here,’” she says.

“After a volleyball match at her parish’s annual picnic that fall—still dating but not having gone on a date—Craig asked Linda to pray with him in her parish’s adoration chapel.

“We prayed, then started talking, then he said, ‘Well, this isn’t what I planned’—‘Then he got down on his knee and proposed,’” says Lisa.

Three months before their wedding, she and her sister joined Craig on a pilgrimage to Medjugorje.

The couple married in 1990 on the day they both knew should be their wedding date: Dec. 8, the feast of Our Lady of Medjugorje. The journey impacted him.

Craig and Linda Whitaker’s—now the couple’s—son Johnathan honor Mary during their wedding Mass at St. John the Evangelist Parish in Georgetown, Ky., on Dec. 8, 1990. (Submitted photo)

Craig, who was 31 at the time. He didn’t drive, so we’d pick her up, and she would just love to sit and tell us [kids] stories,” Stephon recalls.

“Christ pointed me in the clear direction a struggling single mother in 1989 when he told me the due date!” says Stephon.

“I immediately thought of my daughter, the answer on Christmas Day,” she says.

Stephon immediately signed up. The due date was Dec. 27, as supernatural, as the apparitions are reported to still be occurring (as of now).

Lisa’s child was named Lisa. "I want to share what we are experiencing,” Craig says.

“I immediately thought of my daughter,” says Craig, who was 31 at the time. He didn’t realize she was 24.

Craig, who was 31 at the time. He didn’t drive, so we’d pick her up, and she would just love to sit and tell us [kids] stories,” Stephon recalls.

“The woman’s name was Lisa. Craig got her address to send her information. He ended the conversation by reaching into his pocket and giving her a Miraculous Medal.

“I had it in my pocket for two years,” Craig shares. “I said, ‘I think Mary wants you to have this.’”

Thinking she was part of a youth group, Craig got her address to send her information. He ended the conversation by reaching into his pocket and giving her a Miraculous Medal.

“I had it in my pocket for two years,” Craig shares. “I said, ‘I think Mary wants you to have this.’”

Having ‘both a spiritual and an earthly mother’ is ‘very important’

By Natalie Hoefer

As a young girl, Helen Stephon was fascinated by the stories her grandmother shared about the Blessed Mother.

“She didn’t drive, so we’d pick her up, and she would just love to sit and tell us [kids] stories,” Stephon recalls.

“Christ pointed me in the clear direction a struggling single mother in 1989 when he told me the due date!” says Stephon.

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What you need to do in Laudato Si’

Laudato Si’ is a clear and urgent call to action from the highest authority in the Catholic Church and possibly the most important religious leader in the world. As Pope Francis has said, Church leaders have a responsibility to care for creation. Some thoughtful and prophetic reflections of the encyclical are:

1. As the Director of the Secretariat for Creation Care at the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, Sister Sheila Marie Fitzpatrick, left, and Rosemary Spalding, pose on the grounds of Our Lady of Grace Ministry in Indianapolis. Sister Sheila is the director of the Office of Creation Care at the archdiocese.

2. Laudato Si’ emphasizes a shift to a culture of prayer that can help individuals make changes in their lives and lead to systemic change. "We need to be in dialogue with the Earth," Sister Sheila says. "We need to be listening to the Earth as well as talking to the Earth." In the document, all creation is referred to as "brothers and sisters of the same family, the planetary home in which we live."

3. "Laudato Si’'s message is one that's so closely intertwined relationships: with God, with our minds, and most importantly, the behaviors of our bodies in the world. In other words, the climate crisis is a moral imperative because of the impact of our bodies to the planet and the negative impacts to the souls of our people," Sister Sheila says.

4. "As a Jesuit, the spirituality of working for justice and mercy is a personal vocation," says Auxiliary Bishop James C. Kearney of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. "That is part of what I can offer. I believe that it's a spiritual calling.”

5. "The Church teaches that all human life is sacred and has value in the sight of God. It’s the human body that reflects the body of Christ," says Father Michael R. Brown, pastor of St. John the Apostle Parish in Bloomington.

6. "Teaching and preaching about Laudato Si’ is essential," says Father Robert W. Tobin, rector of St. John Paul II Parish in Bloomington. "An encyclical is not just a document, it is a call to action. The responsibility for the Church is to help people understand what it means and to understand what it means to help people understand it.”

7. "The Church has a role to play in the dialogue on climate change. We need to be present in the conversation," says Sister Sheila Marie. "We need to be present in the conversation because we need to be in dialogue with the Earth.”

8. "Laudato Si’ challenges us to think about our relationship with the Earth and to make changes in our daily lives," says Father James D. Sheehan, pastor of St. Mary Parish in Bloomington. "This is not just a theological issue. This is an ethical issue.”

9. "We need to help people understand that the Church is not just a moral authority, but a spiritual authority as well," says Father James D. Sheehan. "We need to help people understand that the Church is not just a moral authority, but a spiritual authority as well.”

10. "Laudato Si’ is a call to action for all Catholics to care for creation," says Sister Sheila Marie Fitzpatrick. "We need to be in dialogue with the Earth, not just with ourselves.
National Shrine to host May 17 worldwide praying of the rosary

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception will host a recitation of the rosary at noon (EDT) on May 17 as part of Pope Francis’ call for a worldwide marathon of rosaries for an end to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Each day during May at noon, the rosary will be prayed from a different Marian shrine around the world. Pope Francis began the rosary marathon on May 1 at the Vatican, and will conclude it there on May 31.

Washington Cardinal Wilton D. Gregory will lead the recitation of the rosary at the basilica on May 17.

“It is an honor for us to participate in this important initiative of the Holy Father as he invites the world to offer this great Marian prayer asking God, through the intercession of Our Lady, to bring an end to the pandemic,” said Msgr. Walter Rossi, the basilica’s rector.

Last month, the Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelization announced the worldwide rosary marathon during May, which is traditionally devoted to Mary.

“Dating back to the Middle Ages, the month of May has been dedicated to Our Lady. ... In each of [her] apparitions, Our Lady called for the rosary to be prayed for conversation of hearts and as an instrument for world peace. Now we offer this prayer in hope that with vaccines being administered, our world will return to a form of normalcy,” Msgr. Rossi said.

In addition to the Washington basilica, other Marian shrines that have or will participate in the monthlong global rosary are those located in Ireland, Belgium, Algeria, Portugal, India, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Australia, France, Turkey, Cuba, Japan, Canada, Malta, Mexico, Ukraine, Germany, Lebanon and Italy.

Each of the participating Marian shrines around the world will pray the rosary for a specific prayer intention. The May 17 rosary at the basilica will be prayed for “all world leaders and for all heads of international organizations.

Other intentions during the month include an end to the pandemic, for all of humanity, for all who have died, for the sick, for expectant mothers, for pharmacists and other health care workers, for peace, for nurses and doctors and for essential workers.

The overall theme for the worldwide event is: “From the entire Church an unceasing prayer rises to God,” which comes from a passage in the Acts of the Apostles that describes how all members of the Church prayed for St. Peter’s miraculous escape from prison.

Archbishop Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the United States, wrote in a letter to Cardinal Gregory that this year the month of May is “dedicated in a special way to prayer for an end to the coronavirus pandemic,” and asked the cardinal to “promote the initiative and to encourage the participation of the faithful in it.”

This will be the third time that the basilica has joined an international effort in prayer for the intercession of Mary during the coronavirus pandemic.

On May 1, 2020, at the basilica, then-Archbishop Gregory joined with bishops throughout the United States and Canada in rededicating the two countries to Our Lady.

On May 30 last year, while the basilica was closed to the public as part of the effort to halt the spread of COVID-19, Msgr. Rossi and the Sisters of Mary Immaculate prayed the rosary in the Great Upper Church at the same time the pope led the rosary from inside the Vatican Gardens in Rome. That livestream was broadcast worldwide along with the prayers from the other Marian shrines.

The May 17 recitation of the rosary will be livestreamed from the basilica’s website www.nationalshrine.org/mass and on various Marian social media platforms. EWTN will also broadcast the prayer.

“The world living for more than a year in pandemic mode, I trust that everyone would agree that we need some re-rearanging,” Msgr. Rossi told the Catholic Standard, archdiocesan newspaper of Washington.

“And so, my hope is that through this monthlong worldwide praying of the rosary, Our Lady will look favorably upon our pleas and present our great need before her Son.”

The rosary recitation is open to the public. The basilica can host up to 1,000 people while maintaining social distancing guidelines and other safety protocols.

The graduation ceremony will be at 5 p.m. on May 30 at the Chapel of the Sisters of St. Francis in Oldenburg.

Three seniors are in contention for valedictorian and salutatorian honors, which will be determined at the end of the academic year. The students are listed in alphabetical order.

Mia Keller, daughter of Paul and Gina Kellar.

Jacob Sheets, son of Kebe and Diana Sheets of St. Louis Parish in Batesville.

Patrick Thompson, son of Tom and Misty Thompson of St. Michael Parish in Brookville.

The archdiocese will be represented at the graduation by Walsh.

Providence Cristo Rey High School in Indianapolis has a graduating class of 46 seniors.

The graduation ceremony will be at 6:30 p.m. on June 26 at Brebeuf Jesuit Preparatory School in Indianapolis.

The class valedictorian is Alexa Forrester, daughter of Facia Hilton.

The class salutatorian is Jacqueline Huey, daughter of David and Nora Huey of St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Parish in Indianapolis.

The archdiocese will be represented at the graduation by Michelle Radomsky, assistant superintendent of Catholic schools.

Roncalli High School in Indianapolis has a graduating class of 235 seniors.

The Baccalaureate Mass will be at 6 p.m. on May 21 at the school.

The graduation ceremony will be at 9 a.m. on May 22 at the school.

The class valedictorian is Rachel Anne Hahn, daughter of Julie and Patric Hahn of St. Jude Parish in Indianapolis.

The class salutatorian is Lauren Marie Prather, daughter of Joseph and Kelly Prather of SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Parish in Greenwood.

The archdiocese will be represented at the graduation by Archbishop Thompson and Lentz.

Seton Catholic Jr./Sr. High School in Richmond has a graduating class of 24 seniors.

The Baccalaureate Mass will be at 1:30 p.m. on June 6 at St. Andrew Church in Richmond.

The graduation ceremony will follow at 2 p.m. on June 6 at the school.

The class valedictorian is Jordan Falcone, son of Robbie and Krista Falcone of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Richmond.

The class salutatorian is Xan Cartwright, son of Tony and Shantel Cartwright of St. Gabriel Parish in Connersville.

The archdiocese will be represented at the graduation by Archbishop Thompson.

GRADUATION

continues from page 3

Father Thomas Seejena Memorial High School in Richmond has a graduating class of 93 students. The Baccalaureate Mass will be at 7 p.m. on May 27 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis.

The graduation ceremony will be at 7 p.m. on May 28 at the school.

The class valedictorian is Alexcia Falcone, son of Tony and Shantel Cartwright of St. Gabriel Parish in Connersville.

The class salutatorian is Xan Cartwright, son of Tony and Shantel Cartwright of St. Gabriel Parish in Connersville.

The archdiocese will be represented at the graduation by Archbishop Thompson.

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A Special Word to Those Who Have Had an Abortion ...

Do not give in to discouragement and do not lose hope....

If you have not already done so, give yourselves over with humility and trust to repentance. The Father of mercies is ready to give you his forgiveness and his peace ... —St. John Paul II, The Gospel Life

A woman prays at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington on June 23, 2017. (CNS photo/Tyler Orsburn)
My husband’s paternal grandfather often said that “life is all about the little things.” It is a simple yet profound saying that has passed down through the men in the Grosso family, often cited by my husband to this day.

In reading “Gaudete et Exsultate” (“Rejoice and Be Glad”), the third apostolic exhortation of Pope Francis, this adage kept rising to my mind with a slight amendment: “Holiness is all about the little things.”

For me, that phrase is a relief. The concept of holiness can seem daunting at best, utterly unattainable at worst. We might consider holiness as a prize for the perfect, for the consecrated religious who have the time and energy to spend hours in deep, unwavering prayer, or for saints who lived long before social media, endless Zoom meetings and globalized crises.

However, “Gaudete et Exsultate” gently reminds and firmly challenges each of us to take small steps each day on the journey to holiness. In re-reading this exhortation from 2018, when the circumstances of the Church and world were certainly different than they are right now, I found that the document’s relevance is deepened. Pope Francis rises to the challenges of our time and reprioritizes “the call to holiness in a practical way for our own time, with all its risks, challenges and opportunities” (#2).

Here are my top takeaways on striving for holiness today, right now:

—Holiness is not about a state of perfection, but the process of strengthening our “holiness muscle” over time.

Pope Francis exhorts us not to be discouraged by perceived unattainability of holiness, because everyone’s journey to holiness is different. Whether looking at well-known saints or people we put on pedestals, we cannot hold up the final product of holiness without considering the path each took to get there.

He suggests looking beyond the well-known holy figures to “the saints next door,” citing examples of everyday people in our lives who model walking the path to holiness (#6). Regardless of whom we look to for inspiration, we are invited to forge our own path to holiness that is right for each of us, right where we are.

He writes, “We are frequently tempted to think that holiness is only for those who can withdraw from ordinary affairs to spend much time in prayer. That is not the case. We are all called to be holy by living our lives with love and by bearing witness in everything we do, wherever we find ourselves” (#14).

Subsequently, it is not hours of kneeling in adoration or lying prostrate while reciting the rosary that make a person holy, though certainly those are spiritually enriching and deeply prayerful activities. The point that “Gaudete et Exsultate” makes is that the small gestures—such as minute choices for the good, brief acts of charity, moments of prayer, etc.—are the ones that strengthen us in holiness. Being a “model Catholic” or a “know-it-all” is not what makes us holy.

Pope Francis spends quite a bit of time on “two subtle enemies of holiness” (#35). We cannot become consumed with having all of the answers or getting things perfectly right, and thus considering ourselves allegedly more holy than others because of that.

“As time passed, many came to realize that it is not knowledge that begets us or makes us saints, but the kind of life we lead” (#47). Subsequently, it is not our own efforts that make us holy, wherein we lose ourselves to the letter of the law, consumed by rules and concern for getting everything “just right” in the hopes of being the most perfect Catholic.

It is when we acknowledge our own limitations even while thirsting for knowledge and tradition that we make room to be strengthened in holiness through the grace of God.

—Modeling holiness is what will attract people to Christ and the Church.

Pope Francis puts it simply: “Holiness is the most attractive face of the Church” (#9). While the body of Christ desires for the Church to grow, and holiness requires boldness, passion, and fearlessness of spirit, the most effective method of evangelization is, to paraphrase Gandhi, to be the Church you want to see in the world.

To model holiness is to be impelled to be the hands and feet of Christ to a hurting world. Simply put by this exhortation, “The beatitudes are like a Christian’s identity card” (#63).

Pope Francis does not shy away from the truth that Christ spelled this out for us in the Gospel, that charity should be paramount in striving for holiness. Those who wish to give glory to God by their lives, who truly long to grow in holiness, are called to be single-minded and tenacious in their practice of the works of mercy” (#107).

—Holiness is intrinsically tied to joy.

Pope Francis reminds us that the saints were joyful, despite experiences of profound suffering and sorrow. He encourages us to have the same spirit, letting joy be the spark that fuels the fire of holiness in each of us.

Holiness is not to be so pious that we are dour, or so consumed by what lies beyond this world that we forget to delight in the here and now. Rather, holiness stems from being who God created each of us to be and living that fully.

The invitation to walk the path to holiness, together as the body of Christ, rings as true today as it did when “Gaudete et Exsultate” was published—and our small steps, “the little things,” can make a big difference.

(Nicole M. Perone is the national coordinator of ESTEEM, the faith-based leadership formation program.)
Joyful Witness/ Kimberly Pohovey

Enrich your life, listen to what a young person can teach you

I sat in awe at the words spoken by such young persons. They were all well-written essays, but for me, the essay written by the youngest award recipient, a seventh-grade student, was the essay written best. It was the essay written without the poise with which she delivered her essay so well.

As a member of the Serra Club of Indianapolis, I was privileged to attend their annual Vocations Contest award luncheon a few weeks ago. One student is chosen from each of the grades K through 12. This year’s contest theme focused on St. Joseph, and I was reminded how important our young people are.

Many years ago, while I was attending a Christian Renewes His Parish retreat, I was similarly inspired by a teenage girl. She was late on Saturday evening, and we were seated around the altar of our church. We were immersed in light and in a quiet and prayerful state. Our leader introduced this young person. She had played a child crawling toward open steps, etc. We were impressed as we were in a quiet and prayerful state.

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Our guide encouraged us to ask questions. When she was finished, we all said, “I would love to hear what the children say to us.” She said, “You will be surprised what they can teach us.”

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One of the children said, “I sit with my mom and watch her sing. I sit with the Lord and see what message he is giving me.”

We were impressed by her words. Her words were filled with faith and hope. She was able to express her thoughts so beautifully.

Many of us can accomplish a lot in 90 days, but what if that is all the time you had? What if you were told you had a limited time to turn your family’s life around?

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The Sunday Readings

Sunday, May 16, 2021

- Acts 1:1-11
- Ephesians 1:17-23
- Mark 16:15-20

The Acts of the Apostles supplies the first reading for this important feast in the Church, the celebration of the Lord’s wondrous ascension into heaven. This reading begins as if it were a letter. It is addressed to Theophilus, as was the Gospel of St. Luke. Who was Theophilus? Was he a person with this as his name? Was he a devout Christian? Someone curious about Jesus? He may have been a devout Christian, because the name Theophilus may have been a title. In Greek, it means “friend of God.” Regardless, both Acts and Luke were sent, as it were, to this person, arguing for a common authorship of these two New Testament works.

In this reading, the author states that Acts continues the story of salvation in Jesus begun in the Gospel of Luke. It describes the ascension of the Lord into heaven, an event occurring after Jesus had risen from the dead and had been among the Apostles and others faithful to God. As the moment of the ascension approached, the Apostles still were confused. This confusion simply reveals that they were human. Their ability to grasp the things of God and his mind was limited, to say the least.

Jesus eases their confusion. He affirms that, while they are limited, all is in God’s plan. The Apostles have been commissioned. To enable them to fulfill their commissions, Jesus promises that the Holy Spirit will be with them. The Spirit will guide them to proclaim the Gospel everywhere as they had been commissioned.

Reflection

Celebrating the Ascension of the Lord in the form of a special liturgical feast is a revered and ancient tradition in the Church. In the early years of the Church, it may have been celebrated together with Pentecost. For seventeen centuries, however, it has been a feast of its own. Such is proper. The Ascension revealed Jesus, divine and human, crucified but risen. It reveals that we are not alone. Christ did not leave us. He lives with us, and teaches us still, through the Apostles and through the Church and its sacraments of the Church that they helped form and celebrated.

This feast, however, is more than a commemoration of a day 20 centuries ago. It calls us modern disciples to live for Jesus, and to love all others as Jesus loved.

My Journey to God

Waiting

By Patrick Harkins

This silent spring is not silent. Cardinals and robins who spent winter away from the winds and ice now bob and sing as if in paradise.

I wait for the Provider of Peace to say rise up, come out, go on your way. The earth, hear only the call of crows, the whisper of a stream that flows, geese going, coming, breaking the gray of heaven, wings unfolding. The All Generous One is waiting for me to break the silence, patiently, patiently.

Question Corner

Fr. Kenneth Doyle

Confession of venial sins is encouraged but not required by the Church

Q I am a 92-year-old homebound woman—near the end of my earthly journey. Lately I have been plagued by the thought that I might be committing a grievous sin for receiving Holy Communion without going to confession for a week. With a clear conscience, I know that I have not committed a mortal sin. I have not gone to confession for more than 50 years, if memory serves me right, but I had been receiving Communion weekly until the onset of COVID-19. Now my grandniece plans to resume dressing her mom and me to weekly Mass, since we have already had our second vaccinations. Can I continue to receive Holy Communion? (location withheld)

A Please relax and be at peace. You may certainly continue to receive Holy Communion. If you have not committed any mortal sins, you are not obliged to go to the sacrament of reconciliation first. Canon 989 of the Code of Canon Law says, “After having reached the age of discretion, each member of the faithful is obliged to confess faithfully his or her grave sins at least once a year.”

So, strictly speaking, one is obliged to go to confession only for mortal (“grave”) sins. I am an advocate, though, of much more frequent confession, and I have read that Pope Francis receives the sacrament every two weeks.

Without any sense of urgency, I would suggest that you might ask your grandniece to drive you to a church to go to confession when it is available there. I think it would bring you a sense of peace, and it would certainly be consistent with the mind of the Church.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church says, “Without being strictly necessary, confession of everyday faults [venial sins] is nevertheless strongly recommended by the Church, especially the regular confession of our venial sins helps us form our conscience, fight against evil tendencies, let ourselves be healed by the Spirit and progress in the life of the Spirit” (#1458).

Q A recent column, you said that if a couple enters into marriage conscienciously intending never to have children, that marriage would be invalid. That response took me by surprise. If a couple in their later years (past the age of childbearing) is seeking the sacrament of marriage, would their marriage be deemed invalid? Also, if a young couple simply cannot afford to raise a child, would their marriage also be invalid?

A The Church views children as the supreme gift of marriage and has always regarded openness to children as an essential part of what marriage is. That having been said, a couple who marry later in life (beyond childbearing years) may certainly contract a valid marriage in the Church’s eyes.

One of the questions the priest or deacon asks a couple during the wedding ceremony is this: “Are you prepared to accept children lovingly from God and bring them up according to the law of Christ and his Church?”

But the ritual itself instructs the officiant that this question “may be omitted if, for example, the couple is advanced in years.”

As to the young couple who feel they can’t afford a child, I would ask: Do you mean “not right now” or “not ever”? The difference is this: If the couple simply wants to wait to have children, that doesn’t automatically affect the validity of the marriage. If, however, they intend to exclude children always and forever, this would render the marriage invalid in the mind of the Church.

I might also ask this couple whether they have considered deferring their marriage until a more suitable time.

Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at askfatherdoyle@gmail.com and 30 Columbus Circle Dr, Albany, New York 12203.
BETHURAM
continued from page 12

The Arcdiocese of Indianapolis has partnered with the University of Notre Dame and Catholic Distance University (CDU) to offer not-for-credit online theology courses:
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• Complete 12 courses online with ND STEP program
• CDU offers classes on Catechism of the Catholic Church
- 20% discount for all employees, volunteers, and parishioners.

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

REPORT SEXUAL MISCONDUCT NOW

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

Ethics Point
- Confidential, Online Reporting
  archdiocese.indiana.edu/reporting or 888-393-6180
- Carla Hill, Archdiocese of Indianapolis, Victim Assistance Coordinator
  NO Box 143, Indianapolis, IN 46206 1410
  317-236-1548 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1548
  caralah@archindy.org

REST IN PEACE

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


MEER, Andrew, 44, St. Mary, Rushville, May 2. Son of Tim Meer. Brother of Christopher Meer.


OLIGER, Cody P., 26, St. Mary, Greensburg, April 30. Son of Peter and Lora Oliger. Brother of Brady, Cary and PJ Oliger. Grandson of Lorelta Olson. Uncle of several.


SEIPP, Nancy, 80, St. Michael, Bradford.

SOUDA, Carolyn K., 89, St. John of the Cross, Columbus, April 20. Daughter of Andrea and Joseph Souza. Grandmother of seven.

SPRILKER, Everett L., 78, St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd County, April 30. Husband of Mary Sprilker. Father of Brad, Brent and Chad Sprilker. Brother of Josephine, Dan, Paul and Thomas Sprilker. Grandfather of four.


And mental well-being were improved. The family left the shelter with housing, knowledge of resources in the community and basic financial plans for the future. With the support of Catholic Charities’ staff, the family left our facility not only whole but regenerated and empowered. And it all happened in 90 days.

(David Bethuram is executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Catholic Charities. You can contact him at david@bethuram.org).†

CAPECCHI
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also urgently needed, enabling us to overcome the sharp societal divisions that mark our times.

“Greene had a deep trust that the world was fundamentally a good place, and I think that trust was continually reinforced by going to daily Mass,” Kelly said. “If you do something every day that’s orienting you toward the greater good and toward humility, you can’t help but feel a certain security in the world and a certain optimism.”

(Christina Capecchi is a freelance writer from Inver Grove Heights, Minn.)†
The “Catechesis for Discipleship Award” is a new annual honor given to one catechist from each of our 126 parishes in central and southern Indiana by the archdiocesan Office of Catechesis. Pastors, parish life coordinators and parish catechetical leaders are asked to identify a catechist who excels at teaching the faith and witnessing to the life-changing power of Jesus. Those who excel at teaching the faith and witnessing to the life-changing power of Jesus are invited to apply.

Catechists are invited to apply online. To apply, go to www.bishopchatard.org/about/employment/ to apply. To apply, please email a resume, cover letter and references to Maureen Malaney, Assistant to the President, at mmalaney@bishopchatard.org. Submission deadline is May 21, 2021.

Executive Director of Mission Integration

Bishop Chatard High School

Bishop Chatard High School, an archdiocesan Catholic high school located on the north side of Indianapolis, is seeking a dynamic Catholic leader and visionary to fill the position of Executive Director of Mission Integration.

At Bishop Chatard, we believe that ministry formation is a dynamic, life-long process rooted in the person of Jesus Christ and the teachings of his church. Building upon the lived experience of students, staff, parents, alumni and community partners, the Executive Director of Mission Integration creates opportunities for renewal. Under the executive director’s leadership, the formation experience provided by Campus Ministry helps all BCHS stakeholders to articulate, implement, and integrate our Catholic educational mission as it inspires our community to live in a way which is consistent with an authentic Catholic identity. The executive director promotes workplace spirituality as a key component of mission integration.

A qualified candidate will possess a Bachelor’s Degree; a Master’s Degree in Ministry is preferred. Relevant experience in school, parish or other Catholic institutional ministry is required. For more information on the duties and responsibilities of this position, view the job description at www.bishopchatard.org/about/employment/.

To apply, email a resume, cover letter and references to Maureen Malaney, Assistant to the President, at mmalaney@bishopchatard.org. Submission deadline is May 21, 2021.

Director of Enrollment Management

Bishop Chatard High School

Bishop Chatard High School, a dynamic archdiocesan Catholic high school located on the north side of Indianapolis, is seeking a creative and engaging individual who will be responsible for the development and implementation of the school’s Enrollment Management program. The Director of Enrollment Management serves as a member of the school’s Advancement team in support of the Bishop Chatard mission. This is a full-time, 12-month, salaried position.

Qualified candidates will possess exemplary written, presentation and interpersonal communication skills; be proficient with technology and social media; and have the ability to manage and work collaboratively on diverse initiatives. A Bachelor’s Degree is required, and three to five years of experience in Enrollment Management or a related field is preferred.

For more information on the duties and responsibilities of this position, the job description at www.bishopchatard.org/about/employment/.

To apply, please email a resume, cover letter and references to Executive Director of Marketing & Enrollment Management Kelly Lucas at klucas@bishopchatard.org.
The pope said, "many competent and dedicated catechists are community leaders in various parts of the world and carry out a mission invaluable for the transmission and growth of the faith."

Especially in communities without a resident priest, catechists are the leaders of the local Catholic community, evangelizing, converting and guiding their fellow Catholics in prayer and works of charity. And, in missionary territories under the guidance of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, they already serve with a specific mandate from their bishop.

"The long line of bishops, saints and martyrs who were catechists has significantly advanced the Church’s mission and deserves to be recognized, for it represents a rich resource not only for catechesis but also for the entire history of Christian spirituality," Pope Francis wrote. The formal institution of catechists, he said, should be a sign and encouragement for all lay Catholics to recognize “even more the missionary commitment proper to every baptized person, a commitment that must however be carried out in a fully ‘secular’ manner, avoiding any form of clericalization.”

Archbishop Fisichella said Pope Francis was insisting that lay “men and women are called to express their baptismal vocation in the best possible way, not as substitutes for priests or consecrated persons, but as authentic laymen and laywomen who, in the distinctive nature of their ministry, are able to experience the full of extent of their baptismal vocation of witness and effective service in the community and the world.”

Laypeople who feel called to the ministry of catechists should be actively involved in the life of their Catholic communities and faithful to the Gospel and the teaching of the Church. Archbishop Fisichella said. But they also must receive “suitable biblical, theological, pastoral and pedagogical formation to be competent communicators of the truth of the faith.”

Catechists are called first to be expert in the pastoral service of transmitting the faith as it develops through its different stages from the initial proclamation” of the Gospel, preparation for receiving the sacraments and support in living a Christian life, the pope said. Presenting the document to reporters, Archbishop Fisichella said catechesis “cannot be improvised. “Those who will be catechists must know that they speak in the name of the Church and transmit the faith of the Church,” he said."

CATECHISTS

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While millions of lay men and women around the world already serve as catechists, lectors and altar servers, formal institution into the ministries signifies that the service is stable, delegated by the bishop and publicly recognized by the Church.

Archbishop Rino Fisichella, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelization, noted how St. Paul VI wrote in 1975 about the importance of laypeople using their gifts for the growth of the entire Church.

"It has taken almost 50 years for the Church to come to recognize that the service rendered by so many men and women through their catechetical commitment truly constitutes a distinctive ministry for the growth of the Christian community," the archbishop told reporters at a news conference to present the pope’s document.

In his document, Pope Francis noted how teachers of the faith were present from the earliest days of the Christian community and were recognized as having a special gift of the Holy Spirit for carrying out their role within the community.

“At times,” he wrote, “the charisms that the Spirit constantly pours out on the baptized took on a visible and tangible form of immediate service to the Christian community, one recognized as an indispensable ‘diakonia’ for the community.”

In looking at the history of evangelization, the pope said, Catholics cannot overlook “the countless lay men and women who directly took part in the spread of the Gospel through catechetical instruction. Men and women of deep faith, authentic witnesses of holiness, who in some cases were also founders of churches and eventually died as martyrs.”

Still today, he said, "Catechists are called first to be expert in the pastoral service of transmitting the faith as it develops through its different stages from the initial proclamation” of the Gospel, preparation for receiving the sacraments and support in living a Christian life, the pope said. Presenting the document to reporters, Archbishop Fisichella said catechesis “cannot be improvised. “Those who will be catechists must know that they speak in the name of the Church and transmit the faith of the Church,” he said."

Cathedral Congratulates the Class of 2021 Summa Cum Laude Graduates, their Parents, and their Parishes

Isaac John Michael
Catherine and Jon-Adam Michael
Holy Rosary

Taylor Rae Prince
Kelly and Richard Prince
St. Simon

Anna Katherine Shea
Christine and Patrick Shea
Holy Spirit

William Galvin Teasley
Colleen O’Brien-Teasley and Kevin Teasley
St. Monica

Levi Irvin Wojtalik
Ann and Christopher Wojtalik
Holy Rosary and Immaculate Heart of Mary

Matthew See Fiedeldey
Kyoungah See and David Fiedeldey
St. Malachy

Nathan See Fiedeldey
Kyoungah See and David Fiedeldey
St. Malachy

Maura Kathleen Flood
Catherine and Michael Flood
St. Luke

Eric Michael George
Carolyn and Malcolm George
Our Lady of Grace

Kieran McKenna McCauley
Clarice and Christopher McCauley
St. Louis de Montfort

Madeline Claire Elson
Megan and Greg Martin
St. Pius X

Preston James Avery
Melissa and Bryan Avery
Immaculate Heart of Mary

Kyleigh Savannah Braun
Chalene and David Braun
Holy Spirit at Geist

Grace Maria Delgado
Sarah Delgado
St. Luke

Abygail Mae Dravis
Barbara and Bryan Dravis
St. Simon

Lauren Alexandra Dubbink
Lynn Murphy-Dubbink and Kevin Dubbink
St. Louis de Montfort

Matthew See Fiedeldey
Kyoungah See and David Fiedeldey
St. Malachy

Nathan See Fiedeldey
Kyoungah See and David Fiedeldey
St. Malachy

Maura Kathleen Flood
Catherine and Michael Flood
St. Luke

Eric Michael George
Carolyn and Malcolm George
Our Lady of Grace

Kieran McKenna McCauley
Clarice and Christopher McCauley
St. Louis de Montfort

Madeline Claire Elson
Megan and Greg Martin
St. Pius X

Pope Francis watches as a family carries offertory gifts to the altar during a Mass for catechists in St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican in this Sept. 29, 2013, file photo. In a document released on May 11, Pope Francis instituted the “ministry of catechist.” (CNS photo/Paul Haring)