U.S. bishops spotlight programs on Eucharist, young people and moms in need

BALTIMORE (CNS)—The U.S. bishops spotlighted two major initiatives focused on the central role of the Eucharist on Nov. 17, the second of two days of public sessions of their fall general assembly.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) approved a 26-page statement, “The Mystery of the Eucharist in the Life of the Church,” with 222 “yes” votes, and also OK’d plans for a three-year National Eucharistic Revival that will culminate with the National Eucharistic Congress 2024 in Indianapolis. 

On other matters, they were invited to take a multicultural journey with young Catholics to Chicago next June; were urged to implement a framework for marriage and family ministry that they had approved at their spring assembly in June; agreed to begin review of the “Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People” earlier than planned; and heard how the pandemic may have slowed but not stopped a pro-life initiative called “Walking With Moms in Need.”

They approved guidelines governing the USCCB’s financial investments that include wider limits on where money would be invested. The guidelines advance a policy of engagement on corporate practices that impact human dignity.

The prelates, meeting in person for a national gathering for the first time since 2019, also approved guidelines for the exposition of the Eucharist and Benediction, affirmed sainthood causes for three U.S. laypeople, approved revisions of statutes for the catechumenate and voted for revised English- and Spanish-language editions of the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults.

Their vote on the Eucharist statement came a day after their discussion of the document—a discussion that was markedly different than their debate in 2019, also approved guidelines for the exposition of the Eucharist and Benediction, affirmed sainthood causes for three U.S. laypeople, approved revisions of statutes for the catechumenate and voted for revised English- and Spanish-language editions of the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults.

Their vote on the Eucharist statement came a day after their discussion of the document—a discussion that was markedly different than their debate in 2019, also approved guidelines for the exposition of the Eucharist and Benediction, affirmed sainthood causes for three U.S. laypeople, approved revisions of statutes for the catechumenate and voted for revised English- and Spanish-language editions of the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults.

The U.S. bishops have selected the Archdiocese of Indianapolis to host the first national eucharistic congress in 48 years. It will take place on July 17-21, 2024, in Indianapolis and is expected to draw at least 80,000 from across the country. The bishops voted on the proposal on Nov. 17 in Baltimore during the fall general assembly of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).
December 1 – 10 a.m. Mass for seniors of archdiocesan high schools at St. Malachy Church, Brownsburg
December 1 – 12:30 p.m. Mass at Marian University Chapel, Indianapolis
December 2 – 10 a.m. Leadership Team meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis
December 2 – 12:45 p.m. Mass at St. Peter Church, Franklin County
December 4 – 5:30 p.m. Mass at St. Bridget of Ireland Church, Liberty

Pope Francis

Parishes, pope pray for victims after SUV plows through parade crowd

WAUKESHA, Wis. (CNS)—Church leaders and parishers offered prayers for the five people who died and dozens more who were injured, including a Catholic priest, church parishioner and Catholic school students, when an SUV plowed through spectators watching a Christmas parade.

“It is in our most difficult hours that we, as a community, turn to our Lord for refuge, strength and love,” the post said.

Community members gathered soon after the incident to pray the rosary on Facebook. Mass was offered early on Nov. 22 at St. William Church, one of the churches in the community, for the victims. A prayer service was planned later in the evening at the church.

The Waukesha Catholic Community also was arranging for counseling and support services for anyone seeking assistance.

Authorities said early on Nov. 22 that five people died and at least 48 others—including 18 children—were injured when an SUV broke through a barricade about 4:30 p.m. local time and drove down the street on which the parade was taking place.

Waukesha Police Chief Daniel Thompson said the driver’s vehicle had been recovered, and the driver identified as William Joseph Broks Jr. He faced five counts of first-degree intentional homicide, with additional charges possible based on the investigation, Thompson said.

News reports said Brooks was a Milwaukee man with a criminal history dating back to 1999 that includes numerous violent felonies. Mayor Shawn Reilly described the incident as “a horrible and senseless act,” local media reported.

Officials at the School District of Waukesha canceled classes on Nov. 22. A video posted on the website of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel showed an SUV speeding down the street between parade participants and parade watchers sitting and standing curbside as a police vehicle, with sirens blaring, followed at a slower pace.

Another video showed bags, a baby stroller and other personal belongings strewn in the street along the parade route afterwards.

The newspaper also reported that Thompson said that “an officer discharged his weapon at the suspect vehicle to try to stop the vehicle. No bystanders were injured as a result of the weapon discharge.”

The parade is one the city’s biggest and most beloved annual events, drawing viewers and participants from throughout southeastern Wisconsin.

Parishes, pope pray for victims after SUV plows through parade crowd

Pope Francis expressed his condolences to the victims of the tragic attack. In a message sent by Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, to Archbishop Jerome E. Listecki of Milwaukee, the pope assured “this spiritual closeness to all affected by the tragic incident that recently took place in Waukesha.”

The pope “commends the souls of those who died to Almighty God’s loving mercy and implores the divine gifts of healing and consolation upon the injured and bereaved. He joins you in prayer for all those involved, their families, and those who are traumatized from witnessing the horrible scene.”

Pope Francis expressed his condolences to the victims of the tragic attack. In a message sent by Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, to Archbishop Jerome E. Listecki of Milwaukee, the pope assured “this spiritual closeness to all affected by the tragic incident that recently took place in Waukesha.”

The pope “commends the souls of those who died to Almighty God’s loving mercy and implores the divine gifts of healing and consolation upon the injured and bereaved. He joins you in prayer for all those involved, their families, and those who are traumatized from witnessing the horrible scene.”

Pope Francis expressed his condolences to the victims of the tragic attack. In a message sent by Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, to Archbishop Jerome E. Listecki of Milwaukee, the pope assured “this spiritual closeness to all affected by the tragic incident that recently took place in Waukesha.”

The pope “commends the souls of those who died to Almighty God’s loving mercy and implores the divine gifts of healing and consolation upon the injured and bereaved. He joins you in prayer for all those involved, their families, and those who are traumatized from witnessing the horrible scene.”

Pope Francis expressed his condolences to the victims of the tragic attack. In a message sent by Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, to Archbishop Jerome E. Listecki of Milwaukee, the pope assured “this spiritual closeness to all affected by the tragic incident that recently took place in Waukesha.”

The pope “commends the souls of those who died to Almighty God’s loving mercy and implores the divine gifts of healing and consolation upon the injured and bereaved. He joins you in prayer for all those involved, their families, and those who are traumatized from witnessing the horrible scene.”

Pope Francis expressed his condolences to the victims of the tragic attack. In a message sent by Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, to Archbishop Jerome E. Listecki of Milwaukee, the pope assured “this spiritual closeness to all affected by the tragic incident that recently took place in Waukesha.”

The pope “commends the souls of those who died to Almighty God’s loving mercy and implores the divine gifts of healing and consolation upon the injured and bereaved. He joins you in prayer for all those involved, their families, and those who are traumatized from witnessing the horrible scene.”

Pope Francis expressed his condolences to the victims of the tragic attack. In a message sent by Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, to Archbishop Jerome E. Listecki of Milwaukee, the pope assured “this spiritual closeness to all affected by the tragic incident that recently took place in Waukesha.”

The pope “commends the souls of those who died to Almighty God’s loving mercy and implores the divine gifts of healing and consolation upon the injured and bereaved. He joins you in prayer for all those involved, their families, and those who are traumatized from witnessing the horrible scene.”
USCCB's Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis process called “Journeying Together,” he last year and a half. More than 60 bishops facilitating virtual gatherings between needed to take time to listen to young and inclusion through the prism of faith. dialogue about issues of culture, racism to participate with young Catholics in a J. Pérez invited fellow bishops to a Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis. The revival, ending in 2024 with the National revival, which is scheduled to begin on June 16, 2022, the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, traditionally known as the feast of Corpus Christi. The revival will begin at the local and diocesan level, and the broader society. Polling data in recent years suggest that shep...
Advent is a time of joyful anticipation

How is a Christian supposed to observe Advent in our secular society? As soon as Thanksgiving is over (actually, well before that), people are celebrating Christmas. Many of them may not know anything about Advent. But they know about Christmas, at least society’s Christmas. For many, it’s just a major holiday and time for parties, decorating their homes and perhaps sending holiday greetings to friends. The stores have had their decorations up for a long time and are expecting big sales.

What does all this have to do with “the reason for the season,” to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ on Earth? Not much.

It’s not that all the secular observances are bad, and Christians may certainly join in them, especially with the emphasis on gift-giving and making charitable contributions to organizations that serve the poor and others in need. The Catholic Church has some of the best of those organizations. The secular holidays are also a wondrous time for children, and that’s good. Parents and grandparents can let them believe in both Santa Claus and Jesus when they are very young. So, Christians can observe “the holidays” along with other Americans.

There are other ways we can prepare for Christmas. We can, and should, make it a point to go to confession sometime during Advent. Our parishes try to make it as easy as possible for people to go to the sacrament of reconciliation, and we should take advantage of those opportunities. No matter how long it has been since your last confession, you’ll feel much better after you go this Advent.

One of the popular devotions, in homes as well as in churches, is the Advent wreath. It is a circle of evergreens with four candles that are lighted successively in the weeks of Advent to symbolize the approaching celebration of the birth of Christ, the Light of the World. The wreath originated among German Catholics and Lutherans in the 16th century and was brought to the United States by German Catholics.

We pray you have a happy Advent as we prepare to remember Christ’s first coming and look forward to his second coming.

—John F. Fink

Opinion

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, Publisher
Greg A. Otolski, Associate Publisher
Mike Krokos, Editor
John F. Fink, Editor Emeritus

Editorial

Be Our Guest/Greg Erlandson

Communion lessons

It is hard to believe that people once considered the Catholic press boring. At least when it comes to opinions, as opposed to news, it never lacks for controversy. Nothing is spared, from pope to priest and from left to right, with op-ed agreement only to be found, and here I paraphrase a Tom Lehrer lyric, in which “everybody hates the USCCB (U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops). Should you seek out these opinions online, the vitriol is even worse.

I can always get an ironic laugh from those who make a point of reading this stuff when I recall the lyrics of that 1960s-era Churchipple, “They’ll Know We Are Christians by Our Love.”

For months, the back and forth among the opined has been about whether the bishops would or should, censure Catholic politicians who support abortion, particularly President Joe Biden, perhaps denying them Holy Communion.

This debate was fueled, to be sure, by the call from some bishops to do exactly that. The Vatican weighed in, however, and despite a lively debate at their June meeting, it seemed obvious that this was not going to happen for a variety of reasons.

Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Ind., and chair of the bishops’ doctrine committee, made it clear that the document he was drafting was not going to be naming or shaming specific politicians or even groups of Catholics.

The statement he delivered, titled “The Mystery of the Eucharist in the Life of the Church,” was overwhelmingly approved at the bishops’ November meeting with little public debate.

What debate there may have been may have taken place in executive session, but even before then the bishops were sending signals that they planned to support the document with only modest modifications.

It does talk about the proper reception of the Eucharist, and the fact that some sins (mortal) “rupture the communion we share with God and the Church.” Someone who is in such a state of sin should present himself or herself for Communion. Let all who have ears, let us hear.

How long might the statement address be Catholic understanding of, and appreciation for, the Eucharist and the communion it signifies. This late in the year, the bishops are also planning a eucharistic revival from 2022 until a national concordat. In Indiana, the bishops have done the work for this Eucharist statement just approved may be the teaching document for this congress. This revival is intended to impact parishes and dioceses in our country during the next three years, and I wish it all the best.

The necessity for such a revival underscores an ongoing failure of our Church, however, which is the lack of continuous Catholic faith formation. Most Catholics received formal education in their childhood. They may be devout or disengaged, but they are often thinking in childhood categories. As St. Paul advises, at a certain point we put away childish things.

There are two ways that our Catholic faith formation is likely to touch the majority of Mass-attending Catholics: the homily and Catholic media. The parish homily in particular is the most widespread means of Catholic faith formation for adults.

News stories explain what the Church teaches and how it impacts the controversies and decisions that are visible every day. Catholic press and blog flash about diocesan or diocesan newspapers, but they are the foot in the door. When it comes to talking about the church, teaching, morality and more, they are where the invitation is extended to grow in understanding and knowledge for what it is we profess to believe.

(Greg Erlandson, director and editor-in-chief of Catholic News Service, can be reached at erlandson@catholicnews.com.)

Reflection

Maureen Pratt

A time of renewed welcome

An unexpected visit from a friend who lives 800 miles away became a blessing in many respects.

The visit prompted me to pick up the pace of tiding up more “lived in” spaces. Yet another aspect of the visit has had spiritually profound effects. A renewed sense of eager anticipation energized my activity as the time for the visit drew near.

Much like the hallway that suddenly became brighter when I replaced an old, dim bulb, the thought of extending hospitality overshadowed the long months of pandemic isolation and drew me closer to a more profound realization for this holiday season and, especially, Advent: How we prepare to welcome Jesus has a deep impact on what happens when we welcome.

For example, I realized early into preparations for my friend’s visit that I could not do everything in one day. Instead, I made up a schedule, breaking up the tasks into smaller periods of time over the course of the visit. Advent devotions can be approached in much the same way: Instead of thinking of long readings on the first five weeks and segments can build one on the other, to bring us forward throughout the season. Preparing my mind through reading, my guest’s eyes was a good way to notice details that needed attention and put my preparations in the context of wanting to do the best for a good friend.

During our soul-searching in Advent, if we try to see ourselves as God sees us—as (Maureen Pratt’s website is www.mpratt.com.)

†

A lit candle is seen on an Advent wreath. Advent is a season of waiting. (CNS photo/Lisa Johnston, St. Louis Review)
Gratitude leads us to hope and joy

La gratitud nos lleva a la esperanza y la alegría

“May the Lord strengthen your hearts at the coming of our Lord Jesus” (1 Thess 3:13).

Yesterday, we celebrated the great American holiday of Thanksgiving. If we were fortunate enough to be with people we love, we joined them in setting aside the sorrows and anxieties of the past 20 months, and we gave thanks for the many blessings we experienced even in the midst of health crises, economic hardship and social unrest.

Gratitude is more contagious than any pandemic. It soothes our bitterness, resentment and fear, and it opens the eyes of our hearts to see how blessed we truly are in spite of our difficulties. Simply by saying “thank you” for whatever blessings—large or small—we have received, we can find relief from whatever pain we feel in our minds, hearts or bodies.

Thanksgiving is a secular holiday here in the United States of America, but its roots are found in the deeply religious experiences of the women and men who came to this land as immigrants in search of a better life. We naturally think of the pilgrims we came to look for hope in search of religious freedom, as they understood
it, but we should also consider the experiences of the native peoples whose ancestors came to this continent many generations ago. The fact of, kind of, we should remember the millions of immigrants who have come here (and continue to come) because of the prospect of a better life for their families.

We are all the children of immigrants, and we should be deeply grateful for the blessings of this great land. Even the worst experiences in our nation’s history—including slavery, racism, nativism, greed, political oppression and unspeakable crimes against the most vulnerable members of our society—cannot completely overshadow the gifts we have received as a people struggling to make freedom, justice and peace realities in our society.

This year, we celebrated Thanksgiving in spite of many challenges in our society and in our Church. We are not naive. Sin and evil surround us every day, but as long as we keep our hearts free in our hearts to say “thank you” for the good things that we enjoy as a result of God’s bounty, we can share in the joy of heaven, both here and now and in the life to come.

By the providence of God, this year our archdiocese is participating in a synod process along with all other dioceses throughout the world. Of course, we are trying to be more conscious of the facts that we are not alone, that we journey together as members of God’s family, and that the end or goal of this earthly pilgrimage is the joy of communion with Christ and with all members of his body, the Church.

Gratitude is an essential feature of this synodal process. By constantly giving thanks, we can walk together with minds and hearts that are unburdened. By sharing our gifts with others as we walk together in faith, we become better disposed to encounter Christ in our fellow travelers. By listening prayerfully to God’s word as the Holy Spirit guides us along the way, we can gradually discern what God is asking us—as individuals and as a Church—to do as missionary disciples of Jesus Christ.

This Sunday, we will once again begin a new Church year with a season of waiting, a time of expectation and longing. If we embrace this special time, Advent will prepare us to celebrate Christmas, which is less than a month away, without falling into the trap of superficial or unrealistic expectations. Advent teaches us that the greatest gift of Christmas is the Lord Jesus, who came into the world to search and to save the lost. And we have an opportunity to embrace each other and encounter Jesus Christ is what we truly hope for during this synodal process (and always). Advent reminds us that all the joys of Christmas, and of the Lord’s second coming, can truly be ours—if we journey together prayerfully.

Authentic gratitude requires patience, trust and a firm belief that God will hear and answer our prayers. We pray that the Lord will give us everything we truly desire, and need, and that this worldwide synodal process will help to unite us and lead us to Christ, our greatest source of joy, who is coming again as he promised.

And, so, we pray: Come, Lord Jesus. Help us journey together in gratitude and in joyful hope. Prepare us for Christmas and for your coming again. Remove all the obstacles—our frustrations, pain and anger—that prevent us from walking together as brothers and sisters who long to receive you with joy. May we gratefully share your love with others and, so, become one with you always.

La gratitud es más contagiosa que cualquiera de las dificultades que nos rodean a diario, pero mientras que nos avivamos por el pecado y el mal que nos impiden caminar juntos, nos conducimos a Cristo, nuestra mayor fuente de alegría, que viene de nuevo como ha prometido.

Y así, rezamos: ¡Ven, Señor Jesucristo!

**Gratitude is a characteristic essential of this process of synodal. Al dar gracias constantemente, podemos caminar juntos con mente y corazones desahogados. Al compartir nuestras dones con los demás al tiempo que caminamos juntos en la fe, estamos mejor dispuestos a encontrar a Cristo en nuestros compañeros de viaje. Al escuchar en oración la Palabra de Dios mientras el Espíritu Santo nos guía en el camino, podemos discernir gradualmente lo que Dios nos pide que hagamos, como individuos y como Iglesia, en calidad de discípulos misioneros de Jesucristo. Este domingo comenzamos un nuevo año litúrgico con una temporada de espera, un momento de expectativas y de afrontamiento. Si nos entregamos a este tiempo especial, el Adviento nos preparará para celebrar la Navidad, que está a menos de un mes, sin caer en la trampa de las expectativas superficiales o irreal. El Adviento nos enseña que el mayor regalo de la Navidad es el propio Señor, y que no referencia el encuentro con Jesucristo es lo que verdaderamente esperamos durante este proceso sinodal (y siempre). Nos recuerda que realmente podemos disfrutar de todas las alegrías de la Navidad y de la segunda venida del Señor si recorremos el camino con recogimiento.**

El auténtico agradecimiento requiere paciencia, confianza y la creencia firme de que Dios escuchará y responderá nuestras súplicas. Rezamos para que el Señor nos dé todo lo que realmente deseamos y necesitamos, y para que este proceso sinodal mundial nos ayude a unirnos y nos conduzca a Cristo, nuestra mayor fuente de alegría, que viene de nuevo como ha prometido.

Y así, rezamos: ¡Ven, Señor Jesús!

Ayúdanos a caminar juntos con agradecimiento y alegre esperanza. Preparamos para la Navidad y para tu nueva aventura con gloria. Elimina todos los obstáculos—nuestras frustraciones, dudas y luchas—y esas promesas de Cristo en lo que hacemos y lo que anhelamos recibir con alegría. Que con agradecimiento compartamos tu amor con los demás y, así, seamos siempre uno contigo.
November 29
The Villages of Indiana online, Foster Parenting Virtual Information Night, 6:8 p.m., for those interested in becoming a foster parent, no fee. For more information or to register: 317 775-6500 or visit www.villageskids.org.

St. Simon the Apostle Parish, 8155 Oaklawn Rd., Indianapolis. SHIP (Single Hoping Involved Partnership), 6:30–8:30 p.m., fellowship ministry for singles ages 45 and older, Euchre, 6:30–8:30 p.m., (Singles Hoping Involved Rd., Indianapolis. Parish, 8155 Oaklandon St.

Visit www.villageskids.org. Fee. For more information or for those interested in Information Night, 6–8 p.m., Foster Parenting Virtual The Villages of Indiana online, November 29.

December 1
Mount St. Francis Chapel, 216 Schellers Ave., Sellersburg. First Saturday Marian Devotion, 8 a.m. rosary, meditation, prayer, 8:30 a.m. Mass with confessions prior. Information: 812–246-3552.

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

Clay County Courthouse library, 609 E. National Ave., Brazil. Pray USA Prayer Rally noon, sponsored by Annunciation Parish Legion of Mary prayer for the country. Information: usa.desmello@frontier.com.

Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. Shop Inn-spired Annual Christmas Sale and Open House, 9 a.m.–3 p.m. Information: 317-788-7581.


December 5, 12, 19 Benedictine Conversations via GroupMe: 4 p.m. Sundays, Benedictine Sister Jill Marie Reuber, facilitator, sponsored by Sisters of St. Benedict, Ferdinand, Ind. (Diocese of Evansville). Information: vocation@thedome.org.

Inmaculate Heart of Mary Parish, 5901 Central Ave., Indianapolis. 75th Anniversary Mass and Reception, 6 p.m., reception follows Mass in the activities center. Information: 317-257- 2266 or jamie@thevillageindy.org.

December 6, 13, 20 St. Therese of the Child Jesus (Little Flower) Parish Center, St. Therese Room, 4720 E. 13th St., Indianapolis. SoulCare Rosary Workout. 6:30–7:15 p.m., prayer and exercise, free. Information: 317-722-1167, jamie@520036@yahoo.com or audoree.com.

December 7
Ritz Charles, 12156 N. Meridian St., Carmel. Right to Life of Indiana Christmas Gala, 6:30 p.m., former Vice President Mike Pence Lifetime Achievement Award recipient, keynote by pro football champion Matt Bark. Christian music artist Colton Dixon performing, individual reservation $100, table for 10 $1,000, table sponsorships available. Information and reservations: www.irtl.org/gala or 317-413-9123.

December 8
Group Lectio via Zoom, 7 p.m., second and fourth Wednesdays of each month, Benedicite Sister Jill Marie Reuber, facilitator, sponsored by Sisters of St. Benedict, Ferdinand, Ind. (Diocese of Evansville). Information: vocation@thedome.org.


December 11
St. Bartholomew Parish, 1206 27th St., Columbus. Our Lady of Guadalupe Celebration. 8 p.m. Mass, 8:30 p.m. dancing, 9:30–11 p.m., mariachi, free. Information: 317-546-4065, ext. 340, or therosemary@usacatholic.org. Indianapolis. Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, 216 Schellers Ave., Sellersburg. First Saturday Marian Devotion, 8 a.m. rosary, meditation, prayer, 8:30 a.m. Mass with confessions prior. Information: 812-246-3552.

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

Clay County Courthouse library, 609 E. National Ave., Brazil. Pray USA Prayer Rally noon, sponsored by Annunciation Parish Legion of Mary prayer for the country. Information: usa.desmello@frontier.com.

Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. Shop Inn-spired Annual Christmas Sale and Open House, 9 a.m.–3 p.m. Information: 317-788-7581.


December 5, 12, 19 Benedictine Conversations via GroupMe: 4 p.m. Sundays, Benedictine Sister Jill Marie Reuber, facilitator, sponsored by Sisters of St. Benedict, Ferdinand, Ind. (Diocese of Evansville). Information: vocation@thedome.org.

Inmaculate Heart of Mary Parish, 5901 Central Ave., Indianapolis. 75th Anniversary Mass and Reception, 6 p.m., reception follows Mass in the activities center. Information: 317-257-2266 or jamie@thevillageindy.org.

December 6, 13, 20 St. Therese of the Child Jesus (Little Flower) Parish Center, St. Therese Room, 4720 E. 13th St., Indianapolis. SoulCare Rosary Workout. 6:30–7:15 p.m., prayer and exercise, free. Information: 317-722-1167, jamie@520036@yahoo.com or audoree.com.

December 7 Ritz Charles, 12156 N. Meridian St., Carmel. Right to Life of Indiana Christmas Gala, 6:30 p.m., former Vice President Mike Pence Lifetime Achievement Award recipient, keynote by pro football champion Matt Bark. Christian music artist Colton Dixon performing, individual reservation $100, table for 10 $1,000, table sponsorships available. Information and reservations: www.irtl.org/gala or 317-413-9123.

December 8 Group Lectio via Zoom, 7 p.m., second and fourth Wednesdays of each month, Benedicite Sister Jill Marie Reuber, facilitator, sponsored by Sisters of St. Benedict, Ferdinand, Ind. (Diocese of Evansville). Information: vocation@thedome.org.

Evansville. Information: frdennis@lafollin.org. Indianapolis. Information: tana.donnelly@hotmail.com.

December 11 St. Bartholomew Parish, 1206 27th St., Columbus. Our Lady of Guadalupe Celebration. 8 p.m. Mass, 8:30 p.m. dancing, 9:30–11 p.m., mariachi, free. Information: 317-546-4065, ext. 340, or therosemary@usacatholic.org.

December 12 midnight—mariachi. Information: org/director@ holyspiritindy.org.


December 11 St. Lawrence Parish, 6944 E. 466th St., Indianapolis. Our Lady of Guadalupe Celebration. 8 p.m. Mass, 9:30 p.m. dancing, 9:30–11 p.m., mariachi, free. Information: 317-546-4065, ext. 340, or therosemary@usacatholic.org.

St. Bartholomew Parish, 1306 27th St., Columbus. Our Lady of Guadalupe Feast, 9 p.m. midnight, mariachi, dances, apparition narrative, mariachi. Information: 812-379-9335 or kumagawa@ stjohnbaptist.net.

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church, 720 N. “A” St., Richmond, Missa de mysterio Virgen de Guadalupe (Mass for Our Virgin of Guadalupe), 11 a.m. †

Your ‘Royal’s’ entrance

Announcements for couples celebrating 50, 55, 60, 65, 70 or more years of marriage are accepted. Go to www.archindy.org/events or call 317-236-1585.

Wedding Anniversaries

Gary and Jane Williams

Gary and Jane (Kiesle) Williams, members of St. Joan of Arc Parish in Indianapolis, will celebrate their 55th wedding anniversary on Nov. 26. The couple was married in St. Joan of Arc Church in Indianapolis on Nov. 26, 1966. They have two children: Barbara Ot and Gary Williams. The couple also has five grandchildren. †

John and Becky Borel

John and Becky (Mackey) Borel, members of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on Nov. 27. The couple was married in St. Thomas Aquinas Church in Indianapolis on Nov. 27, 1971. They have three children: Theresa, Tracy and John Borel. The couple also has two grandchildren. †

Richard and Colleen Simon

Richard and Colleen (Lenahan) Simon, members of Holy Spirit Parish in Indianapolis, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on Nov. 27. The couple was married in the former St. Bernardette Church in Indianapolis on Nov. 27, 1971. They have two children: Angela Clark and Heather Simon. The couple also has two grandchildren. †
Top photo: A crucifix leads a procession into Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis during the opening general session of the National Catholic Youth Conference on Nov. 18. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

Bottom photo: Youths hold hands for the Our Father during the National Catholic Youth Conference closing Mass in Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis on Nov. 20. (Photo by Natalie Hoefer)
Youths encounter Christ through talks, sacraments, fellowship and music at NCYC

By Natalie Hoefer

There is no simple answer to the question, “What is the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC)?” It is so many things. Logically, it is a three-day gathering of Catholic high school youths from around the country that happens every two years. There are talks, Mass, eucharistic adoration, music, service projects, and a convention hall filled with exhibitors from religious institutions and organizations, vendors of religious items and areas for teens to play and pray.

That is the structure of NCYC. But the spirit of the youths and the Holy Spirit comprise the flesh and breath of this event. Every component of it is designed to nurture today’s Catholic youths in their faith and their relationship with Christ.

“NCYC is an opportunity for young people to experience the breadth of our Catholic Church and an opportunity to have an encounter with Jesus Christ amongst their friends, and all their new friends,” said Christina Lamas, executive director of the National Federation of Catholic Youth Ministry which organizes the event. “It provides hope, inspiration, and gives life to our present and our future Church.”

Speakers ‘on fire for Christ’

Much of the teens’ time at NCYC is spent listening to faith-nourishing and thought-provoking talks by renowned Catholic speakers.

“We look for individuals who can speak from their own personal relationship with Christ, who reflect Church teaching, who are filled with the Holy Spirit,” said Ellie Fulbright, 17, of the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings, Mont. “I’m really into seeing different people’s points of views and being able to dive in deeper and realizing maybe, ‘Oh, that’s an interesting point,’ or maybe, ‘Oh, now I understand why we do that.’”

This year, she and the nearly 11,000 participants had five break-out sessions, three general sessions and three types of youth-led discussions to choose from.

“It’s super meaningful”

NCYC abounds with opportunities for young people to partake in the sacraments.

The event begins with a eucharistic procession through the halls and outside of the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis, with participants kneeling along the path then joining in the procession after the Blessed Sacrament passes by.

Masses are celebrated at various times during each day, including a conference-wide Mass in Lucas Oil Stadium that closes the event and sends the youths back home to put into practice what they learned. (See related article on page 3B.)

The sacrament of reconciliation is offered throughout the event. (See related article on page 12B.)

The event closes the event and sends the youths back home to put into practice what they learned. (See related article on page 3B.)

The theme of this year’s Village was “Holy Spirit Mall,” with different areas named after common-known stores.

The Village also included exhibitors from numerous Catholic universities, religious orders and organizations, plus vendors selling anything from books to rosaries.

For instance, Service Merchandise was the area where youths could participate in service projects. (See related article on page 11B.) At the Camelot Café, kids could enjoy karaoke. One of the hot spots in the Village was the Arcade, where participants could take part in games like dodge ball, Human Hungry Hipo and large-sized chess.

The Village also included exhibitors from numerous Catholic universities, religious orders and organizations, plus vendors selling anything from books to rosaries.

The Village also included exhibitors from numerous Catholic universities, religious orders and organizations, plus vendors selling anything from books to rosaries.

The Village also included exhibitors from numerous Catholic universities, religious orders and organizations, plus vendors selling anything from books to rosaries.

The theme of this year’s Village was “Holy Spirit Mall,” with different areas named after common-known stores.

For instance, Service Merchandise was the area where youths could participate in service projects. (See related article on page 11B.) At the Camelot Café, kids could enjoy karaoke. One of the hot spots in the Village was the Arcade, where participants could take part in games like dodge ball, Human Hungry Hipo and large-sized chess.

The Village also included exhibitors from numerous Catholic universities, religious orders and organizations, plus vendors selling anything from books to rosaries.

The Village also included exhibitors from numerous Catholic universities, religious orders and organizations, plus vendors selling anything from books to rosaries.

The Village also included exhibitors from numerous Catholic universities, religious orders and organizations, plus vendors selling anything from books to rosaries.

The Village also included exhibitors from numerous Catholic universities, religious orders and organizations, plus vendors selling anything from books to rosaries.

The Village also included exhibitors from numerous Catholic universities, religious orders and organizations, plus vendors selling anything from books to rosaries.

The Village also included exhibitors from numerous Catholic universities, religious orders and organizations, plus vendors selling anything from books to rosaries.

The Village also included exhibitors from numerous Catholic universities, religious orders and organizations, plus vendors selling anything from books to rosaries.

The Village also included exhibitors from numerous Catholic universities, religious orders and organizations, plus vendors selling anything from books to rosaries.

The Village also included exhibitors from numerous Catholic universities, religious orders and organizations, plus vendors selling anything from books to rosaries.

The Village also included exhibitors from numerous Catholic universities, religious orders and organizations, plus vendors selling anything from books to rosaries.
Archbishop Thompson urges youths to ‘keep the fire alive’ at NCYC closing Mass

By Sean Gallagher

At the closing Mass of the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC), Archbishop Charles C. Thompson encouraged the nearly 11,000 teens from across the country to return home with the fire of the Holy Spirit.

“Let us go forth with that fire to more fully embrace the Lord’s mission in bringing about the kingdom of God, striving always to be Christ-centered in all that we are about,” said Archbishop Thompson. “Let us go and be disciples. Let us go and make a difference. . . . Let us take courage. His dominion is indeed everlasting. The glory of God shall not be denied.”

The closing Mass was celebrated on Nov. 20, the final day of the three-day conference, in Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis.

Throughout NCYC, the youths were led through a meditation on the Apostles and the Blessed Virgin Mary receiving the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, symbolized by tongues of fire that came to rest above their head. Thus, the theme for the conference was, in English, “Ablaze,” and in Spanish, “Enciende el fuego.”

During his homily, Archbishop Thompson called out at various times the theme in one language with his listeners responding with the theme in the other language.

The Mass took place on the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe.

Archbishop Thompson noted that Christ’s kingship stands in contrast to the image of the kings of this world.

“His throne was a cross,” Archbishop Thompson said. “His crown was made of thorns. He was adorned with nails rather than jewels. And rather than an ornate shrine for burial, he was laid in a borrowed tomb.”

This humble vision of Christ’s reign, however, Archbishop Thompson said, is essential to the life of the Church.

“After all, without the cross, there is no Eucharist,” he said. “Without the Eucharist, there is no Church. And without the Church, there is no NCYC. It all hinges on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of our sins, his total gift of self for our salvation.”

Archbishop Thompson encouraged his listeners to nurture a relationship with Christ so that they could learn to recognize the voice of him who is their shepherd and friend.

“Just as we do with family and our closest friends, we must spend quality time with him—not just at NCYC, but every day,” Archbishop Thompson said.

Having an active life of faith in which Christ can reign as king in our heart throughout the rest of the year beyond NCYC is the challenge, Archbishop Thompson noted.

“It’s easy when we’re all here together sharing the same faith,” he said. “It’s another thing when we have to do that sometimes out on that limb alone, out in our schools, neighborhoods and workplaces. In other words, we cannot let the world get the best of us, but to dare to give our best for the mission of Jesus Christ in transforming the world. You possess that grace within you.”

Annalise Loucks knows that challenge well. Attending NCYC for the second time, she is a student at a public high school in Salina, Kan., where she said living Gospel principles is far from the norm.

On the last day of the conference, not long before she’d return home, Annalise spoke of her renewed desire to “spread the word” in her school.

“There are a lot of people at my school who are scared to show their faith,” she said. “I want to open up and spread God’s word more and be unashamed.”

Speaking to Annalise and the nearly 11,000 other youths at the closing Mass, Archbishop Thompson urged them to allow the fire of the Holy Spirit “to permeate your particular gifts, talents and energy in service to others, not merely in our own name, but in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, king of the universe.”

He also reminded them of the importance of their putting into action their God-given talents to the life of the Church.

“Embrace your place in the Church,” Archbishop Thompson said. “To carry out the mission of Christ, the Church needs each and every one of us. To be clear, you are not the future Church, but the young Church here and now.”

Youths at the Mass spoke afterward of the joy they felt about gathering with their fellow Catholic teens from across the country, especially after all of the challenges of the coronavirus pandemic, which began just a few months after the last NCYC in late 2019.

“It was one of the most touching ceremonies I’ve ever seen,” said Aaron Baker of Barnesville, Minn., of the closing Mass. “It’s so nice to just be back here with all my friends and peers, and all the friends I made before at the last NCYC!”

I grew quite a lot in my spiritual journey,” said Sloane Janopoulos of Naples, Fla. “I didn’t know that that many people feel the same way that I do.”

In his final words to his young listeners, Archbishop Thompson encouraged them to “keep the fire alive.” By God’s grace, keep the fire alive.”
By Natalie Hoefer

The organization announced in January that the event would take place, but the decision was not final until we got closer to the event simply because, as we were living through a pandemic and still are, things were always changing day by day, minute by minute," she explained.

"When we opened registration in May, the trend nationally seemed to be looking fairly good. We saw a lot of restrictions being removed, parts of the country opening up, travel beginning to happen, so it was a very good prognosis." More safety decisions needed to be made as the event drew near. Discussions about face masks and how to assure participants were COVID-free before coming to the event.

"There were multiple factors that went into the decision," said Lamas. "We had to make sure the environment was safe, yes, but also security, the number of participants, what activities we would and wouldn’t offer. So all of the program aspects, plus the building and personnel, all of that went into the criteria of making the final decision of whether or not NCYC would take place and how it would look if it did."

Of course, prayer was part of the process in discerning the right and best path forward.

"God has ways of working," Lamas said with a smile. "Problems would come up, and conversations with health professionals and others in the conference industry. We kept moving forward in faith. The unknown became known, so we kept walking in faith that God would provide. And here we are!"

Keeping everyone safe

One major decision affecting the look of NCYC this year was the determination to limit the number of participants to half of the normal 20,000. Including some of those people and all those contributing behind the scenes, the number participating this year was nearly 11,000.

All were required to submit either proof of receiving the COVID vaccine or results showing a negative COVID test result within 72 hours of the event. Face masks were also required to completely cover both nose and mouth. Volunteers offered gentle reminders when spotting a mask dangling from an ear or tucked under a chin.

This year, NFCYM also offered a virtual NCYC. While the numbers fluctuated through the course of the livestreamed event, Lamas said the average number of virtual participants was about 2,000.

"The spirit of NCYC will remain" While NCYC might have looked different in terms of numbers and safety measures this year, Lamas noted that every NCYC is unique.

"It’s the first NCYC for everyone attending this year," she said. "Whether it’s their first or second or 10th, we’re all experiencing for the first time this NCYC. Things may be different, but God’s spirit is the same. The energy, the joy, the smiles, those encounters, those haven’t changed." As for the future, Lamas noted COVID-19 might have an effect on the event, but in a positive sense, such as "thinking outside the box," she said. "We all had to think and stretch ourselves like we’ve not done before. I think you’ll see a lot of innovation and creativity here moving forward—I think the pandemic sparked that in all of us. "But the spirit of NCYC will remain." †

Creative effort gives youths the opportunity to express how they view their lives

By John Shaughnessy

Zoey Deniller was intrigued as she came upon one of the most popular areas of the Interactive Village of the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) in Indianapolis.

The teenager from the Diocese of Davenport, Iowa, saw a crowd of youths flowing through the area where a series of small walls were marked with a few red "I am..." stickers, stickers that were surrounded by numerous white notes that completed that thought:

I am ... lonely.
I am ... beautiful.
I am ... more than my anxieties.
I am ... loved, but I need to remember how much.

Zoey soon learned that all the descriptions on the hundreds of white notes were written by the youths attending the conference, anonymously sharing their insights on their feelings, their joys, their challenges, their lives.

"Asking how she could write one of the white notes herself, she was told that all she needed to do was to enter one of the four blue-curtained booths for privacy, write whatever she wanted to share, and then place her white note in a box on the inside of the booth. Later, one of the organizers of the area would empty the box of new messages and put them on the walls.

I am ... not perfect (and that's OK).
I am ... the quiet weirdo who expresses themselves and cares for others.
I am ... trying to fit in.
I am ... an empathetic woman who wants to love the way I deserve.

Coming out of the booth after she wrote how she felt about herself, Zoey said she was grateful for the opportunity.

"I saw the stickers with the 'I am' and saw the different things people were saying," said Zoey, a member of St. James Parish in Washington, Iowa. "It’s really cool that they’re letting people have a voice, without getting in front of a lot of people—and doing it anonymously."

The "I am" effort was offered by Ablaze Ministries, a ministry focused on connecting youths, parents and youth ministers, to deepen their relationship with each other and with God.

"It’s not too often that teens get asked how they’re doing. And sometimes, it’s in large groups where that can be intimidating at times," said P.J. Lozano, an Ablaze staff member who was helping to oversee the area. "We wanted to give them a safe place to say who they are."

I am ... not who I want to be.
I am ... strong, beautiful and deserving of your attention.
I am ... struggling but finding my way with the strength given me by God.
I am not too often that teens get asked how they’re doing. And sometimes, it’s in large groups where that can be intimidating at times," said P.J. Lozano, an Ablaze staff member who was helping to oversee the area. "We wanted to give them a safe place to say who they are."

I am ... not who I want to be.
I am ... strong, beautiful and deserving of your attention.
I am ... struggling but finding my way with the strength given me by God.
I am not too often that teens get asked how they’re doing. And sometimes, it’s in large groups where that can be intimidating at times," said P.J. Lozano, an Ablaze staff member who was helping to oversee the area. "We wanted to give them a safe place to say who they are."

I am ... not who I want to be.
I am ... strong, beautiful and deserving of your attention.
I am ... struggling but finding my way with the strength given me by God.
I am not too often that teens get asked how they’re doing. And sometimes, it’s in large groups where that can be intimidating at times," said P.J. Lozano, an Ablaze staff member who was helping to oversee the area. "We wanted to give them a safe place to say who they are."

I am ... not who I want to be.
I am ... strong, beautiful and deserving of your attention.
I am ... struggling but finding my way with the strength given me by God.
I am not too often that teens get asked how they’re doing. And sometimes, it’s in large groups where that can be intimidating at times," said P.J. Lozano, an Ablaze staff member who was helping to oversee the area. "We wanted to give them a safe place to say who they are."

I am ... not who I want to be.
I am ... strong, beautiful and deserving of your attention.
I am ... struggling but finding my way with the strength given me by God.
I am not too often that teens get asked how they’re doing. And sometimes, it’s in large groups where that can be intimidating at times," said P.J. Lozano, an Ablaze staff member who was helping to oversee the area. "We wanted to give them a safe place to say who they are."

I am ... not who I want to be.
I am ... strong, beautiful and deserving of your attention.
I am ... struggling but finding my way with the strength given me by God.
I am not too often that teens get asked how they’re doing. And sometimes, it’s in large groups where that can be intimidating at times," said P.J. Lozano, an Ablaze staff member who was helping to oversee the area. "We wanted to give them a safe place to say who they are."

I am ... not who I want to be.
I am ... strong, beautiful and deserving of your attention.
I am ... struggling but finding my way with the strength given me by God.
I am not too often that teens get asked how they’re doing. And sometimes, it’s in large groups where that can be intimidating at times," said P.J. Lozano, an Ablaze staff member who was helping to oversee the area. "We wanted to give them a safe place to say who they are."

I am ... not who I want to be.
I am ... strong, beautiful and deserving of your attention.
I am ... struggling but finding my way with the strength given me by God.
By John Shaughnessy

In the middle of one of his powerful, pulsating songs that rocked Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis on the night of Nov. 18, Lecrae suddenly stopped singing to talk to the nearly 11,000 youths from across the United States who had come together for the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC).

"I just wanted to say something to all you," the Grammy Award-winning singer said as the raucous crowd went silent. "God wants to use you in this stage of your life now. There is a zeal inside you. Use that passion to change the world for the Lord. Go crazy for the Lord now, and go crazy for him for the rest of your life." Lecrae then shared a story about a woman he came upon on a bridge in New York City, a woman who was getting ready to jump from it until he held onto her.

"I said, 'What are you doing?!!' She started kicking and screaming, saying, 'Let me go! I'm trying to go meet God!' I said, 'Sweetheart, you can meet God on the other side of the bridge.' "

That line from Lecrae resulted in a roar of approval from the youths in the stadium, and more cheers followed when the singer added, "The thing I wanted her to know is the same thing I want you to know. Let me tell you all, if God woke you up this morning, he's not done with you yet. So if you got things that God needs you to do, you need to keep going. If you're going through some tough times, just fight a little longer, my friends.

"You may be battling the storm. You may be feeling you don't have what it takes. But I promise you, God is speaking in this moment. The Holy Spirit is speaking to you, and he's saying something like—"which led Lecrae to start singing a song that begins, "Fight a little longer, my friends. It's all worth it in the end."

As he ended his part of the opening presentation, Lecrae turned to the youths in the stadium, to let his spirit fill the youths.

"The Holy Spirit to descend upon the crowd, to let his spirit fill the youths. "Holy Spirit, come rest on us. You're all we want. You're all we want." The evening's keynote speaker—Chika Anyanwu—continued that theme in her presentation.

She shared her own story of saying "yes" to the promptings of the Holy Spirit—even though it took her away from everyone and everything she loved. She provided her own answer to that question.

"I had a lot of fear," she said. "I was also afraid of making the move. "I had a lot of fear," she told the youths, adding that she talked to God in this way, "What if I fail? What if I mess up? What if I just want to move back home? God, I'm scared!"

Yet she made the move after she visited Pittsburgh and saw the need of the youths and how she could help them.

"A lot of us are living in fear," she told the crowd. "Whether it’s the fear of the unknown, a fear of someone, a fear of a virus that’s unknown. But God is with us. He always will be.

"The Lord has given us the gift of the Holy Spirit. Everything that we need to do his will, to do his work, to do it well, he’s given it to us. We are moving forward. We are focusing on our faith over fear. We are focusing on Jesus who says he is the way."

Anyanwu told the youths that it all comes down to one question, a question that seemed to inspire nearly every aspect of this year’s National Catholic Youth Conference:

"Are you ready to be transformed by the Holy Spirit?"

She provided her own answer to that question.

"The Holy Spirit has a plan, a purpose for you," she said. "Wherever you are in your relationship with the Lord, it doesn’t matter. Today, you can choose to be an open vessel to the Holy Spirit, who will take you places that you never thought you would ever go. This Holy Spirit has a plan for you, if you say yes.

"The Lord has not given you a spirit of fear, a spirit of timidity. The Holy Spirit has given you a spirit of courage."
NCYC deepens the faith of adult leaders as they help to bring youths closer to God

By John Shaughnessy

Sixteen-year-old Roch Egan remembers the moment as a turning point in his faith—the day when his mother was near death.

“Five years ago, my mom had a miscarriage, and she almost died at home and in the hospital,” recalled Roch, a member of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish in Indianapolis. “I remember that night praying like crazy. Ever since then, I’ve gotten so much closer to God. I trust him more.

“Now, I like to think of God as a friend, even though I know he’s much more than that. I can go to him whenever I need him. My faith is what my life is for now.”

Roch shared that turning point in his faith during the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) in Indianapolis on Nov. 18. He is one of the nearly 11,000 youths from across the country who attended the three-day event, and many of them came with their own story of turning closer to God and wanting to deepen their relationship with him even more.

In a year when masks were required to attend the conference, the youths may have had to hide their smiles, but they still freely expressed the joy of their faith and their bond with God.

At 18, Ava Yurczyk shared that her Catholic faith is the focal point of her life.

“It’s what I base my values, my decisions around,” said Ava, a member of St. Luke Parish in Shoreline, Wash., in the Archdiocese of Seattle.

A high school senior, Ava turned to her faith in God when she was trying to make a decision that countless peers will be making this year—choosing the right college.

“I’ve always felt called to be a caregiver, which has led to my desire to be a nurse in a neo-intensive care unit,” she said. “I wanted to find a place where I could combine deepening my faith along with my education—and being around people who can support me and so we can grow together.”

That desire led her to choose the University of Mary in Bismarck, S.D., as her college destination.

“The second step on campus, I turned to my dad and said, ‘I could live here for four years,’” Ava recalled. “I knew it was the place for me.”

She also feels confident in her choice knowing the Catholic university is named after the Blessed Mother.

“I know I’m going to be a mom someday, and I’ve turned to Mary for that calling. I’ve found comfort in my relationship with her.”

Miguel Saucedo was seeking a measure of comfort and hope in his life about a year ago.

“I was struggling. I was lonely,” said Miguel, a member of the Church of the Annunciation Parish in Shelbyville, Ky., in the Archdiocese of Louisville. “Then I realized there was somebody who knew more about me than I do myself. God has been there for me from day one.”

“I asked him to promise me to help me through everything I was going through. I heard something pop into my head—‘I promise.’ I actually did cry when that happened. I cried tears of joy.”

At 16, Valentina Chavez has the same deep love of her faith that brought so many Catholic youths to NCYC.

“Youths from Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish in Indianapolis pose for a photo in the Interactive Village of the National Catholic Youth Conference in Indianapolis on Nov. 18. Roch Egan, left, Kierra Wilson, Moire Roller, Mataya Watson and Elamina Watson are all wearing the NCYC sweatshirt for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

For most of us, our faith has always been there for us since we were born,” said Valentina, a member of St. Patrick Parish in Indianapolis. “It’s something we’ve learned to love and appreciate, thanks to our parents. We’re very blessed to have a very supportive parish and families to help us get involved in church.”

“After the Blessed Mother. Knowing the Catholic university is named after me, I felt I knew it was the place for me.”

That desire led her to choose the Church of the Annunciation Parish in Shelbyville, Ky., in the Archdiocese of Louisville.

“Then I realized there was somebody who knew more about me than I do myself. God has been there for me from day one.”

“I asked him to promise me to help me through everything I was going through. I heard something pop into my head—‘I promise.’ I actually did cry when that happened. I cried tears of joy.”

At 16, Valentina Chavez has the same deep love of her faith that brought so many Catholic youths to NCYC.

“Just that there are kids the same age who believe it’s OK to show their love of God, to share what they believe without being judged, that there are others who have questions about their faith, and others who can learn on.”

Guyynn smiled as she recalled the experience of one youth from her predominantly African-American parish, a youth whose only initial reason for coming to NCYC was because his mother had signed him up to attend.

“The energy from that first night is eye-opening, from the music to the kids storming the stage. For him it was, ‘I love this! I can’t wait to do this again!’”

That energy—and that reaction from the youths—fuels Guyynn’s commitment to bring more teenagers to the conference which takes place every two years. And seeing NCYC’s impact on their faith also deepens her faith.

“With everything that’s been changing in the world, just helping the youths along in their journey helps me in continuing my faith,” she said. “It feels good to help others grow in their faith.”

That feeling is prevalent among adult group leaders and chaperones who embrace NCYC as a faith-affirming experience for their youths and themselves.

Mike Sylvester led 23 youths from St. Gregory the Great Parish in Bluffton, S.C., “Coming from South Carolina, where the population is 5% or so Catholic, for”

See LEADERS, page 16B
Adoration leads teens to experience ‘the true love of God’

By Natalie Hoefer

For many youths, eucharistic adoration on the second night of the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) is part of the event they look most forward to and find most memorable.

And it is indeed memorable. For as raucous as the energy of nearly 11,000 spirited, joyful teens is, just as palpable is their reverent silence when kneeling together before Christ in the Blessed Sacrament.

The juxtaposition became especially clear throughout the evening of Nov. 19 in Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis as the evening began with upbeat Christian music, leading the young people to jump and sing along.

But as soon as the Eucharist was processed into the space, the party-like atmosphere changed. Kneeling, the youths watched in silence as the monstrance was placed on an altar.

“Youths kneel and pray during adoration in Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis on Nov. 19 during the National Catholic Youth Conference.”

The next hour was consumed in worship our God. The Spirit in the room was just overflowing. It was really a life-changing experience.

During one point in adoration, 17-year-old Jaidn Asch of the Syracuse Diocese stood and hugged those on either side of him.

“My soul was just filled,” he said. “That led me to feel the true love of God, which made me want to just spread his love to others. Me and my friend here have been close for a while and I wanted to show love to him, and to my brother here, just having this feeling that my soul was filled.”

I go about my day and I get busy, and I’m trying to prove my worth. My soul gets empty, but my soul was filled here. It’s something I’ve been chasing my whole life.”

The next hour was consumed in silence and reverent music, broken only by the occasional voice of Father Leo Patalinghug, the priest-member of a community of consecrated life called Voluntas Dei (“The Will of God”) who led the adoration service.

First, he helped the young people enter into conversation with Christ.

“What has God said to you today?” he asked. “Can Jesus really squeeze his blood into wine?” he asked.

He wants us to feed him with himself, to be a saint—you are supposed to be a saint.

“My soul was filled here.”

The impact of the encounter with Christ was visible. Hands were folded and heads were bowed in prayer. Tears streaked down the cheeks of some, while others raised their hands in praise.

“I just opened up and really felt Jesus here tonight,” said Annalise Bird, 18, of the Diocese of Syracuse, N.Y. “It’s a feeling I’ll always cherish.”

Ryan Perez, 17, of the Archdiocese of Baltimore said it was “so powerful seeing so many people come together to worship our God. The Spirit in the room was just overflowing. It was really a life-changing experience.”

During one point in adoration,...
Befitting the theme of “Ablaze” for the National Catholic Youth Conference in Indianapolis on Nov. 18-20, images of fire flash above a stage on the floor of Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis during the opening session on Nov. 18 for the nearly 11,000 youths from across the country. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

Transitional Deacon Michael Clawson, a member of Annunciation Parish in Brazil, proclaims a Gospel reading during a morning prayer service that was part of the Saturday morning general session of the National Catholic Youth Conference on Nov. 20 at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

Youths from Holy Family Parish in New Albany wave their arms while music is performed before the start of the Saturday morning general session of the National Catholic Youth Conference on Nov. 20 at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

Youths play Human Hungry Hippo in the Interactive Village during the National Catholic Youth Conference in the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis on Nov. 19. (Photo by Natalie Hoefer)

Youths play Human Hungry Hippo in the Interactive Village during the National Catholic Youth Conference in the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis on Nov. 19. (Photo by Natalie Hoefer)

Youths take a break from the talks to enjoy coloring in the Interactive Village during the National Catholic Youth Conference in the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis on Nov. 19. (Photo by Natalie Hoefer)

A priest hears the confession of a National Catholic Youth Conference participant on Nov. 20 in a ballroom of the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

As the keynote speaker of the opening session of the National Catholic Youth Conference in Indianapolis on Nov. 18 in Lucas Oil Stadium, Catholic evangelist Chika Anyanwu shares her story of saying yes to the promptings of the Holy Spirit and how it transformed her life. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

Amy Smith, a chaperone for a group of youths from the Diocese of Des Moines, Iowa, kneels in prayer on Nov. 20 during the closing Mass of the National Catholic Youth Conference at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

Youths from across the country take turns adding their unique style to spelling out NCYC at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis on Nov. 18. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

Youths from Holy Family Parish in New Albany wave their arms while music is performed before the start of the Saturday morning general session of the National Catholic Youth Conference on Nov. 20 at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

Youth from Holy Family Parish in New Albany wave their arms while music is performed before the start of the Saturday morning general session of the National Catholic Youth Conference on Nov. 20 at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)
The National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) had barely begun by mid-afternoon on Nov. 18, but already the hallways of the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis were coming to life with excited, silly-hat-wearing teens from around the country. Not so in one conference hall. There, about 900 youths from all over central and southern Indiana chose to start their NCYC experience by worshiping together at an opening archdiocesan Mass with Archbishop Charles C. Thompson. The large hall went from silence to song as the archbishop, about 13 priests and more than 25 seminarians processed toward the altar located atop a stage.

“Life, as they say, is full of choices,” Archbishop Thompson said during his homily. “Choices of course have consequences. On a regular basis, confronted with opportunity and challenge, we make choices. Sometimes we make choices between good and evil. Other times we make choices between seemingly equally good options, or so-called lesser of evils.”

The archbishop noted that each of those present made an intentional choice to be at NCYC. “The consequences of this choice hopefully include strengthening our Catholic identity, deepening our faith, meeting new friends and having a memorable experience,” he said. “The ultimate consequence, however, will be a personal and even deeper personal encounter with Jesus Christ in the various ways that are made available during this NCYC.”

Archbishop Thompson acknowledged that youths today are faced with many sources “wanting your loyalty, wanting your attention, vying for our attention and dedication can be deafening at times.”

He cautioned the teens to resist such messages. Instead, he said, “We need to be grounded in prayer, in the word of God, reflection, sacraments, discernment and service.”

“These ways of discerning and praying allow us to encounter the person of Jesus Christ in our lives, in our relationships, in our families and in our communities.”

He said the choices Catholics make should reflect and honor “the choice God made for our salvation,” and Jesus freely choosing “to accept the Father’s will, entering into his passion and death, trusting in the ultimate outcome of the Resurrection.”

Choices have consequences,” he reminded the youths. “Many consequences can be long lasting, some even eternal.

“Let us not squander the opportunity to draw closer to the Lord during these special days at NCYC. May the choices we make here lead us to an ever-deepening encounter with the person of Jesus Christ our Savior, and continue to have lasting consequences of peace, joy, faith, hope and blessings despite the burdens and crosses we must carry in this life…. “We have chosen to be here. Let the consequences begin.”

During Archbishop Thompson’s closing remarks, a long, loud cheer erupted after he shared with those present the news of the archdiocese hosting a national eucharistic congress in 2024. He then prepared them for the eucharistic procession through and outside of the Indiana Convention Center that would take place after the Mass.

“We talk about the Indy 500 and how it’s the greatest spectacle in racing,” he said. “Well, it doesn’t compare to the Eucharist. What a great message it is, what a great spectacle, as we begin this eucharistic procession. The witness we give in our reverence and our adoration and great respect to the Eucharist—but not only to the Eucharist, but how we live out this eucharistic experience in our lives.”

Evan Sahlstrom of the Archdiocese of Anchorage-Juneau, Alaska, took part in the eucharistic procession. The 17-year-old found it “really touching to see everyone drop what they were doing and kneel. I really enjoyed seeing the Knights of Columbus out [along the street] with their swords raised to reverence the Eucharist.”

After the procession and adoration, 18-year-old Hanna Helt of St. Joseph University Parish in Terre Haute reflected on the Mass.

“It was honestly amazing, especially with getting to be with all the other teenagers that were there, and hearing [the archbishop] speak,” she said. “It was such an amazing and warming experience.”
Youths at NCYC rush to fill a Box of Joy for children—and other service projects

By John Shaughnessy

Charlotte Wiman and Aidan Sauls kept quickly returning to fill another Box of Joy for a child who wouldn’t otherwise experience the magic of Christmas.

Two thousand boxes needed to be filled with an assortment of gifts—one of the service projects that teenagers at the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) worked on in the conference’s Interactive Village on Nov. 18-20.

Charlotte and Aidan smiled at the thought of the boxes being distributed at Christmas to children in need in Central America—boxes that will include a toy, candy, school supplies, socks, a rosary and a coloring book of Jesus, among other items.

“I just feel grateful I can help and give back,” said Charlotte, a member of Our Lady of the Hills Parish in Columbia, S.C., the same parish as Aidan. “It will show them that God loves them.”

Aidan added, “It really makes you view Christmas from a different perspective. I come from a middle-class family, and I get a lot. I realize there are people in the world who don’t. It feels good helping them. I hope that person will feel the love.”

The enthusiasm of Charlotte and Aidan is exactly the reaction that was hoped for by Terry Waters, the special initiatives manager for Cross Catholic Outreach, a nonprofit organization that coordinated the Box of Joy effort and two other service projects at NCYC.

About 75,000 food packages were made for families in Guatemala. Another 7,500 food packets will be distributed to Indianapolis area food pantries by the Knights of Columbus.

“For us and for the youths, this is a wonderful opportunity to live out our faith, to put our faith into action,” Waters said. “This Box of Joy is what we call a two-way ministry. It’s the joy of serving, and it gives others the joy of experiencing Christmas.”

The 2,000 boxes of joy from NCYC are part of an overall effort across the country to provide a touch of Christmas to more than 100,000 children in Central America.

Kenny Waters noted, “For the kids who get a Box of Joy, this is their Christmas gift. It’s the only gift they will get,” he said. “All three projects are corporal works of mercy. They’ll make a difference in the lives of families.”

In a nearby area, Ava Keicher and Bella Doyle of the Diocese of Buffalo, N.Y., used their talents for a service project called Hands Across Haiti. The effort is a ministry of St. John Paul II Parish in Sellersburg.

Youths decorated backpacks, totes and T-shirts that will be shared with members of two parishes in Haiti that have a special “sister” connection to St. John Paul II Parish.

“I went on a trip to the Dominican Republic with my high school, and the fact that Haiti is so close to there touched my heart. I know how much they go through,” said Ava, a senior at Sacred Heart Academy in Buffalo. “I went on a trip to the Dominican Republic with my high school, and the fact that Haiti is so close to there touched my heart. I know how much they go through,” said Ava, a senior at Sacred Heart Academy in Buffalo.

Bella added, “I like that these are going to people who need clothing. I think that getting something that was pretty would make them see the spirit of God.”

At another area, Paloma Escobedo cut pieces of fabric with three of her friends—Valentina Chavez, Montserrat Gomez and Maria Sanchez. The fabric pieces will be sewn together to create bags for the Christmas Store in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis—an annual effort by Catholic Charities Indianapolis to bring a touch of Christmas joy to families in need. The bags will be filled with hygiene products for parents, complementing the toys and other gifts the children get.

“Cutting fabric is actually pretty fun,” said Paloma, a member of St. Patrick Parish in Indianapolis. “It makes me feel good I’m helping out and someone will appreciate what we’re doing.”

“It’s the double blessing of service projects.”

Wacky hats still reign at NCYC, but messages show the heart of youths’ faith

By John Shaughnessy

Masks were required at the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) in Indianapolis, but wacky hats still reigned on Nov. 18-20, adding an extra touch of joy that has always marked this celebration of the young Church.

Once again, there were youths donning racecar hats, cowboy hats and brightly-colored umbrella hats. Maybe the best were the KFC red-and-white-striped bucket hats proudly worn by the group from Church of the Annunciation Parish in Shelbyville, Ky.—a tip of their hat to Harlan Sanders, the founder of Kentucky Fried Chicken who once lived in their community.

While the colorful hats proclaim fun, another part of the youths’ attire reveals the heart of how they embrace and live their Catholic faith. That more serious side is displayed in the messages that appear on some of the T-shirts and sweatshirts they wear.

Here’s a sampling from this year’s conference:

“Faith does not make things easy. It makes them possible.”

“Be who God meant you to be and set the world on fire.”

“All I need is a little bit of coffee and a whole lot of Jesus.”

“Nunc Coepi,” (the translation of this Latin phrase means “Now I begin.”)

“Comfort Like Veronica”

“Lead Like Joan”

“Accept Like Mary”

“As iron sharpens iron, one person sharpens another. Proverbs 27:17”

“I am the pro-life generation”

“Be not afraid”

“Child of God”

“Church is not just something you go to. It’s a family you belong to.”

“Child of God”

“Blessed!”
God’s mercy flows through the sacrament of penance at NCYC

By Sean Gallagher

The nearly 11,000 youths may have just come from Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis rocking with loud music, cheering and flashing bright lights. But all of that disappeared the instant they set foot in a large, dimly lit and quiet ballroom in the Indiana Convention Center.

Pairs of chairs dotted the expansive room, some with cloth screens dividing them, others arranged close together so that the two people sitting in them could see each other.

This was the room where dozens of priests shared God’s mercy in the sacrament of penance with thousands of participants during the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) on Nov. 18-20 in Indianapolis.

Whenever the room was open, a steady, long line of penitents waited to be directed to a priest who could celebrate the sacrament of penance with them.

Seminarians directed penitents to chairs while other volunteers guided people in the confession lines and handed “I’m forgiven” stickers to those leaving the room after receiving sacramental absolution of their sins.

This year’s NCYC was the fourth at which Tara Donovan of the Diocese of Des Moines, Iowa, volunteered as a chaperone. But talking about the reconciliation room still moved her.

“It’s amazing,” said Donovan through tears. “As parents, we try to guide our kids to make right choices. But you can only do so much. I’m just really glad that the kids are making themselves available and giving it all up to God.”

This was the second NCYC for Kellie Simon, a teenager from Abingdon, Md., in the Archdiocese of Baltimore. Taking the opportunity to experience God’s mercy in the sacrament of penance at the conference is important for her.

“It’s such a different experience than going [to confession] at your own church,” Kellie said. “You get to speak to a priest you’ve never met before.

“It’s such a peaceful entrance with the dim lights and music in the background. And you get to see a ton of youths also doing the same exact thing. It really makes you feel welcome and to know that you’re not the only one. To see all the youths around you, all believing the same thing you do, is really a wonderful experience.”

It’s also a wonderful experience for the priests hearing confessions at the conference, said Father Raphael Assamah of the Diocese of Des Moines, Iowa.

“It’s a great opportunity and a great sacrifice,” he said. “It tells you how the young people want to reconcile themselves with God. They may have a broken relationship with him and are finding ways with [coming to know] themselves and reconciling themselves with God and the Church.”

Father James Brockmeier, pastor of St. Mary Parish in Rushville, came to NCYC on the closing day of the conference to hear confessions, as he has done at previous NCYC’s since being ordained in 2010.

“One of the neatest things about a conference like this is that people come to confession who haven’t been to confession in a long time, many times,” he said.

Father Brockmeier also noted that conferences like NCYC can lead to powerful experiences of the sacrament of penance because many of the event presentations help prepare participants for confession.

“People will be inspired by what’s going on at the conference, the talks,” Father Brockmeier said. “It kind of acts as a giant examination of conscience.

“Everything here helps people to be focused on making a confession of their faith, which confession certainly is. They’re confessing sins, but they’re also confessing their trust that God forgives them and loves them.”

That certainly was the case for Kellie. “It helps me to remember that God loves me no matter what,” she said.
Talk on trusting God helps teens see ‘God controls everything’

By Natalie Hoefer

Maxwell Benefield admitted it—he has control issues, and that leads to trust issues. So the 18-year-old National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) participant from the Diocese of Nashville, Tenn., attended a talk called “Trusting in God” by Catholic singer, songwriter and speaker Steve Angrisano.

“It was a really good talk,” he said. “Here’s a look at the heart of the session’s message.

‘Nothing fills us except for God’

Angrisano began by posing a question from God to those present: “Do you know me?” That’s the question God has for every one of us.”

He quoted from saints who commented on trust in God.

“I have a holy card from my first youth rally,” he said. “It says, ‘There is a God-shaped vacuum in your heart that only God can fill.’ It’s a paraphrase of the words of St. Augustine, which are, ‘Our hearts will be restless until they rest in you.’

“What it means is, you were created by God and for God. … No music, no sport, no boyfriend, no girlfriend, no good thing, no bad thing—nothing fills us except for God.”

Angrisano also quoted St. John Chrysostom’s words on the trust of the early Christians.

“What does it mean that the Apostles were so bold, that these men who abandoned him when he was alive would stand for him at the risk of death after he died?” he quoted from the saint.

Those same men saw Christ resurrected, and their trust in God was sealed, he explained.

Angrisano noted that the Church reminded them of control.

“The reckless love of God”

Catholics are called not just to trust in God but also to trust in God’s love, said Angrisano.

“Genesis 1:27 says that you and I and every one of us.

‘I can’t control everything’

Shayla Drumsly, 14, of the Diocese of New Ulm, Minn., said she was glad she attended the talk.

“I liked how they had songs and made it so it was really understandable for us to get [the message] better,” she said. The talk helped her realize “that God will help you. Even if you think he can’t, he will. You can believe it or not, but he will.”

As for Maxwell, he appreciated Angrisano’s humor, but especially related to Catherine’s witness.

“What she said about wanting everything to be controlled, I could really relate to that,” he said. “I feel like prayer and relying on God has a lot to do with controlling that urge to control. That really spoke to me.

“I can’t control everything. God controls everything, so if I rely on him, it will put me on the right path.”

Steve Angrisano talks to teens about trusting in God during a National Catholic Youth Conference session in the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis on Nov. 19. (Photos by Natalie Hoefer)
By Natalie Hoefer

Face masks were not the only thing new at the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) in Indianapolis this year. New options of optional activities were youth-led sessions called “Youth 2 Youth” and “Spiritual Conversations.” Each was offered several times, with a different youth group from around the country taking ownership of the session.

“I didn’t know what it was, but I thought, ‘Sure, why not?’” said Amara, an assistant to the parish’s youth minister.

He signed the group up to lead a 30-minute Spiritual Conversations session. According to a description of Spiritual Conversations in the NCYC app, these “roundtables offer a space for young people to pause for reflection and further discussion about the different topics and themes being shared in general sessions and breakout sessions.”

“We were really surprised because we signed up before we came here, and we didn’t even know!” said her 17-year-old sister Anna. “We planned it before we left. It was fun!”

Ricardo Amaral said the four teens of their group “did everything—they came up with the instructions, the questions for discussion, the group activity. They led the prayers, they spoke at the podium. We adults were there if anyone needed help, but the girls did all the work.”

Many talks at the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) address hot topics, particularly those where Catholic teaching comes into conflict with the secular world. The talk “Faith, Science, and the Gift of Wonder” addressed the fallacy that faith and science are incompatible.

“In the beginning” Birthday began with a reading of the creation of the world in Genesis, chapter 1. Of course, he said, “Scripture is not a science textbook. It’s an ancient text trying to communicate things about God, not chemistry or physics.”

When Genesis was written, he said, “Many people thought that the Earth was an unpredictable and unsettling place. Genesis, chapter 1, said no to that view of the world. . . For our biblical writers and early Christians, the world was a theater that unveils the goodness, the truth, the beauty of God, not in spite of its natural laws, but precisely through those natural laws.”

The growing Church continued studying the world. By the medieval era, Catholic universities included math and the sciences.

“The Church was open to science and discovering things about the natural world,” said Gregory. “They believed that the natural world in its regularity and order told them something about the goodness of God.”

Science can’t answer the meaning of life
So what happened? How did we get to the place we are today that so many believe that faith and science are opposites of one another?

“A couple hundred years ago, some people started thinking of God as one more character in the theater of a play of the created world,” Gregory explained. “People would look at the world and would find something else that made something happen, and ruled God out.”

The problem with such thinking, he said, is that “it means every new advance in knowledge, God gets smaller and smaller and smaller, until eventually people think there’s no need for God. We can explain anything away.”

“This left many people with the impression that God is unnecessary if we have science.”

Fortunately, he said, many theologians in the last 150 years have insisted that science and faith are compatible.

“St. John Henry Newman said there is nothing in science that is incompatible with God,” said Gregory. “He said science tells us about the laws and how they work, and faith tells us about the author and maintainer of those laws. And Pope Pius XII said the scientific advances of the past 200 years have shown us a lot about the bodies we have. He said what science can’t answer for us is the meaning of life and the answer to questions of the past 200 years have shown us a lot about the bodies we have. He said what science can’t answer for us is the meaning of life and the answer to questions of life.”

“Pope John Paul II gave full support to the exploration of evolutionary science and the other sciences as things that would shed light on the world we live in.”

We need to recover a sense of wonder
To “bring our hearts and imaginations back into alignment or strengthen their alignment with the traditional view of the Catholic Church,” Gregory suggested turning to Pope Francis encyclical, “Laudato Si’: On Care for Our Common Home.”

The major theme of his encyclical is that for us to be right in relation with the created world, we need to recover a sense of wonder, he said. “We need to stop seeing the world just as something we can exploit or abuse and find amazement that it’s the way God created it.”

Gregory closed with impressing upon the youths that “faith is critical to all intellectual work. All truth is God’s truth, and when you pursue it, it’s your wonder that will lead you to find God’s handiwork.”

“He was also thrilled to see youths have the opportunity to take leadership at NCYC.”

Dr. Bradley Gregory, assistant professor of biblical studies at The Catholic University of America in Washington, talks to youths at the National Catholic Youth Conference about the compatibility of faith and science in the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis On Nov. 19. (Photo by Natalie Hoefer)
NCYC presents a positive vision of the priesthood for Catholic youths

By Sean Gallagher

“Follow me to arm wrestle a seminarian! See if you can beat a man who receives Communion every day!”

Holding a chalk board with “Arm Wrestle a Seminarian” written on it, seminarian Samuel Hansen barked this and similar slogans while walking through the crowded halls of the Indiana Convention Center on the afternoon of Nov. 20 during the final day of the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC).

“It was incredibly fun,” said Hansen, a senior at Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary and a member of St. Roch Parish, both in Indianapolis. “Just walking with the sign made a lot of people laugh. I felt like a ballpark food salesman. But it energized the convention center quite a bit.”

In response to Hansen’s hawking, a steady group of challengers gathered around a table promoting vocations to the diocesan priesthood that had earlier attracted fewer visitors when the seminarians manning it waited for NCYC participants to come to them on their own. As lighthearted and winsome as this strategy to attract attention was, Hansen saw it as following in the tradition of the saints. St. John Bosco, for example, did slight of hand tricks and juggling acts for the children in his house to get them to listen to him give a catechesis lesson.

“The saints stepped out of line and took extraordinary action to inspire others,” Hansen said. “That’s exactly what Catholic youths need to know about the vocation [to the priesthood]. It’s not a day job. It’s not for the faint of the heart. Enthusiasm is necessary, and we need to reflect that.”

Archdiocesan seminarians were present to NCYC participants in other ways. Those in the last four years of their priestly formation wore clerical attire in being a candidate for the priesthood.

“Wearing clerics makes [seminarians] who much more obvious,” said seminarian Tyler Hiber, a member of St. Mary-of-the-Knobs Parish in Floyd County. “When you’re wearing the cassock, you stand out and you engage in conversations with kids, playing games with them, they think it’s a little more serious. It’s a way to show that this is a viable option for them. Young people are doing it. It’s joyful. Jesus will provide for you. It’s going to be a wonderful life.”

At the same time, Huber was encouraged during a time of charismatic adoration at the conference in Lucas Oil Stadium when dozens of priests were available in the arena’s concourse to hear confessions of participants.

Huber helped direct participants to the priests sitting in chairs.

“In my section alone, I looked down and saw four or five guys who are now priests that I’ve been in seminary with,” Huber said. “They were now the guys in the chairs—and they loved it. I got so excited. And they were in heaven. To see them thrive and do well in ministry, having a good relationship with their youth groups, getting the kids excited about the faith, celebrating the sacraments—it’s all awesome.”

Huber is in his third year of theological formation at Saint Meinrad and expects to be ordained a transitional deacon next spring.

“My next NCYC will be as a priest, which is awesome,” Huber said with palpable enthusiasm.

Father James Brockmeier knows that feeling.

He was a high school student when he first attended NCYC.

“It was such a new experience to be with 20,000 other young Catholics, to experience the Mass in something bigger than your own parish and your own experience of it,” said Father Brockmeier, pastor of St. Mary Parish in Rushville.

“Seeing all of the priests process into the Mass was one of the things that really got me thinking about the priesthood.”

In 2015, Father Brockmeier, as a seminarian and transitional deacon, experienced a ‘full circle moment’ when he served as the principal deacon at the concluding Mass of NCYC and took part in the same procession that had so impressed him earlier.

The same day that Father Brockmeier described his full circle moment, it may have been beginning for NCYC participant Matthew Heidenreich of the Columbus, Ohio, Diocese, who first attended the conference in 2017.

“It’s inspirational at the Saturday afternoon Mass to see so many priests [processioning] down the aisle,” he said. “After seeing someone who’s discerning the seminary, you have to ask the question, ‘What if that was me? What if I was walking down that aisle?’”

Returning to the conference this year to celebrate the sacrament of penance with Catholic teenagers from across the country, Father Brockmeier spoke of the benefits of dozens of priests coming to minister together at NCYC.

“The priesthood is something that we do communally,” he said. “A lot of times we feel like individuals at our parishes. But we are brother priests. To be able to come and hear confessions with brother priests is a reminder of the communal nature of our ministry.”

Father Brockmeier also serves as an archdiocesan associate vocations director who works with Father Michael Keucher, the vocations director for the archdiocese.

Father Keucher took part in NCYC this year—the seventh such conference he attended. He sees it as a tremendous opportunity to invite young people to begin discerning the vocation to which God has called them.

“One day open the door of their hearts to the Holy Spirit, he makes his will known,” said Father Keucher. “The Holy Spirit is so palpable here. It’s so real. And the kids are finding the Holy Spirit and nurturing their relationship with the Holy Spirit. That will do wonders for vocations.”

Several religious communities had booths in the Interactive Village of the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) on Nov. 18-20 in the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis.

Franciscan Sister Kathleen Brabham, vocations director for the Sisters of St. Francis in Oldenburg, said she had more young women express interest in her religious community than at NCYC in 2019.

“There are more people who want to stay in touch, said. “If they have been a blessing. The young people of today want community. I think [NCYC] plays a really big part with communities. After the pandemic, they realize that there’s more to life than materialistic and consumer stuff and that community means everything.”

Society of Our Lady of the Trinity Sister Mary Clare Strasser was one of three members of her community at the conference.

“It’s a beautiful chance to encounter [youths] and to let our community know, she said. “We’ve met many who have never seen or talked to sisters before. It’s a sign of hope. This is the future of the Church. It’s really beautiful.”

Describing NCYC as an event “where their faith is encouraged and strengthened,” Sister Mary Claire said that “the Lord gives a lot of grace in events like this” for Catholic teenagers.

“I’ve spent a lot of graced moments of deep encounter with Christ,” she said. “Those deep encounters open their hearts to this God that loves them and has a plan for their lives. What might that plan be?”

Holy Cross Brother Jacob Eidref, who is in his third year of temporary vows with the Congregation of the Holy Cross, said he is encouraged in his discernment and formation by NCYC. He also saw hope in the conference for the future of religious vocations.

“When youths come to an event like this, they’re reminded that they’re not alone,” said Brother Jacob. “The Church is much bigger than just their parish. There’s a lot of opportunity out there for ministry, evangelization and growing in their faith. They can be supported by like-minded people. We’re all in this together in the Church.”

Matthew Heidenreich of the Columbus, Ohio, Diocese stopped by the Holy Cross booth and chatted with Holy Cross Father Brendan McAleer, the vocations director for the order’s U.S. province.

Matthew said that NCYC brings religious orders “into the spotlight a little more.”

“A lot of times as young Catholics, it’s almost like religious orders are off on their own,” he said. “They’re mysterious things that we don’t really see. So, being here face-to-face with brothers and sisters and interacting with religious orders is really cool. We get to learn more about their charisms.”

Ava Glemming of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, Okla., echoed such thoughts after visiting the booth of the Sisters of Our Lady of the Trinity.

“Every vocation has a place,” she said. “Every order is different—from Franciscans, to Dominicans, to Benedictines. They’re all different in their own special way. Vocations are all about figuring out what God wants you to do that is unique to you.”

Catholic youths encounter a variety of religious orders at NCYC

By Sean Gallagher

Social Justice Conferences

Several religious communities had booths in the Interactive Village of the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) on Nov. 18-20 in the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis.

Franciscan Sister Kathleen Brabham, vocations director for the Sisters of St. Francis in Oldenburg, said she had more young women express interest in her religious community than at NCYC in 2019.

“There are more people who want to stay in touch, she said. “If they have been a blessing. The young people of today want community. I think [NCYC] plays a really big part with communities. After the pandemic, they realize that there’s more to life than materialistic and consumer stuff and that community means everything.”

Society of Our Lady of the Trinity Sister Mary Clare Strasser was one of three members of her community at the conference.

“It’s a beautiful chance to encounter [youths] and to let our community know, she said. “We’ve met many who have never seen or talked to sisters before. It’s a sign of hope. This is the future of the Church. It’s really beautiful.”

Describing NCYC as an event “where their faith is encouraged and strengthened,” Sister Mary Claire said that “the Lord gives a lot of grace in events like this” for Catholic teenagers.

“I’ve spent a lot of graced moments of deep encounter with Christ,” she said. “Those deep encounters open their hearts to this God that loves them and has a plan for their lives. What might that plan be?”

Holy Cross Brother Jacob Eidref, who is in his third year of temporary vows with the Congregation of the Holy Cross, said he is encouraged in his discernment and formation by NCYC. He also saw hope in the conference for the future of religious vocations.

“When youths come to an event like this, they’re reminded that they’re not alone,” said Brother Jacob. “The Church is much bigger than just their parish. There’s a lot of opportunity out there for ministry, evangelization and growing in their faith. They can be supported by like-minded people. We’re all in this together in the Church.”

Matthew Heidenreich of the Columbus, Ohio, Diocese stopped by the Holy Cross booth and chatted with Holy Cross Father Brendan McAleer, the vocations director for the order’s U.S. province.

Matthew said that NCYC brings religious orders “into the spotlight a little more.”

“A lot of times as young Catholics, it’s almost like religious orders are off on their own,” he said. “They’re mysterious things that we don’t really see. So, being here face-to-face with brothers and sisters and interacting with religious orders is really cool. We get to learn more about their charisms.”

Ava Glemming of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, Okla., echoed such thoughts after visiting the booth of the Sisters of Our Lady of the Trinity.

“Every vocation has a place,” she said. “Every order is different—from Franciscans, to Dominicans, to Benedictines. They’re all different in their own special way. Vocations are all about figuring out what God wants you to do that is unique to you.”
By Sean Gallagher

Tessa Junk first experienced the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) in Indianapolis in 2019. Less than four months after the conference, the emergence of the coronavirus pandemic in the U.S. changed her life of faith, especially with the suspension of the public celebration of the sacraments during the first months of the pandemic.

“I definitely distanced myself from my faith, with not being able to go to church,” said Tessa, a student at Sacred Heart Jr./Sr. High School in Salina, Kan. “And I wasn’t able to be with Catholic teenagers at my school that I can share my faith with and talk to.”

So, returning to NCYC this year was a moving experience for her.

“Yesterday, I was bawling my eyes out all day long,” Tessa said of her experience of the first full day of the conference on Nov. 19.

“So, with all of that distancing, coming back here just makes me feel like the Spirit is back in my heart,” she said. “I feel like God is holding onto me. I feel loved way more than I have ever felt love before.”

Many other youths at NCYC this year who attended the conference in Indianapolis in 2019 echoed Tessa’s experience.

“I won’t lie,” said Kellie Simon of Abingdon, Md. “Going through the pandemic put a strain on my faith, especially with not being able to go to Mass every weekend, having to [watch] it online. I thought about why God put us through all of this.”

“The most challenging thing was when we had to watch Mass on TV,” agreed Emma Donovan of Hazel Green, Wis. “It was easy to get distracted and not pay attention as much when we were in the comfort of our own home rather than in a church.”

For some, the challenge to their faith during the pandemic ran even deeper.

Shelby Mai of Salina, Kan., said she didn’t go to Mass as often after parishes started reopening. “I lost touch with my faith, even though I go to a Catholic school,” she said.

Coming to NCYC this year with many friends from her parish and Catholic high school, though, made a difference for Shelby.

“This has helped me grow in my faith,” she said.

Matthew Heidenreich of the Columbus, Ohio, Diocese said that he may have been in the minority among NCYC participants in noting that his faith grew stronger during the pandemic.

He and about 20 friends met daily on the online video conference platform Zoom during the height of the pandemic to talk about their faith and have one of the group members give a presentation.

“It gave me a chance to root myself more in prayer, because there wasn’t much else to do,” Matthew said. “I re-centered myself because I had been losing my focus on my faith. So, it was a really good time for me."

Coming to NCYC this year has only increased his positive experience of his faith.

“It’s reassuring to see that the community is still here,” he said. “Everyone’s willing to come back and bear with the confusion and chaos. But we’re all still here and united in faith, which is really cool.”

Seeing enthusiasm in nearly 11,000 Catholic teenagers at NCYC this year gave hope to Ava Glemming of Epiphany Parish in Oklahoma City, Okla.

“It’s rejuvenating,” she said. “The Church was in such a quiet, stagnate place in the middle of the pandemic. It was hard on all of us. So, to see this life again is really magnificent. It’s a testament to God’s glory and all that he can do for us.”

The public suspension of the sacraments, including the Eucharist, helped Jailynn Rowe of Salina, Kan., appreciate the Mass more consciously since parishes reopened.

This was strengthened by her participation in NCYC this year, especially in her experience of eucharistic adoration on the evening of Nov. 19 at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis.

“A lot of times, all God needs is an occasion,” he said. “He needs that door being opened. And the pandemic was that door being kicked open with a sledgehammer.”

Tessa Junk first experienced the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) in Indianapolis in 2019. Less than four months after the conference, the emergence of the coronavirus pandemic in the U.S. changed her life of faith, especially with the suspension of the public celebration of the sacraments during the first months of the pandemic.

“I definitely distanced myself from my faith, with not being able to go to church,” said Tessa, a student at Sacred Heart Jr./Sr. High School in Salina, Kan. “And I wasn’t able to be with Catholic teenagers at my school that I can share my faith with and talk to.”

So, returning to NCYC this year was a moving experience for her.

“Yesterday, I was bawling my eyes out all day long,” Tessa said of her experience of the first full day of the conference on Nov. 19.

“So, with all of that distancing, coming back here just makes me feel like the Spirit is back in my heart,” she said. “I feel like God is holding onto me. I feel loved way more than I have ever felt love before.”

Many other youths at NCYC this year who attended the conference in Indianapolis in 2019 echoed Tessa’s experience.

“I won’t lie,” said Kellie Simon of Abingdon, Md. “Going through the pandemic put a strain on my faith, especially with not being able to go to Mass every weekend, having to [watch] it online. I thought about why God put us through all of this.”

“The most challenging thing was when we had to watch Mass on TV,” agreed Emma Donovan of Hazel Green, Wis. “It was easy to get distracted and not pay attention as much when we were in the comfort of our own home rather than in a church.”

For some, the challenge to their faith during the pandemic ran even deeper.

Shelby Mai of Salina, Kan., said she didn’t go to Mass as often after parishes started reopening. “I lost touch with my faith, even though I go to a Catholic school,” she said.

Coming to NCYC this year with many friends from her parish and Catholic high school, though, made a difference for Shelby.

“This has helped me grow in my faith,” she said.

Matthew Heidenreich of the Columbus, Ohio, Diocese said that he may have been in the minority among NCYC participants in noting that his faith grew stronger during the pandemic.

He and about 20 friends met daily on the online video conference platform Zoom during the height of the pandemic to talk about their faith and have one of the group members give a presentation.

“It gave me a chance to root myself more in prayer, because there wasn’t much else to do,” Matthew said. “I re-centered myself because I had been losing my focus on my faith. So, it was a really good time for me."

Coming to NCYC this year has only increased his positive experience of his faith.

“It’s reassuring to see that the community is still here,” he said. “Everyone’s willing to come back and bear with the confusion and chaos. But we’re all still here and united in faith, which is really cool.”

Seeing enthusiasm in nearly 11,000 Catholic teenagers at NCYC this year gave hope to Ava Glemming of Epiphany Parish in Oklahoma City, Okla.

“It’s rejuvenating,” she said. “The Church was in such a quiet, stagnate place in the middle of the pandemic. It was hard on all of us. So, to see this life again is really magnificent. It’s a testament to God’s glory and all that he can do for us.”

The public suspension of the sacraments, including the Eucharist, helped Jailynn Rowe of Salina, Kan., appreciate the Mass more consciously since parishes reopened.

This was strengthened by her participation in NCYC this year, especially in her experience of eucharistic adoration on the evening of Nov. 19 at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis.

“A lot of times, all God needs is an occasion,” he said. “He needs that door being opened. And the pandemic was that door being kicked open with a sledgehammer.”

LEADERS

continued from page 16B

our young people to see the larger Church and to be in a stadium worshipping God with so many people from across the country, it’s amazing the impact it has on them,” said Sylvester, the youth minister of the parish.

“I’ve lost count of the number of conferences I’ve been to, but I’ve seen the way they take it in, the way they own their faith, even if they’re not at church,” Sylvester said. “It’s a blessing to us as a parish to see this life again in the middle of the pandemic. It was hard on all of us. So, to see this life again is really magnificent. It’s a testament to God’s glory and all that he can do for us.”

The public suspension of the sacraments, including the Eucharist, helped Jailynn Rowe of Salina, Kan., appreciate the Mass more consciously since parishes reopened.

This was strengthened by her participation in NCYC this year, especially in her experience of eucharistic adoration on the evening of Nov. 19 at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis.

“A lot of times, all God needs is an occasion,” he said. “He needs that door being opened. And the pandemic was that door being kicked open with a sledgehammer.”

Lucy Herth, left, and Kim Sprague led a group of 100 youths from four Dearborn County parishes in southern Indiana to the National Catholic Youth Conference in Indianapolis on Nov. 18-20. They posed together for this photo at a pre-conference meeting of archdiocesan youth ministers.

(Photos by John Shaughnessy)
Advent can help believers be content, see waiting as a gift

By Shemaiah Gonzalez

We know Advent is a season of waiting. But what if you feel like you’ve been waiting for a long time? We’ve been waiting for the pandemic to be over. We’ve been waiting to “go back to normal.”

But ultimately, and for 2,000 years, we’ve been waiting for Christ to return to reconcile all things, to make everything right.

What if we reframed the act of waiting as a gift?

There is a reframing that happens when we wait. A transformation of our spirit. When we wait, we prepare. We gain experience. And there is a hope that in that transformation God’s will becomes our will.

We have been given this opportunity as a gift, a gift for almost the past two years—and now as we wait during Advent and ultimately as we wait for Christ’s second coming.

The early 20th-century English writer and theologian G.K. Chesterton appreciated how waiting could be a gift. To Chesterton, waiting opened possibility:

“Around every corner is another gift waiting to surprise us, and it will surprise us if we can achieve control over our natural tendencies to make comparisons [to things that are better rather than things that are worse], to take things for granted and to feel entitled.”

Have we grown so entitled that we no longer see the gift of waiting and of life ready to surprise us? Chesterton’s words ring true as we have compared now to B.C., “before COVID-19.”

We reflect longingly back to 2019 as our glory days. We don’t appreciate now for what it is. Now is good. It can be beautiful if we let it surprise us.

I remember when I was younger, I always thought I would be happy when I graduated from college, when I found a husband, when I had my own home. These are good and happy events, and it is good to have goals to work toward. But we need to learn to be content and happy in the moment each day. When we learn this, God’s will takes over our will.

We have been given this opportunity as a gift, a gift for almost the past two years—and now as we wait during Advent and ultimately as we wait for Christ’s second coming.

Advent is the season of waiting. Chesterton wrote, “The aim of life is appreciation. There is no sense in not appreciating things; and there is no sense in having more of them if you have less appreciation of them.”

I think of our current supply chain shortages. Some say these issues threaten appreciation of them.”

Do we buy and consume with intentionality? Has Christmas become about the gifts and less about Jesus? Waiting is the gift. It is a time to change our hearts. While waiting, God can take something that is difficult and use it to shape us into the person he created us to be. And we can get to know him better.

In St. Paul’s Letter to the Philippians, he writes, “I know indeed how to live in humble circumstances; I know also how to live with abundance. In every circumstance and in all things I have learned the secret of being well fed and of going hungry, of living in abundance and of being in need. I have the strength for everything through him who empowers me” (Phil 4:12-13).

Waiting helps us understand what it is like to be content with what we have. It means learning to appreciate what we do have instead of stewing over what we do not.

Or do they refine us? Do they remind us what Christmas is truly about? Like Chesterton writes, why do we need more if we don’t even appreciate what we already have?

It is not about the gifts and wondering if the cargo ships will be unloaded on time, if the semi-trucks will deliver all the gifts you wanted to make Christmas perfect. It can be about being more thoughtful about what we consume and how much of it.

Do we buy and consume with intentionality? Has Christmas become more about the gifts and less about Jesus?

Waiting is the gift. It is a time to change our hearts. While waiting, God can take something that is difficult and use it to shape us into the person he created us to be. And we can get to know him better.

In St. Paul’s Letter to the Philippians, he writes, “I know indeed how to live in humble circumstances; I know also how to live with abundance. In every circumstance and in all things I have learned the secret of being well fed and of going hungry, of living in abundance and of being in need. I have the strength for everything through him who empowers me” (Phil 4:12-13).

Waiting helps us understand what it is like to be content with what we have. It means learning to appreciate what we do have instead of stewing over what we do not.

It will never be 2019 again. Do we want things and comfortability? Or do we want Jesus? Do we want the saving transforming grace of our relationship with the Savior?

This makes me think of the words of one of Chesterton’s contemporaries, C. S. Lewis, who wrote:

“We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.”

I love the tension of being content in our circumstance, but not so easily pleased that we fail to recognize the glory that God is offering us. Isn’t this what we do when we fail to see waiting as a gift?

What are we waiting for? Christmas? A turkey, tree and a holiday movie? Are we waiting for another new normal? Or the pandemic to be over?

Or are we waiting for Christ? To finally be reconciled to our God? To know fully this God who we worship? And then too, we will be fully known.

I am content to wait for Jesus.

(Shemaiah Gonzalez is a freelance writer. Her website is www.shemaiahgonzalez.com.)
My name is Lisa, and I have had a tradition every year since I first applied to the Trusted Mentors Program, I just had arrived at a women’s work release facility under the supervision of the Department of Corrections (IDOC). Women’s Prison. I had been within the

IDOC for about nine months, then was sent to work release to complete the last few months of my sentence. This was my first time ever being involved in the legal system and my first term of incarceration.

Before I went to prison, I had worked in various positions within the social service and court system realm. So, my experience was vastly different from that which I encountered in prison. I was in a domestic violence situation, which prompted my actions, which then ended up with me being sent to IDOC. I have learned to be a person who made a poor choice and had to deal with the consequences. That was the start of the encouragement and support she has given me this time and to this day.

We first met, we met about every two weeks and tried to communicate via phone or e-mail weekly. We also had a few outings, which I looked forward to. I was surprised because at work release this was a rare opportunity and a privilege. It was also surprising to have a trusted mentor. I was in a new city, looking for a job, just came from a prison, and I felt that I had no one to confide in or friends. My family lived three hours away, and because of COVID they were not even permitted to visit. I was matched with a wonderful mentor named Terri. I was a little unsure at first and afraid I was not going to work. However, after we first talked, I really felt like I could relate to her in many ways. There was nothing to say that put me in a bad mood.

I was matched with a wonderful mentor named Terri. I was a little unsure at first and afraid I was not going to work. However, after we first talked, I really felt like I could relate to her in many ways. There was nothing to say that put me in a bad mood.

One thing she says fills her with joy and hope is the pontificate of Pope Francis. When someone’s world is turned upside down, it can be hard to summon peace that only God can give,” said Pope Francis.

When someone’s world is turned upside down, it can be hard to summon peace that only God can give,” said Pope Francis.

Pope Francis continues to draw us closer to the poor, to the social justice mission that is the heart of the Gospel and to be the heart of the Church. He reminds us that we need Jesus, and that when we encounter him, he sends us forth to love and serve one another. I prayed over that word, fulfillment.

What does it mean to be fulfilled? To live out what you were created for or hoped for? Can Amazon fulfill my hopes and dreams? Or was this facility’s use of work and wage a fabricated, laughable parody of true fulfillment?

Then, there was this recent headline: "Whoops! Christmas Trees Ruin Christmas?" Ruin Christmas? Because you don’t get the toy, the device, the sweater, the “stuff” you were hoping for? This headline speaks to the desert that is our consumer culture.

So, like my friend, I turn to Pope Francis. In my lifetime, I have not encountered a more prophetic figure. His encyclical, Laudato Si’, on Care for Our Common Home, calls us to recognize the encyclical call unheeded in many churches in the U.S.

Each day, his words spurs us to prayer and to action and remind us of the Church’s long history of social justice. "Christian joy in the desert that is our consumer culture is a gift of four weeks to slowly prepare for the season of Advent that begins this year. The season of Advent that begins this year has us slowly build to the birth of Christ, a gift of four weeks set aside to focus on hope in the face of trials and tears. Sometimes in those dark moments, parents can feel like they’re in the middle of an endless night. But they can find solace in and make their own the deep yearning expressed in Psalm 130: "My soul is waiting for the Lord, I count on him for my salvation. Even though I looked for more than watchman to daybreak. Let the watchman count on daybreak and Israel on the Lord." Ps 130:5-6"

Our Lord wants to make the times of trial in the lives of our children less painful. It is not our responsibility to create a happy Christmas morning good and fruitful. The season of Advent is a time to prepare for the birth of Christ, a gift of four weeks to slowly prepare for the season of Advent that begins this year. The season of Advent that begins this year has us slowly build to the birth of Christ, a gift of four weeks set aside to focus on hope in the face of trials and tears. Sometimes in those dark moments, parents can feel like they’re in the middle of an endless night. But they can find solace in and make their own the deep yearning expressed in Psalm 130: "My soul is waiting for the Lord, I count on him for my salvation. Even though I looked for more than watchman to daybreak. Let the watchman count on daybreak and Israel on the Lord." Ps 130:5-6"

My soul is waiting for the Lord, I count on him for my salvation. Even though I looked for more than watchman to daybreak. Let the watchman count on daybreak and Israel on the Lord." Ps 130:5-6"

Our Lord wants to make the times of trial in the lives of our children less painful. It is not our responsibility to create a happy Christmas morning good and fruitful. Our Lord wants to make the times of trial in the lives of our children less painful. It is not our responsibility to create a happy Christmas morning good and fruitful.
With this First Sunday of Advent, the Church begins a new liturgical year. As such, the readings for Mass on Sundays in the year to come will be from the “C” cycle of the Lectionary, the collection of biblical texts used by the Church for readings at Mass. The first reading for this weekend is from the Book of Jeremiah, written when times were hard and people’s spirits were low. The text is 33:14-16. God had a covenant with David and his successors. Their task was to govern and to keep the nation of Israel faithful to God. With the end of the unified monarchy under David and his heirs, no other figure or authority had God’s commission to exercise the role of strengthening the national bond with the Almighty. More ominously, it seemed as if the instrument selected by God for this purpose, namely kings of the Davidic dynasty, yielded to pressures and forgotten words of Jesus to encourage and embolden his disciples. Come what may, the Lord will return and be victorious over all evil. The forces of darkness will be laid low. When Luke’s Gospel was written, the tide was turning against Christians. They were in danger. The author of St. Luke’s Gospel recalled words of Jesus to encourage and embolden his disciples. Come what may, the Lord will return and be victorious over all evil. The forces of darkness will be laid low. Do not weaken. Stay with Jesus. Reflection

Advent often is described as a time to prepare for Christmas. It is this, but it has two other purposes. It exists to enable us to reform ourselves, so that we can worthily meet the Lord when he returns. Finally, it calls us to prepare ourselves for the decisive coming of Jesus when we die, and at the end of time, by reminding us that we are mortal. Jesus will return to the Earth. He will vindicate the right. The forces of evil will wither and die. They will fall below the glory of the risen Lord. He will reign forever. Everything else will pass away.

We must be with the Lord or place ourselves opposite the Lord. If we reject God, we shall die. How do we prepare for all this? We prepare by keeping first and foremost our purpose to love God above all else, and by loving all others, in the example of the Lord. Christians should prepare themselves for this great event by loving others in the model of Jesus, who loved all humanity, even to the point of sacrifice on Calvary. St. Luke’s Gospel furnishes the last reading. When reading or hearing a reading from any of the Gospels, it follows chronologically every week; explains: “Sunday is expressly done in creation (Gn 2:2-3) and as it is when God rested from all the work he had done in creation (Gn 2:2-3) and as it is observed by Jews today. Christians, though, celebrate Sunday instead, because that is the day on which Jesus rose from the dead and the day on which the Holy Spirit came upon the Apostles. As the Catechism of the Catholic Church explains: “Sunday is expressly distinguished from the Sabbath which it follows chronologically every week; for Christians its ceremonial observance replaces that of the Sabbath. In Christ’s Passover, Sunday fulfills the spiritual truth of the Jewish Sabbath and announces man’s eternal rest in God” (§175).

What Christians are celebrating instead of the sabbath is what the Church calls the Lord’s Day, and that has been the case since the first century. As the Acts of the Apostles relates in the first day of the week, when we gathered to break bread, Paul spoke to them” (Acts 20:7). So, for Christians, Sunday is the pre-eminent holy day of the week, the day on which we refrain from servile work, devote ourselves to the Eucharist, to prayer and family gatherings. Around 110, St. Ignatius, bishop of Antioch and a disciple of the Apostle John, proclaimed: “Let every friend of Christ keep the Lord’s Day as a festival, the festal day, the queen and chief of all the days.”

Q: Why do some religious say that the Sabbath day is Saturday while others—including Catholics—say it’s on Sunday? (Missouri)

A: No, Catholics do not say that the Sabbath is on Sunday. The Sabbath is on Saturday, as it was in the Old Testament when God rested from all the work he had done in creation (Gn 2:2-3) and as it is observed by Jews today. Christians, though, celebrate Sunday instead, because that is the day on which Jesus rose from the dead and the day on which the Holy Spirit came upon the Apostles. As the Catechism of the Catholic Church explains: “Sunday is expressly distinguished from the Sabbath which it follows chronologically every week; for Christians its ceremonial observance replaces that of the Sabbath. In Christ’s Passover, Sunday fulfills the spiritual truth of the Jewish Sabbath and announces man’s eternal rest in God” (§175).

What Christians are celebrating instead of the sabbath is what the Church calls the Lord’s Day, and that has been the case since the first century. As the Acts of the Apostles relates in the first day of the week, when we gathered to break bread, Paul spoke to them” (Acts 20:7).

So, for Christians, Sunday is the pre-eminent holy day of the week, the day on which we refrain from servile work, devote ourselves to the Eucharist, to prayer and family gatherings. Around 110, St. Ignatius, bishop of Antioch and a disciple of the Apostle John, proclaimed: “Let every friend of Christ keep the Lord’s Day as a festival, the festal day, the queen and chief of all the days.”

Q: Some Protestants believe in the rapture. This was never really discussed in Catholic school when I was a student. What is the Catholic Church’s belief regarding it? It would be wonderful to know that we will not have to live through the tribulation. (Indiana)

A: If, by the “rapture” one understands an event, at the second coming of Christ, where all the faithful, living and dead, will undergo a bodily assumption into heaven—then, yes, I would say that Catholics do believe this. But there are other elements in what is sometimes understood as “rapture theology” that are not consistent with Catholic teaching—especially the notion that there will be a secret coming of Christ where he will snatch believers up to heaven and leave others behind to experience a period of severe tribulation. Supporters of this view look to the passage in St. Paul’s First Letter to the Thessalonians, which says, “For the Lord himself ... will come down from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first; then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air” (1 Thes 4:16-17).

The Catholic understanding of this passage is simply that those believers who are alive at Christ’s second coming will not experience death, but will be transformed in glory and join the saints already with the Lord. Catholic theology finds no evidence to support a belief in a subsequent period of tribulation and chaos. Also, at the same time, the Church, in contrast to some Protestant traditions, does not teach that believers will be saved from tribulation before Christ’s return.

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

My Journey to God

(Family was written communally by a group of Catholics who attended the 2021 Special Religious Development (SPRED) retreat at the Benedict Inn & Conference Center in Beech Grove on Aug. 7-8. As a retreat activity, four separate groups of retreatants and volunteers each created an acoustic poem by thinking of words that describe the experience of a particular saint. Benedictine Sister Cathy Anne Lepore then copied and decorated each poem. The additional poems will be run in future editions of The Criterion. This poem was created by Andrea Alexander, Kathleen Ferguson, Amy Korzewska, Nicole McConnell, Mary McCoy, Chris Rish, Michael Rish, Jenny Stetzl, Nicholas Swallers and Sandy Toll.)
Advent during pandemic remains a season of compassion, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—With Advent coming during an ongoing pandemic, Christians are called to hold on to hope and foster a season of compassion and tenderness, Pope Francis said.

During Advent this year, too, “its lights we are dimmed by the consequences of the pandemic, which still weighs heavily on our time,” he said on Nov. 22. “All the more reason why we are called to question ourselves and not to lose hope.

“The feast of the birth of Christ is not out of tune with the trial we are going through because it is the quintessential feast of compassion, the feast of tenderness. Its beauty is humble and full of human warmth,” the pope said during an audience with organizers and participants in a Christmas music contest.

The contest was proposed and promoted by the Pontifical Foundation Christophorus Education and Don Bosco Valdocco Missions association, based in Turin.

The pope thanked the groups who came up with the idea for the contest, which gives voice to the young, inviting them to create new songs inspired by Christmas and its values.

“The beauty of Christmas shines through in the sharing of small gestures of gratuitousness, a word artists understand well—to the giving of self,” and it can also foster cultural, social and educational life and activities, he added.

Pope Francis quoted what St. Paul VI told artists during Advent in 1965: “This world in which we live needs beauty in order not to sink into despair.”

It must not be the false beauty “made of appearances and earthly riches, which are hollow and a generator of emptiness,” Pope Francis said. It must be the real beauty “of a God made flesh, the one of faces—the beauty of faces, the beauty of stories” and the beauty of “creatures that make up our common home.”

He thanked the young people, artists and other participants “for not forgetting to be custodians of this beauty that the nativity of the Lord makes shine in every daily gesture of love, sharing and service.”

Advent penance services are scheduled at archdiocesan parishes

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

Batesville Deanery

Nov. 30, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Greensburg
Dec. 3, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. at All Saints Parish, St. Martin Campus, Dearborn County
Dec. 5, 9-10 a.m. at Immaculate Conception, Millhousen
Dec. 10, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. at Camp River Road; 6:45 Harvey Branch Road (A-frame house), Oldenburg
Dec. 12, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. at St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Aurora
Dec. 12-14, 7:50 a.m. and 6-6:50 p.m. at St. John the Baptist, Osgood
Dec. 14, 7 p.m. at St. Catherine of Siena, St. John the Evangelist Church, Decatur County
Dec. 15, 6 p.m. at St. Vincent de Paul, Shelby County
Dec. 15 and 16, 6:30 p.m. at Holy Family, Oldenburg
Dec. 17, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. and 2:30-6:30 p.m. at St. Louis, Batesville and St. Anthony of Padua, Morris, at St. Louis
Dec. 17, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. at St. Joseph, Shelbyville
Dec. 21, 6-7 p.m. at St. Michael, Brookville

Dec. 22, 7 p.m. for St. Louis, Batesville, and St. Anthony of Padua, Morris, at St. Louis
Dec. 22, 6:30-7:30 p.m. at St. Peter, Franklin County
Additional, recurring opportunities for reconciliation in the Batesville Deanery are as follows: Half-hour before all Masses at Oratory of SS. Philomena and Cecelia, Oak Forest
Expanded reconciliation times at St. Charles Borromeo, Milan; St. Maurice, Napoleon; and St. Nicholas, Ripley County. Contact parishes for details.

Bloomington Deanery

Dec. 2, 7 p.m. at St. Vincent de Paul, Bedford
Dec. 9, 6-9 p.m. for St. Charles Borromeo Parish and St. Paul Catholic Center, Bloomington, at St. Paul Catholic Church, Bloomington
Dec. 14, 6:30 p.m. at St. John the Apostle, Bloomington
Dec. 15, 6:30 p.m. at St. Jude the Apostle, Spencer
Dec. 16, 6 p.m. at St. Martin of Tours, Martinsville
Dec. 16, 7 p.m. at St. Agnes, Nashville

Connersville Deanery

Dec. 1, 6:30 p.m. at St. Gabriel, Connersville
Dec. 6, 6:30 p.m. at St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Cambridge City
Dec. 14, 6 p.m. at Elizabeth Ann Seton, Holy Family Church, Richmond
Dec. 16, 6:30 p.m. at St. Mary, Rushville

Indianapolis East Deanery

Nov. 30, 7 p.m. for Our Lady of Lourdes and St. Theresa of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) at Our Lady of Lourdes
Dec. 1, 7 p.m. at St. Thomas the Apostle, Fortville
Dec. 14, 7 p.m. at Holy Spirit

Additional, reconciliation in the East Deanery is available on the following dates:
Dec. 14, 9 a.m.-7 p.m. at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St.

Indianapolis North Deanery

Nov. 28, 2 p.m. at St. Lawrence
Nov. 29, 7 p.m. at St. Joan of Arc
Dec. 3, 7 p.m. at St. Matthew the Apostle

Indianapolis South Deanery

Dec. 15, 7 p.m. for St. Jude, St. Mark the Apostle and Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ at St. Jude
Dec. 16, 6:30 p.m. for Holy Name of Jesus, Beech Grove, and Good Shepherd, Indianapolis at Holy Name of Jesus
Dec. 18, 8:30 a.m. at SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi, Greenwood

Indianapolis West Deanery

Dec. 9, 7 p.m. for St. Thomas More, Mooresville, and St. Ann (South Deanery), at St. Thomas More
Dec. 10, noon-1 p.m. at St. Malachy, Brownsburg
Additional, recurring Advent opportunities for reconciliation in the West Deanery are as follows: Sundays: 8-8:30 a.m. at St. Anthony; 9:30-10 a.m. at Holy Angels; 1:45-2:45 p.m. at St. Monica; 3 p.m. at St. Gabriel the Archangel
Mondays: 5-5:30 p.m. at St. Michael the Archangel Tuesdays: 5:45-5:45 p.m. at St. Michael the Archangel; 6-7 p.m. at St. Monica
Wednesdays: 5:30-6:30 p.m. at St. Susanna, Plainfield; 6 p.m. at St. Gabriel the Archangel; 6-7 p.m. at St. Monica; 6:30-7 p.m. at Mary, Queen of Peace, Danville
Thursdays: 6-7 p.m. at St. Monica; 7-8:30 p.m. at St. Malachy, Brownsburg
Fridays: 4-5 p.m. at St. Christopher; 5-5:45 p.m. at St. the Archangel; 5:30-6 p.m. at St. Susanna, Plainfield; 7 p.m. at St. Gabriel the Archangel
Saturdays: 10:30-11 a.m. at St. Susanna, Plainfield; 3-4:30 p.m. at St. Anthony; 3:45-4:30 p.m. at Mary, Queen of Peace, Danville; 4 p.m. at St. Gabriel the Archangel; 4:45-5 p.m. at St. Monica; 4-5 p.m. at St. Michael the Archangel; 4:30-5 p.m. at St. Christopher

New Albany Deanery

Dec. 1, 6:30 p.m. at St. Michael, Bradford
Dec. 9, 6:30 p.m. at St. John Paul II, St. Paul Campus, Sellersburg
Dec. 14, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Lanesville
Dec. 15, 7 p.m. at Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany
Dec. 15, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Nav Islam
Dec. 19, 4 p.m. at St. the Baptist, Starlight
Dec. 21, 7 p.m. at St. Anthony of Padua, Clarksville
Dec. 22, 7 p.m. at St. Mary of the Knobs, Floyd County

Seymour Deanery

Parishes in this deanery are expanding reconciliation periods and priest availability. Contact parishes for information.

Tell City Deanery

Dec. 12, 1-2:30 p.m. at St. Paul, Tell City

Terre Haute Deanery

Dec. 1, 8, 9 and 15, 7 p.m. at St. Benedict, Terre Haute
Dec. 10, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. at Twelve Hours of Grace at St. Margaret Mary, Terre Haute
Dec. 15, 6-30 p.m. at Sacred Heart, Clinton
Dec. 16, 1-30 p.m. at Sacred Heart of Jesus, Terre Haute

Online Lay Ministry Formation

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis has partnered with the University of Notre Dame and Catholic Distance University (CDU) to offer not-for-credit online theology classes:

• Earn certificate in Lay Ministry
• Complete 12 courses online with ND STP program
• CDU offers classes on Catechism of the Catholic Church

For more information, please log on to www.archdioceseofindianapolis.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 two ways to make a report:

Ethics Point
Call 317-236-1548 or 800-392-9836, ext. 1548
carlhall@archindy.org

Carla Hill, Archdiocese of Indianapolis, Victim Assistance Coordinator
carlhall@archindy.org
317-236-1548 or 800-392-9836, ext. 1548
Living activities to complete. If we can remember that it’s the arrival of the newborn king, Emmanuel, that makes Christmas good, then maybe we’ll have to do a dozen family devotionals and handcraft our Advent candles because we believe it will craft our way through the season (darn it!), maybe this Advent can be one of intentional living rat race” by recognizing that we’re living rat race” by recognizing that we’re misguided perceptions of readiness. Rushing to have and do all the things and reading stuff to look and cling to doing nothing to help us let Christ rush into our lives and ready our hearts for the kingdom of heaven.

Director of Pastoral Care St. Elizabeth Seton Catholic Church

St. Elizabeth Seton Catholic Church, which serves a Roman Catholic community of more than 9,700 in Carmel, IN, seeks candidates for our position of Director of Pastoral Care to serve seniors in our area with compassionate, supportive care.

The successful candidate will be responsible for providing pastoral care, support, programs and resources to meet the needs of the elderly through counseling, nurturing, love of Christ and extending the resources of the parish to meet each person in their specific circumstances—which whether one is middle-aged to senior, or struggling with physical or mental-emotional health, grieving, or otherwise in need of support. By providing practical assistance and spiritual guidance for life’s transitions and crises, the Director of Pastoral Care will serve in a leadership and the community and the parish to the parish in implementing an integrated and comprehensive vision of Pastoral Ministry.

The responsibilities of the Director will cover many functions relating to spiritual health, counseling and education: providing spiritual support services and outreach programs; collaborating with parish staff to educate parishioners on mental health issues; coordinating “needs specific” support groups; palliative and bereavement care; Responsibilities require a thorough understanding of Roman Catholic liturgy. The director is responsible for the effective operation, planning, organization, and management of the stewardship of the human, financial, informational and physical resources of the Parish and serves as the professional administrator and strategic leader of the Parish. Applicant must have a Bachelor’s degree in Business (preferably accounting) and a minimum of 5 years of experience in accounting or business management, possess advanced proficiency in computer use in general and the use of Microsoft word, Excel and other office software, be organized and confidential, and possess strong interpersonal skills. Pay is commensurate with experience and benefits are included.

To apply, please send your resume to Glen Ritchey at Ritcheyg@alms.org by Dec. 10, 2021.

Director of Liturgical Music Ministries

St. Louis de Montfort Church in Fishers, Indiana has an immediate opening for a Director of Liturgical Music Ministries. The director is responsible for the effective operation, planning, organization, and management of the stewardship of the human, financial, informational and physical resources of the Parish and serves as the professional administrator and strategic leader of the Parish. Applicant must have a Bachelor’s degree in Business (preferably accounting) and a minimum of 5 years of experience in accounting or business management, possess advanced proficiency in computer use in general and the use of Microsoft word, Excel and other office software, be organized and confidential, and possess strong interpersonal skills. Pay is commensurate with experience and benefits are included. To apply, please send your resume to lifereyberger@sldmfishers.org.

Investing with Faith/Jolinda Moore

Consider ways to support the Church with end-of-year gifts

It’s hard to believe, but 2021 is entering its final month in a few days. The beautiful season of Advent begins this weekend, and hopefully you just enjoyed a memorable Thanksgiving holiday. At its best, these days each year are marked with faith, family and friends, as well as a spirit of connectedness and thinking of others. Our own blessings from God often come into focus in a unique way, and the joyful urge to share those with others can play upon our hearts.

As we approach the archdiocesan Office of Stewardship and Development, we have a unique opportunity to witness firsthand how this sense of gratitude and generosity often continues on through Christmas and the end of the year in the form of gifts for archdiocesan ministries. Whether it’s someone’s United Catholic Appeal (UCA) pledge contribution or parish capital campaign gift or donation to a school’s endowment, the Catholic faithful’s desire to give back and care for those in need is evident. If you find yourself with this inclination to support the Church before the end of the calendar year, we want to share that there may be certain types of charitable gifts that can offer advantages to you as well. A number of giving strategies can help lower your income and taxes this year, and shift dollars to charitable dollars to support your favorite cause. Though rarely the account, with the designee receiving 100% of the gift.

• Raised AGI limit for cash gifts—In 2021, there is an increased limitation on charitable deductions for cash gifts, from 60% of adjusted gross income (AGI) to 100% of AGI. Some donors could find 2021 a very good year to make a large cash gift.

As you experience this season of giving, please know that we are here to help you explore any end-of-year charitable strategies and serve the parish, school or ministry that you cherish. We take great care to ensure that all gifts are used to fulfill a donor’s intentions. Please visit our website, www.archindy.org/CCF, to share with us details on gifts of IRA, stock or transactions from your donor advised fund. If you would like further information on any of these gifts, please contact us.

(Jolinda Moore is executive director of the archdiocesan Office of Stewardship and Development and the Catholic Community Foundation [CCF]. Tax or legal information provided herein is not intended as tax or legal advice. Always consult with your legal, tax or financial advisors before implementing any gift plan. If you would like to learn more about including your parish in your estate plans, please contact us any time. We exist to exclusively serve you and your parish in planned giving. For more information on the CCF, visit www.archindy.org/CCF; e-mail ccf@archindy.org; or call 317-236-1482.)

Consultant

Employment

Director of Operations

Our Lady of Mt Carmel is currently seeking a candidate to fill the position of Director of Operations (“DOO”). The DOO supports the Pastor with the stewardship of the human, financial, informational and physical resources of the Parish and serves as the professional administrator and strategic leader of the Parish. Applicant must have a Bachelor’s degree in Business (preferably accounting) and a minimum of 5 years of experience in accounting or business management, possess advanced proficiency in computer use in general and the use of Microsoft word, Excel and other office software, be organized and confidential, and possess strong interpersonal skills. Pay is commensurate with experience and benefits are included. To apply, please send your resume to Glen Ritchey at Ritcheyg@alms.org by Dec. 10, 2021.

Director of Liturgical Music Ministries

St. Louis de Montfort Church in Fishers, Indiana has an immediate opening for a Director of Liturgical Music Ministries. The director is responsible for the effective operation, planning, organization, and management of the stewardship of the human, financial, informational and physical resources of the Parish and serves as the professional administrator and strategic leader of the Parish. Applicant must have a Bachelor’s degree in Business (preferably accounting) and a minimum of 5 years of experience in accounting or business management, possess advanced proficiency in computer use in general and the use of Microsoft word, Excel and other office software, be organized and confidential, and possess strong interpersonal skills. Pay is commensurate with experience and benefits are included. To apply, please send your resume to lifereyberger@sldmfishers.org.
Make a BIG Impact through your end-of-year giving.

UNITED CATHOLIC APPEAL
Giving to the United Catholic Appeal is one way to ensure that 100% of your gift goes exactly where you designate it to go. Every dollar is used to fund ministry. And every dollar makes a big difference in our Church and in our communities.

YOUR GIFT SUPPORTS IMMEDIATE MINISTRY NEEDS IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:
• Young adult and college campus ministry
• Intercultural ministry
• Catechetical programs
• Youth ministry
• Pro-life and family life ministry
• Office of Catholic Schools
• Seminarian education
• Retired priests support
• Catholic Charities
• MTCA/NDAA center-city schools
• Deacon formation
• Healing ministry for divorce/grief

Questions: Contact Dana Stone at 317-236-1591.

www.archindy.org/UCA

CATHOLIC COMMUNITY FOUNDATION, INC.
CREATE A LEGACY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.

Endowment | Consider coming together as a family to source an endowment in memory of a loved one, or towards a collective passion.

Donor Advised Fund | These can be a powerful tax benefit. You will need to act quickly to claim your deductions for this year.

IRA Charitable Rollover | If you are age 70 1/2 or over, and own an IRA, you can make a gift using a direct transfer of funds from your IRA.

Stocks, Bonds & Mutual Funds | Appreciated stock, held for more than one year, can be the ideal choice for individuals who want their charitable gifts to make the biggest impact for the lowest possible cost.

Donations can be made by cash, check, credit card or publicly traded securities such as stocks, bonds or mutual funds. Allow two weeks processing for securities’ donations.

We are here to help guide you! Call Kim Pohovey at 317-236-1568 for more information.

www.archindy.org/CCF

INSTITUTE FOR QUALITY EDUCATION
SCHOLARSHIP GRANTING ORGANIZATION

Your gift to the Indiana State Tax Credit Scholarship Program benefits the students and families in the 68 archdiocesan elementary and high schools throughout central and southern Indiana.

You can designate your gift to the Catholic school of your choice.

Donations can be made by cash, check, credit card or publicly traded securities such as stocks, bonds or mutual funds. Allow two weeks processing for securities’ donations.

Take advantage of a 50% state tax credit while transforming the life of a deserving student!

Questions: Contact Ellen Sanders at 317-236-1501.

www.i4qed.org/donate

We are grateful to you for your prayerful consideration in making a year-end gift!
You can make a difference today in someone else’s life tomorrow.