Archdiocesan Catholics show ‘eucharistic love’ in Corpus Christi processions

By Sean Gallagher

Since the Diocese of Vincennes, Ind. (which later became the Archdiocese of Indianapolis) was founded in 1834 to today, Catholics from around the world have come here to live out their faith.

An important public religious tradition by which they have done this is an outdoor eucharistic procession on the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, traditionally known as Corpus Christi.

On June 19, the feast of Corpus Christi this year, Catholics from across central and southern Indiana will take part in a eucharistic procession in the heart of downtown Indianapolis from SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral to St. John the Evangelist Church. It is part of the start in the archdiocese of the three-year National Eucharistic Revival.

The June 19 procession will be the latest expression of the love and devotion that Catholics in the archdiocese have had for the Eucharist for 188 years, and their desire to pass that...
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saying, ‘Let us pray with you.’ “I saw those smiles and thought, ‘I need to be around them.' That’s what drew me to the Catholics.”

She was received into the full communion of the Church as a member of Holy Angels Parish in Indianapolis during an Easter Vigil Mass celebrated on April 16. But at 60, Grant was active in other faiths before finding her home among “those people who smile a lot.”

‘Drawn to that kind of love’

Grant’s journey was steeped in faith from the start.

“My grandfather led a sanctified Church, so I have a very religious and Christian background,” she says. In her teens, Grant’s family moved and joined the Jehovah’s Witness church. But “at 18 I began my own faith journey,” she says.

She was a member of an Apostolic Church for a time, then became a member of Calvary Temple Church in Indianapolis.

“I was involved in a lot of ministries there,” says Grant. “The evangelical church kept me going, but I still didn’t feel filled up.”

It was in between her time in those two churches that Grant was introduced to the “smiling people” of the Catholic faith.

“I came out of a divorce when I moved to Indianapolis in the early 2000s, says Grant. “My children and I ended up in Holy Family Shelter. “At the shelter, people were welcoming us and praying with us. The people there were always smiling. When you’re going through something and people were always smiling—that was huge for me. It made a big difference in my world.”

So did the kindness.

“It was the kindness that we mothers in the shelter always talked about,” she recalls. Grant experienced those same smiles and kindness when she turned to the St. Vincent de Paul Society for assistance in starting over after Holy Family Shelter helped her family find a home.

“I was always embraced by Catholics,” she says. “They were always kind. I was drawn to that kind of love.”

So began her attempt to become Catholic—four times.

Grant joined a Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCLA) program and says she was “just fascinated with the information.”

But issues with “lazy” landlords led to moving three times in as many years. The instability prevented her from completing RCLA.

In 2019, Grant started in RCLA at Holy Angels, then a car accident prevented her from continuing.

She attempted RCLA at Holy Angels again in 2020 via Zoom in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, but “I went through a lot that year, and my mind was not into joining.”

In 2021, her third attempt at RCLA at Holy Angels proved to be the charm. At the Easter Vigil Mass on April 16, Grant at last joined the ranks of “smiling, kind” Catholics.

“It felt like home”

“The more she learned in RCLA, the more Grant knew she’d found the right path. “As I started going through the history and the faith life of Catholics, the value of Mass and the Eucharist, it felt like home,” she says. “It was so fascinating to learn about all of it, and there’s always more. It defined the things I’d been taught.”

Grant says the Catholic Church “allows me to go deeper. It’s so much more than surface rituals, more than just taking Communion.”

“Everything has meaning—it’s not just showing up on Easter and partaking and then all year nothing else going on. There’s the liturgical seasons, like Lent and Advent. That’s what really takes me to another level, the depth of it all.”

Grant chose St. Teresa of Calcutta as her confirmation name. It was the saint’s quality as “a genuine giver” that impressed her.

“That was fascinating to me, that someone actually dedicated their life to just loving other people,” she says.

‘I just want to give’

Giving and loving others are traits Grant identifies with. Having been on the receiving end of so much kindness and generosity, she now feels called to give back through a non-profit organization she founded in 2019.

While living in Holy Family Shelter, Grant—who already had a master’s degree in accounting—was working on a capstone project for her second master’s degree, this time in strategic business.

“For my capstone, I said I wanted to start a non-profit,” she recalls. “I wanted to pay it forward.”

She envisioned a transitional homeless shelter for veterans in 2007, but eventually had to close it.

Grant began teaching as an adjunct professor at various colleges. In 2019 she started a new non-profit called TEACH (Taking Education and Challenges Higher) Resource Group.

The organization has two components: the first is helping those in need by distributing donated items she receives from Walmart and other partners. The second is teaching entrepreneurial classes.

The recipients of the donations are “several youth-oriented non-profits” she’s partnered with, says Grant. For example, one non-profit seeks to reunite children with their incarcerated fathers, putting them on events in prisons. Another teaches youth how to assemble bikes. Her organization has also supplied food, book bags and holiday items to churches.

On the educational side, her organization will start offering entrepreneurial classes at a Chick-fil-A’s “success center” in August through a partnership with the company.

“I want to bless others the way I was blessed,” says Grant, who continues to work part-time teaching virtual business courses for Ivy Tech Community College and doing field research with the University of Michigan—while working toward earning her doctorate in education in 2024.

“I just want to give,” she continues. “I just want to bless others to smile.”

Just as the Catholics she encountered when she needed help showed her smiles and kindness.

“They were always there, always serving, and they did it from the heart,” says Grant. “The kindness I felt carried me a long way.”

FAith AT THE 500

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson celebrates Mass on May 21 at the Trackside 19 Garage at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. Assisting him is Father Joseph Felix, pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in New Albany and a volunteer chaplain for IndyCar Ministry. Sweden’s Marcus Ericsson won the 100th running of the Indianapolis 500 later that day. (Submitted photo by Charles Schna)
on to the next generation and the broader community.

“We had the body and blood of Christ!” The first recorded Corpus Christi procession that took place at Holy Family Parish in Oldenburg was in 1846, just 12 years after the Diocese of Vincennes was founded.

German Catholic immigrants who settled in the new village that year began a tradition that has continued uninterrupted to this day that is rooted in the centuries-old custom of eucharistic processions in Germany.

That includes a three-volley shotgun salute by a Schiessener Kompanie (“Shooter Company”) to honor the Trinity during Benediction at altars along the route that winds its way along the borders of the town.

Holy Family parishioner Mary Gehring has helped to coordinate the procession for more than 20 years and is proud of how it has continued every year, even in 2020 at the start of the coronavirus pandemic.

“We’ve kept it going—rain, shine or major disease,” Gehring said. “We’ve not missed a year, through the Civil War, World War I or World War II.” She noted that the procession isn’t simply an expression of civic pride in Oldenburg, but rooted deeply in the Catholic faith.

“It really reflects what we believe in so much,” Gehring said. “The town was founded on the Catholic faith. That was what kept it going, the people who made it the beautiful little village that it is, through fires, floods and famines.

“We had the body and blood of Christ. And we’ve done this every year to renew our faith.”

Still, during her time in organizing the procession, Gehring has said that there have been challenges that have put their longstanding custom into question. “But I’ve always come back and prayed.

“OK God. This is for you. We believe in you. Help us out a little here,” she said. “And he does. I don’t worry about it anymore.”

Passing on a gift

William Selin, a member of St. Joan of Arc Parish in Indianapolis, grew up as a member of St. Michael Parish in Brookville. He had family members who lived in Oldenburg going back to the Civil War.

So, each year in his youth he and his family would drive to Oldenburg for the Corpus Christi procession. His memories of “the incense, the singing, the bell ringing and the shot guns” remain sharp decades later.

“The Corpus Christi tradition in Oldenburg was a gift to me, a real gift,” said Selin. “And it wasn’t just my family’s ties to Oldenburg, but the great tradition of the Church, especially with German immigrants. It was a wonderful thing.”

Selin passed that gift on to his children when he and his family would return to Oldenburg to take part in the annual procession.

In more recent years, though, he has helped to organize Corpus Christi processions at St. Joan of Arc. “It’s a dream come true,” Selin said.

“I’m almost moved to tears. Last year, we had several hundred parishioners processing. It was humbling, really. It’s a public expression of our love and devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. Then, when you take it to the streets, you’re sharing that.”

“Eucharistic love”

When Father Michael Keucher was ordained a priest in 2015, he was determined that he would have a Corpus Christi procession every year.

That wasn’t because of his experience of such processions growing up. He knew very little about Corpus Christi processions until he spent a summer in Guatemala as a seminarian.

One parish in the city where he was staying organized a procession for Corpus Christi Sunday.

“That procession closed down the entire city for that weekend,” Father Keucher recalled. “And then each church in the city would take a turn having a procession for the next several weekends.”

Taking part in those processions opened his heart to the power of this Catholic tradition.

“It was so beautiful, Jesus hitting the streets,” Father Keucher said. “You had such a large crowd literally following our Lord. People on the side of the streets would kneel and put their hands in the air as soon as they caught sight of the Blessed Sacrament. That was eucharistic love.”

He’s organized Corpus Christi processions each year since he became pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Shelbyville in 2017. Hundreds of parishioners take part in the procession, many of them Hispanic Catholics like those he witnessed in Guatemala.

Father Keucher is glad to see the love for the Eucharist so evident in Hispanic Catholics in Shelbyville. It is also being renewed in the parishioners whose families have been rooted in St. Joseph for generations.

“The public expression of our faith is part and parcel of who we are as Catholics,” he said. “It has to include that. It’s inspiring for me to see so many parishioners really want that. That’s who we are as Catholics.”

James Velez, coordinator of Hispanic ministry at St. Joseph, has grown in his love of the Eucharist since becoming a member of the Bateulse Deenreath faith community in 2005 and has grown to appreciate the same devotion in his fellow Latino Catholics in Shelbyville.

“They want to share what they have,” Velez said. “They don’t want their customs to die off. This is an immigrant country. That’s the beauty of the United States, how we incorporate all those different cultures and their ethnic background into what we are as a community.”

For St. Joseph parishioner America Diaz, the most important people she wants to pass on a love of the Eucharist to is her children. Taking them to the annual Corpus Christi procession in Shelbyville is one way of doing that.

“It’s really important for us,” Diaz said of the annual procession. “We enjoy doing it. Every time we do it, I think we have the Holy Spirit coming down upon everyone. It’s amazing.

“It’s important to let them know that it’s Jesus [we adore] on Corpus Christi. We need that. If you teach that when they’re little, then they’ll grow up with it.”

Allowing Jesus ‘to take center stage’

This year, St. Joseph Parish will have its Corpus Christi procession on the evening of June 18 so that parishioners can take part in the procession in Indianapolis the following day.

Father Keucher is helping to coordinate the June 19 procession and is looking forward to the Blessed Sacrament being taken in procession throughout the streets of downtown Indianapolis.

“The possibilities with this procession are beautiful,” he said. “It’s going to be a lovely witness to the biggest city in Indiana of the Church’s love of the Eucharist.

‘It’s a good way to start the Eucharistic Revival in such a public way, to allow Jesus to take center stage on the streets with us following him and kneeling along the side.’

After seeing the beauty of Corpus Christi processions in Shelbyville, Velez is excited about experiencing it on the streets of Indianapolis.

‘I’ll be there and I’m promoting it here at St. Joseph,’ Velez said. ‘It’s going to have a huge impact with so many people who will see the faith of people walking with the Blessed Sacrament.

‘It may steer their hearts to come to or come back to the Church or to just spend an hour with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.”

(Fore more information about the start of the National Eucharistic Revival in Indianapolis on June 19, visit eucharistrevivalindy.org.)

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Congratulations!
Reflection/Sean Gallagher

Highs and lows in racing and in life can lead to humility, gratitude

The Indianapolis 500 is a grueling marathon. Drivers and their teams have to push themselves and their cars to their ultimate limits over nearly three hours to have a chance to finish first. But in most cases, all of their combined racing knowledge and experience will come up short. After all, only one driver can win the race.

Yet we remember the other 32 drivers out of the speedway’s 33, and the uplifting tone of their race. Sometimes it’s race-changing moments that are out of their control. At other times, it’s the tiniest of mistakes.

Both happened last Sunday. IndyCar’s 2021 series champion Alex Palou was the fastest qualifier for this year’s Indy 500 and traded the lead often in the early part of the race with his teammate and pole sitter Scott Dixon.

But a crash that occurred just when Palou was coming in for his second pit stop closed pit lane and forced him to drive through it without getting any service. Low on fuel, Palou was forced to come down the closed pit lane again to refuel. That resulted in him being assessed a drive-through penalty.

This quirk in timing, wholly out of Palou’s control, led to him going far back in the race to the back of the pack.

Dixon was at the top of the field for much of the race, leading 95 of its 200 laps. No other driver, except Palou, could challenge him.

But when he went in for his last pit stop late in the race, Dixon drove just past the speed limit for the pit lane and was assessed a drive-through penalty, which put him at the back of the field. He finished in 21st place.

The racer who benefitted from these misfortunes was winner Marcus Ericsson. But the race’s Borg Warner Trophy didn’t just fall into his lap. He was the fifth fastest qualifier for the race and drove hard all Sunday to put himself into a position to take advantage of Dixon’s late downfall.

But what happened in the 106th Indy 500 happened to all of us. We have our highs and lows. Our hard work to achieve them is sometimes thwarted by circumstances out of our control. We make small mistakes that have effects that seem out of proportion.

We can naturally lead to the kind of tremendous frustration that Palou and Dixon experienced last Sunday. But if we’re wise, it can lead us to a humbling recognition of the mysterious work of God’s providence in our lives.

Dixon has experienced success in his racing career, winning six IndyCar series championships and 51 races, third only to racing legends A.J. Foyle and Mario Andretti. He even won the Indy 500 back in 2008.

That racing excellence is often overshadowed by Dixon’s checked (but mostly uncheckered) flag record at Indianapolis. While he’s been the race’s pole sitter five times, including this year, he’s more often than not forced hard luck and mistakes that’s kept him from winning.

Now, Dixon’s frustrating record in the Indy 500 might be. Dixon can humbly find satisfaction in the success he’s experienced elsewhere.

Likewise, while Ericsson can be justly proud of the effort he made to win the Indy 500, an easy examination of the overall causes of his victory should lead him to humility, too. Circumstances wholly out of his control had to happen for him to win.

Humility, strengthened by God’s grace and a prayerful examination of our lives, can lead us to a more thorough and long-lasting satisfaction for the successes we’ve experienced, but maybe not originally planned for ourselves.

More importantly, humility can lead us to gratitude for the many ways that God works in our lives that are entirely his loving gift to us.

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

Letters from readers are published in The Criterion as part of the newspaper’s commitment to “encourage the exchange of freely-held and expressed opinion among the People of God” (Communio et Progressio, 116).

Letters from readers are welcome and every effort will be made to include letters from as many people and representing as many viewpoints as possible. Letters should be informed, relevant, well-expressed and temperate and conform to the following guidelines:

Letters Policy

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

Send letters to “Letters to the Editor,” The Criterion, 1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367. Readers with access to e-mail may send letters to criterion@archindy.org.
“El Espíritu Santo nos regala el don de la alegría

“De repente, vino del cielo un ruido como de un violento fuego de viento y llenó toda la casa donde estaban reunidos. Se les apareció entonces un hombre lleno de fuego que se repartieron y se posaron sobre cada uno de ellos. Todos fueron llenos del Espíritu Santo y comenzaron a hablar en diferentes lenguas, según el Espíritu les concedía expresarse

(Acts 2:2-4).

Las palabras de la Secuencia de Pentecostés expresan nuestro deseo de recibir la gracia transformadora que proporciona el Espíritu Santo.

Ven, Espíritu Santo, Lava lo que está manchado, riega lo que es árido, cura lo que está enfermo. Doblega lo que es rígido, calienta lo que es frío, dirige lo que está extraviado. Necesitamos la ayuda del Espíritu para “doblegar lo que es rígido” y llevar la ternura, la justicia y la paz a las situaciones que siempre desean fomentar. Necesitamos que todos nos unamos para hacer frente a las frías corrientes que favorecen la gracia transformadora que llega a nuestras almas a través del Espíritu Santo en el mundo. Es el Espíritu quien nos impulsa a ser buenos amigos y amigas del arte, ayudar a nuestras almas a través de Él, podemos “ser Cristo” para los demás.

En estos tiempos difíciles, en los que todo experimentamos la oscuridad y la profunda desunión que rompe las familias, las comunidades y las naciones, necesitamos más que nunca los dones del Espíritu Santo. Tenemos que aprender a perdonar a los demás, a entablar un diálogo respetuoso con las personas con las que tenemos fuertes diferencias y a rezar por nuestros enemigos. Necesitamos la gracia del Espíritu Santo para que nos ayude a ser mujeres y hombres para los demás, especialmente en medio de una cultura que nos dice que solamente debemos velar por nuestros propios intereses.

Estas palabras de la Secuencia de Pentecostés expresan nuestro deseo de recibir la gracia transformadora que proporciona el Espíritu Santo.
June 6
St. Jude Parish Hospitality Room, 5533 McFarland Rd., Indianapolis. Bereavement Group, 7 p.m., last of six sessions, attending all sessions recommended but not required. Information: 317-786-4717 or jmslou@archindy.org.

June 8

June 9-11
Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. Parish Festival, Thurs. 11-11 p.m., Fri. 5 p.m.-midnight, Sat. 2 p.m.-midnight. Information: 317-888-2861 or info@olgreenwood.org.

June 10-11
Virtual Catholic Homeschool Conference. Fri. 3:30-8:30 p.m., Sat. 11 a.m.-6:30 p.m., sponsored by Homeschool Connections, $38.97. Information and registration: catholichomeschoolconference.com.

June 11
Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Parish, 520 Stevens St., Indianapolis. Italian Street Festival, 5-11 p.m., more than 25 Italian meats, pastas, salads, desserts, homemade spaghetti sauce, pizza, cannoli, cheese, Italian beer and wine, live music, dancing, religious procession Sat. 6-45 p.m., 7 p.m. Mass, free parking in Elf Lilly lots on East and New Jersey streets, free admission. Information: 317-636-4478 or indianaunifest.com.

June 14
St. Pius X Parish, 7200 Sarto Dr., Indianapolis. Informational meeting on helping with SPEED retreat (virtual option available) 7-8 p.m., for those interested in helping with archdiocesan Ministry for Persons with Special Needs retreat for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities on July 24-23 in Beech Grove, no special medical or educational background necessary. Information: Erin Jeffries at jeffries@archindy.org, 317-517-4744.

June 15
Church of the Immaculate Conception, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. Taizé Prayer at the Woods, 7-8 p.m., silent and spoken prayers, simple music, silence, virtual attendance available. Information: 317-355-2992 or prayer@spwmu.org.

June 16

June 16
St. Joseph Church, 1401 S. Mckieley Ave., Indianapolis. Third Thursday Adoration, interceding for women experiencing crisis pregnancy, 11 a.m.-7 p.m., with Mass at 5:45 p.m. Information: 317-244-9002.

June 17

June 17

June 17
St. Charles Borromeo Parish, 2222 E. 66th St., Bloomington. Hog Road and Beat Garden Fest, 4:30-8 p.m., benefiting Bloomington St. Vincent de Paul Society; featuring Justin Bloomington St. Vincent de Paul Society; Roberts and T.I. 11:00 a.m. 6:30 p.m. Kiln Dance instructor, beer and wine, face painting, food, ice tea, lemonade, 510 adult admission pre-sale, $12 walk-in; child 6-12 $6, children ages 5 and under free. Information: 812-961-1510.

June 17-18
St. Thomas More Parish, 1200 N. Indiana St., Mooresville. Wonders Fest, Fri. 5-10 p.m., Sat. 11 a.m.-10 p.m., food and entertainment from around the world, hot air balloon rides, Texas Hold’Em, corn hole, raffle, magic show, free admission. Information: 317-416-7170.

June 18
St. Michael Parish, 145 St. Michael Blvd., Bloomfield Parish Festival, 11 a.m.-11 p.m., fried chicken dinner 11 a.m.-6 p.m., music by 90 Proof Twang 7-10 p.m, beer garden, silent and spoken prayers, children’s games, free admission. Information: 765-647-5462 or brookvilleparish@gmail.com.

June 18
St. John the Evangelist Church, 126 W. Georgia St., Indianapolis. Eucharistic Holy Hour for Opening of Eucharistic Revival, 7:45-6:30 p.m., benediction 6:30-7 p.m. Information: eucharisticrevivalindy.org.

June 20
St. Thea Bowman Black Catholic Women Monthly Prayer Gathering, via Zoom, third Monday of each month, sponsored by archdiocesan Black Catholic Ministry, 7 p.m. Information: cutt.ly/9hO-ThePrayers, meeting ID 810 3567 0684 or dail-in at 301-715-8952. Information: pgranger@archindy.org or 317-236-1474.

Wedding Anniversary Mass with Archbishop Thompson is set for Aug. 14
The archdiocesan Annual Wedding Anniversary Mass, to be celebrated by Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, will take place at SS. Peter and Paul Catholic, 1347 N. Meridian St., in Indianapolis, at 2 p.m. on Aug. 14. A reception will follow across the street at the Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center Assembly Hall, 1400 N. Meridian St., for all Mass attendees, $24 non-members. For additional questions, contact Claudia Corona at 317-236-7310 or ccorona@archindy.org.

Wedding Anniversaries

Hubert and Eulalae Hagedorn

Hubert and Eulalae (Walters) Hagedorn, members of St. Mark Parish in Perry County, will celebrate their 75th wedding anniversary on June 10.

The couple was married in St. Mark Church in Perry County on June 10, 1947. They have seven children: Rita Eunice, Marylou Flanion, Becky Hubert, Rosetta Westmoreland, Don, Ed and Linus Hagedorn. The couple also has 14 grandchildren and 19 great-grandchildren. They will celebrate with a Mass of thanksgiving on June 12.

Edward and Sandy Gehrich

Edward and Sandy (Lucas) Gehrich, members of St. Rose of Lima Parish in Franklin, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on June 2.

The couple was married in St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Church in Indianapolis on June 2, 1972.

They have three children: Ed, David and Michael Gehrich. The couple also has eight grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Mark and Susan Burke

Mark and Susan Quill Burke, members of St. Matthew the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on June 3.

The couple was married in the Bishop Chatard High School in Indianapolis on June 3, 1972.

They have three children: Sarah, Andrew and Philip Burke. The couple also has two grandchildren.
By Mike Nelson

“Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid.”

Jesus spoke these words to his disciples (Jn 14:27) at the Last Supper, when he himself had every reason to be afraid of what was to come during the next 24 hours. Then again, maybe not, because Jesus also knew what would happen once that frightful period was over—that he would rise from the dead, speak to and eat with his disciples, and ascend to heaven. But what was to come during the next 24 hours? (CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz, Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary Church in Southampton, N.Y.)

So, too, with us. As faithful to the Lord and his teachings as we try to be, there are times in nearly every day when fear gets the better of us. Will my children be safe at school today? What new infection or disease will my spouse’s blood tests show? How will we pay these bills if I’m getting laid off? Today’s state of the world is enough to arouse fear in our hearts. Will the pandemic strike us or our loved ones? Will our country’s people ever again speak to those of opposing views with civility and without rancor? What part of the world will erupt in violence next? It is important to note that fear is a passion and, in and of itself, “neither good nor evil,” says the Catechism of the Catholic Church (#1831). “They make the faithful docile in readily obeying divine inspirations.”

Both the prophet Isaiah (“His delight shall be the fear of the Lord,” Is 11:3) and St. Bonaventure (“Grant us fear, by which we may draw back from evil and submit to what is good”) allude to the gift of the fear of the Lord—a gift that, writes the late Jesuit Father John Hardon in his Modern Catholic Dictionary, confirms the theological virtue of hope. Yet for many people, it is not “fear of the Lord” that absorbs or exacerbates their “fear quotient.”

“As Christians, we are not immune to feelings of anxiety from facing a health crisis such as the coronavirus outbreak or other life-changing events such as the death of a spouse or other loved one, workplace complications, financial problems and so on,” said Elizabeth Galanti, a Catholic licensed mental health counselor in Buffalo, N.Y.

“However,” she added, “the phrase ‘fear not’ is used more than 80 times in the Scriptures because fear decreases our hope when we face difficult trials.”

How so? Galanti cites St. Paul’s Second Letter to Timothy: “God did not give us a spirit of timidity but a spirit of power and love and self-control” (2 Tm 1:7).

“We need to calm our fears,” she said, “by resting in our faith in God and in the knowledge that our God is a loving God and he is in control. We might still feel afraid, but we can believe that God is with us. We may not be in control, but we can put our trust in the One who is. We may not know the future, but we can know the God who does.”

Other therapists and counselors with a religious perspective and/or affiliation say prayer and Scripture study can be viable tools for calming and eliminating fears. (CNS photo/courtesy Catholic Charities, Archdiocese of Oklahoma City)

Amy Shipman, director of counseling, and Stephanie Spizer, office manager at Catholic Charities in Oklahoma City, illustrate tele-counseling amid the coronavirus pandemic in this undated photo. Therapists and counselors with a religious perspective and/or affiliation say prayer and Scripture study can be viable tools for calming and eliminating fears. So, too, are various techniques to promote exercise, relaxation, healthy diet and dialogue—deep breathing, spiritual reading, consuming less alcohol and caffeine, support groups—that aren’t necessarily tied to faith.

Sometimes, though, professional counseling or therapy may be needed, which for some who profess faith in God seems almost heretical, as if to suggest that God alone isn’t enough. For these folks, it is necessary to broaden their understanding of God, the Church and faith.

“To sit back and expect divine intervention to change things without any effort or insight on your part can be presumption,” said Allison Rucciaro, a licensed mental health counselor in New York and founder of CatholicTherapists.com. “We work together in the body of Christ, and when help is required there is no shame in seeking it out.”

For Catholics, therapy is most beneficial when the faith is integrated into the process, asserted Rucciaro. “Ultimately, good Catholic therapy will help you to transfer your dependence on the therapist to God and the faith. Therapy can help heal the wounds and impediments to healthy relationships and that relationship with God is the basis for true happiness.”

Just “taking the risk of starting therapy,” she added, “is an act of faith in and of itself. It says that you believe that things can change and that you can have a happier life.”

And although our lives can get “derailed” by the realities of daily life, “God’s desire and plan for your happiness doesn’t change,” said Ricciardi. “He will use all of your pain and regrets for your ultimate good. Therapy is one vehicle he uses to help you move from a painful past into a happier future. Don’t let your fears get in the way.”

(Catholic journalist Mike Nelson writes from southern California.)
Amid the Fray/Greg Erlandson

When it comes to abortion, who’s listening to the women?

The leaked draft Supreme Court document that laid out the case for overturning Roe v. Wade made creating a constitutional right to abortion unlikely. Abortion advocates are furious that the forthcoming ruling may toss abortion back to the states, hoping to work furiously to have laws in place at the state level to ban abortions. In either case, the strength of argument will be piled up nearly to nearly level of government for the foreseeable future.

At the start of the high court’s final decision in June, we might do well to listen to Getty Israel, the founder and CEO of Sisters in Birth, located in Mississippi.

Sisters in Birth exists to help poor and underserved women in the poorest state in the union to give birth to healthy babies and to help mothers find the care they need. In a recent interview, Israel sounded fed up with the swirling national debate.

“When interviewed on National Public Radio’s (NPR) “Morning Edition,” Israel did not take the standard NPR line on abortion. She sounded ticked off at everybody.

“When we get calls from women—and we do—who are looking for an abortion, the first question I ask is, ‘What’s going on?’

Because, yes, I want to change her mind. Yes, I want to reduce the number of Black lives lost in an era of Black Lives Matter,” she said.

“Pro-choice people are willing to wage a war … to keep abortion on the table to create any community-based interventions to address the various underlying risk factors that will lead a woman to look for an abortion,” Israel charged.

What’s missing from the national debate, she added, are the voices of women who are considering abortion. “No one ever says, ‘What do you need? What can we do to help improve your life so that you don’t find that you need to have an abortion?’ ”

“When a woman is seeking abortion, she, alone,” she continued. “Pro-choice people aren’t walking down the path with her, and neither are the pro-life people, beyond beating her over the head with a Bible.”

Almost 38% of Mississippians are Black, the highest in the nation. Yet they account for 68% of abortions. Women looking for abortion often work minimum-wage jobs without health insurance. They are beset by poverty and a torn social net.

Mississippi also has the highest rate of infant deaths in the first 12 months of life. Sixty percent of the state’s babies are Black; many of whom were born premature. Yet state medical care for pregnant women and for new mothers in poverty is minimal and underfunded.

Banning abortion will not make Mississippi a pro-life state. The racist murder of Black shoppers in Buffalo, N.Y., has transformed the nation, but Getty Israel is right. Hundreds of thousands of Black babies are being aborted or dying in their first year of life for lack of adequate health care and support.

Nationwide there are bold pro-life efforts like the Women’s Health Choice program, every Catholic health facility, every Catholic Charities program, every Catholic church, every Catholic college and university were asking women for help, to inspire and create culture changing. The challenge is, how do we make this more than just a slogan?

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The Sunday Readings
Sunday, June 5, 2022

- 1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13
- John 14:15-16, 23b-26

This weekend the Church celebrates the feast of Pentecost. After Easter and Christmas, it is the most important feast of the liturgical year because of the mysterious coming of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles.

The first reading for this weekend, from the Acts of the Apostles, recalls this event. Pentecost occurred in Jerusalem, where the Apostles had gathered after the Lord’s ascension. In the first part of the reading, the identity of the Holy Spirit is clearly given. The Spirit is God and comes from God. To understand how clearly this identity is given, it is necessary to be familiar with the symbols for God used in the Old Testament.

First, a “strong, driving wind” blew (Acts 2:1). Ancient biblical writings associated great gusting winds with God. Secondly, fire appeared. Fire also often symbolized God in the Old Testament, as when Moses encountered God in Sinai. These symbols revealed that the Holy Spirit is God. The Lord’s divine identity again is affirmed, since Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would come. Jesus and the Spirit, with the Father, are one.

The reading proceeds. After being empowered by the Spirit and prompted by the Spirit, the Apostles went into Jerusalem. As a result of Pentecost, they suddenly had the ability to speak in foreign languages. Importantly, they felt suddenly had the ability to speak in foreign languages. Importantly, they felt

the Lord through the power of the Holy Spirit. We’re gathered around the Church itself. The Apostles formed the Church. Their successors still preach the Lord’s words, bringing Jesus to us. Thus, the Church carefully protects the Apostles’ teaching simply because it never wants to lose these teachings.

We are the Church, bonded with the Lord through the power of the Holy Spirit. We’re gathered around the Apostles, as were the first Christians in Jerusalem mentioned in Acts. In Jesus our security and a peace, a peace drawn from realizing that Jesus truly is the way, the truth and the life. Through the Church, in God’s merciful love, Jesus gives us the Holy Spirit, the source of wisdom and strength. 

My Journey to God
In Every Language
By Linda Abner
Thank you, thank you, thank you, God! For Holy water in the fonts
Candles may be lit.
Opening procession down the aisle
Gathering song!
Thank you, thank you
For glorious crimson bouquets
Crowning Your Sanctuary.
Crying out Your Spirit’s descent.
For Glorias to be sung and Alleluias to be raised on this blessed day,
the promise fulfilled of Our Risen Lord.
Thank you, Gracias, Merci!
For joyous return of belted gifts
After such a long and aching absence!
Blessings bestowed ever more
to our praise and worship of You, Oh God
Beloved in every language
Every one on that first glorious outpouring
Of Your Spirit.
Grazie, Muito Obriagado, Spasibo, Taek!
In tongues and words unframed in our hearts
Forever and ever!
Thank you.

Daily Readings
Monday, June 6
The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church
Genesis 3:15-20, of Acts 1:12-14
Psalm 87:1b-13, 5, 7
John 19:25-34

Tuesday, June 7
1 Kings 17:17-20
Psalm 4:3-5, 7b-8
Matthew 5:13-16

Wednesday, June 8
1 Kings 16:20-23
Psalm 16:1b-2b, 4-5, 8, 11
Matthew 5:17-19

Thursday, June 9
St. Ephrem, deacon and doctor of the Church
1 Kings 18:14-46
Psalm 65:10-13
Matthew 5:20-26

Question Corner
Fr. Kenneth Doyle
Pastors can dispense a parishioner’s obligation to attend Sunday Mass
(
Editor’s note: This column by Father Kenneth Doyle was originally published in 2014.)

Q
Every summer, I go on a cruise. Only one cruise line (Holland America) continues to have a priest on board to celebrate Mass. When we travel on other cruise lines, frequently we have missed Sunday Mass because there was no priest on board and we could not get to a Catholic church if we happened to be in port. Is missing Mass in such circumstances a mortal sin? (Maryland)

A
The Catechism of the Catholic Church says that Catholics "are obliged to participate in the Eucharist on days of obligation, unless excused for a serious reason [for example, illness, the care of infants]

or dispensed by their own pastor" (#2181).

All the Code of Canon Law allows a pastor, in individual cases, to dispense from the Mass obligation “for a just cause” (canon 1245). The code says “for a just cause” rather than for a “grave” or “serious” cause.

As a pastor, I would consider a once-a-year cruise to be a "just cause." The same provision of the code allows a pastor, when granting a dispensation, to assign some other “pious work.” It could be, for example, reflecting on the Scriptural readings for that day’s Mass, praying the rosary or, after you have returned home, attending a Mass on a day when you are not obliged.

So, my recommendation is to consult your pastor next time for such a dispensation.

P
Please help settle a discussion I have been having with some friends. The question is whether a priest can celebrate Mass and, necessarily, receive Communion in a state of mortal sin, if the Mass is already scheduled and people are waiting for it to begin. First, can he do so if confession is easily available to him? Next, if confession is not easily available, can he just try to make a perfect act of contrition and go ahead with the Mass? (Louisiana)

A
If the priest in question has the opportunity to confess his sins before celebrating Mass, of course he is obliged to do so. A priest is bound by the same requirement as other Catholics: to be in the state of grace to receive the Eucharist worthily.

But what if there is no opportunity to confess before a Mass for which the priest is scheduled? The Church’s Code of Canon Law speaks to that situation directly: “A person who is conscious of grave sin is not to celebrate Mass or receive the body of the Lord without previous sacramental confession unless there is a grave reason and there is no opportunity to confess; in this case, the person is to remember that an obligation to make an act of perfect contrition which includes the resolution of confessing as soon as possible” (1916).

If a congregation is expecting a Mass and there is no practical opportunity to recruit a substitute celebrant, for the good of souls the priest may profess his sorrow privately to the Lord (perfect contrition is based on the love of God rather than the fear of punishment), celebrate the Mass and go to confession later.
Meet our future deacons

Neil May
Name: Neil May
Age: 42
Wife: Kristin May
Home Parish: St. Susanna Parish in Plainfield
Occupation: School bus driver

Mike Nygra
Name: Mike Nygra
Age: 56
Wife: Susan Nygra
Home Parish: St. Michael the Archangel in Indianapolis
Occupation: Claims consultant for The Hartford Insurance Group

Who are the important role models in your life of faith?

The role models in my life of faith were my mom and dad, along with my six other siblings. My parents raised all seven of us to be very spiritual and very regular, and we remain firm in our faith. Other role models include my aunts, Benedictine sisters who taught me in school, sports coaches and Father Bernie Etienne and Archbishop Paul D. Etienne, whom I grew up with in Tell City.

What are your favorite Scripture verses, saints, prayers and devotions?

The beautiful thing about the Scriptures is that a verse can become my favorite on any given day and time because God speaks to me at the time. St. Maximilian Kolbe and St. John Paul II are among my favorite saints. My favorite prayers are the rosary and the Liturgy of the Hours; both serve a particular function in keeping me grounded and centered in Christ.

Deacons often minister, formally or informally, to others in the workplace. Have you experienced that already and what do you anticipate doing in the future?

When I was a high school teacher, kids came in with some pretty sticky issues and needed guidance. It was a tough opportunity to try to provide them with hope and peace at a time when everything seemed to be falling apart in their lives.

Why do you feel that God is calling you to become a deacon?

I have felt God calling me to serve for about 20 years, although I wouldn’t describe it as a calling; it’s more like how magnetic north influences a compass needle. The direction of my life has taken turns toward God by my inner compass that keeps me oriented. Regarding the diaconate, there have been dozens of events that Kristin and I know were God’s hand working through events. Some were planned, know, because of the happiness and joy we feel, despite the challenges, that we have arrived where God wants us—to serve him and his people as disciples of Christ.

How will being ordained a deacon have an impact on your life and family?

I know being ordained will change me. When I became a naval officer and then a commanding officer, given an enormous amount of responsibility, putting on that beautiful white uniform put me to the test. I need to become the best I could be. So many great and brave men and women have worn the same uniform. There was no excuse for me not to let them down. However, more profoundly and more importantly, when I don the deacon alb and dalmatic, I will feel the same responsibility to serve the Church and others to the utmost of my ability. Serving my country was good; serving God is the greatest good. As for my family, I am a father of seven children. Although the last four years have presented challenges, I have an open heart. I am in prayer every day and that God will guide me to the right path. I want to be a man of courage and faith. I have become more firm in my belief in miracles.

How do you hope to serve through your life and ministry as a deacon?

I hope to serve St. Susanna and the archdiocese in every and any way to help us all get closer to Christ and sainthood. The education I have received these past few years has been exceptional, and it’s time to use it. Action in serving my family, my St. Susanna family, and others in Christ is all I desire to do with my remaining days.

Why do you feel that God is calling you to become a deacon?

At 41, I began to discern. I was approached by several people who recommended that I consider becoming a deacon. At first, I shrugged these suggestions off. But as more and more of my acquaintances planted these seeds, I figured maybe the Holy Spirit was trying to tell me something. So, I’m simply trying to do what I believe is our Lord’s divine will for my life. I have a deep desire to give my life in service, to my family, to my Church, and whomever I am asked to serve as a deacon.

How will being ordained a deacon have an impact on your life and family?

Throughout the discernment and formation processes, I have had the company of my wife and children. Although the last four years have presented challenges, I can honestly say my life has been much fuller by the service I have been asked to engage in, especially as a minister to the homebound and as a teacher of the faith. With the time commitments that come with the diaconate, I have tried to be more attentive to my wife and children in the times we do have together. This will continue to be a primary focus following ordination.

How do you hope to serve through your life and ministry as a deacon?

I will simply put, in whatever ways I am asked to serve: my pastor Father John Kamwedzo and Archbishop Charles C. Thompson. I commit to remaining open to the Lord’s divine will and simply take one day at a time.

Eucharistic Revival to begin in the archdiocese on June 19

The three-year National Eucharistic Revival will begin in the archdiocese on June 19 in Indianapolis with two Masses celebrated at 1 p.m. and 3 p.m., both at St. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. There are 15 men from across central and southern Indiana who will be ordained. This week’s issue of The Criterion continues a series of profiles of these men that will run in the weeks leading up to that important day.

Who are the important role models in your life of faith?

I received my faith from my deceased grandparents, Joe and Gene Nygra. Not only did they give good example by faithfully attending Mass each week, but they always spoke to me about the importance of our faith when I was growing up.

What are your favorite Scripture verses, saints, prayers and devotions?

My favorite Scripture verses are Joshua 24:15 and John 15:5. These passages help me to remember to always make our Lord and his divine will the first priorities in my life. My favorite saints, other than St. Joseph and Our Lady, are St. John the Baptist and St. Thomas More. My favorite prayer is the “Animia Christi.” It is a powerful way to live from the graces received in the holy Eucharist. I am also devoted to Our Lady of Fatima and her request for the practices of the Five First Saturdays. I begin each day with meditation on the mysteries of the rosary and allow Our Lady to lead me closer to her Son.

Deacons often minister, formally or informally, to others in the workplace. Have you experienced that already and what do you anticipate doing in the future?

To lead others to Christ, we have to live joyfully and strive to be servants. People are attracted to others who are clearly happy in life and who give their lives to others. I approach each workday with these two goals in mind and with each encounter I have as a professional. When people ask the source of my joy, I am never afraid to proclaim Jesus Christ and the importance of his one true Church to the fulfillment I find in this life.

Eucharist and Secular Misdemeanor

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

EthicsPoint
Online Reporting www.archdioceseofindianapolis.ethicspoint.com or 800-393-6810
Victim Assistance Coordinator, Archdiocese of Indianapolis 317-236-1548 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1548 victimassistance@archindy.org

The 1 p.m. Mass will be primarily celebrated in English. Other languages included in the liturgy will be American Sign Language, Korean, Vietnamese, Tagalog and Burmese dialects spoken in the archdiocese.

The 3 p.m. Mass will be primarily celebrated in Spanish. French will also be included in this liturgy.

A Festival of Faith, Family and Service will take place from 1-4 p.m. in the parking lot of the Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., in Indianapolis. It will feature lunch, service projects, family games and music. At about 4:15 p.m., following the conclusion of the 3 p.m. Mass, a eucharistic procession will begin that will go from SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral to St. John the Evangelist Church, 126 W. Georgia St., in Indianapolis.

Children who have received their first Communion this year are invited to take part in the procession while accompanied by a parent, teacher or cathchist.

All newly initiated Catholics, as those received into the Church at Easter, can also take part in the procession.

Other Catholics are invited to line the procession route and bring banners, flags and other religious articles to decorate the route.

After the Blessed Sacrament arrives at St. John, a holy hour will take place that will conclude with Benediction at 6:30 p.m. Men and women religious from across the archdiocese are especially encouraged to take part in the holy hour.

As more details about the June 19 event are determined, they will be posted at eucharistrevivalindy.org.
VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis announced he will create 21 new cardinals on Aug. 27, including five Americans.

A retired Indianapolis native who will be eligible to vote in a conclave, and the number of cardinals will total 130.

President Biden openly conceded that he probably lacked authority to act, but he decided to curry favor with his electoral supporters. The president has no student loans. Congress has not forgiven pay the bills. Congress to act.

Democrats” who couldn’t persuade “to quell a rebellion among angry turned out for wasting his master’s goods.

continue from page 8

Employment

Archdiocese of Indianapolis

Maintenance Technician

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis is always on the lookout for good, competent and committed maintenance technicians. We have regular turnover of maintenance staff at the Archdiocese level, as well as at our parishes. We are looking for both entry-level maintenance technicians who can be trained and career maintenance professionals who may be looking to make a career change. Working authorities and our parishes can be a treasured and spiritual way to enhance your spiritual connection with the Church. This may also be an excellent way for you to apply your time, talents and treasures.

We need persons with knowledge of HVAC, electrical, plumbing, roofing, and career maintenance professionals who may be looking to make a career change. Working authorities and our parishes can be a treasured and spiritual way to enhance your spiritual connection with the Church. This may also be an excellent way for you to apply your time, talents and treasures.

Applicants need to be able to work independently, but be capable of working as a team player. A driver’s license and background check are required.

Communication skills are very important.

Full- and part-time positions are available. Full-time positions offer a full complement of benefits.

Interested parties should send their resumes to: Dherbertz@archindy.org.
St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities offers ‘hope of a better tomorrow’

By Natalie Hooper

LOUISVILLE, Ky.—Mention St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities to residents of New Albany and the surrounding area, and the agency’s crisis maternity services might be the first image to come to mind.

But “the services we provide are always growing and changing,” said agency director Mark Casper. “While we maintain offering maternity home services, today St. Elizabeth is so much more. Today we are the emergency homeless shelter for women and children” in central southern Indiana.

He made these remarks to more than 550 people during St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities’ Giving Hope—Changing Lives fundraiser gala held in the Galt House Hotel in Louisville on April 21.

“We have added a mountain of those recovering from addiction, and this shelter,” Casper continued. “These are women and children” in central southern Indiana.

“We are already working on coming up meeting this changing need.”

The Community

Casper noted that the agency works affordable supportive housing, domestic violence transitional housing, a supported living program and adoption services, and Marie’s Community Distribution, which offers free items to local families in need.

“God had a plan for her life.”

Several of those services were highlighted at the event.

After the agency’s Spirit of Hope Award was presented to Paula Robinson, participants watched a video on the positive impact of Marie’s Community Distribution, followed by an agency social worker reading a letter of gratitude from a Hispanic woman whose family benefited from the help of the maternity and housing services.

Last, a young family with two small children took the stage to talk about St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities’ adoption services.

“When my husband and I got married...we had talked about adoption being something we both wanted to do,” said Lauren Niehoff.

What she and her husband Brian didn’t know was that, “after 12 foster kids in four years in our home, two years of infertility treatments and so many failed attempts, adoption would be how we welcomed our first baby girl, Roslyn.

“I wanted our baby to come from a local mom. We wanted to know our money was being put to good use. After we learned about St. Elizabeth and all the services our money went to, it felt like a no-brainer for our family.”

Niehoff described the moment she received the call that the couple had been chosen by a birth mother as feeling like they “had won the lottery.”

She said she and Brian “fell in love with our birth mom.”

“What I love about St. Elizabeth is they’re very pro-open adoption,” said Niehoff. “They keep a box for you to send photos and letters, and keep them until the birth mom is ready to come get them.”

The Niehoffs, who have since adopted their second daughter, Ainsley, during the St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities fundraiser gala at Galt House Hotel in Louisville on April 21.

“It’s all showing Christ’s love.”

“Adoption and St. Elizabeth fulfilled a dream that I wanted to be a mother.”

“I hope one day Roslyn will find herself on a stage very similar to this, speaking about how God had a plan for her life...I hope she sees that she was honored by two families who cared so much for her—one woman who gave up everything to give her a good life, and one family who gave up everything just to get her.”

“IT’S all showing Christ’s love”

Indian Rep. Edward Clerc was present for the event. The Republican representing the state’s 72nd District—which includes New Albany where he now resides—grew up near the city. He called St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities “an exceptional organization that touches our region in so many ways.”

“One of the many things I really appreciate about St. Elizabeth is their commitment to the area where they’re located,” he said. “They’re good stewards. People want to support organizations that are good stewards, and there are few better stewards than St. Elizabeth.”

He said the name of the gala, Giving Hope—Changing Lives, is more than a slogan.

“The stories that you hear at this event about lives that have been changed—their work is quite literally life-changing.”

Casper noted that the agency works with more than 100 churches of various faiths in the area.

Mari Coyle, a member of Christ Church, attended the event. She said her church supports the work of St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities.

“I’m Pentecostal, and my husband is Catholic,” she said. “We value life. When people are in situations, you don’t scorn them—you help them. Denominations don’t matter—it’s all showing Christ’s love.”

“And they truly value the women. They don’t just give them ‘things.’ They give them skills to utilize and grow upon.”

Coyle appreciates the organization’s focus.

“They’re centered around Christ,” she said. “I think anytime you center something around Christ, it’s going to be successful.”

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