Forged by fire and faith

Young firefighter’s trust in God continues to be inflamed, even in life-threatening moments

14th in an occasional series

( Editor’s note: In this series, The Criterion is featuring young adults who have found a home in the Church and strive to live their faith in their everyday life.)

By John Shaughnessy

Joe Ybarra reached for his rosary as the wildfire raged across the Idaho mountainside, threatening the lives of him and the seven other firefighters from the U.S. Forest Service. As the fire rushed toward his team, Ybarra fingered the rosary beads and prayed that he would be safe so he could return one day to his family and friends in Indiana.

At first, the threat had been minimal when the fire on Scarface Mountain began on Aug. 7, 2021. After arriving on the scene by helicopter, Ybarra and the seven other firefighters noticed that the fire appeared to be dying out after scorching about 15 acres, thanks to helicopter crews pouring down water on the mountain.

"The next day, we started work around 7 in the morning, building a line around the fire to try to contain the remnants of it," Ybarra recalls.

Yet the wind kicked up a short time later, fanning the smoldering fire, leading it to roar again—and the combination of fire and smoke was so dense it made it hard for the firefighters to see, forcing them to rush back to their base camp.

"At base camp, we saw the fire rapidly grow within a matter of seconds, from the bottom of a

See YOUNG ADULT page 10

Photo: Indianapolis resident Joe Ybarra spent more than a year fighting wildfires in Idaho and Nevada, a time when he relied on his faith in God and the power of the rosary to protect him. (Submitted photo)
Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin and Dr. Carolyn Woo smile at a gala in Indianapolis on July 28 during which they and others were recognized with the Indiana Living Legends Award, the highest honor given by the Indiana Historical Society.

By Natalie Hoefer

On July 28, Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin and Dr. Carolyn Woo were among six recipients of this year’s Indiana Living Legends Award, the highest honor given by the Indiana Historical Society (IHS). Cardinal Tobin, former archbishop of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis from 2012-16, is now archbishop of Newark, N.J. Woo was CEO of Catholic Relief Services—which provides humanitarian relief and development in more than 100 countries—from 2012-16, and has worked in higher administration at Purdue and Notre Dame universities.

The Indiana Living Legend Award “recognizes extraordinary Hoosiers for their local, statewide and national accomplishments in a variety of areas and disciplines,” according to the IHS website.

“Indiana Living Legends is our highest honor,” Indiana Historical Society president and CEO Jody Brinkmeyer told The Criterion. “We don’t take it lightly. I think both [Cardinal Tobin and Woo] are phenomenal choices, each highly deserving in their own ways. What I appreciate about both is neither are originally from Indiana, but epitomize very much what we in Indiana hold as really important values and character traits.”

The award was presented during a gala at the Eugene and Marilyn Glick Indiana History Center in Indianapolis.

“The celebration gave me a reason to return to Indianapolis and be with people who have so deeply touched my life,” Cardinal Tobin told The Criterion.

While he does not consider himself a living legend, the cardinal does “accept my status as an adopted Hoosier and thank God that Hoosiers, especially the members of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, have recognized in my life some values that they cherish.”

Cardinal Tobin said that since Oct. 16, 2012, the day Pope Benedict XVI appointed him as shepherd of the Church in central and southern Indiana, he has been “tutored in the school of ‘Hoosier Hospitality,’ a way of life that is infinitely more than a slope.”

“I believe that this value given to speaking with others, welcoming strangers and struggling sincerely to resolve disputes is a precious contribution of the state of Indiana to our Church, nation and world.”

Woo shared with The Criterion her memory of arriving in Indianapolis 50 years ago to study at Purdue University.

“I came to Indiana with two very heavy suitcases without wheels, one year of tuition, and a pocketful of dreams and worries,” she said.

“This award is a testament to living each day well; taking advantage of opportunities for learning and growing, doing the good that you can do now, trusting God and God’s will,” she said.

In Indiana, Woo encountered people who “came forward to welcome, befriend, teach and mentor me every step of the way.”

She acknowledges leaders from the five corporate boards of directors in Indiana she served on as “exemplary models of values-based leadership.”

“Hoosier hospitality and genuineness, unpretentious goodness nurtured and given by the Indiana Historical Society, has given me so much.”

“For me on the accomplishments of Cardinal Tobin and Woo, go to cutt.ly/LivingLegends.”

Pope Francis says VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Following Christ’s example of love and service to those in need is not a task reserved to a select few but a calling for all Christians, Pope Francis said.

Jesus’ image of entering the kingdom of heaven through a “narrow gate” does not mean that “only a few are destined to go through it,” but instead means living “one’s life in love, in service, and in giving oneself as he did,” the pope said on Aug. 21 during his Sunday Angelus address.

“To enter the plan God proposes for our lives requires that we restrict the space of selfishness, reduce the presumption of self-sufficiency, lower the heights of pride and arrogance, and that we overcome laziness, in order to traverse the risk of love, even when it involves the crosses,” he said.

After praying the Angelus prayer, Pope Francis said he was following news of the continued repression against the Catholic Church in Nicaragua “with concern and sorrow.”

On Aug. 19, Nicaraguan police burst into Matagalpa diocesan headquarters and removed Bishop Rolando Alvarez and nearly a dozen others who had been under house arrest for more than two weeks.

Although the pope did not specifically mention Bishop Alvarez’s arrest, he prayed for peace in the country through Mary’s intercession.

“The door is open to everyone,” he said. “Do not forget this. The door is open to everyone.”

Service is a calling for all, not a select few, Pope Francis says
A member of a religious community in the archdiocese and a Catholic who grew up here recently professed final vows in their respective communities.

Brother Basil Lumsden professed solemn vows on Aug. 15 as a member of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad during a Mass in the monastic community’s Archabbey Church of Our Lady of Einsiedeln.

A native of Trinidad, Brother Basil, 48, has studied music in London and Canterbury, England, and liturgy in Mundelein, Ill., and Oxford, England. He also served in liturgical music in England and Bermuda.

At Saint Meinrad, he has served as an organist, monastery guest master and dining room assistant.

Sister of Life Christi Zetzl professed perpetual vows on Aug. 5 during a Mass at St. Patrick Cathedral in New York. Her religious community is based in New York and serves mothers and their children, both born and unborn, in several missions across the country and in Canada.

Inquiry sessions for permanent diaconate set to start on Sept. 18 in Indianapolis

The archdiocesan Office of Deacon Formation is beginning a period of inquiry and discernment for those interested in the permanent diaconate. In the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, formation for the permanent diaconate is a five-year process beginning with a year of inquiry and discernment.

The first year includes a series of monthly meetings, beginning in September and concluding in March, which are held in various locations across central and southern Indiana. The sessions are open to all those who wish to enter into discernment. Serious applicants are expected to attend all the meetings. If they are married, it is asked that their wives also attend.

Formal application packets will be distributed in January of the discernment year to those who have actively participated in the discernment process. The applications will then be reviewed by a selection committee, and those who are selected to enter formation will begin the formal four-year process in August 2023.

The sessions will begin at 2:30 p.m. and conclude by 4:30 p.m. No pre-registration is required for these sessions.

The following is a list of the dates and locations of the sessions:

- Sept. 18, St. Lawrence Parish, 6944 E. 46th St., in Indianapolis.
- Oct. 16, Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, 1752 Scheller Lane, in New Albany.
- Nov. 13, Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish, 2322 N. 13 1/2 St., in Terre Haute.
- Dec. 11, St. Louis Parish, 13 St. Louis Place, in Batesville.
- Jan. 15, St. Andrew the Apostle Parish, 4050 E. 38th St., in Indianapolis.
- Feb. 12, St. Bartholomew Parish, 1306 27th St., in Columbus.
- March 12, St. Joseph Parish, 1875 S. County Road 700 W., North Vernon.

For more information, contact the archdiocesan Office of Deacon Formation at 800-382-9836, ext. 1492, 317-236-1492, or e-mail Deacon Kerry Blandford, archdiocesan director of deacon formation, at kblandford@archindy.org.

Onward, Christian Soldiers

“We like a mighty army moves the Church of God: Brothers, we are treading where the saints have trod. We are not divided, all one body we, One in hope and doctrine, one in charity.”

From the hymn Onward Christian Soldiers

Together, we can do many great things. We can feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and give homeless families a safe place to rest. We can educate our future priests and care for our retired priests. We can support our youth and young adults with faith-centered programs and activities. And that’s not all!

Your support of the United Catholic Appeal makes all of these things possible. Please give today at www.archindy.org/UCA.
Editorial

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

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson speaks on March 5 at St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus to participants of a meeting titled “Listen to the Voice of Creation.” The archdiocese is launching a synodal process, Archbishop Thompson said, in order to advise the bishops who will direct our church together, and the life, the joy and the love we have together, the ways we have grown and to direct our representation of this year’s theme. Just as Moses listened to the voice in the burning bush, we also must listen to the voice of God through the cries of the suffering, the harmony of biodiversity, and the meaning within the rhythm of nature. As Pope Francis states in his encyclical ‘Laudato Si’: ‘On Care for Our Common Home,’ ‘Nature is filled with words of love’ (§225). By listening to the voices in our community, we become more committed to our vocation to care for our common home.

Join us in this Season of Creation for prayer and opportunities that we in the archdiocesan Creation Care Commission are offering to reflect, pray, and grow and listen. • Mass for the Season of Creation On Sept. 13, we invite you to join us for Mass for Creation at 5:15 p.m. at St. Mary Church, 317 N. New Jersey St., Indianapolis. Archbishop Charles C. Thompson will preside. A light reception will also be held after Mass.

• Ecumenical Service/Blessing of Pets. On Sept. 1, as part of the World Day of Prayer for Creation, Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, 1483 E. Washington St., Indianapolis, will host an ecumenical prayer service at 7 p.m. A blessing of pets will also be offered.

• Season of Creation Prayer Service. On Sept. 29, St. Thomas Aquinas Church, 4625 Kenwood Ave., Indianapolis, is hosting a Season of Creation prayer service at 7 p.m.

• Green Festival/Carrie Newcomer Concert. On Sept. 10, the Creation Care Commission is partnering with the local See FITZPATRICK, page 20

Be Our Guest/Sr. Sheila Marie Fitzpatrick, O.S.B.
The 2022 Season of Creation calls us to ‘Listen to the Voice of Creation’

The Season of Creation is an annual celebration of prayer and action for God’s created world. It begins on Sept. 1, the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, and ends on Oct. 4, the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of ecology. This is a time to renew our relationship with each other and all creation through celebration, conversion and commitment towards the common good. This year’s theme is “Listen to the Voice of Creation.” The first word in the Rule of St. Benedict is “Listen.” “Listen with the ear of your heart.”

To listen with the ear of our heart is to hear the stirrings of the Holy Spirit in all forms, to discern how the Holy Spirit is calling us and to direct our actions accordingly.

The burning bush is offered as a visual representation of this year’s theme. Just as Moses listened to the voice in the burning bush, we also must listen to the voice of God through the cries of the suffering, the harmony of biodiversity, and the meaning within the rhythm of nature.

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Reflection/John Shaughnessy

A morning prayer—thanking God for the gift of another day

Dear God,

I come to you again today, asking for your help.

No, this time it’s not about a sports team that I root for, even though we both know that you’ll always support me—no, this time it’s about you and making unrealistic promises again. Notre Dame football season begins.

Forgive me for the things I can’t change.

Still, there are other parts of my life I continue to need to get better at, ways in which I’ve failed more times than I’d like to admit. And since you’ve given me the gift of another day, I’m asking for your help to be more of the person you want me to be. And so I pray this morning:

Someone will need another person to lift them up and making unrealistic promises again. Notre Dame football season begins. Forgive me for the things I can’t change.

Still, there are other parts of my life I continue to need to get better at, ways in which I’ve failed more times than I’d like to admit. And since you’ve given me the gift of another day, I’m asking for your help to be more of the person you want me to be. And so I pray this morning:

Someone will need to be lifted up today. Help me to give someone the lift they need.

Someone will need a laugh today. Help me to share the humor in life with them, even if it good-naturedly comes at my expense.

Someone will lose their spouse today. Be with them. And help me to be a more loving spouse today, taking the time to focus on the qualities that drew us together, the ways we have grown together, and the life, the joy and the love that we share.

Someone will need another person to listen to them today. Help me listen and, more importantly, help me to hear them.

Someone will have their dream crushed today. Help me to comfort them and, if possible, help me make someone’s dream come true.

Someone will lose a sibling today. Be with them. And help me to remind my siblings how lucky they are to have me as their brother—a reminder that will lead them to give me a hard time as they recall all the dumb things I’ve done as a brother, which will lead to everyone roaring in laughter, which will remind me of how blessed I am to be in the same family as them.

Someone may be hurt or slighted by something I do today. Help me to ask for forgiveness.

Someone may hurt or slight me today. Help me to forgive them.

Someone will lose a child today. Be with them. And help me to be a better parent. Even though my children are all adults now, help me to still be there for them, to listen to them, to comfort them, to rejoice with them, to pray for them, and especially to forgive them when they get together and laugh hysterically as they recall outstanding stories about my faults as a father as they were growing up, even if the stories are true.

Someone will need a prayer today. Help me to make time to ask you to be there for them, to be there with them.

Someone will need my help today. Help me to see that need and take the time to answer.

Someone will lose a friend today. Be with them. And help me to reach out to my friends more often to celebrate the people they are and the bonds we share.

Someone will today forget all the blessings you have given me— including the hope of eternal life with you someday.

Thank you also for the gift of this day, and other opportunities to draw closer to you, to draw closer to others.

Help me to make the most of this day, my friend. Amen.

(John Shaughnessy is the assistant editor of The Criterion.)
Confesiones

“(San Agustín, y coronados los mártires habían sido sacrificados celebrara correctamente en aquellos la comunión del cuerpo del Señor se aprendió a llevar a los oratorios de Jesus Christ whose life and teaching bore powerful witness to the truth of our faith. St. Monica can be seen as a patron saint of parents who worry about their children’s practice of their faith. As many parents have learned over the past 2,000 years, but especially today, it’s always too late to have children baptized and given a solid formation at home and in religious education classes. The young Augustine was raised in the Christian faith, but like many others he drifted away from the Church and searched for meaning and purpose elsewhere. The world he inhabited as a young man, as a student of philosophy, and as an ardent truth-seeker, was not unlike our contemporary secular culture. Augustine tried out many philosophies, and he lived in ways that his mother disapproved of, even fathering a child out of wedlock. But Monica never gave up on him. With tears and heartfelt prayers, she begged God to reveal himself to her wayward son and to help him find the Way, the Truth, and the Life that is Christ. After many years of anxious concern, this devout mother’s prayers were answered, and one of the greatest theologians our Church has ever known emerged from the darkness of false thinking and living and was baptized into the light of Christ. St. Monica’s experience can be a source of inspiration and hope to parents in every age who worry about their children’s spiritual life. The sanctifying grace imparted by baptism remains in the heart and soul of every child who receives this great gift from his or her parents through the power of the Holy Spirit and the ministry of the Church. That’s why we believe that the sacrament of baptism can be an “indelible mark on the soul” that cannot be washed away by sin or neglect. In addition, the formation in faith given to children, youths and young adults stays with them even if it recedes into the background of their conscious awareness. Parents of grown children may be tempted to ask, “Why did I spend so much time and money on my kids’ religious education when they no longer practice their faith?” But the experience of many anxious parents, like St. Monica, is that we cannot control what our children do with the gifts that we give them. Often enough, however, the seeds we plant (by the grace of God) do produce good fruits over time if they are nurtured by our good example and our prayer. It is essential for parents to model the behavior they hope their children will adopt. That’s why it’s so important for parents to take their children with them to Mass on Sundays, to receive the sacrament of reconciliation (confession) regularly, and to purgure family prayer and devotions. If parents only give lip service to the practice of their faith, how can they expect their children to take it seriously? Parents who want to see their children make progress during their recent "penitential journey" to Canada, the gift of faith can never be imposed on anyone. It must be witnessed to in the lives of those who want to share their faith, hope and joy with others. Parents who worry about their children’s practice of the faith should look first to their own words and example. Are they living in ways that can inspire and encourage our children? Or do they live in ways that are indistinguishable from the secular world around them? St. Monica didn’t force her son to open his heart and change his life. She didn’t impose her faith on him. What she did was to live fully her own Christian faith and then to pray fervently for her son’s conversion. Let’s ask this great saint to intercede for all parents and their children. May the grace of every child’s baptism be nurtured by the faithful witness and fervent prayer of their parents. And may our Church always support and encourage parents in their efforts to share the faith, hope and joy of Christ with their children.†

Parents help children practice faith through example, prayer

“En lugar de un cesto lleno de frutos de la tierra, [santísima] Mónica había aprendido a llevar a sus oratorios a los mártires un corazón lleno de las peticiones más puras, y a dar todo lo que podía a los pobres, para que la comunión del cuerpo de Cristo se celebrara correctamente en aquellos lugares donde, a ejemplo de su pasión, los mártires habían sido sacrificados y coronados” (St. Agustín, Confesiones 6.2.2).

Mañana, 27 de agosto, se celebra la memoria de santa Mónica, madre de san Agustín. Sabemos que sus oraciones fueron escuchadas cuando su hijo finalmente rompió su obstinado orgullo e individualidad a Dios, y Agustín se convirtió en un ferviente discípulo de Jesucristo cuya vida y enseñanzas produjeron un poderoso testimonio de la verdad de nuestra fe.

Santa Mónica puede considerarse patróna de los padres que se preocupan por la práctica de la fe de sus hijos. Como han aprendido muchos padres a lo largo de los siglos 2,000 años, pero sobre todo hoy, no basta con que los niños sean bautizados y reciban una sólida formación en casa y en las clases de educación religiosa. El joven Agustín fue educado en la
de sus padres por el poder del Espíritu Santo y el ministerio de la Iglesia. Por eso creemos que el sacramento del bautismo imparte una “marca indeleble en el alma” que no puede ser lavada por el pecado o el abandono. Además, la formación en la fe que se da a los niños, jóvenes y adultos jóvenes permanece con ellos aunque que se aleje de la Iglesia y busquen el sentido de pensar y de vivir en otra parte. El mundo que Agustín habitó como estudiante de filosofía y como ardiente buscador de la verdad de nuestra fe y de las tinieblas de los falsos modos de pensar y de vivir emergió uno de los máximos pensadores de nuestra Iglesia, y nos ofrece la esperanza y la alegría de Cristo con sus hijos. †

Los padres ayudan a sus hijos a practicar la fe mediante el ejemplo y la oración

Christ the cornerstone

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Los padres ayudan a sus hijos a practicar la fe mediante el ejemplo y la oración
Wedding Anniversaries

LAWRENCE and CHARLENE (TWEWLL) BUTCHER, members of Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Beech Grove, will celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary on Sept. 1.

The couple was married in St. John Church in Loogtoot, Ind. (Diocese of Evansville), on Sept. 15, 1962.

They have three children: Laurie Lundy, David and Steven Butcher.

The couple also has three grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

DONALD and SUZIE (RADCLIFFE) KOCHERT, members of St. Mary-of-the-Knobs Parish in Floyd County, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on Sept. 1.

The couple was married in the former St. Augustine Church in Salem on Sept. 19, 1972.

They have three children: Anthony, Charles and Jeffrey Kochert.

The couple also has five grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

EDWIN and MADONNA (STEINER) HANKEN, members of St. Pius X Parish in Indianapolis, will celebrate their 55th wedding anniversary on Aug. 26.

They were married in St. Peter Church in Montgomery, Ind. (Diocese of Evansville), on Aug. 26, 1967.

They have five children: Michael, Patrick and Father Robert Hanken.

The couple also has five grandchildren.

ROBERT and THERESA (FELDMAN) SIEFFER, members of SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Parish in Greenwood, will celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary on Sept. 24.

The couple was married in St. Mary Church in Greensburg on Sept. 2, 1997.

They have five children: Michael, Brian, Aimee, Sophia and Emile Siefker.

The couple also has five grandchildren.

CARLOS and GINNY (NAGEL) MORALES, members of St. Mark the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Aug. 25.

The couple was married in Our Lady of LaSalette Parish in Berkley, Mich., on Aug. 25, 1972.

They have two children: Alissa Honegger and Amanda Spanger.

The couple also has four grandchildren.

The Villages of Indianola

ONLINE FOSTER PARENTING

In-Home Care Information Night, 6-8 p.m., for those interested in becoming a foster parent, free information and registration: 317-775-6500 or cutty@villageindy.org

September 1

Our Lady of Lourdes Church, 5333 E. Washington St., Indianapolis.

World Day of Prayer for Creation, 7 p.m., prayer service in English and Spanish, also available by livestream, free. Information: 317-956-6453.

September 2

On the lawn of the Greenwood Church, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood.

First Friday bilingual celebration of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Mass 5:45 p.m. followed by adoration until 9 p.m., sacrament of reconciliation available. Information: 317-349-6009; grace548@hotmail.com

September 4-2

St. Joseph Parish, 1401 S. Mckley Ave., Indianapolis.

Fall Festival, Fri. and Sat. 5-11 p.m., Sun. 3-11 p.m., rides, food, blackjacks, free admission. Information: 317-244-9002.

September 5

St. Anthony of Padua Church, 4773 Church Rd., Morris.

Lamb & Day Picnic, 11 a.m.-6 p.m., fried chicken dinners include 1/2 chicken, mashed potatoes, green beans, slaw, dessert; live music, beer garden, children’s games, cash raffle, free admission. Information: 317-934-6218 or parishoffice@stanthonytoday.org.

September 9-10

Prince of Peace Schools, 221 W. St. Matheo.

Shaw and Pope John Summer Festival, 5 p.m.-midnight, carnival rides, family games, food, live music, $3 admission. Information: 312-273-5835.

September 9-11

Biking for Brides in Indianapolis, riders needed for short or long distances to raise money for Indianapolis Knights of Columbus’ Ultrasound fund. $45. Information, registration: cutty@bikebabies.com.

September 10

St. Joan of Arc Parish, 4217 Central Ave., Indianapolis.

French Market, noon-10 p.m., live music, 50 artisan booths, French food, bake sale, raffle, children’s games until 5 p.m., Mass 5:30 p.m., tours of restored church at 1:30; 3:30 and 6:30 p.m., free admission. Information: 317-283-5508, sjoa.org/about-french-market.

September 12

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis.

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House Fall Festival, 5:30-9 p.m., author Beth Leonard presenting, 9-9:45 a.m., run/walk, 10 a.m., rain or shine, 2-mile path, wheelchair and stroller accessible, $15, walk-ups welcome. Proceeds benefit Providence Food Pantry. Information, advance registration: jchrost@gmail.com; call or text 812-208-6157.

For a list of events for the next four weeks as reported to The Criterion, log on to www.archindy.org/events

For sponsorship information, go to catholicradioindy.org.
Let the beauty and unity of the liturgy astonish us

Pope Francis has written an apostolic letter on the “Traditio Desideravi” (“On the Liturgical Formation of the People of God”). A year after the publication of “Traditio custodes,” a document issued by the pope on his own initiative and personally signed by him, “Traditio custodes” restricts the celebration of the Mass which was approved by Pope St. John XXIII in 1962 prior to the Second Vatican Council, sometimes colloquially called the “Traditional Latin Mass” or the “Traditio Mass” or the “Tridentine Mass.” “Desiderio Desideravi” describes the Holy Father’s personal view of the meaning and purpose of the eucharistic liturgy. It also flows from his “desire to offer some prompts or cues for reflections that can aid in the contemplation of the beauty and truth of Christian celebration” (#1).

The Latin name of this new letter is a reference to the words of Jesus immediately prior to the Last Supper: “I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer” (Lk 22:15). The pope writes that “These words of Jesus, with which the account of the Last Supper opens, are the surprising possibility of inviting the depth of the love of the persons of the Most Holy Trinity for us” (#2).

Thus, like Jesus, Pope Francis encourages us to contemplate the depth of love that is present to us each time we participate in the eucharistic liturgy. He also strongly desires that we will be united in and by the liturgy, not separated into factions, arguing over which form of the Mass is more authentic.

Of course, a thin line separates diversity in the sacred liturgy—which has been a feature of the Church’s liturgical experience since the beginning—from divisiveness, which stands in opposition to everything that our Lord intended when he instituted this great sacrament and gave himself to us in the eucharistic mystery. So, the challenge is how to maintain unity while encouraging appropriate diversity.

Pope Francis wants to discourage the ideological view that the older form of the liturgy is somehow more authentic than the form of the liturgy approved following the Second Vatican Council. This point is made powerfully in the following paragraph from “Desiderio Desideravi”:

If the liturgy is “the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed, and at the same time the font from which all her power flows,” “[w]hen the Concilium Concilium is well then, we can understand what is at stake in the liturgical question. It would be trivial to read the tensions, unfortunately present around the celebration, as a simple divergence between different tastes concerning a particular ritual form.

The problematic is primarily ecclesiological. I also set out to affirm what it is possible to say that one recognizes the validity of the Council—though it amazes me that a Catholic might presume not to do so—and at the same time not accept the liturgical reform born out of “Sacrosanctum Concilium,” a document that expresses the reality of the liturgy intimately joined to the vision of Church so admirably described in “Lumen Gentium.”

For this reason, as I already expressed in my letter to all the bishops, I have felt it my duty to affirm that “the liturgical books promulgated by Sctus Paulus Vst et Sancti John Paul II, in conformity with the decrees of Vatican Council II, are the unique expression of the lex orandi of the Roman Rite” (Motu proprio, “Traditio custodes,” art. 1) (#31).

In his reflections on the liturgy, Pope Francis expresses his love for the Mass in its current form. He also argues for a renewed sense of unity among all God’s people as they come together “proclaiming the praises of God and the hopes of the human heart through Jesus Christ and in the Holy Spirit” (#30). As the Holy Father makes clear, “the non-acceptance of the liturgical reform, as also to superficial understanding of it, distracts us from the obligation of finding responses to the question that I come back to repeating: How can we grow in our capacity to live in full the liturgical action? How do we continue to let ourselves be amazed at what happens in the celebration under our very eyes?” (#31).

Pope Francis believes that all of us are in need of a serious and dynamic liturgical formation. “Let us abandon our polemics to listen together to what the Spirit is saying to the Church,” the pope says. “Let us safeguard our communion. Let us continue to be astonished at the beauty of the liturgy” (#61).

(Daniel Conway is a member of The Criterion’s editorial committee.)

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El rostro de la misericordia/Daniel Conway

Dejemos que la belleza y la unidad de la liturgia nos asombren

El Papa Francisco ha escrito una carta apostólica sobre la liturgia titulada “Desiderio Desideravi” (“Sobre la formación litúrgica del pueblo de Dios”). Estas reflexiones llegan casi un año después de la publicación de “Traditio custodes,” un documento emitido por el Papa por iniciativa propia y firmado personalmente por él “Traditio custodes” restringe la celebración de la misa que fue aprobada por el Papa San Juan XXIII en 1962 antes del Concilio Vaticano II, a veces llamada coloquialmente “misaa tradicional en latín” o “misaa tridentina.” “Desiderio Desideravi” describe la visión personal del Santo Padre sobre el significado y la finalidad de la liturgia eucarística y emana de su deseo “ofrecer simplemente algunos elementos de reflexión para contemplar la belleza y la verdad de la celebración cristiana” (#1).

El nombre en latín de esta nueva carta apostólica es una referencia a las palabras de Jesús en el versículo 21 antes de la Última Cena: “Adiósmente he deseado comer esta Pascua con vosotros, antes de padecer” (Lc 22:15). El Papa escribe que esta “palabras de Jesús con las cuales inicia el relato de la última Cena son el medio por el que se nos da la asombrosa posibilidad de vislumbrar la profundidad del amor de las Personas de la Santísima Trinidad hacia nosotros” (#2).

Así, al igual que Jesús, el Papa Francisco desea sinceramente compartir con nosotros la profundidad del amor que se nos hace presente cada vez que participamos en la liturgia eucarística. También desea firmemente que estemos unidos en y por la liturgia, no separados en facciones, discutiendo sobre qué forma de la misa es más auténtica.

Por supuesto, existe un límite difuso entre la diversidad en la sagrada liturgia, que ha sido una característica de la experiencia litúrgica de la Iglesia desde el principio, y el divisivismo, que se opone a todo lo que nuestro Señor quiso cuando instituyó y se entregó a nosotros en el misterio eucarístico.

Por otro lado, desde la misma fuente de donde mana toda su fuerza (lucr. Sacrosanctum Concilium, #10), comprendemos que en la celebración, como una comprensión superficial de la misma, nos distrae de la tarea de encontrar los elementos que nos representan. ¿Se desprende de esto que en la celebración es un acto que nos permite reconocer las alabanzas divinas y las esperanzas humanas, listos para ser escuchados y alentar al creyente a vivir la fe de sus antepasados? Por eso, la celebración litúrgica es un acto que nos permite escuchar y seguir el camino que nos guía a seguir.

En sus reflexiones sobre la liturgia, el Papa Francisco expresa su amor por la belleza de la celebración y aboga por un renovado sentido de unidad entre todo el pueblo de Dios al reunirse proclamando “las alabanzas divinas y las esperanzas humanas, por Cristo Señor en el Espíritu Santo” (#30). Como nos adentra el Santo Padre: “la aceptación del reforma, así como una comprensión superficial de la misma, nos distrae de la tarea de encontrar las respuestas a la pregunta que supone: ¿cómo podemos crecer en la capacidad de vivir plenamente la acción litúrgica? ¿Cómo podemos seguir asombrándonos de lo que ocurre ante nuestros ojos en la celebración? Necesitamos una formación litúrgica seria y útil (#1).

El Papa Francisco considera que todos tenemos necesidad de una formación litúrgica seria y dinámica, y en este sentido, nos dice: “Abandonemos las polémicas para escuchar juntos lo que el Espíritu dice a la Iglesia. Desafíen la comisión, sigamos asombrándonos por la belleza de la Liturgia” (#61).

(Daniel Conway es integrante del Comité editorial de The Criterion.)
Jim and Mary Jo Roberts sat in a cozy, sunny room in their Indianapolis home, four of their five children seated around them. An image of the Holy Family hung on the wall. In that moment, the room was a snapshot of what has defined the Roberts’ 75 years of marriage: faith and family.

The gathering occurred a week before Jim and Mary Jo, members to St. Roch Parish in Indianapolis, celebrated their diamond anniversary on June 21. Mary Jo marveled at the milestone.

“My faith is so important to me,” said Mary Jo, her eyes teary. “That’s the way I was raised. I love my faith.”

She met Jim at the Indiana Roof Ballroom in Indianapolis in 1946 after Jim served with the Army in World War II.

“We both loved to dance, and he was a good dancer,” she recalled.

“She was a beautiful girl,” Jim added. Their shared faith, values, hobbies and love for family led to a love for each other. After nine months of dating, the couple married on June 21, 1947.

They raised their four daughters and one son in St. Catherine of Siena Parish until 1963, then in St. Roch, the couple’s faith home to this day.

While Jim worked a successful career as a salesman, primarily of industrial kitchen equipment, Mary Jo was busy raising their children.

“She had her hands full,” Jim admitted. He recalled how, at Mass, the children “looked like a bunch of little ducks following Mary Jo down the aisle.”

Faith was at the center of the family, starting with Sunday Mass, their daughters recalled—whether they went with their “early riser” dad or with their mom “who liked to sleep in.”

“Dad still calls and asks what Mass we went to” on the weekend, said their daughter, Nancy Storey, her sisters nodding in agreement.

They recalled being raised with faith as a part of everyday family life.

Their parents “gave us structure through the Catholic faith,” Storey said. “One of the key things in our family was we would all sit down for supper together and pray. We prayed the rosary, and we’d kneel and say our prayers with Dad.”

“Dad always said our bedtime prayers with us,” her sister, Joni Carroll, added. “He always made them age-appropriate.”

A CYO tradition

The couple lived their faith in their parish and the community as well. Mary Jo was a member of St. Catherine’s Altar Society and the Catholic Women’s League and volunteered at the former Home of the Good Shepherd for teenage girls in Indianapolis. Jim was a charter member of the Knights of Columbus.

There was another side of the faith the Roberts contributed to “actively” in the most literal sense of the word: Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) sports.

The tradition began when Mary Jo was in grade school. She played in the archdiocese’s first CYO kickball league, recalling there were just five teams at the time. Years later, the couple’s children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren would play CYO sports.

“We were all in CYO sports, and Mom never missed a game,” said their daughter, Rosemarie Stahley.

Her sister, Becky Adolay, nodded.

“It wasn’t for CYO, I don’t know what we would have done,” said Adolay. She and her four siblings as well as some grandchildren went on to serve as CYO coaches and parish school athletic directors.

“CYO was part of our formation. We’d play CYO sports, we’d go to CYO socials—all with the support of Mom and Dad.”

Meanwhile, “Mom and Dad” stayed active themselves. The couple enjoyed playing golf and bowling, both as a couple and with their many friends—“especially after the children were grown,” Mary Jo added.

“Good times and bad times”

As their children grew, so did their family—the Roberts now have 17 grandchildren and 54 great-grandchildren.

“When the Bible said, ‘Go forth and multiply,’ we said, ‘OK!’” Jim joked.

Their own upbringing in large families impressed upon Jim and Mary Jo the importance of being there for family when help is needed.

“We didn’t have a whole lot extra growing up,” Storey recalled. “But when Mom and Dad’s siblings needed help, they’d help. I always admired them for that.”

Stahley recalled a time when a young man on her husband’s side of the family was struggling.

“I had kids in school, life was busy,” she said. “I didn’t know if I could help. But Dad said, ‘You don’t have a choice. Think what Christ would want you to do.’ And that’s what they always did.”

“There are good times and bad times” in any marriage and family, Mary Jo noted. She teared up recalling the years their son Mark fought in the Vietnam War, and the prayers the family offered every night for his safety—prayers that were thankfully answered.

Recently, the Roberts and their children faced one of their greatest challenges—moving Jim into a nursing home in Greensburg.

“The transition has been heartbreaking and complicated at times,” the five siblings said in unified comments e-mailed recently to The Criterion. “But, they noted, because their parents ‘raised us to be a close family, grounded in faith, we have been able to lean on each other, as well as the Lord,’ visiting their dad individually or with Mary Jo several times a week.

‘Family, family, family and faith’

Returning to that sunny, June afternoon as the Roberts reminisced with their daughters, the conversation turned to what kept the couple’s marriage strong for three-quarters of a century.

“It helps to have the same values,” Mary Jo said. “Our most important values are family, family, and faith.”

“Family, family, family and faith,” Jim chimed in. “That’s been the crux of everything we do.”

“And always being forgiven,” Mary Jo advised, with Jim adding to “be faithful and truthful.”

Stahley advised recall her dad offered before her wedding that gives insight on her parents’ successful marriage: “Go to Mass together and pray together to have a long, happy life.”

The Roberts’ five children have followed their parents’ example. Their wedding anniversaries range from 34-55 years. Including Jim and Mary Jo, that makes for an incredible 305 years, a testament to valuing commitment and the sacrament of marriage.

Reflecting on her parents’ long-lasting love and the success it’s had on their family, Adolay came to a conclusion.

“The best gift a man can give his family is to love his wife, and you can ask him to say ‘hi’ to their baby for her. We also found out in that moment, Daddy had named the baby Francis. They were doing so good but, while it was not unexpected, they both passed in the spring. Daddy on March 23 and Mother on April 14.

If you asked Daddy what he attributed his long, happy marriage to, he would tell you he learned to say ‘Yes, dear.’

He looked down from heaven after he died, turned to Mother, held out his hand and said, “Come home with me, Mary.”

Mother looked up at Daddy and answered, “Yes, dear.”

(Kathy Wilt is a member of Holy Family Parish in New Albany.)
As they posed for a photograph, Celia and Domingo Conlu looked the part, sharing soft smiles as Archbishop Charles C. Thompson congratulated them on their longstanding commitment to each other. The banner above them, decorated with red hearts, read: “We still do.”

Members of St. Simon the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis, the natives of the Philippines were among the couples who attended the 38th annual archdiocesan Wedding Anniversary Mass on Aug. 14 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis, hosted by the Office of Marriage and Family Life. Approximately 500 people attended the liturgy.

Represented at the Mass were 375 children, 310 grandchildren, 85 great-grandchildren and 13 great-great-grandchildren, noted Gabriela Ross, director of the archdiocesan Office of Marriage and Family Life. All told, the couples represented 4,050 years of matrimony.

Married for 50 years, the Conlus’s move to Indianapolis years ago. Celia was a nurse; Domingo was in the Army. As newcomers to Indiana, the couple put their children through Catholic schools and raised them in the faith.

“We are all Hoosiers now,” Celia smiled.

Reflecting on their union and offering advice to younger couples, Celia said, “It requires a lot of patience, love and respect for each other. Compromise,” Celia said. “And make God the center of your life.”

Many at the liturgy celebrated milestone anniversaries of marriage. The youngest couples recognized had been married for a year. The oldest couple marked 68 years of marriage. Three other couples celebrated unions of more than 60 years. All in attendance took part in a renewal of nuptial commitment and, after reciting the Lord’s Prayer, Archbishop Thompson offered a blessing to the couples.

The program, printed in English and Spanish, included a copy of the homily Archbishop Thompson was scheduled to deliver. The bilingual Mass featured readings in both languages as well.

“When within the context of marriage, as they say, ‘it takes two to tango.’ Without a partnership for the whole of life, where each spouse gives priority to respect for the inherent dignity of the other, there can be no lasting community of life,” the archbishop noted.

“With such a partnership, rooted in mutual respect and dignity, the foundation for family is firmly embedded. This is especially so for those marriages and families that maintain Christ-centeredness through prayer, worship, accompaniment, discernment and encounter together.”


“Pope Francis states: ‘Marriage is the icon of God’s love for us. Indeed, God is also communion: the three persons of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit love one another in perfect unity. And this is precisely the mystery of marriage: God makes of the two spouses one single existence.’ This has concrete daily consequences, because the spouses, ‘in virtue of the sacrament, are invested with a true and proper mission, so that, starting with simple ordinary things of life they can make visible the love with which Christ loves his Church and continues to give his life for her’” (#121).

The archbishop added, “Just as those celebrating anniversaries of marriage give witness, our belief in the transforming power of divine grace in any given vocation is not merely a matter of perspective, but conviction about the truth of God’s unconditional love and abounding mercy for each of us. It is this conviction that underlies the foundation of the baptismal call to holiness and mission for each and every vocation, especially marriage and family.”

After the liturgy, 300 people attended a reception across the street at the Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center. Many of the couples stood in line to get a photo with Archbishop Thompson. Several couples took to the dance floor, with smiles on their faces adding to the festive atmosphere.

Lawrence and Charlene Butcher were high school sweethearts at the former St. John’s High School in Loogootee, Ind., in the Evansville Diocese, who dated, fell in love and were married in 1962. Lawrence said Charlene was a “nice lady who I thought was pretty.” Charlene added, “We seemed to have a lot in common, and had lots of good times together.”

Now members of Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Beech Grove, the Butchers raised three children and now also have three grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. Charlene said a successful partnership involves “a lot of give and take.”

She continued, “They [married couples] need to think a lot about each other and not be selfish.”

Lawrence agreed, adding, “They need to keep Christ in their marriage.”

“When asked if ‘patience is a virtue,’” Charlene responded, “Funny, you would mention that one. Yes, a lot of patience, a lot of forgiveness, a lot of give and talk, bury the hatchet.”

Reflecting on their six decades together, Lawrence noted, “I think without faith, people are floundering. They don’t have any purpose in life. They have nobody to turn to when they get down, and that’s a big thing.”

(For more information on the archdiocesan Office of Marriage and Family Life, go to cutt.ly/MarriageAndFamilyLife.)
YOUNG ADULT
continued from page 1

gally to the top of a ridge," Ybarra says. "It was then that the decision was made to abandon base camp and retreat to a safer location a few ridges over. While retreating, we observed that the fire had made its way to where our base camp was."

In that moment, the group's commander searched for a safe spot for the firefighters to stay while instructing Ybarra and the others to get their fire shelters ready—a safety device that can help firefighters survive for more than an hour in non-burning areas surrounded by intense fire.

"We had practiced deploying fire shelters a few times as part of our basic training, but the prospect of possibly having to use them had me worried because they are typically used as a last resort," Ybarra says.

"I remember asking myself what I was doing out there, 26 hours away from family and everything I know. As my mind began racing, I grabbed my radio, a water bottle, my fire shelter and my rosary as we got to a safe spot and waited to see what the fire was going to do next. When I found my rosary, it was then when my racing mind stopped."

Seconds later, helicopters arrived overhead, most of them dumping water on the fire to stop it from rushing toward Ybarra and his team. When a helicopter swooped down to shuttle them to safety, one thought filled Ybarra's mind.

"I felt God had answered my prayers."

‘Through the good, through the bad’

The Scarface Mountain fire would continue to rage for nearly four weeks, stretching nearly 88,000 acres, before it was contained on Sept. 2, 2021. Still, the experience of facing it didn’t dampen Ybarra’s desire to be a firefighter. It also continued to influence the 32-year-old’s trust in God.

In the year since that life-threatening experience, Ybarra has become a rookie firefighter for a fire department in an Indianapolis area community. He is also a member of St. Mark the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis.

And his journey to both those points in his life has not only been marked by a series of twists and turns, it has also been forged by fire and faith.

The beginning of his faith journey always leads back to his mother, who faced her own life-threatening situation in her homeland of Nicaragua when a civil war and revolution raged across that Central American country in the 1970’s and ‘80s.

After leaving her homeland to come to the United States, she married and gave birth to Ybarra, instilling her Catholic faith—and her belief in the power of the rosary—in him.

"She prayed the rosary, through the good, through the bad,” says Ybarra, the older of her two sons. “She always remained faithful. It was a constant in her life, something that helped her decision-making and heavily influenced her values. A lot of people in the Church in the Latino community looked to her. ‘How have you kept your faith through all these years, all these experiences?’ She said she found power through God."

Similar to many young adults, Ybarra lost that power connection with God during his first few years of college at Indiana State University. Then came a faith-changing invitation from a fraternity brother to attend Mass at St. Benedict Church in Terre Haute. The sound of the choir filled Ybarra with joy, so he approached the choir director about joining it.

"He said, 'Yes, of course,' " Ybarra recalls. "From there, they were very welcoming to me. At that point, it was something that I wasn’t doing with my family. It was something I was doing of my own accord."

Ever since, he’s been seeking God more and more in his life.

"My relationship with him is pretty strong right now," he says. "Initially, I would go to God only when there was bad stuff that was going on. Now it’s more that I’m talking with him daily, whether it’s through music, through the rosary, even through just taking a walk. Through the good, through the bad, that conversation with him is almost like a constant daily thing now."

Ybarra relied on those conversations when he made a dramatic change in his life.

"I wanted to have a free soul"

A saxophone player, Ybarra majored in musical education as an undergrad at Indiana State, where he also earned a master’s degree in higher education administration.

"I wanted to help young adults going into college and turn them into well-rounded, functioning adults throughout their journey."

Yet as a young adult nearing 30, Ybarra didn’t feel well-rounded or fulfilled as he worked at a stressful desk job at Purdue University, "doing all these reports, reporting to eight bosses."

He began volunteering as a firefighter for a nearby township, and he had a revelation.

"I felt loved," he says, the joy radiating on his face. "It’s not just the fire runs. It’s the medical runs, the car crashes, the public outreach and education."

"I wanted to have a free soul, and I decided to leave the world of education and go into firefighting. I like helping others in the worst times of their lives. And I thought there was nothing better than being out West, in the wilderness, fighting fires. I said this is going to be a hard, manual reset—emotionally, mentally, spiritually. It’s going to help me get my head on straight."

He started working for Nevada’s Bureau of Land Management from May of 2020 to December of 2020.

"It was great. My ranger station was actually an oasis in the desert. They called it Paradise Valley because there was such greenery at the foot of the mountains. It was a lot of working in nature and time for personal training. Making sure we were in tip-top shape. Lots of running, lots of hiking, and lots of times in the wilderness. We had lots of patrols in the mountains."

Did a lot of project work with chain saws. Clearing out dead trees that could be hazardous to hikers and people hunting.

In 2021, he worked for the U.S. Forest Service from May to September, an experience that included the reality of seeing a raging fire—and his life—flash before him on Scarface Mountain.

In nature’s beauty and its fury, Ybarra always found something he was bad at."

As a young adult Catholic in the archdiocese, Joe Ybarra has seen his faith in Jesus grow, touching every part of his life. (Submitted photo)

"On the opposite side, during the fires, you definitely felt God was there, too. Ybarra also carried another constant with him.

"Hey, God, it’s me again"

"One of the things I’ve always had in my pocket was a rosary. I always had it on me whenever I was on assignment. There are a few times, especially if I have 100 pounds of equipment on my back, and we’re climbing a hill, and I’m like, ‘What am I doing? Why am I so far away from home?’ And then I say, ‘This is God’s will. He has a plan for me. And I just have to listen to him.’ And then you actually see the good you’re doing.

"Once everything is under control, you see the impact in the community. They’re super thankful you’re there. You see this destruction could be so much worse, but it isn’t."

Ybarra has continued to keep his rosary with him every day since he started as a firefighter for an Indianapolis area community in May.

"The majority of it has been medical runs so far, including overdoses, heart attacks and strokes," he says. "We’ve had a few car crashes, and a couple of times we’ve rode with people to the hospital. They were in a lot of pain, a lot of distress, and we managed to calm them down and calm their families. By the time we hand them over at the hospital, they’re saying, ‘Thank you so much. Thank you for being so calm. Thank you for being with me.’"

"He has the same gratitude for the presence of God in his life. He starts each day in prayer."

"It’s a mindset, just calming everything down. It’s just me and God during that time. It’s like ‘Hey, God, it’s me again.’"

"My relationship with him has definitely had a huge impact. Like for my mom, I can see how it influences my decision-making, how it influences my trajectory in life. Through my faith, I’ve been able to have a lot of positive experiences and meet a lot of amazing people. It’s been a blessing in my life."

Joe Ybarra, right, prepares to help fight the Osgood Fire in Nevada that was started by lightning in July of 2020, and fueled by heavy winds from passing thunderstorms. (Submitted photo)
Growing number of seminarians build fraternity at annual convocation

By Sean Gallagher

As newly-ordained Father Matthew Perronie rode up the drive to Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House in Indianapolis, memories filled his mind. He was travelling there on Aug. 8 to take part in a cookout for seminarians and priests that is a part of the annual archdiocesan seminarian convocation. The possible future priests for the Church in central and southern Indiana gather for a four-day meeting each year before they begin a year of priestly formation at their respective seminaries.

Father Perronie, ordained on June 4 and now serving as the parochial vicar of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis, attended eight such convocations during the years he spent in priestly formation. The convocation, which took place this year at Fatima from Aug. 7-10, was the first he attended as a priest.

“I think back on all the years, playing board games late at night, talking around campfires—just that Powerful spirituality, Father Perronie said. “Community and fraternity start now.”

“The Church makes very clear that the bishop has the ultimate responsibility about who he accepts into the seminary and who he accepts into holy orders,” he said. “That’s not a responsibility that I can surrender to the vocation director or a [seminary] rector.”

That’s an awesome responsibility that a bishop has in the care of his people.”

For his part, seminarian Samuel Rosko appreciates Archbishop Thompson spending time with him and being with seminarians at the convocation.

“You hear from him your expectations, and that sets the tone for the year,” said Rosko. “You really try to be in communion with him on that.”

Rosko is a member of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish in Indianapolis and in formation at Saint Meinrad. In fact, he was only able to spend a day at the convocation because he had to return to the hospital.

“It’s almost like a little vacation,” said Rosko of the convocation. “I have time to be with my brother seminarians and have that fraternity before the school year starts.”

Archbishop Thompson recognizes the importance for fellowship at events like the convocation.

“The fraternity that we cherish as priests doesn’t begin at ordination,” he said. “It has to begin in the seminary. They come together to start enhancing their fraternity in prayer, in the sacraments, in their shared focus on the call to ordained ministry.”

A welcoming community

The seminarians forged fellowship during this year’s convocation in part through an outing to Anarchy Axe Throwing in Indianapolis.

With the sound of axes hitting wooden targets and the seminarians’ laughs and cheers in the background, Father Eric Augenstein, archdiocesan director of seminaries, spoke about the men who are entering into priestly formation this month for the archdiocese.

He noted that, because there are more seminarians this year who already have completed a number of years of formation, their fraternity is already strong.

“Fraternity that we cherish as priests doesn’t begin at ordination,” he said. “It has to begin in the seminary. They come together to start enhancing their fraternity in prayer, in the sacraments, in their shared focus on the call to ordained ministry.”

“Normally, over the last two academic years, he would have come out into parishes or other ministry settings,” said Father Augenstein. “He lost a lot of that. So, this summer was his first real experience of pastoral ministry. It’s been wonderful for him, but he didn’t have some of that previous experience to build on.”

Living a eucharistic life

This year’s convocation took place about six weeks after the start of the three-year National Eucharistic Revival.

“The Church recognizes the importance of seminarians’ relationship with Christ in the Eucharist is key to their priestly formation. Our lives as priests don’t make any sense without the Eucharist,” he said. “The life of a priest is meant to be totally eucharistic in a sense. So, it’s critical that we, as priests and those in priestly formation, are deeply rooted in Jesus in the Eucharist. It’s not for ourselves but so that we can give it to the people.”

In a homily during a Mass on the last day of the convocation, Father Danstrom said that the life of Christ was entirely eucharistic because it is “utterly self-giving.”

“Can we live eucharistic lives today?” Father Danstrom asked. “Can you live a eucharistic life today? It is possible—in the midst of all the panders to the ego that excite the passions and misshapes and warps our desires, everything that mutes the inner voice of our conscience—is it possible in the midst of all of that to make a pure gift of ourselves to God and one another? Yes, but only because he has done so for us. It’s only because we may still feed on him and so be incorporated into his saving sacrifice that we can die to all that takes our life from us and rise to a new and more abundant life that lasts forever.”

Seminarian Casey Deal, a member of St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Bloomington who he accepts into the Eucharist to the seminarians. He is one of 46 eucharistic priests chosen by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops to take the message of the revial across the country.

In an interview with The Criterion, Father Danstrom said that deepening seminarians’ relationship with Christ in the Eucharist is key to their priestly formation. Our lives as priests don’t make any sense without the Eucharist,” he said. “The life of a priest is meant to be totally eucharistic in a sense. So, it’s critical that we, as priests and those in priestly formation, are deeply rooted in Jesus in the Eucharist. It’s not for ourselves but so that we can give it to the people.”

Seminarian Isaac Siefker, a member of St. John the Apostle Parish in Bloomington, throws an axe on Aug. 8 during an outing of archdiocesan seminarians to Anarchy Axe Throwing in Indianapolis. The outing was part of the annual convocation of archdiocesan seminarians. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

For more photos from the seminarian convocation, visit www.CriterionOnline.com. For more information about a vocation to the priesthood in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, visit www.HearGodsCall.com.

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Priest hits high note in living his dream of singing national anthem

By John Shaugnessy

On the day that Father Rick Ginther lived his “bucket list” dream of singing the national anthem at a professional baseball game, a friend sent him a pre-game message that he’s certain you will knock it out of the ballpark.

Actually, the experience of singing “The Star-Spangled Banner” at the Indianapolis Indians’ home game at Victory Field on Aug. 4 was even better for the 71-year-old pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Indianapolis—in ways beyond his a cappella performance.

After all, it’s a great blessing to live a dream by using your God-given talents, there’s extra meaning when you live that dream among people who have touched your life and who have had their lives touched by you.

And that’s exactly what happened for Father Ginther.

It all began when he arrived at the stadium shortly before 6 p.m. and was greeted by a group of his classmates—and their wives—from the 1968 class of the former Latin School in Indianapolis.

“It was humbling. There were 16 in the group. One came from Highland, another from Evansville, and another from Granger.”

Father Ginther says about the three Indiana communities far from Indianapolis. “I was doing something that would take a minute and a half. It meant a lot to me. Their laughter helped. They were very encouraging. It made me realize how much they cared.”

So did the people he met inside the stadium.

Walking along the concourse, he heard someone call, “Father Rick!” from behind him. It was someone who was a teenager back when Father Ginther was the pastor of the Marthas Parish in Richmond. Now in his 40s, the man was married with four children.

He had seen the story in The Criterion about Father Ginther’s bucket list dream and told his family that’s how he wanted to celebrate his birthday. All six of them were there to hear the priest sing.

So were people from his former parishes of St. Margaret Mary and St. Patrick, both in Terre Haute. And from his former parish of SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis, a group led by their current rector, Father Patrick Beideman.

Father Daniel Bedel also came with a group of friends. Indeed, everywhere Father Ginther turned, he saw a familiar face and heard a friend wishing him well.

“I really felt loved,” Father Ginther says. “People were smiling. They were happy to be there. It was kind of overwhelming. I get to do the bucket list dream, but beyond this, it was, ‘I love you,’ and ‘We want you to enjoy this.’ ”

And that’s what he set out to do as he strode onto the playing field with a few Indians’ staff members and his friend, Chris Swinefurth.

Swinefurth is the one who had been there in Las Vegas with Father Ginther last year, a trip during which the priest lived one of his bucket list dreams—driving a Shelby GT Mustang on a racetrack at more than 100 miles per hour.

With that dream checked off the list, Swinefurth asked his friend what he wanted to do next. So Swinefurth set his pastor’s dream of singing the national anthem in motion.

As he stood behind home plate waiting to live that dream, Father Ginther saw some children from Our Lady of Lourdes wave to him and call his name. “One of them gave me a double high-five through the fencing,” he says.

Then, at 7 p.m., the Indians’ announcer told the crowd that Father Rick Ginther would perform the national anthem.

It was his time to sing, to live this dream.

Wearing his black clerics and his white Roman collar, he walked onto a small stand near home plate, stood in front of the microphone, and looked out toward the American flag beyond the left field wall of the stadium.

“I lowered my head, closed my eyes, and put my hands behind my back. It’s a singing posture,” he says. “I just started. And the song took on life. It was delicious. From that very first moment, I knew I was OK. It just flowed out of me. Surprisingly, I was very relaxed and very focused. As a singer, it just felt good.”

The crowd’s response was terrific.

“It was quite an ovation, and it wasn’t just my friends. It was the whole place,” Father Ginther says. “As they walked me up the stairs from the field to the concourse, people told me ‘Well done!’ and they liked it. An Indians’ worker came up to me and said, ‘That was absolutely beautiful. It gave me goose bumps.’ ”

In the midst of the congratulations, Swinefurth smiled at Father Ginther and said, “Next stop, how about the Super Bowl halftime show?”

“I looked at him and said, ‘No!’ I was so relieved to have it done,” Father Ginther says. “Afterward, I spent almost all of the game finding the folks I knew were there. I thanked them for coming and spent some time with them. I did that for seven innings, wandering from one end of the stadium to the other.”

The reality of the experience lived up to the dream for him.

“As a scale from 1 to 10, I give it a 10. As a singer, it was very rewarding. As a human being, I felt love. As a pastor, I felt appreciated. As a citizen, it felt good to be thanked for doing it. That’s a pretty good bucket list fulfillment.”

(To see Father Rick Ginther’s performance of the national anthem at the Indianapolis Indians’ Aug. 4 home game at Victory Field, go to cut.ly/ForGintherSongs.)

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**St. Peter’s 101st Labor Day Festival**

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**AUGUST IS WRITE a WILL MONTH. DO YOU HAVE ONE?**

A last will and testament is a legal document that lets you decide what happens with your estate after you die. Yet, according to a recent survey, almost two-thirds of all Americans don’t have a will. When you die without a will, you leave important decisions up to a local court and your state’s laws. You won’t have a say in who receives your property and other assets. Plus, not having a will can make it more difficult for your loved ones after you pass. Some important reasons to have a will in place:

- Save time, money, and stress for your loved ones.
- Determine who will manage your estate.
- Decide who gets your assets and property — and who does not.
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- Lower the potential for family disputes.
- Provide funeral instructions.
- It’s easy to make a will and you will gain peace of mind.

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NIGERIA

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Church’s charitable projects have been prohibited, priests arrested and stopped from celebrating Mass, and the dioceses are charity expelled. In late Aug. 21, 2021, the Bishop Alvarez’s arrest, but he prayed for peace in the country through Mary’s intercession.

“The Vatican has preferred a quiet, backdoor engagement with the government to try and persuade it to downscale its repressive tactics and resume talks with the opposition, rather than public condemnation,” said Tiziano Zelt, Central America analyst for the International Crisis Group.

“This stems from the understanding that the louder and more outspoken is the criticism against the church… the more likely the presidential couple’s reaction is going to be, and any feeble communication channel still possibly open is likely to be shut,” he added. Ortega’s wife, Rosario Murillo, said in a radio interview.

A priest in Nicaragua, who preferred anonymity for security reasons, called the papal comments, “They say the pope was not explicit, but at least he broke the silence.”

The pope’s call for dialogue was met with skepticism by many Nicaraguans on social media.

“An open and sincere dialogue to restore peaceful coexistence in Nicaragua, as Pope Francis proposes, is only possible without a police state, without political prisoners, and with international guarantors who supervise the agreements,” tweeted prominent Nicaraguan journalist Carlos Fernando Chamorro, editor-director of the new organization Confidencial.

The Catalan bishops mediated a national dialogue in 2018, and the government dismissed what the spirit of Pope Francis means when he has called us to build a field “is often” followed by attacks on people, the bishops added, “God forbid!”

The Cuban bishops thanked Nicaragua’s Catholics for their “wisdom of fidelity to Christ” shown in the communion they have maintained amid the tests and the serenity in the risen Lord that they are proclaiming in these years of crisis.

Chile’s bishops urged their country’s Catholics to pray for peace in Nicaragua, adding, “We join the call for an end to the violence in that country and the persecution experienced by the Nicaraguan sister Church.”

Siler named executive director of Twinning Program of the Americas

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (CNS)—David J. Siler has been named the new executive director of the Parish Twinning Program of the Americas (PTPA), which is based in Nashville.

Siler succeeds Theresa Patterson, founder of the Catholic nonprofit organization and its executive director since 1978. She announced her plans to retire in March.

“I am delighted to pass the torch to David and support him as he continues this work in a statement.” Patterson will continue to serve the organization as a member of its board of directors.

The board announced Siler’s appointment on Aug. 15 and it is effective immediately. He will be introduced to representatives of U.S. twin parishes at the PTPA National Conference on April 22-26.

Siler brings strong leadership experience to the organization along with a passion for its mission,” said a news release about his appointment.

Most recently, he served as the executive director of the National Youth Advocate Program for Indiana, a foster care provider. Prior to this position, he served for five years as president and CEO of Families First Indiana, a human services agency in central Indiana. He also served as executive director of Catholic Charities for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis for 16 years after having served as the director of the St. Elizabeth Coleman Pregnancy and Adoption Services.

Siler also has significant experience with a parish twinning relationship. In 2012, Siler helped to form the twinning relationship between his home parish, St. Matthew the Apostle in Indianapolis, and an impoverished Catholic parish in Bois de Lance, Haiti.

As the parish twinning leader, Siler conducted numerous mission trips and has led several big projects to completion, including the construction of a rectory, the expansion of two schools, funding for wages for teachers and administrators of the two schools, and a food program that provides meals for 400 students four days a week.

“David is a perfect fit for this important position. He brings significant leadership experience and a passion for our mission. We believe he has the energy, dedication and vision to advance our mission and lead our organization into the future,” said Diane Huggins, president of the PTPA board.

“I look forward to working with David to continue the inspirational legacy of our founder Theresa Patterson,” she added.

The theme of PTPA’s upcoming conference will be “All Things Are Possible with God’s Love in Haiti and Latin America,” in Nashville.

Conference attendees will gather to share information and learn about best practices for building spiritually enriching twinning relationships with impoverished parishes in Third World countries.

PTPA describes its mission as living the Gospel “by seeking, building and maintaining twinning relationships between parishes in the U.S. and parishes in Haiti and Latin America.”

Since its founding, it has grown to become the largest organization of its kind and has formed about 300 “twinners” for parishes in 73 Catholic dioceses in 51 states.

(More information about the Parish Twinning Program of the Americas can be found online at https://ptpausa.org )

Special premiere of Lifemark available in central Indiana theaters on Sept. 6

Indiana Right to Life will host three exclusive premiere showings of the new film Lifemark on Sept. 6, three days prior to the movie’s official release.

Lifemark’s based on the powerful true story of Indiana’s Melissa Coles and a last-minute decision to choose adoption. (See article in Aug. 12 issue of The Criterion at catt.lifemarkArticle.htm.) The film is produced by the Kendrick Brothers (Fireproof, War Room, Courageous and more) and stars Kirk Cameron.

The Sept. 6 showings will take place at 7:05 p.m. at the following locations:

• AMC Perry Crossing 18, 380 Cinema Blvd., in Plainfield. (Please be present for this showing.)
• Regal Greenwood and PRX, 461 Greenwood Park Dr. S., in Greenwood;
• Regal Village Pkwy. 2222 E. 146th St., in Carmel.

Tickets are $15 each and can be purchased online at jrl.org/lifemark. Enter code “YOUTH” for 50% off ages 16 and under.

Seating is extremely limited for all premiere showings. Bulk ticket orders for churches, small groups and families are encouraged.

For questions or more information, call Mary Williams of Indiana Right to Life at 317-413-9123 or e-mail her at mwilliams@irrl.org.

After the premiere, the film will be available in select theaters throughout the country from Sept. 16-10. To check for locations and show times and to purchase tickets to see the film during that week, go to lifemarkmovie.com.
The elderly can unite all generations, save humanity, Pope Francis says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis dedicated his general audience talk on Aug. 17 to the urgent need for young and old to come together so older people can share their faith and wisdom about the world.

"Let's think about dialogue, about the alliance between old and young," he said, as well as make sure this bond is not broken. "May the elderly have the joy of speaking, of expressing themselves with young people and may young people seek out the elderly to receive the wisdom of the wise."

"That's not fair!"

It would be unfair to blame the doctrinal quality of catechesis from the late 1960s through the early 1990s for decreases in practices like Mass attendance and frequent confession, as if documented deficiencies in religion texts were the only reason for our mysterious neglect of the sacred sacraments in the 1970s and 1980s didn't help.

"The witness of the elderly unites the generations. The elderly can unite all generations, save humanity," he said.

Saturdome pictures

The pope affectionately rubbed the boy’s close-cropped hair and reassured him he was welcome to stay.

During the audience we talked about dialogue between old and young, right? And this one, he has been brave and he’s at ease," the pope said about his small guest to applause.

The pope continued his series of talks on old age and reflected on how reaching a ripe old age is a reassurance of eternal life in heaven.

In fact, "the image of a God, who is watching over everything with snow-white hair, is not a silly symbol, it is a biblical image, it is a noble image, even a tender image," the pope said. To depict God the Father as venerable in age and authority "expresses God’s transcendence, his eternity and his constant care for this world and its history," the pope’s talk said.

The pope for every older man and woman, the pope said, is to bear witness to the faith and to the wisdom acquired over the years.

"The witness of the elderly is credible to children. Young poorly and adults are not capable of bearing witness in such an authentic, tender, poignant way, as elderly people can," the pope said.

He said it is also very compelling when the elderly bless life as it comes their way and show no resentment or bitterness as time marches on and death nears.

"The witness of the elderly unites the generations, the same with the dimensions of time: past, present and future, for they are not only the memory, for almost all Catholics, wasn’t available. To our credit, many of us strived to maintain a connection to our eucharistic Lord Jesus via livestreamed Masses and spiritual communions.

But grace is real and no virtual experience substitutes for the role of sacramental grace in the life of every Catholic. Thankfully, we have the Catechism of the Catholic Church and related excellent resources speaking clearly to us about the role of sacraments throughout our earthly journey.

The seven sacraments give us a foretaste of heaven. Let’s capitalize on the sustaining gift of sacramental grace by getting to Mass, by celebrating the sacrament of penance frequently—in short, by giving the sacraments their proper place of very high priority in our walk of Christian faith.

( Ken Ogorek, archdiocesan director of catechesis, has lost his six-pack abs.

But his 12-part series, whose theme is: Things Most Catholics Wish They Knew Better, will run through December. He can be reached at his archdiocesan e-mail address kenogorek@archindy.org or by using the contact information at www.kenogorek.com )

Things most Catholics wish they knew better: 'Sacraments, schmacraments: Who needs ‘em?'

Ken Ogorek/Ken Ogorek
Retreat for survivors of suicide loss emphasizes ‘you are not alone’

By Natalie Hoefer

Christine Turo-Shields has a poignant message for survivors of suicide loss. It comes not just from more than 30 years as a professional counselor, but from her own experience with loss by suicide.

“For you to be able to look into the eyes of a survivor and say ‘I know what it’s like, and no other feeling,’” says Thibault. “No words have been spoken to me that make me know that they know the depth of your pain. That can be so healing, to know that you’re not alone.”

And when you’re not alone” is a relaxed time and again in an upcoming retreat Turo-Shields and others will present on Sept. 30-Oct. 2 at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House in Indianapolis. The name of the retreat for survivors of suicide loss even bears the message in its title: “You Are Not Alone.”

The idea for the retreat, now in its third year, was born out of Thibault’s death suffered by Lisa Thibault after she lost her husband to suicide in 2017. She attended a retreat herself, but found her type of grief “isolating.”

An isolating grief

“Suicide loss is a different kind of grief,” says Thibault, a member of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis and mother superior of the Religious Institute of the Immaculate Conception, which includes the Religious Institute of the Sacred Heart and the Religious Institute of the Incoronata.

It’s an isolating grief, especially in my experience. So being around other survivors is very important to move things forward, to learn how to survive.”

With the help of Providence Sister Connie Kramer—a suicide loss survivor herself—a team was formed to design a retreat for those grieving the death of a loved one to suicide.

Sister Connie, Thibault and Turo-Shields are on the team. Two other suicide loss survivors are included—Father James Furrell and Judy Proctor, a member of St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis who created a suicide loss support group after losing her son to suicide in 2008.

The retreat focuses on three “journeys” of suicide loss survivors: the emotional journey, the healing journey and the spiritual journey.

Turo-Shields, a licensed clinical social worker (among other counseling licenses) who co-founded Kenosha Counseling Center, addresses the emotional journey.

“I talk about various feelings and emotions that go along with suicide loss,” says the member of St. Barnabas. “It weighs people with remorse, shame, regret.”

The spiritual journey can be a challenge too, she says.

“When you hit a point of trauma, spiritually we typically do one of three things: we turn toward God, away from God or against God,” she explains.

“Suicide loss is the cross that’s been laid on our shoulders. We don’t get to pick our cross. This [retreat] is a way to begin to make sense out of that which is senseless, and comprehensible that which is incomprehensible.”

Unique for every person

As survivors themselves, the team understands that those who come to the retreat will respond to each component of the weekend differently, says Turo-Shields.

“Grief is like a fingerprint, it’s unique for every person,” she says. “Especially with a traumatic death like suicide. We understand that.

“If a few hours is all someone can tolerate, we recognize and respect the timing of every person’s journey.”

This was true for the family of Tom Hayes. He and his family had lost a son to suicide in 2021. They attended the You Are Not Alone retreat last fall.

“My son’s name was realized it wasn’t for him,” says Hayes. “They were very good, no pressure. Nobody thought less of him. From a dad’s standpoint, I appreciated that.”

“We absolutely want people to stay for the weekend,” Turo-Shields says. “But we understand that people can only do what they can tolerate and are responsive to that.

For some sessions, she says, participants may prefer just to walk the grounds at Fatima. Attendees are also given the opportunity for Mass and a garden that Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House added to its grounds. Attendees are also given their own room during the weekend where they can go to be alone or sleep, whatever they need in that moment.

Some people connect with various parts of the retreat differently. Hayes says he would attend the retreat again just for Father Farrell’s guided meditation.

In addition to the three “journey” sessions and guided meditation, the weekend includes talks from survivors, music, journaling, sharing of resources, opportunities for Mass and a remembrance service in the memorial garden that Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House added to its grounds.

And there is the essential connection with other survivors, reinforcing the message that “you are not alone.”

“The healing will come,” says Turo-Shields.

That message was a stand-out for Christine Hayes. He and his wife Amy lost a son to suicide in 2021. They attended the You Are Not Alone retreat for survivors of suicide loss to come to a retreat.

“Doing something like this definitely is not easy,” she admits. “We want to turn from [grief].”

“But this is an incredibly safe environment with those who’ve gone through the same thing. Taking the first step in coming is the hardest part. But from there, our team will welcome you and guide you through.”

She also notes that it’s “a big help taking time away from regular life to sit with your grief. There are so many distractions during the day. It really takes a forceful effort to not just be present with grief, but to have time to work through it—and work through it with others going through the same thing.”

Turo-Shields agrees.

In note to nuns, pope says he is doing everything he can for Ukraine

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis said he is doing everything he can for Ukraine, saying the world was witnessing “cruelty.”

In a short handwritten note sent to Sister Teresa Longos, mother superior of a religious institute that helps Ukrainian orphans evacuated to Italy, the pope said he was praying for them and for Our Lady’s intervention.

“I am doing all I can for Ukraine. We are witnessing cruelty,” the pope wrote, adding that he also recently spoke by phone with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.

“I am praying for the nun for the letter and a letter she included from three Ukrainian women, saying he was praying for them and would “remain available.”

The papal note’s contents were published on Aug. 19 by Avvenire, the newspaper of the Italian bishops' conference. It was in reply to a letter sent to Pope Francis by Sister Teresa. The sister heads the “Incoronata” Institute, which provides social assistance in Erice, Sicily, and is currently hosting 20 orphans from Ukraine.

The sister told Avvenire they never imagined the pope would reply when she sent the letter to him, saying that he was doing and to relay an urgent appeal from three women she is close to who escaped Mariupol, Ukraine.

She said, one evening, she and the women were praying, and they told her about the fear and frustration they felt over the lack of information concerning their home city, which fell to Russian forces in May, and the suspected abuses happening there. It was then that one of the women decided they should write to the pope.

“There are people at [the retreat] I wish we didn’t have to meet” because of the circumstances, he admits. “But it’s comforting to know others are experiencing the same emotions you’re experiencing, and being able to talk about it is a healing process.”

Other past participants echoed his thoughts. Post-retreat surveys note people appreciated “the feeling of being in a room with others who know exactly how I feel,” “hearing people’s stories and how they got through,” and “learning that suicide loss has been experienced by so many—I really feel less alone.”

Such comments are rewarding to Thibault, especially knowing how difficult it can be for survivors of suicide loss to come to a retreat.

“If you open to the experience, the healing will come,” she assures. “Even if you leave during the retreat, the healing will continue. Part of that is God’s grace and mercy—it will always come.”

(For more information about or to register for the You Are Not Alone retreat at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5537 E. 56th St., in Indianapolis, on Sept. 30-Oct. 2, go to cutt.ly/YANA [all caps] or call 317-545-7681.)

FREE ADMISSION! Saturday, September 10, 2022 12:00noon – 10:00pm Mass at 5:30m FREE LIVE ENTERTAINMENT! 1:00pm French/AxeTransatlantix 2:15pm Corey Cox 4:30pm Sadie Johnson 7:00pm Klark Whitson Foundation ACTIVITIES FOR THE ENTIRE FAMILY! GREAT FRENCH CUISINE!
That All May Be One/ Fr. Rick Ginther

Fabric of traditions' to be on display at annual Festival of Faiths

My youngest sister, Fran, took up weaving a few years ago. Sitting at her loom, she settles herself into the rhythm of pattern, color and threads small to large. She allows herself to recall the purpose of the weaving. It might be a gift, more art than practical. Or a gift both practical and beautiful.

Within the woven rug, runner or tapestry, a story is told, meaning emerges, love is spoken.

Weaving the "Fabric of Our Traditions" is the theme binding all participants at the 108th Indiana State Fair in Indianapolis, and the Festival of Faiths, adjacent to White River State Park, is just one of downtown Indianapolis.

The weavings which will be on display with multi-layered first, there is the tapestry of faiths in central Indiana. Second, there is the multi-hued varied styles of clothing native to each religion. As of mid-August, the tapestry of faiths in Faith and Family/Sean Gallagher

Adults can learn a lot from children

Parents are the primary educators of their children. That’s a duty I take seriously in life as the father of my five sons. It’s one we can only carry out well with the help of God’s grace and the intercession of my saintly wife Cindy.

But I learned early in my 20 years as a father that my sons often taught me a lot. I’ve seen them make acts of kindness to strangers that are far more virtuous than my selfish motivations. Sometimes, they’ll make comments about God, their faith or life in general that shows a tremendous amount of wisdom.

Yes, adults can learn a lot from children.

I’m reminded of that in a video clip from a Little League World Series qualifying game on Aug. 9 between the Oklahoma City Angels and the Texas East.

Kaiden Shelton was pitching for Texas East when he lost control of a fastball that struck Oklahoma player Jarvis Laurus in the side of his head.

The pitch knocked Isaiah’s helmet off, it immediately fell to the ground clutching his head.

Thankfully, Isaiah, was soon able to get up and walk off the field by himself.

But when he got there, he looked to the pitcher’s mound where he saw that Kaiden was too hurt to know his pitch had knocked him to the ground and could have seriously hurt him.

Isaiah walked up to Kaiden. As other Texas East players and a coach wearing a microphone came to the mound, the two boys started to cry. Kaiden said, "Hey, you’re doing just great."

There’s so much here that adults can learn from. It contrasts greatly with what happens so often in similar situations in professional baseball games. Instead of the batter showing an act of kindness to the pitcher, he’d charge the mound to take revenge for the hit. But that’s not the case here.

But the lessons here go far beyond baseball. The good and bad behavior we see in our children can have a far greater impact on what happens in the broader society.

The encounter between Isaiah and Kaiden is a poignant reminder to us adults of the importance of humility, basic human kindness and vulnerability.

The fights we see on the baseball field—diamond—or in various ways in our homes, workplaces, neighborhoods and elsewhere—are ultimately rooted in a pride that leads us either to refuse to show sorrow for our misdeeds or, on the other side, to express too much repentance from those who have hurt us.

Such pride can also be a barrier to us showing kindness to others who have hurt us or whom we have hurt but not yet been reconciled with.

That kind of reconciliation is impeded by an unwillingness, or inability, in some cases, of adults to be vulnerable to one another.

Both those who have been hurt or have done the hurting might be fearful of appearing weak or appearing to have been wronged or that they’re sorrowful for what they’ve done.

I know Isaiah and Kaiden were hurt. They were humble, kind and vulnerable in the moment they shared in that baseball game. Maybe those two young boys taught us adults can learn from their very Christ-like example.

For it is our Lord who is the ultimate example for all of us through his humility, caring and vulnerability—three traits at the heart of our faith.
The Book of Sirach furnishes the first Scripture reading for Mass this weekend. The name of this book derives from the Greek form of the author mentioned in it. The author was Sirach (or Jesus in English), the son of Sira. This book was written around 132 B.C. in Egypt, either by Jewish exiles from the Holy Land or by their descendants. The date of composition can be determined because the forward says that it was authored during the reign of Pharaoh Ptolemy VII. The dates of this reign are also known.

This book is among those biblical volumes collectively called the wisdom literature. They attempt to show the Jews’ ancient faith in the one God of Israel, and their insistence that God’s law be obeyed, are in no way illogical or unwise. To the contrary, to possess genuine wisdom means that a person realizes the fact that God lives and reigns, and also knows that all people and all things are subject to God.

The weekend’s reading expressly refers to humility. While humility more often is associated with Christian theology and spirituality, it was a virtue highly admired and evident in the Old Testament.

In doing so, we are following the example of the early believers, who “devoted themselves to the teaching of the Apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers” (Acts 2:42). So, church attendance and daily kindness is not an “either-or” proposition. We are not forced into making this false choice. In fidelity to Jesus, we do both—and, in so doing, make steady progress in the Christian life with the help of God’s grace.

Q: Who is a better person? Someone who attends Mass every Sunday and receives Communion but is not nice to people (rude, insulting, does not help the poor)? Or someone who attends Mass sporadically but is a kind, considerate and helping individual? (Ohio)

A: It is better to walk on your right leg or your left leg? That question, in my mind, matches your own (whether it’s better to go to church or to be kind).

Obviously, we need both legs to walk correctly and well. And similarly, the Church is committed to regular sharing in Christ’s command to go and because it is from the strength of the Eucharist that we are enabled to live our lives unselfishly.

Jesus, of course, said: “I give you a new commandment: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another” (John 13:34). He even suggested in Matthew 25 that the final standard on which each of us will be judged is whether we have helped people when they needed it most.

But Jesus also, on the night before he died, gathered the Apostles to share his body and blood at the first Eucharist and told them that they should “do this in memory of me” (Luke 22:19; 1 Cor 11:24). The Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, has determined that for Catholics this means the obligation of celebrating Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation.

In doing so, we are following the example of the early believers, who “devoted themselves to the teaching of the Apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers” (Acts 2:42). So, church attendance and daily kindness is not an “either-or” proposition. We are not forced into making this false choice. In fidelity to Jesus, we do both—and, in so doing, make steady progress in the Christian life with the help of God’s grace.

Q: I have asked several people this, but no one seems to know. Why do Catholics light candles in churches? When did this tradition start, and what was the reason? (New York)

A: The custom of lighting candles as a mark of respect and prayer actually predates Christianity. In Judaism, the Talmud prescribed that there be a perpetual lighted candle at the Ark of the Covenant where the writings of the sacred Scriptures were kept—as a sign of respect for the word of God.

This may well have contributed to the current practice of Catholic churches in keeping a lighted sanctuary lamp near the tabernacle to signify the presence of Christ in the Eucharist and to call believers to special reverence and veneration.

Today, many Catholic churches contain racks where vigil candles are lighted by parishioners in honor of particular saints or in memory of someone who is deceased.

The word “vigil” refers to keeping watch. The symbolism is that the one who lights the candle desires to remain present to the Lord in prayer even when he or she cannot attend to other daily obligations. This Christian practice can be traced back as far as the 200s, when lighted candles were kept burning in the catacombs at the tombs of martyrs by Christians honoring them and praying for their intercession.
A religious sister sits near an outdoor crucifixion scene at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help in Champion, Wis., on Aug. 15, the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The shrine is the location of the only Church-endorsed apparition of Mary in the U.S. (CNS photo/Bob Roller)
**Idaho Supreme Court upholds state law banning most abortions**

**BOISE, Idaho (CNS) —** The Idaho Supreme Court on Aug. 12 upheld a state law that bans abortions after the first 20 weeks of pregnancy to be reinstated.

A Planned Parenthood affiliate had sued Idaho in federal court over the law that bans abortion except in cases of rape, incest or to save the life of the mother. The law was scheduled to take effect on Aug. 25.

A Planned Parenthood attorney argued the law went too far, saying it violated Idahoans’ right to bodily autonomy and equal protection under the state constitution.

Writing for the majority in the 3-2 decision, Justice Jacobson said Planned Parenthood was asking the court ultimately “to declare a right to abortion under the Idaho Constitution when—on its face—there is none.”

In a friend-of-the-court brief filed with the Idaho Supreme Court on the abortion ban, the statewide Diocese of Boise said it “supports laws that recognize the sanctity of human life, including an unborn child’s fundamental right to life.”

Deacon Gene Fadness, diocesan spokesperson, told the Idaho Capital Sun news outlet that “in the Catholic tradition, all human life is sacred from the moment of conception until natural death, which means the Church opposes abortion, euthanasia and capital punishment.”

“There are exceptions in those rare circumstances when an abortion is necessary to save the life of the mother,” Deacon Fadness said. “However, because all human life is sacred, we don’t believe the innocent child who is conceived as a result of a rape or incest should have its life terminated.”

“The law that Idaho’s Department of Justice is using is out of state court over the near-total abortion ban, but there has been no total ban,” he said.

In Louisiana, in an ongoing legal conflict between the state Department of Health and the St. Louis-based National Right to Life Committee, the state Supreme Court ruled in August that the “trigger law” was designed to take effect when and if the U.S. Supreme Court decision that found a constitutional right to an abortion was overturned. An appeals court upheld that decision in 2021. The U.S. Supreme Court overruled Roe vs. Wade, which happened on June 24 in the court’s ruling in the Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization case from Mississippi.

The lawyer representing three abortion centers who sued to stop Louisiana’s ban said the state court’s ruling “will effectively deny critical care to women throughout Louisiana.”

The plaintiffs said provisions of the ban are “contradictory and unconstitutional” and have filed suit in state court against Louisiana Attorney General Jeff Landry and the state’s health secretary, Courtney Phillips.

In an Aug. 12 tweet, Landry, a Catholic, said he was “pleased” with the state Supreme Court’s decision “and will continue fighting to end this legal circus.”

Other developments on state abortion laws included an Aug. 17 ruling by U.S. District Judge William Osteen in North Carolina that allows a state law banning abortions after 20 weeks of pregnancy to be reinstated.

In 2019, Osteen had stopped the law from being enforced, stating the ban was unconstitutional in light of Roe v. Wade. An appeals court upheld that decision in 2021. With the U.S. Supreme Court overturning Roe in its June 24 Dobbs ruling, Osteen in his new order said: “Under Dobbs, there is now no constitutional right to a pre-viability abortion, thus depriving the injunction of any constitutional basis from which to enjoin the challenged North Carolina laws regulating abortion.”

In South Carolina, the state’s Supreme Court blocked a six-week abortion ban in effect since June 27. The Aug. 17 ruling granted a temporary injunction requested by abortion centers because litigation continues on the law.

In Indiana, Gov. Eric Holcomb signed a bill Aug. 9 that would allow abortion in Indiana to continue at least through 20 weeks. An abortion referendum that was soundly defeated.

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the encyclical that Pope Francis shared seven years ago.

"The world and the Catholic Church as a whole have not responded adequately to Pope Francis’ core message, which calls for an ‘ecological conversion’ to change our lifestyles and our economy,” Mundell says. "During this same period, we have witnessed firsthand the increasing effects of climate change and biodiversity loss—more intense storm events and flooding, wildfires and record temperatures. While there are positive signs of progress in some areas and increased engagement with the faithful, much more is needed if we are going to make any positive impact.”

Mundell is hoping to help create that positive impact as the director of the Laudato Si’ Action Platform (LSAP), which offers concrete plans for a “seven-year journey toward healing in our relationships with God, our neighbors and the Earth itself.”

Mundell views that journey as essentially Catholic. It’s also a journey that has marked more than 50 years of his life. He shared his thoughts about his personal journey and his recent appointment to lead Pope Francis’ call to heal the Earth in an interview with The Criterion. Here is an edited version of that exchange.

Q. In terms of goals, what do you hope to accomplish as the director of the Laudato Si’ Action Platform?

A. My goals with the LSAP are to do as much as possible to put into action Pope Francis’ vision of how we should all be responding to our environmental crisis. The challenges we face are immense, but it doesn’t mean we should give up on our individual and collective abilities to make a positive impact. Although we still need to continue to talk, think, pray and discuss during our seven-year LSAP journey, we can no longer be satisfied with mere words. Now is the time for our global Catholic community to respond with a sense of urgency.

Q. How do you, and how should we as Catholics, view this effort as an extension of our faith?

A. For over 50 years, from the writings and speeches of St. Pope Paul VI to Pope Benedict XVI, care for creation has become an ever-growing concern for humanity and an integral part of Catholic social teaching. Only in the last few years, has it become politicized as some kind of “right or left” issue.

Our faith calls us to respond differently. Care for our common home is a moral issue for all of us. I believe that we are truly more authentically Catholic when we realize and practice our universal calling to the common good and to caring for all of creation.

Q. For those who may not be familiar with the Laudato Si’ Action Platform, share the emphasis of this initiative?

A. The LSAP is an online, digital space (https://ladatosisactionplatform.org) developed by the Vatican in collaboration with hundreds of Catholic organizations and individuals from around the world to provide concrete actions to support our world. It offers planning guides and resources, a planning process and decision-making tools to support care for our world. It offers faith-based organizations to sponsor this free family-friendly event. The festival is from 3-6 p.m. at the Cumberland First Baptist Church, 116 S. Measuring St., Cumberland, and will offer many family-oriented activities. A ticketed concert featuring singer and songwriter Carrie Newcomer and pianist Gary Walters will follow.

These activities are also available during the Season of Creation:  
• Visit an outdoor sacred space. Go to the Archdiocese Creation Care website (ourcommonhome.org) to obtain a “Guide to Outdoor Sacred Spaces.”
• Enroll in the Laudato Si’ Action Platform. The “LSAP” is a “unique collaboration between the Vatican, an international coalition of Catholic organizations, and all men and women of good will” (#3) (laudatosiactionplatform.org). Join with Pope Francis and people across the globe on our journey to integral ecology. Additional information on ways our archdiocese and our parishes can participate can be found at ourcommonhome.org/lsap/
• Take Our Outdoor Challenge/State Park Pass Raffle. Throughout the month of September, you are challenged to complete four activities as listed in the Outdoor Challenge Guide found at www.ourcommonhome.org/lsap. Submit proof of all parts of the challenge to get your name in an Oct. 4 raffle for a free 2023 Indiana State Park entrance permit.

More information on these events and activities, as well as other Season of Creation resources, can be found on the Archdiocese Creation Care website at www.ourcommonhome.org

(Benedictine Sister Sheila Marie Fitzpatrick is director of facilities at the Benedict Bos Retreat & Conference Center in Beech Grove and a member of the archdiocese’s Creation Care Commission.)

Justice projects. When Pope Francis’ encyclical Laudato Si’ was published, it was as if he had written about everything that I had been experiencing in my work life.

Q. Talk about what it means to you to be named by Pope Francis as the director of the Laudato Si’ Action Platform.

A. First of all, it’s an incredible honor to be asked to lead this global effort to put Pope Francis’ encyclical Laudato Si’ into action. I’m really thankful especially for the chance to have worked with all the other members of the Archdiocese Creation Care Commission over these last seven years—to support our local parishes and individual Catholics in trying to become more aware of the needs of our planet and more sustainable in all of their activities.

I’ve also been excited to work with the Vatican’s Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development and the Laudato Si’ Movement to develop the idea of the Laudato Si’ Action Platform. Despite my special experiences, I believe everyone is called to a life of care for creation and see it as a fundamental aspect of our Catholic faith.

Q. What are some of the ways that individuals and parishes in the archdiocese can make a difference in this Season of Creation and beyond?

A. I hope that individuals, families and parishes will sign up for the LSAP and put a simple Laudato Si’ Plan together to begin living differently. As always, we have to start with ourselves and do a little daily “examination of conscience” with how we are living our lives and our Catholic faith. It’s sometimes easy to ignore those things our faith is calling us to live that are more difficult that others—simpler lives, less consumerism, less wastefulness.

Also, I would recommend to start with something easy and doable—perhaps focusing on only one thing each month that you could consider changing for the better. And if you fail? Just remember you can start over again the next day. I know we will all experience a deeper joy and sense of purpose with these new attitudes and changes.