Young woman finds strength and a taste of heaven on World Youth Day scouting trip to Portugal

By John Shaughnessy

As she prayed at the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima in Portugal, Emily Mastronicola noticed the dramatic changes in herself.

At 28, she had come to Portugal to do advanced scouting for the nearly 200 youths, young adults and chaperones from the Archdiocese of Indianapolis who have already signed up to travel to World Youth Day this summer, joining thousands upon thousands of young Catholics from around the globe who will celebrate their faith with Pope Francis.

But her planning trip in late March to Fatima and Lisbon also became a remarkable time of faith for Mastronicola, the coordinator of events and volunteers for the archdiocese’s young adult and college campus ministry.

“Before the trip, I had a lot of anxiety, just getting ready,” she says about her first college campus ministry. “Some trips before, I’ve gotten sick or had some anxiety. But the whole time I was there I was completely at peace. Just being there to witness and see people pray. I just felt so much strength—strength I haven’t felt in a while. “I wasn’t afraid about the million things that are going on in our world or thinking about my ministry. I was just finding strength and a taste of heaven on World Youth Day scouting trip to Portugal.

At right, Emily Mastronicola poses in front of the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima in Portugal where she visited on March 29 as part of her advance scouting trip for the nearly 200 young people from the archdiocese who will be attending World Youth Day with Pope Francis in that European country on Aug. 1-6. (Submitted photo)
Our U.S. bishops’ National Eucharistic Revival.

25 is the third and final year of the Jesus in the Eucharist. “Our hope is that the National Eucharistic Congress will help us immediately know this would be a great benefit to the Church and to souls, since the holy Eucharist is Jesus Christ himself,” said Father Francis ‘Rocky’ Hoffman, executive director and CEO of Relevant Radio.

“We encourage our listeners to attend and partner in prayer for a successful Congress,” he said. “All positive, sustainable, and transformative change in the Church is rooted in our love for and encounter with the holy Eucharist.”

The mission of the Augustine Institute, based in the Denver suburb of Greenwood Village, “is to help Catholics understand, live and share their faith” through its college of theology, academic and parish programs and multimedia resources, said Tim Gray, the institute’s president.

“Our hope is that the National Eucharistic Revival leads thousands upon thousands of Catholics to rediscover the love and kindness of Christ and gives himself up for us in the most holy Eucharist,” he said.

“The Eucharist has always been the wellspring of Franciscan University of Steubenville’s spiritual life and at the heart of the school’s Steubenville conferences,” according to Franciscan Father Dave Prvovka, the university’s president.

“Year after year, we have seen the power of Jesus in the Eucharist heal, renew and unify our students, faculty, staff and conference guests. So, we’re excited to help spur up a greater love for the holy Eucharist,” he said.

EWTN’s founder, Mother Angelica, a Poor Clare of Perpetual Adoration, “built the network around her community’s chapel where the Eucharist was adored 24 hours each day” at Our Lady of the Angels Monastery in rural Alabama, said Michael Warsaw, CEO of the EWTN Global Catholic Network.

“The more we devote ourselves to the Eucharist, the more we will understand what it means to live a life of service and sacrifice for others—and to live a life of true unity, centered on the ‘source and summit of the Christian life,’” he said in a statement about the organization’s decision to be a mission partner for the 2024 congress.

(To register for the congress go to: www.eucharisticcongress.org/register)
Advocates fear ‘further erosion’ of Indiana wetlands protection

By Victoria Arthur

The Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC) is monitoring legislative activity in the General Assembly and is concerned about a bill making its way through the chamber that could lead to the erosion of wetland protection in the state.

Critics of Senate Bill 414 are concerned about the increased difficulty it would present for wetlands to be classified as a Class II wetland, which are considered the most important and therefore deserving of the greatest protection.

At a March 22 hearing of the Senate Environmental Management Committee, Jessica Frank, the ICC’s associate director, pointed out the bill’s potential to strip wetlands of classification, with the wetlands which currently fall under Class II designation potentially losing that status.

Frank emphasized the interconnectedness between wetlands and the health of the state’s environment, stating, “Wetlands are very much our natural sinks and they’re able to absorb excess nutrients, excess sediment, excess water, which can be very harmful to our ecosystems and to our water quality.”

Frank went on to explain that wetlands play a crucial role in mitigating the effects of climate change, serving as a buffer against flooding and providing a home for a wide variety of plant and animal species.

Act 389, which was opposed by the Indiana Wetlands Task Force, eliminated safeguards for wetlands across the state by changing their definition and classification.

Senator Enrolled Act 389 defined wetlands and changed the Class III definition, which now includes Class III wetlands by eliminating the definition of wetlands as “the other wetlands.”

The ICC is closely monitoring the progress of Senate Bill 414 and is urging constituents to contact their elected representatives to express their concerns about the bill’s potential impact on the state’s wetlands and environment.

By Victoria Arthur

Pope Francis made his comments in a March 22 House committee hearing, stating, “It is beautiful that in our smallness we are all able to put into its production.”

Pope Francis praised the artwork created by a group of people with intellectual disabilities, calling it a “wonder of learning, able to transmit.”

The pope said that “the benefit of the labor is always aware of it.”

For the ICC, the long history of stewardship of the environment forms the basis for engagement on these issues. In line with its opposition to Senate Enrolled Act 389, the ICC has voiced serious concerns with the amendment to Senate Bill 414.

“Instead, now we have this amendment. Everyone who watches this issue and was involved back in 2021 was very surprised to see it.”

“Ultimately, we don’t want the state’s class of our state’s remaining wetlands to be the casualty of arguments over whether IDEM is using its authority properly.”

Instead, Mingus encourages the examination of higher principles, such as those outlined by Pope Francis in his groundbreaking 2015 encyclical on the environment, “Laudato Si’: On Care for Our Common Home,” which was directed toward all people of good will.

“We are concerned about ecological issues, or how wetlands affect us as humans, it’s good to reinforce some of the Church’s teaching.”

Mingus said, “Everything in our environment has an impact on human flourishing and the flourishing of all creation.”

To follow priority legislation of the ICC, visit www.indianacc.org. This website includes access to SCAN, the Indiana Catholic Action Network, which offers the Church’s position on key issues. Those who sign up for SCAN receive alerts on legislation moving forward and ways to contact their elected representatives.

(Victoria Arthur, a member of St. Therese of the Infant Jesus [Little Flower] Parish in Indianapolis, is a correspondent for The Criterion.)
Are you open to surprises— and to allowing Jesus to change your heart?

We are more than a week into Easter, the second-longest liturgical season in the Church, which we will celebrate for 50 days until we mark Pentecost the last weekend in May.

As the Catechism of the Catholic Church notes, “The resurrection of Jesus is the crowning truth of our faith in Christ, the fulfillment of the whole Old Testament; and preached as an essential part of the Paschal mystery along with the cross” (#1168).

The catechism goes on to say: “Therefore, Easter is not simply one feast among others, but the ‘feast of feasts,’ the ‘solemnity of solemnities,’ just as the Eucharist is the ‘sacrament of sacraments’ [the Great Sacrament]” (#1169).

The Gospels in the first days after Jesus’ resurrection tell us that when the chrisms is still wet on their foreheads, and the catechism goes on to say: “‘Blessed are those who have not seen and believe, for they receive the word and deed.”

Pope Francis said as much during his weekly audience on April 12 in St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican. He implored people of faith to not “keyboard warriors” who sit at home and argue with others online.

“One does not proclaim the Gospel standing still, locked in an office, at one’s desk or at one’s computer, arguing like ‘keyboard warriors’ and replacing the creativity of proclamation with copy-and-paste ideas taken from here and there,” the pope said.

We must have an “evangelical zeal,” the pope noted, and be ready to set out and to be open to exploring new paths as we seek to share the Gospel through word and deed.

“I exhort you to be evangelizers who move, without fear, who go forward to share the beauty of Jesus, the newness of Jesus, who changes everyone,” Pope Francis said.

The Easter season is an opportune time to allow Jesus to change our hearts, but we must be willing to allow him to do that.

…”Are you a lukewarm Christian, who doesn’t move? Think about it a bit,” the Holy Father said during his audience.

Are you enthusiastic about Jesus and go forward? Think about it.

“A herald is ready to go and knows that the Lord passes by in a surprising way,” the pope continued. “He or she must therefore be free from schemes and prepared for an unexpected and new action; prepared for surprises. One who proclaims the Gospel cannot be fossilized in cages of plausibility or the idea that ‘it has always been done this way,’ but is ready to follow a wisdom that is not of this world.”

Because of the chaos so prevalent in society, we would do well to explore new paths and not to follow the status quo in so many areas of life.

As missionary disciples, we are called to be different. During this Easter season, we may have the courage to proclaim our unswerving belief that Jesus is alive and that the Risen Christ lives forever. Amen!”

—Mike Krokos

Be Our Guest/Jaymie Stuart Wolfe Welcoming new Catholics with several pieces of advice

Becoming a Roman Catholic was one of the best decisions I ever made, and certainly the most life-changing. But in truth, I had only a vague notion of the deep waters I was walking into. What would have been helpful during the past 40 years? Here are a dozen things I wish I had heard and internalized since:

• Formation never ends, but you’ll be (mostly) doing it yourself from here on out. As St. John Paul II said, “All formation ... is ultimately a self-formation. No one can replace us in the responsible freedom that we have as individual persons” (“Pastores dabo vobis,” #69). The Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA) is a guided process of intense catechesis and prayer aimed toward baptism, confirmation and Eucharist. After that, the training wheels come off and you are ready to ride. But remember: the best way to keep your own faith growing is to contribute to the formation of others.

• There are some people who seem ready to canonize new Catholics while the chrisms is still wet on their foreheads, and others who are equally ready to view them with doubt. Worse than either, though, are those who will push new Catholics into leadership roles too quickly. Don’t ask. And don’t say yes. New Catholics need to allow themselves some time and space to acclimate.

• Those who enter the Church through OCIA probably know more about the Catholic faith than many of their co-religionists. If you’re a cradle Catholic, don’t let that discourage you. If you’re a convert, don’t let it make you feel proud—or frustrated. It’s a sad reality that the formation catechumens and candidates receive is almost always superior to what is provided to everyone else.

• The Church is even bigger than you thought, and it’s easy to get lost. Newbies would do well to find a few tour guides who can show them around what they know and love, but without pushing it as the best-or-only path for everyone. Each of us should discover our leading grace. That means trying on different types of Catholic spiritualities—and there are dozens—until we find one that fits.

• Root yourself in a parish.

• Find a spiritual director and a posse of go-to saints. Make holiness your goal. Be present with yourself but persevere. Recognize that the things most likely to keep you from becoming a saint are defined by human formation, and we all have them.

• There are all kinds of self-described Catholics. Resist the temptation to hyphenate yourself and go narrow. Instead, see the fact that there’s room for all valid forms of authentic Christian discipleship in the Church. That’s what makes us catholic!

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Our encounter with Jesus starts in the breaking of the bread.

"Stay with us, Lord, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over" (Lk 24:29).

The Gospel reading for the Third Sunday of Easter tells the wonderful story of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Lk 24:13-35). Two rather obscure disciples of Jesus (only one, Cleopas, is named) leave Jerusalem three days after Jesus crucifixion. In spite of the fact that they have been told about the empty tomb, they are filled with sadness. All their hopes seem to be unfulfilled, and as they walk toward Emmaus, a village seven miles from Jerusalem, they share their disappointment with each other. A stranger accompanies them and asks what they are discussing. The disciples are amazed at the stranger’s unfamiliarity with the recent events in Jerusalem. “Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know of the things that have taken place there in these days?” they ask him. “What do you mean by this story of our lord?” the stranger replies. They said to him, “The things that happened to Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mightily powerful in deeds and words before God and all the people, how our chief priests and rulers both handed him over to a sentence of death and crucified him” (Lk 24:18-20).

The disciples le explain that they had hoped Jesus “would be the one to redeem Israel” (Lk 24:21) but now that hope appears to have been crushed. The stranger whom they do not recognize, but who we know is the risen Jesus, says, “Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” (Lk 24:25-26). Then, St. Luke tells us, “Beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the Scriptures” (Lk 24:27). In spite of Jesus’ efforts to open their minds and hearts by teaching them what the Scriptures foretold, the disciples don’t get it. They still do not know who the stranger is. As a result, they can’t possibly understand the truth about the Messiah, “the one to redeem Israel” (Lk 24:21).

The truth is that Christian faith is not an abstract concept or even merely a collection of religious and moral teachings. It’s an encounter with a person. As Pope Francis explained recently in one of his weekly audiences: “Evangelization is more than just simple doctrinal and moral transmission. It is, first and foremost, witness—one cannot evangelize without being a witness of the personal encounter with Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word in which salvation is fulfilled.”

In the story of the disciples’ experience on the road to Emmaus, the personal encounter with Jesus that is essential to their understanding of what took place in Jerusalem happens “in the breaking of the bread” (Lk 24:35). Only when they have invited the stranger to stop in the village and eat with them, do they have the profound religious experience that opens their minds and hearts and reveals to them the Word incarnate, the risen Lord. The “breaking of the bread” (the eucharist) is the place where the disciples encounter Jesus. The disciples do not recognize him at first because they are “slow of heart” and, therefore, incapable of grasping the truth that is right before their eyes. The eucharistic encounter with Jesus that occurs in the meal they share makes a profound difference in their lives. It prompts them to turn around and return to Jerusalem so that they can share their experience with Peter and the rest of the disciples. That makes them what Pope Francis would call “Spirit-filled evangelizers,” and it is Christ’s gift of himself in the Eucharist that enables them in their mission to spread the good news, saying: “Were not our hearts burning within us while he spoke to us on the way and opened the Scriptures to us?” (Lk 24:32)

The National Eucharistic Revival sponsored by the bishops of the United States is intended to inspire and prepare the people of God to be formed, healed, converted, united and sent out to a hurting and hungry world through a renewed encounter with Jesus in the Eucharist—the source and summit of our Catholic faith.

We pray that all Catholics, but especially those who no longer participate actively in the Sunday Eucharist, will have an “Emmaus experience” that touches their hearts and causes them to burn with a holy zeal for Christ and his Church. When this “pastoral and missionary conversion” happens, our hearts will be open and wide. Peter’s successor, Pope Francis, and all the disciples throughout the ages, we will joyfully proclaim, “The Lord has truly been with us” (Lk 24:34).

“Le dijeron: ‘Quedate con nosotros, porque ya es tarde, y es casi de noche.’ Y Jesús entró y se quedó con ellos’” (Lc 24:29).

La lectura del Evangelio del tercer domingo de Pascua narra la maravillosa historia de los dos discípulos de Emaús (Lc 24:13-35). Dos discípulos de Jesús mayormente desconocidos (sólo se conoce el nombre de uno de ellos, Cleopas) se marchan de Jerusalén tres días después de la crucifixión. A pesar de que les han contado acerca del sepulcro vacío, están sumamente tristes. Se sienten desenchantados y, mientras caminan hacia Emaús, un pueblo situado a 11 kilómetros de Jerusalén, hablan sobre su decepción.

Un desconocido los acompaña y les pregunta de qué hablan. Los discípulos se asombran de que el forastero no esté familiarizado con los recientes acontecimientos de Jerusalén. “¿Eres tú el único que no en Jerusalén que no sabe lo que ha sucedido en estos días?” “¿Y ha sucedido?” preguntó Jesús. Y ellos le respondieron: “Lo de Jesús de Nazaret, que ante Dios y ante todo el pueblo era un profeta poderoso en hechos y palabra. Pero los principales sacerdotes y nuestros gobernantes lo entregaron para que lo condenaran a muerte, y lo crucificaron” (Lc 24:18-20).

Los discípulos le explican que habían esperado que Jesús fuera el que redimiera a Israel (Lk 24:21), pero ahora esa esperanza parece haberse desvanecido. Jesús resucitado, a quien no reconocen y toman por un desconocido, les dice: “¿Y vosotros, ¿no me reconocéis? ¿Cómo es lento su corazón para creer todos lo que los profetas han dicho? ¿Acaso no era necesario que el Cristo padeciera estas cosas, antes de entrar en su gloria?” (Lc 24:25-26).

Seguidamente, san Lucas nos dice: “Y partiendo de Moisés, y siguiendo por todos los profetas, comenzó a explicarles todos los pasajes de las Escrituras que hablaban de él” (Lc 24:27).

A pesar de los esfuerzos de Jesús por abrir sus mentes y sus corazones enseñándoles lo que predicaban las Escrituras, los discípulos no lo entendieron. Aún no saben quién es el desconocido. En consecuencia, no pueden comprender la verdad sobre el Mesías, el que “habría de redimir a Israel” (Lc 24:21).

Lo cierto es que la fe cristiana no es una ideología, ni siquiera una mera colección de enseñanzas religiosas y morales; se trata de un encuentro con una persona. Tal como señaló recientemente el Papa Francisco en una de sus audiencias semanales: “La evangelización es algo más que una simple transmisión de doctrinas y principios morales. Es, ante todo, testimonio ya que no se puede evangelizar sin dar testimonio del encuentro personal con Jesucristo, el Verbo encarnado en el que se realiza la salvación.”

En el relato de la experiencia de los discípulos de Emaús, el encuentro personal con Jesús, esencial para que comprendan lo que ocurrió en Jerusalén, se produce “al partir el pan” (Lc 24:35). No es sino hasta que invitan al forastero a parar en la aldea y comer con ellos, que tienen la profunda experiencia religiosa que les abre la mente y el corazón y les revela al Verbo encarnado, al Señor resucitado.

Al “partir el pan” (la Sagrada Eucaristía) es cuando los discípulos se encuentran con Jesús. No lo reconocen al principio porque son “lentos de corazón” y, por tanto, incapaces de captar la verdad que tienen ante sus ojos. El encuentro eucarístico con Jesús que se produce en la comida que comparten marca un profundo cambio en sus vidas que les impulsa a dar media vuelta y regresar a Jerusalén para compartir su experiencia con Pedro y el resto de los discípulos. Eso los convierte en lo que el Papa Francisco llama “evangelizadores llenos del Espíritu”, y es el don de Cristo al partir el pan lo que los alimenta en su misión de difundir la Buena Nueva, diciendo: “Acercar la eucaristía a nuestro corazón mientras nos hablaba en el camino y nos explicaba las Escrituras” (Lc 24:32)

El Renacimiento Eucarístico Nacional patrocinado por los obispos de los Estados Unidos tiene como finalidad inspirar y preparar al pueblo de Dios para que se forme, sane, se convierta, se unifique y se desligue en un mundo herido y hambriento a través de un encuentro renovado con Jesús en la Eucaristía, el origen y la cumbre de nuestra fe católica.

Los obispos rezamos para que todos los católicos, pero especialmente aquellos que no ya participan activamente en la Eucaristía dominical, tengan una “Experiencia de Emaús” que toque sus corazones y les haga arder en un santo celo por Cristo y su Iglesia.

Cuando se produzca esta “conversión pastoral y misionera,” nuestros corazones se abrirán y junto con el sucesor de san Pedro, el Papa Francisco, y todos los discípulos de todos los tiempos, proclamarán con alegría “El Señor ha resucitado y se ha aparecido a Simón!” (Lc 24:34)
Events Calendar

For a complete list of retreats and programs, see "The Criterion" or www.archindy.org/events

May 1-20, 2023
Lenten Retreats

May 7-13, 2023
Philosophy for Spirituality, Pump House Conference Center, 335 S. Meridian St., Indianapolis. Parking lot, 5:30 p.m., $35 for overnight stay or $15 for day guest, ages 23 and older, $5 discount for ages 50 and older. Information: franciscansusa.org.

May 14, 2023
The Chosen Season 3: Discounion and Dinner Series, 5-8 p.m. on Tuesday evenings, Saint Meinrad Archabbey, €30 for two nights, €15 for one night. Information: saintmeinrad.org/retreats or call 812-367-4347.

May 15, 2023
Mother of the Redeemer Retreat Center, 2213 Main St., Oldenburg. The Chosen Prayer, 2-3:30 p.m., in person or via Zoom, $35. Information: registration@archindy.org.

May 16-17, 2023
Catholic Charities Refugee and Immigrant Services Volunteer Information Session, 10-11 a.m., refreshments provided.

May 17-19, 2023
Benedict Inn Retreat Center, 8220 W. State Road 48, Bloomington. "The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius," 6:30 a.m. – 9:11 a.m. Sun. and Fri. $241 per adult, includes meals and accommodations. Information: registration@archindy.org.

May 18-21, 2023
Benedictine Father Adrian Burke will lead the retreat.

May 23-25, 2023
The Contemplative Prayer Retreat, 8 a.m. – 4 p.m., in person or via Zoom, $35. Information: registration@archindy.org.

May 25-26, 2023
Saint Meinrad Archabbey, Weekend of Grace, €15 for one night or €30 for two nights. Information: saintmeinrad.org/retreats or 812-367-4347.

May 26-27, 2023
The Chosen Season 3: Discounion and Dinner Series, 5-8 p.m. on Tuesday evenings, Saint Meinrad Archabbey, €30 for two nights, €15 for one night. Information: saintmeinrad.org/retreats or call 812-367-4347.

May 28, 2023
Benedict介绍一下天主教的圣母玛利亚斋节，这是一个重要的天主教节日，庆祝圣母玛利亚的圣洁和德行。这个节日通常在5月1日庆祝，但也可以在5月的其他日子庆祝。在这个节日期间，天主教徒会参加特别的弥撒和圣事，以纪念圣母玛利亚。在这一天，天主教徒也会为圣母玛利亚的圣洁和德行祈祷，并在她的照片或画像前点燃蜡烛。此外，许多天主教徒也会在这个节日期间阅读关于圣母玛利亚的圣洁和德行的书籍和文章，以加深对圣母玛利亚的认识和敬爱。
Living the joy of a life in Christ and witnessing it to others

Pope Francis has been speaking about evangelization in his weekly Wednesday audiences, and he loves to cite what he calls the “magna carta” or foundational document on this topic: Pope St. Paul VI’s apostolic exhortation “Evangelii Nuntiandi” (Announcing the Good News).

As the Holy Father says: “St. Paul VI’s apostolic exhortation, “Evangelii nuntiandi” (Dec. 8, 1975) is topical. It was written in 1975, but it is as though it had been written yesterday. Evangelization is more than just simple doctrinal and moral transmission. It is, first and foremost, witness—one cannot evangelize without witness—witness of the personal encounter with Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word in which salvation is fulfilled. An indispensable witness because, firstly, the world needs “evangelizers to speak to it of a God whom the evangelists themselves should know and be familiar with” (#76). It is not transmitting an ideology or a “doctrine” on God, no. It is transmitting the living word living in me. Evangelization is not about knocking on doors or proselytizing (selling your religion). It is about having a relationship with a person, Jesus Christ. It is about sharing an experience that is life-changing, an encounter that has caused a dramatic shift in the way we look at the world and ourselves. It is about introducing others to that experience as well. Pope Francis quotes his revered predecessor as saying, “Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses” (#41). If we want to teach the Gospel, we must live the Gospel. And living the Gospel means being filled with the joy of life in Christ.

What we teach as evangelizers who are living what we believe is what Pope Francis calls “a professed faith,” a faith that is integral to who we are as human beings made in the image and likeness of God. As the Holy Father says: It is necessary to remember that witness also includes professed faith, that is, convinced and manifest adherence to God the Father and Son and Holy Spirit, that constitutes us out of love, who redeemed us. A faith that transforms us, that transforms our relationships, the criteria and values that determine our choices, Witness, therefore, cannot be separated from consistency between what one believes and what one proclaims, and what one lives.

“A convinced and manifest adherence” to our teaching means that we are seen to be passionate about our commitment to Christ. This doesn’t mean that we brag about our Catholic faith in a simplistic or superficial way. Rather, it means that we take it quite seriously and we are eager to share the substance of what we profess as our relationship with Jesus Christ.

The pope asks us to consider three fundamental questions:

Do you live what you are proclaiming?
Do you live what you believe?
Do you preach what you live?
We cannot be satisfied with any pre-packaged answers, the Holy Father says. “We are called upon to accept the risk, albeit destabilizing, of the search, trusting fully in the action of the Holy Spirit who works in each one of us, driving us ever further: beyond our boundaries, beyond our barriers, beyond our limits, of any type.”

A professed faith is not simply memorized the way we study catechism questions. To be sure, the information that we learn in the Catechism of the Catholic Church is important to develop a mature, informed and adult faith, but it is not enough. We must make what we learn from the Scriptures and from Church teaching our own. We must live what we believe and preach what we live.

In order for the Church to effectively carry out its evangelizing mission, Pope Francis says: “The Church as such must also begin by evangelizing herself. If the Church does not evangelize herself, she remains a museum piece. Instead, it is by evangelizing herself that she is continually updated. She needs to listen unceasingly to what she must believe, to her reasons for hope, to the new commandment of love.” Evangelization is the work of the Holy Spirit, and “without the Holy Spirit we can only publicize the Church, not evangelize.” We are called to become Spirit-filled evangelizers who proclaim what we live and believe.

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

—Pope Francis, “Misericordiae Vultus” (“The Face of Mercy”)

El rostro de la misericordia/Daniel Conway

Vivir la alegría de una vida en Cristo y dar testimonio a los demás

En sus audiencias semanales de los miércoles, el papa Francisco ha hablado últimamente sobre la evangelización y le encanta citar lo que él llama la “carta magna” o documento fundacional sobre el tema: la exhortación apostólica del papa San Pablo VI Evangelii Nuntiandi (Anunciar la Buena Nueva).

Tal como nuestro Santo Padre lo plantea: “La exhortación apostólica de San Pablo VI Evangelii nuntiandi (8 de diciembre de 1975) aborda temas de actualidad. Aunque fue escrita en 1975, es como si se hubiera publicado ayer. La evangelización es algo más que una simple transmisión de doctrinas y principios morales. Es, ante todo, testimonio de que no se puede evangelizar sin dar testimonio del encuentro personal con Jesucristo, el Verbo encarnado en el que se realiza la salvación. Un testimonio indispensable porque, en primer lugar, el mundo necesita “evangelizadores que hablen de un Dios a quienes ellos mismos conocen y traten familiarmente” (#76). No se trata de transmitir una ideología o una “doctrina” sobre Dios, no. Es transmitir al Dios que vive en mí.

La evangelización no consiste en llamar a las puertas o hacer proselitismo (vender la religión que profesamos), sino de dar testimonio sobre una persona, Jesucristo. Se trata de compartir una experiencia que nos ha cambiado la vida, un encuentro que ha provocado un cambio drástico en nuestra forma de ver el mundo y a nosotros mismos. Se trata de presentar a los demás “al Dios que vive en mi.”

El papa Francisco cita las palabras de su venerado predecesor: “El hombre contemporáneo escucha más a gusto a los que dan testimonio que a los que enseñan o sí escuchan a los que enseñan, es decir, dan testimonio” (#41). Si queremos enseñar el Evangelio, debemos vivirlo, y esto significa llenarse de la alegría de vivir en Cristo.

Lo que enseñamos como evangelizadores que vivimos lo creemos y lo vivimos que lo que el papa Francisco llama “una fe profesada,” una fe que es parte integral de lo que somos como seres humanos hechos a imagen y semejanza de Dios.

Tal como nuestro Santo Padre lo plantea:

Es necesario recordar que el testimonio incluye también la fe profesada, es decir, la adhesión convencida y manifesta a Dios Padre, Hijo y Espíritu Santo, que nos creó por amor, que nos redimió. Una fe que nos transforma, que transforma nuestras relaciones, los criterios y los valores que determinan nuestras opciones. El testimonio, por tanto, no puede separarse de la coherencia entre lo que se cree y lo que se proclama, y lo que se vive.

Una “adhesión convencida y manifiesta” es nuestra trazo trágica que se nos nota que no apasiona nuestro compromiso con Cristo. Esto no significa que alabardemos de nuestra fe católica de forma simplista o superficial; más bien significa que nos lo tomamos muy en serio y que estamos deseosos de compartir la sustancia de lo que profesamos como nuestra relación con Jesucristo.

El papa nos pide que consideremos tres cuestiones fundamentales:

• Vivimos lo que proclamamos?
• Vivimos lo que creemos?
• Predicamos lo que vivimos?

“Nos podemos contentarnos con respuestas fáciles y preconfeccionadas,” afirma el Santo Padre. “Estamos llamados a aceptar el riesgo, aunque desestabilizador, de la búsqueda, confiando plenamente en la acción del Espíritu Santo que actúa en cada uno de nosotros, impulsándonos cada vez más lejos: más allá de nuestras fronteras, más allá de nuestras barreras, más allá de nuestros límites, de cualquier tipo.”

Una fe profesada no es un mero ejercicio de memoria como cuando estudiamos las preguntas del catecismo. Sin duda, la información que aprendemos en el catecismo es fundamental. Pero ésta es importante para una fe madura, informada y adulta, pero no es suficiente. Debemos hacer nuestro lo que aprendemos de las Escrituras y de las enseñanzas de la Iglesia. Debemos vivir lo que creemos y predicar lo que vivimos.

Para que la Iglesia pueda llevar a cabo eficazmente su misión evangelizadora, dice el papa Francisco: “La Iglesia como tal también debe empezar por evangelizarse a sí misma. Si la Iglesia no se evangeliza a sí misma, es apenas una pieza en un museo. En cambio, si evangelizándose a sí misma como se actualiza continuamente. Necesita escuchar sin escuchar aquel lo que debe creer, sus razones para tener esperanza, el mandamiento nuevo de amor.”

La evangelización es obra del Espíritu Santo, y “si el Espíritu Santo sólo podemos publicitar la Iglesia, no evangelizar. Estamos llamados a ser evangelizadores llenos del Espíritu que proclaman lo que vivimos y creemos.

(Daniel Conway es integrante del comité editorial de The Criterion.)

—Papa Francisco, “Misericordiae Vultus” (“El rostro de la misericordia”)
to Catholicism. The report also said Protestantism had seen that while about two out of three Hispanic adults (65%) said remain the largest religious group among Latinos in the grandchildren of immigrants from Latin America, the Ospino said. "Now the question is: Are we ready to face large growth of immigrant Hispanics who are Catholic," that the Catholic Church somehow was banking on the with young Latinos driving the trend. born Latinos (21%) to identify as religiously unaffiliated, in general, are nearly twice as likely (39%) than foreign-

even though some people thought they were completely crazy, they totally surrendered and trusted Mastronicola says. "I'm going to be excited, having completely crazy, they totally surrendered and trusted Mastronicola says. "I'm going to be excited, having com-
Biography shows how providence guided Cardinal George to Church leadership

By Sean Gallagher

Cardinal Francis E. George of Chicago traveled to Indianapolis in 2009 for the celebration of the 175th anniversary of the founding of the Diocese of Vincennes, Ind., which later became the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. At the time of its founding in 1834, the Diocese of Vincennes included the eastern third of Illinois in which was located a village on the shores of Lake Michigan called Chicago.

In an interview with The Criterion at the time of the anniversary, Cardinal George reflected on the work of providence in the life of the Church, noting that “every once in a while the curtain of ordinary living is drawn back to reveal the greater significance of what our lives are about,” adding that such moments show “how God’s providence guides the Church through the centuries.”

Cardinal George knew the mysterious reality of divine providence well in his own life. His story, shot through with providence, is ably told in a new biography about him, Gloriifying Christ: The Life of Cardinal Francis E. George, O.M.I. by Michael Heinlein (Our Sunday Visitor 2023).

Born in Chicago in 1937, Cardinal George felt a call to the priesthood while a young student at St. Pascal School. His dream of serving as a priest in the Chicago Archdiocese came to an end, though, when he contracted polio as an eighth-grade student and lost some of the use of his right leg as a result.

Leaders at the archdiocese’s high school seminary made it clear to young Francis George that he could never expect to be ordained. Providence, it seemed, had turned him away from serving the Church in Chicago. So, Cardinal George enrolled instead at a high school seminary operated in southern Illinois by the Oblates of Mary Immaculate religious order.

Discerning a call to serve the Church in the worldwide missionary congregation, Cardinal George was ordained a priest in 1963. Soon showing his worth, intellect and leadership abilities, Cardinal George rose within a decade to serve as second in authority in the order.

In 1990, he was appointed bishop of Yakima, Wash. Seven years later, providence turned the journey of Cardinal George back to Chicago when St. John Paul II appointed him to serve as the shepherd of the Church there.

Heinlein included a quip by Cardinal George upon his return to St. Pascal Parish to celebrate Mass there shortly after he was installed as archbishop: “I never expected, as one going to Mass here, to stand here as archbishop. So it be better God’s will or else we’re all in trouble.”

Cardinal George could take lightly such a momentous turn in his life because he knew in humility that it wasn’t himself in control of his life, but the loving providence of God.

Heinlein highlights well throughout his book Cardinal George’s humor, intelligence and insight into the persisting relevance of faith in an increasingly secular society.

But Heinlein’s exploration of the role of suffering in Cardinal George’s life and how it helped him minister to others in their own darkness and pain was truly compelling.

He lived with physical hardships most of his life through the ongoing effects of polio and in later bouts with cancer, which eventually led to his death.

The tensions in the Church through the past half century in the implementation of the reforms of the Second Vatican Council, and in the effects of contemporary culture on the faithful were other ongoing sources of suffering for Cardinal George. He helped lead the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in the 1970s and early 1980s when many of its members left the order. Heinlein describes well the difficulties Cardinal George faced in leading the frequently fractious presbyterate of the Chicago Archdiocese.

Perhaps the most challenging suffering of all that Cardinal George faced—but one that he never tried to avoid—was the heartrending effect of clergy sexual abuse on victims and the broader Church.

Heinlein documented in detail how Cardinal George, as archbishop of Chicago and later president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, was a leading voice of reform in the Church in the U.S. and at the Holy See in response to revelations of clergy sexual abuse.

Constantly bearing many crosses didn’t embitter Cardinal George, however. Instead, it made him more sympathetic to others whose lives were marked by pain.

Heinlein poignantly recalls how Cardinal George always took time from his weighty responsibilities as the pastoral leader of one of the nation’s largest archdioceses to spend time ministering to the sick, those in need, victims of clergy sexual abuse and priests struggling to live out their calling.

God’s providence may have led Cardinal George to positions of high leadership in the Church, but he never lost sight of his vocation in ordained ministry to show forth the mercy and compassion of Christ to others in personal encounters.

Heinlein emphasized how Cardinal George, ordained a priest in the midst of Vatican II, sought to embody the fullness of the council’s teachings in his ordained ministry by keeping Christ at the center of his life and seeking to share the Gospel in ways fit for the culture of the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

Cardinal George was determined to keep to this course when many around him in the Church retreated to different competing camps of interpretations of the council, putting on themselves any number of labels—conservative, liberal, traditional, progressive—to mark themselves off from others.

Cardinal George strongly rejected this divisive trend and dedicated himself to fostering unity in the Church.

This work was left undone at his death in 2015. In the years that have followed, its importance has arguably only increased.

So, Heinlein’s biography of a leader of the Church in America who sought, as noted in his episcopal motto, to glorify Christ in the Church, has come at an important time, perhaps a providential time.

If reading this detailed and sensitive biography can in some small way advance the work of building up unity in the Church, then the power of providence will be shown by God’s ability to work today through the life of Cardinal George, eight years after God called him to himself. †

Embrace Grace in Greenfield helps moms in need

Walking with Moms is a monthly feature highlighting organizations that help—and need support in helping—expecting and parenting mothers in need in central and southern Indiana.

Embrace Grace

St. Michael Parish
519 Jefferson Blvd.
Greenfield, IN 46140

Weekly meetings in Parish Life Center, Room 2, from 7-9 p.m.

Contact for moms: Tanya Livingston, 317-498-4239 (call or text), livingston.tanya@yahoo.com

Volunteer needs: Organizing, decorating and providing food and gifts for baby showers; prayer support. Contact Mary Beth Sifferlen, 317-408-5476, mssifferlen@comcast.net.

Services: 12-week programs offering emotional, spiritual and material support for parenting moms or moms experiencing an unexpected pregnancy.

Themed weekly sessions allow moms to work on their relationship with God through Scripture, journaling and other homework, and to develop a support system with other participants. Each 12-week program culminates with a baby shower for each mom.

Volunteer needs: Organizing, decorating and providing food and gifts for baby showers; prayer support. Contact Mary Beth Sifferlen, 317-408-5476, mssifferlen@comcast.net.
Blessed Mother’s life of faith offers compelling witness at Indiana Catholic Women’s Conference

By Jennifer Lindberg

More than 400 women participated in this year’s Indiana Catholic Women’s Conference to find that walking together allowed them to more fully understand the conference’s theme: “Holding Mary’s hand in faith and Hope.”

The conference at the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis on March 11 provided a line-up of speakers with inspiring talks on the Seven Sorrows of Mary, miracles of the Miraculous Medal and Catholic teaching regarding abortion and infidelity.

“I do better with my faith when I’m with a community,” said Olivia Kitchel, a member of St. Michael the Archangel Parish in Indianapolis.

She is known for helping with crisis pregnancies, saving babies through the medical abortion reversal protocol and helping her patients in all pro-life issues.

She advocates natural family planning. Natural Procreative (NaPro) Technology and adoption for couples struggling with fertility. Delcoco also incorporates St. John Paul II’s Theology of the Body teachings into her medical practice.

“Medicine follows natural law,” she said. “We don’t need to be afraid of the truth or following the Church.”

“I know that I’m not alone or in a bubble when it comes to practicing my faith.”

“I do better with my faith when I’m with a community,” said Dr. Casey Delcoco.

As a family practice physician, Delcoco said she wrote her business plan based on a study at the time that showed 90% of patients wanted their spiritual needs addressed as well as their health care needs. However, only 30% of doctors were comfortable addressing those needs. In her practice, combining those needs is her practice.

“I was inspired to me hear how [Delcoco] helps women choose life and not abortion,” said Sarah Winternheimer. She and her mother Karen Winternheimer, both members of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Indianapolis, attended the conference to deepen their devotions with women also seeking to grow in their faith.

The power of the Miraculous Medal

The day also included two talks about Mary from Jennifer Waldyke and Sister Mary Augustine McMenamy of the Sisters of the Reparation to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus based in Steelville, Ohio.

Waldyke hosts the “Catholic Mom and Daughter: Real Life. Living the Faith” YouTube channel. She gave attendees an overview of the Miraculous Medal by focusing on the conversion of Marie-Alphonse Ratisbonne in the 19th century.

His hatred of the Catholic Church increased after his brother became a Jesuit priest. He began wearing the Miraculous Medal as a sort of bet when he spent time in Italy. It led to an appearance of the Virgin Mary, his conversion and his becoming a priest as well.

Understand Mary ‘through her sorrows’

Sister Mary Augustine of the Sisters of Reparation to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus guided the women through an in-depth mediation on the Seven Sorrows of Mary.

“Jesus wants you to take you into his arms,” said Sister Mary Augustine. “We need to understand Mary, and one way to do that is through her sorrows. She stepped onto the path of reparation and suffering out of love for each of us.”

Uniting our sorrows with the Blessed Mother has great efficacy, she said. “There are griefs that lie too deep for tears in a mother’s broken heart,” said Sister Mary Augustine.

Those griefs include the indignities that women experience through abuse and pornography, watching a child die, pleading for a lost child to come back to the Catholic faith and other sufferings that can be united with Mary, she said.

Sister Mary Augustine’s mediation illustrated the sins and virtues present in each of the Seven Sorrows of Mary.

• The Prophecy of Simeon: Mary is told that she will suffer with a sword piercing her heart. This sorrow reveals the sin of wrath, which is countered by the virtue of forgiveness.

• The Flight into Egypt: Just after the magi presented the Christ child with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh, St. Joseph was told in a dream to take Jesus and Mary to Egypt to protect them from the wrath of King Herod. This sorrow represents the sin of envy, which is countered by the virtue of gratitude. It was a 300-mile journey that took 30 days on foot through a land full of robbers and little water.

• Mary understands your grief if you ever had to fear for your safety or the safety of your children,” said Sister Mary Augustine.

• The Loss of the Child Jesus in the Temple: This was the first time Mary did not know where Jesus was and went searching for him. This sorrow represents the sin of sloth—or lack of hope—which is countered by the virtue of persistence, as well as practicing the corporal and spiritual works of mercy.

This sorrow includes losing someone to drugs, alcohol, depression or a child blaming you for their problems.

The sorrow shows the sin of sloth and how sloth begets gossip, said Sister Mary Augustine.

Mary and Joseph were probably blamed for losing Jesus, or people thought they were bad parents. It also shows how people want to look at other people’s lives instead of their own, she said.

“Sloth is the opposite way of how Mary lived her life,” said Sister Mary Augustine. “She made haste to her cousin Elizabeth. She helped when the wain ran out at Cana. We must take ownership of our own lives and who we are.”

• Mary meets Jesus on the Way of the Cross: This sorrow reflects on the sin of lust, which leads to treating “other people like objects—it hardens our hearts [and] causes violence,” Sister Mary Augustine said. This sin is countered by the virtue of chastity.

“Lust treats other people like objects,” she said. “It hardens our hearts. It causes violence.”

The way to overcome this is modesty. “Our role as women is to nurture our children and show that there is a holy expression of love for the world,” she said.

• The Crucifixion: Sister Mary Augustine said when that Mary stood at the foot of the cross, watching Christ die, the Blessed Mother saw what pride can do. The opposing virtue is humility.

God is rebuked. He will not be served, just as when the angels rebelled in heaven. The sin of pride encompasses indifference, ridicule, being pompous, and not being able to take any criticism, said Sister Mary Augustine.

“Don’t be afraid to fail,” she said. “Don’t be afraid to be last. It’s OK if someone is better than you. And be willing to ask for forgiveness.”

• Jesus is taken down from the cross: Sister Mary Augustine said this sorrow represents the sin of gluttony in that Christ used the opposing virtue of temperance to empty himself. Mary held the dead Christ in her arms, who emptied himself of everything; yet we cannot deny ourselves even simple pleasures. This can lead to over consumption of food, alcohol and drugs, she said.

“Temperance is how we repair this,” she said.

• Jesus is laid in the Tomb: This sorrow is a meditation on the sin of greed and its opposing virtue of generosity, said Sister Mary Augustine. Mary had to rely on the generosity of another to provide Christ’s burial because he was considered a criminal. Mary had to borrow a burial place for him. It is the sin of greed represented in this sorrow.

“One way to make reparation for this is generosity to and live simply,” she said.

Walking in faith

At the end of the day, the soothing music of Catholic composer Francesca Larosa helped the women process all they learned. Larosa, the former music director of St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis, sang her newest song, “Let Me Hear Your Voice,” about St. Teresa of Avila’s writings.

Her song, using the words of the saint, summed up a conference day meant to strengthen the women’s faith life as she sang: “You are God’s beloved. You are not forsaken. You are not alone!”

(Sister Mary Augustine McMenamy, a member of the Sisters of Reparation to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus in Steelville, Ohio, speaks at the Indiana Catholic Women’s Conference on March 11 at the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis. (Photo by Jennifer Lindberg)}
Eucharistic revival a time to renew love for Christ in Blessed Sacrament

(OSV News)—The Eucharist is the summit of our faith, in which the entire story of our salvation is made real in a miraculous and powerful way. St. Thomas Aquinas in his liturgical text for the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (traditionally called Corpus Christi) calls the Eucharist the “sacred banquet, in which Christ is received; the memory of his passion is renewed; the mind is filled with grace; and a pledge of future glory is given unto us.” Yet how often do we take time to reflect on this priceless gift? Even in Mass, we can become distracted and what is miraculous and precious becomes routine.

The three-year National Eucharistic Revival can be an opportunity for reflection and for deepening our love for what God has given us—his Son, Jesus, whom we receive into our bodies and souls. The culminating event of the revival will be the National Eucharistic Congress on July 17-21, 2024, in Indianapolis.

During the revival, we can make a point to focus on the Eucharist—in the Mass, in our reading, in our faith formation classes and in the quiet of our own hearts. We can use this time well to pay closer attention to this gift.

At every Mass, we are witnesses to a miracle. The Eucharist is not a symbol of our Lord. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, bread and wine actually become the body, blood, soul and divinity of Christ. At the altar, he truly comes to us, again and again, in his Real Presence. The bishops at the Second Vatican Council taught that Christ himself instituted the Eucharist at the Last Supper as a “memorial of his death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a paschal banquet in which Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us” (“Sacrosanctum Concilium,” 647).

The Eucharist calls us to make present here and now with the help of God’s grace Christ’s passion and death on the cross, the sacrifice in which he won for us our salvation and eternity with the Father. It also is a tremendous sign of our unity as believers.

We call it holy Communion because when we approach the altar, we are acknowledging our unity with Christ, his Church, and one another. Christ, through our participation in the Eucharist, makes this communion a living reality.

Yet these words can only partially express a mystery that is beyond words. “If you understand it, it would not be God,” wrote St. Augustine. So, too, with the Eucharist.

During the National Eucharistic Revival, we can plumb this mystery more and more deeply—not just when we come together for Mass, but in every situation of life. The Church asks all of us to examine our consciences and make sure we are truly prepared to receive Jesus:

- Are we in a state of grace, then the Church asks us, for our own good, to receive God’s mercy and forgiveness in the sacrament of penance before receiving Communion.
- Have we observed the one-hour fast from food and drink (except for water and medicine) before receiving Our Lord?
- Do we believe in the Real Presence? Do we believe that Christ is truly present, body and blood, soul and divinity in the Eucharist?
- Are we faithful to the moral teachings of the Church in our personal and public lives?

There are many ways that the Church can celebrate the National Eucharistic Revival:

- Corpus Christi processions—The National Eucharistic Revival began on the feast of Corpus Christi in the United States on June 19, 2022. The feast of Corpus Christi began in 1246 in France and became a feast for the entire Western Church only 18 years later. It was itself meant to be a celebration of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

In this centuries-old Catholic tradition, the faithful take part in a procession to honor the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist, singing eucharistic hymns as they process in a church or an outdoor public setting as a testimony of their faith.

- Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament—Parishes often celebrate exposition and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. During exposition, Catholics spend time praying and worshipping the Lord in the Eucharist while a host is exposed on an altar, ordinarily displayed in a special brass receptacle called a monstrance.
- Adult Faith Formation—Throughout the revival, parishes around the country are offering programs and other types of study on the Eucharist.

Catholics are encouraged to take advantage of these opportunities to join with others in deepening their faith in and understanding of the Eucharist.

- At Mass—When we recognize that Jesus himself is present in the Eucharist, we come to realize that participation every week at Sunday Mass (or Saturday vigil Mass) is more than an obligation. It is a privilege.
- Prayer before a tabernacle—Jesus is present in the hosts reserved in a tabernacle. We can take time out regularly to visit a church and talk to him there. Make it a “holy hour.”
- Prayer in an adoration chapel—Many parishes provide a place where the Blessed Sacrament remains exposed for prayer and adoration every day—sometimes even around the clock in a perpetual adoration chapel. This arrangement provides an excellent and ongoing opportunity to draw close to Jesus in his eucharistic presence outside of Mass. If possible, sign up for a regular time to visit the church or chapel.

- Cultivating an attitude of gratitude—Finally, keep in mind that the Greek word that is the root of our word Eucharist literally means “thanksgiving.” In holy Communion, as Jesus gives himself to us, we give ourselves to him as well in gratitude. His sacrifice on the cross—presented on the altar—takes away the sins of the world and makes possible for us a life of intimate union with God.

The National Eucharistic Revival is still only in its first of three years. This is a wonderful time for Catholics across the U.S. to grow in a deeper love for Christ in the Eucharist and allow him through his presence in it to transform us as individuals and as a Church in our country.

(For more information on the National Eucharistic Revival, visit www.eucharisticrevival.org. To learn more about the National Eucharistic Congress, including how to purchase tickets for it, visit www.eucharisticcongress.org. For information on the eucharistic revival in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, visit eucharisticrevivalindy.org.)
Workshop will share how to spread the good news

... but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts. Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope! (1 Pt 3:15).

In the archdiocesan Office of Evangelization, we are here to help give you the opportunity to be that voice witness to one another by affording you the resources to take steps to build upon your commitment to Christ.

Evangelization should become more important in our faith communities as we begin being able to share the Gospel and our own experiences, our own stories with one another, which leads to our own spiritual growth.

We are all called to be disciples of Christ. We are called to follow the path of faith of truly not understanding where ourselves somewhat lost in our faith, a disciples of all the nations” (Mt 28:19). Authority, and that is to go and “make Christ. We are called to follow Jesus’ one another, which leads to our own experiences, our own stories with being able to share the Gospel and our own spiritual growth.

Second path: You’re not sure what an evangelization team is or what to expect to find out more about how you can try to start your team. If you sign up today, you will learn more. The next step is to sign up and come more by participating in the workshop.

Evangelization was led by the Spirit of God to a life of preaching and of service. We also have that same Spirit to share, with others.

The Office of Evangelization is excited about hosting a day-long, engaging workshop on the topic of how to register, guide, and teach and invite others to do the same.

For more information, call 317-236-1446.

That All May Be One

Christianity. One’s life dedicated to the pillar of Ramadan fasting (Islam). The joy of life in playful colors and the rising from the earth of vegetation (Hinduism). And life blossoming into nirvana (Buddhism).

The thread of release from bondage: from sin and death (Christianity), from imprisonment and cruel injustice (Judaism), from human passions trying to dominate one’s mind and spirit (Islam), and from physical concerns to spiritual enlightenment (Buddhism).

These festivals and seasons are very important. It is good to recognize them and rejoice in their meaning for those who celebrate them.

Nevertheless, they are not equal in their importance. For among these religious celebrations, only one has a universal impact. It is Easter.

The salvation won by Christ is a gift for all humanity. As our liturgy states, “Christ died, once for all, for the forgiveness of sins.” No human being is excluded from the effect.

While Judaism names Jesus Christ as a prophet and Islam sees Jesus Christ as the prophet who will bring to fruition the end times, these Abrahamic faiths do not believe him to be “Son of God,” “Messiah” or “Savior.”

Both Judaism and Buddhism sprang up without knowledge of Jesus. He does not factor into their belief systems. This Easter season, we Catholic Christians embrace Jesus as Lord and Savior. We profess that he came for the salvation of all.

Our joy is not for just ourselves, but for how God mysteriously works out the salvation of all.

We pray in our Good Friday intercessions (see my March column) for both believers and non-believers.

Let us embrace the common humanity of all religious people. Let us see in these religious festivals and seasons common threads that invite understanding and respect.

And while we are doing so, let us sing out: Alleluia!

(Father Rick Ginther is director of the archdiocesan Office of Evangelization and disciplefish in the archdiocesan Office of Catechesis. She can be reached at abioneer@archindy.org)

Traveling while older: Patience and wisdom go with us

I write this having freshly returned from a week-long trip to Europe, visiting the company of storytellers. We embarked with a purpose: to hear the stories of love, of hope and faith. Our destination was the Dominican Republic, a country specifically its rocky coasts, verdant hills and fertile sugar cane fields. Traveling with ministry professionals from the archdiocese of Nashville, we witnessed firsthand their work with the poorest of the poor.

Strangely, the older I get, the more I find myself eager to pack my bags and explore the world. My work has carried me to many places, but always back to my faith in a place as America. These days, I prefer mission trips that carry me directly into the lives and homes of new friends just waiting to be met.

When I pour over the stamps in my report, it’s not the museums or restaurants I remember most. Don’t get me wrong. I love a beautiful beach or a tourist attraction, but what matters most to my heart are the memories of the people I meet along the way. The way they’ve fundamentally changed my life, how they’ve experienced the world and how I hope to travel in the years I have ahead of me. On my way back from a trip, I couple around my age who were just returning home from a week in the Caribbean. As they debarked the plane, I recognized commonalities between our experiences. Their favorite moments were spent in the company of locals, savoring the sights, sounds and smells of the “real” place they were visiting. As they rattled off suggestions to the group, I wondered what they would to the pack of fraternity brothers who had been in front of me in the customs line and likely had a very different plan for their spring break. Same destination. Different agendas.

We seniors travel with purpose.

We embark on pilgrimages in the company of our faith families to pray in sacred places.

We remember eras of past and the lessons their monuments, battlefields and memorials teach us.

We journey to see and sometimes minister to our loved ones.

We retrace our roots.

We take to the road to marvel at the natural world around us, and dream of adventures yet to come.

I carried two recent stories of traveling seniors in my heart when I embarked for Santo Domingo.

First was an account about St. Teresa of Calcutta, who in 1899 finally received a travel visa to return to her native Albania after more than 60 years of exile away from home and family. She has become my new traveling companion and intercessor for travel-related delays.

Second was Via Viaggio, a recent film documenting Pope Francis’ 37 trips visiting 53 countries during the first nine years of his pontificate. The filmmakers intermittently weave in sentimental connections in these places. People matter.

Traveling as we age challenges yet enriches. For some of us, the way is slow and burdensome. Yet we endure the hardships with a joy and a patience we know the reward that awaits us when we arrive at our destination will be worth the trial.

Unpacking from this most recent trip involves more than simply collapsing my clothes. There’s a stubborn stain I picked up from the afternoon I spent learning to make cement forms for simple, storm-
Again, as is usual for the Easter season, the Acts of the Apostles provides the first reading for Mass this weekend. This reading recounts an event like several others in Acts. St. Peter preached in the name of all the 11 surviving Apostles. His remarks recorded in this passage were brief and crisp. The questions raised by biblical scholars is that Peter’s message was kerygmatic, drawing from kerygma, the Greek word for “message.” It means that Peter’s words contained the basic information about Jesus and God’s plan of salvation.

Despite the small number of Christians at the time and the fact that the Jewish culture and the effects of Roman domination were overwhelming, the Apostles were still determined to speak aloud about Jesus.

Their resolve revealed their trust and faith in Jesus as Savior and Son of God. The world desperately needed Jesus. Only Jesus could fill what the world needs—then and now. Remembering last weekend’s first reading that described both the early Church’s love for the Lord and its outreach to the troubled and needy, this reading shows that the first followers of Christ saw informing others about the Redeemer as a loving service. Note also, here as elsewhere in Acts, Peter alone spoke on behalf of the Apostles, even when they were present.

The First Epistle of St. Peter supplies the next reading. Scholars debate the authorship of this epistle. Was Peter the author? Or was someone writing in Peter’s name the author, or was the author presenting ideas that had come from Peter?

In any case, the reading shows how totally committed to Jesus the Savior the early Christians were, and how aware they were that salvation had come through the Lord’s death and resurrection.

The last reading, from St. Luke’s Gospel, is the powerful and lovely story of the risen Lord’s walk to Emmaus with two disciples. The Emmaus narrative appears only in Luke. It is one of the most renowned and beloved pieces in the New Testament.

Important in its message is the fact that, regardless of their devotion to Jesus, the disciples still do not understand everything. They are limited human beings, bewildered by the events of the Lord’s death and resurrection. They need Jesus to understand the deep meaning and purpose of all that they had seen.

Secondly, Jesus meets this need. He teaches them. Thirdly, Jesus is with them. Finally, as they share a meal, with its eucharistic overtones, Jesus is the central figure presiding as they “break the bread” (Lk 24:35). The connection with the Eucharist is too strong to overlook.

Reflection

Beginning with the Scripture readings for Easter itself and continuing this weekend, the Church expresses to us forcefully and clearly its unflinching belief that after his crucifixion and death the Lord Jesus rose to new life.

With equal vigor and faith, it also insists that Jesus did not rise and then disappear. Instead, the Lord was with the Apostles, showing to them his wounds and blessing those who believe. He was alive, present and still teaching during the journey to Emmaus. The supper at Emmaus was the culmination of the two disciples’ time with Jesus.

The use of the technique of kerygma gives us the basic facts of the Lord’s identity and mission. The experience of the Apostles shows us that they literally knew the risen Christ. We turn to them to know Jesus ourselves.

Knowing Jesus is more than possessing data. It confronts us with the obligation to follow Jesus if we know him. By our discipleship, we extant Christ to those with whom we meet.

That is, Jesus’ daughter, the widow’s son, and Lazarus would all eventually die a second time—and definitively. In contrast to this, when Jesus was resurrected in the proper sense of the term, he moved completely beyond death and could never die again (see the Catechism of the Catholic Church, #686).

To your question, it’s notable that in accounts of Jesus raising these people from the dead, the Gospel give us plenty of what we might call human interest details. Jesus tells Jairus to give his newly-raised daughter something to eat (Lk 8:55). Jesus wept upon hearing of his friend Lazarus’ impending death (Jn 11:35). But they do not tell us clearly where these people’s spirits went or what was experienced in death.

Likewise, as far as I have been able to find, the Church doesn’t give us a direct, specific answer to your question. But we may take into account the Church’s traditional understanding of what happened on Holy Saturday, namely that Jesus descended into “hell” (understood in this sense as simply the underworld or the realm of the dead, rather than a freely-chosen state of separation from God).

He did this to triumphally open the gates of heaven to all of God’s faithful, who were awaiting their redemption from his sacrifice on the cross.

The Office of Readings from the Liturgy of the Hours for Holy Saturday includes an ancient homily which contains an imaginative meditation on Jesus’ descent to the dead during the time between his death and resurrection:

“He has gone to search for our first parents, as for a lost sheep. At the sight of him Adam, the first man he had created, struck his breast in terror and cried out to every splendid race of men: ‘My Lord be with you all!’ Christ answered him: ‘And with your spirit.’ He took him by the hand and raised him up, saying: ‘Awake, O sleeper, and rise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.’ … ‘Rise, let us at least come together,’ for you are in me and I am in you; together we form only one person and we cannot be separated.’

So, if we wish to speculate a little, my own guess is that Lazarus and the others would have—for however brief a time—shared in the hope and longing of all the other souls of the dead who were awaiting their salvation in Christ.

(Jenna Marie Cooper, who holds a licentiate in canon law, is a consecrated virgin and a canonist whose column appears weekly at OSV News. Send your questions to CatholicQ&A@osv.com.)
Please submit in writing to our office by 10 a.m. on the third Thursday before the week of publication; be sure to state date of death. Obituaries of archdiocesan priests serving our archdiocese are listed elsewhere in The Criterion. Order priests and religious sisters and brothers are included here only when they are natives of the archdiocese or have other connexions to it; those are separate obituaries on this page.


BROOKS, Stacia. 46, St. Martin, New Albany, March 29. Sister of Tonya and Brian. Grandmother of one.


RUPPRECHT, Daughters of St. Paul Sister Hosea Rupprecht is the director of Catholic Media Relations. She writes about faith-related topics, current social and media issues as is the Church influencing Christians to develop and deepen relationships with God. The question is: how can we counteract influences that are contrary to our faith, especially the influence of media stories? Here are a few tips—Learn, share, and live your faith. Know what the Church teaches, share it and model it in your life. Influence society for the good by living an authentic relationship with God—Talk about media stories with children and teens. Ask them what they think of characters and their behavior. If characters exhibit problematic behavior, ask what a better way would be. If virtual behavior is on display, ask how that could translate into real life—Be courageous. It’s not easy to embrace values and beliefs that are countercultural. Pray and ask God for the strength to witness to your faith, even when it’s not popular. Yes, we need to acknowledge the “normalizing” effects of media messages and the influences of social contagion but without fear. Just remember that, as Christians, we are called to “normalize” Gospel behavior in all our personal, faith, social and media interactions. (Daughters of St. Paul Sister Hosea Rupprecht is the associate director of the Pauline Center for Media Studies, a ministry of the Daughters of St. Paul.)

HENDERSON, Online Lay Ministry Formation The Archdiocese of Indianapolis has partnered with the University of Notre Dame and Catholic Distance University (CDU) to offer not-for-credit online theology classes: • Earn certificate in Lay Ministry • Complete 15 courses online with NO STEP program • CDU offers classes in Catechism of the Catholic Church • 2020-21 enroll for all employees, volunteers, and parishioners.

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

proof houses in San Juan de la Maguana. The patient workers allowed me to “help” them even though my efforts probably needed fixing afterward. The stairs, in truth, is a precious memory.

I will also unpack fragrant recollections from the mountain community who welcomed us to the grand opening of their women-owned cheese factory, and the commencement ceremony of the first-ever graduating class of the Blessed Carlo Acutis technology center. I will ponder the futures of the children of the housing communities of Baytev 412 and 106, who danced with me while their Haitian fathers labored for hours in the scorching heat of the nearby sugar cane fields. I will channel the example of Maggy, a woman who has devoted her life to ministering to the young single mothers of her home town. Maggy helps them find a way to become educated as they dream of something better for themselves and their babies. I travel to see the world, meet God’s people and connect more deeply with our common stories. My confidence rests in the One who loves us all and continues to guard my steps and point the way. And because I am older—and hopefully wiser—than I once was, my prayers travel with me and remain with all of my new friends.

(Lou Henderson is the founder of CatholicMom.com, a bestselling author and an international speaker. Her column appears monthly at OSV News.)
Vatican announces theme for World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis has chosen “His mercy is from age to age,” a passage from the Gospel of Luke, as the theme for the 2023 celebration of the World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly.

The theme was chosen by the Pontiff in the first chapter of Luke—to mark the celebration of the World Day of Grandparents and the Elderly to World Youth Day, which will be celebrated about a week later, in Lisbon, Portugal, the dicastery said.

On the world day, which will be celebrated on July 23, Pope Francis will celebrate Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica, according to the dicastery for Lay, Catholic parishes, dioceses, movements and associations are asked to organize local celebrations as well, the dicastery said in a short note on April 1.

Pope Francis chose the theme—which is a line from Mary’s “Magnificat” in the first chapter of Luke—to mark the celebration of the World Day of Grandparents and the Elderly to World Youth Day, which will be celebrated about a week later, in Lisbon, Portugal, the dicastery said.

The theme for the youth gathering on Aug. 1-6 is “Mary arose and went with haste” from Luke 1:39, the dicastery said.

Pope Francis visited Portugal in 2001 to mark the Year of Faith, and he along with Pope Benedict XVI visited Lisbon in 2007.

“With this event, and with so many others since then, I have learned that God will provide the way for me. My hope lies on this renewed path, straightened by God’s unending love for me,” Barbara Davis of St. Paul Parish in Tell City said of her faith journey.

“An uplifting touch of kindness”

Sometimes, it’s our seemingly small acts of kindness that make such a big difference to people.

Barbara Davis of St. Paul Parish in Tell City experienced a personal renewal of hope and faith as a result of the end of a relationship she was in for more than a decade.

“Some days are much better than others, but, regardless, I still feel my relationship with Christ,” says Meyer, a member of St. Mark the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis.

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consisting of eight bishops, three laywomen, two priests, two laymen and two religious. Synod participants addressed the implications of prayer, silence and discussion to distill responses for inclusion in the text, which forms a report to the December 2021-2023 Continental Synod.

The final document for the continental phase from North America, along with the continental gathered in Arizona, will be sent to the assemblies for approval, will form the basis of the "Instrumentum Laboris," the global synod’s working document, to be released by the General Secretariat in June 2022.

Bishop Daniel E. Flores of Brownsville, chairman of the USCCB Committee on Doctrine, who leads the North American team with Canadian Bishop Raymond Poisson of Saint-Jérôme-Mont-Laurier, Quebec, presented the document at the Vatican on April 12.

Launched by Pope Francis in October 2021, the multi-year synod of bishops—the theme of which is “communion, participation and mission”—seeks to cultivate an ongoing dynamic of discernment, listening, humility and engagement within the Catholic Church.

The North American report highlighted the key themes of the synod: baptism, communion with Christ and one another, and missionary discipleship as a living out of the baptismal call.

“Our baptismal dignity is inseparable from our baptismal responsibility, which sends us forth on mission.”

By virtue of their baptism, participants in the synod’s North American phase expressed “a desire for a greater recognition of, and opportunities for, co-responsibility within the Church and her mission,” with greater collaboration “among the laity and the clergy, including bishops,” said the document.

It stressed “there can be no true co-responsibility in the Church without fully honoring the dignity of women.”

An "authentic acknowledgment and respect for the gifts and talents of young people is another vital aspect of a co-responsible Church in North America,” said the document.

"Polarization and a strong pull toward fragmentation," synod participants in North America emphasized the need to "maintain the centrality of Christ," especially "in the Eucharist.

The document candidly acknowledged that a “significant threat to communion within the Church is a lack of trust, especially between bishops and the laity, but also between the clergy in general and the lay faithful.”

The clergy sexual abuse crisis in particular has caused “major areas of tension in North America,” as have “the historical wrongs found in the residential and boarding schools for Indigenous peoples, included abuse of all kinds,” said the document.

In their introduction to the document, Bishop Flores and Bishop Poisson admitted the need to “make efforts to listen more effectively to those from whom we have heard, including many who have been relegated to the margins of our communities, society and Church.” They noted their “absence” in the synodal process was “not easily interpreted but was palpably felt.”

Among those often missing from synodal sessions were priests with bishops acknowledging their responsibility to address that lack “by example and by conveying the transparency and spiritual/pastoral fruitfulness of synodality.”

Synod participants listed women, young people, immigrants, racial or linguistic minorities, LGBTQ persons, people who are divorced and civilly remarried without an annulment, and those with varying degrees of physical or mental abilities as marginalized within the Church.

Outreach and inclusion of these groups is ultimately driven at the local level by the faithful actively living out their baptism, McStravog told OSV News.

At the same time, “the bishops really took to heart the call … to reach out to the periphery,” Coll told OSV News, who added that virtual synod sessions enabled broader participation.

Synod participants consistently articulated a longing for better formation in the faith and in Catholic social teaching, the document said.

As the synod process moves into its next phase, Coll and McStravog pointed to the need for humility and openness to God’s will.

“We don’t have all the answers, and none of this is pre-packaged,” said Coll.

“You have to trust that the Spirit will be there to guide us despite the messiness—or maybe because of it.”

(The final document for the Continental Stage in North America, available in English, Spanish and French, can be viewed and downloaded at usccb.org/synod.)

North American Catholics identify harm of polarization, bishop says

North American Catholics identify harm of polarization, bishop says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—In their discussions about the life of the Church and “synodality,” or walking together to discern the Church’s life, American bishops repeatedly stressed the negative impact “polarization” is having on the Church, said Bishop Daniel E. Flores of Brownsville, Texas.

“Politics gets mixed into it, and it’s Ok to disagree,” he said. “But you don’t have to deal with the other person who thinks differently than you do.”

Bishop Flores, chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Doctrine, spoke to Catholic News Service on April 12 about the release of the final document from the North American continental session of the synod, and the bishops’ experiences participating in the Synod of Bishops at the Vatican in 2023 and 2024.

The Texas bishop, who had shepherded the continental process for the United States and Canada, Bishop Flores said one of the themes that came out most strongly was wanting to be a Church that continues this experience of communion in a practical sense, of being able to get together and speak about matters of the faith and matters of the Church that are very important to people.

People “were really happy just to have been asked to share their experience of the life of the Church,” Bishop Flores said, and they would like to have similar opportunities in the future.

In the North American report and in the other continental reports he has read, Bishop Flores said he sees a common theme of Catholics feeling “the world is changing so fast” and wanting to find the best ways for the Church to respond to those changes.

Certainly in North America, but also in most other parts of the world, he said, Catholics highlighted a need for “formation” and not primarily as a call for religious education classes, but “formation in a synodal mindset,” one that helps people understand and appreciate being “a people of the word of God who gather together and talk about it and pray together and then let that inform us as we move forward.”

On a whole range of issues, including on the repeatedly stressed issue of reaching out to and involving young people in the life of the Church, Bishop Flores said the discussions were not about “what the Church needs to do” but “how can we do this better”—and that’s an important shift.

The North American synthesis also includes a separate section, titled “Bishops’ Reflections on the Experience of Synodality in North America.”

Bishop Flores said the key reflection was that bishops found their diocesan synodal sessions “very invigorating,” and want to find ways to continue having that kind of interaction with the variety of people that make up the Church in their dioceses.

A Bishop needs to find new ways to kind of stay in touch with what his people are living, are thinking and are praying about,” he said.

The bishops, like many other people who participated in some stage of the synod process, he said, also have questions about what it means, on a practical level, to be a “synodal Church” that listens to and relies on the gifts of everyone while also being a “hierarchical Church.”

And that is a discussion that will continue, he said, including at the synod assemblies.

The continental phase also again heard calls for the Church to be more welcoming and inclusive. “The groups named during the continental stage included women, young people, immigrants, racial or linguistic minorities, LGBTQ persons, people who are divorced and remarried without an annulment, and those with varying degrees of physical or mental abilities,” the report said.

Bishop Flores said he expects “lively discussion” on that topic as well.

What does it mean as a Church to be open and welcoming to people, especially in the context of the dignity of the baptized,” is a question to be explored, he said. “The continental document does not offer us a solution to these things, it just raises them up. This is what people really are thinking about.”

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson speaks on March 5, 2022, at St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus to participants of a meeting to review a draft report on a synodal process in the archdiocese that started in October of 2021. (Catholic News by Sean Gallagher)