Pope, Ukrainian leader discuss humanitarian situation provoked by war

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—After literally hundreds of public prayers for peace in Ukraine and 443 days after Russia launched an all-out war on the Eastern European country, Pope Francis welcomed Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to the Vatican.

The topics of the conversation on May 13 included “the humanitarian and political situation in Ukraine caused by the ongoing war,” the Vatican press office said.

Pope Francis assured the president of “his constant prayers, evidenced by his many public appeals and continuous invocation to the Lord for peace,” the statement continued.

“Both agreed on the need for continued humanitarian efforts to support the population,” the Vatican said. And “the pope particularly stressed the urgent need for ‘gestures of humanity’ toward the most fragile people, the innocent victims of the conflict.”

Zelensky, in a tweet after the meeting, said he was grateful for the pope’s “personal attention to the tragedy of millions of Ukrainians.”

But he also said he asked the pope “to condemn Russian crimes in Ukraine. Because there can be no equality between the victim and the aggressor.”

Earlier that morning, in a speech to new ambassadors to the Vatican, Pope Francis seemed to indirectly address criticisms, including by many Ukrainians, of his attempts not to demonize and isolate Russia.

Having no “political, commercial or military aims,” the pope said, the Vatican operates on the world stage “through the exercise of a positive neutrality. Far from being an ‘ethical neutrality,’ especially in

Seymour Deanery Catholics celebrate love for the Eucharist in Columbus

By Sean Gallagher

COLUMBUS—Love for Christ in the Eucharist brought together some 600 Catholics from across the Seymour Deanery for a May 7 bilingual Mass, outdoor eucharistic procession and Benediction at St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus.

Cathy Lampton, St. Bartholomew’s youth minister, was excited to see so many people come to

See Seymour, page 14

Father Christopher Wadleton carries the Blessed Sacrament in a monstrance at the head of a May 7 eucharistic procession in the grounds of St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

I want to share my life with others’

Deacon José Neri travels a challenging and joyful journey to the priesthood

By Sean Gallagher

ST. MEINRAD—Transitional Deacon José Neri’s road to the priesthood has been a long and arduous one—geographically, culturally and spiritually.

Born in southern Mexico, he moved with his parents and five siblings to Indianapolis in 2004 when he was 12.

Deacon Neri traveled culturally from what he described as an “Hispanic bubble” in which he lived for the first 18 years of his life, including his first six years in Indianapolis, to one dominated by English speakers. And spiritually, he went from living in a town in Mexico where a priest would only come occasionally to celebrate Mass and the sacraments to Indianapolis where the sacraments were readily available, and he soon fell in love with the faith.

This long and challenging journey will culminate at 10 a.m. on June 3 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral when Archbishop Charles C. Thompson will ordain Deacon Neri and transitional Deacon Jack Wright as priests for the Church in central and southern Indiana.

Then-seminarian José Neri, left, kneels in prayer on Aug. 9, 2021, in the chapel of Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House in Indianapolis. Neri, who was ordained a transitional deacon in 2022, will be ordained a priest for the archdiocese on June 3 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. (Catholic file photo by Sean Gallagher)
Bishops with bordering dioceses reaffirm humanitarian commitment

(OSV News)–Eight Catholic bishops in the U.S. whose dioceses share a border with Mexico reaffirmed their commitment to promoting human dignity and their cooperation with government officials as the Church and its partners organizations provide humanitarian aid.

“Daily, we witness the human consequences of migrants and their blessings and its challenges,” the bishops said in a May 12 statement released by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Committee on Migration, both its consequences of migration, both its blessings and its challenges, “the bishops said in a May 12 statement released by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).” As parish and border communities, we minister to migrants and native-born persons alike. Our congregations include asylum seekers, enforcement officers, landowners, and elected officials, who come together, not as adversaries or adversaries, but brothers and equals, in dignity and worth before the Lord.”

Signatories were Cardinal Robert W. McElroy of San Diego; Archbishop Gustavo García-Siller of San Antonio; Bishop Pedro Baldacchino of Las Cruces, N.M.; Bishop Daniel E. Flores of Brownsville, Texas; Bishop Mark J. Seitz of El Paso, Texas; Bishop Michael J. Sis of San Angelo, Texas; Bishop James A. Tamayo of Laredo, Texas; and Bishop Edward W. McElroy of San Diego; Archbishop Flores is chairman of the USCCB Committee on Migration.

The statement came the day after the May 11 expiration of Title 42, a federal public health emergency declared by the Trump administration in March 2020 and renewed in October 2020. The Title 42 policy allowed immigration officials to return migrants seeking asylum to Mexico until their cases in the United States were resolved. The policy, which the Biden administration decided to extend to May 21, 2022, was reunified with the public health emergency declared in March 2020 that blocked migrants from entering the U.S. under Title 42 and Title 8 have been criticized by Catholic immigration advocates as insufficient, especially for migrants seeking asylum. The bishops did not specifically refer to U.S. immigration policy in their statement. “Since our nation’s founding, Catholics across this country have been at the forefront of efforts to welcome newcomers of all faiths and nationalities,” the bishops said. “As Christians, we are called to see the face of Christ in those who suffer, who those who lack the basic necessities of life, and we judge ourselves as a community of faith by way we treat the most vulnerable among us. We are each bound by a universal call to serve the human life in all its forms. Therefore, we remain committed to supporting the efforts ongoing within our dioceses and beyond to promote the God-given dignity of every person, including those who have recently arrived in our communities. Further, as a Church committed to the common good, we will always cooperate in the administration of humanitarian aid with local, state, and federal officials, frequently in partnership with faith communities and like-minded secular organizations.”

Parishes change Mass times due to holiday weekend, Indy 500 race

Several parishes in the Indianapolis West Deanery will change their Mass schedule for the Memorial Day weekend on May 27-28 due to the annual Indianapolis 500 race on May 28.

Holy Angels Parish/St. Rita Parish, Indianapolis: There will be Mass at 4 p.m. at Holy Angels Church, 2710 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. St., on May 27. There will be no Mass at Holy Angels on May 28. There will be Mass at St. Rita Church, 1733 Dr. Andrew J. Brown Ave., at 6 p.m. on May 27 and at 11 a.m. on May 28.

St. Anthony Parish, 337 N. Warman Ave., Indianapolis: Mass schedule remains the same. It will be celebrated in English at 4 p.m. and Spanish at 6 p.m. on May 27, and at 8:30 a.m. in Spanish and 11:30 a.m. in English on May 28.

St. Christopher Parish, 5301 W. 16th St., Indianapolis: Mass will be celebrated at 4 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. on May 27. No Mass will be celebrated on May 28 or May 29.

St. Gabriel the Archangel Parish, 6000 W. 34th St., Indianapolis: A bilingual Mass will be celebrated at 3:30 p.m.; in English at 5 p.m.; and in Spanish at 7 p.m. on May 27. There will be no Masses on May 28.

St. Michael the Archangel Parish, 3354 W. 30th St., Indianapolis: Mass will be celebrated at 4 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. on May 27. Mass will be celebrated at 7 a.m. on May 28. Parking for the Indy 500 is available for $10.

For information about Mass changes at other parishes in the area, call the parish offices.
By John Shaughnessy

Marty Brown’s favorite Bible verse is so much a part of his life that his wife Lauren had it embroidered on a journal for him as a gift.

Brown also sees the verse every time he attends Mass or prays at St. Joan of Arc Church in Indianapolis.

“My favorite Bible verse is Mark 8:37,” he notes. “My favorite translation is the one on the back wall at St Joan of Arc: ‘What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?’ ”

The verse has become a touchstone for Brown, the father of 6-year-old Alison and 4-year-old Camille.

“This verse is a call to humility and magnanimity at the same time. I’ve reflected on this verse through many seasons and challenges of my life. It clarifies my priorities every time.

“For example, times when I’ve unknowingly drifted away from being the best father or husband or son I could be, that verse will come to mind, and it jars me back to my ‘better angels.’ Similarly, there have been times when I’ve become too concerned with work and professional status, and this verse has reminded me what is most important to focus on.”

Bob Teipen

Bob Teipen was on a pilgrimage in Ireland when he heard the Bible verse that changed his life and captured the essence of a dream he had.

The verse is from Romans 12:12, “Rejoice in hope, endure in affliction, persevere in prayer.”

Teipen’s dream was to create a Catholic radio station in the Indianapolis area that would continue to grow and help share the Catholic faith, all with the goal of bringing people closer to Christ.

“I selected [that verse] as a theme for a venture inspired by the Holy Spirit—Catholic Radio Indy,” says Teipen, a member of St. John Vianney Parish in Fishers, Ind., in the Lafayette Diocese.

Since starting the radio station in 2004, the frequencies for the radio station have grown to the point that Catholic Radio Indy now reaches more than 1 million people.

As for the continuing influence of that verse, Teipen says, “I had the verse painted on a bulkhead as you enter the Catholic Radio office.”

Sharing the gift of faith

Francis Ziegler came upon his favorite quote for the first time, it resonated so completely with him because he had already seen it being lived out by some of the heroes in his life. It’s a quote often attributed to St. Francis of Assisi: “Go and preach the Gospel. Use words if you must.”

“This quote came into my world upon our present pope taking the name Francis,” says Ziegler, a member of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Indianapolis.

“I had never heard that saying about St. Francis prior, but it has stuck with me since that time. I have had great mentors who did just that and preach every day.”

His mentors include his father James, “an excellent example of preaching the Gospel with his daily actions.”

Ziegler says he also benefitted from the example of his late uncle, Father Ambrose Ziegler, a priest who served the Lafayette Diocese.

“I was also taught 12 of my 16 years of Catholic education by Franciscan priests and sisters who lived that example. I try and live the same, as our Pope Francis wants us to evangelize through our daily actions.”

A warning, a dream and a gift: stories of our readers’ favorite verses
Be Our Guest!

Stay close to the seniors in your life and see the blessing for them and you

The COVID-19 public health emergency has officially ended and summer promises happier times in the months ahead. And yet our surgeon general, Dr. Vivek H. Murthy, has just issued an advisory signaling a new public health threat in our country. The issue is loneliness.

And actually not a new problem at all, but an invisible epidemic that has been spreading through our society unchecked for many years.

In an essay in The New York Times in April, Murphy asserts, “We need to acknowledge the loneliness and isolation that millions are experiencing and the grave consequences for our mental health, physical health and our collective well-being.”

Murphy warns that loneliness “is more than just a bad feeling. It often leads to anxiety and depression—but that is not all. It is also associated with increased risk of heart disease, dementia and stroke.”

Loneliness carries with it a more significant risk of premature death than either smoking or obesity.

Murphy also noted that social disconnection is linked to reduced performance in the workplace and at school as well as diminished social engagement.

To combat this epidemic of loneliness, he proposes a three-pronged national framework aimed at rebuilding social connection and community.

The first point in Murphy’s plan is to strengthen our social infrastructure through programs, structures and policies that support healthy relationships.

The second point is to renegotiate our relationships with the technologies that help to learn to put down our devices in order to be more present to each other.

The third point is to reach out and rebuild relationships in our personal lives.

Although all three elements are important, I’d like to focus on the third point in this framework—our personal relationships—and I suggest that we begin by reaching out to the elders in our families and neighborhoods, many of whom suffer from a lack of meaningful relationships, though they have many gifts to share with others.

Summertime brings with it many opportunities for family-centered events—graduations, weddings, reunions, picnics and vacations—but always keep in mind that we should include our elders, especially if they have mobility, communication or memory issues.

The summer months can be a dangerous time for seniors, especially those in the poverty line and those who live alone.

Heat waves quickly become deadly for seniors who lack air conditioning as well as those who have chronic conditions that make it difficult for their bodies to acclimate to temperature fluctuations.

For example, rising temperatures can cause renal failure in persons with kidney problems and exacerbate dehydration from medications like diuretics, which are commonly prescribed to older persons.

The summer years ago, hundreds of seniors died in Paris and other French cities during a summer heat wave, seemingly forgotten by family members who were away on vacation.

French society was criticized for this obvious neglect of the elderly, but similar incidents have recently occurred in our country with seniors dying in their own homes due to a lack of air conditioning during periods of extreme heat.

Many cities in the U.S. have now set up public cooling centers and regulations for air conditioning in public housing.

But this summer may be the first line of defense for vulnerable seniors should the attentiveness of family members and kind neighbors.

For many years, Pope Francis has been challenging us to live in a greater spirit of service and concern for each other, both near and far, especially those on the peripheries of society. He has drawn attention to the needs of seniors, condemning neglect of the elderly and calling on us to strengthen bonds between the generations.

The first time he spoke publicly about the elderly was at World Day of Youth in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2013. This summer, Pope Francis will join young people for World Youth Day in Lisbon, Portugal.

He has intentionally linked this celebration, whose theme is focused on the Virgin Mary in the Visitatio, to the third World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly, which falls just a few weeks prior to the events in Lisbon.

As we prepare for these two celebrations this summer, let’s stay close to the seniors in our lives, strengthening our emotional and practical bonds with them and remaining attentive to their well-being.

We will be blessed as we reach out to them, just as Mary was blessed in her encounter with her elderly cousin Elizabeth.

(Little Sisters of the Poor Sister Constance Veit, Director of Communications)

Letters Policy

Letters from readers are published in The Criterion as part of the newspaper’s commitment to “the reasonable exchange of freely-held and expressed opinion among the People of God” (Communio et Progressio, 116). Letters from readers are welcome and every effort will be made to include letters from as many people and representing as many viewpoints as possible. Letters should be informed, relevant, well-expressed and temperate in tone. They must reflect a basic sense of courtesy and respect.

The editors reserve the right to edit the letters that will be published and to edit letters from readers as necessary based on space limitations, past oral sensitivity and content (including criticism) and perceptions.

In order to encourage opinions from a variety of readers, frequent writers will ordinarily be limited to one letter every three months. Concise letters (usually less than 300 words) are more likely to be printed.

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

Send letters to “Letters to the Editor,” The Criterion, 1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367. Readers with access to e-mail may send letters to criterion@archindy.org.
El Señor está con nosotros incluso durante su ascensión al cielo

"Por tanto, vuevan y hagan discípulos en todas las naciones, y bautízalos en el nombre del Padre, y del Hijo, y del Espíritu Santo. Enséñenles a cumplir todas las cosas que les he mandado. Y yo estaré con ustedes todos los días, hasta el fin del mundo" (Mt 28:19-20).

Ayer, 18 de mayo, fue el tradicional Jueves de la Ascensión que se celebra 40 días después de la Pascua de Resurrección. Muchas diócesis, incluida la Arquidiócesis de Indianapolis, trasladan este importante fiesta al domingo siguiente para facilitar la participación de una mayor cantidad de católicos.

Pero esta decisión no fue tomada a la ligera. Sabemos que debido a nuestra cultura secular, a muchos católicos se les dificulta tomar tiempo libre del trabajo, los estudios u otras obligaciones. Asimismo, somos muy conscientes de la triste realidad de que muchos católicos de hoy no le dan la debida seriedad a la obligación de asistir a misa los domingos y fiestas de guardar. Al trasladar esta fiesta del jueves al domingo, buscamos maximizar la oportunidad de comunicar el significado de esta gran fiesta y fomentar una mayor asistencia a la misa domingual.

¿Por qué la Ascensión es un acontecimiento tan importante en la vida de Cristo? ¿Qué significado tenía la ascensión de Cristo al cielo para la Iglesia primitiva y para la Iglesia de hoy de baya y de mañana?

Según el Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica: "La Ascensión de Jesús marca la entrada definitiva de la humanidad de Jesús en el dominio celestial de Dios de donde ha de volver [cf. Hch 1:11], aunque mientras tanto lo escondes a los ojos de los hombres [cf. Col 3:3]. Jesucristo, cabeza de la Iglesia, nos precede en el Reino glorioso del Padre para que, miembros de su cuerpo, vivamos en la esperanza de estar un día con Él eternamente. Jesucristo, habiendo entrado una vez por todas en el santuario del cielo, intercede sin cesar por nosotros como el mediador que nos asegura permanentemente la efusión del Espíritu Santo." (866-867).

Aquí hay varios mensajes importantes. En primer lugar, con la Ascensión de Jesús al cielo, se da el primer caso de un cuerpo humano que entra en el reino celestial. Sabemos por los relatos del Evangelio posteriores a la resurrección que el cuerpo de Jesús era real, pero transformado. Invitó a los discípulos a tocar sus manos y palpar las heridas de su cuerpo resucitado. Comía y bebía con ellos. A pesar del misterioso hecho de que aparecía y desaparecía inesperadamente en lugares que estaban a puertas cerradas y de que a menudo resultaba irreconocible para las personas que lo conocían bien, Jesús siguió siendo un ser humano real en mente, cuerpo y alma.

En segundo lugar, Jesús dijo que volvía al cielo para “preparar un lugar para ustedes” (Jn 14:2). Este es el fundamento de nuestra creencia en la resurrección de los muertos en el último día. Cuando llegue ese día, los que le han sido fieles se unirán a Jesús en cuerpo y alma—en la alegría celestial. Esta enseñanza es un misterio. Quizá no entendamos cómo sucederá esto, pero le tomamos la palabra a Jesús de que, si somos fieles, moraremos con él en la alegría eterna del cielo.

En tercer lugar, la Ascensión de Jesús celebra el hecho de que, aunque parezca estar ausente, oculta a nuestra vista, en realidad está más cerca de nosotros ahora de lo que estaba de sus discípulos antes de volver a casa al Padre. Es una paradoja, un ejemplo más del rasgo del “tanto y el como” que caracteriza a nuestra fe católica. Jesús está tanto ausente como presente; está tanto en el cielo como en la Tierra. Nos encontramos con Él en la Palabra, los sacramentos y el servicio a los demás. Está especialmente presenciado en la Eucaristía, donde se nos entrega real y verdaderamente en cuerpo, sangre, alma y divinidad.

Por último, además de su presencia continua entre nosotros, Jesús nos ha concedido también el maravilloso don del Espíritu Santo, y nos dice que sin este no seríamos capaces de conocerlo, amarlo y servirle íntimamente ni de llevar a cabo su obra en el mundo. La Ascensión hace posible Pentecostés y nos da la oportunidad de “soltar” la dependencia a Jesús hombre y, paradójicamente, de encontrarlo y abrazarlo más profundamente en el Espíritu Santo.

Por eso el catecismo nos dice que la Ascensión de Jesucristo al cielo nos asegura que ahora tenemos un “mediador que nos asegura permanentemente la efusión del Espíritu Santo.” Cristo está con nosotros; no nos ha abandonado. Al contrario, ahora está más cerca de nosotros que cuando recorría los caminos de Tierra Santa. Celebrémosla la Ascensión del Señor con la joya central de lo que permanece entre nosotros en la Palabra, los sacramentos y el servicio. Celebremos esta fiesta especial con la convicción de que Él habita en nosotros por la fuerza del Espíritu Santo.
May 19–May 28
RISE UP! Daily Easter Reflections, one per minute video reflections led by Father Jonathan Meyer, pastor of All Saints Parish in Dearborn County, receive link via text or e-mail, “text “Risingo” to 84576,” free. Information: 812-576-4002, clarkeck.asp@gmail.com.

May–August
Marian University, 3200 Cold Spring Rd., Indianapolis. Summer Youth Camps: Innovation Through Engineering, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. Catholic Charities Refugee and Immigrant Services, Corner Lane, Indianapolis. Bennial Retreat, 8:30 a.m.–noon, registration deadline June 12, free. Information: 317-955-6102, camps@ marian.edu, cathrc.org/summercamps.

May 25
Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, 500 W. Main St., Danville. Retreat: Beer Weekend, Sat. 5–p.m., Sun. 8–9 a.m., $10, free. Information: 317-236-1501, gaudrey@archindy.org.

May 27, 28, 29
Mary, Queen of Peace Church, 1005 W. Main St., Danville. Friday Mass, 9 a.m. Sat. 8–9 a.m., $10, free. Information: 317-236-1501, gaudrey@ archindy.org.

May 28
Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, Pump House Studio, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis. Bluegrass Jam, June 5-6, noon-9 p.m., free. Information: franciscans.org/gr悲观ism-iom.

May 29

May 30
May 30–June 9
Holy Island O’Hanley, 5615 N. Cumberland Ave., Chicago, Ill. Catholic Writers Conference, for new or experienced writers of any genre, manuscript feedback, pitch sessions with Catholic publishers and literary agents, CWG members $100, nonmembers $140. Register: 317-984-4375, by May 29. Information: hciw@Catholicconference.org.

June 1
Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1400 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. Personal Day of Retreat, 9 a.m.–4 p.m., $40, includes dinner, popcorn and refreshments. Registration: fmretreatportal.com/events, 317-545-7681, boom@archindy.org.

June 2
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5533 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. “The Chosen” Season 3: Discussion and Dinner Series, 5:30–8:30 p.m., first two of eight Monday sessions (June 19, 26, July 10, 17, Aug. 7), episode viewing and discussion, $16 per session or eight sessions for $115, includes dinner, popcorn and refreshments. Registration: fmretreatportal.com/events, 317-788-7581, benedictinowc@benedictinowc.org.

June 3–7
Chicago, Ill. Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1400 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. Personal Day of Retreat, 9 a.m.–4 p.m., $40, includes private room for the day and lunch, spiritual direction available for additional $30, must be scheduled in advance. Information, registration: benedictinowc.org, 317-788-7581, benedictinowc@ benedictinowc.org.

June 4
Our Lady of the Greenwood Church, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. Francis Center Open House, in person or via Zoom, 2-3:30 p.m., Franciscan Sister Olga Witkower presenting, free admission. Information, registration: 317-933-6437, center@oldenburgfranciscancenter.org, oldenburgfranciscancenter.org/events.

June 5
San Antonio, Tex. Saint Anthony of Padua Parish, 403 E. Commerce St., San Antonio. Dinner for Holy Thursday, 6-8 p.m., free admission, prices for food, drinks and rides vary. Information: retpp@archsanantonio.org, 317-291-7014.

June 7
St. John Paul II Church, 223 St. Joe Road W., Sellersburg. First Saturday Devotion, 8 a.m., rosary, litany, consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, confessions 8-10:30 a.m. followed by 8:30 a.m. Mass. Information: 812-246-2512.

June 8–July 20
Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, Pump House Studio, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis. New Horizons: Emerging Artists Exhibit, opening reception June 8, 4-6 p.m., gallery hours: Mon. and Wed. 11 a.m.–2 p.m., Thu. 4-7 p.m., featuring four local artists, free. Information: franciscanumc.org/events. 

June 9
Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. A Day of Quiet Renewal, 9 a.m.–4 p.m., $20, with spiritual direction, free admission. Information, registration: 317-933-6437, oldenburgfranciscancenter.org/events.

June 15–27
Portugal, birthplace of St. Anthony of Padua, 1567–1622. Eight-day pilgrimage to Portugal on June 15-27. All are invited to join on a pilgrimage organized by Father Dellinger of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood to visit Maryan shrines and other holy sites in Portugal, Spain and France on Sept. 17-26. Retired Msgr. Mark Svarczkopf will serve as spiritual director of the pilgrimage. Pilgrims will visit Maryan shrines at Porto, Aveiro, Salvador do Porto and Lourdes, France. Stops also include Santarém, Portugal, site of the 13th-century eucharistic miracle; Lisbon, Portugal, birthplace of St. Anthony of Padua; Loyola, Spain, birthplace of St. Ignatius of Loyola; and more. The 54-member including members from Indiana, double-room occupancy, daily breakfast and dinner, and other holy sites in Portugal, Spain and France on Sept. 17-26. Retired Msgr. Mark Svarczkopf will serve as spiritual director of the pilgrimage. The deadline to register is June 15. For more information, contact Valor Bendel at 317-414-9083 or vlpverpa@comcast.net, or Greg Bendel at 317-893-6547 or insullationfirsttop@yahoo.com.

July 3–5
On Wednesday, register with Catholic publishers for a complete list of retreats as reported to The Criterion, log on to www.archindy.org/retreats.

Mass and pinning-in honor of African Day will be held at St. Rita Parish in Indianapolis on June 4

A Mass and pinning-in honor of African Day will be celebrated at St. Rita Parish, 1733 Dr. Andrew J. Brown Ave., in Indianapolis, at 2 p.m. on June 4. African Day, officially celebrated on May 25, is in the annual commemoration of the foundation of the Organization of African Unity in 1963. The Mass will be celebrated in English and French, along with at least six African vernacular languages.

Join Msgr. Svarczkopf on pilgrimage to Portugal in late July, from Sept. 17-26

All are invited to join on a pilgrimage organized by Father Dellinger of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood to visit Maryan shrines and other holy sites in Portugal, Spain and France on Sept. 17-26. Retired Msgr. Mark Svarczkopf will serve as spiritual director of the pilgrimage. Pilgrims will visit Maryan shrines at Porto, Aveiro, Salvador do Porto and Lourdes, France. Stops also include Santarém, Portugal, site of the 13th-century eucharistic miracle; Lisbon, Portugal, birthplace of St. Anthony of Padua; Loyola, Spain, birthplace of St. Ignatius of Loyola; and more. The 54-member including members from Indiana, double-room occupancy, daily breakfast and dinner, and other holy sites in Portugal, Spain and France on Sept. 17-26. Retired Msgr. Mark Svarczkopf will serve as spiritual director of the pilgrimage. The deadline to register is June 15. For more information, contact Valor Bendel at 317-414-9083 or vlpverpa@comcast.net, or Greg Bendel at 317-893-6547 or insullationfirsttop@yahoo.com.

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Register by May 31. Information, registration: 812-535-2952, djlucer@pum.org, events@pum.org.

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guest House, 200 RIE Dr., Saint Meinrad. How Do We Pray? An Introduction to Liturgical and Devotional Prayers, a 5-30 p.m. CT, Benedictine Father Lorenzo Penasola presenting, $55. Information, registration: sanursur@retreatportal.com.

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5533 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. “The Chosen” Season 3: Discussion and Dinner Series, 5:30-8:30 p.m., free. Information, registration: benedictinowc.org, 317-788-7581, benedictinowc@ benedictinowc.org.

Our Lady of the Greenwood Church, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. First Friday bilingual celebration of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Mass 6 p.m. followed by adoration until 9 p.m., sacrament of reconciliation available. Information: 317-750-7309, munsol@hotmail.com.

St. John Paul II Church, 2223 St. Joe Road W., Sellersburg. First Friday Devotion, 11:45 a.m., litany, consecration to the Sacred Heart, Divine Mercy Chapel followed by noon Mass. Information: 812-246-2512.

St. Gabriel the Archangel Church, 6000 W. 34th St., Indianapolis. International Festival, 5-7 p.m., Sante Feliz, silent auction, bingo, Monte Carlo games, beer tent, Sat. evening live music with Josh Kaufman, free admission. Information: 317-786-6200, santisim festoon.org.

Our Lady of the Greenwood Church, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. First Friday bilingual celebration of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Mass 6 p.m. followed by adoration until 9 p.m., sacrament of reconciliation available. Information: 317-750-7309, munsol@hotmail.com.
This public entrustment of responsibility, which has been passed on to [St. Peter’s] successors, is shared in varying degrees by all those who directly or indirectly assist the pope in his worldwide ministry, especially through their financial contributions.

In his address to the group, the Holy Father expressed his gratitude for the foundation’s work. He also challenged the members to bear in mind two important aspects of their participation in the Petrine ministry: unity and transparency.

It’s no secret that some Catholics in the United States, and in other parts of the world, are uncomfortable with the current pope’s emphasis on poverty, migrants and people who live on the “peripheries” of social acceptance. It’s safe to assume that some of those who were present at the Pope Francis Foundation are current or former members of the Papal Foundation. With this in mind, the pope’s words take on an added significance.

In his address to foundation members, the Holy Father said:

“Let us then, in this our common and in our own day how the unity of the Church is wounded by division. And the devil is a specialist in fighting against unity; he is a specialist! This is often caused by the influence of ideologies and movements that at times will well intentioned, end up fomenting parties and criticism, with each one developing a certain superiority complex when it comes to insight into the authentic practice of the faith.

Pope Francis strongly rejects what he calls “a superiority complex” which he equates with hypocrisy—the attitude assumed by Pharisees and other religious leaders in the Gospels. Jesus did not tolerate smugness or self-righteousness in his day, and Pope Francis regularly rebukes those clergy, religious and lay people in the Church who portray themselves as ‘holier-than-thou’ instead of showing the same understanding and compassion that Jesus asks of all his disciples.

The pope’s call to foster unity in our concrete work and the need for appropriate transparency in the Church’s ministry demands a degree of tolerance and understanding that does not mean anything goes, but rather signifies us as missionary disciples who follow Jesus Christ to be merciful and non-judgmental.

In addition to fostering unity, Pope Francis says that transparency is an essential feature of papal ministry. For the past 10 years, Pope Francis has worked to make the Vatican more accountable in its finances and in its decision making. The pope is the first to admit that while progress has been made, much work remains.

His address to members of the Papal Foundation underscores the importance of transparency in the Church’s ministry: As you are aware, the Holy See has been making strides in these past years to guarantee that the services provided to the universal Church and to society in general by its various dicasteries, institutions and offices is carried out with appropriate transparency.

This is especially important in its service of charity, which relies on the good will and generosity of so many people around the world. While not comparable to the immense harm resulting from the failure of the Church and world to protect to the most vulnerable from various forms of abuse, financial scandals caused by a lack of oversight and transparency also damage the good name of the Church and can call into question the credibility of the faith itself, even if such thinking is always misguided.

Financial scandals, which have happened in parishes and dioceses as well as in the Vatican, can also destroy the Church’s credibility as a responsible steward of resources entrusted to the Church’s care.

Here Pope Francis prays the Papal Foundation for its efforts to help the Church be more accountable.

In this regard, I thank and commend the Papal Foundation for its ongoing commitment to maintain appropriate measures of transparency so that the funding of scholarships and projects truly benefits those in need and contributes to the building up of the kingdom of God on Earth.

Unity and transparency are not easy to achieve or maintain. That’s why Pope Francis calls on the Holy Spirit to accompany him, in carrying out his ministry as pope, in his work to assist him, in carrying out his ministry as pope.

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

“Jesús de Nazaret, by his words, his actions, and his entire person reveals the mercy of God.”
—Pope Francis, “Misericordiae Vultus” (“The Face of Mercy”)

“Jesús de Nazaret con su palabra, con sus gestos y con toda su persona revela la misericordia de Dios.”
—Papa Francisco, “Misericordiae Vultus” (“El rostro de la misericordia”)

El rostro de la misericordia/Daniel Conway

La unidad y la transparencia son esenciales para la misión de la Iglesia

Este mandato público de responsabilidad, transmitido a sus sucesores [de Pedro], es compartido en distinto grado por todas las realidades que, directa o indirectamente, asisten al Papa en el cumplimiento de su misión. (Discurso del Santo Padre Francisco a los miembros de la Fundación Papal, 21 de abril de 2013).

El viernes 21 de abril el Papa Francisco se reunió con los miembros de la Fundación Papal, un grupo de hombres y mujeres laicos que ayudan al Papa en su ministerio en todo el mundo, especialmente a través de sus aportes financieros.

En su discurso al grupo, el Santo Padre expresó su agradecimiento por la labor de la fundación y exhortó a los miembros a tener en cuenta dos aspectos importantes de su participación en el ministerio petrino: la unidad y la transparencia.

No es ningún secreto que algunos católicos ricos de Estados Unidos, y de otras partes del mundo, se sienten incómodos con el énfasis que el actual Papa da a la pobreza, los migrantes y las personas que viven en las “periferias” de la aceptación social. Podemos suponer con cierto grado de certeza que algunos de los que están en desacuerdo con el Papa Francisco son miembros actuales o anteriores de la Fundación Papal. Teniendo esto en cuenta, las palabras del Papa adquieren un significado adicional.

En su discurso a los miembros de la Fundación, el Santo Padre dijo:

“Lamentablemente, vemos también en nuestros días cómo la unidad de la Iglesia está herida por la división. Y el diablo es especialista en la lucha contra la unidad, ¿es un especialista? Esto a menudo es causado por influencia de ideologías y movimientos que, incluso teniendo a veces buenas intenciones, terminan por fomentar partidas y críticas, donde cada uno desarrolla un cierto complejo de superioridad cuando se trata de comprender la práctica de la fe.

El Papa Francisco rechaza tajantemente lo que denomina “complejo de superioridad,” el cual equipa con la hipocresía, la actitud asumida por los fariseos y otros líderes religiosos en los Evangelios. Jesús no toleró la petulancia ni el fariseísmo en su época, y el Papa Francisco repite sistemáticamente a los clérigos, religiosos y laicos de la Iglesia que se presentan como “más santos que tú” en el llamado de mostrar la misma comprensión y compasión que Jesús pide a todos sus discípulos.

El llamamiento del Papa a “fomentar la unidad” en nuestra Iglesia y nuestro mundo, cada vez más divididos, exige un grado de tolerancia y comprensión que no es sinónimo de que “todo vale,” sino que nos desafía, como discípulos misioneros que seguimos a Jesucristo, a ser misericordiosos y no juzgar.

Además de fomentar la unidad, el Papa Francisco afirma que la “transparencia” es una característica esencial del ministerio papal. Durante los últimos 10 años, el Papa Francisco se ha esforzado para que el Vaticano sea más responsable en sus finanzas y en su toma de decisiones. El Papa es el primero en admitir que, aunque se han hecho progresos, aún queda mucho por hacer.

En su discurso a los miembros de la Fundación Papal destaca la importancia de la transparencia en el ministerio de la Iglesia.

Como subrayó, en los últimos años la Santa Sede ha dado pasos significativos para garantizar que los servicios prestados a la Iglesia universal y a la sociedad en general por sus diversos dicasterios, instituciones y oficinas se lleven a cabo con la adecuada transparencia.

Este es particularmente importante en el servicio de caridad, que confía en la buena voluntad y la generosidad de tantas personas en todo el mundo. Aunque no sean comparables al inmenso daño que deriva de la incapacidad de proteger a los más vulnerables de formas variadas de abuso, los escándalos financieros causados por la falta de vigilancia y transparencia dañan el buen nombre de la Iglesia y pueden cuestionar la credibilidad de la misma fe.

Los escándalos financieros, que se han producido tanto en parroquias y diócesis como en el Vaticano, también pueden destruir la credibilidad de la Iglesia como administradora responsable de los recursos confiados a su cuidado.

Aquí el Papa Francisco elogia a la Fundación Papal por sus esfuerzos para ayudar a la Iglesia a ser más responsable.

Al respecto, dice: “Las gracias y aprecio a la Fundación Papal por el constante compromiso para mantener medidas adecuadas de transparencia, para que la financiación de becas y proyectos vaya verdaderamente en beneficio de quien lo necesita y contribuya a la edificación del Reino de Dios en la tierra.”

La unidad y la transparencia no son fáciles de conseguir ni de mantener. Por eso el Papa Francisco pide al Espíritu Santo que le acompañe, y a todos los que trabajan para ayudarlo, en el desempeño de su ministerio como Sumo Pontífice.

(Daniel Conway es integrante del comité editorial de The Criterion.)
As he approaches this pivotal day through years of priestly formation, Deacon Neri hasn’t allowed himself to imagine too much what it will be like for him to celebrate the Eucharist and the sacraments for the first time.

“It comes to mind every now and then,” he said in an interview with The Criterion at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad, where he has been a seminarian for the past five years. “I try not to think too much about it. It can be overwhelming. It’s going to be awesome.”

‘You began this’

When Deacon Neri was a boy growing up in the southern Mexican state of Guerrero, his family was not very active in their Catholic faith.

He received the sacraments of initiation—baptism, confirmation, and the Eucharist—but he rarely went to Mass.

That was in part because there was such a priest shortage in the region that one only came to his town occasionally.

Lay-led prayer services would be held at his parish’s church on Sundays, but his parents rarely took Deacon Neri and his siblings to them.

His maternal grandmother Angela was a bedrock model of faith for him, though. “I learned from her what it means to be a Christian,” Deacon Neri recalled. “She has a calm demeanor. She’s always nice to people. She’s humble. She’s poor, but whatever she had, she would contribute it to the Church. I remember going to her house and she’d be on the front porch reading her Bible.”

He enjoyed going from time to time with her to the Sunday prayer services in the town church.

“Even then, I had an interest in the Church,” Deacon Neri said.

That interest grew over time to the point where he discerned that God was calling him to be a priest.

Through it all, he never forgot his grandmother, who still lived in Mexico, and the role she played in his life.

“When I was ordained a deacon last year, I wrote to her and sent her a picture of me being ordained,” he said. “I told her, ‘You began this.’”

‘A whole new world’

When Deacon Neri was 12, his parents and five siblings moved to Indianapolis where he had relatives living near him.

Nearly overnight, he went from living in a town where the Mass was barely ever available to a city where multiple Masses were celebrated daily only a short drive from home.

His family soon became members of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis.

Shortly afterward, Deacon Neri saw a friend from the public school he attended assisting as an altar server at a Mass celebrated in Spanish at St. Monica.

“That caught my attention,” he recalled. “I thought it was cool. I soon became an altar server himself. This led him to want to be involved in the parish in other ways.

‘I joined the choir, even though I’m a horrible singer,’ Deacon Neri said. “I was looking for a different way to serve. I enjoyed it.”

Six years after moving to Indianapolis, Deacon Neri’s faith had grown enough that he became an archdiocesan seminarian and entered into priestly formation as a freshman at Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary and Marian University, both in Indianapolis.

At the same time, his knowledge of the vocation to the priesthood was limited.

“What I knew about the priesthood was that priests say Mass on the weekend,” Deacon Neri said. “That was it.”

The hurdle of his limited knowledge of the vocation he was discerning combined with cultural and linguistic obstacles he faced when he moved into Bishop Bruté made life as a seminarian difficult initially.

“I had been learning English, but I was in a Hispanic bubble,” Deacon Neri explained. “At home, we’d only speak Spanish. Most of my friends were Hispanic, and we’d only speak Spanish. My family and I were going only to a Spanish mass. I was going to an Hispanic youth group.”

Bishop Bruté “was a whole new world of culture for me,” he remembered. “I lived with ‘Anglo’ people.”

“I was in a college that didn’t have a lot of Hispanics,” Deacon Neri said. “It wasn’t a question of ‘how.’ ”

These challenges led Deacon Neri to discern out of the seminary after his sophomore year.

Two years later, he earned a bachelor’s degree in Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI).

“I got overwhelmed by the whole thing,” he remembered. “But I never ruled the priesthood out, even when I left.”

‘From if to how’

While a student at IUPUI, Deacon Neri went on a retreat. There, he experienced a turning point while praying.

“I heard God saying in the back of my mind, ‘Be a priest,’ ” Deacon Neri said. “It was always those words: be a priest, be a priest, be a priest. Those words were so loud in my mind.

“After a year of working in a business owned by an uncle, Deacon Neri became an archdiocesan seminarian again and entered priestly formation at Saint Meinrad.

For his first three years there, he still wasn’t sure if the priesthood was his vocation.

“During those three years, I would tell people, ‘If God wants me to be a priest, I’ll be a priest,’ ” Deacon Neri said. “There was always a question mark.”

That changed by the end of that third year, when ordination as a transitional deacon was a year away.

“I went from, ‘If God wants me to be a priest, to ‘How am I going to be as a priest, because God wants me to do this?’ ” he said. “It wasn’t a question of ‘if,’ but a question of ‘how.’ ”

After overcoming cultural and linguistic challenges at Bishop Bruté as a teenager, Deacon Neri at Saint Meinrad has helped his fellow seminarians whose first language is English prepare to minister in Spanish.

One of those seminarians is Aaron Noll, in his second year of formation at Saint Meinrad.

“I’ve been practicing my Spanish with José, either in random small conversations or on Tuesdays here at Spanish tables where we have conversations in Spanish while we eat lunch,” said Noll, a member of St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus. “He’s helping form me in ministry in that way, to continue to broaden how I can minister by knowing Spanish.”

Transitional Deacon Bobby Vogel, a member of St. Mary Parish in North Vernon who expects to be ordained a priest in the archdiocesan next year, has grown in his proficiency in Spanish with Deacon Neri’s help. He also appreciates his friend’s happiness in his vocation.

“He’s one of the most joyful men here,” said Deacon Vogel. “You can tell his laugh from across the room. And it’s very common to hear it. He’s a very genuine person, very genuine in his happiness. He’s willing to talk with anybody. He makes you feel welcome.”

“He’s just continually going outside of himself in the community to help people,” Noll said. “He doesn’t have to help people with their Spanish. He’s not the Spanish professor. It’s not his job. But he does it anyway.”

‘I want to share my life with others’

Building relationships in Christ and in service has attracted Deacon Neri to the priesthood more and more as he has progressed in seminary.

“I want to share my life with others and allow others to share their lives with me—in Christ,” he said. “Sharing our lives in Christ gets me excited.”

As enthused as Deacon Neri is about his faith, he knows that isn’t the case with everyone.

“I’ve seen people who have faith but struggle to understand and to feel spiritually,” he said. “Knowing that God is using you is amazing, and you can help those people—that excites me.”

Deacon Neri has grown in his understanding and love of the priesthood through having summer ministry assignments where he has served alongside a variety of archdiocesan priests.

One was Father Ted Goodson, who leads Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood, where Deacon Neri will serve as parochial vicar beginning in July.

“He cares for what he does, and he cares for people,” Deacon Neri said of Father Goodson. “He gave me the freedom to do things and respected what I did.”

Deacon Neri also lived for a summer with archdiocesan vocations director Father Michael Kencher at St. Joseph Parish in Shelbyville, where Father Kencher serves as pastor.

“He allowed me to see what a priestly life is really like,” recalled Deacon Neri. “It was really helpful. Whatever he did, he would take me with him—visiting friends, going to a hospital, going to a store to get something for someone.”

As he approaches being ordained a priest, Deacon Neri encourages young men to prayerfully consider the priestly vocation to which God has called him.

“I’d say what Jesus says so many times in the Gospels: Do not be afraid,” Deacon Neri said. “Give it a try. I’ve been through it. There are so many questions. And we want the answers before we go to the seminary. But you don’t need them. Just go and give it a try.”

(Transitional Deacon José Neri serves as pastor.

The public is invited to attend the priestly ordination of Deacon José Neri and Deacon Jack Wright, which will be at 10 a.m. on June 3 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., in Indianapolis. For more information on a vocation to the priesthood in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, visit www.HearGodsCall.com.)
“Keep it simple” when either starting or jump-starting parish evangelization teams

By Natalie Hofer

Parish evangelization teams can turn that tide, he notes. His office created a guidebook for starting—or re-igniting—such teams (see sidebar). "A good place to consider starting evangelization is yelling on a street corner or forcing your views on someone else. That is what evangelization is and is not," says Bardo. "They think evangelization is yelling on a street corner or forcing your views on someone else. That is what evangelization is and is not," says Bardo. "They think evangelization is yelling on a street corner or forcing your views on someone else. That is what evangelization is and is not," says Bardo.

"Keep it simple" when either starting or jump-starting parish evangelization teams

By Anita Bardo

Walking in faith, my purpose

Sometimes evangelization is as simple as sharing your story. When did you first become aware of Jesus’ presence in your life? Is there a moment when that awareness deepened significantly, leading to a stronger relationship with Christ? Here is an example:

My relationship with God had been pretty consistent, but I knew there was something missing.

Then in 2010, my oldest grandson was born. He was born with a few complications, but nothing we felt we could not handle. Through his first few months of life, he went through several surgeries. Elijah is his name, and he was the joy of our lives. He had his own personality he shared with us individually. Elijah was on the mend and healing—so we thought.

Then, at 4 months old, we were given the news that none of us expected. Elijah was diagnosed with stage four neuroblastoma, a childhood cancer. This news broke my spirit and my heart, but I could not be there for him.

While sitting in a moment of silence, I thought, “How could a newborn have stage four cancer?” I never asked why, I simply asked God for guidance and understanding. I reached out to my family, my spiritual director and close friends asking for prayer, more so for my daughter than for me.

The days became gloomy, frustrating and sad. All we could do was make Elijah comfortable, singing to him and staying fervent in prayer. On July 8, 2010, Elijah was called back home to God. He was perfect and peaceful, and we were grateful for those five months and four days of his life. He brought a change in our lives that will forever be remembered.

In reflecting on how things transpired, I asked God what this meant, and these answers continually came to mind: Your life is going to change, your faith will become stronger, and your outlook on life will be promising.

Weeks, months and years passed, and my life did begin to change. My spiritual journey increased, and I began to understand how my life would begin to shift. I thought at this moment, “What is my purpose?” At that very moment, I prayed for direction. I looked at Scripture to give me a better understanding. I reflected on Isaiah 30:21: “And your ears shall hear a word behind you: This is the way, walk in it, when you would turn to the right or the left.”

Last August, I was laid off from a job of 22 years. Then on Nov. 3 last year, I was offered a job I was not looking for but prayed for, working in evangelization ministry for the archdiocese. Love of my neighbor was present. The invitation of God to take a leap of faith was present. I’m forever grateful for my true purpose in life—ministering to the local Church—and the satisfaction of being OK with God’s plan.

Our stories that we share open doors to reach others in ways that we may not know. But it’s what God is calling each of us to: to be vulnerable, to be uncomfortable, to be authentic in who we are and in following Christ as a disciple. Being hope for others, being a resource for many—that truly is my walk with Christ.

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By Sean Gallagher

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis has 126 parishes spread across 39 counties reaching from the plains of central Indiana through the hills in the southern part of the state to the banks of the Ohio River. All of those faith communities are outposts of the Church spread across cities, small towns, rural farmland and rolling hills. It is from these parishes that the faithful go forth to carry out the Church’s mission to proclaim the Gospel to all creation.

Four archdiocesan faith communities are taking a multi-pronged approach to the task of evangelization, seeking to strengthen the faith of its members, inviting back Catholics who have walked away from the faith and reaching out to people with no church home.

Members of St. Joseph Parish in Shelbyville, St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Parish in Indianapolis, St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in Fortville and St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Shelby County are all making efforts online, through mail and person-to-person to share the Gospel.

‘The message is Jesus’
Little Flower Parish on Indianapolis’ east side isn’t located on a main thoroughfare, but is embedded in the middle of a neighborhood. Members of the Indianapolis East Deanery faith community’s Invite Commission are working to build up the connection between the parish and its non-Catholic neighbors.

Cindy Woods, who helps lead the commission, grew up in the parish decades ago at a time when the divide between Catholics and non-Catholics seemed set in stone. “We want to be a part of the community and let people know that it’s a good place for them to come to,” said Woods. “We want them to know about Jesus. The message is Jesus.”

This happens in many ways, Woods noted. “We’ve been trying hard to put ourselves out there,” she said. “For three or four years, we’ve had food drives and get the neighborhood involved. We’re trying to [interact] with non-Catholics in the neighborhood to invite them to come to the parish and its festival.” At Little Flower’s annual summer festival, the commission has a table where they meet visitors, give them crucifix necklaces and ask if they have any prayer needs. “Sometimes, people will just pray with us right there and talk with us about Jesus,” Woods said. Despite the challenge Catholics face in the increasing secularization of contemporary culture, Woods has confidence in the future. “It’s all going to work out,” she said. “Everything’s going to be OK because of Jesus. That’s contagious. All the members of the commission have that feeling.”

Helping the Holy Spirit touch hearts
For much of its 154-year history, St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in Fortville was a faith community in a small town in the midst of farmland in northwestern Hancock County.

In recent years, however, new housing developments have been constructed on many of those fields, attracting many people to Fortville who work in nearby Indianapolis and the quickly growing towns of Hamilton County. That has led Kevin Sears and other St. Thomas parishioners to let newcomers to the area know about St. Thomas and the Gospel it offers.

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Kevin Sears, a member of St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in Fortville, mans a booth for the Indianapolis East Deanery faith community at an ecumenical event in the town in northwestern Hancock County. (Submitted photo)

‘Organic evangelization’
St. Joseph Parish in Shelbyville and nearby St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Shelby County have taken similar approaches to evangelization as those used at Little Flower and St. Thomas. In reaching out to inactive Catholics, though, they go out to meet them—at their homes.

“People are grateful for a personal encounter,” said Father Michael Keucher, St. Joseph’s pastor. “The personal encounter, face-to-face, person-to-person, is how Christ encountered people.”

When people realize that they are missing, they were loved, they wanted and that their Church cares enough to come visit them—that makes a big difference. They do come back.”

The two parishes also reached out to inactive Catholics by sending them postcards at the start of Lent. One featured an image of ashes, a Palm Sunday palm, an invitation to return to Christ and the parish, and the website address for both parishes.

Another offered a Lenten prayer, instructions on the lectio divina form of prayer, and a list of Scripture passages to meditate upon.

Father Keucher has also posted daily “Father Mike Minute” videos on St. Joseph’s YouTube channel that explain aspects of the Church’s beliefs and worship and offer spiritual reflections.

‘The more people know, the more they will love,’” said Father Keucher. Whether it’s through mail, in person-to-person encounters or through online videos and social media, Father Keucher said the members of St. Joseph and St. Vincent are starting to get an “organic evangelization” mindset. “Evangelization is becoming more a part of who are across both parishes,” he said.

Father Keucher spoke of how teenage St. Joseph parishioners recently took prom dates to the parish’s perpetual adoration chapel after the dance and prayed with them there.

“Wow, how beautiful is that!” Father Keucher said. “It’s not an official evangelization program or campaign. It’s just something that organically happened where people get the idea in their mind and heart that they’re supposed to make disciples of all nations and they’re going to start with their friends. Hopefully the parish-wide initiatives are not just fruitful in and of themselves, but will breed a change of culture and a change of heart inside each of our members, that they’ll want to evangelize.”

Parishes use a variety of initiatives to share the Gospel

This is the image on a postcard sent out before Ash Wednesday to inactive Catholics by St. Joseph Parish in Shelbyville and St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Shelby County as part of their multi-pronged evangelization efforts. (Submitted photo)
Evangelization, sharing the good news of salvation through Christ, is your baptismic commitment. That’s your right, but it’s also your duty,” says Archbishop Charles C. Thompson.

By our baptism, the answer is no, says Archbishop Charles C. Thompson.

“As the chairman-elect of the USCCB’s Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis, Archbishop Thompson has been familiarizing himself with the committee’s mission, efforts and resources. The group’s website offers nearly a dozen topics and tools under its “Resources” tab.”

“Evangelization versus proselytization”

“The primary purpose is love”

Parish evangelization leaders don’t have to go it alone. The Office of Evangelization and Catechesis has a guidebook: “The Salesian Way to Evangelization” which can be found online or printed. The guidebook offers an annual workshop on creating or jump-starting parish evangelization teams. The most recent one was held on April 29 at St. Agnes Parish in Nashville. Nearly 40 people from 15 parishes in central and southern Indiana participated.

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“The salesian Way to Evangelization”

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From local to nearby to national, evangelization resources abound

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson.

Below are five tools offered by the archdiocesan Office of Evangelization, Franciscan University of Steubenville and the USCCB to help individuals and parish evangelization teams in their mission to share the good news of Christ’s love, mercy and salvation. For more information on these tools, see the related sidebar.

Archdiocesan Office of Evangelization

“Evangelization in its most basic form is to invite people to a encounter with Christ; proselytization is the force of our will to make this online tool available to parishes in central and southern Indiana.”

“It’s really an extension of the St. John Bosco Conference,” says Seman, who worked for the Institute for two years. “Not only are a lot of the talks from the conference available, but it has a wide variety of tracks made up of a number of workshops, each with videos and guides you can print out.”

“TIme to get inspired”

“The Institute, Kathy Sleva of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Bedford was especially struck by the sharing of witness stories during the workshop. “That is where the inspiration and excitement came from,” she says.

“Sleva described the different steps and advice discussed during the day. But amid the practical tips and suggestions, one message stuck with her. “Anita Bardo was especially emphatic about keeping it simple, and don’t assume that you have to be the best disciple to bring others to Jesus.”

“The conference, held each year in June, offers a variety of workshops and talks.”

“Although most people who go work for the Church, any Catholic is going to find something beneficial to them,” says Seman. “It’s very much like a retreat as well, with Mass, confession and adoration,” he adds.

He also recommends another Franciscan University resource: Franciscan at Home, offered through the university’s Catholic Institute.

The archdiocese has partnered with the Institute to make this online tool available to parishes in central and southern Indiana.

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For Hispanic Catholics and for all Catholics, we’re called to come together as one in Christ

By John Shaughnessy

The eyes of Felix Navarrete sparkle when he recalls one of his favorite moments from the past few months—a moment that gives a view of the Church when it’s at its best. The moment unfolded on the evening of April 18 at a gathering of people from different Indianapolis parishes. As the coordinator of Hispanic Ministry for the archdiocese, Navarrete was invited to speak at the gathering about the multi-year National Eucharistic Revival that will soon place its emphasis at the parish level from June 23 to July 2024. Yet before his talk at St. Ann Church in Indianapolis, Navarrete joined the group for eucharistic adoration, a task that has involved speaking to different languages—English, Spanish and French.

“Seeing all these people together in the church was just beautiful,” Navarrete says. “I was just speechless. I really felt the presence of Jesus, and I felt he was feeling so happy to see all this diversity of cultures and skin colors all together in the church. In that moment, I thought, ‘OK, this is what the Lord wants us to do.’”

That feeling for Navarrete was enhanced by what happened next—a simple yet significant gesture for the Spanish-speaking group that was made by Father Jude Merel Sahayam, the administrator of St. Ann Parish.

After eucharistic adoration, Father Sahayam divided the groups by their language, sending the English-speaking and French-speaking groups to rooms outside the church while inviting the Spanish-speaking group to stay in the church to hear their talk. That invitation deeply touched many of the Hispanics.

“At the end of the gathering, a lot of the people expressed to me how they felt so welcomed. Some of them said, ‘Hey, Felix, most of the times we’re the ones that don’t find that specific ingredient that helped them have that closeness with Jesus. That feeling for Navarrete was enhanced by what happened next—a simple yet significant gesture for the Spanish-speaking group that was made by Father Jude Merel Sahayam, the administrator of St. Ann Parish. After eucharistic adoration, Father Sahayam divided the groups by their language, sending the Spanish-speaking group to rooms outside the church while inviting the English-speaking group to stay in the church to hear their talk. That invitation deeply touched many of the Hispanics.

“That’s the moment I feel we are really instruments of God, helping others to get closer to him. To be part of building these relationships makes me feel special. It also makes me feel more engaged in the Church, in the way I need to do things better and give a personal testimony, as well in the way I act and the way I speak. If we can help them create those spaces and help them get closer to Jesus, that’s part of our mission as leaders.”

That mission and that hope arise against the backdrop of some sobering statistics about U.S. Latinos who are Catholic. A recent study by the Pew Research Center noted that the percentage of Hispanic adults in the U.S. identifying as Catholic decreased from 67% in 2010 to 43% in 2022. It’s concerning,” Navarrete says. “That’s pretty drastic. It’s concerning. I’ve noticed that a lot of Catholics who we’ve the ones who need to move to a different room. And this priest invited us to stay in the church. ‘In the last couple of months, it’s been one of the best moments I’ve shared with the Hispanic community. I was able to see in their faces that they had a special moment with Jesus in the Eucharist. And they were so grateful for that moment in the church. I was so happy. I got home and I was telling my wife they were so grateful for that moment in the church.

“We can grow our faith community together. It’s important that we’re widening our thoughts and putting them on the website all the time,” he adds. “They’ve done some very important work.”

“Creating that connection to the Church for people from all backgrounds is the work of all Catholics—and an emphasis that parishes are especially asked to embrace during this upcoming parish phase of the National Eucharistic Revival.

“We’re called to come together as one”

“We really need to think intentionally about how we can grow our faith community together. It’s all nationalities,” says Anita Bardo, coordinator of evangelization and discipleship for the archdiocese. “When we have things like eucharistic adoration or the rosary, we can all come together because we know it’s all the same. And that’s what we’re called to do. We’re called to come together as one.”

The Eucharistic Revival has the great potential for fostering that unity among the faithful of the Church—an emphasis that’s particularly meaningful to the way that Hispanic Catholics celebrate their faith, Navarrete says. “I believe this is the moment we have to recommit ourselves in our faith—to get back to our beginning, to our first love, to our first encounter with God,” he says. “This Eucharistic Revival is giving us an opportunity to make a new chapter in our faith journey.”

Bardo agrees. “It’s important that we’re widening our thoughts and our concerns because we’re all growing together in faith. And the eucharistic revival is going to get us there,” she says. “It’s going to help people realize that if we’re not just to ourselves, but we’re reaching out to our sisters and brothers. We have Hispanics, we have Burmese, we have Africans, we have French-speaking people,” as well as Catholic communities from the Philippines, South Korea and Vietnam.

“Though we may be different, we’re still one. It’s important to see everyone come together and then to know that everyone is welcomed. We should embrace the different cultures. The more that we have an understanding of what we’re called to do—be bonded in Christ together, to be one in Christ—then I think we’ll all be better.”

RESOURCES

In 2017, the committee published “Liturgy as Missionary Disciples.” Different from the how-to nature of the archdiocese’s guidebook, this 38-page document breaks down parish leaders to consider when forming an evangelization team. It also addresses the nature of what St. John Paul II called “New evangelization.”

“That doesn’t mean we’re saying anything wrong,” Archbishop Thompson explains. “Our message is always the Gospel, Christ, the good news of salvation.”

“The new evangelization means finding new ways to proclaim it. How do we proclaim the message to our particular time and culture? What are the different ideologies and the agendas that we’re facing today? What new tools do we have to help in this mission. The document also asks for questions for reflection on the four cultures—a parish evangelization team needs to nurture for effective discipleship encounter, accommodation, community and sending.

“It addresses how do we create those cultures, both for individuals and communities,” says the Archbishop. “How do we create a culture where individuals and parishes encounter Christ? How do we prepare them for a culture of accommodation? How do parishes reach the variety of people that make up their community? How do they prepare them to be sent out to witness?”

Another USCCB evangelization resource deals specifically with outreach to the “unaffiliated”—those who claim no religious affiliation. While the “Outreach to the Unaffiliated Discussion Guide” and “Field Guide for Leaders” were written for bishops, “both can be helpful to parish leaders,” says Archbishop Thompson.

“I think for this and a lot of these documents is the bottom line that there’s not a one-size-fits-all solution when it comes to evangelizing. You have to look at your community, your parish. I think that’s important.”

Finally, Archbishop Thompson notes the connection between evangelization and the National Eucharistic Revival.

“In fact, it’s a sub-committee of Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis,” he says. The coordinating organization for the three-year revival “is creating resources and putting them on the website all the time,” he adds. “They’ve done some very nice stuff.”

In addition to a podcast, the site offers numerous videos—including one that featured Archbishop Thompson, and another in the works that includes him.

The connection between evangelization and the revival is direct, he says. “The Eucharist is the core of who we are and what we do, so it is the source of evangelization.”

Members of St. Gabriel the Archangel Parish in Indianapolis work together during a gathering at St. Ann Church in Indianapolis on April 19 for talks about the multi-year National Eucharistic Revival. (Submitted photo)

Members of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis and their pastor, Father John McClaslin, pose for a photo with Felix Navarrete, far right, coordinator of Hispanic ministry for the archdiocese, during an April 18 gathering at St. Ann Church in Indianapolis about the National Eucharistic Revival. (Submitted photo)
Para los católicos hispanos y para todos en general: ‘estamos llamados a la unidad’ en Cristo

Por John Shaughnessy

Los ojos de Félix Navarrete brillan cuando recuerda los momentos más importantes de sus labores como director del estudio sobre los hispanos en Estados Unidos. Un estudio reciente del Pew Research Center señaló que el porcentaje de adultos hispanos que se identifican como católicos disminuyó del 67% en 2010 al 43% en 2022.

“Resulta preocupante—comenta Navarrete sobre los resultados del estudio de Pew—. Algo ha ocurrido en ese cambio de vida al venir de Latinoamérica a Estados Unidos. En América Latina, el pueblo católico suele estar formado por personas que dan cuenta de alguna tribulación o enfermedad, o lo que sea. Ese es un momento en el que algunas personas pueden ser más cercanas a Dios en una iglesia, y pasarse a otra denominación. Y eso es muy triste. Como líderes, estamos viviendo momentos muy difíciles para la Iglesia. Debemos ser conscientes de estas situaciones específicas que viven los hispanos en Estados Unidos.”

“Creo que es el momento de reavivar nuestra fe, de volver a nuestros orígenes, a nuestro primer amor, a nuestro primer testimonio personal. Y que todos estemos creciendo juntos en nuestra fe, asegura Navarrete.

“Y aunque seamos diferentes, seguimos siendo miembros del mismo cuerpo, de la misma Iglesia. Es importante que ampliemos nuestros horizontes y pensemos en cómo podemos hacer crecer juntos nuestra comunidad de fe. Para todas las nacionalidades—afirma Anita Bardo, coordinadora de evangelización y disciplina de la Arquidiócesis—. Cuando tenemos actividades como la adoración eucaristica o el rosario, todos podemos unirnos porque sabemos que en cualquier idioma es igual. Y eso es lo que mantenemos: la unidad.”

El Renacimiento Eucarístico es un esfuerzo que tiene un gran potencial para fomentar esa unidad entre los fieles de la Iglesia, un énfasis que también es particularmente significativo para la forma en que los católicos hispanos celebran su fe, asegura Navarrete.

“Creo que es el momento de reavivar nuestra fe, de volver a nuestros orígenes, a nuestro primer amor, a nuestro primer encuentro con Dios—afirma Navarrete. —Este Renacimiento Eucarístico nos da la oportunidad de escribir un nuevo capítulo en nuestro camino de fe.”

Bardo concuerda:

“Es importante que amplíemos nuestros pensamientos y nuestras inquietudes porque todos estamos creciendo juntos en la fe. Y el Renacimiento Eucarístico nos va a llevar hasta este punto—expresa—. Marcará la diferencia si no nos limitamos y tendremos la mano a nuestros hermanos y hermanas. Tenemos hispanos, birmanos, africanos, tenemos francolínes. Y aunque somos diferentes, seguimos siendo uno. Es importante verlos a todos reunidos y saber que todos somos bienvenidos. Debemos acoger a las diferentes culturas. Cuanto más comprendamos lo que estamos llamados a hacer, es decir, estar unidos en Cristo, creo que todos estaremos mejor.”
Irving Luis wasn’t used to such large gatherings of Catholics from so many ethnic backgrounds, said the 16-year-old member of Holy Trinity Parish in nearby Edinburgh.

“It’s not something I get to see every Sunday,” he said. “It was one of the few moments in my life when I got to see a big congregation showing our faith and who we are.”

At the same time, Irving knew in his heart that it was natural, or perhaps supernatural, for Catholics to gather for worship like this.

“Our faith goes around the whole world, as it should,” he said. “God is the Creator of everything.”

The event was the last of a series of deanery-based events tied to the National Eucharistic Revival that took place in the 11 archdiocesan deaneries throughout Lent and the Easter season.

As the first year of the revival, focused on dioceses, comes to a close and with the second year, focused on parishes, beginning next month, the deanery events were planned as a way for leaders of faith communities across central and southern Indiana to explore possibilities for how the revival can be observed at the local level.

Father Christopher Wadelton, pastor of St. Bartholomew Parish, said it was glad to see so many come to his faith community on the north side of Columbus, not knowing in advance how many people would take part.

“We were overwhelmed and pleasantly surprised,” he said. “It gave me joy in my heart.”

Father Michael Keucher, pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Shelbyville and archdiocesan vocations director, said: “The Eucharist is what is most important to me,” he said. “It’s our God on Earth—and I get to receive [him].”

Adriana Galicia, left, Amy Morales and Maribel Aparicio, all members of St. Ambrose Parish in Seymour, kneel in prayer during a May 7 bilingual Mass at St. Bartholomew Church in Columbus that was part of a Seymour Deanery event for the National Eucharistic Revival. (Photo by S eyes Gallagher)
Our Catholic schools provide an education that is best for their child. Education is best for their child. Education is best for their child. Education is best for their child. Education is best for their child. Education is best for their child. Education is best for their child. Education is best for their child. Education is best for their child. Education is best for their child. Education is best for their child. Education is best for their child. Education is best for their child. Education is best for their child. Education is best for their child. Education is best for their child. Education is best for their child. Education is best for their child. Education is best for their child. Education is best for their child. Education is best for their child. Education is best for their child. Education is best for their child. Education is best for their child. Education is best for their child. Education is best for their child. Education is best for their child. 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### Guest Column/Shermiah Gonzalez

**We’re not ‘that kind of parish’** should inspire change

On the last bitter morning of winter, with spring just threatening, my husband shipped on an icy pathway outside our home, detaching his quadriceps muscle from his knee. The next 12 hours were a whirlwind: emergency surgery, picking up our children from school, feeding them and leaving them with a neighbor before rushing back to the hospital.

When I brought my husband home late that night, it was clear we would need help during his three-month recovery. Exhausted, I posted to social media with a call for support. We live two states away from family, and I hoped a few friends could pitch in, but no one did. My heart sank as I e-mailed to my pastor, the parish director of my children’s ministries. I recounted my husband’s accident and gave her the link to the “meal train” calendar I had set up, so she could share it with other families. Our Catholic school would support us— isn’t that what the body of Christ is for?

The next day, I received a call from my priest. As he is not on social media, someone from the parish had alerted him to my post. He offered prayers and said that he would alert church staff. A few days later, when I had a string of messages from the director of children’s ministries, I knew he had shared the meal train with others. I texted him: “Thank you so much.”

I did not hear from our church for the next two weeks. I set up a ground-floor bed for my immobile husband and scurried to keep up with the household tasks we used to divide among the family. I attended Mass with my children, as my husband watched from home. The church never checked in with us. The parishioner who originally alerted my priest to my need never commented.

My priest went on a retreat and when he returned, he did check in with us, to see how we were faring. I let him know that beyond the children’s ministry’s reach-out, we’d heard from no one. As active members of this parish for 17 years, this was the first time our family had really needed the Church, the body of Christ, to be at our hands and feet—to walk with, assist and comfort us.

### Guest Column/Br. Patrick Briscoe, O.P.

**Our home, detaching his quadriceps muscle**

The Criterion Friday, May 19, 2023

### PERSPECTIVES

See the light to encounter Jesus in every detail of life

Anxiety is prevalent in all of us

### See BRISCOE, page 18

### Guest Column/Melissa Alvarez

Anxiety is rooted in fear of perceived danger. Worrying about the future is about to go wrong or will go wrong in the future. But what Jesus says about anxiety is: to come back to the present moment—to be aware that we are because tomorrow will have enough troubles. It is OK to be concerned about the future, we don’t want to go there.

There is a difference between expressing anxiety and having an anxiety disorder. Anxiety becomes a mental health concern when it starts interrupting our daily functioning—when the distress is taking away from your ability to engage with people, do work, or manage your job or any role you might have.

Not all anxiety is bad. For example, if you are going to confess, you may experience some anxiety, which is normal. Negative thoughts are normal, too, but not helpful. But just because we “think” something may happen or is happening does not make it fact. We have to identify and observe our thinking thoughts, review our thoughts, but not every thought is accurate. Accepting a self-induced anxiety as reality can impact our daily functioning but also how we interact with others.

Many times, self-care can be hijacked by the marketing industry taking time for you to “treat yourself” (and spend money on distractions). That is not what self-care is. Self-care is witnessing to soul—what fuels you and gives you energy.

What self-care really depends on is what you need. It could mean something as simple as buying a cup of coffee, reading a book, going fishing, exercising, spending time with your family. Self-care is really about you—what fuels you and gives you energy.

### See ALVAREZ

### Worship and Evangelization Outreach/Jennifer Burger

### Why Harrison Butker’s commencement address was a solid ‘goal’

“Anyone with eyes can see that something is off,” said Harrison Butker, addressing the crowd gathered for commencement at his alma mater, Georgia Tech. “It would seem the more connected people are to one another, the more they feel alone,” the two-time Super Bowl champion said.

Directly addressing the ongoing epidemic, the Kansas City Chiefs kicker proceeded to offer the class of 2023 some powerful words.

Butker pitted success against failure—arguing that a failure “is a part of what makes us smart and talented people successful but remain unhappy.” “In the end, no matter how much research you attain, none of it will matter if you are alone and devoid of purpose,” he said.

But why was this such a great speech? First, it was remarkable because Butker subtended referenced God and Scripture throughout his text. He insisted that talents were “God-given” and noted that all of our deeds, even those things done in darkness, will someday be brought to light. In an extremely inviting and uncompromising way, the frame of his speech served the following:

In an address at a secular school, Butker’s words were a reminder to all students in attendance that Christians believe in the meaning and purpose of life bestowed on the human heart.

In a world where professionals, teachers and coaches are discouraged from bringing their faith to bear in the public square, Butker’s humble example shows how to insist that Catholics don’t subscribe to the same acceptance as nonbelievers. By insisting our gifts are God-given and alluding to Scripture, his speech was open to the transcendent truths of faith in a way that simply encouraging people to be the best version

TheCriterion Friday, May 19, 2023
The Ascension of the Lord
The Sunday Readings
Sunday, May 21, 2023
• Acts 1:1-11
• Ephesians 1:17-23
• Matthew 28:16-20

In many dioceses in the United States, including the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, the Church celebrates the Ascension this weekend. The Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord. Other dioceses observe this weekend as the Seventh Sunday of Easter. These reflections will refer to the biblical accounts for the Ascension of the Lord.

The first reading is from the beginning of the Acts of the Apostles. As with the Gospel of St. Luke, the author addresses Theophilus. The identity of Theophilus is unclear. Was Theophilus his actual name? Perhaps it was. Perhaps it was not. Theophilus also is a title, meaning “friend of God.”

In any case, this initial form of address helps establish that Luke’s Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles are inseparably linked. Acts simply continues the story first given in the Gospel. It is important to remember this.

As the New Testament was compiled into one set of Scriptures, and especially as the Church accepted St. John’s Gospel as part of the authentic word of God, the Gospel of John was inserted between Luke and Acts so as not to divide the four Gospels.

However, this process upset the perception of seeing Acts as the continuation of Luke.

Important in this reading is the identification given the Apostles, 11 in number since the ascension and then suicide of Judas. Acts clearly states that the Lord chose the Apostles. His selection was not insignificant or casual. It was done with the power of the Holy Spirit.

They still need the wisdom of Jesus. They are confused about salvation and about the Savior. Will Jesus restore Israel to its old earthly might? Jesus clarifies what salvation means.

He also clarifies the place of baptism in the faith. Finally, Jesus ascends to heaven. The story ends on a note of hope.

For its second reading, the Church offers a passage from St. Paul’s Epistle to the Ephesians. This reading is a prayer that all Christians might find true wisdom in Christ, the only source of truth.

St. Matthew’s Gospel provides the last reading. This passage, too, identifies the dignity and limited humanity of the Apostles. They are with Jesus. Even though they see Jesus gloriously alive after the crucifixion, some of them continue to have doubts in their hearts.

The Lord then commissions them to go into the world, expecting no place or anyone, and to bring all into God’s family by baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This passage not only underscores the role of the Apostles and their task of continuing to proclaim God’s mercy, but it also reveals the Holy Trinity.

Reflection
The site in Jerusalem believed by the first Christians and still venerated as the site of the Lord’s Ascension is only a small chapel, surprisingly. Though it is no grand basilica, it still commemorates a momentous event. Jesus bodily ascended into heaven.

At that moment, the Lord wonderfully reassured the disciples at the time and us as well that we will never be alone. He always will be with us.

Indeed, the Gospel of Matthew concludes with the Lord’s promise, “I am with you always, until the end of the age” (Mt 28:20).

No human life is free of difficulty and distress. Conditions surrounding everyone can be vexing. Look at the Ukrainians. Look at people enduring chronic illnesses. Look at the poor.

The Lord’s words are consoling, and they are real. Jesus is with us in the strength of grace, in the hope of eternity with God. He is with us in the Church, begun by the Apostles after the Ascension. He is with us in the sacraments and in the Eucharist.

Before ascending, the Lord empowers the Apostles and then sent them out on mission. He empowers us and sends us to refresh our world with the Gospel, confident that we are called, blessed and gifted.

Daily Readings
Monday, May 22
St. Rose of Cascais, religious
Acts 19:1-8
Psalm 68:2-7
John 16:29-33

Tuesday, May 23
Acts 20:17-21
Psalm 68:10-11, 20-21
John 17:4-11a

Wednesday, May 24
Acts 20:28-38
Psalm 68:29-30, 33-36b
John 17:11b-19

Thursday, May 25
St. Bede the Venerable, priest and doctor of the Church
St. Gregory VII, pope
St. Mary Magdalene de’Pazzi, virgin
Acts 22:30; 23:6-11
Psalm 16:1-2a, 5, 7-11
John 17:20-26

Friday, May 26
St. Philip Neri, priest
Acts 20:34-42
Psalm 103:1-2, 11-12, 19-20b
John 21:15-19

Saturday, May 27
St. Augustine of Canterbury, bishop
Acts 16:12-20, 34-41
Psalm 11:4-5, 7
John 21:20-25

Vigil Mass of Pentecost
Genesis 11:1-9
or Exodus 19:1a; 16-20b
or Ezekiel 37:1-14
or Joel 3:1-5
Psalm 104:1-2a, 24, 35, 27-28, 29bc-30
Romans 8:22-27
John 7:37-39

Sunday, May 28
Pentecost Sunday
Acts 2:1-11
Psalm 104: 1, 24, 29-31, 34
1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13
John 20:19-23

The Ascension of the Lord/Mgr Owen F. Campion

Daily Readings

Question Corner/Jenna Marie Cooper
A crucifix is to be placed on or near the altar in the celebration of Mass

Q Our priest has recently stopped using the processional crucifix, and now we have no crucifix on the altar during Mass or at any other time. I’ve always thought that there is supposed to be a crucifix on the altar to remind us all of the suffering and passion of Christ.

A Yes, the “General Instruction of the Roman Missal,” the “instruction book” for how Mass is to be celebrated, specifically indicates that “on the altar or close to it, there is to be a crucifix on the altar to remind us all of the suffering and passion of Christ.”

Q Presumably, this is not only to remind us of Christ’s passion, but also to help call to mind how the holy sacrifice of the Mass is a representation here and now of Christ’s original sacrifice of his life on Calvary.

A The General Instruction in paragraph 117 goes on to tell us that a processional crucifix may also be used for this purpose. But either way, it is clear that a crucifix is required.

Q If it looks as though your own parish is not following this norm, the best thing to do would be to share your concerns directly with your pastor in a respectful way. Sometimes your local diocesan liturgy office can also be a good resource for these kinds of liturgical questions.

A My Catholic grandmother used to say that original sin was a sort of stamp that all people since Adam and Eve have been born with. In original sin, God is still holding people guilty of Adam and Eve’s sin of disobedience even up through today. Unless this stamp is removed through baptism, people will automatically go to hell at death.

Q This seems a bit extreme to me and perhaps a bit “old school.” Wouldn’t a more modern take on the subject be that all people, even up through today, are simply continuing in an exiled state from Eden—perfection—and that God through Jesus offers a return?

A Thank you for this interesting question.

First of all, I’m not sure exactly what you mean by “a more modern take.” While through the centuries Catholic doctrine might be developed—that is, be explained in more detail and articulated with greater clarity.—Catholic teaching itself doesn’t change in its substance.

So, what was true in your grandmother’s day is still true in ours, and will remain true even for your great-great-grandchildren. That being said, it is possible to explain unchanging Catholic teaching in new ways that can resonate better with different cultures and in different time periods.

Older catechisms often referred to the “stain” of original sin, and it’s not unreasonable to question whether this language may be potentially confusing or off-putting to younger generations. At face value, neither you nor your grandmother are incorrect in your descriptions of original sin, although perhaps your grandmother’s terminology requires some additional context.

Baptism does remove the “stain” or “blemish” of original sin, and this indeed makes it possible for us to live forever with God in heaven. But this is not because God would otherwise desire to punish us in some legalistic or vengeful way.

Additionally, the Catechism of the Catholic Church readily acknowledges that original sin is not the same as a personal choice to commit some evil act on our part (#405).

Your description of original sin as exile is actually very “old school” as well. The book of Genesis itself describes Adam and Eve as being specifically “banished” from the Garden of Eden (Gen 3:23). And many of us are familiar with the traditional prayer “Hail Holy Queen” (“an English translation of the Latin chant “Salve Regina”), in which we pray for our Lady’s intercession for us, “the poor banished children of Eve,” and then implore her to show us her son Jesus “after this, our exile.”

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. †
Rest in peace

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


STEIGERWALD, Lawrence, 71, St. Lawrence, Lawrenceburg, April 30. Father of Chelsie Shinkle, Ryan Howard and Swede Steigerwald. Grandfather of eight. Great-grandfather of one.

SANTOS, Carlos, 89, St. Michael the Archangel, Indianapolis, April 29. Husband of Pat Santos. Great-grandfather of two.


On 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:

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Briscoe

BRISCOE, continued from page 16

of themselves or discussing vague values is not.
Second, he offered a dramatic personal witness about the joy of marriage and family life. Brandishing his wedding ring, Butler smiled saying, “This is the most important ring I have right here.” Butker boasted of having kicked the game-winning field goal in both the AFC Championship Game and the Super Bowl. Noting that Super Bowl LVII was the most-watched football game of all time, he insisted, “And yet, all of this happiness is temporary,” Butler said. “And the truth is none of these accomplishments mean anything compared to the happiness I have found in my marriage and in starting a family.”

For Butler, his legacy is built in his marriage. Having children and raising them is what he believes will make the biggest impact on future generations. John Paul II warned, “As the family goes, so goes the nation, and so goes the whole world in which we live.” By emphasizing family life, Butler is drawing from the long tradition of Catholic social teaching, encouraging the renewal of the core unit of society.

Finally, Butler emphasized investing in meaningful relationships. He lamented: “Sadly, we are encouraged to live our lives for ourselves, to move from one thing to another with no long-term commitment, to have loyalty for nothing but ourselves and sacrifice only when it suits our own interests.” The loneliness many face is exasperated by attempts to achieve greater self-dependence and in prioritizing professional advancement. In the end, we are not liberated by shirking commitment. Rather, we become the slaves of our own autonomy, trapped without the aid of our responsibilities and our duties.

These relationships demand sacrifice. But they do not, as many people assume today, constrain us. The commitments we make are not obstacles but the very means for our fulfillment.

“Remember your purpose, focus on meaningful relationships and know that to without the spotlight, your life has value and you are meant for more,” he continued. Butler’s advice is sound not just for college graduates but for us all. In the end, what could matter more to us than God, our families and our friendships? (Dominican Father Patrick Briscoe is editor of Our Sunday Visitor. Follow him on Twitter @PatrickMaryOP)

Marian Pilgrimage

Children and adults wait for a two-mile “Walk with the Children’s pilgrimage to begin at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion in Champion, Wis., on May 6. Organizers of Walk to Mary, a 21-mile trek, began a walk for children in 2014 to allow more families to participate in the annual event. The shrine is the site of the only Church-approved apparition of Mary in the U.S. (CNS photo/Sam Lucero)

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:  
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- Complete 12 courses online with ND STEP program  
- CDU offers classes on Catechesis of the Catholic Church  
- 20% discount for all employees, volunteers, and parishioners.

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

REPORT SEXUAL MISCONDUCT NOW

If you are a victim of sexual misconduct by a person ministering on behalf of the Church, or if you know of anyone who has been a victim of such misconduct, please contact the archdiocesan victim assistance coordinator. There are 13 offices within the Church.

(317) 236-1548 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1548 victimassistance@archindy.org

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ALVAREZ

ALVAREZ, continued from page 16

Seek helpful tools and resources and be grounded in truth. Struggling and suffering are very real, so if you need help, reach out to a professional therapist, or call your diocese or archdiocese to discover helpful resources within the Church.

(Melissa Alvarez is an associate assistant director with the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis and Ministry with Persons with Disabilities for the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston.)
It’s unfair, humiliating if only the rich can build a family, pope says

ROME (CNS)—Starting a family and having children has become a kind of herculean task when instead it should be valued and supported by everyone, Pope Francis said at a meeting in Rome on Italy’s severe decline in population growth.

Today’s culture is “unfriendly, if not hostile, to the family, centered as it is on the needs of the individual, where individual rights are continually claimed and the rights of the family are not discussed,” the pope said at the meeting on May 12.

Women face “almost insurmountable constraints,” he said, especially as they are often forced to choose between having a career and being a mother or caring for family members who are frail or need special care.

“They experience a social climate in which starting a family has turned into a titanic effort, instead of being a shared value that everyone recognizes and supports.”

In his talk, Pope Francis said that bringing children into the world is often seen as a task the family should be dealing with on its own.

“This, unfortunately, influences the mentality of the younger generations, who grow up in a spirit of disillusionment and fear,” he said.

“They experience a social climate in which starting a family has turned into a titanic effort, instead of being a shared value that everyone recognizes and supports.”

Feeling alone and forced to rely solely on one’s own strength is dangerous: “This is unfair, as well as humiliating,” he said, “because it is there for everyone to see that the free market, without much-needed correctives, becomes savage and produces increasingly serious situations and inequalities.

“A change in mentality is needed: the family is not part of the problem, but part of its solution,” the pope said.

“We cannot accept that our society stops being generative and degenerates into sadness,” he added. “We cannot passively accept the fact that so many young people struggle to realize their dream about a family and are forced to lower the bar” of what they really wish for.

“It’s important that things like making money, concentrating on a career, traveling and valuing one’s free time do not become “mediocre substitutes” or selfish aspirations, he said,“ go it alone,” he added.

Increasing the birthrate, he said, “means repairing the forms of social exclusion that are hurting young people and their future. And it is a service to everyone: children are not personal assets, they are people who contribute to everyone’s growth, creating human and generational wealth.” 

Principal

St. Matthew Catholic School, Indianapolis

St. Matthew Catholic School in Indianapolis is seeking a principal for the upcoming school year. St. Matthew has an enrollment of over 340 students, from kindergarten through eighth grade as well as over 40 students in preschool. This school has been a vibrant part of the Indianapolis Catholic Community since 1958 and forms Catholic leaders for the twenty-first century.

Applicants must possess a valid administrator’s license, have demonstrated ability to foster Catholic identity, possess a passion for education of all students, and be a practicing Roman Catholic. Applicants may apply online at https://archindy.applicantpro.com/jobs/ and are asked to submit a letter of interest, resume, and professional references by May 25, 2023.

Anne Krieger, Office Manager
Archdiocese of Indianapolis, Office of Catholic Schools
1400 North Meridian Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367
317-263-4444
akrieger@archindy.org

Mother Theodore Catholic Academy
Maintenance Technician

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis is seeking to hire a full-time maintenance technician. This person hired for this job will train with the Archdiocesan Catholic Center Staff but will become the primary maintenance technician for the Mother Theodore Catholic Academy (MTCA). The MTCA has four schools in Marion Co., Indianapolis. This person will be responsible for the maintenance of all four schools.

The major responsibility of the person in this position is to oversee the maintenance of our four MTCA schools. This is a hands-on position, but it also requires the oversight and management of subcontractors.

• The person in this job will need to be an independent thinker.
• Responsible for the maintenance and safety of the MTCA buildings.
• Good communication skills are required.
• 10 years of experience in property management or commercial building maintenance.
• GED is required.
• A valid driver’s license is required.

Interested candidates apply to Daniel Herbertz at dherbertz@archindy.org.

Youth Minister

Holy Spirit at Geist Catholic Church in Fishers

Holy Spirit at Geist Catholic Church in Fishers, Indiana is seeking candidates for the full-time position of Youth Minister (grades 9-12). Essential duties of the applicant:

• Coordinate the high school Confirmation program (instruction and reception of sacrament)
• Participate in the recruitment, training, formation, supervision and empowering of core team members (adult and student)
• Build Christ-centered relationships with high school teens, their families, and volunteers
• Provide opportunities for teens to participate in retreats, service projects, mission trips, etc.
• Coordinate and implement weekly programming of the Life Teen curriculum

Applicant should be a practicing Catholic in good standing, have a thorough knowledge of Catholic teaching, have 3-5 years of experience in a related field, have experience with Microsoft Office applications, and supervisory experience with small groups and volunteers. Undergraduate degree in theology or related field preferred. Competitive salary commensurate with education and experience. Cover letter and resume should be sent to Mark Timko at: MTimko@parish.dol-in.org

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The 156 members of the Trojan Class of 2023 have collectively earned more than $24.6 million in college scholarships and grants. The faculty, staff and administration of Bishop Chatard are very proud of all that these young men and women continue to accomplish. They’ve challenged themselves, embraced their faith, and are prepared to make their own unique impact in our world. The prayers and support of the entire Trojan community accompany them on their journey.

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