By Natalie Hoefer

NEW ALBANY—Kara Garrison wiped the tear tracing down her cheek as the poem “Little Angel Unknown” was read aloud. Behind the man reciting the poem were 109 tiny caskets placed around a Pietà statue, each holding the precious remains of a miscarried child.

Having spent 14 years as a nurse on the Women’s Services unit at Baptist Health Floyd hospital in New Albany, Garrison saw more than just small boxes. “It’s just devastating when you have a young couple who’s just lost their hopes and dreams,” she said. “It’s devastating for everyone.”

The recitation of the poem was part of a burial service for the 109 short-lived lives held in an outdoor pavilion at Holy Trinity Cemetery in New Albany on July 14.

While such services have typically been held there quarterly since 2017, this was the first one to be held in more than two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

New Albany Catholic Cemeteries (NACC) director Teri Popp was overjoyed to see the burial services resume. “This is the mission of the Church,” she said. “We do this because we should.”

‘Doing the just thing’

When Popp became NACC director in September of 2016, she envisioned creating a plot for children of 22 weeks or less gestation who were miscarried at a local hospital.

She reached out to what was then Floyd Memorial Hospital. At the time, the facility cremated miscarried fetal remains and discarded them as biohazardous waste.

“I told them that, at zero cost to them, we would take the miscarried babies and give them a private burial service and place them into a small mass grave,” said Popp. “But they didn’t want to mix religion and state.”

Just one month later, Baptist Health Floyd bought Floyd Memorial.

“I called the hospital and spoke with them, and they had been struggling with what to do with the babies,” Popp recalls. “With their religious background, they have more of an understanding that babies should be treated with respect from the time of conception.”

Popp said providing the priest-led burial service—which includes prayer, Scripture, song and a blessing of the caskets with holy water—is “doing the just thing.”

Of the three NACC locations, she chose Holy Trinity, an “old Irish cemetery” founded in 1929, for the mass grave.

Franciscan Sister Shirley Gerth retires after 32 years of parish leadership

By Sean Gallagher

NAPOLEON—With the archdiocese being 189 years old, it’s not often nowadays that Catholics can celebrate a real pioneer in the life of the Church in central and southern Indiana.

But that’s what the members of St. Maurice Parish in Napoleon in southeastern Indiana were able to do in July.

Franciscan Sister Shirley Gerth stands on May 31 in St. Maurice Church in Napoleon. She led the Batesville Deanery faith community as parish life coordinator since 2010. In July, she retired after serving 32 years in the archdiocese as a parish life coordinator. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)
Red Mass for legal professionals set for Oct. 2 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral

By Sean Gallagher

The St. Thomas More Society of Central Indiana’s annual Red Mass for legal professionals will be celebrated at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., in Indianapolis, at 5:30 p.m. on Oct. 2. Archbishop Charles C. Thompson is scheduled to be the principal celebrant of the Mass.

A dinner reception will follow in the Assembly Hall of the Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., across the street from the cathedral. During the dinner event, Angela Espada, executive director of the Indiana Catholic Conference, will be honored with the society’s “Woman of the Year” award.

Judge David Certo, who serves in the Marion County Superior Court, was a student of the Indiana University McKinney School of Law in Indianapolis when Espada was a dean in its administration.

“She was a towering figure to me when I first met her, even though I’m much taller than she is,” said Judge Certo, president of the St. Thomas More Society.

“I am very grateful to have observed her career since then, including her service in leading the Indiana Catholic Conference on behalf of all the Catholic bishops of Indiana at the Statehouse. I’ve especially appreciated learning about her lived example of our faith from her public roles and in her personal life.”

Judge Certo expressed admiration for Espada’s good example for Catholics in the legal profession.

“It’s true that we’re tempted to view the world and live our lives through an ideological lens,” Judge Certo said. “Her public witness resists that temptation. We can’t be stuck in ideological positions if we’re going to be holy to the Holy Spirit and receptive to the needs of others.”

A Red Mass is a centuries-old tradition of those who work in law to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit at the beginning of the legal term in the early fall. The liturgy derives its name from the red vestments worn by the clergy during the Mass, red being symbolic of the Holy Spirit.

The keynote speaker at the dinner that will follow the liturgy will be Judge Robert Conrad, a senior judge for the U.S. District Court for Western North Carolina. He is the author of John Fisher and Thomas More: Keeping Their Souls. While Losing Their Heads (TAN, 2021), a book about the two 16th-century English saints. Both were beheaded as martyrs for opposing King Henry VIII’s claim to be the head of the Church in England.

Judge Certo and the St. Thomas More Society invited Judge Conrad “to come to Indianapolis to share ideas about how we can all live a more saintly life by listening to the voices of those two saints in particular who point toward Christ.”

All are invited to take part in the Mass and dinner. Judges, attorneys, law students and others who work in the legal field are especially encouraged to attend.

“The cost for the dinner is $40. A table sponsorship is $400, and a bar sponsorship is $1,500.”

Registration for the dinner is required and due by Sept. 21. Reservations may be required for those only attending the Mass.

The cost for the Mass, red being symbolic of the Holy Spirit, is $100. A table sponsorship is $400, and a bar sponsorship is $1,500.

For more information about registration or sponsorship, call 317-236-1226 or send an email to stthomasmoresindy@gmail.com.

H ow has God made his presence known in your life? Share it with our readers

The Criterion, in the article about Catholic Charities Terre Haute’s 50th anniversary, the correct name for the food bank is Terre Haute Catholic Charities Food Bank.

An article in the Aug. 25 issue about the archdiocese’s 32 seminarians failed to note that one of them is enrolled at Mount St. Mary’s Seminary and School of Theology in Cincinnati.

Synod assembly won’t be secret, but won’t be open to press, pope says

ABROAD THE Papal flight FROM MONGOLIA (CNS) — The Synod of Bishops is not a television show or a parliamentary debate, and its discussions will not be open to the public or to reporters, Pope Francis said.

“We must safeguard the synodal climate,” the pope responded on Sept. 4 when asked by journalists about access to the discussions at the assembly of the Synod of Bishops on Oct. 4-29.

“This isn’t a television program where you talk about everything; no, it is a religious moment, a religious exchange,” he told reporters flying back to Rome with him from Mongolia.

The synod process began in October 2021 with a succession of listening sessions on the parish, diocesan, national and regional levels focused on creating a more “synodal Church,” where each person feels valued, welcomed and called to contribute and share the Gospel.

After so many Catholics around the world devoted their time and their prayers to the process, an initial idea was to livestream the general discussions from the synod hall or at least allow reporters some access.

Pope Francis made it clear on the plane that would not happen. An official announcement from the synod’s days’ discussions would be made by the synod’s communication committee, led by Paolo Ruffini, prefect of the Vatican Dicastery for Communication.

“Beyond the anonymous, summarized points, journalists will try to interview participants to at least get individual points of view about the day’s synod work,” Pope Francis told reporters that each synod member—including lay women and men for the first time—would have three or four minutes to address the assembly. Each address will be followed by three or four minutes of silence “for prayer.”

“We need to think of the synod as a dialogue. We need to think of it as a dialogue of the Holy Spirit. No synodality without the Holy Spirit.”

Pope Francis told reporters that each synod member—including lay women and men for the first time—would have three or four minutes to address the assembly. Each address will be followed by three or four minutes of silence “for prayer.”

“We need to think of the synod as a dialogue. We need to think of it as a dialogue of the Holy Spirit. What are the needs of our people? We need to reflect on that and decide what to do next.”

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National Eucharistic Congress will be ‘real presence of Christ,’ organizers say

By Natalie Hoefer

Local and national organizers of the National Eucharistic Congress (NEC)—which will take place in Indianapolis on July 17-21, 2024—have been meeting virtually for some time.

But for the first time, scores of them met in person in Indianapolis on Aug. 30 at Lucas Oil Stadium, where in less than a year tens of thousands of Catholics will gather for the closing Mass of the historic event—the first in 83 years.

The congress will launch the third year of the three-year National Eucharistic Revival.

“The Holy Spirit is inviting the United States to find unity and renewal through a grassroots National Eucharistic Revival,” Jaime Reyna, executive director of the National Eucharistic Congress (NEC) event lead, said NEC event lead Jaime Reyna, quoting remarks from a letter written by NEC executive director Tim Glemkowski.

“This movement—discerned and approved by the bishops of the U.S.—is critical to rekindling a living faith in the hearts of Catholics across America, unleashing a new missionary chapter at this pivotal moment in Church history.

“The goal is to start a fire, not a program.”

‘A lot of people who are really excited’

More than 25,000 have already registered for the event, said Reyna.

“We just have a lot of people who are excited about gathering,” he noted. “Remember that feeling after COVID when people just wanted to come back together? It’s almost the same way, that there’s that spiritual connection of wanting to come together and pray and for the many different reasons that people are just wanting to come together.”

In addition to general and breakout sessions, the five-day event will be filled with opportunities for prayer, worship and the sacraments, said Father Patrick Beidelman. The pastor of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Indianapolis is chair of the NEC liturgy committee.

“We’ll have a large Mass each day, three at the Indiana Convention Center [ICC] and the closing Mass at Lucas Oil Stadium, … and opportunities for confession all over the place,” he said.

“And St. John [the Evangelist] Church [from across the ICC] will be turned into a place of perpetual adoration starting on Wednesday evening through Sunday.”

The route of a massive eucharistic procession is still being determined, he noted.

Reyna spoke with excitement about the speakers scheduled for the general and breakout sessions. Among them are well-known Catholic speakers, including priests, religious and bishops.

“The Church is diverse, Reyna also noted, and event coordinators are taking that into consideration. In addition to programming in English and Spanish, he said the NEC team is working with existing ministries to address other language needs as well.

“We’re talking about Vietnamese, Native Americans, Asian-Pacific Islanders and others,” he said.

The team is also cognizant of engaging those with special needs.

“We are working with national ministry organizations, like the National Catholic Office for Deaf Ministry,” said Reyna.

“We are also trying to be as inclusive as possible for all our brothers and sisters, including those who may have some physical disabilities, to make sure that they are able to participate and to see how we can accommodate and serve them.”

‘Representing the real presence of Christ’

The event will involve “hundreds if not thousands” of volunteers, said Nikki Slater of Maribeth Smith & Associates, the Indianapolis-based event planning firm contracted to coordinate the National Eucharistic Congress.

While registration for specific volunteer opportunities and shifts will go live next spring, Slater noted that a section of the NEC website will be created soon for people interested in volunteering.

The Knights of Columbus are providing many volunteers as well.

“I’m on the volunteer committee, so I’m working with NEC to figure out where they need volunteers,” Scott Schutte told The Criterion after the meeting. Schutte is state deputy of the Indiana Knights of Columbus.

“The goal is to start a fire, not a program.”

“I’ve got guys who are all excited about being part of the event.”

His current efforts are focused on the four routes pilgrims will walk from the north, south, east and west portions of the United States, all meeting in Indianapolis just before the National Eucharistic Congress begins.

“We’re trying to get with diocesan coordinators [for the routes] to find out where the Knights can provide water, food, a place to rest, maybe direct a little traffic … or at least participate in some way,” said Schutte.

He noted that the Knights of Columbus Supreme Council is a national sponsor for the congress.

“We want to give our 33,000 men the opportunity to be involved,” he said.

Speaking on behalf of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, archdiocesan chancellor Christopher Walsh said it is “a tremendous honor to be the host diocese for this historic event.”

He noted the archdiocese’s commitment to the effort. But he also recognized the vital help from all of the local organizers—including state and local police, firemen and emergency medical services—for their help “in making this event the success that we certainly know it is going to be.”

Walsh called the National Eucharistic Congress “truly an event for all, as all are united in the mystical body of Christ.

“That is what this is about, and certainly about representing the real presence of Christ in the world today through this event.”

(For information on the National Eucharistic Congress, registration, schedule, speakers or to become a sponsor, go to eucharisticcongress.org. Applications for financial aid will open on Sept. 15. A section on the site will be available soon for those interested in volunteering. For more information on being an exhibitor, contact sponsorships@ eucharisticcongress.org.)

Christopher Walsh
Mary, the “wished-for child” is our guiding star

Blessed by the Lord are you, O daughter: for through you we have received the fruit of life. (Traditional Marian Antiphon)

Today, Sept. 8, is the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Devotion to Mary, the Mother of God and our mother, is a distinctive feature of our Catholic way of life. She is our guiding star, the one who leads us to our Lord and our son, Jesus.

In the biblical account of creation, found in the Book of Genesis, human beings are given the power of “naming” all God’s creatures. To name something is to know it, define it and therefore, enter into some kind of relationship with it. Of course, human naming is never comprehensive, exhaustive or definitive. We name things precisely in order to get to know them better, and even the wisest among us would freely admit that we can never fully understand anything that we have named. Why? Because only the Creator can fully understand his creation.

When Mary’s parents named their daughter Mary (Maryam in Aramaic), they had no idea that she would become a woman venerated by “all generations,” including Christians and Muslims throughout the ages (Lk 1:48).

The root meaning of the name Mary offers many different associations from a variety of ancient cultures. Some of these include bitter, rebellious and wished-for child.

Knowing that her parents, traditionally identified as SS. Joachim and Anne, were devout Jews who had waited patiently to conceive a child, we can assume that they named her Mary because she was their “wished-for child.”

Certainly, nothing in our knowledge of her suggests bitterness or a rebellious spirit. On the contrary, the woman that we read about in the New Testament is the model for every loving, trusting and patient person. Even when she is repeatedly faced with great injustice and sorrow, she trusts in God’s providence.

Mary lived in a tumultuous time of human history. Religious freedom was threatened. The poor, the sick, and people who for various reasons found themselves on the margins of society were routinely persecuted, abused or neglected. A devout Jew like her parents, Mary was surrounded by the hypocrisy, intolerance and self-aggrandizement of the political and religious leaders of her time who failed to help their people see the truth.

What was Mary’s response? Faithful acceptance of God’s will, dedication to her family, and service to others. Although the world around her was in chaos, Mary remained steadfast.

Only God knows the whole truth about the material and spiritual world and everything in it. Our participation in the mystery of creation is a gift that allows us to know people, places and things in limited ways—and to grow in our understanding through the study of science, mathematics and the liberal arts. But the more we know about anything, the closer we get to the mystery that transcends our human knowledge and experience. That’s why true wisdom is knowing that we do not know anything as God knows it.

We venerate Mary as the Seat of Wisdom because through her guidance, we are invited, and challenged, to seek the truth about God and the universe he created. Every one of us, including Mary, was born with an insatiable desire to discover and embrace the mystery we call God. We are free to ignore this invitation/challenge, but it remains integral to who we are as human persons.

Or, like Mary, we can open ourselves to the Word of God and we can choose to embrace all aspects of reality—both the spiritual and the material. In the end, Mary is the shining star that helps us in times of confusion or doubt. She helps us to better understand the will of God and, by her example, she shows us how to say “Yes.”

Like Mary, we find ourselves living in tumultuous times. That’s why we turn to our Mother to comfort and support us and to show us the way to her son Jesus. The closer we come to Mary, the more we can open our minds and hearts to the mystery that has been revealed to us by her divine Son. And the more we imitate Mary, the more we discover who we are called to be.

We reverence the name of Mary, especially as we celebrate her birthday, because she is our guiding star. Let’s look to her when we are lost or lonely. Let’s follow her example and trust in the providence of God.

—Daniel Conway

Season of Creation calls us to transform ourselves through prayer and action

The prophet Amos cries out, “But let justice roll down like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!” (Am 5:24)

From this cry, we are moved to act in our world today so peace may flow in the hearts and life of all of creation.

We have entered the Season of Creation for this year, which began on Sept. 1, the Day of Prayer for Creation, and continuing until Oct. 4, the feast of St. Francis of Assisi. This is a time to renew our relationship with our Creator and all of creation through prayer, education, a change in habits and advocacy. The theme for this year draws on Amos’ image of a mighty river.

How can we contribute to the mighty river of justice and peace? In his message for the Season of Creation, Pope Francis calls us to transform our hearts, our lifestyles and the public policies ruling our societies. Through our prayer and actions we can join the worldwide Church in these efforts.

Also, this year the closing of the Season of Creation coincides with the opening of the Synod on Synodality at the Vatican, whose theme is “For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission.”

The river gives us another image, one of a basin with its many tiny and larger tributaries. So too… “the Church is a communion of countless local Churches, religious communities and associations that draw from the same shared waters. Each source adds its unique and irreplaceable contribution, until all flow together into the vast ocean of God’s loving mercy” (Pope Francis, Message for the Season of Creation, 2023).

There are many actions you can take to mark the Season of Creation. First, join us at 6 p.m. on Sept. 26 at St. Thomas Aquinas Church, 4625 N. Kenwood Ave., in Indianapolis, for a Mass with Archbishop Charles C. Thompson.

For the entire year’s theme of peace and justice, you may choose to become a liaison with the Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC). Visit its website: iancc.org, to learn more.

In addition, the international organizing committee has created a powerful, full-length documentary titled The Letter, available on YouTube.com that discusses the connections between nature and our relationship with God. Additional actions, prayers and meditations are available at the Archdiocese of Indianapolis’ Creation Care Commission website: www.ourcommonhome.org

As Salesian Sister Alessandra Smerilli, the Secretary of the Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development stated in this year’s Season of Creation message: “The Earth needs justice to flourish. Our task is to call for an integral vision of life, beginning with the conviction that everyone is connected and that we are interdependently connected with one another.”

Let us work together to care for our common home.

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

Letter to the Editor

Photo of seminarians offers ‘dignified, … refreshing’ view, reader says

We appreciate the work that you do so much, and we faithfully read our newspaper every week.

We just wanted to say how much we enjoyed the unusually informal photo of the seminarians on the steps of the SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis on page 12 of the Aug. 25 issue of The Criterion.

While it was still dignified, it was just a little less stiff than most photos usually are, and we found it refreshing.

Thanks to each of you for the good work you do every day.

Colette Fike
Indianapolis

Letters Policy

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 select the letters that will be published and to edit letters from readers as necessary based on space limitations, pastoral sensitivity and content (including spelling and grammar). In order to encourage opinions from a variety of readers, frequent writers will ordinarily be limited to one letter every three months. Considered letters (roughly less than 300 words) are more likely to be printed.

Letters must be signed, but, for serious reasons, may be published anonymously.

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.

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, Publisher
John F. Fink, Editor Emeritus
Mike Krook, Editor

The Criterion Friday, September 8, 2023

OSV News photo/Bob Roller

A statue of Inmaculate Heart of Mary is pictured on the bell tower of Basílica de Nossa Senhora da Rosário, Our Lady of the Rosary in Fatima, Portugal, on Aug. 7. (OSV News photo/Diego Rollier)
Let’s celebrate Mary’s birthday and the great gift of her ‘yes’

Let us celebrate with joy the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, for from her answered ‘yes’ to God’s Word, Christ our God. (Entrance Antiphon)

The publication date for this column is Friday, Sept. 8, the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Today we are invited to celebrate Mary’s birthday, and as every birthday occasion of their birthdays, it’s only right that we should celebrate with Mary today.

Mary’s importance for us, her children, cannot be emphasized too strongly. In many ways, this simple, strong, ordinary woman from Nazareth shows us how we are meant to live. Her prayer, her trust in God, her devotion to her Son, and her instruction to us: “Do whatever he tells you” (Jn 2:5), all serve as examples of Mary’s maternal care for us, her children.

It is impossible to imagine the Catholic Church without Mary. She was the first Christian disciple, her Son’s most loyal follower, one who stood with him until the bitter end, who rejoiced in his resurrection and ascension, and who stood with the disciples when the Church was born at Pentecost. She remains present throughout Christian history, accompanying us on our spiritual pilgrimage as the pilgrim people of God.

Let’s celebrate our mother’s birthday with simplicity but with great joy, giving thanks to God for the great gift of our Mother Mary.†

Celebremos el cumpleaños de María y el gran regalo de su ‘sí’

Celebramos con alegría la Natividad de la Santísima Virgen María, pues de ella surgió el sol de justicia, Cristo nuestro Señor. (Antífona de entrada)

La fecha de publicación de esta columna es el viernes 8 de septiembre, la festividad de la Natividad de la Santísima Virgen María. Hoy se nos invita a celebrar el cumpleaños de María y, como debería serlo todo cumpleaños, es una oportunidad para dar gracias a Dios por el obsequio precioso e inviolable de la vida humana.

Además, hoy nos alegramos por el papel absolutamente único de María en la historia de nuestra salvación pues gracias a su colaboración en el plan de Dios, todos hemos sido liberados de la opresión del pecado y de la muerte, ¡y eso sí que es motivo de regocijo! El nacimiento de María en un pequeño pueblo llamado Nazaret no fue un acontecimiento público, sino que fue algo tan simple y sencillo como ella. Suponemos que los santos Ana y Joaquín (tradicionalmente identificados como los padres de María y de Jesús) se alegraron del nacimiento de María, quizá rodeados de familiares y amigos. Pero ninguno de ellos podía saber lo que Dios le deparaba para esta hija “corriente” de Sión y lo que llegaría a ser para el mundo.

De hecho, la grandeza de María permaneció oculta hasta que, siendo una joven mujer, dijo “sí” a la Palabra de Dios y dio a luz a nuestro Redentor en un establo lejos de su casa. El propio nacimiento de María puede haber parecido anodino, pero estaba escrito en la historia del pueblo judío. En María se cumple la promesa de Dios de enviar un salvador (el significado del nombre “Jesús”) para redimirnos de nuestros pecados. Todavía hoy los profetas que figuran en el Antiguo Testamento preparan el camino para la madre de nuestro Señor, cuya valiente elección libra a nuestra especie de la opresión del pecado y da lugar a la realización del plan de Dios.

Al igual que la Natividad de San Juan Bautista —el único otro cumpleaños que se celebra en el calendario litúrgico de la Iglesia— el nacimiento de María tiene un significado especial para nosotros porque nos prepara para el don de la vida eterna que solamente Jesús puede dar.

El cardenal Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI) una ocasión la idea de que, aunque tradicionalmente asociamos el nacimiento de la Iglesia con la venida del Espíritu Santo en Pentecostés, en cierta forma la Iglesia nace en María y a través de ella, por ser la Madre de la Iglesia. De hecho, afirma que existe una estrecha correlación entre estos dos “nacimientos”.

El tiempo de la actividad pública de Jesús había sido para [María] el tiempo del rechazo, el tiempo de la oscuridad. La escena de Pentecostés, sin embargo, retoma el comienzo de la historia en Nazaret y muestra cómo todo cuen en su lugar. Así como Cristo había nacido entonces del Espíritu Santo, ahora la Iglesia nace por obra del mismo Espíritu. Pero María está en medio de los que oran y esperan (Hechos 1:16) (del libro El Credo, hoy). Y, por supuesto, los cristianos creemos que el mismo Espíritu Santo que estuvo presente en el nacimiento de Jesús y en Pentecostés también estuvo presente y fue instrumento en la Natividad de María, que nació llena de gracia y libre del pecado original.

Nos alegramos del cumpleaños de María por muchas razones, pero quizá la más obvia sea el papel de María para nuestra madre espiritual. En el momento de su pasión, Jesús nos hizo dos regalos sagrados y preciosos: el obsequio de sí mismo en la sagrada Eucaristía y el obsequio de su Santísima Madre.

Estamos invitados a celebrar con alegría la natividad de María porque es el cumpleaños de nuestra madre espiritual, un momento especial para dar gracias y alabar a Dios. Y al igual que hombreamos y respuestas a nuestros padres sobre ocasión de su cumpleaños, es justo que hoy celebremos con María la importancia de María para nosotros, sus hijos, es algo que nunca se recordará lo suficiente. En muchos sentidos, esta mujer sencilla, fuerte y corriente de Nazaret nos muestra cómo debemos vivir. Su oración, su confianza en Dios, su devoción a su Hijo y su instrucción para nosotros: “Hagan todo lo que él les diga” (Jn 2:5), todos sirven como ejemplos del cuidado maternal que nos dispensa María por ser sus hijos.

Es imposible imaginar la Iglesia católica sin María. Fue la primera discípula cristiana, la más leal seguidora de su Hijo, la que estuvo con él hasta el amargo final, la que se alegró de su resurrección y ascensión, y la que estuvo con los discípulos cuando nació la Iglesia en Pentecostés. Ella permanece presente a lo largo de la historia cristiana, acompañándonos en nuestro viaje simbólico como pueblo peregrino de Dios.

Celebremos el cumpleaños de nuestra madre con sencillez pero con gran alegría dando gracias a Dios por el gran regalo de nuestra Madre María.†
September 12
Church of the Immaculate Conception 1525 N. Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. Taizé Prayer at the Woods, 7-8 p.m., silent and spoken prayers, simple music, silence, virtual option available. Information: Taizé Sisters of Providence, 812-335-2992.

September 15
Northside Events and Social Club. 2100 E. 71st St., Indianapolis. Catholic Business Exchange. CBO CCO executive director Jack Schmitz presenting, rosary, rosary buffet breakfast and program following. 18 members, $24 non-members. Register by 4 p.m. on Sept. 12. Information: registration: cutilty@CBE-Rep.

September 15-16
St. Bartholomew Parish, 1306 27th St., Columbus. Fall Festival. Fri. 6-10 p.m., Sat. 4-10 p.m, live music, food, games, free admission. Information: 812-379-9553, stbartholomewfallfestival@gmail.com.

St. Thomas More Parish, 1200 N. Indiana St., Mooresville. Fall Festival. 5-10 p.m., live music, kids and teen games, raffles, bingo and beer and wine garden, food including hand-breaded tenders, hand-breaded dogs, hot air balloon rides (depending on weather), free admission. Information: 317-831-5200, pwaber@smc-church.com.

September 16
St. Mary Parish, 415 E. Eighth St., New Albany. Multicultural Fall Fest. 5-11 p.m., Mass 4 p.m., followed by live entertainment. DJ entertainment, food games, prize booth, free admission. Information: 812-944-0417, info@smmary.org.

St. Bridget of Ireland Parish, 404 E. Vine St., Louisville. Oktoberfest. 4-11 p.m., Mass at 4 p.m., German meal for $15 served 4-7 p.m., adult and children’s games begin 5 p.m., handmade crafts, beer and wine garden, cash raffle, poker, games of chance, free admission. Information: 765-825-8578, autumn@stbridget.org.

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus School parking lot, 1840 E. Eighth St., Jeffersonville. St. Mary Church, 7-11 a.m., school fundraiser, live music, food trucks, kids’ area. $10 admission. Information: 812-285-3123, info@sacredheartjeo.org.

September 17

St. Michael Parish, 101 S. Michael Dr., Charlestown. Septemberfest. 11 a.m.–4 p.m., chicken dinner, games, quilt and cash raffles, silent auction, free admission. Information: 812-256-3200, northcountyarchdiocese.org.

St. Meinrad Parish, 19570 4th N. St., St. Meinrad. Annual Fall Picnic. 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m. Country club, pond, round house, outdoor pavilion, food court, famous soup, German tenterloins, fried chicken dinners, live music, raffles, free admission. Information: 812-357-5533, info@smparishfamilychurch.com.

September 20

St. John the Evangelist Parish, 10701 Olcott Ave., Indianapolis. DiscipleShift Conference for Parish Leaders. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. CT, registration opens 8 a.m. CT, speakers include co-founder of Divine Renovation Ron Huntley, National Director of Alpha USA in the Catholic Context Josh Darius and Father Summie Malletta.

September 21
Our Lady of Peace Cemetery and Mausoleum, 9001 Havenstick Road, Indianapolis. Mass, 2 p.m. Information: 317-574-8898, catholiccemeteries.com.

Mt. Glad Church, 6019 E. State Road 144, Mooresville. Right to Life Johnson and Morgan Counties Banquet. 6:30 p.m., keynote by Greg Mayo—local author of Almost Daddy, with legislative update by Indiana Attorney General Todd Rokita, $35 per person, register by Sept. 14. Information, registration 317-560-0678. RightToLifeIN@Gmail.com.

Sunday, September 21-23
Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, 5333 E. Washington St., Indianapolis. Fall Festival. Thurs. 5-10 p.m., Fri. 5-10 p.m. with concert 9 p.m.-1 a.m., Sat. 2 p.m.-midnight, $5,000 raffle grand prize, pull tabs, Texas Hold'em poker, carnival rides, kids' games, silent auction, live bands, food, three parking lots. 1 p.m. at Our Lady of Lourdes, 5333 E. Washington St., Lot 2 at Oakley Hammond Funeral Home, 5342 E. Washington St., Lot 3 at Muddell and Associates, 110 S. Downey Ave. Information: 317-356-7291, olifesavel@gmail.com.

September 22
Northside Events and Social Club. 2100 E. 71st St., Indianapolis. JoJo’s Jumpstart Foundation Birthday Bash. 7-11 p.m., online scholarship fundraiser, live and silent auctions, heavy hors d’oeuvres, open bar, live music by Figures Sure, casual attire, $75, register by Sept. 21. Information, registration: jojoshosjumpstart.org, donations: 317-260-8015, jojoshosjumpstart@gmail.com.

Wedding Anniversaries

ROBERT and MARY (MUCKERHIEDE) PRICE, members of St. Paul Catholic Center in Bloomington, celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on Aug. 31. The couple was married in Our Lady of the Valley Church in Hemet, Calif., on Aug. 31, 1963. They have three children: Rebecca Livingston, Robert and William Price. The couple also has six grandchildren.

DAVID and CHRIS (STOKER) ARDELEAN, members of St. Malachy Parish in Brownsburg, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Aug. 31. The couple was married in Mary Queen of Peace Church in Danville on Aug. 25, 1973. They have six children: Susanna Ardelean, Katie Buck, Emily Muth, Julie Ratliff, Jane Seib and Amy Spencer. The couple also has 19 grandchildren.

KEN and DEBBIE (KREUTHAUPT) BURKHART, members of St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Decatur County, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Aug. 18. The couple was married in the former St. Mary-of-the-Rock Church in Franklin County on Aug. 18, 1973. They have two children: Dawn Ernstrom and Eric Burkhart. The couple also has four grandchildren.

STEPHEN and ALICE (ANDRES) VOLPERT, members of St. Mary-of-the-Woods Parish in Floyds Knobs, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Aug. 11. The couple was married at St. Mary-of-the-Woods Church on Aug. 11, 1973. They have two children: Leslie Alison and Jennifer Payne. The couple also has one grandchild.

PETER and MARLA (GRZELAK) ZINKAN, members of St. Pius X Parish in Indianapolis, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Aug. 9. They have two children: Christen Coleman and Kyle Redmond.

The couple also has three grandchildren.


The conference is sponsored by the Bowman-Francis Ministry, founded and located in Indianapolis. This year’s conference will feature keynote addresses by Louise Archibishop Skelton J. Faber, Rev. Andre Barns of “I’m Just Saying... Dee!” ministry, Bowman-Francis co-founder Society of the Divine Word Father Kenneth Hamilton, The Catholic Center at AUC Lyle House chaplain Society of the Divine Word Father Uriy Mark, and Marc Guess. The conference will offer 20 workshops, praise and worship, Mass, music by Men in the Fire, vendors, a health fair and more.

The cost is $150 for ages 18 and older and $75 for ages 17 and younger. Hotel rooms are available at the Marriott Louisville Downtown for $239 per night through Sept. 19, and $351 per night after Sept. 19. Self-parking is $40, and valet parking is $45. To book a room, go to cutt.ly/blackmen, or call 888-236-2427.

To defray costs, scholarships are now available. E-mail categhees@archindy.org for details.

For more information or to register for the conference, go to bowmanfrancis.org or call 317-800-1621.

Six-week Project Hope jobs will begin in September

Two six-week Project Hope jobs will begin in mid-September. Project Hope is a ministry of the archdiocesan Office of Life, Dignity and Dignity of the Mind Health Ministry. It is a faith-based mental health support group where participants can encounter Jesus through community, support and Scripture. Participants will have the opportunity to share their experiences and process challenges through the lens of Catholic teaching.

A group will consist of 8-10 adults, including a mentor who is in a mental health professional each meeting. Each participant will have time in circle to share their thoughts, prayer reflecting on Scripture, and fellowship.

For more information or to register, visit www.catholiccemeteries.com to contact Brie Anne Varick at 317-236-1523 or bvarick@archindy.org. Also contact Brie Anne for information on starting a Project Hope group in your parish.

Events Calendar

For a list of events for the next four weeks as reported to The Criterion, log on to www.archindy.org/events.
Maio-Burford encouraged the youngest of his eight children to return onto the kickball diamond again, leading a tournament for which he made to the girls she coached.

of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Parish in Indianapolis. (Photo by)

WPCI and NFPW awards
The recognition for work completed during the 2022 calendar year started in April when staff writer Natalie Hofer was honored by WPCI. She garnered five awards:

—First place: Special articles, Religion—“More than 1,000 Zomi Catholics gather in Indy for National Eucharistic Congress”.
—First place: Special articles, Obituary—“William Brunns leaves a legacy of service to the archdiocese”.
—First place: Profile: More than 750 words—“Rydes director offered youths 40 years of ‘support, positive memories and love’”.
—Second place: Column—“Mass Excursions: St. Boniface boasts outreach, historic church and hospitality”.
—Third place: Photogapher—“March for Life and rally draw nearly 1,000 hopeful for the end of Roe v. Wade”.

All three of her WPCI first-place entries advanced to the national NFPW competition.

In the NFPW competition, Hofer’s honors included:
—Second place: Special articles, Obituary—“William Brunns leaves a legacy of service to the archdiocese”.
—Honorable Mention: Special articles, Religion—“More than 1,000 Zomi Catholics gather in Indy for National Eucharistic Congress.”

CMA awards
The staff received more recognition on June 9 during the awards program, held in Baltimore, of the Catholic Media Association of the United States and Canada.

Assistant editor John Shaughnessy was awarded first place in the “Best Reporting on Social Justice Issues—Solidarity;” for his article, “Faith, a couple’s love and extended family help guide a Ukrainian to his true home.”

The story focused on then-19-year-old Anton Bezborodov, a foreign exchange student from Ukraine, and his desperate yearning to return to Indianapolis to the home of Beth and Thomas Wright, the family who had adopted him as one of their own. [A compelling story,” judges wrote.

“Written in a way that keeps the suspense so that the reader continues to the end to see how the story turns out.”

Shaughnessy also received first place recognition for “Best Reporting on a Special-Age Group—Young adults ages 18-40” category for his series, “Finding a Home, Living the Faith.”

The stories included: “Acts of kindliness lead young couple to love and a mission to bring college students to God”;

“Young fighter’s trust in God continues to be inflamed, even in life-threatening moments”;

“The story turns

and love”;

She made to the girls she coached.

Coaches who have never coached before learn from

the best,” she said. “It’s all about your

I learned from the best,” said Maio-Burford, whose

the kickball diamond again, leading a tournament for

Antoinette Maio-Burford poses for a team photo with the fifth-and-sixth grade kickball players she coaches at St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Parish in Indianapolis. (Photo by)

44 teams in the archdiocese’s Catholic Youth Organization (CVO), all with the ultimate goal of helping to save lives.

In its third year, the “One Faith, One Family, One Sock” tournament on Aug. 8-12 was organized to raise funds to buy smoke detectors for families in low-income areas in Indianapolis. Enough money was raised to buy 25 smoke detectors.

“We can save one, we’ll be successful.” Maio-Burford said about the tournament that took place at Holy Spirit and St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) parishes in Indianapolis. “The whole goal of our Catholic faith is to make sure that everybody is one, regardless of who you are, where you live, what you do. We want everybody to be healthy, safe and to love life.”

There’s no doubt that Maio-Burford loves kickball and the opportunity that the sport—and especially the tournament—offers to build confidence and camaraderie among the coaches and the girls from different teams who play.

“Coaches who have never coached before learn from those who have been coaching a long time,” she said about the tournament’s approach. “And it’s fun to watch the kids make new friends. As an example, there was a player from St. Barnabas [Parish in Indianapolis] who invited all the Little Flower girls to come down and watch a movie with all the St. Barnabas players. So, friendships are made along the way.”

Maio-Burford was instrumental in starting the tournament three years ago with Tracy Miller, coordinator of the kickball program at St. Barnabas Parish, and Ellie Leffler, the former kickball coordinator of Nativiry of Our Lord Jesus Christ Parish in Indianapolis.

The name of the tournament—“One Faith, One Family, One Sock”—came naturally.

“We’re professing our faith,” Maio-Burford said. “CVO is all about family. And you wear one sock for kickball. That’s like kicking foot, your strong foot. It’s all kind of fit together.”

In the tournament’s first year, players, coaches, parents and fans made donations to benefit Holy Family Shelter in Indianapolis. In its second year, the money raised helped teams from low-income parishes—including the donation of one player who brought her piggy bank and emptied it for the fundraiser. This year, donations were placed in the boot of an Indianapolis Fire Department firefighter.

The idea was to fill the boot,” said Maio-Burford, whose husband Steven Burford is an Indianapolis firefighter.

As for Maio-Burford, her passion for kickball still burns intensely even after coaching it since she was 16—39 years ago.

“Kickball is a rite of passage if you’re a girl who goes to a Catholic school,” she said. “The girls love it. And it’s a pressure for me. I love watching the girls grow, watching them love the sport.”

She believes her daughter, who also coached, is watching her at every practice and during every game.

“I learned from the best,” she said. “It’s all about your faith, family, the kids.”
As they honored Franciscan Sister Shirley Gerth as she retired from 32 years of ministry as a parish life coordinator (PLC) in the archdiocese.

The last 13 of those were spent in Napoleon. But when she was first appointed a PLC in 1991, Sister Shirley was only in her late 20s. “I felt very comfortable the very first time I went to a parish,” Sister Shirley said. “Of course, in that community in that time, most of them taught.”

“A born leader”

Sister Shirley, 79, grew up as a member of St. Mary Parish in North Vernon. Being educated in the parish’s school by Franciscan sisters from Oldenburg, she felt drawn to their vocation.

She entered its novitiate in 1962 and expected to spend much of her life serving in Catholic schools. “I never thought about what work I would do. I just knew I wanted to be a sister,” Sister Shirley said. “Of course, in that community in that time, most of them taught.”

And, for 12 years, that is what she did, serving among other things, at St. Louis School in Batesville and the former St. Rita School in Indianapolis.

Beginning in the early 1970s, when Sister Shirley was still only in her late 20s, she began to feel a call to parish ministry. “I felt that, if God was calling me to this, God would find a place for me,” she said.

That place ended up being her parish home in North Vernon, where she served as parish associate for a decade from 1974-84 before moving on to St. Mary Parish in Greensburg for three years.

In Greensburg and at Enochsburg, she collaborated with Father John Geis, respectively the pastor and administrator of those faith communities.

In 1991, Father Geis was appointed archdiocesan vicar for clergy. That same year Sister Shirley became a pioneer PLC in the archdiocese.

Although she was keenly aware of the responsibility she had taken on, Sister Shirley appreciated the wide range of ministry open to her in leading parishes. “One of the joys of me of being a parish life coordinator was that I was involved with all age groups, from babies all the way to the elderly,” Sister Shirley said.

Father Geis was certain she could lead a parish well. “She didn’t just wield power in making decisions because she had the power to do that,” said Father Geis, now retired. “She really was truly involved with people and knew what people were. She made decisions from that point of view.”

He also knew that Sister Shirley was able to face crises and make difficult decisions in the life of a parish. “She could do that,” Father Geis said. “But she took it to prayer and then did what she felt was the right thing to do.”

Sister Shirley was able to find the right answer to the many challenges she faced from the fire.

“Just months after Sister Shirley joyfully witnessed the dedication of the new St. Anne Church, she left New Castle when then-Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein appointed her as PLC of St. Maurice Parish in Napoleon.”

Sister Shirley reflected on how during times of transition, she always asked God to prepare the place where she was going to take up a new ministry.

Those prayers seem to have been answered when she arrived in Napoleon. “They were and are a welcoming community,” Sister Shirley said. “I felt very comfortable the very first time I was here.”

She hoped, after dealing with the crisis of a church burning and the complexities of building a new church, that ministry in Napoleon might be a little more relaxed. “I felt a heaviness, because I knew that I was the one that was responsible now. I knew that I was a pioneer in this position.”

“Realizing that I should be asking God to prepare heaven for me, too.”

A prayerful leader

A leader ‘filled with the Holy Spirit’

Sister Shirley’s decades of parish ministry were put to the test that she could never have imagined on the morning of April 7, 2007.

She had been serving as PLC of St. Anne Parish in New Castle and the former St. Rose of Lima Parish in Knightstown since 1995.

On that Holy Saturday morning, just hours before the parish’s celebration of the Easter Vigil, Sister Shirley discovered that a church on fire.

The fire, later found to have been started by an arsonist, gutted the church.

“Sister Shirley leaned hard on her dedication to prayer and to the people of St. Anne as she led them through this tragedy,” the Archdiocesan Pilot reported.

“She learned to take it a day at a time,” she said as she recalled those difficult days. “I felt such a part of the people. I cried with them. Together, we tried to speak words of comfort and encouragement.”

As the parishioners learned that the destruction of their beloved church was not an accident but an act of arson by New Castle’sCONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Basler noted that Sister Shirley’s ability to handle the many complexities of building a new $4.4 million church wouldn’t have been effective had she also not been able to bring the parish community to support the project.

“She was able to get the people all on the same page, all heading in the same direction at the same time,” Basler said.

“A small parish like we are, and considering the age of the parishioners, she raised more money than I thought was possible. After we built the church, we had enough money to go ahead and re-do the school building as a parish center—with no debt on top of it.”

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As the parishioners learned that the destruction of their beloved church was not an accident but an act of arson by New Castle’s arsonist, Sister Shirley faced the challenge of leading her parishioners to forgive him.

She only became fully aware of the enormity of this task as she sat in a Henry County courtroom with Abbot William Abbavon during a court hearing related to the arson fire.

“I remember both of us looking at each other,” Sister Shirley said. “I realized that I should be asking God to prepare heaven for me, too.”

Franciscan Sister Shirley Gerth carries a candle that would be used as the sanctuary candle in the newly dedicated St. Anne Church during its Feb. 28, 2010, dedication Mass. (Criterion file photo)
Evangelizing catechesis: Inviting people to a disciple relationship with Jesus in the Church

By Ken Ogorek

First it was consubstantial. Then came missionary disciples. Now the Church wants us to become familiar with another phrase: “evangelizing catechesis.”

Official definitions, practical examples

A semi-official definition of this phrase, as it’s currently used, can be found via the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops webpage:

“At the heart of the Church’s mission to all people, an evangelizing catechesis seeks to deepen a personal encounter with Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. It proclaims the core message of the Gospel, the person of Jesus. It accompanies people to a response of faith and conversion to Christ; it provides a systematic exposition of God’s revelation within the communion of the Catholic Church; and it sends out missionary disciples as witnesses to the good news of salvation.”

I like to use an example when explaining it: Jesus taught. And when he teaches, he often includes an invitation. “Follow me.” “Be my disciple.”

Evangelizing catechesis, then, teaches the faith in ways that intentionally include invitations to a personal, discipleship relationship with Jesus—lived in full communion with his mystical body and spotless bride, the holy Catholic Church.

Lifelong learning, new vocabulary

I’ve heard folks say they prefer the phrases “religious education” or “faith formation” to the word “catechesis.” And while it’s generally good to avoid jargon that can be at least a bit off-putting, it’s also OK to use (or revive) a new word or phrase occasionally.

We’re lifelong learners. And if a phrase catches our attention because it’s a bit unfamiliar, this can be an invitation to explore the meaning and intention behind this specific vocabulary.

What exactly is a missionary disciple? Why is it important to profess that Jesus is of the same substance—consubstantial—as our heavenly Father?

How we support parish ministry

As for evangelizing catechesis, one place you might notice this phrase in is in connection to how our archdiocesan offices support ministry in parishes. I often say, “The reason people like me really being involved and much not a whole lot on Monday to Wednesday and the reverence the children showed during the closing Mass. …Their participation went from not a whole lot on Monday to really being involved and much more reverent by Friday,” says Rust, the catechetical leader of St. Paul Parish in Tell City.

“I was a joy to watch those kindergartners to sixth graders really come to appreciate the Mass more.”

Another joy for Rust was knowing that there were 80 children and teens who participated this year’s program, a record number that reflects the increased cooperation among the 10 faith communities in the Tell City Deanery to combine their resources to help grow and deepen the faith of their youths.

“We provide a free meal to every student and adult who comes in for the program. And we couldn’t do that without the support of the community.”

Lifelong learning, new vocabulary

“Something that we do for Totus Tuus and something that is supported across the deanery is that for the program. And we couldn’t do that without the support of the community.”

Not only are we doing this with great numbers, but we also have such tremendous support from all of the parishes. When we’re able to pool those resources from all of the different parishes, the kids win.”

That deanery-wide support is also complemented by the contributions of the Tell City Knights of Columbus Council #1172. Rust also says that individual Catholics in the

Catechetical leader points people to Christ and the Church through storytelling

By Sean Gallagher

The Christian faith that began 2,000 years ago in Palestine and has spread to the ends of the Earth is rooted in a story—the story of God’s love for humanity told in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Sandra Hartlieb has been convinced for some 50 years that the Holy Spirit has empowered her to draw others to Christ and his Church by sharing that story. Beginning in the early 1970s as a young wife and mother in Indianapolis, she began working with other people to dramatically act out Bible stories—a ministry she continues today.

For the last 10 of those years, Hartlieb served as the director of adult faith formation at St. Lawrence Parish in Indianapolis, incorporating her interest in Scripture and drama into her ministry there.

Hartlieb was recently honored with the archdiocese’s 2023 Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein Excellence in Catechesis Award for her years of catechetical ministry at St. Lawrence Parish in Indianapolis.

Ken Ogorek, executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Evangelizing Catechesis, presented her with the award on June 24 at St. Lawrence Church. The Mass preceded a party celebrating her retirement—but the award was a surprise.

“Sandra has been very generous with her time and talent over the years,” Ogorek said. “Her knack for creatively portraying key figures in our faith—for example, the Blessed Virgin Mary—engages the imagination in ways that help deepen faith and devotion. Sandra has been and remains a blessing to many folks.”

Hartlieb described the moment when she realized that Ogorek was at the Mass to give her the award.

“I just wanted to shrink in my seat because I didn’t need to get awards,” she recalled. “I feel so blessed and called by the Holy Spirit to spread the Gospel. I choose to do that through storytelling and teaching. That has blessed my life for a very long time.”

As director of adult faith formation at St. Lawrence, Hartlieb oversaw the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) and Bible studies. She also helped address faith with developmental disabilities grow in their love for Christ and the Church.

She said that guiding adults into the full communion of the Church through RCIA provided her with many “memorial moments in my spiritual journey.”

Hartlieb recalled working with a Muslim man who had married a Catholic woman and who initially participated in RCIA simply to learn more about the faith of his wife.

Later, though, he fully embraced the Gospel and was received into the Church.

“The told me that, as a Muslim, he was a slave of St. Paul Parish in Tell City.

The children who participated in the Totus Tuus summer program in the Tell City Deanery line up for a group photo on the last day of the program, which included the fun of a water balloon fight and a slip-and-slide. (Submitted photo)

Evangelizing catechesis: From water fights to rosary lessons, children and teens grow in faith through cooperation of parishes

By John Shaughnessy

A childlike joy fills 34-year-old Megan Rust as she describes a fun-filled scene from earlier this summer. When a water truck from a local fire station approached the hill by St. Mark Church in Perry County in southern Indiana, a group of children waiting for the water turned giddily heading down the hill with huge smiles.

The fun was just beginning. A water balloon fight followed, with Rust joining in, getting blasted by time and time again by the children, leaving her soaked and smiling. Rust had a similar smile earlier on that late June morning as she watched the same children enter into the church for the closing Mass of the Tell City Deanery’s Totus Tuus program.

Latin for “Totally Yours,” Totus Tuus is a weeklong summer program designed to bring children and teenagers closer to Jesus, the Blessed Mother and the Church. And Rust saw that development by the reverence the children showed during the closing Mass.

“They participated in a way—much more reverent by Friday,” says Rust, the catechetical leader of St. Paul Parish in Tell City.

It was a joy to watch those kindergartners to sixth graders really come to appreciate the Mass more.”

Another joy for Rust was knowing that there were 80 children and teens who participated in this year’s program, a record number that reflects the increased cooperation among the 10 faith communities in the Tell City Deanery to combine their resources to help grow and deepen the faith of their youths.

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Not only are we doing this with great numbers, but we also have such tremendous support from all of the parishes. When we’re able to pool those resources from all of the different parishes, the kids win.”

That deanery-wide support is also complemented by the contributions of the Tell City Knights of Columbus Council #1172. Rust also says that individual Catholics in the archdiocese’s 2023 Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein Page 9

Catechesis Supplement
parishes, with different experiences and backgrounds. In different catechists in this workshop gave us a widely diverse,” Navarette said. “The fact of having such own knowledge and ability to share sacred truths as ministry, helped lead the workshop attended by more are given.

pray and how to retain the knowledge of the faith they other. This new initiative can strengthen the ties within the diverse New Albany Diocese faith community and give encouragement to people who are just beginning to pass on the faith to others in parish programs. "Every opportunity to have talks from different ethnic and language backgrounds together for a common cause is a small but important step to continued integration and mutual enrichment," Remondini said. "Perhaps the special thing about the workshop is it also acknowledges our common needs to grow, our common dreams about taking up the role of lay apostolate. "When our new catechists are nervous and see the same in the others, there is a chance to build not only cooperation but mutual support." Jessica Sarver, pastoral associate at St. Francis de Sales Parish in Jeffersonville, said Michael Parrish in Charlestown, attended the workshop with 10 catechists from St. Michael. “We are always seeking to develop in our ministry, and this was a perfect opportunity for our Spanish and Anglo communities to come together for a common training,” Sarver said. “The training was very helpful, as it gave us some practical suggestions, some of which I was able to put into practice at a recent meeting at my parish. I have two new young adult volunteers that will be helping with youth ministry this year. They were both able to attend the training with us.” She also appreciated how people from diverse ethnic backgrounds came together at the workshop to learn more about the faith that they all share and seek to pass on to others. “This is extremely important, especially for the parish communities that serve both a Spanish-speaking community and an Anglo community,” Sarver said. “We do a pretty good job of bringing our Anglo and Spanish communities together in children’s and youth ministry, but not so much in adult ministry. “We are working hard to collaborate more at St. Michael. Bringing Anglo and Spanish catechists together for one training really helps. †

"They’re always open to hear what we say," Farrell says. "They listen well; they respond when we ask questions; they participate in discussions. They’re just enthusiastic participants. “That fact led to activism each year, like their prayer and worship sing-along with Benedictine Sister Cathy Anne Lapat, to new activities as well. "This year we added adoration," says Bryan. “Because it was the first time we really saw how it would be. They were so very grateful. We said the rosary on the last day of the program." Father Todd Reihe says he’s seen that same enthusiasm and reverence at the closing Mass he has celebrated at the last four retreats. “The participants could learn about participation from them—I ask a question during the homily, and every hand goes up,” says Father Reihe, who retired last year and now lives in Terre Haute. “The participants who proclaim readings and serve at the Mass—help with such dignity, he adds. “Every volunteer gets to see it in the context and really do it. "And they have so much love and concern for each other. I love the people of斑斓 disabilities, and it could go on for half hour if I let them, with their needs and concern for each other. "Father Reihe calls the SPREAD retreat "a great catalytic moment"—even the Mass, just to open the Scripture in the most fundamental way, even more than at parishes, to help them understand it and celebrate it. “Their sense of faith and belief is absolutely strengthened at the retreat! "So much love and support!" "The retreat offers something else important for the participants—” Farrell says. “Children learn how to study the Scripture in the most fundamental way, even more than at parishes, to help them understand it and celebrate it. "Their sense of faith and belief is absolutely strengthened at the retreat! "So much love and support!" "The retreat offers something else important for the participants—” Farrell says. “Children learn how to study the Scripture in the most fundamental way, even more than at parishes, to help them understand it and celebrate it. "Their sense of faith and belief is absolutely strengthened at the retreat! "So much love and support!" “The retreat is so important because that sense of belonging to the Church is strengthened,” says Father Reihe. Farrell agrees. “People with disabilities are important members of our society,” she says. “They deserve to have their faith cherished just like the rest of us. Coming together in a large group helps them feel like they’re part of something bigger.” Farrell notes that some participants say they’ve been on the retreat for eight or nine years. Each year, the catechetical message is shared in numerous ways: group discussions, crafts, games, interactive activities, prayer, worship and the sacrament of reconciliation is always celebrated, and each retreat culminates with Mass. Whatever the activity, the participants are all in.
Archabbey in St. Meinrad that Benedictine Father Luke extends to the confirmation retreat at Saint Meinrad watch.”

learned to pray the rosary, and they were proud of that what we provide. By the end of the week, they had

years.

They've seen an uptick in our younger programs. I would say the same is true the past couple of

A dramatic impact

The impact of all that cooperation for the Totus Tuus program has been noticeable.

“I've seen more kids in Mass since we've done Totus Tuus,” Rust says. “I've seen an upturn in our younger families. I would say the same is true the past couple of years. That's neat to see because we don't have a Catholic school here. Religious ed, Totus Tuus and Mass on Sunday are as much as they get. That's what we provide. By the end of the week, they had learned to pray the rosary, and they were proud of that accomplishment. That was something really neat to watch.

The cooperation of the parishes in the deanery also extends to the confirmation retreat at Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad that Benedictine Father Luke Waugh leads each year.

The program helps extend the young people's faith,” Father Luke says. “They get to know their brothers and sisters in Christ that are of the same faith,” Father Luke says. “They get to know their brothers and sisters in Christ that are of the same faith. We have a good mix of students from different school systems, so it's nice to see them interacting. It's nice to see their faith grow. The participants from my parishes have always enjoyed it and look forward to returning.”

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“It's designed to foster a dialogue between the confirmand and their sponsor,” says Father Luke, who serves in Holy Cross Parish in St. Croix, St. Augustine Parish in Leopold and St. Isidore the Farmer Parish in Perry County. “That seems to be well-received.

“In early January, we usually have an Epiphany tour where we get the kids of the deanery together, and we go tour different parishes to see how they decorate for Christmas and then have a little party afterward.”

There was also a deanery-wide pool party for youths on July 28. These efforts are geared to overcoming one of the biggest challenges a parish priest has, Father Luke says—“getting our young people to participate in things.”

“We get a lot more participation when we get all our kids together,” he says. “We try to look for a whole lot of avenues to do this. As priests, we try to support all of our lay catechists and lay leaders with this.”

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Parents’ search leads to a way of hope to honor their son

By John Shaughnessy

Robin and Jeff Kontor believe that for most of us, our lives are marked by searching—searching to find our place in life, searching for how we can best contribute to the world, and even searching to understand the toughest times in our lives and how to keep moving forward in hope.

The Kontors have been on such a search ever since their 28-year-old son Jordan died in February of 2022 from a seizure related to his lifelong struggle with epilepsy. As they tried to deal with their heartbreak, they kept remembering how Jordan tried to live his life. They focused on his smile, his willingness to help others, and his ability to make people see their worth. They also constantly recalled his work ethic, and how he started his own landscaping service while at Bishop Chatard High School in Indianapolis, continued it through college and made it his business as an adult.

As they thought of those qualities, they began searching for a way to honor their son. And when they found one, they shared it in a statement they wrote together.

“Our lives were forever changed when we lost our son,” noted the Kontors, members of Our Lady of Grace Parish in Noblesville, Ind., in the Lafayette Diocese. “From the pain of losing Jordan came a vision to help others find their purpose. We want to make it his business as an adult.

“None of what hand you are dealt and with each struggle, you learn a lesson that forces you forward, to the 20s is a critical time. There are challenges and constant recalled his work ethic, and how he started his own landscaping service while at Bishop Chatard High School in Indianapolis, continued it through college and made it his business as an adult.

As a longtime former teacher at Bishop Chatard High School, Robin Kontor knows the challenges that young people—especially those with learning disabilities—face while making the transition from youth to adulthood. She also believes that Jordan—who had severe dyslexia—would smile about his family’s tribute to him.

“As much as our hearts are broken to lose Jolo, we know he would love this idea,” his mother says. “He would be so proud that kids who are on the same path as him are getting acknowledged for their gifts and talents.

“Jordan—who had severe dyslexia—would smile about his family’s tribute to him.

For more information about JoJo’s Jumpstart Foundation, visit the website, www.jojosjumpstart.org.

The Kontor family members are all smiles in a past moment of celebration. In the front row are Jeff, Robin and Frankie Kontor. In the back row, Jordan stands next to his other sister, Courtney Robinson. (Submitted photo)
But every project has a price, and Popp was worried about where to find funding. Enter the Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH), a Catholic Irish organization. “This is an Irish cemetery, and the Hibernians are based on faith, unity and Christian charity,” said Frank McPhillips, a member of St. John the Baptist Parish in Starlight. “Within five weeks, we had the funding approved.”

The organization’s focus on faith, family, community and life, the request “was obviously right in our wheelhouse,” said Mike Carter, a past Grand Knight of the city’s Knights of Columbus (K of C) Cardinal Ritter #1221 Council. “We were more than happy to help give these babies a proper burial.”

Kits to make the boxes were sent to K of C member Ron Webber, whose woodshop became assembly-central. “As soon as we put the word out to the Knights, 11 people came people out of the woodwork—all different ages and backgrounds—“and wanted to be involved,” he said.

In less than a week, the men had cut the wood and assembled the small boxes. “It was good fellowship for us, just to know what we were a part of,” said Webber.

All told, the Knights built about 250 boxes, enough for the 109 babies buried in July—more than double the previous high count—and for several burial services to come.

“A sign of our trust in his providence”

It was hot and humid as Popp and others placed the 109 little boxes around the Pieta statue in Holy Trinity Cemetery’s outdoor pavilion on July 14. But the afternoon heat did not prevent nearly 50 people from coming to the service—by far the highest attendance since they began, said Popp.

Among them were members of the New Albany Knights of Columbus and representatives of the AOH in Louisville. Several of those present were staff members from Baptist Health Floyd, including Kelly Owles, clinical coordinator for the hospital’s Women’s and Children’s Services.

“I’m Catholic,” said Owles, a member of the Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in New Albany. “So, it was important for me to see that these babies were laid to rest and not just considered products of conception.”

Right to Life of Southern Indiana (RTLSI) president Doris Corby and members of the organization’s board also attended the service.

“We wanted to come to honor these babies, these lives,” said the member of St. John Lutheran Church in Lanesville. “They didn’t have long on this Earth, but they lived on this Earth, and they need to be honored.”

Denny Voelker, an RTLSI board member and parishioner of St. Mary Parish in Lanesville, agreed.

“The service and burial give more integrity to the fact that each baby was a life,” he said. “And all life has purpose.”

The service was led by Conventual Franciscan Father Mark Weaver, pastor of St. Mary Parish in New Albany. It included Scripture, a hymn and a reading of the poem that brought tears to the eyes of Garrison and others.

Before sprinkling the small caskets, Father Mark blessed the water, “asking that the Lord use it, that it be a sign of the baptism that we have received and our trust in the Lord. And also a sign of our trust in his providence over our lives. We entrust these little ones to his providence.”

“Our faith creates this space, it can just give so much comfort. After the service, many of those present silently and solemnly carried the boxes from the pavilion to the gravestones.”

“Caring for these families and babies can just be emotionally and physically draining in the sense that we, too, feel the loss and the sadness of these families,” said Marshall.

“Time moves forward, we never forget them, and we never forget their stories. There were many instances flashing through my mind during the ceremony. It’s always a sweet remembrance of that bond that we build with these families that have come into our lives through unfortunate circumstances.”

Garrison was as visibly moved after the service as she was during it.

“Grief is tough,” she said with a heavy sigh. “So, it’s nice to have someplace where you can come back and visit and basically work through those stages.”

Her words ring true not just for hospital staff, but for family members of the miscarried babies, too.

“I send people home, and they’re not at their best,” said Garrison. “They’re working through those processes. When you lose a baby in miscarriage, you may not be able to make certain decisions.”

“But when the community steps in and creates this space, it can just give so much comfort.”

A sign of our trust in his providence has meant more than just giving a proper burial.

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Members of the New Albany Knights of Columbus #1221 Council assemble small wooden caskets at the woodshop of Knights member Ron Webber. The Knights assembled about 250 of the boxes, 109 of which were used during a burial service for miscarried babies at Holy Trinity Cemetery in New Albany on July 14. (Submitted photo)
by St. John XXIII, he took part in all four sessions of the
Crumbs from the Catechism, a committee and, from 1972-75, as vice president.
In 1971, St. Paul VI selected him to take part in the
Second Vatican Council. He also was an active member
of Divorce in Italy.

When Bishop Luciani became patriarch in 1969,
he served as chancellor and then vicar general of the
diocese. In 1947, he earned a doctorate in theology from
the Gregorian University in Rome.

Born on Oct. 17, 1912, in Forno di Canale (now, Canale d’Agordo), a village in northern Italy near
Belluno, Albino Luciani was the eldest of four children
in a family of modest means. His father was a bricklayer
who often traveled to Switzerland to find work. When
his son announced that he wanted to enter the seminary,
the elder Luciani is said to have replied, “I hope that
he will be elected pope, Patriarch Luciani said, “You don’t
make goocchi out of this dough.” (Gnocchi are Italian
dumplings.)

In 1971, St. Paul VI selected him to take part in the
meeting of the world Synod of Bishops held in October
of that year. There, he delivered an intervention in
which he proposed that wealthy countries give 1% of
their annual incomes to poor ones—“not as alms but as
something that is owed” in light of their exploitation
by the rich. In 1973, St. Paul VI elevated him to the College
of Cardinals.

During his pre-papal years, Cardinal Luciani addressed
many religious and social issues.

He sold a gold cross given him by St. John XXIII,
used the money to help children with disabilities, and
encouraged his priests to do likewise. He also established
family counseling clinics to help poor people deal
with marital and financial problems.

He opposed the idea of worker priests (priests who
would hold factory jobs alongside the workers they
served in the Gospels, “more so than the Apostles
themselves.” But he added: “Through the will
of Christ, women—in my
judgment—carry out a
different, complementary
and precious service of the Church, but they
are not ‘possible priests’… That does not do wrong to
women.

About religious freedom as Vatican II had endorsed it,
said: “The choice of religious belief must be free.
The freer and more earnest the choice, the more those
who embrace the faith will feel honored. These are rights,
natural rights. Rights always come hand in hand with
duties. The non-Catholics have the right to profess their
religion, and I have the duty to respect their right as a
private citizen, as a priest, as a bishop and as a state.”

He also wrote a series of popular essays relating faith
to life, which were published in a monthly magazine.
They were cast in the form of letters to famous people,
both fictional and real-life, among them Pinocchio,
Figure, St. Teresa of Avila, Charles Dickens, Mark
Twain, the German poet Goethe, King David and Jesus.
The pieces were collected in 1976 in a book called
“Illustrissimi” that appeared in an English translation
after the author’s election as pope.

On becoming pope, John Paul I laid out a six-point
program for his pontificate: renew the Church by
implementing the Second Vatican Council; complete the
revision of the Code of Canon Law; remind Catholics of
their duty to preach the Gospel; promote religious unity
without compromising doctrine; foster dialogue; and seek
world peace and social justice.

It was a good plan, but he did not live to see it carried out.
He experienced severe pain several times during the
day on Sept. 28, but refused to see a doctor. Around
5:30 a.m. the following morning, one of the papal
apartment’s nun-housekeepers found him dead: in bed,
nightstand light on, with reading material still in his
hand. Death, it appears, was the result of a pulmonary
embolism.

The people around him muffed the announcement
by giving contradictory accounts with the apparent aim
of defaming. Wild rumors flew: Pope John Paul was
killed by the KGB, the CIA, the mafia, officials of
the Roman curia afraid of losing their jobs, the
Fremasons, and Pope Francis beatified him on Sept. 4, 2022. (CNS file photo)
**Twenty Something/Christina Capecchi**

How to travel lightly: embracing the great de-clutter

My next-door neighbors have been packing up to move for the last month. The empty nesters are downsizing, and I’ve watched their weeklong purge with a mix of horror and admiration.

High-school letter jacket? Give. Handmade desk? Give. Bar stools sewn by Grandma? Give. Everything else that had everything to go. There was no longer space or, it turns out, need. They’ve raised their kids, retired from their careers. So they handpicked recipients for special items that no longer serve them and donated the rest.

Yesterday, when the moving truck pulled up, their garage became the graveyard for the final bits: a vintage carved clock, potting soil and a box labeled “rags.”

That’s what it had come down to: the rags. I could see a lightness in the wife’s face. Sure, the past month had been grueling—endless sorting, boxing, lifting, lugging. But she had eliminated all that mess in her life and, with it, a tremendous psychological weight.

She’s ready for the next chapter, and she can put in the work so she can travel lightly. I want to do the same. I just don’t know if I’m ready.

For guidance, I’ve been reading Laraine Bennett, the Catholic author best known for her writing on temenos. Bennett’s latest book explores the spiritual upending of our consumerist culture. It draws inspiration from St. Therese of Lisieux, who wrote, “Happiness has nothing to do with the material things that surround us; it dwells in the very depths of the soul.”

“I’m finding as I write The Way of Living with Less: Learning to Let Go with the Little Flower that many women are looking at their possessions, they are finding, ‘I don’t need this. I could get by without that.’”

The book aligns with Bennett’s account of selling almost everything to move to Germany with her husband and two young children. They settled in an old house with a tiny kitchen and miniature stove. Their American-size box spring wouldn’t fit through the stairs, so they made do with a mattress on the floor and fleas from the barn animals next door.

“Ultimately, we need very little. But the line between want and need has never been blurrer in the age of Amazon. We buy for so many reasons because we can, because it becomes a momentary thrill or distraction, because it was recommended by someone on social media. It can be difficult to examine our motives, especially when the period from acquisition to sentiment has become so short and, at times, so significant. We can’t be too critical or too simple in this question, my guess is that the largest percentage of those donors would be those weekly attenders and media readers.”

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-Bernard of Clairvaux

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**Christian Capecchi is a freelance writer from Inver Grove Heights, Minn. †**

**Eucharistic adoration: Do ing is good; being is even better**

I am not totally sure how my parents felt when I told them I’d signed up for the 3 a.m. hour of prayer on my 16th birthday. I was 16 years old. My parish had invited me to sign up for this hour with Jesus, and I certainly didn’t want to sign up for an hour. There was only one small detail I forgot to consider: I didn’t have a driver’s license yet.

But I remember my parents were excited, thinking of me to church without any sense of tension, and to this day I have no idea what he was thinking as he watched from the back pew as I silently knelt before the altar of repose.

Admittedly, I was a rather pious child, and at age 24 I still have a hard time doing things. Anything I could do to be a better Catholic, I wanted to do. If that meant kneeling before the Eucharist in the early hours of the morning during the Easter triduum, I was game.

Little did I realize, though, that as I kept Jesus company on that get-up-and-go, dark night, he was not only planting the seeds of my vocation, but helping me discover a great secret: the truth of what I was told. I am simply good, who I am in him was even better—a truth he longed to share with me.

Years later, I would find myself in the thick of a crisis. As a young Franciscan sister, I had sustained a serious head injury, the trauma of which so affected me I was left doing nothing. I lay in bed all day, and my only recourse was our daily Mass and holy hour, for which I somehow mustered the strength to be present.

I was very sick, and it was very hard. But in the Gift of the Eucharist I found the peace and isolation there was finally the space for Jesus to allow those seeds planted so long ago to begin to bear fruit. Finally, in prayer before the Eucharist and in the solitude of my room, I realized that I was never alone—not because our faithful German Shepherd, Liberty, kept constant watch over me, but because all around me and within me was the secret, silent presence of Jesus.

So many years before, I had had a desire to watch one hour with him, now I began to see how your church’s Eucharist and Jesus had been delighting in watching every moment of every hour with me.

As I prayed before my head injury, finished school, graduated final vows in 2015 and continue to live and serve among the very poor on Chicago’s West side with my community, I even ran a marathon in 2018 to help raise funds for our apostolate.

I have never lost the profound sense of gratitude for that gift that came of recognizing that Jesus is ever present to me. Thishoff was renewed every day at every Mass, where Jesus’ passion, death, resurrection and ascension are reenacted for me: this is his daily giving of himself, completely. This gift of presence is also deeply emotional for me: For every hour of every holy hour I have the privilege to attend.

Because I have grown to see Jesus present in the Eucharist, I have become able to see him in my brothers and sisters—especially those most broken and lost one among us. I am truly able to long to be present to him. I am sure I would be lost without him, and yet with him, not only not am I alone, but I am truly home, and on my way home. I can’t even imagine what it will be like to enter the kingdom one day and not be allowed to be there. I mean it means to watch, to present, to be united with Jesus not just for an hour, a day or a lifetime but for all of eternity.

(Staff Writer of the Chicago State Stacia Torres is a National Eucharistic Revival executive team member and managing editor for the thrust of the third (her)
The Sunday Readings
Sunday, September 10, 2023

Ezekiel 33:7-9
Romans 13:8-10
Matthew 18:15-20

For the last reading, the Church this weekend offers a passage from the Gospel of St. Matthew. Jesus told the disciples to administered grace among them whom somehow is at fault.

The Lord gives a progression of steps. First, a Christian should call a wayward brother or sister to task. This step failing, the Christian should seek the aid of others in calling the wayward to correct his or her ways. Finally, this step also failing, the disciple should go to the Church. If the wayward individual will not reform, the Church should dismiss that person.

The reading reminds us of the teachings of the Church regarding how to teach the Gospels. We should remember that the Gospels were not written at the time of Jesus, but rather years later. By the time Matthew was written, the Church that Christ had founded had begun to develop more fully along the direction given by the Holy Spirit through the Apostles.

Being a follower of Jesus is a serious matter. Ezekiel represents Christ, has the right to judge a member’s behavior, even a member’s sincerity. Christ is in the assembly of disciples. The Church is not simply a convenient, occasional gathering of people of like minds or good intentions.

Reflection
For weeks, we have heard advice about being good disciples. We hear that again this weekend.

Ezekiel gives us a clear message. All humans are inclined to sin. Bad results follow when we forget God. Searching for excuses, we blame others or some unwelcomed coincidence. We say that we are helpless in the face of temptation or did not understand the seriousness of our sin.

But we are responsible for what we do. We are weak. We are myopic. We are afraid. Even so, if we ask, God will strengthen us. God speaks and acts through the Church. So, the Church acts with God’s authority. It’s a prayer that is meant to be said by those who want to be receiving Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, but who are not able, in that moment, to receive Communion in the same physical way that most of the assembled congregation would be.

A prayer of spiritual communion is not meant as a formal theological statement on God’s omnipresence in general. God is indeed present always and everywhere, and he loves us unconditionally no matter where we are. It’s not as though God is somewhere absent from us unless (or until) we pray a certain prayer.

Yet, at the same time, as Catholics we believe in the doctrine of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, meaning that the prayers of consecration at Mass, through the power of the Holy Spirit, literally transforms the offered bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus. Because the bread and wine become Jesus’s body and blood, we believe that during the Eucharist he becomes present to us in a uniquely intense and spiritual way. For the individual level, his presence to us is especially intimate when we personally receive him in holy Communion.

Acts of spiritual communion are meant as a way for those who cannot receive Communion at a particular point to try “to bridge the gap” between their current circumstances and their desire to receive Jesus sacramentally. You could look at spiritual communion as a way of making ourselves especially open to God’s constant presence.

Can priests be wrong? (Wisconsin)

Taking your question at simple face value, yes, of course priests can be wrong. Priests are mere human beings, not all-knowing demigods or supercomputer running perfect algorithms. And no priest is going to be an expert in all areas of knowledge. Like the rest of us, priests can and will make wrong about at least some things some of the time.

But priests receive quite an extensive training in graduate-level theology, so—in general—when a priest explains Church teaching, he is speaking as a qualified professional in his field. Many priests have roles of authority (like, for example, pastor of a parish) which empower them to make practical decisions. So even if we, for example, believe that our priest is wrong in his pastoral decision-making in a given instance, it may nevertheless be a choice the priest is legitimately able to make.

We Catholics also have a concept of papal infallibility, which means that the pope, when speaking ex cathedra and in certain very specific circumstances, namely when he proclaims by a definitive act some doctrine of faith or morals. (“Lumen Gentium,” #25). That is, the Holy Father is infallible when he specifically and deliberately raises some aspect of established Catholic teaching on faith or morals to the level of infallibility.

This occurred. The last time it happened was in 1950 with the proclamation of the dogma of the Assumption of Mary body and soul into the heaven. There is no belief that the pope would be infallible in areas unrelated to faith or morals. (Jenna Marie Cooper, who holds a licentiate in canon law, is a consecrated virgin and a canonist whose column appears weekly at CNS. Send your questions to Catholic@CNSnews.com."

On the Day You Were Born
By Natalie Hoefer

In your mother’s arms you stretched and yawned, Swaddled in a woven cloth of blue. In your mother’s arms you stretched and yawned, Swaddled in a woven cloth of blue.

As they adored you peacefully sleeping, Your little form in memory keeping.

That you were already spiritually into my heart and “I love you as if you were already there” don’t reflect good theology. Don’t we believe that the Bible and our faith assure us of God’s constant presence and unconditional love? Please address this question since it is used by many parishes each weekend. (Location withheld)

Prayer of spiritual communion related to Christ’s presence in the Eucharist

Questions Corner/Jenna Marie Cooper

The Exaltation of the Holy Cross
Numbers 21:4b-9
Psalm 78:1b-2, 34-38
Philippians 2:6-11
John 1:13-17

On the Day You Were Born
By Natalie Hoefer

In your mother’s arms you stretched and yawned, Swaddled in a woven cloth of blue. “Anne, she’s perfect,” your father fawned, Unaware he had spoken the truth.

“For Mary” means both “bitter” and “blessed,” But none other did it so aptly fit, But none could match your eternal mystique.

Unlike you, the name was not unique, Unaware he had spoken the truth.

Swaddled in a woven cloth of blue.

In your mother’s arms you stretched and yawned,

That He would rise triumphant and crown you as you wept bitterly at His crucifixion;

Blessing you with many a gentle kiss,

That one day an angel would greet you and declare you to be “full of grace”; That one day a sword would pierce your Son, O blessed Immaculate Conception. That one day a sword would pierce your Son, O blessed Immaculate Conception. That one day a sword would pierce your Son, O blessed Immaculate Conception.

That dark would descend and banish the sun as we wither bitterly at his crucifixion;

That He would rise triumphant and crown you as heaven and Earth’s glorious Queen;

That with your prayers we could know life anew through your Son, O Mother Most Serene. That with your prayers we could know life anew through your Son, O Mother Most Serene.

Your parents happily knew none of this
Your parents happily knew none of this

As they adored you peacefully sleeping, Blessing you with many a gentle kiss; As they adored you peacefully sleeping, Blessing you with many a gentle kiss;

You were already spiritually into my heart and “I love you as if you were already there” don’t reflect good theology. Don’t we believe that the Bible and our faith assure us of God’s constant presence and unconditional love? Please address this question since it is used by many parishes each weekend. (Location withheld)

A prayer of spiritual communion is not meant as a global theological statement on God’s omnipresence in general. God is indeed present always and everywhere, and he loves us unconditionally no matter where we are. It’s not as though God is somehow absent from us unless (or until) we pray a certain prayer.

Yet, at the same time, as Catholics we believe in the doctrine of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, meaning that the prayers of consecration at Mass, through the power of the Holy Spirit, literally transforms the offered bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus. Because the bread and wine become Jesus’s body and blood, we believe that during the Eucharist he becomes present to us in a uniquely intense and spiritual way. For the individual level, his presence to us is especially intimate when we personally receive him in holy Communion.

Acts of spiritual communion are meant as a way for those who cannot receive Communion at a particular point to try “to bridge the gap” between their current circumstances and their desire to receive Jesus sacramentally. You could look at spiritual communion as a way of making ourselves especially open to God’s constant presence.

Can priests be wrong? (Wisconsin)

Taking your question at simple face value, yes, of course priests can be wrong. Priests are mere human beings, not all-knowing demigods or supercomputer running perfect algorithms. And no priest is going to be an expert in all areas of knowledge. Like the rest of us, priests can and will make wrong about at least some things some of the time.

But priests receive quite an extensive training in graduate-level theology, so—in general—when a priest explains Church teaching, he is speaking as a qualified professional in his field. Many priests have roles of authority (like, for example, pastor of a parish) which empower them to make practical decisions. So even if we, for example, believe that our priest is wrong in his pastoral decision-making in a given instance, it may nevertheless be a choice the priest is legitimately able to make.

We Catholics also have a concept of papal infallibility, which means that the pope, when speaking ex cathedra and in certain very specific circumstances, namely when he proclaims by a definitive act some doctrine of faith or morals. (“Lumen Gentium,” #25). That is, the Holy Father is infallible when he specifically and deliberately raises some aspect of established Catholic teaching on faith or morals to the level of infallibility.

This occurred. The last time it happened was in 1950 with the proclamation of the dogma of the Assumption of Mary body and soul into the heaven. There is no belief that the pope would be infallible in areas unrelated to faith or morals.

(Jenna Marie Cooper, who holds a licentiate in canon law, is a consecrated virgin and a canonist whose column appears weekly at CNS. Send your questions to Catholic@CNSnews.com.)

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Prayer of spiritual communion related to Christ’s presence in the Eucharist

Questions Corner/Jenna Marie Cooper

The Exaltation of the Holy Cross
Numbers 21:4b-9
Psalm 78:1b-2, 34-38
Philippians 2:6-11
John 1:13-17
Pope confirms ‘second Laudato Si’ will be an apostolic exhortation

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis confirmed plans to publish a “second Laudato Si’,” which is expected to update and expand on his 2015 encyclical on the environment.

Greeting visitors in the Paul VI audience hall after his weekly general audience on Aug. 30, the pope drew attention to the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation on Sept. 1, the beginning of the Season of Creation, a monthlong ecumenical period for prayer and action to promote ecological principles. The Season of Creation ends on Oct. 4, the feast of St. Francis Assisi.

“One day, I intend to publish an encyclical, a second Laudato Si’, ” Pope Francis said. The document will be the sixth apostolic exhortation of his pontificate and the first since his February 2020-synodal exhortation on the Amazon.

To conclude his weekly audience, the pope asked Catholics to join with “our Christian brothers and sisters in the commitment to caring for creation as a sacred gift of the Creator. It is necessary to side with the victims of environmental and climate injustices, striving to end the senseless war on our common home, which is a global, terrible war,” he said.

The pope had mentioned the upcoming document on Aug. 21 when he met with a group of lawyers. He said he was preparing the document as a “second part to Laudato Si’” to update it on current problems.

Brother of Prinzipi Hussinger
Grandfather of three.


WACHENDORF, Marvin, 85, St. Malachi, Brownsburg, Aug. 15. Father of Karmen, Brian and Mark Wachendorf. Grandfather of four.


#FamilyTreeQuilt

—from The Criterion, Friday, September 8, 2023

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 The Criterion. 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.

BRAUN, Daniel, 62, Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Indianapolis, June 30. Son of Betty Jane Braun. Brother of Timothy and David Braun. Uncle and great-uncle of several.


Gaffney, Barbara (Tuttlew), 84, Christ the King, Indianapolis, Aug. 18. Mother of Kelley and Michael Gaffney. Sister of Grace Barveder and Debbie Maples.


Sparks, Kenneth, 78, St. Andrew, Connersville, July 29. Husband of Regina Sparks. Father of Sabrina Sparks, Kenneth Usaha, Kenneth Young and Kenneth Cory Sparks.

Stumler, Patrick, 73, St. John the Baptist, Starlight, Aug. 7. Husband of Dorothy Stumler. Brother of Prentis Hunsinger.

VandenBerg, Roscoe, 92, St. John the Baptist, Starlight, Aug. 15. Grandfather of one.


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REPORT SEXUAL MISCONDUCT NOW

If you are a victim of sexual misconduct by a person ministering on behalf of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis or any person who has been a victim of such misconduct, please contact the archdiocesan victim assistance coordinator or another trusted person to make a report.

Ethics Point
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Family Tree Quilt

Margaret Smith, who celebrated her 100th birthday on Aug. 24, poses by a family tree quilt she created, adding to it as her family has grown through the years. In her 66 years as a member of Holy Spirit Parish in Indianapolis, Smith helped start a quilting group there, making many quilts for raffle at Holy Spirit festivals. Smith is mother of eight, a grandmother of 27, a great-grandmother of 44 and a great-great-grandmother of several. (Submitted photo)
Olivas professed temporary vows as a Benedictine novice professes vows. Christians and honest citizens,” and told attention to the transcendent. sign of the Mongolian people’s constant to the “big sky” of Mongolian poetry as a traditional round house of the nomadic Empire and grandson of Genghis Khan. when Pope Innocent IV sent an emissary and the Vatican going back to the 1200s positive contacts between Mongolians the national capital, repeatedly referenced arrived in the country in 1992. from the Catholic missionaries who government that it has nothing to fear the Gospel message does not mean wanting Catholic does not destroy or replace a Pope Francis' mind. Perhaps Vietnam—was never far from perhaps China—and its 1,400 Catholics, China—and was never far from Pope Francis’ mind. The Catholic Church is registered as a foreign NGO in Mongolia, not as a Church. Individual parishes are registered separately. Missionaries receive visas that must be renewed each year. And for every foreign missionary granted a visa, the Church must hire at least five Mongolians. The bigger challenge, Catholic missionaries told reporters covering the trip, is convincing Mongolians that Catholic missionaries are not some kind of advance team preparing for a Western invasion of their country. Since the visit of Pope John Paul II in 1989, to a lesser degree, Vietnam. Pope Francis flew over China early Sept. 1 before landing in Ulaanbaatar. Benedictine novice professes vows at Saint Meinrad Archabbey Benedictine Novice Angel Romero-Olivas professed temporary vows as a monk of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad, Ind., in a ceremony on Aug. 6 in the monastery’s Archabbey Church of Our Lady of Einsiedeln. He had completed his novitiate, a year of prayer and study of the Benedictine way of life. As is the custom during the profession of vows, he was given a religious name. Novice Angel is now Brother Jude. Brother Jude, 39, is a native of Chihuahua, Mexico, where he was a member of Santa Rosalia Parish. He attended the Autonomous University of Chihuahua Law School. Before entering the monastery, he worked at a Mexican consulate and in law. Temporary vows are typically for three years. This period offers a continuing opportunity for the monk and the monastic community to determine whether monastic life is indeed, the right vocation for this individual. Pope Francis and again on Sept. 4 on his way back to Rome, sending courtesy telegrams to Chinese President Xi Jinping, thanking him for allowing the papal plane to enter Chinese airspace and offering his blessings and good wishes to the nation. Throughout his stay in Mongolia, Pope Francis was accompanied by bishops from Central Asia and beyond. They included Cardinal-designate Stephen Chu; Sau-Yan of Hong Kong and the city’s retired Cardinal John Tong Hon. At the end of Mass on Sept. 3 in Ulaanbaatar’s Steppe Arena, the pope called the two over to him and told the international congregation, “I want to take the opportunity of their presence to send a warm greeting to the noble Chinese people.” To Chinese Catholics, he added, “I ask you to be good Christians and good citizens.” Miao Ning, spokeswoman of the Chinese foreign ministry, was asked about the pope’s remarks at a Sept. 4 news conference. “We noted the report,” she said. “China is positive toward improving the relations and we are in contact and communication with the Vatican.” Bishops and priests from mainland China were not permitted to travel to Mongolia, but several small groups of lay Catholcs from China did manage to cross the border to see the pope. A large group of Catholics from Vietnam also were present and were hopeful that the pope could visit their country soon. “I don’t know if I will go, but John XXIII certainly will,” the pope, using the name he has invented for his successor, told reporters on his flight back to Rome. “The Vatican and Vietnam’s communist government have a joint working group focused mainly on bilateral relations and trying to reach an agreement on establishing diplomatic ties. And since the 1990s, a Vatican delegation has made annual visits to Vietnam, getting government approval for the nomination of bishops and seeking permission on issues like establishing or expanding seminaries. “I am very positive about the relationship with Vietnam; good work has been going on for years,” Pope Francis told reporters on the plane on Sept. 4. “I remember four years ago, a group of Vietnamese parliamentarians came. There was a nice dialogue, very respectful,” the pope said. “When a culture is open, there is possibility for dialogue; if there is closure or suspicion, dialogue is very difficult. With Vietnam, the dialogue is open, with its pluses and minuses, but it is open and slowly moving forward. There have been some problems, but they have been slowly overcome.” Pope Francis and his predecessors have been betting on a similarly patient dialogue with China for decades. And Pope Francis shows no sign of giving up. “The relationship with China is very respectful, very respectful,” he told reporters on the flight back to Rome. “I personally have great admiration for the Chinese people.” While some priests and Catholic intellectuals have been invited to teach at Chinese universities, promoting a cultural dialogue, the pope said, “I think we need to move forward in the religious aspect to understand each other better and so that Chinese citizens do not think that the Church does not accept their culture and values.” He added that the idea that through ties with the pope, the Catholic Church in China “is dependent on another, foreign power” is false. “Relations are moving forward,” he repeated. †
Saint Meinrad Archabbey welcomes two new novices

In a brief ceremony on Aug. 5, Patrick Allbright and Andrew Levering were clothed in the Benedictine habit at the entrance of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad.

The two novices now begin a year of monastic formation, including study of the Rule of St. Benedict and monastic history.

Novice Patrick, 26, is from Loogootee, Ind. He was a member of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Loogootee in the Evansville Diocese and attended Loogootee High School.

He studied law enforcement at Vincennes University Jasper Campus in Jasper, Ind., graduating in 2017 with an associate degree. Before joining the monastery, Novice Patrick worked as a police officer and dispatcher for Loogootee Police Department and as a corrections officer with Daviess County Sheriff’s Office. He was also a private first class in the Marine Corps in 2020 before being medically discharged.

Novice Andrew, 24, is a native of Libertyville, Ill., where he was a member of St. Joseph Parish and attended Vernon Hills High School in Vernon Hills, Ill.

He earned a bachelor’s degree in Christian theology in 2021 from Hope College in Holland, Mich. After graduating from college, Novice Andrew worked as a forklift driver.

As novices, they will take a year off from formal studies and trades. The novitiate is a time of prayer and learning intended to help a novice discern his vocation as a monk. At the end of this year, a novice may be permitted to profess temporary vows of obedience, fidelity to the monastic way of life and stability in the community of Saint Meinrad.

†

Father Thomas Schlessmann, carrying the Blessed Sacrament in a monstrance, leads students of St. Joan of Arc School in Indianapolis during an Aug. 18 eucharistic procession on the grounds of St. Joan of Arc Parish.

(Photo by Sean Gallagher)