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We are called to 'dream' of a Church that is a servant to all humanity, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—To reform the Church is to put God first and adore him, and to love and serve others, Pope Francis said at Mass marking the conclusion of the first session of the Synod of Bishops on synodality.



Pope Francis

"This is the Church we are called to 'dream': a Church that is the servant of all, the servant of the least of our brothers and sisters; a Church

that never demands an attestation of 'good behavior,' but welcomes, serves, loves, forgives; a Church with open doors that is a haven of mercy," he said.

"We may have plenty of good ideas on how to reform the Church, but let's remember: to adore God and to love our brothers and sisters with his love, that is the great and perennial reform," the pope said in his homily at Mass in St. Peter's Basilica on Oct. 29.

Thousands of faithful stood at the start of Mass as synod members and participants processed into the basilica. The procession was led by non-ordained members followed by bishops and then cardinals. The synod on synodality marked the first time laypeople and women religious could take part as voting members. Of the total 364 members, close to 25% were "non-bishop members," and 54 of them were women.

"Dear friends, the general assembly of the synod has now concluded," the pope said in his homily. "Today we do

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Kerin O'Rourke Buntin beams and outstretches her body toward the heavens during a visit to St. Peter's Square at the Vatican on May 20, a time when she felt wrapped in God's presence.

(Submitted photo)

A dark time in a woman's life leads her to be embraced by God's healing presence

(Editor's note: The Criterion invited our readers to share their stories of how God has made his presence known in their lives. Here are the first two stories in a series.)

John Shaughnessy

The photo captures Kerin O'Rourke Buntin in a moment of pure joy.

Buntin is beaming as she stands in front of St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican on May 20, her whole body outstretched toward the heavens.

The scene reflects the feeling that fills her—"as if a perpetual blanket of peace and love was wrapped around me," she says.

In that moment, she also feels God's presence all around her, knowing in her heart that he has delivered her from one of the darkest times in her life, a time when she felt "guilty and unworthy."

When she and her husband were married 30 years earlier in the Church, she says, "My plan was to celebrate our golden years in the same manner that my maternal grandparents modeled their faith to me."

Yet, in 2020, she reached the heartbreaking point that her marriage was "irretrievably broken."

"To observe the gut-wrenching breakdown of the family unit that was my most prized possession felt as if my heart was being torn from the inside out of me," says Buntin, a mother of two grown children and a member of St. Louis de Montfort Parish in Fishers, Ind., in the Lafayette Diocese.

As she filed for a divorce that year, the now-57-year-old Buntin also turned to the source in her life that has always sustained her—her faith.

She has often encouraged people to pray to the saints, to ask them to intercede to God. So, she prayed to St. Helen, the patron

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God makes his presence known in special way at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House

By Natalie Hoefler

When I reflect on how God has made his presence known to me, the answer comes in the form of a place: Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House in Indianapolis.

I like to go there when they offer silent retreats. So often have I heard God at those times that I have come to call the place "my own Mount Tabor."

One year during a silent retreat there, I was struggling with believing in God's love for me. I "knew" he loved me, but I didn't feel loved. Rather, I had long come to see God as a cold and distant judge who always found me lacking.

I had brought with me a book of retreat talks based on the teachings of St. Thérèse of Lisieux called *I Believe in Love* by Father Jean du Coeur de Jesus D'Elbee. I had read a few pages already, which to that point had addressed God's love for all people.



Natalie Hoefler

"God, I just don't understand how you could love me," I prayed, curled up in the recliner in my private room for a three-day stay.

I heard an internal voice distinctly say, "Get the book."

I didn't question the fact that I heard a voice, but I did question its command.

"But all it's talked about is how you love others. I need to know you love me," I whined.

Again the words, spoken a bit more insistently: "Get the book."

So I did. I opened it up and continued to read where I had left off.

The very next words in the book were God's direct answer to my concern:

"We have spoken of his love for everyone," I read. "Let us now talk about his love for you, personally."

The next seven pages are now so covered in underlines, stars,

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PRESENCE

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saint of broken marriages. And she prayed to St. Faustina, the patron saint of mercy whose feast day is the same day—Oct. 5—that Buntin was married.

As she prayed, she continued to struggle with the end of her marriage. Then came a conversation with the pastor of her parish, Father Thomas Haan.

“He encouraged me to find the healing presence of God in the annulment process,” she recalls. “I had not even given an ounce of thought to it. I was taught that marriage is forever. I felt guilty and unworthy. The darkness was real.”

Yet, she found a touch of light in early 2022 as she started the process of seeking an annulment, the common term used to describe what the Church officially calls “a declaration of marriage nullity.”

Buntin began writing a journal, reflecting on her thoughts and feelings from her 30 years of marriage. She relied upon the advocate that the Lafayette Diocese assigned to guide her through the process. And she began to recognize the importance of each step along the way.

“It consumed my time for over a year, yet I would not change a thing. I felt called to embrace the journey forward,” she says. “It empowered me to completely surrender my life to God. God gave me hope in the required witness testimonies.”

That hope turned into relief when the tribunal committee reviewed her case earlier this year and found there were sufficient grounds for her marriage to be annulled.

“Shortly after the annulment was granted, I felt so much gratitude not

necessarily for my situation, but grateful for what I learned about myself in the process.”

Buntin felt the full, powerful impact of that turning point a short time later when she led a women’s retreat to Tuscany, Italy, in May of this year.

After landing in Rome, she and a friend made a quick tour of the city, eventually ending up in the area outside St. Peter’s Basilica. As her friend stood in awe of the basilica that she was seeing for the first time, Buntin was overwhelmed for a different reason.

“What happened next had to be the grace of God,” she recalls. “It felt as if a perpetual blanket of peace and love was wrapped around me.”

“The feeling at St. Peter was a holy moment right up there with the birth of my two amazing, determined and motivated adult children. I felt the kind of peace and love that only God can provide, not the kind obtained from a person or material things.”

That feeling of being embraced by God’s love continues for Buntin.

“My relationship with God now is a continuous trust walk,” she says. “God continues to open doors for me to walk with others who are on a similar journey.”

“I feel the real presence in me, receiving Communion at daily Mass, bringing the Eucharist to my aged friend, and by contemplating the life of Christ in the mysteries and virtues of the holy rosary. Now I see why so many of the saints found respite in the rosary.”

The joy that filled her that day in St. Peter’s Square has stayed with her.

“I am not the same woman I was years ago,” she says. “I have a healthy perspective, and life is radically better than I could have ever imagined.” †

and that he hasn’t changed, then who is the one really judging you so harshly?” he asked.

An image instantly flashed in my mind. It was someone wearing a mask of God. The mask was pulled off, and the unmasked person standing there—was me.

I’d struggled so long with feeling judged by God that I was convinced he was the one critically judging me—I never questioned it.

But with that one question by the spiritual director, God revealed the truth to me. He really did love me. I needed to believe and trust in that truth—and hold it up against any voice that told me otherwise.

God has made himself present to me in many ways during my life. But the lengths he went to assure me of his unchanging love for me during that silent retreat at Our Lady of Fatima sealed the deal for me: If you seek him, he won’t just find you—he’ll reveal that he never left your side.

(Natalie Hoefler is a member of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis and is a reporter for The Criterion.) †



Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

November 3–18, 2023

November 3 – 6 p.m.
Marian University Annual Gala at JW Marriott, Indianapolis

November 4 – 10 a.m.
Archdiocesan Pastoral Council meeting at St. Bartholomew Parish, Columbus

November 5 – 2 p.m.
Confirmation Mass for youths of St. Bridget of Ireland Parish, Liberty; St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, Richmond; St. Elizabeth of Hungary Parish, Cambridge City; St. Gabriel Parish, Connersville; St. Anne Parish, New Castle; and St. Mary Parish, Rushville, at St. Gabriel Church

November 7 – 10:30 a.m.
Priest Personnel Board meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

November 8 – 5:30 p.m.
Mass and dinner with Daughters of Mary Mother of Mercy, Indianapolis

November 9 – 8:15 a.m.
Virtual Judicatories meeting

November 9 – 10 a.m.
Leadership Team meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center

November 9 – 6 p.m.
Legatus Louisville Mass at Holy Family Church, New Albany, followed by dinner at The Calumet Club, New Albany

November 11-16
U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee and General Meeting, Baltimore, MD

November 16-18
National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) at Indiana Convention Center, Indianapolis

POPE

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not see the full fruit of this process, but with farsightedness we look to the horizon opening up before us.

“The Lord will guide us and help us to be a more synodal and missionary Church, a Church that adores God and serves the women and men of our time, going forth to bring to everyone the consoling joy of the Gospel,” he said.

As the Church concludes this stage of its journey, he said, “it is important to look at the ‘principle and foundation’ from which everything begins ever anew: love.

“Loving God with our whole life and loving our neighbors as ourselves,” he said, is “the heart of everything.”

The way to channel this love is to adore God and serve one another, he said.

“We have lost the habit of adoration,” the pope said, calling on all priests, dioceses, parishes and communities to “return to worship” and adore the Lord. “Only in his presence will we be purified, transformed and renewed by the fire of his Spirit.”

To adore God means “to acknowledge in faith that he alone is Lord and that our individual lives, the Church’s pilgrim way and the ultimate outcome of history all depend on the tenderness of his love. He gives meaning to our lives,” he said.

“We are always at risk of thinking that we can ‘control God,’ that we can confine his love to our own agenda. Instead, the way he acts is always unpredictable and consequently

demands amazement and adoration,” Pope Francis said. The path of idolatry is “wanting the Lord to act according to the image we have of him.”

He said the Church needs to be “a worshipping Church and a Church of service, washing the feet of wounded humanity, accompanying those who are frail, weak and cast aside, going out lovingly to encounter the poor,” as God commanded.

“It is a grave sin to exploit the vulnerable, a grave sin that corrodes fraternity and devastates society,” he said, and, “as disciples of Jesus, we desire to bring to the world a different type of leaven, that of the Gospel.”

Quoting St. John Chrysostom, he said that those who are merciful are like a safe harbor to those in need, so “when you see a man suffering shipwreck on land through poverty, do not sit in judgment on him, nor require explanations, but relieve his distress.”

Later in the day, before praying the midday *Angelus*, the pope again reflected on the Lord’s command to love God and neighbor.

He held up the example of St. Teresa of Calcutta as someone “who was so little,” but was still able “to do so much good—by reflecting God’s love like a drop” of clear water.

“If at times, looking at her and other saints, we might be moved to think that they are heroes that cannot be imitated, let us think again about that small drop,” which reflects love and “can change many things,” he said.

“How?” the pope asked. By taking the first step to love and serve those in need without waiting for others to act, even though this is not easy to do. †

SPECIAL WAY

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exclamation points and notes that the words of the text are almost obscured.

That was day one of the retreat.

On day two, I sat in the chapel listening to the priest’s homily during Mass. I was paying attention, my mind for once not adrift, when again I heard a voice.

“I haven’t changed,” it said.

Just like that, out of the blue, unsolicited and completely unrelated to the Scripture readings or homily.

As I prayed about the experience after Mass, understanding washed over me: “God doesn’t change. God is love, so if he doesn’t change, then he is still love. Therefore, I’m the one who has changed my perception of him.”

God addressed that revelation further through the guidance of the spiritual director I’d been assigned for the duration of my retreat. I met with him shortly after Mass, and I shared with him the two God-moments I’d experienced.

“If God is telling you he loves you



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Synthesis shows agreement, divergences, including on 'synodality'

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—A report summarizing discussions at the assembly of the Synod of Bishops said the Church may need more welcoming pastoral approaches, especially to people who feel excluded, but also acknowledged fears of betraying traditional Church teachings and practices.

Among the topics addressed in the report were clerical sexual abuse, women's roles in the Church, outreach to poor and the concept of "synodality" itself.

The assembly, with 364 voting members—365 counting Pope Francis—met in working sessions six days a week on Oct. 4-28 after a three-day retreat outside of Rome.

After the voting on the synthesis concluded, the pope said he wanted to remind everyone that "the protagonist of the synod is the Holy Spirit." He briefly thanked the synod officers and joined members of the assembly in giving thanks to God.

The assembly's discussions set the stage for a year-long period of reflection that will culminate in the second and final synod assembly in late 2024 on the same topic.

The 41-page synthesis report, voted on paragraph-by-paragraph on Oct. 28, described its purpose as presenting "convergences, matters for consideration and proposals that emerged from the dialogue" on issues discussed under the headings of synodality, communion, mission and participation.

Every item in the report was approved by at least two-thirds of the members present and voting, synod officials said. They published a complete list of the votes.

Within the synod topics, members looked at the role of women in the Church, including in decision making, and at the possibility of ordaining women deacons. The report asked for more "theological and pastoral research on the access of women to the diaconate," including a review of the conclusions of commissions Pope Francis set up in 2016 and 2020.

The paragraph, one of several on the theme of women deacons, was approved

279-67, which was more than the needed two-thirds support but still garnered among the highest negative votes.

Among members of the assembly, the report said, some thought the idea of women deacons would be a break with tradition, while others insisted it would "restore the practice of the early Church," including at the time of the New Testament, which mentions women deacons.

"Others still, discern it as an appropriate and necessary response to the signs of the times, faithful to the Tradition, and one that would find an echo in the hearts of many who seek new energy and vitality in the Church," it said. But, the report added, some members thought that would "marry the Church to the spirit of the age."

The paragraph on how different members explained their support of or opposition to women deacons also was approved by more than two-thirds of the voting members, but it received more negative votes than any other item, passing 277 to 69.

Assembly members also discussed pastoral approaches to welcoming and including in the life of parishes people who have felt excluded, including the poor, people with disabilities, LGBTQ+ Catholics and Catholics whose marriages are not recognized by the Church.

The synthesis report did not use the term "LGBTQ+" or even "homosexuality" and spoke only generally of issues related to "matters of identity and sexuality."

Jesuit Father James Martin, a synod member involved in outreach to LGBTQ+ Catholics, told Catholic News Service, "From what I understand, there was too much pushback to make using the term 'LGBTQ' viable, even though it was contained in the 'Instrumentum Laboris,' " or synod working document.

"This opposition came up often in the plenary sessions, along with others who argued from the other side, that is, for greater inclusion and for seeing LGBTQ people as people and not an ideology," he said.

The synthesis said that "to develop authentic ecclesial discernment in



Pope Francis gives his blessing at the conclusion of the assembly of the Synod of Bishops' last working session on Oct. 28, in the Paul VI Hall at the Vatican. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

these and other areas, it is necessary to approach these questions in the light of the Word of God and Church teaching, properly informed and reflected upon.

"In order to avoid repeating vacuous formulas, we need to provide an opportunity for a dialogue involving the human and social sciences, as well as philosophical and theological reflection," it added.

The divergences in the assembly, it said, reflected opposing concerns: that "if we use doctrine harshly and with a judgmental attitude, we betray the Gospel; if we practice mercy 'on the cheap,' we do not convey God's love."

Still, it said, "in different ways, people who feel marginalized or excluded from the Church because of their marriage


status, identity or sexuality, also ask to be heard and accompanied. There was a deep sense of love, mercy and compassion felt in the Assembly for those who are or feel hurt or neglected by the Church, who want a place to call 'home' where they can feel safe, be heard and respected, without fear of feeling judged."

The report emphasized the "listening" that took place on the local, national and continental levels before the assembly, and the "conversations in the Spirit" that took place during it, which involved each person speaking in his or her small group, other participants at first commenting only on what struck them, silent reflection and then discussion.

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Editorial



Pope John XXIII signs his encyclical "*Pacem in Terris*" ("Peace on Earth") at the Vatican in this 1963 file photo. (CNS photo)

Peace on Earth

The encyclical that Pope St. John XXIII published in 1963, "*Pacem in Terris*" ("Peace on Earth") is a passionate and compellingly urgent call for an end to the wars that, as Pope Francis says, "are always a defeat, always!" Perhaps we would do well to revisit the message that Good Pope John tried to teach us some 60 years ago.

Pope John begins his encyclical with an affirmation of the fundamental truth that God alone is the author of all things visible and invisible. He is the one who establishes the necessary conditions for peace.

Thus, St. John tells us that "Peace on Earth—which man throughout the ages has so longed for and sought after—can never be established, never guaranteed, except by the diligent observance of the divinely established order" (#1)

In other words, it is human sinfulness, our deliberate refusal to live as God intended, that begets violence, injustice and war among the nations and peoples who inhabit the world that God created. A real and lasting peace can never be achieved among us until we dedicate ourselves completely to the restoration of God's plan for us, his children.

What would it take to build a world order that reflects God's plan? What must we do to place the good of all over the political, economic or social interests of the few individuals or organizations that set the agendas that provoke violence, hatred and injustice over the peace we desperately need and desire? What are the necessary conditions for a true and lasting peace—in the Holy Land, in Ukraine, and in all the areas of the world that are suffering from violence and the absence of freedom?

"*Pacem in Terra*" outlines the following conditions for genuine peace on Earth which, while framed understandably in Christian terms, apply equally to all religions, cultures, political and economic systems:

The first condition is a recognition of the greatness of God, who alone made the world and everything in it. Without a keen awareness of the grandeur and glory of the Divine Majesty, humankind ceases to search for God's kingdom of justice and peace. Earthly kingdoms, no matter how well intended, always fall far short of the kingdom of peace and love that is the ultimate destiny of all humankind.

The second condition is an absolute reverence and respect for human dignity.

"Any well-regulated and productive association of men in society demands the acceptance of one fundamental principle: that each individual is truly a person," St. John writes (#9). Human persons have "a nature, that is, endowed with intelligence and free will. As such, they have rights and duties, which together flow as a direct consequence from this nature. These rights and duties are universal and inviolable, and therefore altogether inalienable" (#9). There can be no real peace without an absolute regard for the inalienable rights of all regardless of race, ethnicity, or political and economic circumstances.

Third, John XXIII tells us that "human society can be neither well-ordered nor prosperous without the presence of those who, invested with legal authority, preserve its institutions and do all that is necessary to sponsor actively the interests of all its members" (#46).

As social beings who live in ordered communities, men and women need to be led by people who, St. John says, "derive their authority from God, for, as St. Paul teaches, there is no power but from God" (#46).

Authoritative leadership is a necessary condition for peace, but it's important that leaders understand that their authority comes from God and is intended only for the good of those they serve.

"The attainment of the common good is the sole reason for the existence of civil authorities," St. John says. "In working for the common good, therefore, the authorities must obviously respect its nature, and at the same time adjust their legislation to meet the requirements of the given situation" (#54).

Finally, we learn from "*Pacem in Terris*," that "the world will never be the dwelling place of peace, till peace has found a home in the heart of each and every man, till every man preserves in himself the order ordained by God to be preserved" (#165).

Peace is not something that someone else is responsible for. It begins with every individual person and extends outward to local, regional, national and global authorities.

May the Prince of Peace who sacrificed his whole life to bring justice, mercy and compassion to our world, show us the way to achieve lasting peace on Earth.

—Daniel Conway

Be Our Guest/Russell Shaw

U.S. politics badly needs an infusion of decency and idealism via St. Thomas Aquinas

One needn't be a big fan of Kevin McCarthy to see the California Republican's ouster as Speaker of the House of Representatives last month as a



significant low point in recent American politics. Unfortunately, there's apparently more—much more—yet to come.

Consider the painful fact that a year before the election, the presidential race

already shows signs of being the nastiest in living memory. Some Democrats talk seriously of using provisions of the 14th Amendment, originally aimed at office-holders of the Confederate States, to keep former president Donald J. Trump off the ballot. Not to be outdone, House Republicans have begun an impeachment probe with the goal of tarring President Joe Biden.

Do I hear someone saying, "At least it can't get any worse"? Maybe not, but I wouldn't bet on it. The bipartisan spirit of vengeance and extremism now animating our politics threatens to turn America into the superpower version of those unhappy places where seeking high office can land you in prison.

Aquinas, kingship and the speaker contest

However you look at it, our politics stands badly in need of an infusion of decency and idealism. And a help to that can be found in St. Thomas Aquinas and his treatise on kingship. Written in the 1260s at the request of the king of Cyprus, much that it says doesn't apply to our present situation, but parts of it deserve thoughtful, even prayerful reflection.

As, for example, this: "It pertains to the king's office to promote the good life of the multitude in such a way as to make it suitable for the attainment of heavenly happiness ... [A king] should command those things which lead to the happiness of heaven and, as far as possible, forbid the contrary."

Can you imagine a candidate saying

anything remotely like that in one of the presidential debates? Neither can I. And doesn't that shed light on our present problem?

How about a platform? Declaring that a king's "principal concern" should be "the means by which the multitude subject to him may live well," Aquinas says this has three elements: first, that people be "established in the unity of peace"; second, that they are "directed to acting well"; and third, that they have "a sufficient supply of the things required for proper living." In other words: peace at home and abroad, laws that serve the common good, and a stable, prosperous economy operating to the benefit of all.

The reward for running a government?

What should a king get for doing a good job? St. Thomas notes that honor and glory are commonly considered suitable rewards for someone who does well in the top job. But not so fast, he adds: "The desire for human glory takes away the greatness of soul, which is crucial to greatness in a king." True, a king should want glory rather than money or pleasure. But, granting that, "it is the mark of a virtuous and brave soul to despise glory as he despises life."

"Therefore," Aquinas writes, "since worldly honor and human glory are not sufficient reward for royal cares ... it is proper that a king look to God for his reward." This makes perfect sense, he points out, when you consider that, as Scripture says, "the king is the minister of God in governing the people."

I wouldn't expect to hear any of this on MSNBC and Fox. But I can't help hoping that such thinking, appropriately updated, could somehow find its way into the political mainstream during an ugly election year. Would any of our present political leaders like to give it a try?

(Russell Shaw, a veteran journalist and writer, is the author of more than 20 books, including three novels. His latest book is *Revitalizing Catholicism in America: Nine Tasks for Every Catholic*.) †

Letter to the Editor

Reader advises us to overcome our fear in trusting in God and following his will

"Fiduciatheophobia" is the fear of trusting in God.

Somewhere in our lives and stories, we are afraid of what would happen if we were to trust God fully—with all our mind, heart and soul.

Our Western culture likes to trust what we can see, measure and predict.

We like five-year plans and long-range goals. We see history as linear, and the lack of contradiction as the test for all truth. We want our future to be planned and predictable.

But we cannot see God, and we cannot plan or predict his will. The greatest obstacle standing between most of us and our obedience to God, is our fear of following God's will.

And so we're afraid that he will ask more of us than we can give, more than we are able to do or give to him. He'll ask us to teach when we can't teach, or to give more than we can give.

Or we're afraid that he'll ask more of us than we want to give, that he'll lead us where we don't want to go, that the price of following him will be higher than we want to pay.

What are you afraid to surrender to the will and purpose of God today? There are times when we're all afraid that God will ask of us more than we think we can do, or give.

Kirth N. Roach
Order of Carmelite Discalced Secular
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.

In order to encourage opinions from a variety of readers, frequent writers will

ordinarily be limited to one letter every three months. Concise letters (usually less than 300 words) are more likely to be printed.

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

Send letters to "Letters to the Editor," The Criterion, 1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367. Readers with access to e-mail may send letters to criterion@archindy.org. †

ARCHBISHOP/ARZOBISPO CHARLES C. THOMPSON



Christ the Cornerstone

Like the saints, live humbly and serve others without cost

“The greatest among you must be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled; but whoever humbles himself will be exalted” (Mt 23:11-12).

This weekend in the Gospel reading for the Thirty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time (Mt 23:1-12), Jesus tells us that service and humility are essential to his way of life. This is in sharp contrast to the way the religious leaders of Jesus’ time exercised their authority. Our Lord observes that:

The scribes and the Pharisees have taken their seat on the chair of Moses. Therefore, do and observe all things whatsoever they tell you, but do not follow their example. For they preach, but they do not practice. They tie up heavy burdens hard to carry and lay them on people’s shoulders, but they will not lift a finger to move them. All their works are performed to be seen. They widen their phylacteries and lengthen their tassels. They love places of honor at banquets, seats of honor in synagogues, greetings in marketplaces, and the salutation “Rabbi” (Mt 23:1-7).

Jesus tells his followers to respect their leaders’ teaching, but not to follow their example because they are hypocrites who

don’t practice what they preach.

Everyone who has been given a position of responsibility in the Church (everyone who has been baptized) is challenged to take Jesus’ words to heart.

As Pope Francis reminds us frequently, none of us is perfect. We are sinners called by the Lord to proclaim the Good News of our salvation in Christ and to serve the needs of others. We do not always succeed at practicing what we preach.

Our sinful humanity is always with us—tempting us to place our own desires ahead of those we serve. That’s why we must rely on the Lord’s mercy to forgive us when we fall short of our baptismal calling and our particular vocations. It’s also why we must trust that, by the power of the Holy Spirit, God’s grace will do for us what we cannot do for ourselves.

Jesus’ whole life, his public ministry and his death on the Cross show us what humble service looks like. To serve is to get outside of ourselves and to be women and men for others.

Perhaps the most dramatic example of our Lord’s commitment to serving others is found at the Last Supper (Jn 13:1-17) when he washed the feet of

the disciples gathered in the upper room for the Passover meal. Jesus insists that this is the only acceptable way authority may be exercised among his followers. Anything less is hypocrisy.

The example of Jesus can seem to be overwhelming. How can those of us who acknowledge our sinfulness, and our inadequacy as servant leaders, hope to “practice what we preach”?

The intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and all the saints is important here. These are the men and women who have successfully gone before us. Except for Mary, who was sinless by the grace of God, all the others were weak, imperfect and sinful people who accepted the Lord’s challenge to follow his way of humble service. Although they had many different personalities—many diverse strengths and weaknesses—what they all had in common was a desire to live humbly as Jesus lived and to serve others without counting the cost to themselves.

Our observance of the Solemnity of All Saints earlier this week was a testimony to all the people—known and unknown—who have dedicated their lives to humble service in Jesus’ name. By asking them to intercede for us, we

acknowledged that we cannot possibly practice what we preach without help. To humble ourselves and serve others as Jesus commands, we must rely on the grace of God and the intercession of Mary and all the saints.

Our observance of All Saints this week was followed, as always, by the Commemoration of the Faithful Departed (All Souls’ Day). This popular feast acknowledges that God’s love and mercy are still available to us after death.

All Souls’ Day also reflects our understanding that those of us who are still living have a responsibility to humbly serve those who have died by our heartfelt prayers. Just as we rely on the intercession of Mary and all the saints, the souls of our deceased brothers and sisters who have not yet attained the happiness of heaven rely on us to help them.

“Whoever exalts himself will be humbled; but whoever humbles himself will be exalted” (Mt 23:12), Jesus tells us both by his words and by his example.

Let’s ask Blessed Mary and all the saints to help us live these challenging words, and when we fall short, to ask for God’s forgiveness and the grace to carry on. †



Cristo, la piedra angular

Al igual que los santos, vivamos con humildad y sirvamos al prójimo desinteresadamente

“El que sea más importante entre ustedes, sea siervo de todos. Porque el que se enaltece será humillado, y el que se humilla será enaltecido” (Mt 23:11-12).

Este fin de semana, en la lectura del Evangelio del trigésimo primer domingo del tiempo ordinario (Mt 23:1-12), Jesús nos dice que el servicio y la humildad son esenciales en su forma de vida, lo cual contrasta fuertemente con el modo de ejercer la autoridad de los líderes religiosos de la época de Jesús. Nuestro Señor observa que:

Los escribas y los fariseos se apoyan en la cátedra de Moisés. Así que ustedes deben obedecer y hacer todo lo que ellos les digan, pero no sigan su ejemplo, porque dicen una cosa y hacen otra. Imponen sobre la gente cargas pesadas y difíciles de llevar, pero ellos no mueven ni un dedo para levantarlas. Al contrario, todo lo que hacen es para que la gente los vea. Ensanchan sus filacterias y extienden los flecos de sus mantos, y les encanta ocupar los mejores asientos en las cenas y sentarse en las primeras sillas de las sinagogas, y que la gente los saluden en las plazas y los llame: “¡Rabí, Rabí!” (Mt 23:1-7).

Jesús dice a sus seguidores que respeten las enseñanzas de sus líderes, pero que no sigan su ejemplo porque son hipócritas que no practican lo que predicán.

Todos los que han recibido un puesto de responsabilidad en la Iglesia (todos los que han sido bautizados) tienen el reto de tomarse a pecho las palabras de Jesús.

Como nos recuerda con frecuencia el Papa Francisco, ninguno de nosotros es perfecto sino que somos pecadores llamados por el Señor a proclamar la Buena Nueva de nuestra salvación en Cristo y a atender las necesidades de los demás. No siempre conseguimos practicar lo que predicamos.

Nuestra humanidad pecaminosa está constantemente a nuestro alrededor, tentándonos a anteponer nuestros propios deseos a los de aquellos a quienes servimos. Por eso debemos confiar en la misericordia del Señor para que nos perdone cuando no estemos a la altura de nuestro llamado bautismal y de nuestras vocaciones particulares. También es la razón por la que debemos confiar en que, por el poder del Espíritu Santo, la gracia de Dios hará por nosotros lo que no podemos hacer por nuestra cuenta.

Toda la vida de Jesús, su ministerio público y su muerte en la Cruz nos muestran cómo es el servicio humilde: servir es salir de nosotros mismos y ser mujeres y hombres para los demás.

Tal vez el ejemplo más dramático del compromiso de nuestro Señor con el servicio a los demás se encuentre en la Última Cena (Jn 13:1-17), cuando lavó

los pies de los discípulos reunidos en el cenáculo para la cena de Pascua. Jesús insiste en que esta es la única forma aceptable de ejercer la autoridad entre sus seguidores y que todo lo demás es hipocresía.

El ejemplo de Jesús puede parecer abrumador: ¿Cómo podemos esperar “practicar lo que predicamos” si reconocemos nuestra condición de pecadores y nuestras falencias como líderes servidores?

Aquí resulta importante la intercesión de la Santísima Virgen María y de todos los santos ya que estos son los hombres y mujeres que nos han precedido con éxito. Excepto María, que estaba libre de pecado por la gracia de Dios, todos los demás eran personas débiles, imperfectas y pecadoras que aceptaron el reto del Señor de seguir su camino de humilde servicio. Aunque tenían muchas personalidades diferentes, muchas fortalezas y diversas debilidades, lo que todos tenían en común era el deseo de vivir humildemente como vivió Jesús y de servir a los demás de manera desinteresada.

Nuestra celebración de la Solemnidad de Todos los Santos a principios de esta semana fue un testimonio de todas las personas—conocidas o no—que han dedicado su vida al servicio humilde en nombre de Jesús. Al pedirles que intercedan por nosotros, reconocemos que

no podemos practicar lo que predicamos sin ayuda. Para ser humildes y servir a los demás como manda Jesús, debemos confiar en la gracia de Dios, en la intercesión de María y de todos los santos.

Nuestra observancia de Todos los Santos esta semana fue seguida, como siempre, por la conmemoración del Día de los Fieles Difuntos (Día de Muertos). Esta fiesta popular reconoce que el amor y la misericordia de Dios siguen estando a nuestra disposición incluso después de la muerte.

El Día de los Fieles Difuntos también refleja la noción de que los que aún vivimos tenemos la responsabilidad de servir humildemente a los que han muerto mediante nuestras oraciones sinceras. Del mismo modo que contamos con la intercesión de María y de todos los santos, las almas de nuestros hermanos y hermanas difuntos que aún no han alcanzado la felicidad del cielo cuentan con nuestra ayuda.

“El que se enaltece será humillado, y el que se humilla será enaltecido: (Mt 23:12), nos dice Jesús tanto con sus palabras como con su ejemplo.

Pidamos a la Bienaventurada María y a todos los santos que nos ayuden a vivir el reto que representan estas palabras y, cuando nos quedemos cortos, pidamos el perdón de Dios y la gracia para seguir adelante. †

Events Calendar

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

November 6

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Movie Night at Fatima: *Jesus Revolution***, 5-9 p.m., includes dinner, popcorn, refreshments, \$16. Registration: ftm_retreatportal.com/events, 317-545-7681, lcoons@archindy.org.

November 6, 13, 27

St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Parish, 4720 E. 13th St., Indianapolis. **Jesus and the Eucharist Bible Study**, 6:30-8 p.m., final three of seven Monday evening stand-alone sessions, content also available through formed.org, free, registration preferred. Information, registration: 317-501-0060, cacdiehr@gmail.com.

November 7

Holy Trinity Cemetery, 2473 Green Valley Road, New Albany. **Burial Service for Miscarried Babies**, 4 p.m., quarterly service led by Conventual Franciscan Father Mark Weaver, blessing and burial of babies recently miscarried at local hospital. Information: Teri Popp, 812-944-0417, teri.ccna@gmail.com.

Monthly Prayer with Sisters of Providence: "Prayer on Thanksgiving," for single

Catholic women ages 18-42, via Zoom, 7-7:45 p.m., seventh day of each month. Information, registration: Events.SistersofProvidence.org, 361-500-9505, jluna@spsmw.org.

November 8

Lumen Christi Catholic School, 580 E. Stevens St., Indianapolis. **Open House**, 12:30-2:30 p.m. for pre-K through high school, 6-8 p.m. for high school only. Information: 317-632-3174, erosko@lumenchristischool.org.

November 9

Marian University, 3200 Cold Spring Rd. Indianapolis. **Gold Mass Event for Scientists**, presentation 4:30-5:20 p.m. in E.S. Witchger School of Engineering collaboritorium, Catholic University of America biomedical engineering professor Dr. Christopher Raub presents "Tissue Engineering, Organ Transplantation, and the Church," Mass 5:30 p.m. in St. Joseph's Chapel, Caito-Wagner Hall followed by reception in engineering collaboritorium. Free admission, campus parking passes provided with registration, RSVP requested by Nov. 7. Information, registration: cnicholson@

marian.edu, cutt.ly/mariangoldmass23.

November 9, 16, 30

St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Parish, 4720 E. 13th St., Indianapolis. **Jesus and the Eucharist Bible Study**, 1-2:30 p.m., final three of seven Thursday afternoon stand-alone sessions, content also available through formed.org, free, registration preferred. Information, registration: 317-501-0060, cacdiehr@gmail.com.

November 11

Our Lady of the Apostles Family Center, 2884 N. County Road 700 W., Greenfield. **"The Joy of Being a Grandmother: an Expression of Our Feminine Genius,"** 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m., prayers, talks, activities, sponsored by Regnum Christi of Greater Indianapolis, lunch included, suggested donation \$30. Information, registration: 812-498-7512, hustedlaurie@gmail.com.

St. Mary Parish, 1331 Hunter Robbins Way, Greensburg. **Holiday Shopping Expo**, 8 a.m.-2 p.m., free admission. Information: 812-663-2804, holidayexpo@stmarysgreensburg.com.

November 12

Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, Pump House Studio, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis. **Bluegrass Jam**, 5:30 p.m., free. Information: franciscansusa.org/bluegrass-jam.

November 14

Church of the Immaculate Conception, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Taizé Prayer at the Woods**, 7-8 p.m., silent and spoken prayers, simple music, silence, virtual option available. Information: Taize.SistersofProvidence.org, 812-535-2952.

The Atrium, 3143 E. Thompson Road, Indianapolis. **Gabriel Project Fundraising Dinner**, 6-9 p.m., pro-life author Kirk Walden presenting, freewill donation requested, RSVP via e-mail by Nov. 9. Registration: e-mail gpddinner2023@gmail.com with list of everyone in your group including names, address and phone. Information: goangels.org, linda@goangels.org.

November 15

Calvary Mausoleum Chapel, 435 W. Troy Ave., Indianapolis. **Mass**, 2 p.m.

Information: 317-784-4439, catholiccemeteries.cc.

November 16

Our Lady of Peace Cemetery and Mausoleum, 9001 Haverstick Road, Indianapolis. **Mass**, 2 p.m. Information: 317-574-8898, catholiccemeteries.cc.

November 17

Northside Events and Social Club, 2100 E. 71st St., Indianapolis. **Catholic Business Exchange**, Indiana Historical Society Vice President of Marketing and Sales Amy Lamb presenting "Festival of Trees ... and Much, Much More!" rosary 6:35 a.m., Mass 7 a.m., buffet breakfast and program following, \$18 members, \$24 non-members. Register by 4 p.m. on Nov. 14. Information, registration: cutt.ly/CBE-Reg

November 18

Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. **Cross Catholic Outreach Men's Spiritual Retreat**, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Dominican Father Dave Caron presenting "Father's Heart: Celebrate St. Joseph, Protector of the Holy Family," bring items for Our Lady of the Greenwood Food Pantry

especially toilet paper, soap, shampoo, peanut butter, canned and boxed items, free admission, register by Nov. 3. Information, registration: 219-775-5774, kofcjsopsma12177@gmail.com, tinyurl.com/stjoeretreat23.

November 23

Downtown Depot 1401 J St., Bedford. **Becky's Place Run for Hope 5K**, 9 a.m., pick up registration packets Nov. 22 at Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce noon-6 p.m. or Downtown Depot on race day 8-8:45 a.m., early bird pricing through Oct. 31: \$15 ages 18 and younger, \$20 adult, \$15 for one-mile fun walk, prices increase Nov. 1, registration preferred by Nov. 17, however walk-ups will be accepted, \$20 for T-shirt (order by Nov. 10), sponsorships available. Information, registration: 812-275-5773, BeckysPlaceBedford.org.

November 26

Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, Pump House Studio, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis. **Bluegrass Jam**, 5:30 p.m., free. Information: franciscansusa.org/bluegrass-jam. †

Retreats and Programs

For a complete list of retreats as reported to The Criterion, log on to www.archindy.org/retreats.

November 17-19

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Hymns to the Mother of God**, Benedictine Father Colman Grabert presenting, \$300 single, \$425 double. Registration: saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

November 18

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Grieving Our Losses**, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m., Franciscan Sister Olga Wittekind presenting, \$45, includes lunch and Mass. Registration: retreatportal.com/events, 317-545-7681, lcoons@archindy.org.

December 6

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **Contemplative Prayer**, in person or via Zoom, 2-3 p.m., Franciscan Sister Olga Wittekind presenting, freewill donation. Information, registration: 812-933-6437, center@oldenburgosf.com. †

Retreat centers offer Advent-related retreats in November and December

To help prepare hearts for the coming of the Lord at Christmas, several retreat centers in the archdiocese are offering Advent-related retreats in November and December. Here is a compilation of the sites and their Advent-related offerings:

Benedict Inn Retreat & Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. Information and registration: benedictinn.org/programs, 317-788-7581, benedictinn@benedictinn.org.

—**Dec. 4: Advent Mysteries—An Evening of Reflection**, 6-9 p.m., Father James Farrell presenting, includes dinner, \$45 credit card, \$40 cash or check.

—**Dec. 13: Personal Day of Retreat**, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., \$40, includes a private room for the day and lunch; spiritual direction is available for an additional \$30, must be scheduled in advance.

Mother of the Redeemer Retreat Center, 8220 W. State Rd. 48, Bloomington. Information: 812-825-4642 ext. 1.

—**Dec. 2: Advent Day of Reflection**, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Dominican Father Reginald Wolford presenting "The Hope of the Advent Wreath for the Order of Preachers," freewill offering accepted; no advance registration required.

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg.

—**Dec. 10: A Day of Quiet Renewal**, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., \$20, \$80 with spiritual direction. Information and registration: 812-933-6437, www.oldenburgfranciscancenter.org.

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. Registration: cutt.ly/fatimaretreats, 317-545-7681 or jburger@archindy.org.

—**Dec. 2: Stations of the Nativity**, 2-3 p.m., Father Keith Hosey leads outdoor stations from Annunciation through Flight into Egypt, will move to chapel if inclement weather, free.

—**Dec. 11, 12, 13, 14: Advent Days of Silence**, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., \$40 per day, includes room, continental breakfast, lunch and use of the common areas and grounds, overnight stays available for additional \$30 per person, dinner additional \$10.

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 100 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad.

—**Nov. 21: Advent Workshop: It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year!** 9 a.m.-3 p.m. CT, topics include "The Scriptures of Advent," "Advent is Not Lent," and "Keeping Advent surrounded by Christmas." Benedictine Father Jeremy King presenting, \$55. Registration: saintmeinrad.org/retreats. †

Intercultural Pastoral Institute hosting Spanish women's conference on Dec. 9

The archdiocese's Intercultural Pastoral Institute (IPI) is hosting a women's conference in Spanish from 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. on Dec. 9 at Holy Trinity Church, 100 Keeley St., in Edinburgh. The theme of the gathering is from the Book of Proverbs: "She is clothed with strength and dignity" (Prv 31:25). All women are invited.

Speakers will include Oscar Castellanos, director for the Initiative for Parish Renewal (*Renovación*) at Marian University in Indianapolis, and Marianhill Father José Ferney Aragón

Briñez, associate pastor of Holy Spirit Parish in Indianapolis.

The conference will be a day of meditation and reflection that will include Mass and the opportunity for women to take part in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. The sacrament of reconciliation will also be available, and lunch is included. Cost is \$30.

For more information, contact Dr. Carmen Hernandez, IPI coordinator, at 317-261-3381 or e-mail chernandez@archindy.org. †

El Instituto de Pastoral Intercultural celebrará una conferencia de mujeres de habla hispana el 9 de diciembre

El Instituto Pastoral Intercultural (IPI) de la Arquidiócesis está organizando una conferencia para mujeres de habla hispana de 9:30 a.m. a 3:30 p.m. el 9 de diciembre en la Iglesia de la Santísima Trinidad localizada en 100 Keeley St., en Edinburgh. El tema de la reunión procede de Proverbios: "Se reviste de fuerza y de honra" (Prv 31:25). Todas las mujeres están invitadas.

Entre los ponentes estarán Oscar Castellanos, director de la Iniciativa para la Renovación Parroquial (*Renovación*) de la Universidad Marian de Indianapolis, y el Marianhill Padre José Ferney Aragón Briñez,

párroco asociado de la parroquia del Espíritu Santo de Indianápolis.

La conferencia será un día de meditación y reflexión que incluirá Misa y la oportunidad para que las mujeres participen en la adoración del Santísimo Sacramento. También estará disponible el sacramento de la reconciliación y el almuerzo está incluido. La conferencia tendrá un costo de \$30.

Para obtener más información, comuníquese con la Dra. Carmen Hernández, coordinadora del IPI, llamando al 317-261-3381 o envíe un correo electrónico a chernandez@archindy.org. †

St. Louis de Montfort to host free Thanksgiving Day dinner on Nov. 23

A free dine-in or take-out Thanksgiving dinner with turkey, mashed potatoes, stuffing, vegetables, rolls and dessert will be offered in Craig Willy Hall at St. Louis de Montfort

Parish, 11441 Hague Road, in Fishers, Ind. (Lafayette Diocese), from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. on Nov. 23. All are welcome.

For more information, call 317-517-4256. †



2023 Vocations Awareness Supplement

Photo illustration by Sean Gallagher

Every vocation starts with Christ in the Eucharist

By Father Michael Keucher

In so many stories, the Gospels recount what priests and religious like to call “vocation stories.” They tell us about men and women chosen by Jesus for a special type of service.



Fr. Michael Keucher

No vocation story is quite the same, but they always start with Jesus. He finds who he wants and then issues a call.

Many examples come to mind from the Scriptures. Jesus summons Matthew out of his counting house. He invites James and John and a host of others out of their fishing boats. He tells Mary Magdalene to spread the news of his resurrection.

Each vocation story starts with Jesus calling and the recipient answering.

One of the biggest mistakes we can make is to think of Jesus simply as a historical figure. He is the God-man who lived in the past. He worked miracles, taught people and called them to service—all in the past.

Why is this a mistake? Because Jesus is alive in the most holy Eucharist! Jesus Christ has all the same powers in the Eucharist that he had when he walked

the Earth 2,000 years ago. He is still working miracles, healing and teaching, and yes, he is still calling men and women to serve him by laying down their lives.

In tabernacles and monstrances around the world, and laid on altars simple and fancy, there is the living Jesus. Alive in the Eucharist, Jesus is still calling men and women to sing God’s praises and lead all humanity to his kingdom.

Because each vocation starts with Jesus, each vocation necessarily starts with the Eucharist.

Looking for a way to know your vocation? Go to the Eucharist, the living Jesus!

Trying to grow and mature in your vocation and find the strength you need to persevere in it? Go to the Eucharist, the living Jesus!

Trying to find a way to call on Jesus, the master of the harvest, to increase the number of laborers for his harvest? Go to the Eucharist, the living Jesus!

There is no more beautiful sight than a burning sanctuary lamp flickering in the nearest Catholic church. For as long as that light flickers, Jesus is there calling men and women for special service from our parishes and families.

Not only does every vocation start with the Eucharist, but every vocation matures with the Eucharist, is held together by the Eucharist and reaches

its fulfillment in the Eucharist—because the Eucharist is the living Jesus!

As you read this year’s Vocations Awareness Supplement, pray for our priests who bring the body, blood, soul and divinity of Jesus to our altars and into our souls. Pray for our seminarians in formation who hunger for the day of their first Masses. Pray for our deacons who serve humbly at the altar and from the altar. Pray for our religious men and women vowed to the eucharistic Lord, for whom the Eucharist is their portion and cup.

And pray, too, for those in every vocation and those searching for their vocation. Jesus in the Eucharist is the way.

Get ready to meet people who have fallen deeply in love with the eucharistic Lord and who have been summoned by him to lay down their lives for the Eucharist. May their love of Jesus inspire us all to a deeper love of the Living Bread.

(Father Michael Keucher is director of vocations for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, dean of the Batesville Deanery and pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Shelbyville and St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Shelby County. Contact him at mkeucher@archindy.org.) †



New postulant finds a spiritual home with the Sisters of Providence, page 5B.



Benedictine monks live a ‘eucharistic life’ that is ‘immersed in God’, page 9B.



Sister Evangeline follows her heart to embrace a lifelong dance with Jesus, page 4B.



Seminarians Isaac Siefker, left, Samuel Hansen and Casey Deal stand on Oct. 11 by the tabernacle in the St. Theodore Guérin Chapel at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad. (Photo courtesy of Saint Meinrad Archabbey)

Seminarians' love of the Eucharist draws them closer to the priesthood

By Sean Gallagher

ST. MEINRAD—The Church in the U.S. is in the middle of its three-year National Eucharistic Revival.

Its mission is to renew the relationship of Catholics across the country with Christ in the Eucharist with the hope that it will then spur them to more effectively proclaim the Gospel in their everyday lives.

Four seminarians for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis recently shared with *The Criterion* how their love for Christ in the Eucharist has grown in three stages of their lives: while growing up, in discerning a possible priestly vocation and while in seminary.

They are seminarians Casey Deal, Samuel Hansen and Isaac Siefker, who are enrolled at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad, and seminarian Randall Schneider, who is in his final year of formation at Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary in Indianapolis.

'You look at him and he looks at you'

For Schneider, his family's move to southeastern Indiana when he was about 15 was the point where he started to grow in his love for Christ in the Eucharist.

The move closer to All Saints Parish

in Dearborn County—where they were already members—led his parents to commit to praying weekly for an hour before the Blessed Sacrament in the faith community's perpetual adoration chapel.



Randall Schneider

Schneider often went with his mother for her hour of prayer. Spending time in silence before the Blessed Sacrament opened him to the mystery of Christ's presence.

"My senses failed me when I tried to understand our Lord's presence in the Blessed Sacrament," said Schneider. "I began to pray and intentionally look at the Eucharist and to see Jesus there. ... You look at him and he looks at you.

"You begin to understand that he's there and wants to be there. He wants to be there with you. That really drew me. Without even knowing it, I was being catechized by adoration."

The seeds of his vocations were being planted as well.

"My vocation really blossomed under the sun of adoration," Schneider said. As a home-schooled high school student, he spoke about the priesthood with Father Jonathan Meyer, who serves

in All Saints Parish and the other three parishes in Dearborn County. After graduating from high school, Schneider became an archdiocesan seminarian and has been in formation at Bishop Bruté for three years.

Hansen's love for the Eucharist grew as a student at St. Roch School and Roncalli High School, both in Indianapolis, where he was influenced by "a lot of people who practiced what they preached."

That started with his father, Joseph Hansen, who was St. Roch's principal when he was a student there. It also included his fourth-grade teacher Dick Gallamore and St. Roch's pastor at the time, now-retired Father James Wilmoth.

"He was my Catholic Superman when I was young," Hansen recalled.

At Roncalli, Hansen was impressed by his English teacher Philip Milroy, who went out of his way to kneel during all-school Masses celebrated in the school gym.

"With the gym filled up, there was no room to kneel," Hansen recalled. "But I remember Mr. Milroy. He'd always sit on the edge of a row in the bleachers and kneel on the stairs during the consecration of the Eucharist. I thought then that it was incredible that he did that. He showed a profound reverence."

It was during high school that Hansen

started praying a holy hour, often in the perpetual adoration chapel of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood.

This practice was strengthened when he became a student at Wabash College in Crawfordsville, Ind., and he saw Catholic peers praying before the tabernacle in the school's Newman Center.

"That started to rub off on me," Hansen said. "I started to see the character of these guys. I realized that, if I wanted to be the man who I was created to be, I needed to give time to the Eucharist."

His thoughts about the possibility of a call to the priesthood, which had been on his mind in high school, then crystallized enough that, after two years at Wabash, he became an archdiocesan seminarian and transferred to Bishop Bruté.

The Eucharist as the 'core component' of discernment

Casey Deal grew up in Bloomington as a member of St. Charles Borromeo Parish. Attending public schools there, he credits the parish's catechists and pastors for helping him grow in his love for the Eucharist.

This love started to take off as a young adult when Father Thomas

See SEMINARIANS, page 8B

Vocations Awareness Supplement highlights the priesthood, diaconate and consecrated life

This issue of *The Criterion* features our annual supplement that highlights vocations in the Church to the priesthood, diaconate and consecrated life.

It is ordinarily published during the U.S. bishops' annual Vocations Awareness Week, which this year is on Nov. 5-11.

From the beginning, the Church has recognized that marriage is also a vocation, a pathway to holiness, to which God calls people. *The Criterion* publishes two marriage supplements annually, usually in February and July.

In addition, the Archdiocese of Indianapolis has three offices which

promote vocations. For information on the Office of Marriage and Family Life, visit www.archindy.org/marriageandfamily. For information on the diaconate, go to www.archindy.org/deacon. For information on the priesthood and consecrated life, visit www.archindy.org/vocations. †

Vow of stability helps Benedictine sisters be rooted in prayer and mutual support

By Sean Gallagher

BEECH GROVE—What vows do religious in the Catholic Church profess? Poverty, chastity and obedience? That might be the most common answer.

But it wouldn't be entirely accurate.

For some 1,500 years, Benedictine men and women have professed vows of obedience, stability and conversion to the monastic way of life. The last vow includes poverty and chastity but encompasses more aspects of life than just them.

But what about stability? What is it? In that vow, Benedictines promise to be tied to their particular monastic community for the rest of their lives.

That's what links the 45 members of Our Lady of Grace Monastery to their monastic community in Beech Grove, which was founded in 1955 by Monastery Immaculate Conception in Ferdinand, Ind., in the Evansville Diocese, and became an independent community in 1961.

Three members of Our Lady of Grace recently spoke with *The Criterion* about what the vow of stability means to them.

Benedictine Sister Nicolette Etienne, who teaches middle school religion at nearby Holy Name of Jesus School, sees stability as "a solid, rooted tree."

"To be really rooted and secure allows me to live all the other vows," Sister Nicolette said. "When you're really secure, confident and sturdy, the winds can blow, but you're safe, because you're secure."

"Everything else flows from my feeling strong, safe, secure and rooted in my love for Christ and my Benedictine sisters. That makes me strong to be able to go out and build God's kingdom."

Benedictine Sister Sheila Marie Fitzpatrick, a member of the archdiocesan Creation Care Commission, understandably views stability as the rich soil Jesus spoke of in the parable of the sower that yields 100 fold (Mt13:1-23; Mk 4:1-20; Lk 8:4-15).

"Rich soil doesn't happen overnight," Sister Sheila Marie said. "When you think of how nutrients are put in soil, it takes season after season, year after year in the cycles of life. Vegetation dies. It creates new compost and builds layer after layer after layer."

"When we make our monastic vows, we make them for life. So, we keep renewing them in ourselves every day. It's our sense of stability that allows us to do that."

Benedictine Sister Susan Nicole Reuber, her community's director of development, offers a relational image of the vow of stability: "staying at the table."

"Even when things are tough and hard, stability asks us to stay in the conversation," Sister Susan Nicole said. "Even if [other people] have an opinion different from mine, I stay in the conversation."

"It's that 'I' becoming 'we.' That's very important in community life. ... If I stay at the table and listen to the rest of the sisters, then maybe I can have a conversion and understand more why we're not choosing my particular opinion."

The vow of stability for Benedictines grew out of St. Benedict's experience of the great instability of society in late fifth-century Italy when the western part of the Roman Empire was collapsing.

Sister Sheila Marie thinks many people in society today, perhaps especially young adults, similarly seek a stability amid the often-roiling changes in contemporary culture.



Benedictine Sister Susan Nicole Reuber, left, Benedictine Sister Heather Jean Foltz and Benedictine Sister Rocio Moreno pray Evening Prayer on Oct. 16 in the chapel of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

"Our culture in the United States is one that thrives on change," she said. "Our advertisements focus on what is newer and better. To move from job to job now is seen as moving up. You don't stay in one place."

"[But] that doesn't get to the deep longing for belonging. It doesn't allow people to truly belong. I think there's a real longing for that."

Sister Susan Nicole, who was a young adult teacher at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis before joining Our Lady of Grace in 2012, has firsthand experience of this.

"I was doing lots of things at Roncalli and at St. Jude [Parish]," she said. "But there was still something missing. It was a tie to something bigger, to a community, to be with other women who believed in the same things that I believed in, being part of a group that saw gifts in me that I didn't see in myself."

"I think that's what young adults long for. They want to be known and to belong."

The Benedictine sisters of Our Lady of Grace don't just belong to their monastic community. They also value the connection they have with the city of Beech Grove in which they're located.

Its history is largely rooted in the early 20th-century development of the town as a railroad center. The days of the Beech Grove community finding its lifeblood in the large rail yard along Emerson Avenue, though, have long since passed.

"Beech Grove has survived the changes that have happened in its history," said Sister Sheila Marie. "And it's still able to maintain a small-town sense. It's a tight-knit community. It's a real blessing to have that. We hope that we're holding down our part of it on the north side [of Beech Grove]."

Sister Susan Nicole recently spoke with Beech Grove leaders about the place of Our Lady of Grace in the wider community.

"All of them said that, even if a Beech Grove community member isn't Catholic and doesn't know about the sisters, they still know that 1402 Southern Avenue is a special holy place," said Sister Susan Nicole,



This aerial photo shows Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove. The community of Benedictine sisters who live there profess a vow of stability that links them to the monastic community for life. (Submitted photo)

referencing the monastery's street address. "People know who the sisters are and the stability that we've brought to the community."

One aspect of the life of the Benedictine sisters at 1402 Southern Avenue in Beech Grove that Sister Nicolette, Sister Sheila Marie and Sister Susan Nicole emphasized as the prime expression of their stability is their daily life of prayer.

St. Benedict in his *Rule for Monasteries* said that "nothing is to be preferred to the work of God," which, for him, meant monastic communities gathering several times a day to pray the Liturgy of the Hours.

"Our monastic life is centered around common prayer and community life," Sister Nicolette said. "That's what gives us the strength to go out to build the kingdom of God."

Sister Susan Nicole sees the vow of stability beautifully illustrated in the fidelity of Benedictine Sister Mary Carol Messmer, 100, and a founding member of Our Lady of Grace, to the community's life of prayer.

"She still is at prayer every single morning, noon and evening," Sister Susan Nicole said. "She may be in a

wheelchair or behind a walker, but she's there."

Sister Susan Nicole said that, while stability drew her to Our Lady of Grace, it was prayer in the midst of stability that has kept her there.

"When I do occasionally have a time where I can't be at Morning Prayer or Evening Prayer, my day feels off," she said. "It just feels like something is missing, a great big piece of my life."

"Some mornings, I wish I could just sleep until 10 and not have an alarm clock. But then I need to be there with my sisters. I need to be praying for them. They're praying for me, even if I don't feel like being there."

For Sister Nicolette, being part of a community of women religious gathering faithfully for prayer every day is at the heart of who she is before God.

"Life isn't always easy," she said. "We're a group of women who are all different and have different idiosyncrasies. But our common goal is seeking God. It's why I'm here. To be able to seek God with another person is easier to do than doing it by yourself."

(For more information about Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove, visit www.benedictine.com.) †

Sister Evangeline follows her heart to embrace a lifelong dance with Jesus

By John Shaughnessy

When she talks about her relationship with Jesus, Franciscan Sister M. Evangeline Rutherford shares a thought that is uplifting and unusual.

"I used to go swing dancing in high school and college, and I like to think of my relationship with Jesus as a dance," she says. "I have to trust that he will lead me. I am freest when I let him be in total control of where we are going and what we are doing."

The joy and commitment that are at the heart of that response pervade every part of life for this 33-year-old woman, a member of the Perpetual Adoration Franciscans, based in Mishawaka, Ind.

Those qualities shine through as she recalls her time as a member of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis, when she was part of the ministry there that helps feed the homeless downtown.

"I was the Tuesday 'sandwich maker.' They handed out bologna-and-cheese sandwiches and peanut butter-and-jelly sandwiches to the homeless in the area," she says. "It was refreshing to be able to do some regular volunteering as an adult."

The joy and commitment are also there when she describes her current role at Franciscan Health Lafayette. Her ministry includes working in the lab and interviewing patients about their stay in the Lafayette hospital, which is run by the Perpetual Adoration Franciscans.

"I have a survey to fill out, but often the conversation becomes more personal," she notes. "It is a privilege to be able to listen to people share their stories about their families, careers, health struggles and their faith lives. I have often had the privilege of praying with patients and their families. I have also gotten to know many of our staff members."

"There have been many beautiful moments talking with patients. They have thanked me for coming and have said that they feel so much better now that someone has listened to their story. People naturally feel safe talking to a sister, and many people really open up to me. I sometimes marvel at that privilege. I know it is so much larger than just myself."

That last sentence also captures her path to becoming a religious sister, starting with the influence that her parents—George and Linda—had on her, the younger of their two children.

'God wants us to try to be the best version of ourselves'

"I have been blessed to share the faith journey with my parents," says Sister Evangeline, who grew up in Michigan. "I was able to experience many formative moments during my high school years with my dad. He was involved with youth ministry. We attended a Catholic youth camp together and went to several Franciscan University of Steubenville Youth Conferences together."

"My parents always encouraged me to do my best, but they did not demand perfection. I feel like my parents really helped me to understand that God wants us to try to be the best version of ourselves, and he is there to forgive us when we repent and call upon his mercy."

'I like to think of my relationship with Jesus as a dance. I have to trust that he will lead me.'

'Let your discernment flow from prayer. The Lord often reveals his will one step at a time.'

—Franciscan Sister
M. Evangeline Rutherford



Father Rick Nagel, pastor of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis, shares a moment of joy with Franciscan Sister M. Evangeline Rutherford after she professed her perpetual vows on Aug. 2 as a member of the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration, based in Mishawaka, Ind.. Sister Evangeline is a former member of St. John and felt supported by Father Nagel in her path to becoming a religious sister. (Submitted photo)

We can learn and strive to do better."

It was during one of the youth conferences at Franciscan University—in the summer after her high school graduation—that she first thought about being a religious sister.

"At the end of the weekend conference, they invite up any young men and women who are thinking about religious life or the priesthood to come forward for a blessing," she recalls. "I remember thinking, 'Why not you?' I did not go up for the blessing, but the question stuck, and I could never let it go."

Her eventual answer to that question took another step forward during her college years at Michigan State University, a time when, she says, "I grew to know Jesus more and more and came to know that this is how he made my heart."

She also became aware of the Franciscan sisters during her senior year in college, thanks to the influence of another young woman who felt called to religious life.

The woman, who later became Sister Mary Augustine, dropped out of her doctoral program to pursue a master's degree that prepared her to enter the Franciscan community.

"I lived in a women's discernment house at the time," Sister Evangeline recalls. "We had Saturday morning Mass and formation nights, so I got to know her through that. I went to her entrance ceremony in 2013 and met the sisters."

'A bright light among her peers'

Her connection with the Franciscan sisters continued when she moved to

Indianapolis in 2014 to take a job in the laboratory at Franciscan Health Indianapolis. Looking for a parish with a strong young adult faith community, she found hers at St. John the Evangelist, led by its pastor, Father Rick Nagel.

"I did not know anyone, and it was a place to start to get to know people," says Sister Evangeline, who also became involved in the activities of IndyCatholic, an outreach of the archdiocese's Office of Young Adult & College Campus Ministry.

"I am inspired by what has happened at St. John's with Father Rick's leadership. Adoration was just beginning when I was there. We had a holy hour on Thursday evenings. I went to confession several times during those holy hours, and Father Rick had great fatherly advice for me. I felt supported to continue in my discernment."

Father Nagel remembers her time at St. John with joy.

"She was always a bright light among her peers and gave hope to the parishioners that the young Church is alive and well," he says. "Her steadfast faith, attention to prayer and intentional discernment of God's plan for her life served as a fruitful example for others in the community."

When Sister Evangeline professed her perpetual vows this August as a member of the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration, Father Nagel made sure he was there in the chapel of St. Francis Convent in the northern Indiana community of Mishawaka.

"It was a great joy for me as a spiritual father," he says. "I was deeply moved by the joy of both Sister Evangeline and her community of sisters who welcomed her into the family of faith. During the reception, after her perpetual vows, Sister Evangeline was so present to each person who greeted her. I was moved by the time she took with us all and made each person feel as if they had an important role in her formation and life."

For Sister Evangeline, that day and her choice were a natural extension of her love of Christ and her deep appreciation for St. Francis.

'Jesus wants you to fully become who he created you to be'

"I was always drawn to St. Francis," she says. "He simply wanted to preach and live the Gospel. Our charism of perpetual adoration fits so well with Franciscan spirituality. We want to spend time with the Lord, to entrust the cares of the world to him, and to go out and preach the good news through our witness and in our words."

"I remember hearing about our community and thinking that I could spend the rest of my life reflecting on the beauty and the mystery of the Eucharist. I have been able to give my total commitment to the person of Jesus. He is now my spouse forever."

In many ways, her dance with Jesus has just begun. In other ways, she has always been moving toward his embrace of her life. It's a relationship that she hopes other young women will consider as a religious sister.

"Let your discernment flow from prayer," she advises. "The Lord often reveals his will one step at a time. So, ask the Lord, 'What are you calling me to do at this point in my life?' It might be as simple as going to adoration for an hour every week or attending weekday Mass."

"Seize the graced moments. If you are inspired to go talk to a sister or a priest or go on a discernment retreat, do it."

Most of all, she says, turn to Jesus, trusting he will lead you to where he wants you to be.

"Do not be afraid!" she says. "Jesus wants you to fully become who he created you to be. He knows your heart."

(For more information on the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration in Mishawaka, Ind., visit ssfpa.org.) †



New postulant finds a spiritual home with the Sisters of Providence

By Jason Moon
Special to *The Criterion*

ST. MARY-OF-THE-WOODS—"I knew when I came here for a month's stay in 2022, and I didn't want to leave Providence Hall."

Stephanie Rivas finally felt like she was home at St. Mary-of-the-Woods in western Indiana when she came to visit with the Sisters of Providence.



Stephanie Rivas

After four years of investigating religious life, Stephanie found herself in front of the entrance to historic Providence Hall on Sunday, Sept. 9, 2023. She knocked on the door and was greeted by Providence Sister Dawn Tomaszewski, the sisters' General Superior. She stepped through the doors and was welcomed as the congregation's newest postulant.

Stephanie, 36, has visited with the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods since 2020. At that time, she stayed at a hermitage because Providence Hall at the motherhouse was closed due to COVID-19. However, during her stay in 2020, she met with Providence Sister Barbara Bluntzer who is from Stephanie's hometown of Corpus Christi, Texas.

Stephanie's discernment began in 2019 as she investigated many other religious communities. But after meeting with Sisters of Providence

vocations director Providence Sister Joni Luna, she felt God nudging her closer and closer to the congregation founded in 1840 in western Indiana by Mother Theodore Guérin, Indiana's first saint.

"I always came back here," Stephanie said. "Sister Joni always reached out to me. It started in 2020 through social media."

Stephanie has a bachelor's degree in management from Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio. She later earned a master's degree in early childhood development at Texas A&M University-San Antonio.

After completing her graduate education, Stephanie started teaching at a reservation in South Dakota, but COVID-19 reared its ugly head and she began to feel something might need to change.

"I wasn't expecting to not be with students," she said. "So, I used that time to teach and discern."

Following her teaching stint in South Dakota, Stephanie found herself compelled to volunteer to aid woman in crisis pregnancies with the Vitae Corps program in Chicago. During her stay there, she met with many members of the Sisters of Providence who lived in Northlake, Ill., and began furthered her discernment process with Providence Sister Teresina Grasso.

"I had to know who I was as a person," Stephanie said. "I was learning myself and the history of religious life. I wrestled with it."

Even though she continued to visit with other congregations, Stephanie always felt her heart drawn back

to the Sisters of Providence and all of the natural beauty of the motherhouse campus at St. Mary-of-the-Woods.

"I like the quiet pace, and I connected with nature," she said. "I like to be in nature. Something moved me, that at-home feeling. It was probably very subtle, the at-home feeling, to me in little ways. But the quiet felt loud."

After her stay in 2022, Stephanie went home to Texas and taught at a charter school before coming back for a come-and-see retreat in October of that year.

"I started the process at that time," she said. "I applied and only three Sisters of Providence knew. I kept everything quiet. It was hard, but all of my experiences have led me to this point."

The congregation's director of postulants, Providence Sister Editha Ben, will help coordinate Stephanie's new schedule and ministry.

During her postulancy, Stephanie will take part in various ministries within the community while continuing her discernment and initial formation in religious life.



Stephanie Rivas knocks on the entrance door of Providence Hall on Sept. 9, prior to being welcomed by the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods in western Indiana as the congregation's most recent postulant. (Submitted photo)

After approximately 10 months in the postulancy, Stephanie will be eligible to enter into the first year of the novitiate. At that point, she will receive the title of sister.

(Jason Moon is the communications director for the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. For more information on the community of women religious in western Indiana, visit spsmw.org.) †

PRAY for VOCATIONS
2023-2024

Eucharistic Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us!

2023-2024 Seminarians & Religious in Formation Prayer Card

Please pray for the following individuals and intentions on the corresponding day of the month.

1. Pope Francis
2. Archbishop Charles C. Thompson
3. Deacon Anthony Armbruster
4. Deacon Samuel Rosko
5. Deacon Bobby Vogel
6. Thomas Day
7. Liam Hosty
8. Aaron Noll
9. Isaac Siefker / Sr. Emily Tekolste, SP
10. Kristofer Garlitch / Sr. Maria Gemma Barnett, SOLT
11. Samuel Hansen/ Sr. Mary Lily among Thorns McCann, SSVM
12. Timothy Khuishing / Sr. Evelyn Lobo, SSps
13. Khaing Thu / Sr. Mary Peter Ruschke, OSF
14. Lance Tony / Sr. Mary Amata Naville, OSF
15. Casey Deal / Maureen Pisani
16. Randy Schneider / Sr. Israel Mercy Magnificat, S.V.
17. Nathan Thompson / Sr. Maria Guadalupe Figueroa, RSM
18. Emiliano Enriquez De Alva / Sr. Magdalene Marie Schafer
19. Aidan Hauerperger / Sr. Mary Paul Callahan, FSGM
20. Seth Hickey / Sr. Stephanie Pahren
21. Alexander Lindberg / Sr. Katelyn Noll
22. Robert McKay / Br. Alberic Henry, OCSO
23. Noah Sherman / Br. Benjamin Sasin, CSC
24. Levi Wojtalik / Josh Amodeo
25. Aidan Smith / Br. Taylor Fulkerson, SJ
26. Jack Adams / Br. Ben Jensen, SJ
27. Maximilian Egan / Abraham Hudepohl
28. Lucas LaRosa / Nathan Huynh
29. Todd Seiler/ William Rees
30. Antonio Harbert / Joshua Russell
31. For Vocations to the Priesthood and Consecrated Life

For information on the Seminarians and Religious in Formation from the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, visit www.HearGodsCall.com





New deacon aspirants come from varied backgrounds

In August, 17 men from across central and southern Indiana began formation as the archdiocese's fifth class of deacon aspirants.

During the next four years, they will participate in the four dimensions of deacon formation: human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral.

In that time, they will meet as a group for classes or on retreat one weekend a month for 11 months

each year. Additionally, they will participate in various ministries of charity in parishes to which they will be assigned as well as other places outside of parishes such as jails, hospitals and nursing homes.

Leading the men in their formation will be Deacon Kerry Blandford, archdiocesan director of deacon formation.

The new class of deacon aspirants range in age from

40 to 72. They have been married as few as 10 years and as many as 41 years.

All continue to work at careers in the secular world in a wide range of fields including technology, engineering, education, social work, firefighting and carpentry.

The 17 aspirants come from 14 archdiocesan parishes that are located in eight of its 11 deaneries. †



James Barker

Age: 53
Wife: Julie
Children: 4
Parish: St. Joseph, Shelbyville
Occupation: Software account executive



Anthony Basso

Age: 45
Wife: Courtney
Children: 2
Parish: St. Malachy, Brownsburg
Occupation: Theology teacher at Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School in Indianapolis



Donald Burgener

Age: 55
Wife: Yolanda
Children: 3
Parish: St. Rose of Lima, Franklin
Occupation: Retail store assistant manager



Michael Crossey

Age: 58
Wife: Tricia
Children: 5
Parish: Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary, Indianapolis
Occupation: Strategic and financial management



Richard Gallamore

Age: 72
Unmarried
Parish: St. Mary, Indianapolis
Occupation: Teacher at St. Roch School in Indianapolis



Patrick Hoekstra

Age: 42
Wife: Jennifer
Children: 3
Parish: St. Malachy, Brownsburg
Occupation: Licensed clinical social worker, program manager for mental health staff for U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs



Rodrick Hughes

Age: 50
Wife: Julie
Children: 6
Parish: St. Pius X, Indianapolis
Occupation: Vice president of transformation for a technology company



Bryan Korff

Age: 63
Wife: Teresa
Children: 4
Parish: St. Michael, Greenfield
Occupation: Software developer



Peter Mejeski

Age: 62
Wife: Angela
Children: 4
Parish: St. Thomas More, Mooresville
Occupation: Insurance agent



Kevin Murphy

Age: 40
Wife: Jessica
Children: 1
Parish: St. Joseph University, Terre Haute
Occupation: Firefighter, emergency medical technician



Richard Rader

Age: 61
Wife: Andrea
Children: 4
Parish: St. Malachy, Brownsburg
Occupation: Certified public accountant



Miguel Angel Perez Salazar Carillo

Age: 52
Wife: Fernande Denise Drieux Parra
Children: 2
Parish: St. Bartholomew, Columbus
Occupation: Computer systems analyst



Christopher Rito

Age: 56
Wife: Melinda
Children: 5
Parish: SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi, Greenwood
Occupation: Research scientist



Edward Spahr

Age: 47
Wife: Susan
Children: 3
Parish: Immaculate Heart of Mary, Indianapolis
Occupation: Engineer



Augustin Torres-Lozano

Age: 52
Wife: Angelica Guadalupe Martinez Arce
Children: 3
Parish: St. Bartholomew, Columbus
Occupation: Project manager



Jayson Waterman

Age: 53
Wife: Karen
Children: 5
Parish: St. Gabriel, Connorsville
Occupation: Forester for Indiana Department of Natural Resources



Bryan Wulf

Age: 58
Wife: Patricia
Children: 2
Parish: Good Shepherd, Indianapolis
Occupation: Carpenter



Oldenburg Franciscans discover vocations at a later age

By Sean Gallagher

OLDENBURG—Franciscans have always done things a bit differently. It's in their history. In the story of their founder, St. Francis of Assisi himself.

As the son of a rich cloth merchant in early 13th-century Italy, Francis had the destiny of raising his family's glory to greater heights by becoming a chivalrous knight. It was a dream he fully embraced.

But that dream turned into a nightmare when, in a battle against neighboring Perugia, he was taken as a prisoner of war. While in captivity, Francis experienced a conversion and threw away his dreams of knightly glory.

But he went further, turning his back on his family's material riches to become "the poor man of Assisi." Although he has been beloved for centuries since by Catholics and non-Catholics alike, Francis' vocational choice shocked the townspeople of Assisi at the time. That's not what the son of a rich cloth merchant was supposed to do.

Today, members of the community of Franciscan sisters in Oldenburg are following in their founders' footsteps. Some of them have walked away from wealth like Francis did.

But four of them have broken the mold of vocational discernment in another way by embracing a call to religious life at an older age—when they were in their 40s or 50s.

Their newest postulant, Maureen Pisani, is 55. A native of Malta and a naturalized U.S. citizen, Pisani moved to Oldenburg earlier this year after selling a comfortable home in Santa Fe, N.M., and giving away many of her possessions to friends.

A successful hypnotherapist, Pisani had been driven to succeed, describing herself as a "typical type A personality."

"I would set a goal, strive to achieve it and then go on to the next," she said.

After earning a doctorate in her field in 2021, however, she was no longer satisfied making plans for the future.

"There was absolutely nothing inside," she recalled. "Every time I thought of what was next, I would get this question, 'So, are you going to say 'Yes' to me now?'"

"It stopped me in my tracks. Every step I took, it was, 'Is this because Maureen wants it? Or is it because God is asking?'"

Once she opened herself to a possible religious vocation, Pisani embraced it much like she had driven herself to succeed in worldly pursuits. After meeting Franciscan Sister Kathleen Branham, the Oldenburg Franciscans' vocations director, she visited the motherhouse in May 2022.

"I fell in love with the community," Pisani said. "The sisters are tremendous."

Among those sisters, she met three women who, like herself, joined the community at an older age.

One of them is the vocations director. Sister Kathleen joined the Oldenburg Franciscans when she was 43, walking away from a successful career in the transportation industry, selling a big home, a lake house and a boat.

"All of my friends and family were saying I was crazy for giving everything up that I had worked my life for," she said. "That's when I was realizing that St. Francis was about living the vow of poverty and that everything was a gift given by God.

"Once I gained that insight, I realized that it was very easy to give up [my possessions] because they were only gifts given to



Maureen Pisani, left, Franciscan Sister Kathleen Branham, Franciscan Sister Janette Marie Pruitt and Franciscan Sister Susan Marie Pliess pose by a statue of St. Francis of Assisi on Oct. 4, the feast of St. Francis, on the grounds of the Oldenburg Franciscan sisters in Oldenburg. Pisani is a postulant for the religious community. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

me by God to begin with to enjoy. Now it was time for me to pass them on to others."

While embracing a life of poverty after living a life of wealth as an adult was relatively easy for Sister Kathleen, living the vow of obedience was more of a challenge.

"I am a very independent woman," she said. "The vow of obedience—I'm not going to lie—has been kind of tough for me off and on through my 23 years of religious life.

"But once I got it ingrained that it's not about me, but it's about we and what's the common good of all of us, then I learned to let go of my independence and learned to become interdependent."

Franciscan Sister Susan Marie Pliess, who oversees Pisani's formation in the community, had already given up a career as an engineer long before becoming a Franciscan. Raised as a Catholic, she became an evangelical Christian as a young adult. That led her to serve as a missionary in China.

Eventually making her way back to the U.S. and the Catholic Church, Sister Susan Marie ultimately discerned in her 50s that God was calling her to religious life.

Coming to religious life after living an independent adult life for decades made some parts of her transition easier.

"You've been through lots in your life already," Sister Susan Marie said. "You've had lots of challenges. Things are not as traumatic and dramatic. You can put your nose to the grindstone and get through the formation period seemingly at times just because of your life experience.

"That might be harder for a young person who's maybe just starting to make their way."

But, like Sister Kathleen, embracing the will of the community was challenging for Sister Susan Marie after being so used to following her own will



Spires dot the skyline of Oldenburg, a historic village in southeastern Indiana that was founded by German immigrants in 1837. The spires are on the buildings and churches of the Sisters of St. Francis' motherhouse and Holy Family Parish. (File photo by Sean Gallagher)

alone for so many years.

"I had more freedom to act, especially in the area of social justice that you can't necessarily do when you're part of a community," she said. "Your voice is now the voice of the community and not your own voice as an individual Catholic."

When Franciscan Sister Janette Marie Pruitt entered the Oldenburg community in 2000, she was 51, a mother and grandmother.

Raised in Bay St. Louis, Miss., she had a desire as a child to become a religious sister, but saw racial barriers to that dream.

"Being an African-American, no one invited us to be sisters," she said. "We were not allowed to be sisters in my time."

She eventually married and was divorced, raising her children as a single mother. After her children were living on their own and she had received a declaration of nullity (annulment)

regarding her previous marriage, the possibility of religious life re-emerged in her life.

"God handled me with a long-handled spoon," Sister Janette Marie said.

Entering religious life at a later age has helped her be open to new possibilities, said Sister Janette Marie, who now makes Mass vestments.

"I'm still discovering what God has for me to do next," she said. "There's always something evolving."

In her work in promoting vocations for her community, Sister Kathleen is seeing a growing interest among middle-aged adults in religious life.

"God calls people at different times in life, not just when you're young," she said. "The Franciscan way of life is open to all of God's people. It's a radical availability. Age really doesn't have anything to do with it."

(For more information on the Franciscan Sisters of Oldenburg, visit oldenburgfranciscans.org.) †



SEMINARIANS

continued from page 2B

Kovatch became St. Charles' pastor.

Deal recalled being impressed by the love Father Kovatch showed for the Eucharist in the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday. It's a liturgy that especially celebrates Christ's gift of himself in the Eucharist and his institution of the priesthood. A eucharistic procession often happens after the Mass.

"You could just see the love that he had for the Eucharist," Deal said. "To see him love Jesus so much—the impact of those Holy Thursday Masses when he took [the Blessed Sacrament] out of the church—it was so moving for me. Jesus' presence in the Blessed Sacrament is really felt in those times."

During that time, Father Kovatch also made eucharistic adoration more widely available at St. Charles. Deal was attracted to praying before the Blessed Sacrament and began to discern God calling him to consider the priesthood.

"There was a draw to want to be with Jesus in that unique way that a priest has," he said. "That God calls normal men to confect his presence through words of the priest is incredible. It's something that I want to do and somehow I think that God might be calling me to do."

Isaac Siefker felt a call to the priesthood at a much younger age.

"The Eucharist was the core component to my discernment," said Siefker. "As long ago as I can remember, I've always said that I wanted to be a priest when I grew up. And it started with a basic love of the Eucharist."

He felt that when he was 6, before he had received his first Communion, when he saw his older brother serve at Mass at St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Bedford and had an urge to be in the sanctuary with him.

Father Richard Eldred, St. Vincent's pastor at the time, knew of his desire.

"One day, he came out of the sacristy and said to me, 'Do you want to serve?'" Siefker recalled. "I remember being so excited. I zoomed back into the sacristy. I loved so much being that close to the altar."

Like Schneider, Siefker's love of the Eucharist was also planted in him by the witness of his parents praying before the Blessed Sacrament, which they did at



Seminarian Randall Schneider kneels on Oct. 25 before the tabernacle in the chapel of Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary in Indianapolis. (Submitted photo)

St. Vincent's perpetual adoration chapel.

"We were a big homeschool family," he said. "We were very busy. And yet the Eucharist was something that they made time for. It was a priority. That alone spoke volumes."

His love of the liturgy grew when his family moved and became members of St. John the Apostle Parish in Bloomington and came to know the Franciscans of the Immaculate, who minister at the nearby Our Lady of the Redeemer Retreat Center.

After high school, Siefker took time to discern where God might be calling him. Two weeks that he spent with the Knights of the Eucharist, a community of Franciscan brothers ministering at the time at the Shrine of the Blessed

Sacrament in Hanceville, Ala., proved crucial for him.

"That was when I really got the strength I needed to enter seminary," Siefker recalled. "It had been something I was afraid of. I was able to sit before the Blessed Sacrament and tell our Lord, 'I'm afraid to do this. ... But if you're going to ask me to do it, I know you'll give me the strength and I'll give it a shot.'"

'I dream about it every day'

Mass is celebrated daily at both Bishop Bruté and at Saint Meinrad. And the Blessed Sacrament is exposed for adoration most days of the week at both seminaries.

Thus, the Eucharist is a central part of the priestly formation that archdiocesan seminarians experience.

"It's a privilege that I get to go to Mass every day," Deal said. "I have chapels readily available to me where I can pop in and say hi to Jesus in a real way. I don't want to take this for granted."

Since Schneider is involved in liturgical music at Bishop Bruté, he often finds himself praying at the back of its chapel, where its organ is. Seeing his fellow seminarians in front of him praying before the Blessed Sacrament moves him.

"It's so inspiring," he said. "Every time that I get distracted, I see one of them and their gaze redirects me back to the Eucharist. That's really been powerful for me."

As Siefker has progressed in his priestly formation, his daily life has become more complex. He takes a full load of

classes at Saint Meinrad, has a parish assignment, holds down a work-study job and volunteers for the seminary's Project Warm in which seminarians help provide firewood for people living in poverty in the area.

Yet, in the midst of being pulled in so many directions, Siefker feels a greater draw toward prayer before the Eucharist.

"It's so tempting to put eucharistic adoration on the back burner," he said. "But then I realize you have to make your time with the Eucharist your priority. Then, somehow, everything else will get done."

Keeping the Eucharist at the heart of a busy daily schedule is good training for Siefker for what it will be like for him as a parish priest, something he's yearning to be.

"Maybe I'm ahead of myself, but I dream about it every day," he said.

And those dreams are all centered on leading his future parishioners to a greater love for the Eucharist.

"If I can just get them to love the Eucharist, everything else will come along."

Hansen gets a taste of what serving as a priest can be like when he serves as an extraordinary minister of holy Communion at St. Roch, where he's still a parishioner.

"Each of the people that I'm giving our Lord in the Eucharist to are being affected differently," Hansen said. "How are these people's lives being transformed by the Eucharist? That's something I won't know until I get to heaven."

When envisioning himself as a priest, Hansen thinks about a photo of retired Father Paul Landwerlen, the archdiocese's oldest priest, praying in 2022 on his 94th birthday before the Blessed Sacrament in the perpetual adoration chapel of St. Joseph Parish in Shelbyville.

"That's what I want," Hansen said. "I want to be the 94-year-old priest that can just kneel before the Eucharist, seeing that this is what made my life great."

(To learn more about a vocation to the priesthood in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, visit HearGodsCall.com.) †



Seminarian Casey Deal kneels in prayer during an Aug. 14 Mass at the St. Joseph Retreat and Conference Center in Tipton County in the Lafayette, Ind., Diocese. The liturgy took place during the annual seminarian convocation. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)



Benedictine monks live a ‘eucharistic life’ that is ‘immersed in God’

By Br. Zachary Wilberding, O.S.B.

Special to *The Criterion*

All you who are thirsty, come to the water! You who have no money, come, buy grain and eat. Come, buy grain without money, wine and milk without cost! (Is 55:1).

For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I have life because of the Father, so also the one who feeds on me will have life because of me (Jn 6:55-57).

The above Scripture quotations remind us that God’s love is expressed in a desire to feed his people. God feeds us through his word in Scripture and through his body and blood in the holy Eucharist.

Catholics in the U.S. have been taking part in the National Eucharistic Revival since *Corpus Christi* Sunday of 2022. Sponsored by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, the renewal will culminate in the National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis in July 2024.

The revival addresses, affirms and celebrates a critical truth: the Eucharist is the source and summit of our faith because it is the body and blood of Jesus Christ, the living Word of God and the root of our faith. The bishops have given us an opportunity to reflect on this gift and proclaim it to others.

The Eucharist is all about presence. When we gather together for the Eucharist, we are present to Jesus as the assembled people of God. And because he said that he is present when two or three are gathered in his name, Jesus is present in the assembly.

During the liturgy of the word, Jesus is present in the Scriptures proclaimed. And in the liturgy of the Eucharist, he becomes present to us under the forms of bread and wine.

In receiving holy Communion we receive Jesus—body and blood, soul and divinity. To reflect on this is to realize that when we participate in the Mass, it is like standing in the midst of a tsunami of God’s grace. The communion of Eucharist then is communion with one another, with the word of God and with the body and blood of Jesus.

The English word Eucharist is based on the Greek word *eucharistia*, which means thanksgiving. Since the body and blood of Christ presented in the sacrament of the Eucharist is the greatest possible gift, thanksgiving is the foremost response.

At Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad in southern Indiana, there is a direct path between the Archabbey Church of Our Lady of Einsiedeln and the monastery dining room, which the monks call their refectory.

This feature is intentional and is meant to remind us that, in both places, we gather in an assembly for nourishment. Neither at the table of the Eucharist nor at the dining table do we eat in isolation. We eat as a community. We are in communion.

For Benedictine monks, the meal of physical nourishment will always be a reminder of the meal of spiritual nourishment.



Benedictine Archabbot Kurt Stasiak prays the eucharistic prayer during a Jan. 25 Mass at the Archabbey Church of Our Lady of Einsiedeln in St. Meinrad. The monks of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad live a life of giving thanks to God, especially in the Eucharist. (Photo courtesy of Saint Meinrad Archabbey)

Several times a day, we listen to God’s word in Scripture in the Liturgy of the Hours, as well as privately. And so, we are in communion with Christ, present in the words of Scripture. Through reflection and meditation, we deepen our relationship with him.

Like the eucharistic liturgy, the life of a monk is very much about presence and communion. Our daily lives are punctuated by times for gathering for prayer, meals, work and recreation. We are present to one another in all of these activities, and Christ is present in our brothers.

Living in community means that we serve one another. In serving one another, we serve Christ who taught us to wash each other’s feet. Benedictine Sister Joan Chittister once remarked that you can’t wash someone else’s feet if you live in isolation. Life lived in community is a life of communion.

Fed by the body and blood of Christ received at Mass, we meet and serve Christ in our brothers in the community.

In his *Rule for Monasteries*, St. Benedict counsels monks and nuns to always be ready to welcome guests as Christ. Hospitality offered to guests is another way of being present to Christ, of meeting Christ and serving him. It is a form of communion.

The core value of Benedictine monastic life is to seek God. This desire to seek God is already a gift of God’s grace. We seek God because God is seeking us and putting the desire for himself in our hearts. We desire to grow in relationship with God, to enter into communion with him.



Benedictine Father Thomas Gricoski proclaims a reading during an Aug. 15, 2022, Mass in the Archabbey Church of Our Lady of Einsiedeln in St. Meinrad. (Photo courtesy of Saint Meinrad Archabbey)

Therefore, we make ourselves present to God by being present to his word through reading and reflection, by publicly praying with the psalms and other Scriptures in church, by celebrating together the Eucharist at Mass.

Furthermore, we are present to Christ in one another in the community. We serve him in our relationships with one another.

This is a life immersed in God. It is a life of joy and gratitude, but it is also a life of trials and crosses.

But they do not overwhelm us. Jesus said that his followers would have to experience them. They lead us to resurrection and fullness of life in God’s kingdom.

At the end of several of our times of prayer, we say “Thanks be to God.” Thanks for this eucharistic way of life.

(Benedictine Brother Zachary Wilberding is vocations director of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad. For more information on the monastic community there, visit saintmeinrad.org.) †

‘Like the eucharistic liturgy, the life of a monk is very much about presence and communion.’

‘The core value of Benedictine monastic life is to seek God. ... We desire to grow in relationship with God, to enter communion with him.’



—Benedictine Brother Zachary Wilberding





ARCHDIOCESE OF INDIANAPOLIS

2023-2024 Seminararians



VOCATIONAL SYNTHESIS STAGE



Deacon Anthony Armbruster '24
Saint Meinrad Seminary
St. Malachy, Brownsburg



Deacon Sam Rosko '24
Saint Meinrad Seminary
Holy Rosary, Indianapolis



Deacon Bobby Vogel '24
Saint Meinrad Seminary
St. Joseph, Jennings County

CONFIGURATION STAGE



Thomas Day '25
Saint Meinrad Seminary
Holy Rosary, Indianapolis



Casey Deal '27
Saint Meinrad Seminary
St. Charles Borromeo, Bloomington



Kristofer Garlitch '26
Saint Meinrad Seminary
St. Mary, North Vernon



Samuel Hansen '26
Saint Meinrad Seminary
St. Roch, Indianapolis



Liam Hosty '25
Mount St. Mary's Seminary
St. Barnabas, Indianapolis



Timothy Khuishing '26
Pastoral Internship
St. Mark the Evangelist, Indianapolis



Aaron Noll '25
Saint Meinrad Seminary
St. Bartholomew, Columbus



Isaac Siefker '25
Saint Meinrad Seminary
St. John the Apostle, Bloomington



Khaing Thu '26
Saint Meinrad Seminary
St. Mark the Evangelist, Indianapolis



Lance Tony '26
Saint Meinrad Seminary
St. Simon the Apostle, Indianapolis
**Co-sponsor with the Diocese of Palayamkottai*

DISCIPLESHIP STAGE



Emiliano Enriquez De Alva '29
Bishop Simon Bruté Seminary
St. Ambrose, Seymour



Aidan Hauersperger '29
Saint Meinrad Seminary
St. Joseph, Jennings County



Seth Hickey '29
Saint Meinrad Seminary
Mary Queen of Peace, Danville



Alexander Lindberg '29
Bishop Simon Bruté Seminary
St. Joseph, Jennings County



Robert McKay '29
Bishop Simon Bruté Seminary
St. Ann, Indianapolis



Randy Schneider '28
Bishop Simon Bruté Seminary
All Saints, Dearborn County



Noah Sherman '29
Bishop Simon Bruté Seminary
St. Mary, North Vernon



Aidan Smith '30
Bishop Simon Bruté Seminary
St. Bartholomew, Columbus

PROPAEDEUTIC STAGE



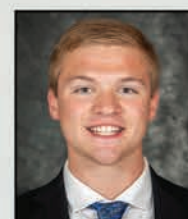
Jack Adams '30
Saint Meinrad Seminary
St. Malachy, Brownsburg



Maximilian Egan '30
Bishop Simon Bruté Seminary
Holy Rosary, Indianapolis



Antonio Harbert '31
Bishop Simon Bruté Seminary
St. Joseph, Shelbyville



Abraham Hudepohl '31
Bishop Simon Bruté Seminary
St. Nicholas, Ripley County



Nathan Thompson '28
Bishop Simon Bruté Seminary
St. Ann, Jennings County



Levi Wojtalik '29
Bishop Simon Bruté Seminary
Holy Rosary, Indianapolis



Nathan Huynh '31
Bishop Simon Bruté Seminary
Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany



Lucas LaRosa '30
Saint Meinrad Seminary
St. Mark the Evangelist, Indianapolis



William Rees '31
Bishop Simon Bruté Seminary
St. Nicholas, Ripley County



Joshua Russell '31
Bishop Simon Bruté Seminary
Holy Family, New Albany



Todd Seiler '30
Saint Meinrad Seminary
St. Mary, Aurora



vocations@archindy.org
HearGodsCall.com
(317) 236-1490





RELIGIOUS IN FORMATION

2023-2024



Sr. Teresa Kang, SP
Sisters of Providence,
Saint Mary-of-the-Woods
Temporary professed



Sr. Emily Tekolste, SP
Sisters of Providence,
Saint Mary-of-the-Woods
St. Anthony, Indianapolis
Temporary professed



Sr. Jessica Vitente, SP
Sisters of Providence,
Saint Mary-of-the-Woods
Temporary professed



Sr. Leslie Dao
Sisters of Providence,
Saint Mary-of-the-Woods
Novice



Stephanie Marie Rivas
Sisters of Providence,
Saint Mary-of-the-Woods
Postulant



Sr. Mary Lily Among Thorns McCann, SSVM
Servants of the Lord and the Virgin of Matara
All Saints, Dearborn County
Temporary professed



Sr. Evelyn Lobo, SSps
Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters,
St. Monica, Indianapolis
Temporary professed



Sr. Mary Amata Naville, OSF
Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration,
St. Mary, Navilleton
Temporary professed



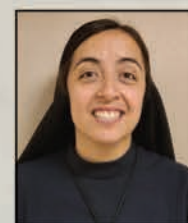
Sr. Mary Peter Ruschke, OSF
Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration,
Batesville
Temporary professed



Sr. Israel Mercy Magnificat
Sisters of Life
Novice



Maureen Pisani
The Sisters of St. Francis, Oldenburg
St. Vincent de Paul/
St. Joseph, Shelbyville
Postulant



Sr. Maria Guadalupe Figueroa, RSM
Religious Sisters of Mercy
St. Anthony, Indianapolis
Temporary professed



Sr. Magdalene Marie Schafer
Daughters of the Holy Mary of Sacred Heart of Jesus
St. Lawrence, Indianapolis
Temporary professed



Sr. Mary Paul Callahan, FSGM
Sisters of St. Francis of the Martyr St. George
St. Joseph University
Temporary professed



Sr. Stephanie Pahren
Missionaries of Charity
St. Michael, Brookville
Postulant



Sr. Maria Gemma Barnett, SOLT
Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity
St. Charles Borromeo,
Bloomington
Temporary professed



Sr. Katelyn Noll
Nashville Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia
Our Lady of Perpetual Help,
New Albany
Postulant



Br. Alberic Henry, OCSO
Abbey of Gethsemani
Our Lady of the Greenwood,
Greenwood
Temporary professed



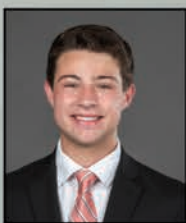
Br. Gregory Morris, OSB
Saint Meinrad Archabbey
St. Meinrad, IN
Temporary professed



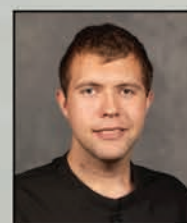
Br. Jude Romero-Olivas, OSB
Saint Meinrad Archabbey
St. Meinrad, IN
Temporary professed



Benjamin Sasin, C.S.C.
Congregation of Holy Cross,
United States Province of Priests and Brothers
St. John the Evangelist,
Indianapolis
Temporary professed



Josh Amodeo
Congregation of Holy Cross,
United States Province of Priests and Brothers
SS. Francis and Clare,
Greenwood
Postulant



Patrick Allbright
Saint Meinrad Archabbey
St. Meinrad, IN
Novice



Andrew Levering
Saint Meinrad Archabbey
St. Meinrad, IN
Novice



Taylor Fulkerson, SJ
Society of Jesus-Midwest Jesuits
St. Mary, Lanesville
Theology



Ben Jansen, SJ
Society of Jesus-Midwest Jesuits
SS. Francis and Clare,
Greenwood
Philosophy Studies

RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

Sisters of St. Benedict
Beech Grove | benedictine.com

Congregation of the Sisters of Third Order of St. Francis
Oldenburg | oldenburgfranciscans.org

Sisters of Providence
Saint Mary-of-the-Woods | spsmw.org

Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration
Mishawaka | ssfpa.org

Discalced Carmelite Nuns
Terre Haute | heartsawake.org

Order of St. Benedict
Saint Meinrad Archabbey | saintmeinrad.org

Franciscans of the Immaculate
maryschildren.com

Dominican Friars Central Province
domcentral.org

Conventual Franciscan Friars
franciscansusa.org

Little Sisters of the Poor
littlesistersofthepoor.org

Missionaries of Charity
motherteresa.org

Society of Jesus Midwest Province
jesuitsmidwest.org

Order of Friars Minor St. Louis Providence
thefriars.org

Order of Friars Minor Cincinnati Providence of St. John the Baptist
franciscan.org



New role brings full-circle moments in Father Brockmeier's vocational story

By Natalie Hoefler

In an article published just weeks before his June 25, 2016, ordination, then-transitional Deacon James Brockmeier expressed to *The Criterion* his desire for his priestly vocation.

"I just think Christ is so much closer to our lives than people think sometimes," he said in the article. "I want to help them see that closeness."

Since being appointed as director of the archdiocesan Office of Worship this summer, Father Brockmeier is in a unique position to fulfill his desire.

"I get to focus on helping parishes in the archdiocese, and the archdiocese as a whole, reflect on our worship, and to help serve as we worship the Lord well," he says.

"And I'm still blessed to be a parish priest as rector of the Cathedral [of SS. Peter and Paul in Indianapolis] and a chaplain at Butler University," Father Brockmeier adds.

In this article, he shares more about his new role—and how those duties bring him full circle in his vocational journey.

It's that 'encounter with Christ'

One of those full-circle moments involves the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC).

Father Brockmeier's first experience with NCYC was in Atlanta, Ga., in 2005, when he was 14. Looking back, he calls the event "really great."

His second NCYC experience had a much more profound impact on him as a transitional deacon less than a year away from his priestly ordination.

At that NCYC in 2015, he was honored to proclaim the Gospel to 26,000 youths during the conference's closing Mass in Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis.

"In the midst of this huge celebration of the Eucharist, Jesus is giving himself to us for the whole Church," Father Brockmeier said in the 2016 article. "But he's also calling each person to receive the Eucharist and be close to him."

"It was my prayer that [the NCYC participants] could feel that kind of closeness to the Church—that the Church is huge and they're part of it."

Now, as director of the Office of Worship, Father Brockmeier will play a much larger role for the closing NCYC liturgy in Lucas Oil Stadium on Nov. 18. (This year's NCYC gathering takes place in Indianapolis on Nov. 16-18).

"I've been [at NCYC] as a participant, as a transitional deacon, and now [in this new role] I get to coordinate the closing Mass," he notes.

"People come away from the whole conference as a beautiful experience."

"But many people point to worshipping at Mass with thousands of other youths—all worshipping the Lord, all in prayer together—as the highlight. It's that experience of not being alone and the encounter with Christ that they have."

"I'm excited about facilitating that experience for so many people."

Father Brockmeier will have a similar experience in January. For the first time, the Mass prior to the Indiana March for Life will take place in the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis, due to the high number of participants expected from dioceses throughout the state.

But the largest Mass he will play a role in assisting will come during next year's National Eucharistic Congress on July 17-21 in Indianapolis.

Since planning for the nationwide event has



Father James Brockmeier, chaplain to the Catholic students of Butler University in Indianapolis, speaks with Butler student Stephanie Gonzalez on Oct. 25 on Butler's campus. (Submitted photo)

been going on for some time, Father Patrick Beidelman (Father Brockmeier's predecessor in the Office of Worship) is coordinating its liturgies and eucharistic procession. Father Brockmeier says he is "really excited" about assisting him.

'That's a really great part of my week'

Another full-circle aspect in his new role harkens back to a moment of awe in *Sainte-Chapelle* ("Holy Chapel") in Paris, one stop on a pilgrimage Father Brockmeier took as a seminarian.

He was struck by the chapel's stunning stained-glass windows—15 of them, each about 50 feet tall, portraying 1,113 scenes from the Bible.

"The theology of the space is that the light of Christ reaches us in the Scriptures," then-transitional Deacon Brockmeier explained in the 2016 article before his ordination. "We sit in the midst of the word of God, and God's light shines through these stories."

"It really communicated the beauty of the word of God. And it's inspiring to look at the potential of the Church to create a place in the world where the light of the Gospel can shine. We're called to create this beautiful thing in the world."

Illuminating the Gospels through liturgy and worship is Father Brockmeier's mission in his new role.

"The Office of Worship serves the parishes of the archdiocese in the way that we worship as the people of God, as the Church," he explains.

That service comes in many forms. The office fields questions from parishes regarding the celebration of the Mass and other sacraments. It also coordinates preparations with parishes when the archbishop comes to celebrate Mass.

"I'm also more involved in the bigger liturgies that happen at the cathedral—ordinations, the chrism Mass, Rites of Election," Father Brockmeier says. "There are a lot of moving parts in those Masses."

He particularly enjoys educating Catholics about the liturgy.

"Sometimes I'll be invited by parishes to come and give presentations

about the Mass," he said. "And I'm preparing right now for a day of formation for our permanent deacons about their role in the liturgy."

Then there's the blessing of his continued role as a parish priest. He's rector of SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, and also serves as chaplain to the Catholic students at Butler University in Indianapolis.

"My role there is very similar to a parish priest, but on a college campus," Father Brockmeier explains.

Each Sunday, he celebrates Mass and enjoys dinner with the students, and offers Mass and adoration on Wednesdays.

"Every Wednesday, I also spend a couple hours in the afternoon out on campus making confessions available," says Father Brockmeier. "I just have a bench in the middle of campus where I sit, and I send something out to all the Catholic students signed up on our text list and say, 'Hey, I'm out in the middle of campus. I'm available to talk or hear confessions. Come stop by.'"

"That's a really great part of my week, for sure."

'The most important thing we do as Catholics'

Heading the Office of Worship in the midst of the National Eucharistic Revival is inspiring for Father Brockmeier, both in his new role and in his vocation as a priest.

"Especially at this time, we're reflecting on the Eucharist and the celebration of the Eucharist being at the



Father James Brockmeier prays part of the eucharistic prayer as a concelebrant during a Sept. 28 Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral. At right is Father Eric Augenstein, another concelebrant. Father Brockmeier serves as rector of the cathedral and director of the archdiocesan Office of Worship. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)

heart of the Christian life, the source and summit of the Christian life," he says.

"I've been trying to keep that focus at the heart of my work, that our worship of God and the Eucharist is the most important thing that we do as Catholics, and all the little details that are a part of my work all go to serving our worship as the Archdiocese of Indianapolis."

And they go toward fulfilling his vocational desire to "help people see the closeness" of Christ.

(For more information on a vocation to the priesthood in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, visit HearGodsCall.com.) †

SIMPLY CATHOLIC

Stewardship is about ‘our entire relationship with God’

By Susan M. Erschen

(OSV News)—What is stewardship?

Stewardship is perhaps one of the most misunderstood words in the Church today. Some people think it is all about money. Others think it means only time, talent and treasure. Some wonder if it is just another word for fundraising or tithing.

In reality, stewardship is the word that describes our entire relationship with God who loves and trusts us so much that he made us his stewards.

Our challenge is to strive to be good stewards by recognizing that everything we have is a gift from God, taking time to be grateful for the gifts that he has given us. We are called to realize that God gives each of us all we need—plus enough to share—and turn to the Holy Spirit for guidance in sharing our gifts as God intended.

Stewardship, therefore, is linked to our life of following Jesus.

“Once one chooses to be a disciple of Jesus Christ, stewardship is not an option,” the bishops in the U.S. stated in their 1992 pastoral letter “Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response.”

Anyone who wants to be good at any task must study it and practice it. Stewardship, too, takes practice. Society tempts us to triumph in our material accomplishments and continually strive for more. At times, resisting this pull toward self-centered materialism requires practice, prayer and careful study of God’s teachings.

At the Last Supper, Jesus Christ gave us important final messages: “I no longer call you slaves, because a slave does not know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father. It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go bear fruit that will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give you. This I command you: Love one another” (Jn 15:15-17).

This simple message from Our Lord gives us five keys for living as good stewards: spend time with God, realize God has chosen us, contribute something for God, trust in God’s abundance, and love and serve.

Spend time with God

God is the owner and master of everything. Yet, we are not his slaves. We are the stewards he trusts, the ones he invites to know him and his will. Stewardship draws us closer to God. When we embrace the role of steward, we open ourselves to know God more fully.

We foster that relationship by attending Mass more frequently; weaving more prayer into and throughout our busy days; finding time to study Scripture and religious books, articles or websites; participating in faith-enrichment activities in our parish; and stopping into a church or chapel for quiet time alone with our eucharistic Lord present in the tabernacle.



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson and priests serving across central and southern Indiana process on April 4 into SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis, joining Catholics from across the archdiocese for its annual chrisM Mass. Being stewards of God’s gifts helps Catholics become part of something greater than themselves. (File photo by Sean Gallagher)

Realize God has chosen us

How awesome it is to realize that God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, has chosen us. Everything we are, everything we do and everything we have is a result of God choosing us, loving us and blessing us.

God chooses each one of us to be the stewards of different gifts. We may have a musical talent, financial aptitude, a generous spirit or a positive attitude. Even our faith is a gift from God.

God does not give us all the same gifts. We could look around and see people who have more gifts than we have and become jealous. Or we could look around the world and see people who have much less than we have and learn to be compassionate. The choice is ours.

Contribute something for God

Based on the unique combination of gifts that God has given us, each of us is called to make a contribution that is uniquely ours to make.

We can contribute in a variety of ways: by providing

a helping hand or a strong back; leadership, knowledge or wisdom; financial support; a listening ear or a gentle smile; a new idea; and special skills or talents.

Only we, through prayer, know what God is calling us to contribute.

Trust in God’s abundance

It can be difficult for any of us to give away something that we think we need. However, stewardship teaches us to look at our financial situations in a new way. When we believe our own needs will be met, it is easier for us to give.

Unfortunately, the endless advertising so prevalent in today’s media convinces us we have endless needs. However, the things the world tempts us to grasp for ourselves are not needs. They are wants. God may not give us all we want, but we must trust that he will give us what we need, when we ask. In turn, we generously share with the world what God has entrusted to us.

Love and serve

When we share our resources more generously with the parish or our wider diocesan community, we take the focus off their financial burdens.

In this way, stewardship encourages ministry and a more loving parish and diocesan community. When we love and serve others in our local Church, we build up a community that will also love and serve us.

We become part of something greater than ourselves. We feel a sense of belonging. We also develop a sense of compassion when we reach out to those who are most in need. Belonging and compassion are two of the many unexpected benefits of living as God’s stewards.

Stewardship is not a gift we give to God, but rather a gift God gives to us.

From the earliest disciples of Jesus Christ, Catholics made the work of the Church, Christ’s mystical body, a priority in their lives. The great cathedrals and simple country churches where people worship, schools where countless children are educated, and hospitals that care for the sick and charitable institutions that serve the needs of many, have been built by generations of the faithful.

They gave, even when they had little to give, because they knew Jesus had called them as his disciples to be good stewards of the resources God entrusted to them.

(Susan M. Erschen served for 12 years as the director of stewardship education for the Archdiocese of St. Louis. She is the author of the books *God’s Guide to Grandparents* and *Finding a Loving God in the Midst of Grief.*) †



Deacon Bob Hornacek, left, leads volunteers at Paul’s Pantry in Green Bay, Wis., in prayer on Sept. 16, 2021, prior to opening the pantry to guests for the day. Being stewards of God’s gifts helps Catholics care for those in need. (CNS photo/Sam Lucero, *The Compass*)

Hispanic Ministry/Felix Navarrete

Social justice emanates from the heart of Jesus Christ

In a society with so many challenges and diversity of interests, we find a palpable reality that strongly demands our attention, especially in the Christian sphere where one of our biggest interests continues to be man and his dignity as a human being and as a child of God.



The topic of social justice should not be considered revolutionary by a group that seeks to claim its importance, nor is it a new anthropological philosophy where man becomes the center of everything. On the contrary, the topic springs from the heart of our Lord Jesus and is

intrinsically a part of the Gospel message to love and care for the most vulnerable and needy.

In reality, our Lord never tried to abolish the law of the ancients, but gave it a more human meaning by creating a close relationship between man and God. What Jesus called the law of love, we can consider as the first foundation for the social doctrine of the Church: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life" (Jn 3:16).

This reality reflects the true evangelical meaning of the message of a triune God, incarnated in a human being who experienced firsthand the challenges of society and the injustices of the world. It is a truth that led Jesus to be unjustly accused for simply wanting to demonstrate a particular and real interest in those who were oppressed by an authoritarian regime.

Social justice invites us to continue with our evangelical mission, but above all, it invites us to imitate the first teacher in social doctrine: Jesus.

There are many challenges that we as a Church must respond to, including the endless realities of injustice experienced by diverse peoples or groups in the world.

But it is important to remember that the Church is especially characterized by our being "Catholic," that is, universal. Such universality has unimaginable power when there is unity among the people of God, when the



More than 30 parish leaders took part on Aug. 11-12 in a collaborative training effort provided by the Indiana Catholic Conference and an interdiocesan alliance to discuss several topics, including some of the challenges faced by undocumented immigrants. (Submitted photo)

interest of a few acquires the strength of many, and even more so when we invoke the help that we get from the Holy Spirit.

The last act of love by our Lord Jesus before his resurrection was to give his blood completely, that is, to empty himself, of every last drop of blood and water. His blood reminds us of his pain, and the water washes that pain and gives us hope.

The scene of Jesus being pierced in the side leads us to reflect on a people who groan and cry for mercy, a people who suffer injustice and lack of love, a tragic scene where very few feel the shame of seeing a young man hanging from a cross without having deserved it. It is a scene that describes the deep pain of women when they see such an outrageous act that attacks the human gaze.

When we relive that scene, we think of the mothers

who suffer from not being able to save or protect their children from war or malnutrition, or from not being able to have the opportunity to provide basic rights to their little ones, including living in a healthy environment or being able to send them to school. In this scene, I also see the lack of mercy for some who passed by without showing compassion in the face of such injustice.

Our Church suffers and cries alongside these mothers who have no voice, suffering and crying with the marginalized of society. Our Church presents the pain of a crucified Christ, not as a sign of defeat as some believe, but as a sign of humanity to remind us that, as a Church, we have been the product of great pain.

The Church of Christ also cries out for justice for the helpless, accompanies them in suffering and represents

See HISPANIC, page 10A

Ministerio Hispano/Felix Navarrete

La justicia social brota del corazón de Jesús Cristo

En una sociedad con tantos retos y diversidad de intereses, nos encontramos con una realidad palpable que reclama fuertemente nuestra atención, especialmente en el ámbito cristiano en donde el interés superior continúa siendo el hombre y su dignidad cómo ser humano e hijo de Dios.



El tema de la justicia social no debe ser considerado como una especie de revolución por parte de un grupo que busca reclamar sus derechos, tampoco es una nueva filosofía antropológica en donde el hombre se vuelve el centro de todo, no, al contrario el

tema de la justicia social brota del corazón de nuestro Señor Jesús y está intrínsecamente comprometido con el mensaje del evangelio, amor y atención por los más vulnerables y necesitados.

En realidad, nuestro Señor Jesús nunca trató de abolir la ley de los antiguos sino que le otorgó un sentido más humano creando una estrecha relación entre los hombres y el gran Dios creador. A esto que Jesús denominó la ley del amor, podemos considerarla como el primer fundamento para la doctrina social de la Iglesia: "porque

tanto amó Dios al mundo que entregó a su hijo único" (Jn 3:16).

Esta realidad rescata el verdadero sentido evangélico del mensaje de un Dios trino encarnado en un ser humano que vivió en carne propia los desafíos de la sociedad y las injusticias del mundo, una verdad que le llevó a ser acusado injustamente por simplemente querer demostrar un interés particular y real por aquellos que eran oprimidos por un régimen autoritario.

La justicia social hoy en día nos invita a continuar con la misión evangélica pero sobre todo nos invita a imitar al primer maestro en doctrina social: Jesús. Son muchos los retos que tenemos como Iglesia para dar respuesta a las interminables realidades de injusticia que viven los pueblos o grupos diversos en el mundo, pero es importante recordar que la Iglesia se caracteriza especialmente por ser "Católica" es decir universal, tal carácter de universalidad tiene un poder inimaginable cuando existe unidad entre el pueblo de Dios, cuando el interés de unos pocos adquiere la fuerza de muchos, y más aún cuando invocamos la ayuda que proviene del Espíritu Santo.

El último acto de amor de nuestro Señor Jesús antes de su resurrección fue el haber entregado su sangre por

completo, es decir vaciarse completamente brotando de su costado hasta la última gota de sangre pero también de agua, una sangre que nos recuerda el dolor y un agua que nos lava del dolor y que nos brinda esperanza, esta escena de Jesús siendo traspasado por la lanza nos lleva a reflexionar acerca de un pueblo que gime y clama misericordia, un pueblo que sufre las injusticias y la falta de amor, una escena trágica en donde muy pocos sienten la pena de ver a un hombre joven colgando de un madero sin haberlo merecido, una escena que describe el dolor profundo de las mujeres al ver tal acto de ultrajante que atenta incluso contra la mirada humana, cuando volvemos a revivir esa escena pensamos en las madres que sufren por no poder salvar o proteger a sus hijos de la guerra o de la desnutrición, o por no poder tener la oportunidad de brindar los derechos básicos a sus pequeños como el de vivir en un ambiente sano y saludable o de enviarlos a la escuela. También encuentro en esta escena la falta de misericordia de aquellos que pasaban por el lugar sin despertar en ellos una reacción de compasión ante tal injusticia.

Nuestra Iglesia sufre y llora junto a esas madres,

Mira HISPANO, pagina 10A

Guest Column/Richard Etienne

While you can't be perfect, always give your best effort in this life

"Perfect!"

In my experience, it's a word that is sometimes used when a young couple is just beginning a relationship.



"I have found him and her! ... Or he or she is perfect!" Those two phrases come to mind. At the beginning, every activity is fun or amazing or exciting and new!

But as time passes, we realize—whether it's as a couple or in the sacred single life—that people and situations are never perfect.

We are all broken individuals. We all make bad choices at times. This is called sin. Yet, God somehow works with what is available from us at the time.

For example, Peter denied Christ. Thomas doubted Christ. And King David, a "favorite" of God, was caught in an adulterous and murderous plot.

Yet God loved and forgave each of them. And we, in the present day, are no exception to this human condition of sinfulness.

On the other hand, I know someone who often complements others with the phrase, "decent job." This person is, of course, teasing—in most situations.

I am among those who believe every

effort in life should not be characterized as merely "decent."

I believe somewhere between a "decent" and "perfect" job is an appropriate middle ground for more informative feedback for other people's behaviors and actions.

My family and I have a reminder we see every day. A plaque in our home reads: "Don't forget: A person's greatest emotional need is to feel appreciated."

And knowing the words or phrases other people love to hear can be a great springboard in knowing what they most want to be appreciated for.

In Scripture, we read in the Gospel of Matthew challenging words that Jesus

shares with his disciples: "... be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt 5:48).

We know there are few situations in life where a person will truly have an opportunity to apply the word "perfect" to whatever challenges they are taking on.

We no doubt understand that total perfection is unachievable in this lifetime, but as followers of Christ, let's always strive to put our best effort into everything we do.

(Richard Etienne has a degree in theology from Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad and resides in Newburgh, Ind.) †

Thirty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, November 5, 2023

- Malachi 1:14b-2:2b, 8-10
- 1 Thessalonians 2:7b-9, 13
- Matthew 23:1-12

The Book of Malachi provides the first reading for Mass this weekend. The prophet's name, Malachi, reveals his role. In Hebrew, it means "messenger of God." As a prophet, he brought God's message to the people.



Often in prophetic writings, as in this weekend's reading, the prophets wrote in a way in

which God spoke in the first person. The prophets presented themselves merely as earthly instruments through whom God spoke, but the actual communicator was God.

Malachi did not write at a time of crisis for God's people, as was the case for other prophets, or when life was filled with peril and destitution. Nevertheless, Malachi shared with all the prophets the opinion that when people were sluggish in their religious observance, or when they altogether had rejected God, they risked their own well-being.

Lack of fervor, in the estimates of the prophets, was the height of ingratitude. By contrast, God always was merciful, always faithful to the covenant.

In this weekend's reading, God accuses the people of sin. He is the perfect and all-knowing judge. He is merciful, but God does not prevent people from sinning. It is their choice. He also does not interrupt the consequences of sinning.

St. Paul's First Epistle to the Thessalonians supplies the second reading. In this reading, Paul reassures the Christians of Thessalonica that he cares deeply for them and especially for their spiritual vitality.

Essential to these feelings of care and love has been Paul's proclamation of the Gospel. He could do nothing greater for the Thessalonians than to share with them the saving story of Jesus.

For its third reading, the Church presents a passage from St. Matthew's Gospel. It is the last in a series of stories in which Jesus discusses or argues with the Pharisees or with others. As often

as elsewhere in the Gospels, Jesus denounces the Pharisees' hypocrisy.

Pharisees were learned in Jewish law and tradition, usually occupying central places in synagogues, regarded as people very knowledgeable in religious matters, hence the Lord's reference to the "chair of Moses" (Mt 23:2). Still, they were humans, subject to temptation. They were not perfect, and they knew it—if they were intellectually honest.

Humans are always insecure and confused, burdened by their inadequacies. To compensate, to convince themselves or others of superiority, humans often seek places of privilege or control over others.

Jesus tells the disciples to serve others. He calls them to be bold and encourages them. With God's grace, nothing needs to be feared.

Reflection

For weeks, in these readings from St. Matthew's Gospel, Jesus has assumed the role of the final authority, of the ultimate judge. Jesus pronounces on the most supreme of all laws, the law of Moses.

For Matthew, Jesus judges as the Son of God, in a position to pronounce on anything and everything.

Matthew depicts Jesus as always presenting the wisest and most reasonable of judgments on matters that usually perplex others.

In this weekend's Gospel, Jesus directly addresses the most basic of human inadequacies: the deep fear within us all that we, even unwittingly, will make mistakes and pay the price.

Be strong, the Lord admonishes. There is nothing to fear. Be sincere. Follow the Lord in confidence.

Supporting this view are the readings from First Thessalonians and from Malachi. God is always with us in mercy, love, guidance and protection. He sent to us the prophets, the Apostles and, of course, Jesus.

Still, God does not overwhelm us. We voluntarily must turn to God. We must hear God. We must love God. Always crippling us will be our embedded fears and defenses, but in conquering self, we do not leave ourselves at risk. God strengthens us. †

Daily Readings

Monday, November 6

Romans 11:29-36
Psalm 69:30-31, 33-34, 36
Luke 14:12-14

Tuesday, November 7

Romans 12:5-16b
Psalm 131:1cde, 2-3
Luke 14:15-24

Wednesday, November 8

Romans 13:8-10
Psalm 112:1b-2, 4-5, 9
Luke 14:25-33

Thursday, November 9

The Dedication of the Lateran Basilica
Ezekiel 47:1-2, 8-9, 12
Psalm 46:2-3, 5-6, 8-9
1 Corinthians 3:9c-11, 16-17
John 2:13-22

Friday, November 10

St. Leo the Great, pope and doctor of the Church
Romans 15:14-21
Psalm 98:1-4
Luke 16:1-8

Saturday, November 11

St. Martin of Tours, bishop
Romans 16:3-9, 16, 22-27
Psalm 145:2-5, 10-11
Luke 16:9-15

Sunday, November 12

Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time
Wisdom 6:12-16
Psalm 63:2-8
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
or 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14
Matthew 25:1-13

Question Corner/Jenna Marie Cooper

Prayers to saints aren't part of 'to-do list' for those in heaven's eternal life

With more than 7 billion people in the world, it stands to reason that, at any given moment in time, thousands of people are praying to any given saint



(Our Lady being an example). If the saints still have minds like they did when alive on Earth, how can they possibly grasp and process all of those prayers? (Virginia)

A phrase in your question is "if the saints still have minds like they did ..."

There is a reason why we sometimes refer to a person's passing away as "entering into eternity." Linear time as we know it is something specific to our mortal lives on Earth and does not carry over into the afterlife. Heaven, like hell and purgatory, is a state that exists outside of time.

(Although prior to the Second Vatican Council partial indulgences were sometimes referenced in terms of days or years saved from purgatory, this was meant to represent the amount of time it would take to obtain a similar amount of purifying grace for someone on Earth, and not a literal timeline for the one

actually in purgatory awaiting heaven.)

So, my thought is that the saints upon whom we call to intercede for us experience these requests as part of one large eternal "now," not as a to-do list they struggle to fit into a schedule.

I'm confused as to why, if St. Peter was our first pope, we have only two of his writings in the New Testament. St. James, another early leader, only has one book included. St. John has five, but St. Paul, who never even met Jesus while Jesus was alive here on Earth, has 13 books included. As our first pope, it certainly seems like there ought to be more in Scripture from Peter. (Indiana)

Perhaps some Apostles have more writings in the New Testament than others because—like their successors, today's bishops—they were human beings with different strengths, talents and particular pastoral concerns. You might as well ask why someone like Bishop Robert E. Barron, the bishop of a small rural diocese in Minnesota, has written more books than many bishops of much larger archdioceses—or Pope Francis himself.

Even though St. Peter was the first pope, his status as the "first among equals" among the Apostles doesn't automatically mean that writing was his personal strong suit. Unlike St. Paul, who was a Pharisee and a scholar, St. Peter had been a humble fisherman before hearing Jesus' call to follow him.

St. Paul's ministry also had a different theme, as it were, than Peter's. Paul himself tells us in his Letter to the Galatians that Peter was an Apostle to the Jews, working to bring the Gospel among those who already worshipped the one true God, while Paul saw his mission as directed toward the Gentiles, striving to evangelize the pagan cultures of the first century Roman empire (See Gal 2:7-9).

Because of this, St. Paul had to address a greater variety of people. He traveled more widely, and therefore he would have had a more pressing need to communicate via written letters. Naturally, the more letters written, the more were likely to have been preserved and later included in the canon of Scripture.

Many Apostles have no extant writings at all, but we might reasonably suppose that most of their teaching was done via oral preaching in the context of the particular local Churches to which they devoted themselves.

(Jenna Marie Cooper, who holds a licentiate in canon law, is a consecrated virgin and a canonist whose column appears weekly at OSV News. Send your questions to CatholicQA@osv.com.) †

My Journey to God

Autumn Beauty

By M. Lynell Chamberlain

Leaves litter the cooling ground,
The birds fall silent at last.
Summer is fully and truly gone,
The sun but a ghost of the past.
Yet I revel in this starkness,
The beauty surrounding me still,
The absence of one thing reveals another.
That's the essence of life distilled
In the stark, cold, autumn valley
Beneath the slumbering hills,
Where I feel the presence of God
Surrounding and loving me still.

(M. Lynell Chamberlain is a member of St. John Paul II Parish in Sellersburg. Photo: A family walks on a trail in Shades State Park in Waveland, Ind.) (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)



After mass shooting, Maine parish becomes a hub of healing

(OSV News)—A Maine parish has become a hub of healing as its community grapples with a devastating mass shooting.

“It’s been miraculous what the Holy Spirit has done,” said Tyler Nadeau, director of evangelization and catechesis at Prince of Peace Parish in Lewiston, Maine. “I can say with 100% certainty that God has sent legions of angels into our community.”

Nadeau spoke with OSV News hours after an Oct. 29 prayer vigil—organized by Lewiston officials and hosted by the parish—drew some 4,000 residents to the Basilica of SS. Peter and Paul, one of the five churches that comprise the parish.

The evening gathering commemorated the 18 victims killed in an Oct. 25 shooting rampage that spanned two locations in Lewiston. The attack was the deadliest mass shooting since 21 people were killed at an elementary school in Uvalde, Texas, in May 2022.

After a two-day manhunt that saw the town and surrounding communities locked down, 40-year-old suspect Robert Card was found dead of an apparently self-inflicted gunshot wound.

Speaking to media after the discovery, Maine Gov. Janet Mills said she was “breathing a sigh of relief ... knowing that ... Card is no longer a threat to anyone.”

“Now is a time to heal,” she said.

That task began when “the community

came back to its roots” at the basilica, Nadeau told OSV News.

“We were able to come out as one,” he said. “So many people just walked [into the basilica] and said, ‘We had forgotten how beautiful this is.’”

The bells of the basilica—which was “built by the community of mill workers through the Great Depression”—told for the dead, and “there were almost 2,000 people standing outside in the street on the front lawn watching a [livestream] of what was happening inside,” said Nadeau.

The parish also held an additional vigil featuring eucharistic adoration and another tolling of bells, with some 200 in attendance—including members of some of the victims’ families, Nadeau said.

No parishioners from Prince of Peace were among those slain, he said, although one teen parishioner was injured and hospitalized for reconstructive surgery.

At the same time, “we all [lost someone],” said Nadeau. “This is one community, and people don’t appreciate how connected Maine is.”

Several of Nadeau’s family members who are hard of hearing knew the victims who were part of the local deaf community.

One of the parish’s priests—who wished to remain unnamed and who serves as a hospital chaplain—“sat with one of the deceased until the family could arrive,” said Nadeau. “And then he sat

with the family the rest of the night.”

Parishioners also are remembering the suspect in their prayers, he said.

“I’m not going to say it’s easy to pray for Robert Card,” Nadeau admitted. “It’s very, very hard to pray for him. [But] we can’t hate him, because hate just breeds more pain. ... And we don’t know the whole story. Mental health struggles are real. ... What was going through his mind? Did he get any clarity as to the evil that had been committed? ... If he did wrestle with his own demons, we have to pray for that.”

Nadeau said the parish will frame and present to first responders and city officials an Oct. 28 message of consolation from Pope Francis, which was issued by the Vatican secretary of state, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, and sent to Bishop Robert P. Deeley of Portland, Maine, by the U.S. apostolic nuncio, Cardinal Christophe Pierre.

The parish has already raised more than \$10,000 for the victims’ medical and funeral expenses, Nadeau said.

The work of healing hearts will take time, he said.

“We’re always going to be that town where that awful thing happened. ... It needs to scar over, this wound,” he said. “[But] it’s going to be a continual message of hope that there is no room for hate, that evil does exist, but that wherever evil things happen, grace abounds and the Holy Spirit is there.”

In a reflection penned moments after



A woman holds a candle outside the Basilica of SS. Peter and Paul in Lewiston, Maine, on Oct. 29 during a vigil for the victims of a deadly mass shooting. (OSV News photo/Kevin Lamarque, Reuters)

his interview with OSV News, Nadeau added, “If our churches could speak, they would tell the people of Lewiston, that they are one with them. That their doors are open for them, and that all are welcome to come and rest. ... They would tell Lewiston of how so very sad they are, for the losses they have endured.

“If our churches could speak, they would tell the people of Lewiston of their love for them.” †

HISPANIC

continued from page 8A

a light for many. It is a home and shelter for immigrants and a refuge for those who desperately seek comfort.

Our archdiocese is part of a group of organizations that is advocating for changes that generate better conditions for our most vulnerable.

Currently, with the support of the Indiana Catholic Conference and an interdiocesan alliance, we are joining forces so that our undocumented immigrants might be

able to obtain a permit to drive. At present, it appears somewhat complicated since laws have not yet been designed to benefit some people. Laws are written to guarantee a social order, but we also know that the world is moving and undergoing changes that should lead us to consider possible ways to provide solutions to new realities. A first step of this initiative was a training session for parish leaders that involved more than 30 people, including two of our state senators.

Identifying the signs of the times can lead us down a path that started more than 2,000 years ago, a path that began with a change, generating a transformation

in a group of 12 people, who lived and understood the messianic message and whose contribution to our society kept us alive as a Church with the hope that one day all will understand our Lord’s message of loving and serving all our brothers and sisters.

It is a message that springs from the Sacred Heart of Jesus and promises hope and comfort for those who are tired and overwhelmed, a heart that becomes a place of rest for many, and one that strengthens us in our mission.

(Felix Navarrete is archdiocesan coordinator of Hispanic Ministry.) †

HISPANO

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mujeres que no tiene voz, sufre y llora con los marginados de la sociedad, nuestra Iglesia presenta el dolor de un Cristo crucificado no como un signo de derrota como algunos creen sino como un signo de

humanidad, para recordarnos que también como Iglesia hemos sido producto de un gran dolor.

La Iglesia de Cristo también clama por justicia para los desvalidos, acompaña en el sufrimiento y representa una luz para muchos, es casa y hogar de inmigrantes, y refugio para aquellos que buscan desesperadamente un Consuelo.

Nuestra arquidiócesis es parte de un grupo de organizaciones que está abogando por cambios que generen condiciones dignas para nuestros más vulnerables, actualmente con el apoyo de la Oficina de Conferencias Católicas de Indiana y una alianza interdiocesana estamos uniendo fuerzas para que nuestros indocumentados puedan obtener un permiso de conducir y si, suena un poco complicado ya que las leyes en este sentido no han sido diseñadas para beneficiar a un grupo determinado de personas, las leyes son por lo general estratégicamente construidas para garantizar un orden social y por eso son leyes, pero también sabemos que el mundo se mueve y sufre procesos de transformación

que nos llevan a considerar posibles brechas para dar soluciones a nuevas realidades, un primer paso de esta iniciativa ha sido un entrenamiento para líderes parroquiales que involucró a más de treinta personas incluyendo la presencia de dos senadores.

Identificar los signos de los tiempos actuales nos pueden conducir a un camino que ya se inició hace mas de dos mil años, un camino que empezó con un cambio, generando una transformación en un grupo de 12 personas, que vivieron y entendieron el mensaje mesiánico y que cuya contribución a nuestra sociedad nos mantiene vivos como Iglesia con la ilusión que un día no muy lejano todos podamos comprenderlo, un mensaje que brota del Sagrado Corazón de Jesús y que promete esperanza y consuelo para los que están cansados y agobiados, un corazón que se convierte en el lugar del descanso para muchos, y que nos fortalece en la misión.

(Felix Navarrete es el coordinador del Ministerio Hispano en el Arquidiócesis de Indianapolis.) †

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As world prays for peace, Israeli-Hamas war intensifies by air, on ground

JERUSALEM (OSV News)—As the world prayed for peace in the Holy Land on Oct. 27, Pope Francis called for the war to halt and prayers to continue during the *Angelus* on Oct. 29, as death toll in Gaza passed 8,000 and Israeli troops gradually increased their ground activity in the Gaza Strip.

“Let us not stop. Let us continue to pray for Ukraine, as well as for the serious situation in Palestine and Israel, and for other regions at war,” the pope said. “Particularly, in Gaza, may space be opened to guarantee humanitarian aid, and may the hostages be released right away. Let no one abandon the possibility that the weapons might be silenced—let there be a ceasefire,” the Holy Father urged.

In a recorded Oct. 25 YouTube video message, Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, the Latin patriarch of Jerusalem, told the Christians in Gaza—who he called his “dear ones”—that he is dedicating all of his time not only in prayer for them, but also in dialogue with all the responsible authorities in order to bring the Israel-Hamas war, now in its third week, to an end.

“What we are living now ... is touching my heart, me personally but [also] all of our community,” he said in the video, which he began with an Arabic greeting. “We are also very encouraged, I am very encouraged, by your testimony for the way you are living this terrible situation.”

He said their testimony reminded him of the word of Jesus: “Do not be afraid of those that can kill the body but cannot kill the soul” (Mt 10:28).

“I am with you in your suffering and your pain is my concern,” he said. “You are not alone: all the Christian community in the Holy Land, not only in the Holy Land, but all over the world, is with you praying for you and supporting you.”

There are some 1,000 Christians living in Gaza mainly belonging to the Latin Catholic and Greek Orthodox Churches, with a small Baptist presence as well. The majority of the Christian community has taken shelter in the Holy Family Parish church compound after an Israeli missile landed next to a Greek Orthodox Church compound, destroying part of the structure and killing 18 people.

“Now we have also 18 brothers and sisters who are in heaven praying for you and interceding for you and they are our strength,” said Cardinal Pizzaballa. “God is with you; we are with you. Be strong, one day I am sure, we will join again in Gaza ... for prayer in joy and in peace.”

On Oct. 7, thousands of Hamas terrorists breached the security fence separating Gaza from the southern Israeli agricultural communities on the border, and brutally murdered some 1,400 Israelis, mostly civilians including children and elderly, in their homes and

at a dance party at a nearby kibbutz, and taking 239 people—elderly, children and toddlers, and disabled—hostages to Gaza, a new number confirmed to Fox News on Oct. 29.

Israel has since retaliated with airstrikes. Save the Children put the number of children killed in Gaza at 3,195 during the three weeks of fighting. But as war rages in Gaza, settler violence is growing in the West Bank as all eyes are focused on the war, noted the Israeli nongovernmental organization Yesh Din, which documents and prosecutes instances of settler violence.

Since Oct. 7, the NGO said at least 82 Palestinian households were forcibly driven from their homes by settlers, who have been threatening farmers herding their flocks and now with the start of olive-picking season, also farmers tending their trees. On Oct. 22, for the first time, settlers threatened and beat farmers from Christ the Redeemer Parish in the West Bank Village of Taybeh as they began harvesting their olives, said parish priest Father Bashar Fawadleh.

“Our village is quiet. We are afraid, it is not safe. There has never been anything like this, not even during the second intifada,” he said. “It is because of the fanatical trio in the Israeli government [Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Minister of Finance Bezalel Smotrich and Minister of National Security Itamar Ben-Gvir.] This is the point we are now in. It is very dangerous,” the priest said.

On Oct. 27, a Jewish settler fatally shot a Palestinian man harvesting olives near the city of Nablus.

On Oct. 28, only three families were out picking their trees and only on lands close to the village with their cars facing in the direction of the village, so that in case the settlers came from over the ridge, they would be able to escape quickly, Father Fawadleh noted.

Prime Minister Netanyahu met with representatives of families of Israeli hostages held captive in Gaza, and pledged that Israel “will exhaust every possibility” to bring about their return. However, he did not agree to release Palestinian prisoners from Israeli prisons in return—a move demanded by families of Israelis kidnapped by Hamas.

Prayers in the Holy Land continued to beseech for peace, and on Oct. 27 the Franciscan friars in Jerusalem, led by the cardinal and the custos of the Holy Land, Father Francesco Patton, united with the call by Pope Francis for a day of prayer and fasting by walking the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem’s Old City for the first time since the war broke out.

“The situation in Gaza is critical, with bombings and in all of Gaza Strip there is shortage of everything: water, fuel, food, medicines,” said Mother María del Pilar Llerena Vargas, a Sister of Charity of the



A child is near a sign that says “Pace,” peace in Italian, as visitors gather to pray the *Angelus* with Pope Francis in St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican on Oct. 29. (CNS photo/Lola Gomez)

Incarnate Word from Peru who is serving in the Catholic parish in Gaza, in a videotaped Spanish message on behalf of all the Christians of Gaza. She shared her message before she led the worshippers in a prayer for peace at the Holy Family Parish on the feast of Our Lady of Palestine.

“We all—religious and lay—are praying for peace and an end to the war, and for help to all the needy in the south and north of Gaza. We are grateful for the closeness of the Holy Father, and we thank all who pray and work for peace. We want to pray to the Virgin this beloved prayer of peace.”

Another video posted on the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem Facebook page shows a group of children from the parish with their hands pressed together praying for peace during the feast of Our Lady of Palestine celebrations.

At the shrine of Deir Rafat, outside of Jerusalem, Cardinal Pizzaballa presided over a Mass followed by the traditional procession with the icon of the Virgin Mary, Queen of Palestine, who is the principal patroness of the diocese. The shrine was erected during another time of tensions, in 1929, and was chosen as a special place to pray for peace. However,

because of the current state of war, where Hamas is still firing missiles into Israel, the faithful were not able to attend the traditional procession this year.

Earlier, in an open letter to the entire diocese, the cardinal noted that the people in the area were going through “one of the most difficult and painful periods” in recent times.

He condemned both the atrocities of Oct. 7 in southern Israel and the cycle of violence in Gaza.

“It is time to stop this war, this senseless violence,” he said.

The only way a serious peace process can begin is ending decades of occupation and “giving a clear and secure national perspective to the Palestinian people,” he said.

“Unless this problem is solved at its root, there will never be the stability we all hope for. The tragedy of these days must lead us all, religious, political, civil society, international community, to a more serious commitment in this regard than what has been done so far,” Cardinal Pizzaballa said.

In John 16:33, Jesus spoke of courage, he noted: “Such peace, such love, require great courage,” he said. †

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Pope asks Mary to ‘convert those who fuel and foment conflict’

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis asked Mary to look mercifully upon the human family, “which has strayed from the path of peace,” and entrusted to her protection the world’s regions and nations at war.

“Queen of Peace, you suffer with us and for us, as you see so many of your children suffering from the conflicts and wars that are tearing our world apart,” the pope said during a prayer service for peace in St. Peter’s Basilica on Oct. 27.

“At this dark hour—this is a dark hour, Mother—we submerge ourselves in your luminous eyes. We entrust ourselves to your heart, sensitive to our problems,” he said, looking at an icon of Mary.

With a black-beaded rosary in hand, Pope Francis prayed with cardinals, bishops and delegates of the assembly of the Synod of Bishops, recalling Mary’s strength and initiative from several Gospel scenes—the visitation, the wedding feast at Cana, Jesus’ passion and resurrection.

“Now, Mother, once more take the initiative for us, in these times rent by conflicts and waste by the fire of arms,” the pope said. “Teach us to cherish and care for life—each and every human life!—and to repudiate the folly of war, which sows death and eliminates the future.”

Pope Francis asked Mary to “touch the hearts of those imprisoned by hatred, convert those who fuel and foment conflict.

“Queen of all peoples, reconcile your children, seduced by evil, blinded by power and hate,” he said.

The pope also asked her to care for the victims of war: children, the elderly and isolated, the sick and wounded and those forced to abandon their homeland and loved ones due to conflict.

“To you we consecrate our world, especially those countries and regions at war,” the pope said without naming any particular nation or region. “To you we consecrate the Church, so that in her witness to the love of Jesus before the world, she may be a sign of harmony and an instrument of peace.”

Present on the altar was an icon of Mary, “*Salus Populi Romani*,” (“Protectress of the Roman People”) which has been present on the stage of the Vatican audience hall where the assembly of the synod on synodality has been held.

Among the cardinals present for the ceremony was Cardinal Matteo Zuppi of Bologna, the pope’s Ukraine peace envoy and a synod delegate. Ambassadors to the Holy See from many nations also attended.

On the eve of the last working day of the assembly of the Synod of Bishops, Pope Francis asked Mary to “help us preserve unity in the Church and to be artisans of communion in our world.

“Make us realize once more the importance of the role we play,” he said. “Strengthen our sense of responsibility for the cause of peace as men and women called to pray,



Women religious join Pope Francis in praying for peace in St. Peter’s Basilica with members of the assembly of the Synod of Bishops at the Vatican on Oct. 27. (CNS photo/Lola Gomez)

worship, intercede and make reparation for the whole human race.”

After Pope Francis’ prayer for peace, the Eucharist was exposed on the basilica’s main altar, and a moment for silent prayer in adoration was observed.

Cardinal Michael Czerny, prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, led Benediction, blessing the people gathered in the basilica by making the sign of the cross with the monstrance, praying, “let us adore with living faith the holy mystery of your body and your blood.” †

SYNOD

continued from page 3A

In several places throughout the report, assembly members insisted that greater efforts must be made to listen to the survivors of clerical sexual abuse and those who have endured spiritual or psychological abuse.

“Openness to listening and accompanying all, including those who have suffered abuse and hurt in the Church, has made visible many who have long felt invisible,” it said. “The long journey toward reconciliation and justice, including addressing the structural conditions that abetted such abuse, remains before us, and requires concrete gestures of penitence.”

Members of the assembly said the process helped them experience the Church as “God’s home and family, a Church that is closer to the lives of her people, less bureaucratic and more relational.”

However, it said, the terms “synodal” and “synodality,” which “have been associated with this experience and desire,” need further clarification, including theological clarification and, perhaps, in canon law.

Some participants, it said, questioned how an assembly where about 21% of participants were lay women, lay men, religious and priests could be termed a Synod of Bishops.

The report also acknowledged fears, including that “the teaching of the Church will be changed, causing us to depart from the apostolic faith of our forebears and, in doing so, betraying the expectations of those who hunger and thirst for God today.”

In response, though, assembly members said, “We are confident that synodality is an expression of the dynamic and living Tradition.

“It is clear that some people are afraid that they will be forced to change; others fear that nothing at all will change or that there will be too little courage to move at the pace of the living Tradition,” the report said.

“Also,” it added, “perplexity and opposition can sometimes conceal a fear

of losing power and the privileges that derive from it.”

Members of the assembly described the synodal process as being “rooted in the Tradition of the Church” and taking place in light of the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, particularly its emphasis on “the Church as Mystery and People of God, called to holiness.”

Synodality, they said, “values the contribution all the baptized make, according to their respective vocations,” and thus “constitutes a true act of further reception of the Council.”

The report also insisted the purpose of synodality is mission.

“As disciples of Jesus, we cannot shirk the responsibility of demonstrating and transmitting the love and tenderness of God to a wounded humanity,” the report said.

Throughout the synod process, the report said, “many women expressed deep gratitude for the work of priests and bishops. They also spoke of a Church that wounds. Clericalism, a chauvinist mentality and inappropriate expressions of authority continue to scar the face of the Church and damage its communion.

“A profound spiritual conversion is needed as the foundation for any effective structural change,” it said. “Sexual abuse and the abuse of power and authority continue to cry out for justice, healing and reconciliation.” †

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