



The

Criterion

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In the image of God

Archdiocesan Statement on Immigrants and Refugees, pages 2 and 3.

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ICC is supporting pro-life, pro-family initiatives at Statehouse

By Victoria Arthur

On the heels of the Indiana March for Life, the Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC) is taking steps to support pro-life legislation while calling for a halt to the death penalty in the state.



The ICC—the public policy voice of the Catholic

Church in Indiana—made its presence felt during the Jan. 22 march and rally in downtown Indianapolis and is backing life-affirming bills that have been introduced in the state legislature. Now, the ICC is also planning a Feb. 3 press conference at the Statehouse seeking the abolishment of the death penalty, which was recently reinstated in Indiana.

“All of our efforts tie in nicely with a week of reflection on the



Alexander Mingus

dignity of all human life, from conception to natural death,” said Alexander Mingus, the new executive director of the ICC, referring to both the Indiana march and the National March for Life, held on Jan. 24 in Washington.

These events continue to solemnly mark the anniversary of the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion nationwide, even following the court’s overturning of it in 2022 through its *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization* decision, which returned the issue of

See ICC, page 10



Participants from throughout the state share joy and pro-life messages as they walk along Meridian Street in Indianapolis during the Indiana March for Life on Jan. 22. (Photo by Natalie Hoefer)

Rally, Mass, March participants reminded ‘cause for life is not just ours, but God’s’

By Natalie Hoefer

At a rally outside the Indiana Statehouse in Indianapolis on Jan. 22, the facts Marc Tuttle shared with roughly 1,400 Indiana March for Life participants from throughout the state were as harsh as the 7-degree windchill.

“Over 63 million children are estimated to have died from abortion [in the U.S.] since 1973,” the executive director of Right to Life of Indianapolis said, referring to the year abortion was legalized through the U.S. Supreme Court’s *Roe v. Wade* decision.

“So, 63 million is a hard number to get our heads around. But if you picture the population of the city of Indianapolis, 63 million is about 30” times that size.

Honoring those lives is one purpose for the annual Jan. 22 day of remembrance. But there are other reasons, too. Bishop Joseph M. Siegel of the Evansville, Ind., Diocese, shared those reasons in his homily during the Mass for Life celebrated prior to the march.

‘Cause for life is not just ours, but it is God’s’

A record number of an estimated 1,700 people worshiped at the Mass, which was celebrated in the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis.

At the beginning of the Mass, principal celebrant Archbishop Charles C. Thompson reminded those present to “keep Christ at the center” of the day’s activities.

See MARCH FOR LIFE, page 7

Speakers at youth rally call teens from across the state to ‘live an abundant life’

By Sean Gallagher

Frigid winter temperatures did not keep nearly 1,450 youths and their chaperones from across the state from making their way on Jan. 22 to the Indiana Convention Center for the Indiana Youth Rally for Life.

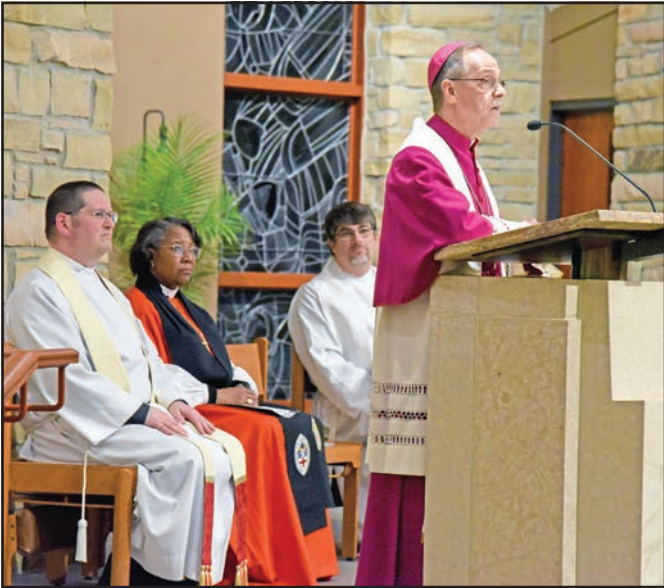
Rare blizzard-like conditions in southern Louisiana, however, did keep the rally’s scheduled keynote speaker, Katie Prejean McGrady, from traveling to Indiana from her home 26 miles from the Gulf Coast where 7 inches of snow had fallen the previous day.

Prejean McGrady, a noted Catholic author, speaker, radio host and podcaster, did speak in a 10-minute pre-recorded video to the youths gathered at the convention center for the

See YOUTH RALLY, page 10

Julia Eckrich, director of youth and young adult ministry at Our Lady of Grace Parish in Noblesville, Ind., in the Lafayette Diocese, shares a witness talk in the Indiana Convention Center during the Indiana Youth Rally for Life on Jan. 22. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)





Archbishop Charles C. Thompson gives a reflection during a prayer service for Christian unity held on Jan. 19 at Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ Church in Indianapolis. Also taking part in the service are, from left, Father Eric Augenstein, pastor of Nativity Parish, Bishop Jennifer Baskerville-Burrows, shepherd of the Episcopal Diocese of Indianapolis, and Rev. Daniel Forehand of the Indiana-Kentucky Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

Archbishop Thompson speaks on common baptism in Christian unity prayer service

By Sean Gallagher

Leaders of Christian faith communities around Indianapolis gathered on Jan. 19 at Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ Church on the southeast side of the city to pray for unity among all Christians.

The prayer service took place during the annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, which occurs on Jan. 18-25 each year. Archbishop Charles C. Thompson was joined on the occasion by leaders from the Episcopal, Baptist, United Methodist and Evangelical Lutheran Church in America faith communities.

The theme of the prayer service, “Do You Believe,” was inspired primarily by 2025 being the 1,700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea, which is the origin of the creed that many Christian communities still profess today.

Archbishop Thompson gave a reflection during the prayer service. He noted the relevance for all Christians of the emphasis on baptism in the final document on the Church’s recent closing session of the Synod on Synodality.

“While baptism is the foundation of Christian life, the call to conversion for each of us is ongoing,” he said. “It is for this reason that we must be ever-attentive, docile and responsive to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, not only as individuals, denominations, but as Christians, all for lifelong growth and maturity of being missionary disciples.

“‘It is this common identity we share in baptism, as brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ, articulated in the creed we’ll profess in a few minutes, that prompts us to gather in the celebration of Christian Unity Week.

“Despite the differences that exist among us, Christians are bound together as people of God, called to holiness and mission,” Archbishop Thompson said. “Holiness is not some type of personal achievement or character trait. God alone is holy. A person can be holy only in communion with the divine, as if grafted as a branch to a vine.”

Emphasizing the unity already shared by Christians of various traditions, Archbishop Thompson pointed to believers’ common bond in Christ in his reflection.

“Our celebration of Christian unity is not one of naivete or denial of differences among us, nor of the realities of our times, but the profession of faith in something greater than all differences and worldly realities, namely the transforming power of divine love made available to us through the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ,” he said. “We who have been baptized into his death have been baptized into his resurrection.”

Archbishop Thompson later focused on the Holy Spirit, whom he described as “the protagonist” of the prayer service for Christian unity.

“We celebrate a diversity of charisms that exist among us, lived and understood in the proper way,” he said. “Diversity is not an obstacle to our unity, but that which is meant to enrich our unity. Christian unity, as Pope Francis reminds us, is about harmony among the diversity of charisms. And this harmony comes from the Holy Spirit.

“... It is this unity, rooted in our common baptismal identity as missionary disciples of Jesus, that enables us to stand together as one singular beacon of hope against the various atrocities against the dignity of persons and sacredness of life.”

Bishop Jennifer Baskerville-Burrow, shepherd of the Episcopal Diocese of Indianapolis, took part in the prayer service and told *The Criterion* afterward that she and other Christian leaders around the city meet regularly. “We are deeply connected, and we pray for each other all the time and all year long.

“‘But to come together in a public way like this is a way to celebrate what we aim to be in Christ,” she said of the annual Christian unity prayer service. “It’s a wonderful way to make public something that’s important to us all the time.” †

Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

February 1–11, 2025

February 1 – 5 p.m.
Confirmation Mass for youths of St. Monica Parish, Indianapolis, at St. Monica Church

February 2 – 2 p.m.
Annual Scout Award Ceremony at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis

February 3 – 3 p.m.
Press conference on death penalty at Indiana Statehouse, Indianapolis

February 3 – 5 p.m.
Catholic Legislators Dinner at Ruth’s Chris Steakhouse, Indianapolis

February 4 – 9:30 a.m.
Visit to St. Mary’s Early Childhood Center, Indianapolis

February 6 – 10 a.m.
Leadership Team meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

February 7 – 5:30 p.m.
Legacy Gala Dinner in support of Catholic Charities, Catholic Schools and Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary at JW Marriott, Indianapolis

February 8 – 1 p.m.
Memorial Mass for Rev. Jean Bosco Ntawugashira at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral

February 11 – 10:30 a.m.
Priest Personnel Board meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center

February 11 – 1 p.m.
Virtual meeting with USSCB Subcommittee on the Catechism

Archdiocesan Statement on Immigrants and Refugees

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Catholic teaching has long recognized the right and responsibility of each sovereign nation to maintain proper border security to protect its citizens while simultaneously remaining clear on the respect owed to the dignity of every person as created in the image of God. Consequent to this dignity is the right of each person to have proper access to food, water, healthcare, employment, justice, and freedom from oppression. As Pope Francis exhorts us, we must be especially attentive to the needs of the poor and vulnerable, which includes immigrants and refugees. Christians are keenly aware that the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph were refugees for a time, traveling to another country to escape violence and death as imposed by the unjust decree of King Herod.

As pastors, we hear the concerns of our brothers and sisters, heightened by recent threats of aggressive immigration enforcement actions, who flee to escape various forms of injustice, such as violence, war, and persecution. These migrants and refugees are often beloved members of our communities, parishes, and schools who inspire by their faithful witness and devotion to their faith, commitment to their families and fruitful participation in the civic life of their communities. Using the foundational principles of the Church’s social and moral teaching, we will continue to advocate for the just and dignified treatment of migrants as well

as for national immigration reform that includes targeted, proportionate, and humane enforcement, and reasonable pathways to citizenship for long-time residents with an emphasis on family unity. We are committed to accompanying those in need through prayer, advocacy, ongoing formation and education, legal remedies, and all proper means of support.

In Indiana, we continue to support meaningful reforms that affirm the desire of so many migrants who wish to contribute fruitfully to society. It is our hope that reasonable policies can uplift those who feel trapped by the challenges of navigating our country’s immigration system. Serious offenders with a history of harming U.S. citizens and immigrants, however, should not find protection under these reforms.

I invite all in our Catholic communities to join me in supporting our migrant brothers and sisters as we advocate for meaningful immigration reform. As Catholics and Americans, we have a moral obligation to discern the difference between the vulnerable and those who hide among the vulnerable seeking to exploit them. May we never tire of being Christ-centered in our unity as People of God, Pilgrims of Hope, and Missionary Disciples of Jesus Christ, Savior of the World.

+ Charles C. Thompson

Most Reverend Charles C. Thompson
Archbishop of Indianapolis

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The Criterion

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Bishop Chatard teacher receives prestigious national award

By John Shaughnessy

When Amanda Horan opened the e-mail, the news shocked the science teacher at Bishop Chatard High School in Indianapolis in the best possible way.



Amanda Horan

The e-mail shared the news that Horan had been chosen for a prestigious national honor—the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching. On Jan. 13, then-U.S. President Joseph Biden announced that Horan was among the educators from across the country who received the honor, which includes a

\$10,000 grant and a trip to Washington for an upcoming ceremony. A press release from the White House noted that this presidential award honors “the vital role that America’s teachers and mentors play in shaping the next generation of technical leaders, including scientists, engineers, explorers and innovators.” “I was shocked,” Horan recalls about receiving the e-mail that informed her of the honor. “I stared at it and my jaw dropped. In big font, it said, ‘CONGRATULATIONS!’ ” Horan had applied for the honor in the 2022-23 school year, the same year she received the highest honor that the Archdiocese of Indianapolis gives an educator—the Saint Theodora Excellence in Education Award. Horan is in her 14th year of teaching at Bishop Chatard, leading classes in

Physics, Chemistry, Honors Chemistry and Advanced Placement Chemistry. A mother of two adopted children, she also serves as the moderator of the archdiocesan high school’s Black Student Union. “I’m a very motherly person in my interactions with my kids in my classroom,” Horan says about her approach to teaching. “I think my kids know I love them and care about them because I hold them to high expectations, and I’m not going to let them sluff off. I tell them, ‘Here are my expectations for you, and I’ll do anything I can to help you get there. But I’m going to hold you to those high expectations because I know you can do it, and I care about you.’ ” “I want my students to grow up to be people who can think for themselves. Whether or not they love chemistry or physics, I want them to learn how to learn for themselves and how to think for themselves and how to have discussions with each other and help each other.” As the principal of Bishop Chatard, John Hasty has seen the difference that approach makes to Horan’s students. “Her personal commitment to faith, continuous learning, leadership and service profoundly impacts our students and staff, inside and outside the classroom,” he says. “Students often credit Mrs. Horan with helping them find a love for science and learning. We are excited to see her earn this well-deserved and distinguished recognition.” The students in one of her Advanced Placement classes even threw her a party. “They wanted an excuse to bring snacks in, let’s be honest,” she says with a laugh before turning serious. “My students have all been supportive and excited for me. They were all impressed that my name was actually on the White House website.” Students also have asked her about her plans for the \$10,000 grant she will receive. Some of the grant will be used when she travels this fall to Chicago to pursue

a dream—to run in that city’s marathon. She sees how striving for that goal helps her as a teacher. “Running is not something that comes easily to me,” she says. “I have to work really hard at it whereas school, science and math have always come very easily to me. Running has given me an appreciation for the struggles some of my students have with chemistry. It gives me more empathy for their struggles. “I can stand in front of them and say, ‘I’ve done hard things that have taken me a lot of work and I can understand how that can feel sometimes. I know that if you work hard and I’m here to help you, you can get this tough chemistry too.’ ” Horan completed her first marathon this past fall—the Monumental Marathon in Indianapolis. She has also run about 15 half-marathons. “I started running and I realized I could do something hard,” she says. “I like that feeling of setting a goal that I used to think was impossible, of working toward it and achieving it. It’s made me a happier person.” So has changing her career path to teaching. After graduating from Purdue University with a degree in chemical engineering, she worked for five years with Eli Lilly & Co., doing good work and making good money. But there was always the thought in her mind about teaching. It reached the point where she felt God was calling her to teach and influence young people. Horan views the Presidential Award as another affirmation that she made the right decision to become a teacher. “I believe in the potential of every student, and I show this by maintaining high expectations while supporting them on their educational journey. Being recognized with this award reaffirms that teaching is my true calling and that my impact extends beyond the classroom.” †

Declaración de la Arquidiócesis sobre inmigrantes y refugiados

Queridos hermanos y hermanas en Cristo:

Desde hace tiempo la doctrina católica reconoce el derecho y la obligación de cada nación soberana de mantener una seguridad fronteriza adecuada para proteger a sus ciudadanos y al mismo tiempo mantiene claramente su postura en cuanto al respeto de la dignidad de cada persona por haber sido creada a imagen de Dios. En consonancia con esta dignidad está el derecho de toda persona a tener acceso adecuado a alimento, agua, atención de salud, empleo, justicia y libertad frente a la opresión. Como nos exhorta el Papa Francisco, debemos estar especialmente atentos a las necesidades de los pobres y vulnerables, lo que incluye a los inmigrantes y refugiados. Los cristianos son muy conscientes de que por un tiempo, Jesús, María y José—Sagrada Familia—fueron refugiados que se trasladaron a otro país para escapar de la violencia y la muerte impuestas por el injusto decreto del rey Herodes. Como pastores, escuchamos las preocupaciones de nuestros hermanos y hermanas—reforzadas por las recientes amenazas de agresivas medidas de control migratorios—que huyen para escapar de diversas formas de injusticia, como la violencia, la guerra y la persecución. Estos inmigrantes y refugiados son a menudo miembros queridos de nuestras comunidades, parroquias y escuelas, que inspiran con su testimonio fiel y su devoción a su fe, su compromiso con sus familias y su participación positiva en la vida cívica de sus comunidades. Sustentados en los principios fundamentales de la doctrina social y moral de la Iglesia, seguiremos abogando por un trato justo y digno a los inmigrantes, así

como por una reforma nacional de la inmigración que incluya una aplicación precisa, proporcionada y humana de la ley, así como vías razonables hacia la ciudadanía para los residentes de larga data, haciendo hincapié en la unidad familiar. Nos comprometemos a acompañar a los necesitados a través de la oración, la defensa, la formación y educación permanentes, los recursos legales y todos los medios de apoyo pertinentes. En Indiana, seguimos apoyando reformas significativas que afirmen el deseo de tantos inmigrantes que buscan contribuir positivamente a la sociedad. Esperamos que la implementación de políticas razonables pueda ayudar a quienes se sienten atrapados por las dificultades de navegar por el sistema migratorio de nuestro país. No obstante, los delincuentes peligrosos con antecedentes de haber causado daño a ciudadanos estadounidenses e inmigrantes no deberían encontrar protección en estas reformas. Invito a todos los miembros de nuestras comunidades católicas a que se unan a mí para apoyar a nuestros hermanos y hermanas inmigrantes mientras abogamos por una reforma migratoria considerable. Como católicos y estadounidenses, tenemos la obligación moral de discernir la diferencia entre los vulnerables y quienes se esconden entre ellos buscando explotarlos. Que nunca nos cansemos de estar centrados en Cristo en nuestra unidad como pueblo de Dios, peregrinos de la esperanza y discípulos misioneros de Jesucristo, Salvador del Mundo.

+ Charles C. Thompson

Reverendísimo Charles C. Thompson
Arzobispo de Indianapolis

Memorial Mass for Holy Angels, St. Rita pastor set for Feb. 8

A memorial Mass for Marianhill Missionary Father Jean Bosco Ntawugashira, previously pastor of Holy Angels and St. Rita parishes, both in Indianapolis, will be celebrated at 1 p.m. on Feb. 8 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. Archbishop Charles C. Thompson is scheduled to be the principal celebrant of the memorial Mass. Marianhill Missionary Father Jose Aragon Briñez, administrator of St. Mary Parish in Indianapolis, will be the homilist at the liturgy. Father Jean Bosco died of cancer on Dec. 27 surrounded by his family in his native Rwanda. A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated for him on Jan. 6 at the

Cathedral of Our Lady of Fatima in Ruhengeri, Rwanda, Father Jean Bosco’s hometown. Bishop Vincent Harolimana, the shepherd of the Ruhengeri Diocese, was the principal celebrant of the Mass. Burial followed in a cemetery adjacent to the cathedral. †

Correction

An obituary in the Jan. 17 issue of *The Criterion* for Marianhill Missionary Father Jean Bosco Ntawugashira, previously pastor of Holy Angels and St. Rita parishes, both in Indianapolis, incorrectly noted that his death was on Dec. 26. He died on Dec. 27. †

Marriage

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Be a part of our Spring Marriage Edition

Feb. 14 issue of The Criterion

Couples who are planning to be married between Feb. 14 and July 11, 2025, in a marriage that is recognized as a valid sacramental or valid natural marriage, or couples who were wed between Aug. 1, 2024, and Feb. 1, 2025, in such a recognized marriage and did not have their engagement announcement in *The Criterion* are invited to submit the information for the upcoming Feb. 14 Spring Marriage Edition. Announcements can be submitted by mail using the form below or electronically at www.archindy.org/engagements.

E-mailed photos
Photos should be saved in jpg format and be at least 500 kb. Color photos are preferred. We recommend sending a photo where the couple’s faces are close to each other. Please send the photo as an attachment to the e-mail: alewis@archindy.org. Subject line: Spring Marriage (Last name). In the e-mail, please include the information in the form located below.

If it is not possible to e-mail a photo, a photo can be mailed with the bottom form. Please no photocopies or laser prints. To have the photo returned, please include a return addressed envelope with a postage stamp on it.

Deadline
All announcements and photos must be received by 5 p.m. on Feb. 5.

— Use this form to furnish information by mail —

Clip and mail to: BRIDES, The Criterion, ATTN: Ann Lewis, 1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367. To submit information online go to: www.archindy.org/engagements. **Deadline with photos:** Wednesday, Feb. 5 at 5 p.m.
Please print or type:

Name of Bride (first, middle, last)		Daytime Phone	
Mailing Address	City	State	Zip Code
Name of Bride's Parents (first, last)			
City		State	
Name of Bridegroom (first, middle, last)			
Name of Bridegroom's Parents (first, last)			
City		State	
Wedding Date	Church	City	State
<input type="checkbox"/> Photo Enclosed	Signature of person furnishing information		Relationship
<input type="checkbox"/> Return photo			Daytime Phone
<input type="checkbox"/> No Picture			



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, *Publisher*
Sally Krause, *Associate Publisher*
Mike Krokos, *Editor*

Editorial

May all generations continue building a culture of life

It is inspiring each year to see the more than 1,000 high school and college students from across the state who participate in the annual Indiana March for Life on the streets of downtown Indianapolis.

This year, where nearly 1,400 attended, was no different.

Despite arriving in Indianapolis on the morning of Jan. 22 to a temperature of minus 2 degrees (which registered as minus 15 degrees with the wind chill), the students and adults from the Archdiocese of Indianapolis and dioceses of Evansville, Fort Wayne-South Bend, Gary and Lafayette who participated were—as is always the case—eager to stand up for life.

Many began the day by attending an annual youth rally in the Indiana Convention Center, followed by taking part in a Mass for Life celebrated by Indianapolis Archbishop Charles C. Thompson.

And their actions and words—including the nearly 400 teenagers who took part in the sacrament of reconciliation—throughout the day were again a powerful witness of faith.

Despite a sun-drenched afternoon, frigid temperatures (15 degrees, with a windchill of 7 degrees) descended on the marchers. Undeterred by the stinging cold and biting wind that blew at times, the group chanted pro-life slogans, prayed the rosary and offered petitions as they poignantly marched to the Indiana Statehouse and stood up for the unborn.

“Pro Woman: Child: Life” read one placard carried during the rally. “I Demand Protection At Conception” read another. Several signs stating “The New Albany Deanery Marches for Life” were carried by a group of young people from southern Indiana. “I Am The Post-Roe Generation” signs filled the streets of downtown Indianapolis as well.

While many in society believe the U.S. Supreme Court’s *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization* landmark 2022 ruling, which overturned *Roe v. Wade*, put an end to any discussion about legal abortion, nothing could be further from the truth. The court’s decision held that the U.S. Constitution does not protect abortion rights. But it returned the power to regulate abortion back to individual states.

Sadly, several states—including all of the states bordering Indiana—have passed legislation or taken other action to keep abortion legal. Last November, voters approved referendums to expand legal protections for abortion in Arizona, Colorado, Montana, Nevada and Missouri, and related measures in Maryland and New York.

But thanks be to God, voters in Florida, Nebraska and South Dakota rejected such measures in November, defying a trend from elections in 2022 and 2023.

Other states, including Indiana in August of 2022, have enacted laws giving legal protection to unborn children. But several of those decisions have been challenged in court by pro-abortion advocates. The Indiana



A young woman holds a pro-life sign during a rally at the Statehouse after the Indiana March for Life in Indianapolis on Jan. 22. (Photo by Natalie Hoefer)

Supreme Court upheld the state’s abortion ban in June of 2023, and it went into effect in August of that year.

Although it may appear a monumental task, the states that have approved legal protections for abortion need our prayers. We must have the strength and wherewithal to offer petitions for what some may consider the impossible to achieve—ending abortion during our lifetime. But we must also remember our faith can move mountains.

Clearly, the effort to build up a culture of life where abortion is unthinkable is far from over in our country.

There is also an erroneous argument some pro-abortion supporters make about pro-life advocates abandoning and not supporting the mothers of these preborn children, and only caring about the unborn child. That untruth must be addressed as well.

We need to remind them every state has a life-of-mother provision which protects an expectant mother’s safety.

When it comes to expectant mothers, the Church in the U.S.—including in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis—has a Walking with Moms program.

A nationwide, parish-based initiative to increase support for pregnant and parenting mothers in need, Walking with Moms “works to ensure that any woman who finds herself unexpectedly pregnant, or parenting in difficult circumstances, can turn to her local Catholic Church and be connected with the resources she needs. Volunteers walk with moms throughout the motherhood journey, offering them authentic Christian friendship and ongoing support.” Its local website is walkingwithmomsindy.org.

This is offered in addition to the countless grassroots pro-life ministries across the nation that have been giving material, emotional and spiritual assistance to mothers in need for many decades before *Dobbs*.

We thank our Creator for people of all generations and faith traditions who stand up for life.

We understand that truly building a culture of life takes time, but let us pray that God continues to use us as his instruments to bring about the conversion of others.

—Mike Krokos

Reflection/John Shaughnessy

A dream ends in devastation, and a young man does this?!

Take a moment to think of a time when you have felt devastated. When some dream, hope or goal that you have poured



all your hard work, energy and belief into has come to a crashing end.

Then ask yourself this question: How did I immediately react to that feeling of devastation?

Take a long moment to let that feeling and that question settle into your thoughts.

Now consider what Riley Leonard did and said almost immediately after his University of Notre Dame football team lost in the national championship game against Ohio State on Jan. 20.

As Notre Dame’s star quarterback took his seat at a press conference just moments after the game—alongside his head coach Marcus Freeman and his tearful teammate Jack Kiser—Leonard had the look of someone who was physically and emotionally drained, the emotional pain noticeable in his reddened eyes.

The journey of his past year was one filled with surgeries, a painful early season loss and even some boos, and also one filled with growth, cheers and his stellar play in three amazing playoff wins, victories in which he began every post-game interview by giving glory to God. Now the remarkable season was over, ending in as much devastation and heartbreak as sports can bring.

For the first few minutes of the press conference, Leonard listened as an equally devastated Freeman answered questions with grace. Then came the first question directed to Leonard.

He leaned forward and said to the reporter, “Before I answer your question, I want to thank my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for giving me the opportunity to play in this game.” Then for the next minute, he mentioned how, before the game, he had written on his hand the verse of Proverbs 27:17—“As iron sharpens iron, so should one man sharpen another.” He then praised Ohio State before adding a thought that connected to the way he had thanked God first after the three playoff wins.

“I’m happy to see godly men come out on top, no matter what the circumstances.

I’m very happy to praise Jesus in the lowest of lows as well.”

He then turned his thoughts to his teammates and coaches, praising them for how much they have helped him grow in the past year as a person, a player and a man of faith—while also expressing that he felt he should have done more to help them win the national championship game.

The depth of his commitment to his faith, his teammates and his coaches had also surfaced in a reporter’s interview with Leonard earlier in the season—when he talked about the influence of Notre Dame’s only other loss this season, in the second game against the team from Northern Illinois University (NIU).

“I do share my faith publicly, and I think it’s important to know that, like, I’m not completed at all in my faith,” he said. “And I’m striving to be a better Christian every single day. And I know that there are things maybe in my past that—you don’t know what you don’t know. And I think I’ve grown a lot.

“This team has helped me grow a lot. I think after NIU, I was walking in the locker room with my head down and things like that. And I had younger guys come up to me and be like, ‘Dude, you say it’s faith, family, football, but a football game two days ago is completely affecting your family and your faith. Now, tell me how that works.’

“And that kind of just shook me up a little bit and made me realize, like, ‘Dude, that’s hypocritical of me to be emotionally so connected to football that it affects my relationship with Christ.’ And that’s one lesson that I’ve learned.

“And hopefully, I’m just a reflection of him everywhere I go. I try to just do my best to ask myself, what would he be doing in certain circumstances, and hopefully my teammates can see that, and maybe learn a thing or two. But like I said, I’m just as broken as anybody.”

Just as he does in moments of complete joy, Leonard’s first reaction in his times of brokenness and devastation is to do something that has always challenged me—and maybe you—in such moments.

He turns to God and thanks him.

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



Notre Dame Fighting Irish quarterback Riley Leonard (13) reacts after losing the CFP National Championship college football game at Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta on Jan. 20. Ohio State defeated seventh-seeded Notre Dame 34-23. (OSV News photo/Mark J. Rebilas-Imagn Images via Reuters)

ARCHBISHOP/ARZOBISPO CHARLES C. THOMPSON



Christ the Cornerstone

Joining the Holy Family’s journey from sorrow to joy

Mary and Joseph bring to the Temple their firstborn who, in accordance with the law, had to be redeemed or “bought back” by means of the prescribed sacrifice. Thirty-three years later, Jesus himself will be the sacrifice that is offered on our behalf, for our redemption. (Magnificat, Vol. 26, #12, February 2025)

On Sunday, Feb. 2, our Church celebrates the feast of the Presentation of the Lord. This feast is also known as Candlemas Day, because of the blessing of candles that takes place before Mass begins.

The ceremony for the blessing of candles includes this beautiful introductory address given by the celebrant, which summarizes the meaning of this great feast day:

Forty days have passed since we celebrated the joyful feast of the Nativity of the Lord. Today is the blessed day when Jesus was presented in the Temple by Mary and Joseph. Outwardly he was fulfilling the Law, but in reality, he was coming to meet his believing people. Prompted by the Holy Spirit, Simeon and Anna came to the Temple. Enlightened by the same Spirit, they recognized the Lord and

confessed him with exultation. So let us also, gathered together by the Holy Spirit, proceed to the house of God to encounter Christ. There we shall find him and recognize him in the breaking of the bread, until he comes again, revealed in glory.

The story told in St. Luke’s Gospel (Lk 2:22-40) is filled with rich imagery and hidden meaning brought to light by the grace of God. It is a story of the Holy Family, and it demonstrates how their obedience to the law sets in motion the radical transformation of the sacrifice that is at the heart of Christian worship.

Jesus did not need to be redeemed or “brought back” to God by means of the prescribed ritual of a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons. Jesus is God, the second person of the Holy Trinity, and as the old man Simeon testifies, he is both “a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel” (Lk 2:32).

But Mary and Joseph are serious about their Jewish faith, and they are determined to comply with its laws and customs. Theirs is an act of profound, religious obedience which allows the Holy Family to be open to the working of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

Simeon and Anna represent the people of God that the Incarnate Son of God has come to redeem. They have waited patiently for a sign that the salvation promised is at hand. Simeon gives voice to the miracle he has witnessed with his own eyes: “Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you prepared in the sight of all the peoples: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel” (Lk 2:29-32). This joy-filled exclamation, the “*Nunc Dimittis*,” which the Church proposes to us nightly in the Liturgy of the Hours, is a confession of faith that will echo throughout the millennia.

Simeon also gives prophetic voice to the sorrows that Jesus’ mother, Mary, will endure: “Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted—and you yourself a sword will pierce—so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed” (Lk 2:34-35).

The glory of God that is revealed in this child is a double-edged sword. It will free humankind from the tyranny of sin and death, but it

will also be the occasion for great suffering and personal sacrifice. Mary will suffer grievously because of her closeness to Jesus but, by the grace of God, her sorrow will become great joy.

The suffering of Jesus is discussed in the second reading for this feast day. The Letter to the Hebrews (Heb 2:14-18) says that Jesus “had to become like his brothers and sisters in every way, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest before God to expiate the sins of the people. Because he himself was tested through what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested” (Heb 2:17-18).

The suffering and death of Jesus is redemptive. It is through his suffering that Jesus takes away our sins, frees us from the consequences of death, and gives us eternal life in and through him.

As we celebrate the feast of the Presentation of the Lord, let us thank God for the obedience of the Holy Family which revealed the promised salvation “in the sight of all the peoples: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel” (Lk 2:31-32). †



Cristo, la piedra angular

Unámonos en el recorrido de la Sagrada Familia del dolor a la alegría

María y José llevan al Templo a su primogénito que, de acuerdo con la ley, debía ser redimido o “devuelto” mediante el sacrificio prescrito. Treinta y tres años más tarde, Jesús mismo será el sacrificio que se ofrecerá en nuestro nombre, para nuestra redención. (Magnificat, Vol. 26, #12, febrero de 2025)

El domingo 2 de febrero nuestra Iglesia celebra la fiesta de la Presentación del Señor. Esta fiesta también se conoce como el Día de la Candelaria, por la bendición de las velas que se realiza antes de que comience la misa.

La ceremonia de bendición incluye este hermoso discurso introductorio del oficiante, que resume el significado de esta gran fiesta:

Han pasado cuarenta días desde que celebramos la alegre fiesta de la Natividad del Señor. Hoy es el día en que María y José presentaron a Jesús en el Templo. Para el mundo, estaba obedeciendo la ley, pero en realidad venía al encuentro de su pueblo creyente. Impulsados por el Espíritu Santo, Simeón y Ana acudieron al Templo. Iluminados por el mismo Espíritu,

reconocieron al Señor y lo confesaron con exultación. Así también nosotros, reunidos por el Espíritu Santo, vayamos a la casa de Dios para encontrarnos con Cristo. Allí lo encontraremos y lo reconoceremos al partir el pan, hasta que vuelva con gloria.

La historia narrada en el evangelio de san Lucas (Lc 2:22-40) está llena de ricas imágenes y significados ocultos que salen a la luz por la gracia de Dios. Es un relato de la Sagrada Familia, y demuestra cómo su obediencia a la ley pone en marcha la transformación radical del sacrificio que constituye el núcleo del culto cristiano.

Jesús no necesitaba ser redimido o “devuelto” a Dios mediante el ritual prescrito de un par de tórtolas o dos pichones de paloma. Jesús es Dios, la segunda persona de la Santísima Trinidad, y como atestigua el anciano Simeón, es a la vez “luz de revelación a los gentiles, y gloria de Tu pueblo Israel” (Lc 2:32).

Pero María y José se toman en serio su fe judía y están decididos a cumplir sus leyes y costumbres. Es un acto de profunda obediencia religiosa mediante el cual la Sagrada Familia permite que el Espíritu Santo obre en sus vidas.

Simeón y Ana representan al pueblo de Dios que el Hijo de Dios encarnado ha venido a redimir. Han esperado pacientemente una señal de que la salvación prometida está cerca. Simeón da voz al milagro que ha presenciado con sus propios ojos: “Ahora, Señor, permite que Tu siervo se vaya en paz, conforme a Tu palabra; porque mis ojos han visto Tu salvación la cual has preparado en presencia de todos los pueblos; luz de revelación a los gentiles, y gloria de Tu pueblo Israel” (Lc 2:29-32). Esta exclamación llena de alegría, el “*Nunc Dimittis*,” que la Iglesia nos propone cada noche en la Liturgia de las Horas, es una confesión de fe que resonará por milenios.

Simeón también profetiza los dolores que sufrirá la madre de Jesús, María: “Este Niño ha sido puesto para caída y levantamiento de muchos en Israel, y para ser señal de contradicción, y una espada traspasará aun tu propia alma, a fin de que sean revelados los pensamientos de muchos corazones” (Lc 2:34-35).

La gloria de Dios que se revela en este niño es un arma de doble filo: liberará a la humanidad de la tiranía del pecado y de la muerte, pero también

será ocasión de grandes sufrimientos y sacrificios personales. María sufrirá dolorosamente por su cercanía a Jesús pero, por la gracia de Dios, su dolor se convertirá en una gran alegría.

El sufrimiento de Jesús se aborda en la segunda lectura de la festividad de hoy. La Carta a los Hebreos (Heb 2:14-18) dice que “[Jesús] tenía que ser hecho semejante a Sus hermanos en todo, a fin de que llegara a ser un sumo sacerdote misericordioso y fiel en las cosas que a Dios atañen, para hacer propiciación por los pecados del pueblo. Pues por cuanto Él mismo fue tentado en el sufrimiento, es poderoso para socorrer a los que son tentados” (Heb 2:17-18).

El sufrimiento y la muerte de Jesús nos redimen; por medio de su sufrimiento, borra nuestros pecados, nos libera de las consecuencias de la muerte y nos da la vida eterna en Él y por Él.

Al celebrar la fiesta de la Presentación del Señor, demos gracias a Dios por la obediencia de la Sagrada Familia, que reveló la salvación prometida “la cual has preparado en presencia de todos los pueblos; luz de revelación a los gentiles, y gloria de Tu pueblo Israel” (Lc 2:31-32). †

Events Calendar

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

February 5

MCL Cafeteria, 5520 Castleton Corner Lane, Indianapolis. **Solo Seniors**, 5:30-8:30 p.m., Catholic, educational, charitable and social singles—separated, widowed or divorced—age 50 and older, new members welcome, also call about regular Friday night dinner events. Information: 317-796-8605.

February 5, 12, 19, 26

Christ United Methodist Church, 8540 U.S. 31 South, Indianapolis. **Caterpillar Kids**, 5-6:30 p.m., series of four sessions for children ages 6-12 experiencing grief or loss of a loved one, sponsored by Franciscan Hospice Care, registration required, free. Information, registration: 317-528-2636.

February 7

Virtual Prayer with the Sisters of Providence, 7-7:45 p.m., for single women ages 18-42, prayer and sharing on topic of fear. Information, registration: events.sistersofprovidence.org. 361-500-9505, jluna@spsmw.org.

Women’s Care Center, 4901 W. 86th St., Indianapolis. **First Friday Mass**, 5 p.m., optional tour of center to follow. Information: 317-829-6800, womenscarecenter.org.

Our Lady of the Greenwood Church, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. **First Friday bilingual celebration of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus**, Mass 6 p.m. followed by adoration until 9 p.m., sacrament of reconciliation available. Information: 317-750-7309, msross1@hotmail.com.

St. John Paul II Church, 2253 St. Joe Road W., Sellersburg. **First Friday Devotion**, 11:40 a.m., litany, consecration to the Sacred Heart, Divine Mercy Chaplet followed by noon Mass. Information: 812-246-2512.

February 9

Marian University, Norman Center Room 222, 3200 Cold Spring Road, Indianapolis. **People of Peace OFS Monthly Meeting**, 12:30-3 p.m., explore Franciscan spirituality with lay

Franciscans, free. Information: 317-432-0909, jodymdalton@aol.com.

February 11

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.

February 14-16

Louisville, Ky. **Retrouaille Retreat**, for those in a struggling marriage, location disclosed upon registering. Information, registration: 502-479-3329, 3012@helpourmarriage.org, helpourmarriage.org.

February 14-17

Providence Spirituality and Conference Center, Foley Room, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Used Book Sale**, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., freewill donations. Information: 866-996-2947,

events.sistersofprovidence.org, lindenleafgifts@spsmw.org.

February 16

Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, 1530 Union St., Indianapolis. **Indianapolis Symphony Sphinx Series Concert “Strings and Soul,”** 2-4 p.m., featuring string quartet of Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra musicians, tour of Sacred Heart Church available after concert, free. Information: 317-902-3006, judithessex@icloud.com.

February 19

Calvary Mausoleum Chapel, 435 W. Troy Ave., Indianapolis. **Mass**, 2 p.m. Information: 317-784-4439, catholiccemeteries.cc.

February 20

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

White Violet Center for Eco-Justice, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods.

Virtual Sourdough Bread Baking Workshop, 6-9 p.m., limited online spots available, \$50, includes materials and sourdough starter kit, register by Feb. 14. Information, registration: 812-535-2932, events.sistersofprovidence.org, wvc@spsmw.org.

February 21

Northside Events and Social Club, 2100 E. 71st St., Indianapolis. **Catholic Business Exchange**, WTHR 13 meteorologist Chuck Lofton presenting “Finishing Strong,” 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 Feb. 18. Information, registration: cutt.ly/CBE-Reg.

February 22

East Central H.S. Performing Arts Center, 1 Trojan Place, St. Leon. **E6 Catholic Men’s Conference**, 8 a.m.- 3:30 p.m., featuring keynote by author and speaker Chris Stefanick, other speakers: Jake Khym, Bobby Angel and Father Jonathan Meyer, includes Mass, confession, adoration,

lunch, adults \$48, group of 10 or more adults \$43 per person, high school and college students \$18, clergy and religious free. Information, registration: 812-576-4302, contact@e6catholicmensconference.com, e6catholicmensconference.com.

February 26

St. Simon the Apostle Church, 8155 Oaklondon Road, Indianapolis. **Parenting Pioneers: Navigating the Hypersexualized Culture**, 7-8:30 p.m., Diocese of Lincoln, Neb., priest and sexual addiction counselor Father Sean Kilcawley presenting, free. Information: 317-826-6000.

February 28

St. John the Evangelist Parish, Corpus Christi Hall, 126 W. Georgia St., Indianapolis. **Pro-life Film: The 1916 Project**, 6 p.m. doors open for pizza dinner, 6:30 p.m. film showing, panel discussion following, free-will offering for dinner. Information: 317-407-6881, smdye1@gmail.com. View trailer at the1916project.com. †

Retreats and Programs

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

February 14-16

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Benedictine Wisdom for Married Life**, Valentine’s Day retreat for married couples, Benedictine Father Simon Herrmann presenting, \$550 double. Registration: 812-357-6611, saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

Mother of the Redeemer Retreat Center, 8220 W. State Road 48, Bloomington. **The Seraphic Doctor’s Guide to Holiness**, 5 p.m. Fri.-10 a.m. Sun., Franciscans of the Immaculate Father John Lawrence facilitating, \$241 for single, \$302.90 double, \$368 triple, \$433.12 quadruple, includes four meals and room for two nights, commuters \$50.70 includes lunch and dinner on Sat. Information, registration:

812-825-4642, ext. 1, motheroftheredeemer.com.

February 19, March 28

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Day of Silence**, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., \$45, includes room, lunch, Mass and use of common areas and grounds, overnight stay available for additional \$32, dinner additional \$11. Registration: archindy.org/fatima-events, 317-545-7681, lcoons@archindy.org.

February 22

Mystics and Fellowship virtual program, 9-10:30 a.m., sponsored by Sisters of Providence, third of four independent sessions (March 29), register by Feb. 19, \$25 per session. Information, registration: events.sistersofprovidence.org, 812-535-2952, provctr@spsmw.org.

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **Wisdom Knowing and Wisdom Jesus**, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., doctor of nursing Kay Jackson presenting, \$40. Information, registration: 812-933-6437, center@oldenburgosf.com, oldenburgfranciscancenter.org.

February 25-27

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **A Contemplative Approach to the Lord’s Prayer**, Benedictine Brother Zachary Wilberding presenting, \$350 single, \$550 double. Registration: 812-357-6611, saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

February 28

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **A Day of Quiet Renewal**, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.,

\$20, \$80 with spiritual direction. Information, registration: 812-933-6437, oldenburgfranciscancenter.org.

March 5

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Ashes, Awe and the Cross**, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. CT, Jane Feliz Rush presenting, \$75. Registration: 812-357-6611, saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

March 8

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

Indianapolis. **‘Tis a Gift to Be Simple: Finding Hope and Peace of Mind in a Complex Time**, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m., Father Jeffrey Godecker and Mary Schaffner presenting, \$45. Registration: archindy.org/fatima-events, 317-545-7681, lcoons@archindy.org.

March 13

Virtual guided meditation series via Zoom, 7-7:45 p.m., every second Thursday of the month through May, offered by Providence Spirituality & Conference Center,

free, registration required. Information, registration: events.SistersofProvidence.org, 812-535-2952, provctr@spsmw.org.

March 21-23

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Christian Contemplative Prayer: Being Centered on Christ**, Benedictine Father Adrian Burke presenting, \$350 single, \$550 double. Registration: 812-357-6611, saintmeinrad.org/retreats. †

Vocations essay contest submissions sought from students in grades 7-12

The Serra Club of Indianapolis’ annual John D. Kelley Vocations Essay Contest is seeking submissions from Catholic students in grades 7-12 in parochial, public or home school systems in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

The theme for this year’s contest focuses on the 2025 Jubilee Year theme, “Pilgrims of Hope.” Essay contest participants are asked to address: How a priest or consecrated person encouraged you to seek God? How does pursuing a vocation bring hope into your life? And

how are you preparing to know where God is calling you to build up his kingdom with your God-given talents?

For more details and an essay submission form, contact your school religion teacher, religious education program instructor or parish catechist/youth minister. Information is also available from the Office of Vocations at vocations@archindy.org.

Submitted essays must be postmarked no later than March 7. †

Conference on life-limiting prenatal diagnoses will take place at Notre Dame on March 15

A conference titled “The Changing Face of Life-Limiting Prenatal Diagnoses: Clinical, Pastoral, and Ethical Considerations” will take place in Geddes Hall Auditorium at the University of Notre Dame, in Notre Dame, Ind., near South Bend, from 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. on March 15. Geddes Hall is Building #1212, located behind the Hesburgh Library and across from Breen-Phillips Hall on St. Joseph Drive.

The conference, sponsored by the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend’s Marriage and Family Ministry, is open to anyone age 18 and older.

The conference will bring together five national experts to discuss new research concerning the diagnosis of Trisomy 13 and 18; concerns regarding the absence of accurate prognostic information available to parents when a prenatal diagnosis is provided; the impact of prenatal diagnosis

on perinatal palliative care; and guidance regarding Catholic ethics. The program will also include a review of effective Trisomy 21 advocacy during the last 50 years, which has changed the medical landscape for those living with this syndrome, and best practices in trauma-informed care. The day will conclude with a question-and-answer session with the presenters. Lunch will be provided.

The cost is \$50 for physicians, \$30 for nurses, midwives, and other health professionals, and \$10 for diocesan/parish staff, parents, students and clergy. Lunch is included.

Registration is required by March 1. To register, go to diocesefwsb.org/pnd-conference.

For more information, contact Lisa Everett at the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend at 574-234-0687 or leverett@diocesefwsb.org. †

Wedding Anniversaries

JAY AND REBECCA (HARKLEROD) HARTMAN, members of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Richmond, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Dec. 28.

The couple was married in St. Andrew Church, now a campus of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, in Richmond, on Dec. 28, 1974.

They have three children: Andria Baumgartner, Leah Watkins and Sara Woll.

The couple also has three grandchildren. †



Announcements for couples celebrating 50, 55, 60, 65, 70 or more years of marriage are accepted. Go to cutt.ly/anniversaries or call 317-236-1585.

MARCH FOR LIFE

continued from page 1

“That’s why we do everything around this altar with the Eucharist—the body, blood, soul and divinity of Christ, the living Word of God—made available to us to carry with us,” he said.

He also introduced the two bishops concelebrating the liturgy—Bishop Siegel and Bishop Timothy L. Doherty of the Lafayette, Ind., Diocese. The state’s two other bishops were unable to attend.

In his homily, Bishop Siegel recognized the “terrible tragedy that legalized abortion has been in our country as millions of children have been denied the right to be born, to live lives of wonder, joy and hope.”

But there were additional reasons for the solemn day of remembrance, he said, including “the countless men, women and families who continue to endure guilt, grief and pain, which is a bitter aftermath of abortion.”

There was cause for prayers of thanksgiving, too, Bishop Siegel noted—for the 2022 U.S. Supreme Court *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization* decision overturning *Roe v. Wade*, and “that our own state has enacted some very strong protections for the unborn.”

Still, Bishop Siegel said, there is “much work to do to help change the hearts and minds of many of our fellow citizens to recognize and respect the dignity of the child in the womb, so that abortion becomes unthinkable in any circumstance.”

He listed facets of such work “central to us who strive to be apostles of the gospel of life,” including: supporting pregnancy care centers; accompanying women in a crisis pregnancy who might otherwise seek abortion; supporting pro-life legislation; serving the needs of society’s most vulnerable people; and devoting time for prayer.

Bishop Siegel reminded those present that “all human life is sacred. It must be protected and respected, including the unborn, the sick, the elderly, those with special needs, the poor, the imprisoned, refugees and victims of violence.”

“We have to remember that the cause for life is not just ours, but it is God’s,” he said. We are called to trust “his power to overcome the darkness with his light and life, ... that we who celebrate God’s wonderful gift of life may receive and use well the many talents and gifts we need to build a culture of life in our families, our parishes, our communities, nation and our world.”

‘Something we all can continue to fight for’

Among those worshipping at the Mass were Michael and Amy Pavey of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish in Indianapolis and two of their five children. Their son Dominic, an archdiocesan seminarian at Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary in Indianapolis, assisted with the Mass.

They came to honor lives lost to abortion, but also “to embolden these young people [who are the] future of our society,” Michael said. “It’s about creating a culture of life.”

Before the march—with a record crowd of about 1,400 participants—several high school students from the archdiocese noted the importance of their generation’s role in the pro-life cause.

“We are showing hope in that the younger generation

is very involved in this movement,” said Olivia Leising, a sophomore at Oldenburg Academy of the Immaculate Conception in Oldenburg. “It shows that there’s a lot of strength in younger members in the Church.”

Charlie Baker, a junior at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis, agreed.

“Us being here, especially as schools coming in as groups, it’s like a sign that young people haven’t given up on this cause,” he said. “It’s something that we all can continue to fight for, like the new generation wants the same thing as the older generation.”

Blake Konger was impressed by the friendliness and enthusiasm of the youths gathered for the cause.

“If we just take that friendliness outside this convention center, out to people that aren’t pro-life and share that with them, it’d bring great hope,” said the senior at Bishop Chatard High School in Indianapolis.

As the joyful, pro-life chanting multitude made their way along the city streets, a man in a parked car took a video of them with his phone, a wide smile on his face.

“I see the march on the road, and I have to stay and see,” said Nelson Joseph, who recently moved to Indianapolis with his wife and two small children. He called the march “very, very, very, very good. When you protect the baby, it’s a wonderful cause, because God says, ‘don’t kill.’”

Joseph looked forward to showing the video to his wife, who is six months pregnant.

‘Couldn’t do it without all of you’

Pro-life flags and banners rippled in the cold wind as the marchers reached the south steps outside the Indiana Statehouse for a rally.

In addition to memorializing the 63 million lives lost to abortion, “We also march for the women,” Tuttle told the bundled crowd. “We march for the pregnant moms. We march so that no woman has to feel alone, no woman has to feel abandoned.

“We march so that there will be a day that every child is welcome, and every mom recognizes that she has help, that she has support, that she has community there to gather around her, no matter her circumstances. “We march for a day when we’ll look back and we’ll look at abortion similarly that we look to slavery, of an injustice that we just can’t imagine was allowed. Until we hit those points, we’re going to continue to march and continue to be out here every January 22nd—no matter how cold, no matter the weather.”

Eleven speakers addressed the crowd during the rally.

Tuttle, whose organization coordinates the Indiana March for Life and rally, took special note of one of them: Indiana’s newly-elected governor Mike Braun. This year marked the first time a governor addressed participants in the event’s eight-year history.

Braun recalled the days after the *Dobbs* decision in June 2022.

“There were some legislators here that, when [abortion law] finally came back to the states, had to exercise some real fortitude to be the first state that came out and said we were going to practice what we preached as a state and get a law out there that reflects that sanctity of life,” he said. “We must do everything in our power never to backslide to where we were before.”

State Rep. Joanna King, author and co-author of several



Right to Life of Indianapolis (RTL) executive director Marc Tuttle welcomes roughly 1,400 Indiana March for Life participants for a rally outside of the Indiana Statehouse in Indianapolis on Jan. 22. RTL organized the march and rally. (Photos by Natalie Hoefer)



State Rep. Becky Cash makes a point during her address at a rally outside of the Indiana Statehouse following the Indiana March for Life in Indianapolis on Jan. 22.

pro-life bills, also addressed the crowd.

“Passing bills is very difficult,” said King. “We most certainly couldn’t do it without all of you fighting for us and making sure that everybody knows and understands the value of a human being.”

When State Rep. Becky Cash invited the crowd to look up at the statehouse windows where “the legislators are watching you” and “scream as loud as you can,” the crowd happily complied, shouting, waving and tilting their signs for the unseen legislators to read.

On a more serious note, Cash cautioned those present. “Please do not be out there saying things like, ‘Well, now that *Roe vs. Wade* has been overturned, *now* we need to help pregnant women and babies.’ Because I know that you’ve already been out there doing that,” she said. “And [opponents of the pro-life cause are] trying to imply that that’s not what’s been happening. Don’t let them take the narrative back from you.”

During his address, State Treasurer Daniel Elliott called out particularly to the men present.

“We need our young men to know, preparing for fatherhood is going to be the most important thing you will ever do,” he said. “If it’s planned, amazing. And if it’s not, you can still be an amazing father.”

His closing comments were for all those gathered. “You have done so much,” he said. “But remember, this battle is not over, and we need everybody to step up and continue to protect the children, the unborn, who cannot protect themselves.” †



Participants from the New Albany Deanery show off their pro-life signs during a rally at the Statehouse in Indianapolis after the Indiana March for Life on Jan. 22.

A powerful pro-life witness



Students from Marian University in Indianapolis hold a banner leading the Indiana March for Life up Meridian Street in Indianapolis on Jan. 22. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)



The Sarah Kroger Band provides music for the nearly 1,450 students on Jan. 22 in the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis during the annual Indiana Youth Rally for Life. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)



Young men from the Diocese of Evansville, Ind., show their pro-life pride prior to the Indiana March for Life in Indianapolis on Jan. 22. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)



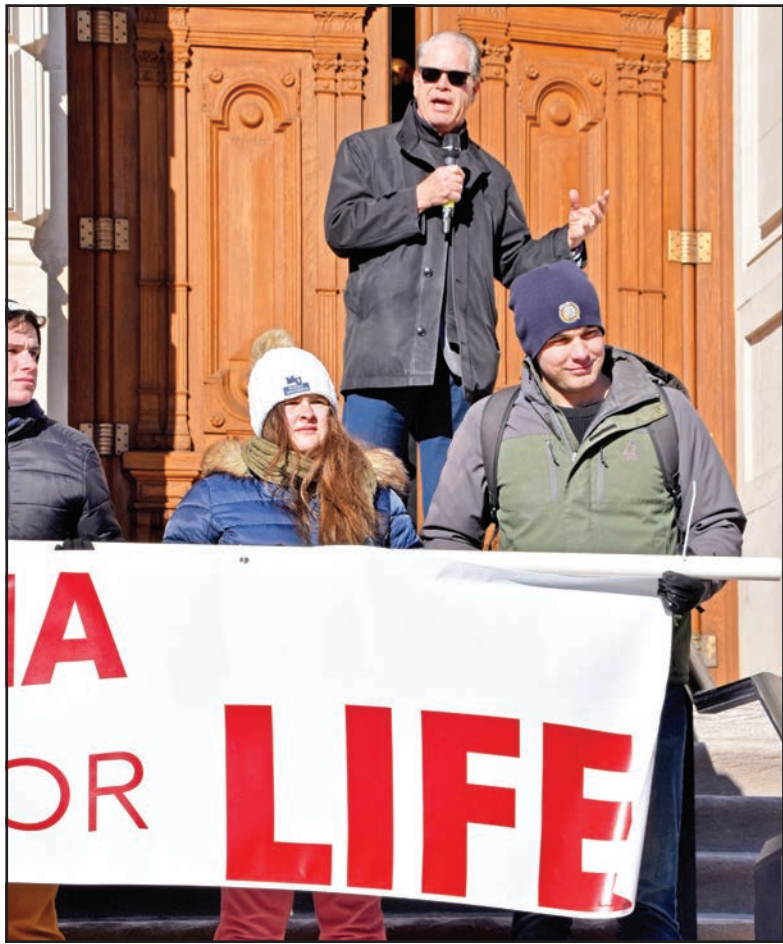
Teens from across the state taking part in the annual Youth Rally for Life on Jan. 22 in the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis watch a video of keynote speaker Katie Prejean McGrady. Blizzard-like conditions in her native Louisiana prevented Prejean McGrady from speaking at the rally in person. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson elevates the Eucharist during a Mass for Life in the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis on Jan. 22. Concelebrating with him are Lafayette, Ind., Bishop Timothy L. Doherty, left, and Evansville, Ind., Bishop Joseph M. Siegel. Kneeling are archdiocesan transitional Deacons Thomas Day, left, and Isaac Siefker. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)



Reyna Santos-Ramirez, a junior at St. Joseph High School in South Bend, Ind., gives a witness talk during the Jan. 22 Youth Rally for Life in the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)



Gov. Mike Braun addresses a pro-life crowd of roughly 1,400 at a rally outside of the Indiana Statehouse in Indianapolis on Jan. 22, the first governor to do so in the Indiana March for Life's eight-year history. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)



A mural of the Indiana state flag serves as a backdrop to a pro-life flag outside of the Statehouse in Indianapolis during a rally after the Indiana March for Life on Jan. 22. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)



Indiana March for Life participants pour onto the south lawn of the Indiana Statehouse in Indianapolis for a rally on Jan. 22 (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)



Students from Marian High School in Mishawaka, Ind., in the Fort Wayne-South Bend Diocese, kneel in prayer on Jan. 22 during the annual Indiana Mass for Life celebrated in the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

To view more photos from the Indiana Life Youth Rally, Mass, March and Statehouse Rally, go to tinyurl.com/2025INMFL.

YOUTH RALLY

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second annual youth rally.

She shared with her listeners that God in Jesus Christ is offering them “an abundant life” that is a gift and not something that they can earn or create on their own.

“We become saints, not just because we work really hard,” Prejean McGrady said. “We become saints because we embrace an abundant life. We live life to the full because the Lord has invited us to this full life, and we walk with him.”

She then gave the youths three suggestions to do daily to enter more fully into this abundant life: read from Scripture for five minutes; listen to the voice of God in silence for five minutes; and ask God in prayer, “Lord show me what you want me to see today.”

If her listeners do this faithfully, Prejean McGrady said, they will become like Christ’s disciples whom he sent out to preach and heal just as he had done.

“When we read Scripture, when we listen for his voice, when we sit quietly and ask him to show us what he wants us to see, then we, too, can go out,” she said. “We, too, can be these witnesses. We, too, can live and proclaim the abundant life.”

Filling in for Prejean McGrady during much of the rest of the rally was Catholic author and speaker Dom Quaglia.

Encouraging the youths to give themselves “face-to-face time” with God in personal, conversational prayer, he said this will lead them more fully into the abundant life that Prejean McGrady had described, an abundant life that saints across the ages had embraced.

“The saints are people who live this abundant life, but sainthood is not reserved just for a few wild and crazy people,” Quaglia said. “It’s not reserved just for people who travel the nations to preach or have some other kind of miraculous story in their life. Sainthood is a call for all of us.”

In a later reflection during the rally, Quaglia was clear with his listeners that, while God calls all of them to an abundant life, they need to know there will still be difficulties in the midst of it.

“Anyone who has ever said yes to the adventure that God has called them to knows that it’s not all sunshine and rainbows,” he said. “Every adventure has trials and challenges.”

One such challenge is to be a witness to pro-life principles in a society that often rejects them.

“You and I have to choose to build the culture of life,” Quaglia said. “We live in a culture that isn’t always so pro-life, and we have to choose to help build that culture of life. And you may not always be prepared to speak about it, but I would encourage you to try to prepare to speak to people about what you believe and why you believe it. Pray for the courage to do so.”

A witness talk was given during the rally by one of its attendees, Reyna Santos-Ramirez, a junior at

St. Joseph High School in South Bend, Ind., in the Fort Wayne-South Bend Diocese.

She reflected on her pride in her Latino heritage and the joy she’s experienced in helping families who recently emigrated to her hometown from Central and South America at a Catholic social service agency.

Reyna recalled recently helping a mother of a family from Venezuela get clothes for her children.

“The smile she had after receiving all of her things was one of joy and relief in her knowing that her kids had some clothes to get them by,” Reyna said.

The teen also reflected on the challenges of being Latino in today’s society and the difficulties she’s experienced in prejudicial attitudes shown to her and others.

“Your ethnicity and race shouldn’t be something that should stop you, but something that will make you stronger,” Reyna said. “We all need to not only treat immigrant and immigrant families like we would treat our Lord, but also we should all try and find the courage to walk with them, befriend them and get to know their story, just like you would want someone to know your story and know that you are loved.”

The rally’s emcee, Julia Eckrich, who serves as director of youth and young adult ministry at Our Lady of Grace Parish in Noblesville, Ind., in the Lafayette Diocese, also gave a witness talk about the experience of her and her husband in being foster parents for 13 children during the past four years.

Noting that “we never know what we’re getting into” when they get a call that they will be receiving a new foster child, they nonetheless “just say yes, and we trust that the Lord has their story written if we’re just a small part of it.”

“In all of this, we try to bring love and joy and stability and a lot of Jesus to each of these kiddos,” Eckrich said.

Describing both beautiful moments and difficult challenges in caring for foster children, she said that all of them are ultimately searching for one thing: love.

“And who is the ultimate author of love? Who is love himself? God,” Eckrich said. “So, we always try to bring God into these new relationships as they’re in this new environment...”

For her and her husband, “Foster care is more than just providing a roof over a child’s head,” she continued. “It’s answering Christ’s call to love and care for the most



Students from Roncalli High School in Indianapolis enjoy the music of the Sarah Kroger Band on Jan. 22 in the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis during the annual Indiana Youth Rally for Life. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

vulnerable among us. As Catholics, we’re called to be the hands and feet of Jesus, reaching out with compassion and hope.

“Whether by becoming a foster parent, supporting a foster family or simply praying for those in the system, each of us can play a part in bringing healing and stability to children in need.”

Ruby Martin, a junior at Father Michael Shawe Memorial High School and a member of Prince of Peace Parish, both in Madison, took part in the rally for the second year in a row.

“It’s good to know that there are so many other people who feel the same way,” Ruby said of the large gathering of youths in the convention center. “It makes a big impact on me to see everyone out here supporting the pro-life movement.”

Sherie Coolie left for Indianapolis at 5 a.m. on Jan. 22 from her home in Posey County in the Evansville Diocese for the rally and the Indiana Mass for Life and Indiana March for Life that followed it.

The director of faith formation and youth ministry at St. Francis Xavier Parish in Poseyville and St. Wendel Parish in St. Wendel, she was grateful that so many young people from her faith communities and her diocese had shown their commitment to the gospel of life.

“I’m really proud of them that they’re stepping up like this,” Coolie said. “They care enough about this that they’re willing to sacrifice their schedules. Some of them are missing extracurriculars and athletic events that are important to them.”

Her gratitude wasn’t restricted to those who came from southwestern Indiana but was also expressed for all the youths at the rally.

“It definitely gives you a sense of unity, that we’re all in this together,” Coolie said. “We’re not alone in this. We have support across the whole state.” †

ICC

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abortion to the states. In Indiana, most unborn lives are now protected from abortion, with exceptions in instances of rape or incest, lethal fetal anomalies or medical issues endangering the life of the mother.

In this post-*Roe* landscape, one Indiana lawmaker is attempting to add clarity to the medical complexities surrounding care for pregnant women and their unborn children. House Bill 1325, authored by Rep. Joanna King (R-Middlebury), would require the Indiana Department of Health to create a video for physicians concerning the state’s abortion laws and the standard of care for treating pregnant women with life-threatening conditions.

“We often hear that with the new abortion laws, it makes it impossible for women to get the care they need because physicians fear that what they’re doing will be called an abortion,” Mingus said. “Having this extra education should offer reassurance that physicians can treat a woman having a miscarriage or care for a mother whose life is at risk while recognizing that, as the billboards from Right to Life say, we want to ‘love them both.’ We care about the life of the mother and the life of her baby.

“Sometimes you can’t save both, and that’s tragic. But the state is saying that doctors don’t have to be afraid to care

for women, and we think this clarity can be very helpful.”

The bill is currently awaiting a hearing. Another measure recently introduced in the legislature would offer families a tax credit for newborn babies, including those who are adopted. Senate Bill 497, authored by Sen. Greg Walker (R-Columbus), would allow parents to claim a \$500 refundable credit within their child’s first year to help with the costs of adding a member to their family.

“The newborn or new dependent tax credit increase would help growing families settle into their new normal after welcoming a child into their lives,” Walker said. “We want to support new families in Indiana, and this is a great step in the right direction.”

The ICC strongly supports the bill as both a life-affirming measure and a way to assist families, especially those struggling financially.

“It’s a way for the state to say, ‘We value the lives of newborn children, and we value families raising children,’” Mingus said. “This proposed legislation also acknowledges that there are many financial hardships for young families, and this is a small way of helping to relieve some of that.

“Particularly for moderate-income and lower-income Hoosiers, we think about the Catholic Church’s articulation of the preferential option for the poor,” he continued. “We believe this is a good pro-family policy.”

Other advocates agree.

“Whatever part of the state we live in, whatever our home or background or religion, one of our deepest values is the ability to provide security and opportunity for our families,” said Erin Macey, director of the Indiana Community Action Poverty Institute and a longtime ally of the ICC on numerous issues. “In each young Hoosier, we see potential and an unwritten story. These are our future innovators and entrepreneurs, neighbors and leaders.”

Speaking at a Jan. 16 press conference at the Statehouse titled “Babies in the Budget,” Macey encouraged lawmakers during this budget-year legislative session to focus on the youngest and most vulnerable in the state.

The ICC, which served as a co-sponsor of that press conference, is now spearheading its own media briefing at the Statehouse. On Feb. 3, the ICC is inviting faith leaders, legislators and other advocates to join in calling for an end to the death penalty in Indiana.

Indianapolis Archbishop Charles C. Thompson and Bishop Robert J. McClory of the Diocese of Gary, Ind., are among those scheduled to speak at the 3 p.m. press conference that day.

“We continue to have conversations with legislators about how the death penalty is a pro-life issue, and how we advocate for life from conception to natural death,” said Roarke LaCoursiere, the ICC’s new associate director. “During our upcoming press conference, we will

emphasize that the death penalty is both a matter of faith and a matter of being pro-life.”

LaCoursiere, who engaged with numerous visitors to the ICC booth during the Indiana March for Life, reflected on the pro-life passion that she witnessed, particularly among high school and college students.

“I’d been to the Washington, D.C., March for Life, but it was my first time experiencing the march in Indiana,” said LaCoursiere, who joined the ICC in September. “I really appreciated how many schools allowed students to take a day off to come and pray with the bishops who were able to be there and go around to all the tables, including ours, and learn about what the state of Indiana is doing to build a culture of life.

“The youth of the Church and our state being so excited and willing to band together and stand up for life touches me,” she continued. “It reminds me of all the ways my hometown parish and family helped me get involved with the values of my faith when I was in high school and college. Those core memories of being one with the Church led me to where I am today with a career advocating for the Church and state.”

To follow priority legislation of the ICC, visit www.indianacc.org.

(Victoria Arthur, a member of St. Therese of the Infant Jesus [Little Flower] Parish in Indianapolis, is a correspondent for The Criterion.) †

SIMPLY CATHOLIC

Black Catholics offer great example of holiness to Church in America

By Michael R. Heinlein

(OSV News)—We are greatly blessed by the contributions of Black Catholics in the Church in the United States, particularly their illuminating legacy of holiness.

The struggles and pain faced by the African American community are succinctly captured in the lives of these six Black Catholics now being considered for canonization. In them, we can find the greatest of human characteristics, truly men and women for our times.

With Black History Month starting on Feb. 1, it is good for all Catholics in the U.S. to learn more about them and, hopefully, to be inspired by them to seek holiness more in their daily lives.

—**Venerable Pierre Toussaint (1766–1853)**

Born a slave in Haiti, Toussaint came to New York as property of a French Haitian family, who later freed him in 1807. After establishing himself as a successful hairdresser, Toussaint put his sizable earnings to use for the good of others, beginning with the purchase of his sister’s freedom as well as that of his future wife, Juliette.

Together, the Toussaints spent their lives in service to the poor and needy. When urged to retire and enjoy his remaining years, Toussaint is quoted as saying, “I have enough for myself, but if I stop working, I have not enough for others.”

Toussaint’s great charity and works of mercy were fueled by an abiding faith. A daily Mass attendee for more than 60 years, Toussaint lived as he worshiped. Not embittered by the hardships he endured because of his race and his Catholic faith, the model layman gave of himself to others.

Toussaint and his wife adopted his niece, took in orphans and funded orphanages, operated a credit bureau, established hostels for priests and refugees and generously supported the Church and other institutions. Toussaint attended to the sick and suffering, too, even strangers whom he helped nurse to health.

Toussaint died on June 30, 1853. In 1990, his remains were moved to a niche in the bishop’s crypt at St. Patrick’s Cathedral in New York City—a rather poetic postscript to the life of a man whose race once prohibited him from entering the city’s Old St. Patrick’s Cathedral. He was declared venerable in 1996.

—**Venerable Mother Henriette Delille (1812–1862)**

Born out of wedlock to a Frenchman and a free woman of color, Henriette Delille spent all her life in and around New Orleans’ French Quarter. A cultured young woman of high society, Delille was expected, like her mother and the women of her family, to form a liaison relationship with an eligible white man.

After receiving the sacrament of confirmation, however, Delille clearly became a woman committed to the Lord. Her guiding motto, written in a prayer book, captures what defined her heart and spurred her vocation: “I believe in God. I hope in God. I love. I want to live and die for God.”

Prevailing racist attitudes, even within the Church, made Delille’s pursuit of a religious vocation painful and difficult. Two congregations denied her admittance. Undeterred by the rejection, Delille persevered to establish a religious congregation herself in 1836. Using an inheritance from her mother, Delille began what became known as the Sisters of the Holy Family with the aim to serve the poor, sick and elderly, and to teach the faith to both slave and free children.

Delille’s generosity and love was known to everyone who knew her. She was a mother to all she encountered, and sacramental records show she even served as godmother and marriage witness to many. She died on Nov. 16, 1862, at age 49. An obituary summed up her calling: “For the love of Jesus Christ, she had become the humble and devout servant of the slaves.” Delille’s cause for canonization opened in 1988, and she was declared venerable in 2010.

—**Venerable Father Augustus Tolton (1854–1897)**

Augustus Tolton, born the son of slaves on April 1, 1854, was the first Black man from the United States to be ordained a priest. But his path to priesthood was not easy.

After a harrowing escape from their Missouri home, Tolton’s family settled in freedom in Quincy, Ill., where the pastor accepted him into the parish school despite much opposition from parishioners. Later, as Tolton began to pursue a priestly vocation, seminaries across the United States rejected his applications out of prejudice.

With heroic determination, Tolton pressed on toward his calling. He was accepted to a seminary in Rome and was ordained there in 1886. Though Father Tolton expected to serve as a missionary in Africa, he soon



found out that he was destined for service back in the United States. “America has been called the most enlightened nation; we will see if it deserves that honor,” said Cardinal Giovanni Simeoni, prefect of the Holy See’s Congregation for Propagation of the Faith, which oversaw Tolton’s seminary. “If America has never seen a black priest, it has to see one now.”

Upon his return to Quincy, Father Tolton was met with racial prejudice by laity and clergy alike. An authority even told him not to allow white people to attend his parish. A priest of great humility and obedience, Father Tolton was invited to minister in Chicago in 1889, and left Quincy thinking he had been a failure there.

In Chicago, Father Tolton was indefatigable in his efforts to serve a growing Black Catholic community and established St. Monica Parish for Black Catholics. Returning from a retreat by train, Father Tolton collapsed on a Chicago street amid record heat and died on July 9, 1897, at the young age of 43. His body was returned to Quincy for burial. Father Tolton’s cause for canonization was opened in 2010, and he was declared venerable in 2019.

—**Venerable Mother Mary Lange (c. 1784–1882)**

Few details are known about the early life of Elizabeth Lange. Likely born in Santiago de Cuba, she emigrated to the United States with a heart ready for service. Known to be of African descent, Lange once described herself as “French to my soul.”

God’s providence eventually led Lange to Baltimore, where there was a sizable group of French-speaking Catholics who fled Haiti at the time of its revolution. At that time, no free education existed for Black children in Maryland. There, Lange operated a free school out of her home. Financial difficulties eventually forced its closure.

Lange was drawn into further teaching by Sulpician Father James Joubert, who also encouraged her and a few companions to consecrate their lives and work to God as professed religious women. With Mother Mary Elizabeth Lange as the first superior, the Oblate Sisters of Providence were established in 1829—the first successful congregation for Black women in the United States. With Lange’s pioneering vision and holy example, the Oblate sisters persevered through great difficulties and offered their lives in service to all in need—especially to school children, orphans, widows, the sick and those in spiritual need.

With a humble heart, Lange accepted whatever tasks lay before her. In her final years she patiently endured many hardships. Yet, Lange consistently persevered trusting in God’s provident hand. She died on Feb. 3, 1882, and her cause for canonization formally was opened in 1991. She was declared venerable in 2023.

—**Servant of God Julia Greeley (c. 1840–1918)**

Born into slavery in Hannibal, Mo., Julia Greeley gained her freedom after the Emancipation Proclamation. Her years as a slave left a permanent mark: a drooping eye, received as the result of a beating.

After moving to Colorado in 1879, Greeley fell in love with the Catholic faith. She converted the following year and immediately immersed herself in the devotional and sacramental life of the Church. She attended daily Mass,

was devout, pious and took up intense fasting. When questioned about regularly eating no breakfast, Greeley would respond, “My Communion is my breakfast.”

Greeley found great joy in her love for the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which she saw as the source for her many charitable and service-oriented ministries. She was known to spread the devotion, even using it as a tool to evangelize Denver’s firemen. From her heart flowed the love of Christ’s heart.

Greeley took on a life of poverty, living in union with the poor of Denver. Taking on odd jobs like cooking and cleaning, she used her meager salary to finance a ministry to the poor while suffering from painful arthritis. She could not write, read or count, but wearing her trademark floppy hat Greeley could show Christ’s love.

She dragged a red wagon filled with goods to distribute to the poor, and, at times, she even begged for them. Many of those she helped were among the nearly 1,000 mourners who attended the funeral after her death on June 7, 1918. Her canonization cause was opened in 2016.

—**Servant of God Sister Thea Bowman (1937–1990)**

Born in Mississippi on Dec. 29, 1937, Bertha Bowman converted to Catholicism at the age of 9. Missionary priests and sisters began a Catholic school in her hometown to provide a better education for Black children, and it did not discriminate. The gospel-filled joyfulness of those missionaries attracted the young Bowman to the faith. This same joyfulness became a hallmark trait of hers later on.

Bowman was so attracted to their way of life that at 15 she went on a hunger strike to get her parents’ permission to enter as an aspirant with the order of sisters who staffed her school, the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration in La Crosse, Wis.

Life in the convent did not protect her from racial prejudice, but she won people over with her joyful, outgoing demeanor and love for Christ and the Church. The daughter of a doctor and a teacher, Sister Thea, her name given upon professing religious vows, was intellectually gifted. She earned a doctorate in English at The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., and subsequently served in a variety of teaching roles.

After she, an only child, returned home to take care of her parents in 1978, Sister Thea served as director for intercultural affairs in the Diocese of Jackson, Miss. She dedicated herself to overcoming divisions in the Church and society in the wake of the Second Vatican Council and the racial strife of the 1960s.

As a writer, teacher, musician and evangelist, Sister Thea preached the Gospel to clergy and laity alike, promoting ecclesial and cultural harmony and reconciliation as a tireless spokeswoman for the Black Catholic experience.

Pledging to “live until I die,” Sister Thea remained wholeheartedly committed to her ministry while battling breast cancer for several years. She died on March 30, 1990, and her cause for canonization was opened in 2018.

(Michael R. Heinlein is editor of Black Catholics on the Road to Sainthood and author of Glorifying Christ: The Life of Cardinal Francis E. George, OMI.) †

Faith and Family/Sean Gallagher

Simeon and Anna can be reflected in encouraging elders at parishes

Sometimes the stories we read in the Scriptures seem far removed from our daily lives. They happened thousands of years ago in places far from our homes and in societies so different from the one in which we live.

But then other Bible stories seem to leap off the page as if they could be happening all around us here and now.

We'll hear one such story proclaimed this Sunday as the Church observes the feast of the Presentation of the Lord. This is the feast that recalls how the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Joseph brought the Christ Child to the temple in Jerusalem and were met there by two elderly people, Simeon and Anna.

Both recognized the Christ Child as the long-awaited Messiah. Mary and Joseph, the Gospel of St. Luke tells us, "were amazed at what was said about him" (Lk 2:33).

For me, at least, this story from Luke (Lk 2:22-40) seems familiar because I have often seen reflections of Simeon and Anna in the many older members of parishes, often parents and grandparents themselves, who give

encouragement to parents of young children in their faith community.

Parents of young babies know the great gift they've been given in their children. But the constant 24/7 care that their infants demand can make it easy for those parents to forget about the wonder they carry in their arms as they live through what my wife Cindy calls "baby bootcamp."

They may drag themselves to Mass on Sundays, having been up half the night with their babies. Maybe that was how Mary and Joseph felt when they brought the Christ Child to the temple.

But then they sit down next to an older couple who smile at them and engage the baby, and maybe even hold him or her for a while during the liturgy.

Then, after Mass, the elderly couple might ask about the baby, praise him or her and give reassuring words to the infant's parents. Maybe they show such interest in their young counterparts and their baby because they see in them an image of themselves when they were starting their family years ago.

Cindy and I were blessed by this happening to us many times when our five sons were newborns.

While the babies so often doted upon by older members of parishes are not the Messiah, they nonetheless can appear to these experienced parents as sign of God's continued love for our world. They're a grace-filled light of hope for the future for older parishioners who might have experienced some darkness in their lives.

Younger parents can also find hope in the bright faces of elderly parishioners as they take in their babies. That hope might be just for the next day, not for far into the future. The constant care that infants need can understandably shorten the vision of their parents.

The warm smiles and supporting words of older parishioners after a Sunday Mass might also be just what young parents need in those moments.

With our youngest son now being 11, Cindy and I are starting to become part of the cohort of older parents in our parish.

With the help of God's grace, may Cindy and I, and all experienced parents in parishes, be like Simeon and Anna. May we help young parents be renewed in their amazement for the gift God has given them in their babies. †

That All May Be One/Fr. Rick Ginther

Creed's anniversary, date of Easter offer hope for coming together in jubilee

"Pilgrims of Hope." In his documents about the Jubilee Year 2025, Pope Francis names all believers as pilgrims. He urges that believers be about prayer, pilgrimage and renewal.

According to a canon of the Council of Ephesus, the ecumenically approved creed was not to be altered except through an ecumenical council.

The Holy Father wants this jubilee year to be an active one for and by those who believe in Christ. We who so believe are invited to be pilgrims living, sharing and spreading hope.

This year offers jubilee activities in Rome, across the United States, and here within the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. For an excellent resource about them, go to www.archindy.org/jubilee.

As we mark the jubilee, the Church this month also observed the annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity on Jan. 18-25, a week rooted in "hope, ... that all maybe one."

A hope-filled celebration at Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ Church in Indianapolis on Jan. 19 focused on the Nicene Creed, because the Council of Nicaea happened 1,700 years ago in 325. This council gave us the first creed for the entire universal Church.

The creed was reaffirmed in 381 at the Council of Constantinople, and in 431 at the Council of Ephesus, the latter of which also affirmed the title of "*theotokos*" ("God-bearer") for Mary.

During the ensuing centuries, controversies both in the east and in the west threatened the acceptance of the creed by the entire Church.

One such controversy centered upon the noting in the creed that the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father "and the Son" ("*filioque*" in Latin). This term, added at some regional councils in the west, was unacceptable in the east.

The tensions became divisive when the Church of Rome added this phrase to the creed in the 11th century.

Both Pope Francis and Patriarch Bartholomew have stated their hope that the date of Easter this year for both east and west (on April 20) will be the impetus for an agreed upon common date for Easter moving forward.

Thus, the year 1054 witnessed mutual excommunications by Church leaders in the east and west. Bitter distance ensued, and in some ways, yet remains.

Various theological, political, linguistic and Church discipline factors also contributed to divisions in the Church.

About 900 years later, during the Second Vatican Council, Pope Paul VI and Orthodox Patriarch Athenagoras I of Constantinople issued the Catholic-Orthodox Joint Declaration of 1965. At the same time, they lifted the mutual excommunications dating from the 11th century. The act did not result, however, in the restoration of communion.

On June 28, 2024, in an address to the annual visit of the delegation of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople for the patronal feast of SS. Peter and Paul, Pope Francis stated that "it is my hope that the commemoration of the [1,700th anniversary of Nicaea] will inspire all believers in Christ the Lord to testify together to their faith and their desire for greater communion.

"In particular, I am pleased that the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity have begun to reflect on how to join in commemorating this anniversary, and I thank His Holiness Bartholomew [of Constantinople] for inviting me to celebrate it near the place where the council met. It is a trip that I truly wish to make."

Both Pope Francis and Patriarch Bartholomew have stated their hope that the date of Easter this year for both east and west (on April 20) will be the impetus for an agreed upon common date for Easter moving forward.

One can only hope!

(Father Rick Ginther is director of the archdiocesan Office of Ecumenism and Interreligious Affairs. He is also the pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Indianapolis.) †

Corrections Ministries/Deacon John Cord

Those incarcerated can receive plenary indulgence during jubilee year

Immediately after Pope Francis opened the first Holy Door on Dec. 24 at St. Peter's Basilica to start the Jubilee Year, whose theme is "Pilgrims of Hope," he travelled to Rebibbia prison complex in Rome. The Holy Father wanted the second holy door to be opened at a prison.

During his homily there, he told the people who are incarcerated that the open door was a symbol for them to open their hearts to the love of Christ. He explained that having an open heart gives us hope. Pope Francis gives us a great example of how we on the outside can lift up our incarcerated sisters and brothers. Our hope can be their hope.

The Vatican has given us some very concrete ways that the incarcerated can receive a plenary indulgence. They are asked to join in spirit and prayer with those on the outside who can pray with them and for them. They are also asked to study from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* or from the documents from the Second Vatican Council and reflect on them. In addition, when and if the sacraments are available, they should receive the sacrament of reconciliation and receive holy Communion. And they are to strive to turn away from all sin, even venial sins.

If you are involved in jail or prison ministry, please

educate the people you visit about the jubilee year. Please teach them about what a plenary indulgence is: the remission of consequences after life for sins already forgiven. Let them know that if they follow the steps above, they can receive this grace. Let them know they are loved by the pope, and they are loved by all who work with the incarcerated.

For the rest of us, even if we don't visit a jail or prison, we can lift the incarcerated by praying for them during Mass. If we pray for the incarcerated while we receive holy Communion, we are joining ourselves to them to help them receive this grace.

We can also receive a plenary indulgence. Special pilgrimage sites have been designated in Rome and dioceses around the world. In the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, three locations have been designated as jubilee pilgrimage sites:

—SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis.

—The Shrine of St. Mother Theodore Guérin and the Church of the Immaculate Conception, 1 Sisters of Providence Road, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary of the Woods.

—The Archabbey Church of Our Lady of Einsiedeln at Saint Meinrad Archabbey, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad.

An indulgence can be obtained by visiting one of these sites and participating in Mass or any other public prayer, a time of adoration or a rosary while there, in

addition to meeting other plenary indulgence requirements. We should join ourselves as if we were on pilgrimage with everyone who desires to engage in this jubilee year.

Pope Francis has also given us concrete actions that we can do this year to receive the grace of a plenary indulgence. One of these is to visit those on the margins and learn how we can help them. The marginalized include the homeless, the incarcerated, the mentally ill, the addicted and more. For more in-depth information on plenary indulgences during the jubilee year, visit www.archindy.org/jubilee/indulgence.html.

I think this is such a beautiful request from the pope. When we interact face to face with people, we get to know them. By getting to know them, we realize that their struggles are our own struggles. I can't count how many times I have witnessed someone interact with a struggling person, and both people are forever changed. It is always beautiful.

Please join Pope Francis in this jubilee year as a "pilgrim of hope." You will gain so much, and the people's lives you pray for and touch will also receive many graces.

(Deacon John Cord is the coordinator of Corrections Ministry for the archdiocese. For more information on supporting the office's re-entry ministry, contact Deacon Cord at 317-432-6604 or by e-mail at jcord@archindy.org.) †

The Presentation of the Lord/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, February 2, 2025

- Malachi 3:1-4
- Hebrews 2:14-18
- Luke 2:22-40

This weekend, the Church celebrates the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord. It's a reminder of the Jewish heritage



of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. For pious Jews, as Mary and Joseph were, the event of the presentation of a first-born son in the temple was very important.

Think of the importance for parents and families in the Church of baptizing a newborn, a child's first Communion or a wedding in the Church.

For Jews, the presentation ceremony was a way of giving thanks to God that the mother of the infant had been spared the complications of childbirth. It was also a way to "present" the newborn to God in the sacred surroundings of the temple, acknowledging that the child belonged to God and was destined to live by fulfilling God's holy will.

For its first reading, the Church offers a passage from the prophecy of Malachi.

Little is known about the Book of Malachi, such as its authorship or the date of its composition. But its message is clear. People, by disregarding the law of God, inevitably create for themselves trouble, even disasters.

In this reading, God promises to send a "messenger" to guide the people (Mal 3:1).

The second reading is from the Epistle to the Hebrews. No writing in the New Testament surpasses Hebrews in its eloquent, brilliantly worded and profound exaltation of Jesus as the promised Redeemer, given to humanity in God's love and mercy.

This reading fully is in that pattern. Jesus is the Savior, perfect and mighty.

St. Luke's Gospel provides the third reading. It is a rather detailed account of the presentation of Jesus by Mary and Joseph in the temple in Jerusalem.

Traveling to Jerusalem was not quick or easy for anyone living in Nazareth, yet Mary and Joseph made the trip to comply with Jewish custom, and this is evidence

of their devotion both to their faith and religious convictions.

At the time, animal sacrifice was part of Jewish liturgy. (This ended in the first century with the destruction of the Temple and the scattering or slaughter of the priests under the Romans.)

The preferred victim in the sacrifice was a lamb. Not everyone, however, could afford to buy a lamb. The poor offered doves, as did Mary and Joseph. They were not persons of means.

In the temple, they encounter two holy people, Simeon and Anna. The Gospel says that these people had been lifelong in their religious fervor and that they were elderly. They recognized that this child would have a marvelous place in the accomplishment of God's plan for salvation of the world.

Reflection

The readings for this feast, so ancient in Christian tradition, are heavy with lessons and advice for people today who wish to follow Jesus, or who simply want to find answers in their lives.

First, Malachi and Hebrews present so well not only the identity of Jesus but the need for him. The Lord brings to people the aid, strength and instruction that are vital to their well-being and available nowhere else.

Second, Mary and Joseph, in their willing attention to their religious heritage, the beliefs behind that heritage and their response despite their lack of means, offer a lesson. They carried out the Jewish practices of their time because they provided them with direction, guidance, inspiration and organization.

Their example invites us to follow the Lord, honor God and trust God, even if all the circumstances are not ideal or if problems present themselves.

Third, Simeon and Anna furnish great examples, and they provide proof of a reality that never fails.

True devotion to God brings not only hope and peace of mind, but also wisdom. Living with God, with God truly in our heart and mind, enlightens us and clarifies questions that may arise. Recognizing God puts everything in place. †

Daily Readings

Monday, February 3

St. Blaise, bishop and martyr
St. Ansgar, bishop
Hebrews 11:32-40
Psalm 31:20-24
Mark 5:1-20

Tuesday, February 4

Hebrews 12:1-4
Psalm 22:26b-28, 30-32
Mark 5:21-43

Wednesday, February 5

St. Agatha, virgin and martyr
Hebrews 12:4-7, 11-15
Psalm 103:1-2, 13-14, 17-18a
Mark 6:1-6

Thursday, February 6

St. Paul Miki and companions, martyrs
Hebrews 12:18-19, 21-24
Psalm 48:2-4, 9-11
Mark 6:7-13

Friday, February 7

Hebrews 13:1-8
Psalm 27:1, 3, 5, 8b-9c
Mark 6:14-29

Saturday, February 8

St. Jerome Emiliani
St. Josephine Bakhita
Hebrews 13:15-17, 20-21
Psalm 23:1-6
Mark 6:30-34

Sunday, February 9

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Isaiah 6:1-2a, 3-8
Psalm 138:1-5, 7-8
1 Corinthians 15:1-11
or 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, 11
Luke 5:1-11

Question Corner/Jenna Marie Cooper

Life of consecrated virgins is rooted deep in the history of the Church

What does it mean in the Church to be a consecrated virgin?

What are the rights and duties of the designation? And what is the process of becoming a consecrated virgin?



The *Code of Canon Law* defines consecrated virgins as chaste and never-married women who "through their

pledge to follow Christ more closely, ... are consecrated to God, mystically espoused to Christ and dedicated to the service of the Church, when the diocesan bishop consecrates them according to the approved liturgical rite" (#604).

Consecrated virginity is the oldest form of consecrated life in the Church, predating the development of religious life by several centuries. Since apostolic times, there have always been women who chose to renounce marriage in order to dedicate their lives and hearts more fully to Jesus. For this reason, they were traditionally called and formally recognized by the Church as "brides of Christ."

Since at least the fourth century, if not even earlier, the Church has had a special liturgical ritual—distinct from but in some respects parallel to priestly ordination—for bishops to solemnly consecrate women to a life of virginity. Many of our earliest female martyr saints—such as SS. Agatha, Agnes, Lucy and Cecilia, who are named in the Church's eucharistic prayer I—are considered consecrated virgins.

With the development of religious orders in late antiquity, the custom of consecrating women outside of monasteries gradually fell out of practice. By the Middle Ages, the Church no longer had consecrated virgins "living in the world."

But in the mid-20th century, the Second Vatican Council document

"*Sacrosanctum Concilium*" called for a revision of the ancient rite of consecration to a life of virginity. In 1970, the new ritual was promulgated.

And so in a situation similar to the revival of the permanent diaconate, the vocation of consecrated virginity was restored to the life of the modern Church.

In 2018, the Vatican issued a document called "*Ecclesiae Sponsae Imago*," which provided bishops with more detailed guidance on this state of life, covering topics such as the discernment of vocations, formation and the life and mission of consecrated virgins.

Consecrated virginity is a unique vocation for women in that it is centered in the local diocesan Church rather than a particular group or religious community. The diocesan bishop is the one who accepts women into this state in life and who ultimately serves as the superior of consecrated virgins in his diocese. In general, consecrated virgins are called to pray for the needs of their diocese and to serve the needs of their local Church according to their own specific gifts and talents.

In paragraphs 80-103, "*Ecclesiae Sponsae Imago*" describes the formation process for aspiring consecrated virgins as lasting between three to five years. Formation for consecrated virginity is envisioned as involving various elements, including personal mentorship and spiritual direction, some level of academic theological study and a gradual adoption of the lifestyle of a consecrated virgin.

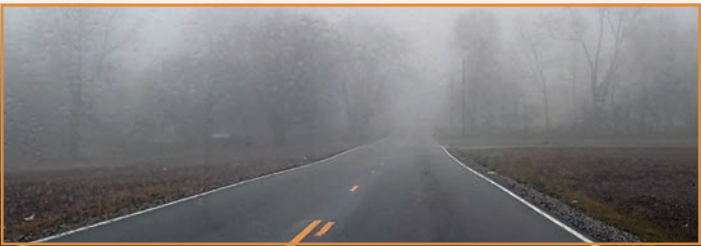
In terms of a consecrated virgin's duties and obligations, the introduction to the rite of consecration to a life of virginity states: "They are to spend their time in works of penance and of mercy, in apostolic activity and in prayer according to their state in life and spiritual gifts."

"*Ecclesiae Sponsae Imago*" more specifically describes consecrated virgins as having an obligation to pray the Liturgy of the Hours and to attend daily Mass in regions where this is possible. Consecrated virgins are also expected to live a relatively ascetical life, discerning the concrete penitential practices with their confessor or spiritual director.

Consecrated virgins do not profess vows of poverty and obedience in exactly the same way as religious sisters do. However, consecrated virgins are still called to live in a spirit of evangelical poverty and to co-discern major aspects of their life and mission with their bishop.

(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



(Seana Zoderer is a member of St. Roch Parish in Indianapolis. Photo: Fog and mist obscure what lies ahead on this country road near Mary, Queen of Peace Church in Danville in January 2020.) (Submitted photo by Seana Zoderer)

little by little

By Seana Zoderer

little by little
breath by breath

I widen my gaze
embracing the beauty . . . the imperfection

noticing with eyes of wonder
pondering this life . . . this journey

little by little
breath by breath

I tenderly place my hand on my heart
feeling all that is within me
grief and peace
gratitude and longing

gently acknowledging
I don't need to know everything
I don't need to know why
surrendering . . . to grace

little by little
breath by breath

I move forward . . . slowly
with faith . . . with trust . . . with love

this is my path
this is my healing journey

little by little
breath by breath

Investing with Faith/Kimberly Pohovey

Conversations with your family can inspire generations of generosity

As a faithful Catholic, you understand the importance of giving back to God and the Church.

Have you instilled this habit in your children? The future of the Church relies on the generations to come being generous with their God-given blessings. Whether your children are grown adults or still little, introducing the value of financial stewardship is important at any age.

Teaching young children the value of giving back plants the seeds of stewardship. If you give your children an allowance or they receive a gift, it would be a great practice to teach them to always give a portion of it to the church or other charitable cause. I remember my parents teaching me this lesson when I was little, which I believe led me to be a faithful contributor to the Catholic Church as an adult.

Sharing your philanthropic goals with your adult children can help inspire generosity in their lives. Engaging them in your charitable contribution decisions can help them better understand why philanthropy is important to you and solidify your family’s philanthropic legacy.

In my work with archdiocesan planned giving, I have seen entire

families support the same ministry, endowment fund or cause. I have witnessed adult children continuing to support a particular ministry, even after their parents have passed. I have also conversed with families in which the parents set aside a particular amount for each child to donate to the charity of their choice in order to foster stewardship before they have the financial means to make meaningful gifts on their own.

Kathy and Jim Laudick of St. Pius X Parish in Indianapolis understand the importance of generational giving. In 2017, they established a donor-advised fund (DAF) with the Catholic Community Foundation (CCF) which they use to give grants to their favorite Catholic ministries. Since then, they have found their DAF to be a great tool to involve their adult children in giving discussions.

“Until recently, our young adult children knew that we supported several different philanthropic organizations and that we concentrated on education,” Kathy said. “For several years, Jim and I discussed more directly involving our children by giving them a pool of funds with the idea that they would decide where the funds went.”

In 2024, they implemented this plan. “They [their children] decided to give part of the funds collectively, and we allocated a sum to each child to distribute as they desired,” Kathy continued. “When we saw their chosen

organizations, there were no surprises—their choices matched their interests.”

Kathy and Jim’s goal was to provide a more direct way for their children to gain an appreciation of the value of philanthropic giving. “It is an important component of who we are,” Kathy shared, “and we hope to instill that same value in them. We also saw this as an opportunity for our children to work together.”

When it comes to informing your adult children of your wishes regarding end-of-life issues, I have heard from several priests that they are frustrated when one of their faithful parishioners dies and their children decide to forego a funeral Mass.

My husband and I recently updated our last will and testament. Among the documents our attorney prepared for us was a funeral planning declaration that clearly states for our children our wishes to receive a Catholic funeral Mass, as well as our burial instructions. While most would prefer not to discuss death, it is important to broach this subject with your children if your final intentions are to be followed.

Wondering how to get started?

—Even from a young age, instilling a sense of philanthropy can help your children grow in the habit of giving back. Discuss with children that everything we have is a gift from God and he calls us to not only give back, but to benefit others.

—We encourage parents to regularly discuss their giving with their adult children. Be sure to express to them your wishes regarding your estate, potential charitable bequests and your funeral wishes so that they understand and can carry through your intentions. Discuss with your adult children your desire that they follow in your footsteps in continuing the family tradition of charitable giving.

—Did you know that a DAF with the CCF is a great tool to facilitate generational giving? It allows you to grant donations to Catholic parishes, schools or ministries. A DAF provides donors with flexibility in the amount, frequency and timing of grants to charities. A family can decide together where to distribute the funds, or each member could recommend a different charity to benefit.

Having these conversations with your family can inspire generations of generosity.

(Kimberly Pohovey is the director of major and planned gifts for the archdiocese. Tax or legal information provided herein is not intended as tax or legal advice. Always consult with your legal, tax or financial advisors before implementing any gift plan. For more information on the Catholic Community Foundation, visit www.archindy.org/ CCF, e-mail ccf@archindy.org, or call 317-236-1482.) †

Holy Year shines light on journey of life and faith, Pope Francis says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Whether one needs a fresh start or simply time for “recalculating the route,” the Holy Year 2025 is an opportunity for all Christians to set off on a pilgrimage, Pope Francis said.

“The destination is not just any goal, but a place of as much sharing, fraternity and joy as possible in this world with its lights and its trials,” and where people are “open to the ultimate happiness in the company of Jesus, Mary and all the saints,” the pope told members of the Italian Automobile Club.

Pope Francis focused on the meaning of jubilee pilgrimages in his meeting with the club members on Jan. 23, in audiences that day with the Italian police who patrol the area around the Vatican, and with leaders of the foundation that supports the Pope’s Worldwide Prayer Network.

On the pilgrimage through life, he told the auto club,

people do risk “taking the wrong road—it’s true—or of finding oneself in difficulty or feeling lost.”

Especially in those situations, he said, “the jubilee can be an opportunity to start again, to recalculate the route of one’s life, identifying the landmarks that should not be missed and those that might instead become obstacles to reaching the goal.”

Even worse than getting lost, though, is not moving at all, he said. “We were not made to stand still.

“Do not get discouraged, but always start again,” the pope told them.

In his meeting with the Italian national police unit responsible for the area around the Vatican, Pope Francis thanked them for guaranteeing his safety and that of his collaborators and the pilgrims and tourists who visit the Vatican.

But he also encouraged them to take advantage of the

jubilee and the holy doors opened in St. Peter’s Basilica and the basilicas of St. Mary Major, St. John Lateran and St. Paul Outside the Walls.

“Going through the holy door is not a magical act—no, it is not—it is a symbol, a Christian symbol; Jesus himself says, ‘I am the door [Jn 10:9],’ ” the pope told them, quoting the Gospel of John.

Making a pilgrimage and crossing the threshold of the holy door is “a sign that expresses the desire to begin again,” the pope said. A wise person recognizes the need “to begin again. Always going one step forward. The desire to be renewed, and to let God find you.”

Pope Francis prayed that even “those who may not recognize that they have the gift of faith, let them equally take advantage of this jubilee year to go forward.” †

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Archdiocesan Retreat House

The Secretariat for Evangelizing Catechesis, Archdiocese of Indianapolis, seeks a leader to direct retreat and renewal ministry at Fatima Retreat House.

This director oversees all aspects of activity at the retreat center as well as serving as a liaison between Fatima and the Archdiocese. Familiarity with Catholic retreat/renewal experiences is required, as is at least 5 years of related experience. The equivalent of an undergraduate major in Catholic theology or a related field is preferred.

Cover letter, resume and references may be sent in confidence to kogorek@archindy.org.

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‘Great spirit of hope’ animates advocates at 2025 March for Life

WASHINGTON (OSV News)—The theme of the 52nd National March for Life was “Life: Why We March.” For the thousands of people gathered on the National Mall in the freezing cold on Jan. 24, each had their own “why” for coming out that day to stand for the life of the unborn child.

Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kan., who led the rally in prayer, told OSV News that he attends the annual march “because this is the most important human rights issue.” But also, he said, “to get recharged with all the great people that are here.”

He praised both the personal testimonies of those who spoke at the rally about choosing life in difficult circumstances, and the enthusiasm of those gathered to march more than two years after the Supreme Court overturned the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision that legalized abortion nationwide. The court returned the issue back to the states’ lawmakers in the 2022 *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization* decision.

“I think there’s a great spirit of hope,” he said. He noted the recent hopeful news of President Donald J. Trump pardoning 23 pro-life protestors who had been convicted of violating the federal Freedom of Access to Clinics (FACE) Act. He also welcomed the president’s video address to the marchers in which he promised to “stand proudly for families and for life.”

At the same time, in the post-*Dobbs* climate where pro-life efforts in many states have failed, Archbishop Naumann emphasized that “we have to change the culture.

“If we want good laws, that means we have to evangelize others. We have the truth, we have good arguments, but we have to evangelize them with love and with our joy. That’s what’s going to convert culture. That will change laws.”

Sister Mary Rose Bingham with the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia in Nashville, Tenn., said that her life as a religious sister naturally includes being pro-life, because life is a “fundamental” gift from God. She said the Dominican sisters attend the March “to be a living witness to the value of life in all its forms.”

Sister Theresa Joseph Loan Anh Nguyen, a member of the Dominican Sisters of Mary Immaculate Province in Houston, added that “it is our duty to protect life from the moment of conception to natural death.”

She said gathering to march for life is to be “among



People hold signs during the 52nd annual March for Life rally in Washington on Jan. 24. (OSV News photo/Bob Roller).

thousands of people to stand up for the voiceless, to stand up for women who would receive the gift of motherhood.” Babies, she said, “are made in the image and likeness of God and they are a gift, not something to be trashed or to be thrown away. Life is precious.”

Marcela Rojas, who lives in the Archdiocese of New York, said that she came to the march with a group of 75 people, many of them mothers bringing their small children. They came, she said, to be the voice of those babies “who cannot have a voice.”

Rojas also had a message “for all those moms or those people who are going through moments in which they do not want to have their baby.

“Be aware that you are not alone. You are not alone; seek help,” she said. “There is a lot of help in which there are ways out—not to abort—there are ways out to feel better and there are ways out to be able to say yes to that life.”

Chris and Isabel Hoff traveled from Michigan to attend the March for Life. They held a brightly colored sign that announced, “We’re adopting,” and included a link to their adoption agency. The couple first started going to the March for Life when they were college students.

“We were always open, even before getting married, to adoption,” Chris Hoff said. Isabel also said that they were

marching “to show our support for life and all life from conception to natural death and to promote the beauty of adoption as well.”

They were overwhelmed by the “beautiful” responses they got from their fellow marchers to their sign, including encouraging stories from those who were adopted and from couples who have adopted. Isabel felt blessed “to witness to adoption and to promote our adoption journey with so many other pro-lifers here.”

Diane Ferraro, CEO of Save the Storks, was one of the pro-life advocates at the march who was adopted. Her organization provides mobile pregnancy testing and ultrasound buses to assist women in need.

“My birth mother went to Mexico to abort me in 1966,” she told OSV News. “So this is very personal to me. And we want every woman who is finding out that she’s pregnant, and maybe feels she isn’t ready, to know we have so many resources around the country to help support her and equip her.”

She added that the climate today is difficult following the *Dobbs* decision. But she said they “have to keep fighting for life” and “really making motherhood a beautiful thing and celebrating motherhood for what it is: It’s a miracle.” †

Trump tells March for Life rally he will ‘stand proudly’ for life, family

WASHINGTON (OSV News)—President Donald J. Trump pledged to “stand proudly for families and for life” in a video message for the 52nd annual March for Life on Jan. 24.

Trump, who took office just days earlier, delivered the message to the crowd at the event’s preceding rally, while Vice President JD Vance addressed marchers in person.

Leaning into a pro-life message after trying to strike a moderate tone on the issue during his campaign, Trump said he was “so proud to be a participant” in the process to overturn the U.S. Supreme Court’s 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision.

During his third Republican bid for the White House, Trump argued that abortion should be a matter for the states rather than Congress and said he would veto a federal abortion ban if one reached his desk. On several occasions, Trump has blamed the issue of abortion and pro-life voters for the Republican Party’s underperformance in the 2022 midterm election cycle.

But Trump told rallygoers, “to all of the very special people marching today

in this bitter cold, I know your hearts are warm and your spirits are strong because your vision is just very, very pure to forge a society that welcomes and protects every child as a beautiful gift from the hand of our Creator.”

Among the first actions of his second term, Trump issued pardons for 23 individuals he said were improperly prosecuted by the Biden administration under the Federal Access to Clinic Entrances Act, or FACE Act, which prohibits actions including obstructing the entrance to an abortion clinic.

In remarks to reporters at the White House before leaving to survey disaster response in North Carolina and California, Trump was asked about the pro-life event.

“We look forward to seeing it,” he said. “I’m going to be watching it, and JD Vance, our vice president, is there and he’s going to be representing us very well. It’s taking place in a little while and, other than being a little bit cold, it’s a beautiful day.”

In an in-person address to the rally, Vance said Trump’s second term would be the “return of the most pro-family,

most pro-life American president of our lifetime.”

During his 2022 U.S. Senate bid in Ohio, Vance, a Catholic, said he supported a federal 15-week abortion ban—a measure potentially affecting nearly 6% of abortions in the U.S. But two years later, in the days leading up to his selection as the Republican vice presidential nominee, Vance moderated his position on abortion, aligning with Trump that abortion policy should be left to the states, affirming Trump’s stated position he would oppose a federal abortion ban if Congress passed such a law.

In a July interview, Vance also said he supported mifepristone, a pill commonly used for first-trimester abortion, “being accessible.” Although mifepristone can be used in early miscarriage care protocols, Vance did not qualify his statement. Nearly nine out of 10 abortions take place within the first trimester, with more than six of 10 abortions performed through mifepristone.

In his address to the March for Life rally, Vance said, “I want more babies

in the United States of America,” and argued addressing cost-of-living concerns would be part of this approach.

“We need a culture that celebrates life at all stages, one that recognizes and truly believes that the benchmark of national success is not our GDP number or our stock market, but whether people feel that they can raise thriving and healthy families in our country,” Vance said.

Vance has also frequently discussed a more aggressive policy approach to combating root causes of poverty, such as advocating for a higher minimum wage and floating a \$5,000 per child tax credit. Some pro-family researchers have pointed to findings indicating that giving robust child allowances to parents could have both anti-poverty and pro-life effects by lifting households with children out of poverty. In the U.S., abortion correlates heavily with low-income levels, with seven out of 10 women telling researchers at the Guttmacher Institute that they could not afford a baby as an important factor in why they had an abortion. †

Pope Francis clears way for beatification of Franciscan martyrs in Georgia

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis has formally recognized that five Franciscan missionaries ministering in what is now the U.S. state of Georgia were killed for their faith, in 1597.

By signing the decree in the sainthood cause of the Georgia martyrs on Jan. 27, the pope cleared the way for their beatification, although a date for the ceremony was not announced immediately.

The Spanish Franciscans Pedro de Corpa, Blas Rodríguez de Cuacos, Miguel de Añón, Antonio de Badajoz and Francisco de Veráscola were killed between Sept. 14 and Sept. 17, 1597, after Father Pedro told a young Indigenous man, Juanillo, who was heir to a Guale chiefdom, that as a baptized Christian he could not take a second wife.

Juanillo and a band of his men killed the priest with a stone hatchet at the Mission of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Tolomato, which is near modern-day Eulonia, Ga. They then went after the other Franciscan missionaries living and ministering along the Georgia coast.

Recounting the story of the Georgia martyrs on its website, the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints said Father Pedro not only “reprimanded” Juanillo for taking a second wife, but also “told him that he would oppose his succession as village chief if he persisted in his polygamous choice.”

Bishop Stephen D. Parkes of Savannah, the diocese that includes the missions where the five friars were martyred, thanked all the people who worked to promote their sainthood cause for more than 40 years.

“May Venerable Friar Pedro de Corpa and Companions intercede for families everywhere, and inspire husbands and wives around the world to live out the sacrament of marriage with love, truth, and fidelity,” the bishop wrote in a statement on Jan. 27.

The first proof of the five Franciscans’ readiness to give their lives for the Lord was their choice “to leave Spain and set out as missionaries to a land and among peoples still partly unknown. The five were aware of the risks and dangers associated with their apostolate also in relation to their safety,” the dicastery said.

“Moved by a genuine spirit of love for Christ and service to the Church, they accepted to be sent on mission to the North American territory,” it said. †