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Criterion

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One mission, one voice



Archdiocese launches new logo based on historic coat of arms, page 3.

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Gabi Moore has seen the difference that the Teen Mental Health First Aid program at Oldenburg Academy of the Immaculate Conception in Oldenburg has made during her high school years, a time filled with growth, challenges, close friends and struggles. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

School's mental health program helps teens, including how to be there for each other

By John Shaughnessy

OLDENBURG—Sometimes life comes down to a friend who notices, who cares and who acts.

During his time in high school, 18-year-old Luke Hopkins saw that one of his friends was struggling with life in a way that made Luke worry.

"My friend was kind of going down a bad path mentally," Luke recalls. "It was kind of like the world was ending."

So, Luke sought the help of a teacher he trusted.

"We got the student what they needed at the time, so they were good," Luke says.

That moment captures the hopeful essence of the Teen Mental Health First Aid program at Oldenburg Academy of the Immaculate Conception in Oldenburg—just one of several schools and youth organizations in Indiana that has embraced the program developed by the National Council for Behavioral Health.

"One in five adolescents will experience a mental health

See MENTAL HEALTH, page 8

An appeal for civility rooted in humility and empathy

Statement from Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

The recent shootings of protesters, attacks on government officials, and continued indiscriminate deportations of so many of our neighbors have



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

sparked outrage and grave concern about the integrity of our nation. Have we lost our moral compass? Have we sacrificed our sense of human decency for unbridled freedom without obligations or restrictions? Whatever the concern, as the saying goes, *the end*

does not justify the means. Violence is not the answer to tension and disagreement. If you have not already done so, I implore you to read the special message issued by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in November 2025. (To read the message, go to cutt.ly/2025SpecialMessage.) The path to lasting peace and unity, Pope Leo XIV reminds us, is predicated on the building of bridges rather than walls.

See statement in Spanish, page 9.

There but for the grace of God go I.

While the origin of this quote remains uncertain, this famous idiom is often attributed to John Bradford, a 16th-century English reformer and martyr, as he witnessed criminals being led to execution. Regardless of where it originated, the phrase is meant as an expression of humble awareness of oneself as well as empathy for others. During his historic address to the U.S. Congress in 2015, the late Pope Francis expressed concern for several respect life issues within the context of the so-called ancient *Golden Rule*; namely, *Do unto others as you would have done to you.* (Mt 7:12)

See CIVILITY, page 9

Lawmakers reject firing squad as additional execution method in Indiana

By Victoria Arthur

The Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC) is hailing positive developments at the midpoint of the legislative session, including the rejection of a push to



introduce execution by firing squad as a means of capital punishment.

Following impassioned debate on the House floor, a bill that would have added this controversial method of carrying out the death penalty in Indiana was defeated in a close vote. Rep. Bob Morris (R-Fort Wayne), a Catholic lawmaker who last year introduced legislation to abolish the death penalty altogether, was among

those appealing to his colleagues to vote "no" on House Bill 1119.

"We have executed people in this country wrongfully," Morris told his fellow House members before their vote on Jan. 28. "One thing is for certain: You will never bring that life back when it is gone."

Calling execution by firing squad inhumane and the effort to bring this method to Indiana "taking a step backwards," Morris called for a renewed look at capital punishment in the Hoosier State. Currently, only lethal injection is allowed by law to carry out the death penalty, although lawmakers backing House Bill 1119 argued

that the high cost of the drugs involved as well as supply issues have created the need for alternate methods.

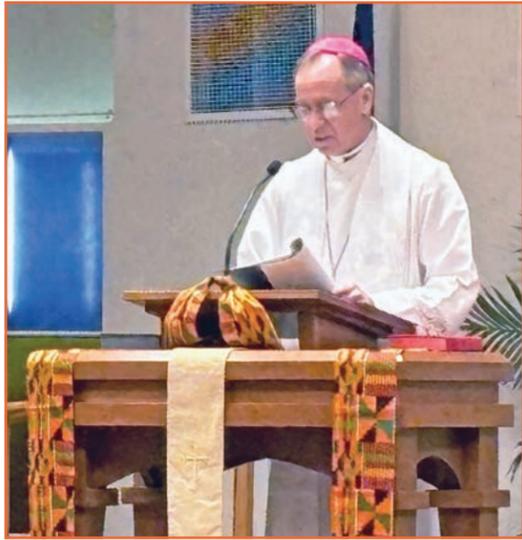
"I'm against every means of capital punishment until this body can debate it," Morris said. "Stand here and tell me the best way to execute a life. I'm a pro-life legislator, and I know many of you are as well. Vote this down and let's start the discussion on capital punishment."



Rep. Bob Morris

Authored by Rep. Jim Lucas (R-Seymour), House Bill 1119 was rejected on a narrow 48-46 vote, failing to reach the 51 votes needed for a constitutional majority. An earlier version of the bill had also proposed

See EXECUTION, page 16

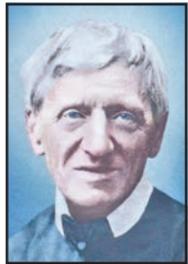


That all may be one

As part of the annual celebration of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity on Jan. 17-25, Archbishop Charles C. Thompson took part in a prayer service on Jan. 20 at Lawrence United Methodist Church in Indianapolis. Other archdiocesan leaders who attended the gathering included Father Rick Ginther, director of the archdiocesan Office of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs. (Submitted photo)

Pope adds feast day of St. John Henry Newman to universal calendar

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Leo XIV has added the feast day of St. John Henry Newman, who is “a radiant light for the Church on pilgrimage through history,” to the General Roman Calendar so that “his Optional Memorial be celebrated by all on 9 October.”



St. John Henry Newman

Cardinal Arthur Roche and Archbishop Vittorio Francesco Viola, respectively prefect and secretary of the Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, announced the pope’s decision in a decree published by the Vatican on Feb. 3.

Previously, the feast day of Newman was inscribed only in the proper calendar of the Congregation of the Oratory—the religious congregation to which he belonged—and the proper calendar of England and Wales. Now his memorial, celebrated on the date of his conversion to Catholicism in 1845, is included in the calendar of the universal Church.

“Throughout his long life, Cardinal Newman was unstinting in this service to which he had been called. The service of intellectual inquiry; the service of preaching and teaching; as well as service to the poor and the least,” said the decree, dated Nov. 9.

“His lively mind has left us enduring monuments of great importance in the fields of theology and ecclesiology, as well as poetic and devotional compositions. His constant search to be led out of shadows and images into the fullness of the truth has become an example for every disciple of the Risen One,” the decree said.

In a separate note, Cardinal Roche said the inclusion of Newman in the General Roman Calendar “is intended to present his figure as an outstanding example of the constant search for the truth that enlightens and saves,” and to help the faithful contemplate him “as a man led by

the ‘kindly light’ of God’s grace to find peace within the Catholic Church.”

Bishops’ conferences around the world will need to translate from Latin the prayers issued by the dicastery for Mass on his feast day as well as those used in the Liturgy of the Hours and in the Roman Martyrology, and have the translations confirmed by the dicastery.

Cardinal Roche said the collect or opening prayer for Mass on his feast day reveals “the very essence of the saint’s spiritual journey,” which can become “for us too a source of inspiration and a reason for humble prayer, we who desire to be led out of shadows and appearances, so as to arrive at the full light of truth.”

The Gospel reading for his feast is from the 13th chapter of St. Matthew, the cardinal said, in which “the Kingdom of God is compared to a net cast into the sea that gathers all kinds of fish. Only one who becomes a disciple can understand the parable of the Kingdom, becoming “like a master of a house, who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”

The decree came after Pope Leo proclaimed the British saint a doctor of the Church on Nov. 1, the feast of All Saints.

Celebrating Mass in St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican on Nov. 1, Pope Leo concluded the Jubilee of the World of Education and proclaimed Newman the 38th doctor of the Church, including him among the men and women of the Christian East and West who have made decisive contributions to theology and spirituality.

Earlier that week, Pope Leo had officially recognized Newman as co-patron of education along with St. Thomas Aquinas.

Newman was born in London on Feb. 21, 1801, and was ordained an Anglican priest in 1825. He joined the Catholic Church in 1845 and was ordained a Catholic priest in Rome at the church of the Pontifical Urbanian College on May 30, 1847. He was made a cardinal in 1879 by Pope Leo XIII and died in 1890. †



Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

February 6–15, 2026

February 6 – 5 p.m.
Legacy Gala Dinner in Support of Catholic Charities, Catholic Schools and Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary at JW Marriott, Indianapolis

February 8 – 9 a.m.
Mass for Vietnamese Community at St. Joseph Church, Indianapolis

February 8 – 11 a.m.
Mass at St. Joseph Church, Indianapolis

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

February 11 – noon
Lunch Gathering with archdiocesan priests, Indianapolis

February 11 – 6:30 p.m.
Panel Discussion on “Pope Leo XIV in Context” at Marian University, Indianapolis

February 12 – 10 a.m.
Leadership Team meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center

February 12 – 5 p.m. CST
Ministries of Lector and Acolyte Mass, St. Meinrad

February 14 – 10:30 a.m.
Rite of Election at St. Mary-of-the-Knobs Church, Floyds Knobs

February 15 – 2 p.m.
Rite of Election at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis

February 15 – 6 p.m.
Rite of Election at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral

Official Appointments

Effective November 5, 2025

Rev. Joseph Orlowski, F.S.S.P., appointed parochial vicar of SS. Philomena and Cecilia Oratory, Oak Forest.

Effective December 1, 2025

Rev. Anthony Eziefule, appointed parochial vicar of St. Jude Parish in Indianapolis.

Rev. Jeremy Gries, pastor of Holy Family Parish in New Albany and dean of the New Albany Deanery, appointed priest *in solidum*, moderator of St. Mary Parish in New Albany, while remaining pastor of Holy Family Parish in New Albany and dean of the New Albany Deanery.

Rev. Jose Neri, appointed priest *in solidum* of St. Mary Parish in New Albany.

Rev. Justin Bobby Vogel, appointed parochial vicar of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Parish in Rushville, St. Gabriel Parish in Connersville, and St. Bridget of Ireland Parish in Liberty.

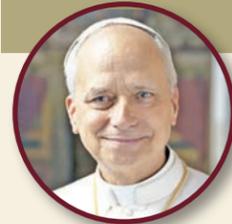
Effective December 7, 2025

Deacon Samuel Hansen, seminarian for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, appointed to transitional diaconate ministry at St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis in accordance with the provisions of the *Program of Priestly Formation* (6th Edition).

Deacon Timothy Khuishing, seminarian for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, appointed to transitional diaconate ministry at St. Mark the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis in accordance with the provisions of the *Program of Priestly Formation* (6th Edition).

Deacon Khaing Thu, seminarian for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, appointed to transitional diaconate ministry at St. Michael Parish in Greenfield and St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in Fortville in accordance with the provisions of the *Program of Priestly Formation* (6th Edition).

(These appointments are from the office of the Most Rev. Charles C. Thompson, Archbishop of Indianapolis.) †



Pope’s prayer intentions for February

- **For formation in discernment**—Let us pray that children suffering from incurable diseases and their families receive the necessary medical care and support, never losing strength and hope.



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E-mail us:
criterion@archindy.org

Staff:
Editor: Mike Krokos
Assistant Editor: John Shaughnessy
Reporter: Sean Gallagher
Reporter: Natalie Hoefler
Graphic Designer / Online Editor: Brandon A. Evans
Executive Assistant: Ann Lewis



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One mission, one voice: Archdiocese launches new logo

By Sally Krause

They say a picture is worth a thousand words. Indeed, the words we choose and the visuals we use shape how people experience our archdiocese—and ultimately, our Church.



Since 1994, the archdiocesan logo has been a blue window with panels suggesting the variety of communities across central and southern Indiana. It was created by the late Benedictine Father Eric Lies, an artist-calligrapher of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad; it was modified into the shape of a stained glass window by Jane Lee, a graphic designer with the archdiocese at the time. While that visual has served us well, it began to feel dated.

An archdiocesan-wide communication study, completed in the spring of 2024, laid the groundwork for change by providing a deeper understanding of parishioner communication needs and preferences. Among the discoveries was a need to update our archdiocesan identity.

Jennifer Bradley, an Indianapolis designer with more than 20 years of experience, designed the new look.

The updated logo is a modern interpretation of the archdiocese's historic

coat of arms, honoring our heritage in central and southern Indiana while introducing relevant new elements.

Anchored by the original design commissioned in 1934, the shield reflects faith and tradition. A Marian blue cross proclaims the Gospel and the *fleur-de-lis* honors French missionaries and early bishops. The fish with trident recalls Native American roots, remembering the Algonquin tribe whose name means "place of spearing fish."

Crowned by a bishop's miter, the shield signifies episcopal authority. New features include 38 points encircling the emblem, representing the Indiana counties within the archdiocese that have a parish, and the founding date, which grounds the design in its enduring mission.

Finally, in the tradition of coats of arms going back centuries, blue and gold are French heraldic colors, a reference to the first Catholic explorers and settlers of the archdiocese. Blue

also symbolizes faith, while gold represents wisdom, generosity, glory and constancy.

With its first appearance on the cover of the 2026-2031 pastoral plan, the new logo unites the Archdiocese of Indianapolis as one community with one mission in central and southern Indiana—to joyfully proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all people by living his mission of mercy, hope and salvation.

(Sally Krause is executive director of communications for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.) †



Seen above is the retiring archdiocesan logo and text branding, which has been in use for more than 30 years.

Choose hard, sacrifice for others: lessons learned from the Camino

(Editor's note: A record 499,239 pilgrims from all over the world walked the Camino pilgrimage route in northern Spain in 2024. The Criterion has invited people from the archdiocese who have made all or part of that pilgrimage to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in Spain to share how that experience has influenced their life and their faith.)

Eighth in an occasional series

By John Shaughnessy

A journey along the Camino is often filled with many gifts and blessings, but the pilgrimage also comes with the challenges and hardships that test the body and the spirit.

Bette Lindley knows that reality from the pilgrimage she made with her late husband Larry in 2013. The treks up the mountains and the descents on the steep, rocky roads took their toll on her body while a miserable case of homesickness sapped her spirit.

Yet, what kept her going was "a simple idea that Larry had before we left Terre Haute," recalls Lindley, a longtime member of St. Patrick Parish in that city. "He sent out a request to our family and our church friends to share their favorite Bible verse.

"He compiled each name with their verse on a small paper, which we carried with us to Spain. And each morning, we drew a name and prayed the rosary for

that couple or person and walked for them all day. When I needed 'attitude adjustment,' as one French woman told me over the pilgrim meal one night, I thought about the person on that paper and realized that God wanted me to shift my attention from me to the person I walked for all day."

That approach made "the blisters, snorers and shoulder aches more manageable," Lindley says.

"Pilgrim life stayed the same all the way into Santiago, but knowing the Lord was expecting me to pray and sacrifice for someone else made the hundreds of miles not any easier, just more doable.

"Today when I have to do something hard, I choose someone and do that hard thing for them. A lesson learned on the Camino."

'God was there with us at each moment'

Like many of the plans we make for our lives, God had a different one in mind for Beth and Bill Reedy.

The couple from St. Augustine Parish in Jeffersonville had planned to travel across the Camino in a different way than most pilgrims. They had arranged to bike from Portugal to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in 11 days. Yet on the first day of their pilgrimage, Beth had an accident on her bike.

"My ring finger immediately began to bleed and hurt and swell around my great grandmother's wide, gold wedding band,

eventually turning my whole finger quite a few interesting colors. I thought I had broken a finger," Beth recalls. "Our next steps required a slew of Ubers to move us and the bikes to our hotel and to the three hospitals we visited before the ring was removed, and X-rays showed no broken bones.

"Luckily, every single person we encountered truly had our best interests at heart. They gave us great medical attention, drove us to the correct hospital—finally—helped my husband with the bikes, carried my luggage, and Google translated us through all the ins and outs of the Portuguese medical system. Every one of them was in the right place at the right time to be God's presence on our pilgrimage."

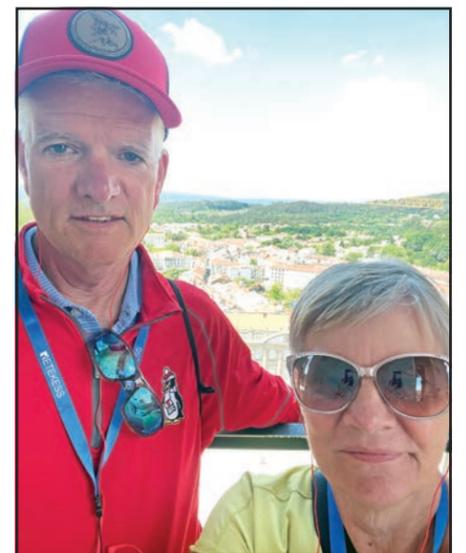
With Beth's injury, the couple changed plans, opting for a rental car to take them to their scheduled stops along the Camino. Even with that change, one part remained constant, she says—God's providence.

"We didn't have the privilege of riding through each small village or meeting very many pilgrims along the way, but we did spend time in beautiful medieval cities, visited churches big and small to get our credentials stamped, searched for sea glass along the Atlantic Ocean, and spent a great deal of time in awe of God's beautiful creation," she says. "God provides."

Every day offered more instances of God's presence and humanity's efforts to honor him.

"We were awed by the actions of our faith-filled ancestors who built beautiful cathedrals, monasteries and statues in places that would have been extremely difficult and dangerous to get to in earlier centuries," she says.

"We visited the port of Baiona, Spain,



God had a different plan for Bill and Beth Reedy as they traveled along the Camino. (Submitted photo)

where Christopher Columbus' boat, *The Pinta*, brought the first news of the New World to the people of Europe. And where we also visited the *Virgen de la Roca* [Virgin of the Rock]—a 50-foot-tall statue of Mary holding a ship which is perched high on a hill overlooking the port.

"We attended Masses with cloistered Dominican sisters, with pilgrims from all over the world at the Cathedral of Santiago, and with the Catholics of Vigo, Spain, at the feast day Mass at Our Lady of Fatima Church."

Beth believes God gave them just the right pilgrimage he had planned for them.

"God was there with us at each moment," she says. "He gave us more than we needed. And he always has. His love and care were just more evident to us on The Way." †



Bette and Larry Lindley had a special routine of praying for people as they walked the Camino in 2013. (Submitted photo)

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Editorial



Pope Leo XIV gives his homily during Mass in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican on Jan. 1, the feast of Mary, Mother of God, and World Peace Day. (CNS photo/Lola Gomez)

Hope allows us to commit ourselves to God and our neighbor

During his first Sunday *Angelus* address for 2026, Pope Leo XIV offered an insight into the hope that Jesus made possible by his Incarnation.

After spending all of the previous year—the 2025 Jubilee Year of Hope—celebrating this important, but often elusive, theological virtue, the Holy Father reminds us that “the coming of Jesus in the weakness of human flesh rekindles our hope.” It is precisely through his weakness and fragility that the infant Savior inspires hope for the future.

In his Message for the World Day of Peace on Jan. 1, Pope Leo makes a similar point. “Goodness is disarming,” he says. “Perhaps this is why God became a child. The mystery of the Incarnation, which reaches its deepest descent even to the realm of the dead, begins in the womb of a young mother and is revealed in the manger in Bethlehem.”

Hope is born in our hearts when we witness the defenselessness of an infant who must depend on others for everything. And yet we know that by the grace of God, this fragile child will one day grow to be an adult capable of remarkable things that seem unimaginable in its infancy.

In his World Day of Peace Message, Pope Leo continues:

“Peace on Earth,” sing the angels, announcing the presence of a defenseless God, in whom humanity can discover itself as loved only by caring for him [cf. Lk 2:13-14]. Nothing has the power to change us as much as a child. Perhaps it is precisely the thought of our children and of others who are equally fragile, that cuts to the heart [cf. Acts 2:37].

Hope effects change in us. It convinces us that the world is not a prison, that we are not determined by the status quo but are free to become the persons that God intends us to be.

Hope liberates us from the fear and mistrust that hold us back. “At the same time,” the Holy Father says, “it entrusts us with a twofold commitment: one to God and the other to our fellow human beings.”

In order for hope to realize its potential, we must bind ourselves to others. This is a paradox. True liberation (freedom) requires commitment. It does not mean that we have no obligations

or responsibilities. On the contrary, the more we give ourselves to God and our neighbor, the more we can be freed from the chains of selfishness and sin.

Pope Leo challenges us to think differently about our relationship to Jesus, the incarnate Word of God:

We are committed to God, for since he has become flesh, choosing our human frailty as his dwelling place, we are called to reconsider how we think about him, beginning with the flesh of Jesus, and not from an abstract doctrine. We must, therefore, constantly examine our spirituality and the ways in which we express our faith, in order to ensure that they are truly incarnate. In other words, we must be capable of contemplating, proclaiming and praying to the God who meets us in Jesus. He is not a distant deity in a perfect heaven above us, but a God who is nearby and inhabits our fragile Earth, who becomes present in the faces of our brothers and sisters, and reveals himself in the circumstances of daily life.

The God who is near to us—who is one with us especially in the holy Eucharist—is the source of our hope for the future.

The same is true of our commitment to all men and women, our neighbors. “Since God has become one of us,” the Holy Father says, “every human creature is a reflection of him, bearing his image and containing a spark of his light. This calls us to recognize the inviolable dignity of every person and to offer ourselves in mutual love for one another.”

The hope that springs from the incarnation demands a concrete commitment to the promotion of fraternity and communion among all God's people. “Through this commitment,” Pope Leo says, “solidarity becomes the criterion of all human relationships, calling us to strive for justice and peace, to care for the most fragile, and to defend the weak.”

The incarnation of God's only Son has made hope possible for us. As Pope Leo says, “God has become flesh; therefore, there is no authentic worship of God without care for humanity.”

Hope allows us to commit ourselves to God and our neighbor. By binding ourselves to others, we are set free.

—Daniel Conway

Be Our Guest/Fr. Patrick Hyde, O.P.

The joy of being a Hoosiers fan

(Editor's note: This reflection by Dominican Father Patrick Hyde was posted on Jan. 19 on the website of First Things, a journal on religion and public life. It was written before Indiana University's football team won the

College Football Championship in Miami Gardens, Fla., on the day it was posted.)



“Are you around at all for the next hour? Wanted to stop by with the trophy!”

“I sure am,” I

replied. About 15 minutes later, Fernando Mendoza, the quarterback of the Indiana University football team, walked into the lobby of the St. Paul Catholic Center on campus with the Heisman Trophy. I have received wonderful Christmas presents, but holding the Heisman Trophy and celebrating with the winner—who is one of my parishioners—on Christmas Eve is undoubtedly the most outstanding Christmas present I have ever received.

In the Gospel of John, Jesus says, “These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full” (Jn 15:11). Jesus had the joy of doing the will of the Father and sharing the fullness of revelation with the Apostles. Joy, from a Christian perspective, is a gift to be shared.

What a blessing it was to share the joy of the Heisman Trophy and the team's success with Fernando. On top of that, the joy of the moment was an opportunity to marvel at how this IU football team has reversed more than a century of suffering for Hoosier fans. As the Psalmist says, “Those who sow with tears will reap with songs of joy” (Ps 126:5).

Standing in the stands at the Rose Bowl and the Peach Bowl was an act of communal catharsis for generations of Hoosiers. We always seemed to be on the other side of those outcomes. As the pastor of the university's Newman Center, I have been particularly edified to see some of the biggest contributions coming from the student athletes who are also faces in the pews on Sundays.

My joy, however, is not limited to the success of Fernando Mendoza and the IU football team. Rather, my hope and joy are rooted in the marvels of the young Church. For nearly a decade I have served as a priest on the campus of Indiana University. Like many other ministries, ours is a rapidly growing one.

Our young people flourish, not because they are finding in the faith what is culturally acceptable, but because they are finding something far greater than what

the world offers. In the din of a college campus, the silence of a church becomes attractive. In a world that permits everything but forgives nothing, deep, intimate friendships and the priest in the confessional are powerful antidotes.

We faith leaders, therefore, must respect our young people, prioritize their needs and provide a place where their faith can be nourished and can flourish. Moreover, if we want our students to take their faith seriously, we leaders must make the essentials of the faith the priority of our work. This demands that priests like me (and other ministers) work all the harder to create a ministry that helps our young people incorporate faith into their pursuit of excellence, to integrate the freedom that comes from faith into every aspect of their lives.

In a world marked by division, hostility and confusion, striving after holiness is often seen as impossible or the work of the extraordinary saints. Others believe that holiness requires detachment from the world. However, despite the challenges, it is possible to be holy and good in the world. It all starts with faithfulness and love; placing our trust in God's providential care and extending his love to all through our actions.

How one goes about doing good, living one's faith and loving one's neighbor is not some hidden secret. We are made for relationship with others. We respond to the invitation of the Lord to worship in the Church, to pray without ceasing, to share the goodness of the Lord with others and to love those who are in need simply by doing those things.

Football games are great. Winning the Heisman Trophy is an incredible accomplishment. Not all of us can show up at our church with the Heisman Trophy or be part of a successful football team, but all of us can share our lives, our joys and sorrows and our hearts with others. The best place to start is with the Lord. Prayer, far from being extraordinary, is the most reasonable act for a person who seeks clarity and focus. God wants to be all in all. Prayer opens the door.

More and more young people—like Fernando and so many others—are responding to God's fidelity by entrusting their hearts and lives to him. They then light other hearts on fire, and that fire is spreading. I am grateful to be a Hoosier fan. My faith is being deepened by the witness of our young people who are courageously and zealously proclaiming and living their faith.

(Dominican Father Patrick Hyde is the pastor of St. Paul Catholic Center in Bloomington.) †



Dominican Father Patrick Hyde, left, and Dominican Father Ben Keller, right (partially obscured), celebrate with Indiana University quarterback Fernando Mendoza on Jan. 19 in Miami Gardens, Fla., after the school's football team won its first national championship. The two priests are respectively pastor and parochial vicar of St. Paul Catholic Center in Bloomington and serve the Indiana University community. (Submitted photo)

ARCHBISHOP/ARZOBISPO CHARLES C. THOMPSON



Christ the Cornerstone

May our Christ-like light shine for others

I am the light of the world, says the Lord; whoever follows me will have the light of life. (Jn 8:12)

The Scripture readings for the Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time contrast the light of Christ with the darkness that surrounds us in the world.

In the first reading (Is 58:7-10), the prophet Isaiah connects what we would call works of justice and mercy with enlightened spiritual experience. He says:

If you remove from your midst oppression, false accusation and malicious speech; if you bestow your bread on the hungry and satisfy the afflicted; then light shall rise for you in the darkness, and the gloom shall become for you like midday. (Is 58:7-10)

If we respond generously to the needs of our sisters and brothers, without seeking any reward for ourselves, the light of Christ will shine through us. The result will be healing and hope for those who are afflicted with any material or spiritual suffering. Whatever personal doubts or depression (“darkness or gloom”) that we may be tempted to experience in our daily lives will be dispelled by the hope-filled

midday light that our Christ-like actions make possible.

The refrain for Sunday’s Responsorial Psalm (Ps 112) carries this theme forward. “The just man is a light in darkness to the upright.” And, so, we pray: “Light shines through the darkness for the upright; he is gracious and merciful and just.” The psalm continues: “His heart is steadfast; he shall not fear. Lavishly he gives to the poor; His justice shall endure forever; his horn shall be exalted in glory.”

Goodness shines, and the glory of the Lord is revealed, wherever justice and mercy overcome the negative attributes of inequity, unkindness, intolerance and self-centeredness. Evil is persistent darkness and gloom, but it can be overcome by an infusion of Christ’s light of goodness and truth.

In the second reading for the Fifth Sunday of Ordinary Time (1 Cor 2:1-5), St. Paul tells the Church in Corinth that his own light—his personal skills, talents and intellectual abilities—are not equal to the task he has been given.

When I came to you, brothers and sisters, proclaiming the mystery of God, I did not come with sublimity of words or of wisdom. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except

Jesus Christ, and him crucified. (1 Cor 2:1-2)

In order to effectively proclaim the mystery of God, a different kind of power is needed. No amount of human rhetoric or artful persuasion is sufficient to illuminate the minds and hearts of people who walk in darkness. As a result, St. Paul insists that:

I came to you in weakness and fear and much trembling, and my message and my proclamation were not with persuasive words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of Spirit and power, so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God. (1 Cor 2:3-5)

What is this “demonstration of Spirit and power” but the light of Christ that shines through St. Paul? Paul was the greatest of missionary disciples; he was an evangelist whose words and witness of faith have continued to enlighten and uplift the minds and hearts of God’s people throughout the millennia.

By his words and example, Sunday’s Gospel reading (Mt 5:13-16) is affirmed:

You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is

set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house. Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father. (Mt 5:14-16)

Every baptized Christian, regardless of our state in life, is called to provide the same kind of missionary discipleship as St. Paul and all the saints who have given witness to Christ.

We are all asked to be bearers of the light of Christ who shine brightly in our world’s darkness. We accomplish this not by our own wisdom or power, but by allowing the grace of God to shine brilliantly in and through us in the simplest but most powerful ways.

When we take to heart the words of Isaiah, when we resist every form of oppression, when we refuse to engage in malicious gossip, when we feed the hungry, and satisfy the temporal needs of our sisters and brothers, then the light of Christ can shine in us and dispel the darkness of the world around us.

May Christ our light shine in us always. May our words and actions truly reveal the Divine light. And may God alone be praised as the true source of goodness, power and heavenly glory. †



Cristo, la piedra angular

Que la luz de Cristo en nosotros brille para los demás

Yo soy la luz del mundo, Quien me siga tendrá la luz de la vida. (Jn 8:12)

Las lecturas del quinto domingo del tiempo ordinario contrastan la luz de Cristo con las tinieblas que nos rodean en el mundo.

En la primera lectura (Is 58:7-10), el profeta Isaías conecta lo que llamaríamos obras de justicia y misericordia con una experiencia espiritual iluminada, de la siguiente forma:

Si quitas de en medio de ti el yugo, el amenazar con el dedo y el hablar iniquidad, y si te ofreces a ayudar al hambriento, y sacias el deseo del afligido, entonces surgirá tu luz en las tinieblas, y tu oscuridad será como el mediodía. (Is 58:7-10)

Si respondemos generosamente a las necesidades de nuestros hermanos, sin buscar ninguna recompensa para nosotros mismos, la luz de Cristo brillará a través de nosotros y el resultado será la curación y la esperanza para quienes padezcan algún sufrimiento material o espiritual. Cualquier duda personal o depresión (“tinieblas u oscuridad”) que pudiéramos sentir en nuestra vida cotidiana se disipará con la luz de pleno día llena de esperanza que irradian esas acciones nuestras en las que imitamos a Cristo.

La antífona del salmo responsorial

del domingo (Sal 112) prosigue con este tema. “El justo brilla como una luz en las tinieblas.” Y así, rezamos: “En las tinieblas brilla como una luz que es justo, clemente y compasivo.” El salmo continúa: “Su corazón está seguro, sin temor, reparte limosna a los pobres, su caridad es constante, sin falta, y alzaré la frente con dignidad.”

La bondad brilla, y la gloria del Señor se revela, allí donde la justicia y la misericordia superan los atributos negativos de la inequidad, la falta de amabilidad, la intolerancia y el egocentrismo. El mal es oscuridad y tinieblas persistentes, pero puede superarse mediante una infusión de la luz de bondad y verdad de Cristo.

En la segunda lectura del quinto domingo del tiempo ordinario (1 Cor 2:1-5), san Pablo dice a la Iglesia de Corinto que su propia luz—sus habilidades personales, talentos y capacidades intelectuales—no está a la altura de la tarea que se le ha encomendado.

Yo mismo, hermanos, cuando fui a anunciarles el misterio de Dios, no lo hice con gran elocuencia y sabiduría. Me decidí más bien, estando entre ustedes, a no saber de cosa alguna, excepto de Jesucristo y de este crucificado. (1 Cor 2:1-2)

Para proclamar eficazmente el misterio de Dios, se necesita otro tipo

de poder. Ninguna retórica humana o persuasión ingeniosa es suficiente para iluminar las mentes y los corazones de quienes caminan en la oscuridad. Como resultado, san Pablo insiste en que:

Estuve entre ustedes con debilidad y con temor y mucho temblor, y mi mensaje y mi predicación no fueron con palabras persuasivas de sabiduría, sino con demostración del Espíritu y de poder, para que la fe de ustedes no descansase en la sabiduría de los hombres, sino en el poder de Dios. (1 Cor 2:3-5)

¿Qué es esta “demostración del Espíritu y de poder” sino la luz de Cristo que brilla a través de san Pablo? Pablo fue el más grande de los discípulos misioneros, un evangelista cuyas palabras y testimonio de fe han seguido iluminando y elevando las mentes y los corazones del pueblo de Dios a lo largo de los siglos.

Con sus palabras y su ejemplo se reafirma la lectura del Evangelio de este domingo (Mt 5:13-16):

Ustedes son la luz del mundo. Una ciudad en lo alto de una montaña no puede esconderse. Tampoco se enciende una lámpara para cubrirla con una vasija. Por el contrario, se pone en el candelero para que alumbre a todos los que están en la casa. Hagan brillar su luz delante de todos, para que ellos puedan ver las buenas obras de ustedes

y alaben a su Padre que está en los cielos. (Mt 5:14-16)

Cada cristiano bautizado, independientemente de la etapa de la vida en la que se encuentre, está llamado a ofrecer el mismo tipo de discipulado misionero que san Pablo y todos los santos que han dado testimonio de Cristo.

A todos se nos pide que seamos portadores de la luz de Cristo para que brille intensamente en la oscuridad del mundo. Esto no lo logramos por nuestra propia sabiduría o poder, sino al permitir que la gracia de Dios brille en nosotros y a través de nosotros de la forma más sencilla pero a la vez poderosa.

Cuando nos tomamos a pecho las palabras de Isaías, cuando resistimos toda forma de opresión, cuando nos negamos a participar en chismes malintencionados, cuando damos de comer al hambriento y satisfacemos las necesidades temporales de nuestros hermanos y hermanas, entonces la luz de Cristo brilla en nosotros y disipa las tinieblas del mundo que nos rodea.

Que Cristo, nuestra luz, brille siempre en nosotros. Que nuestras palabras y acciones revelen verdaderamente la luz divina. Y que solo Dios sea alabado como la verdadera fuente de bondad, poder y gloria celestial. †

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 11

Marian University, Evans Center Lecture Hall, 3200 Cold Spring Road, Indianapolis. **"Habemus Papam: Pope Leo XIV in Context,"** 6:30-8 p.m., 6 p.m. reception in Evans Center Atrium, four speakers including Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, free but registration requested. Information, registration: tinyurl.com/PopeLeoInContext.

Our Lady of Lourdes Church, 5333 E. Washington St., Indianapolis. **Sacred Music Concert,** 7 p.m., exploring religious narrative behind Robert Schumann's musical fairytale for piano "Forest Scenes" ("Waldszenen"), free, non-perishable food or money donations for St. Vincent de Paul food pantry requested. Information: parishsecretary@ollindy.org, 317-356-7291.

February 11, 18, 25, March 4, 11

St. John the Evangelist Parish, Corpus Christi Parish Hall, 126 W. Georgia St., Indianapolis. **Catholics in Recovery Support Group,** 7 p.m., meets every

Wednesday, Catholic 12-step program serving those with addictions and unhealthy attachments. Information: 317-557-8888, jjdav887@gmail.com.

February 12

St. Mary Parish, 1331 E. Hunter Robbins Way, Greensburg. **Presentation on Eucharistic Miracles Exhibit,** 6:30 p.m., presentation on St. Carlo Acutis' "Eucharistic Miracles of the World" exhibit (see event listing below) by Patrick Brueggen, International Marian Catechist coordinator and national coordinator for the Real Presence Association, freewill donations accepted. Information: 812-663-8427, ext. 204, anavarra@stmarysgreensburg.com.

February 12-15

St. Mary Parish, 1331 E. Hunter Robbins Way, Greensburg. **"Eucharistic Miracles of the World" Exhibit,** walk-through exhibit created by St. Carlo Acutis, first-class relic of St. Carlo present for veneration; Feb. 12, 2:30-5:30 p.m. and 6-8:30 p.m.; Feb. 13, 4-7 p.m.; Feb. 14, before and after 4:30 p.m. Mass;

Feb. 15, before and after 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. Masses; freewill offerings accepted. Information: 812-663-8427, ext. 204, anavarra@stmarysgreensburg.com.

February 16

Virtual Sister Thea Bowman Black Catholic Women's Prayer Group, 7 p.m., meets online monthly on third Monday, sponsored by archdiocesan Black Catholic Ministry, all women welcome. Meeting: tinyurl.com/SrTheaPrayerGrp. Information: iowhosomaddox@archindy.org, 317-261-3381.

February 19-22

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: 812-535-2947, events.sistersofprovidence.org, lindenleafgifts@spsmw.org.

February 20

Liter House, 5301 Winthrop Ave., Indianapolis. **Catholic Business Exchange,** CEO of Goodwill Central

Indiana Kent Kramer presenting, rosary 6:35 a.m., Mass 7 a.m., buffet breakfast and program following, \$20 members, \$25 non-members. Register by 4 p.m. on Feb. 17. Information, registration: cutt.ly/CBE-Reg.

February 28

Pike Performing Arts Center, 6701 Zionsville Road, Indianapolis. **Holy Fire Youth Retreat,** 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m., for students in grades 6-8; \$74.50 with lunch or \$64.50 without lunch; register by Feb. 8, sponsored by archdiocesan Office of Youth Ministry. Information, registration: archindyym.com/holy-fire, 317-456-7076, rgilman@archindy.org.

St. Joan of Arc Church, 4217 Central Ave., Indianapolis. **Healing Service,** 7 p.m., sponsored by Encounter School of Ministry, free, no registration required. Information: indianapolis@encounterschool.org, 317-795-4912.

March 7

Sisters of Providence, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods,

St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Teen Volunteering Opportunity,** 9 a.m.-2 p.m., ages 12-18, visit with elder sisters and help them with activities such as Bingo, exercise, baking and more. Information, registration: teenvolunteer.sistersofprovidence.org, jluna@spsmw.org, 361-500-9505.

March 13-15

Our Lady of the Holy Spirit Center, 5440 Moeller Ave, Norwood, Ohio. **Worldwide Marriage Encounter,** \$75 non-refundable fee. Registration: www.wwme.org. Information: Andy and Melanie Reinersman, 859-653-8464.

March 14-15

Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **Pre-Cana Retreat,** 8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. each day, includes materials, light breakfast, box lunch and snacks, \$200 per couple, register by March 4. Information, registration: ccorona@archindy.org, 317-800-9306, tinyurl.com/ccprecana3-26.

March 15

Ancient Order of Hibernians St. Patrick's Day Events. St. John the Evangelist Church, 126 W. Georgia St., Indianapolis: **Celtic Cross Blessing, Mass, Parade:** 10:15 a.m. Celtic cross blessing in church courtyard followed by 10:30 a.m. Mass, 11:30 a.m. parade to Indiana Roof Ballroom, 140 W. Washington St., Indianapolis, for **Ancient Order of Hibernians St. Patrick's Celebration,** 11:45 a.m., plated luncheon, Irish bands, raffle for Ireland trip for two, \$40 adults, \$16 ages 12 and younger, register for dinner by March 10. Information: aohindy.com/spc. Registration: 317-341-3570, kmcginley720@sbcglobal.net.

Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, 1530 Union St., Indianapolis. **Indianapolis Symphony Sphinx Series Chamber Music Concert,** 2-4 p.m., brass program featuring works by Giovanni Gabrieli, J.S. Bach, Poulenc, Moncayo, Irving Berlin and Alice Gomez, free. Information: 317-902-3006, judithessex@icloud.com. †

Retreats and Programs

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

February 20, March 27

Oldenburg Franciscan

Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **A Day of Quiet**

Renewal, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., \$20, \$80 with spiritual

Annual E6 Catholic Men's Conference is scheduled for Feb. 21 in St. Leon

The E6 Catholic Men's Conference will take place at East Central High School, 1 Trojan Place in St. Leon, from 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m. on Feb. 21.

The conference is designed to bring men into a deeper relationship with Christ and his Church through a celebration of the sacraments, engaging talks to strengthen their faith, opportunities for true fraternity and exposure to good resources to aid them in living their faith as disciples of Christ. In a world that is losing a truly biblical understanding of masculinity, fatherhood and brotherhood, this conference aims to equip men to put on the armor of God (Eph 6:11) and stand as men of Christ.

Speakers for this year's conference include former Google executive Ryan Olohan, whose integrity led to a winning lawsuit against the global company; Tim Francis, author of *From the Crack House to God's House - The Power*

of a Mothers Prayer"; Devin Schadt, executive director of the Fathers of St. Joseph apostolate; Kevin Wells, an award-winning Catholic author, international speaker and journalist; and Father Jonathan Meyer, who helps lead the four parishes of Dearborn County.

Doors open at 6:30 a.m. for check-in, coffee and breakfast, with the conference starting at 8:05 a.m. The day also includes Mass and adoration, and the sacrament of reconciliation will be available.

Ticket prices—which include lunch—are \$48 for adults, \$38 per person for a group of 10 or more adults, and \$18 for students ages 14-25. There is no cost for clergy and religious men.

For more information or to register, go to e6catholicmensconference.com, e-mail contact@e6catholicmensconference.com or call 513-518-2728. †

direction. Information, registration: 812-933-6437, oldenburgfranciscancenter.org.

February 20-22

Mother of the Redeemer Retreat Center, 8220 W. State Road 48,

Bloomington. **Strong Marriage, Strong Parenting,** 6 p.m. Fri.-10 a.m. Sun., EWTN personality and clinical psychologist Dr. Ray Guarendi presenting, \$290 for single, \$480 double, \$670 triple, \$860 quadruple, commuter \$90,

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. †

Wedding Anniversaries

GERALD AND PAULA (SPELLMAN) STAHL, members of Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ Parish in Indianapolis, celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on Jan. 22.

The couple was married in Holy Name of Jesus Church in Beech Grove on Jan. 22, 1966.

They have three children: Michelle Richardson, Christian and Daniel Stahl.

The couple also has 11 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

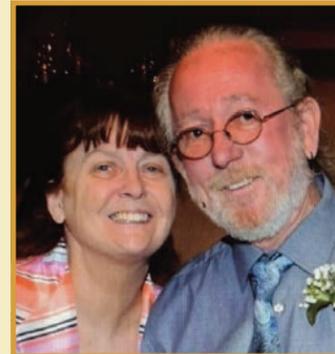


DAVID AND RITA (MOLL) PAUL, members of Holy Family Parish in Oldenburg, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on Feb. 14.

The couple was married in St. John Church, now a campus of St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Decatur County, on Feb. 14, 1976.

They have two children: Christina Bausman and Brian Paul.

The couple also has five grandchildren and one great-grandchild.



ALLEN AND ROBIN (HORNBERGER) WEILER, members of St. Peter Parish in Franklin County, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on Feb. 14.

The couple was married in St. Paul Church in New Alsace, now a chapel of All Saints Parish in Decatur County, on Feb. 14, 1976.

They have six children: Josie Bonilla, Valarie Hoff, Tonya Hudepohl, Jacob, Michael and Nicholas Weiler.

The couple also has 20 grandchildren and four great-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.

Panel discussion on poverty will take place on Feb. 19 in Indianapolis

A "Poverty in Our Community: Complexities, Challenges and Hope" panel discussion will take place in the Assembly Hall at the Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St. in Indianapolis, from 5:30-8 p.m. on Feb. 19.

The event was originally planned for Jan. 28 but had to be rescheduled due to weather.

The evening begins with time from 5:30-6:30 p.m. to visit with representatives of local organizations that work directly with those experiencing poverty.

The panel discussion, which will begin at 6:30 p.m., will address how poverty impacts seniors, children,

veterans and those living within urban and rural communities.

Panelists include archdiocesan Holy Family Shelter program director Rachelle Frink, archdiocesan Catholic Charities Senior Service director Joyce Beaven, and others.

The event, sponsored by the archdiocesan Catholic Charities-Social Concerns ministry, is free and includes refreshments.

Online registration is requested at tinyurl.com/povertypanel2026, although walk-ins are also welcome.

For more information, contact Laura Sheehan at lsheehan@archindy.org or 317-542-2492. †

In illo uno unum (In the One Christ we are one)**One in Christ/Daniel Conway**

As we profess our faith, let's also commit to living it

To commemorate the 1,700th anniversary of the Ecumenical Council of Nicaea, which began the formulation of the Nicene Creed that we recite during Mass on Sundays, Pope Leo XIV has written an apostolic letter *"In Unitate Fidei"* ("On the Unity of Faith").

In this letter, the Holy Father writes: "For centuries, this enduring confession of faith has been the common heritage of Christians, and it deserves to be professed and understood in ever new and relevant ways" (#1).

To "profess our faith" means much more than simply to express it, to explain it, or even to attempt to persuade others about it. To *profess* it means to live it—to make it an integral part of who we are as women and men united in our faith in Jesus Christ.

Pope Leo invites us "to profess our faith" and to "understand it in ever new and relevant ways." He challenges us to give profound personal witness in our daily lives to the truths that we profess whenever we recite the Nicene Creed. These truths are essential to our understanding of who God is, and of who we are as faithful followers of Jesus Christ.

According to Pope Leo, "the heart of the Christian faith" is the belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Everything else either flows from this core belief or it further explains the implications of this profound statement of faith. The Holy Father insists that the ancient faith that we profess is not something outmoded or irrelevant.

"In these difficult times we are living, amid so many concerns and fears, threats of war and violence, natural disasters, grave injustices and imbalances, and the hunger and misery suffered by millions of our brothers and sisters," Pope Leo writes, "this Creed gives us hope" (#2).

Why does the Creed give us hope? Because it describes God's relationship to his creation ("the maker of all things visible and invisible") and because it affirms that Jesus Christ is the Son of God ("begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father") even as he is one with us—in all things but sin.

These two truths are fundamental to our understanding of Christian faith. As Pope Leo says: "The Fathers of Nicaea were firm in their

resolution to remain faithful to biblical monotheism and the authenticity of the Incarnation. They wanted to reaffirm that the one true God is not inaccessibly distant from us, but on the contrary has drawn near and has come to encounter us in Jesus Christ" (#5).

We believe in the one true God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit), and we profess Jesus, the Son of God, as our brother. Everything else flows from this. For an elaboration of these truths, we need only consult the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, which builds on the Creed and provides us with an abundance of detailed information about its meaning.

As Christians, we strive to follow Jesus "as our master, companion, brother and friend" (#11). But as Pope Leo writes, "the Nicene Creed asks for more: it reminds us not to forget that Jesus Christ is the Lord [*Kyrios*], the Son of the living God who 'for our salvation came down from heaven' and died 'for our sake' on the cross, opening the way to new life for us through his resurrection and ascension" (#11).

Following the Lord necessarily entails embracing the way of the cross which, "through repentance, leads us to sanctification and divinization"—the fullness of human life in Christ (#11).

When we profess this ancient faith, we do much more than simply give lip service to the truths of our Creed. As the Holy Father teaches us:

"If God loves us with all his being, then we too must love one another. We cannot love God whom we do not see without loving our brother and sister whom we do see [cf. 1 Jn 4:20]. Love for God without love for neighbor is hypocrisy; radical love for our neighbor, especially love for our enemies, without love for God, requires a 'heroism' that would overwhelm and oppress us" (#11).

Next time we recite the Creed at Mass, let's remember that as a profession of faith it commits us to live what we believe and, therefore, "in the face of disasters, wars and misery, [to] bear witness to God's mercy to those who doubt him" so that they can "experience his mercy through us" (#11).

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

Uno en Cristo/Daniel Conway

Al profesar nuestra fe, comprometámonos también a vivirla

Para conmemorar el aniversario número 1,700 del Concilio Ecuménico de Nicea, en el que se formuló el credo que lleva el nombre de esa ciudad y que recitamos los domingos durante la misa, el papa León XIV escribió una carta apostólica titulada *"In Unitate Fidei"* ("Sobre la unidad de la fe").

En esa carta, el Santo Padre señala que esta confesión de fe que "desde hace siglos constituye el patrimonio compartido entre los cristianos, merece ser confesada y profundizada de manera siempre nueva y actual" (#1).

"Confesar nuestra fe" significa mucho más que simplemente expresarla, explicarla o incluso intentar persuadir a los demás de ella. "Confesar" significa vivirla, hacerla parte integral de lo que somos como mujeres y hombres unidos en nuestra fe en Jesucristo.

El papa León nos invita a "confesar nuestra fe" y a comprenderla más profundamente "de manera siempre nueva y actual." Nos desafía a dar un profundo testimonio personal en nuestra vida cotidiana de las verdades que profesamos cada vez que recitamos el credo de Nicea. Estas verdades son esenciales para comprender quién es Dios y quiénes somos nosotros como

fieles seguidores de Jesucristo.

Según el papa León, "el corazón de la fe cristiana" es la creencia de que Jesucristo es el Hijo de Dios. Todo lo demás, o bien se deriva de esta creencia fundamental, o bien explica con más detalle las implicaciones de esta profunda declaración de fe. El Santo Padre insiste en que la antigua fe que confesamos no es algo anticuado o irrelevante, sino que "nos da esperanza en los tiempos difíciles que vivimos, en medio de muchas preocupaciones y temores, amenazas de guerra y violencia, desastres naturales, graves injusticias y desequilibrios, hambre y miseria sufrida por millones de hermanos y hermanas nuestros" (#2).

¿Por qué el Credo nos da esperanza? Porque describe la relación de Dios con su creación ([el creador] "de todo lo visible y lo invisible"); porque afirma que Jesucristo es el Hijo de Dios ("engendrado, no creado, de la misma naturaleza que el Padre") y que es uno con nosotros, en todo menos en el pecado.

Estas dos verdades son fundamentales para nuestra comprensión de la fe cristiana. Tal como nos lo explica el papa León:

"Los Padres de Nicea quisieron

permanecer firmemente fieles al monoteísmo bíblico y al realismo de la encarnación. Quisieron reafirmar que el único y verdadero Dios no es inalcanzablemente lejano a nosotros, sino que, por el contrario, se ha hecho cercano y ha salido a nuestro encuentro en Jesucristo" (#5).

Creemos en el único Dios verdadero (Padre, Hijo y Espíritu Santo), y profesamos a Jesús, el Hijo de Dios, como nuestro hermano. Todo lo demás se deriva de esto. Para profundizar en estas verdades, basta consultar el *Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica*, que se basa en el Credo y nos proporciona abundante información detallada sobre su significado.

Como cristianos, nos esforzamos por seguir a Jesús "como Maestro, compañero, hermano y amigo" (#11). Pero, como escribe el papa León: "el Credo niceno pide más: nos recuerda de hecho que no hemos de olvidar que Jesucristo es el Señor [*Kyrios*], el Hijo del Dios viviente, que 'por nuestra salvación bajó del cielo' y murió 'por nosotros' en la cruz, abriéndonos el camino de la vida nueva con su resurrección y ascensión" (#11).

Seguir al Señor implica necesariamente

abrazar el camino de la cruz "que por medio de la conversión nos conduce a la santificación y a la divinización: la plenitud de la vida humana en Cristo" (#11).

Cuando confesamos esta antigua fe, hacemos mucho más que proclamar de la boca para afuera las verdades de nuestro Credo. Tal como nos enseña el Santo Padre:

"Si Dios nos ama con todo su ser, entonces también nosotros debemos amarnos unos a otros. No podemos amar a Dios, a quien no vemos, sin amar también al hermano y a la hermana que vemos [cf. 1 Jn 4:20]. El amor a Dios sin el amor al prójimo es hipocresía; el amor radical al prójimo, sobre todo el amor a los enemigos sin el amor a Dios, es un heroísmo que nos supera y oprime" (#11).

La próxima vez que recitemos el Credo en la misa, recordemos que, como profesión de fe, nos compromete a vivir lo que creemos y, por tanto, "ante las catástrofes, las guerras y la miseria, podemos testimoniar la misericordia de Dios a las personas que dudan de Él sólo cuando ellas experimentan su misericordia a través de nosotros" (#11).

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

In illo uno unum (En el único Cristo somos uno)

MENTAL HEALTH

continued from page 1

challenge at some point in their lives,” says Rebecca Niese, the school nurse and a science teacher at Oldenburg Academy who teaches the mental health program.

Niese also notes that more than half of teens with mental health challenges—54%—do not seek help, but they’re also more likely to ask for assistance when the encouragement comes from a trusted friend or family member.

“So, educating students on how to help a friend felt super important because if someone close to them suggests help, they are more likely to seek it,” Niese says.

As part of the program, each student gets a manual from the National Council for Behavioral Health, a manual that notes the challenges that teenagers today face:

“For teens, mental health challenges can make life particularly hard. There is a lot going on during adolescence. During the teen years, teens are reaching physical maturity [going through puberty and the final stages of brain development]; spending less time with their family and more time with friends; creating new relationships; developing a sense of identity and purpose; finishing high school, starting work, and/or going to college.

“Because there is so much going on, mental health challenges can disrupt a teen’s development in a whole range of areas. Importantly, if this disruption continues, mental health challenges can cause a person to suffer long into adulthood.”

At 16, Gabi Moore believes the program has made a difference to her and her friends at Oldenburg Academy.

‘I love that!’

“I feel that high school is a very complicated place. It’s a new environment for a lot of freshmen,” says Gabi, a junior and a member of All Saints Parish in Dearborn County. “Their friends [from grade school] go to all different high schools, so they possibly don’t have as many friends or they need to make new ones, and it can be hard. I’ve had a hard time a little bit, but now I have my own friends, and I love them very much.

“Having the mental health program definitely helps us learn, ‘Hey, it’s OK to make mistakes. It’s OK to be weird. It’s OK to be yourself around other people and let people help you.’”



With the help of a teacher, Luke Hopkins was able to help a friend and a fellow student at Oldenburg Academy of the Immaculate Conception through a tough time. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

The program has made a huge difference on her personally.

“I make a lot of art. I normally do digital art—scrapbooking and collages and stuff like that. I always see my art as very weird, that people will see it as too freaky,” she says. “But then if I leave something on my desk, people will come up to me and say, ‘Gabi, that’s so good!’

“I love that! It’s helped a lot for me to have people encourage me and tell me they like the things that I do.”

The program has also helped her to be more empathetic to her peers.

“It’s helped me look past my own ideals and thoughts and see into other people’s point of view, to take a step into their shoes,” she says. “Or even like with one of my close friends. She was in a lot of stuff I wasn’t particularly interested in, but once she started talking to me about it, I thought, ‘Oh my gosh, this is like so cool.’

“I liked seeing that spark in her when we talked about one of her hobbies. Or she would say, ‘I don’t think you’ll like it.’ And I said, ‘No, I want to see what makes you happy.’”

Creating a circle of support

High school is a time that can be marked by many happy moments, growth experiences, close friends and influential teachers.

It can also be touched by struggles of self-worth and doubt, concerns about fitting in somewhere, challenges with studies and teachers, worries about the present and the future.

The mental health program provides tools to help teens deal with and cope with those tough times—both for themselves and their friends.

One of the tools involves having the teens create “a circle of support.”

“That’s five trusted adults—one can be a peer—that I can turn to if I am noticing an issue with a friend or even myself,” Niese, the program’s teacher, says. “It’s good to know who you can count on, to know you’re not alone, and that it’s OK to speak up, it’s OK to not feel OK—and just knowing again who you can go to and having easy access to those people. It’s also really thinking about why you’re choosing those people and what qualities they possess.”

The program also includes a self-love action plan.

Six approaches to live by

“They’re different things they can do to show themselves a little grace if they’re having a tough time,” Niese says, noting the plan revolves around six approaches.

The approaches start with a physical emphasis, encouraging a teen to consume nutritious foods and stay away from smoking, vaping and using alcohol or drugs. The first approach also promotes movement, as research shows “it helps improve mood and contributes to an overall healthy lifestyle.”

“Giving back” is also stressed because “helping others gives you a sense of purpose.” The third approach is to “recharge,” to find time in their busy lives to rest and regroup.

Disconnecting from social media and phones, even for a short time, is also emphasized as research shows that approach decreases stress and



School nurse and science teacher Rebecca Niese believes that the Teen Mental Health First Aid program at Oldenburg Academy of the Immaculate Conception in Oldenburg has made a difference to students. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

anxiety. With the extra time, teens are encouraged to reconnect with—and be present to—their personal relationships.

Tapping into creativity—singing, writing, making videos—also is part of the self-love plan as it helps a person express their feelings. And then there is “limit setting,” allowing yourself to say no to certain situations and invitations.

“These are things they can do for themselves,” Niese says.

She also shares the approaches that can help teens look out for each other.

Building a foundation of compassion

“We teach them action steps: Look, ask, listen, help and then that your friendship is important,” Niese says. “We talk about each of those individual items in detail. We also talk about what to look for, how to ask questions and who are some contacts, resources and trusted adults.”

“I think that giving them these tools helps them to transition a little bit better into college and adulthood. Giving them the tools that ‘I can help a friend’ even makes them feel a little bit empowered, too.”

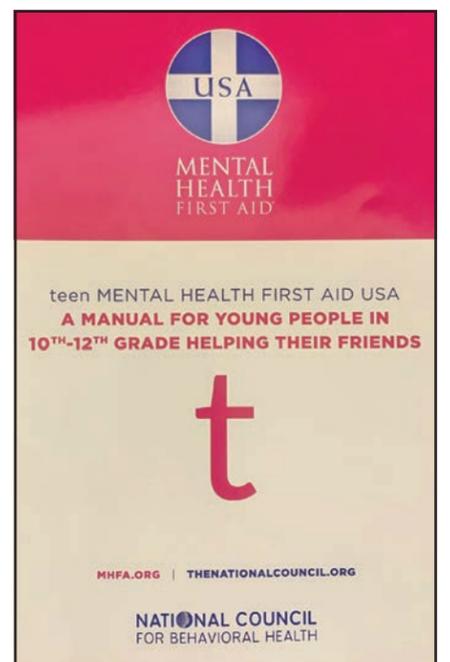
Oldenburg teachers have also participated in training to help students as part of the mental health program.

“They’re all youth-certified,” Niese says. “That’s for adults working with teenagers. It’s teaching our teachers how to use similar action steps: non-judgmental listening, giving reassurance, and encouraging appropriate professional help and also encouraging appropriate self-love.”

Luke Hopkins also relies on another foundation of his life—his faith and his relationship with God.

“My faith and my prayer have definitely helped me get through some of the rough patches,” says Luke, a member of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Parish in Aurora.

“Whenever I don’t know what to do or I’m struggling with one of my teachers or one of my friends or someone who is being mean just to be mean, I just give it up to God. Because it’s out of my control at that point. I just



have to get through it and hold my head high.”

Even in the tough times, Luke has faith in the Oldenburg school community too.

“If I’m down or if one of my friends is, everybody can tell because it’s a really close-knit community,” he says. “If somebody is in bad enough shape, then somebody will definitely know and get help for that person.”

That’s always the hope for teenagers in this defining part of their lives. The Teen Mental Health First Aid program at Oldenburg Academy is one more foundation for that hope, says the school’s principal, Angie Parmer. She calls it “an essential part of our school culture” and “life-changing training.”

“Our first sophomore class received the training in 2022, and by this spring every Oldenburg Academy student will be certified,” Parmer notes. “We are already seeing its impact. Students are more confident recognizing signs of anxiety and depression, and they know how to support one another with care and compassion.” †

Pope praises religious for courageous witness serving the marginalized

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Leo XIV praised consecrated men and women for going to the world's peripheries and refusing to abandon their people, even amid conflict.

"They remain, often stripped of all security, as a living reminder—more eloquent than words—of the inviolable sacredness of life in its most vulnerable conditions," he said on Feb. 2 in his homily for Candlemas—the feast of the Presentation of the Lord—which also marks the Catholic Church's celebration of World Day for Consecrated Life.

"Even where weapons roar and arrogance, self-interest and violence seem to prevail," he said, the presence of these consecrated men and women "proclaims the words of Jesus" in his parable of the lost sheep: "See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for ... their angels in heaven always look upon the face of my heavenly Father."

The pope's Mass began with the pope blessing with holy water, the candles used for the entrance procession. Dozens of consecrated men and women led the candlelit procession while the lights in St. Peter's Basilica remained dimmed, and thousands of people who filled the basilica held lit candles as well.

After the darkened basilica was filled with light, Pope Leo, who joined the Order of St. Augustine as a young man and served as a missionary in Peru for decades, reflected on the mission of religious men and women in the Church and in the world.

"Dear brothers and sisters, the Church asks you to be prophets—messengers who announce the presence of the Lord and prepare the way for him," he said in his homily. "You are called to this mission above all through the sacrificial offering of your lives, rooted in prayer and in a readiness to be consumed by charity."

Docile to the action of the Holy Spirit, the founders and foundresses of their religious orders and communities offer "wonderful models of how to fulfil this mandate faithfully and effectively," he said.

"Living in constant tension between Earth and heaven, they allowed themselves to be guided with faith and courage," he said. Some founders "were led to the

silence of the cloister, others to the demands of the apostolate," but all of them returned "humbly and wisely, to the foot of the cross and to the tabernacle, where they offered everything and discovered in God both the source and the goal of all their actions."

Pope Leo highlighted those founders who "embarked on perilous undertakings."

"They became a prayerful presence in hostile or indifferent environments; a generous hand and a friendly shoulder amid degradation and abandonment; and witnesses of peace and reconciliation in situations marked by violence and hatred," he said. "They were ready to bear the consequences of going against the current, becoming, in Christ, a 'sign of contradiction,' sometimes even to the point of martyrdom."

One way to honor these brothers and sisters, he said, is "by carrying forward their legacy."

"You are called to bear witness to God's saving presence in history for all peoples, even within a society in which false and reductive understandings of the human person increasingly widen the gap between faith and life," he said.

"You are called to testify that the young, the elderly, the poor, the sick and the imprisoned hold a sacred place above all else on God's altar and in his heart," he said, and to show how each of the least is "an inviolable sanctuary of God's presence, before whom we must bend our knee, in order to encounter him, adore him and give him glory."

Many religious communities have established "outposts of the Gospel ... in a wide variety of challenging contexts, even in the midst of conflict," he said. "These communities do not abandon their people, nor do they flee" as they seek to uphold the sacredness of human life in its most vulnerable conditions.



Pope Leo XIV receives offertory gifts from women religious as he celebrates Mass marking the feast of the Presentation of the Lord in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican on Feb. 2. The Mass also marked the Vatican celebration of the World Day for Consecrated Life. (OSV News photo/Simone Risoluti, Vatican Media)

"Consecrated life, in its serene detachment from all that is passing, reveals the inseparable bond between authentic care for earthly realities and a hope filled with love for what is eternal" and gives meaning to everything else, he said.

Through their promise to follow Christ more closely by professing the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience, consecrated men and women "empty" themselves so that Christ, "the one eternal messenger of the covenant who remains present among humanity today, can melt and purify hearts with his love, grace and mercy," Pope Leo said.

Through this self-emptying and life in the Spirit, he said, consecrated men and women "can show the world the way to overcome conflict, sowing fraternity through the freedom of those who love and forgive without measure."

"Dear consecrated men and women, today the Church gives thanks to the Lord and to you for your presence," he said, encouraging them "to be leaven of peace and signs of hope wherever providence may lead you." †

Un llamamiento al civismo desde la humildad y la empatía

Queridos hermanos y hermanos en Cristo:

Los recientes tiroteos contra manifestantes, los ataques a funcionarios del gobierno y las continuas deportaciones indiscriminadas de tantos de nuestros vecinos han desatado la indignación y una grave preocupación por la integridad de nuestra nación. ¿Acaso se nos ha descalibrado la brújula moral? ¿Hemos sacrificado nuestro sentido de la decencia humana por una libertad desenfundada sin obligaciones ni restricciones? Sea cual sea el problema, como dice el refrán, el fin *no* justifica los medios. La violencia no es la respuesta a las tensiones y los desacuerdos. Si todavía no lo han hecho, les suplico que lean el mensaje especial que emitió la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de los Estados Unidos en noviembre de 2025. (Para leer el mensaje, visite [cutt.ly/2025SpecialMessage](https://www.usccb.org/2025SpecialMessage).) Tal como nos recuerda el papa León XIV, el camino hacia la paz y la unidad duraderas se construye con puentes y no muros.

Allí iría yo, si no fuera por la gracia de Dios. Si bien el origen de esta cita sigue siendo incierto, a menudo se atribuye esta famosa frase a John Bradford, un reformador y mártir inglés del siglo XVI, mientras presenciaba la ejecución de unos criminales. Independientemente de su origen, la frase es una expresión de humilde conciencia de uno mismo y de empatía hacia los demás. Durante su histórico discurso ante el Congreso de Estados Unidos en 2015, el difunto papa Francisco expresó su preocupación por varios asuntos relacionados con el respeto a la vida en el contexto de la llamada antigua *Regla de Oro*, a saber: *Traten a los demás como les gustaría ser tratados.* (cf. Mt 7:12)

Dada la escalada de violencia—tanto en el discurso como en la brutalidad—en nuestra sociedad, pareciera que la humildad y la empatía brillan por su ausencia entre nosotros, mientras que la creciente falta de civismo sigue fuera de control. En lugar de reconocernos unos a otros como hermanos y hermanas, miembros de la misma raza humana o

familia, los extremos de la polarización nos están haciendo sospechar del otro, como si fuéramos algún tipo de amenaza o enemigo. Hubo un tiempo en que una persona era inocente hasta que se demostrara su culpabilidad; no obstante, cada vez somos más testigos de lo contrario. Con poco o ningún sentido del respeto por la dignidad de las personas o el carácter sagrado de la vida, tendemos a juzgar, arrestar, disparar o condenar antes de cuestionarnos a nosotros mismos y a los demás. La verdad ha sido sacrificada en aras del ego, la ideología y la agenda partidista. Para poder lograr las reformas adecuadas en el ámbito de inmigración, política y economía, debemos dejar que la *Regla de Oro* transforme nuestras mentes y corazones.

Independientemente del credo o la tendencia política de cada uno, la empatía y la humildad son parte integral de lo que significa ser humano. Lo que nos diferencia de los animales es nuestra capacidad de pensar, razonar, sentir, dialogar y responder, en lugar de reaccionar. Aunque hay entre nosotros quienes son criminales, incluso malvados, no debemos echar en el mismo saco a toda una clase o grupo de personas. Vivimos en una sociedad muy compleja que requiere algo más que respuestas simples o soluciones cortoplacistas. Debemos superar las mezquindades del orgullo, la vanidad y el egocentrismo para ser mejores.

Con demasiada frecuencia nos apresuramos a etiquetar a la gente como problemas que hay que resolver o eliminar, en lugar de como personas que poseen una dignidad inherente pese a sus heridas e imperfecciones. Esto vale para el no nacido, el sinteche, el adicto, la víctima de trata de personas, el enfermo, el anciano, el preso, el emigrante y el refugiado. El aborto, las deportaciones masivas, la eutanasia, los tiroteos indiscriminados y la llamada autopreservación justificable son formas de resolver o eliminar problemas—una inhumanidad contra la propia humanidad—en lugar de tratar humanamente a quienes se enfrentan a los grandes retos que asolan nuestra

condición humana. Cuando perdemos de vista el significado y el sentido de pertenencia de la familia humana, los más afectados son los pobres y vulnerables, pero todos sufrimos. Quizá pocos entiendan lo que significa formar parte de una familia, algo más grande que uno mismo, con valores y principios que fomentan relaciones interpersonales de confianza y respeto mutuos. *Allí iría yo ...*

cualquiera de nosotros, si no fuera por la gracia de Dios.

De ustedes en Cristo,

+ Charles C. Thompson

Reverendísimo Charles C. Thompson
Arzobispo de Indianápolis

CIVILITY

continued from page 1

Given the escalating violence of both rhetoric and brutality in our society, it seems that both humility and empathy are gravely lacking among us as the growing lack of civility continues to spiral out of control. Rather than recognizing one another as brothers and sisters, members of the same human race or family, the extremes of polarization are causing us to hold one another in suspicion as some type of threat or enemy. There was a time when a person was innocent until proven guilty. We are increasingly witnessing, however, quite the opposite. With little or no sense of regard for dignity of persons or the sacredness of life, we tend to judge, arrest, shoot and/or condemn before asking the right questions about others and ourselves. Truth has been sacrificed for the sake of ego, ideology and partisan agenda. If we are to achieve the proper reforms of immigration, politics and economics, we must allow ourselves to be transformed in mind and heart by the *Golden Rule*.

Regardless of one's religion or politics, empathy and humility are integral to what it means to be human. What sets us apart from animals is our ability to think, reason, feel, dialogue and respond rather than react. While there are those among us who are criminal, even evil, we should not label an entire class or group of people in a single category. We live in a very

complex society that requires more than simple answers or short-sighted solutions. We must rise above the pettiness of pride, vanity and self-centeredness to realize our better selves.

Far too often we are quick to label people as problems to be solved or eliminated rather than as persons possessing inherent dignity even in their wounds and brokenness. This is true for the unborn, the homeless, the addict, the victim of human trafficking, the sick, the elderly, the prisoner, the migrant and refugee. Abortion, mass deportation, euthanasia, indiscriminate shootings, and so-called justifiable self-preservation are ways to solve or eliminate problems, inhumanity against humanity, rather than humanely treating those struggling with great challenges that plague our human condition. When we lose our sense of meaning and belonging as a human family, it is the poor and vulnerable who are most impacted, but we all suffer. Perhaps few understand what it means to be a part of a family, something greater than oneself, with values and principles that foster interpersonal relationships of mutual trust and respect. *There but for the grace of God go I ... any of us.*

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ Charles C. Thompson

Most Reverend Charles C. Thompson
Archbishop of Indianapolis

Sainthood cause opened for catechist of ‘this wild country’ in Wisconsin

GREEN BAY, Wis. (OSV News)—It’s quite a birthday present—especially for someone born 195 years ago.

On Jan. 30, the Diocese of Green Bay opened a cause for the beatification and canonization of Adele Brice, potentially leading to her formal recognition as a saint in the Catholic Church. The visionary and Belgian immigrant reported seeing the Virgin Mary three times in 1859.

Those apparitions, which took place in October 1859 in the woods of northern Wisconsin, are now approved as worthy of belief by the Catholic Church, with Mary given the title “Our Lady of Champion,” named for the village of Champion where they occurred.

Green Bay Bishop David L. Ricken formally declared Brice a “servant of God” at a Jan. 30 vespers liturgy at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral in Green Bay.

“During my 18 years here in the diocese, I have heard countless stories of the life and virtues of Adele,” Bishop Ricken said. “And it is because of this that I was compelled to open the cause for further, deeper study of Adele’s life as a Servant of God.”

“Servant of God” is a designation in the Catholic Church that recognizes a deceased person known for holiness whose life is being investigated for potential canonization.

While sometimes called “Sister Adele,” Brice—who was born Jan. 30, 1831, and whose last name is sometimes spelled “Brise”—was a Third Order Franciscan but remained a laywoman all her life, never taking public religious vows. She becomes the first Servant of God from the Green Bay Diocese, and she joins a small cadre of Servants of God who lived in the United States. The list includes individuals such as Bishop Simon Bruté, Dorothy Day and Nicholas Black Elk.

In early October 1859, 28-year-old Brice was carrying grain to a grist mill for her family, who had arrived from Belgium in 1855. Along the way, she saw a woman dressed in white with a yellow sash, golden wavy hair and stars around her head. The woman, floating a little above the ground, said nothing. Brice fled.

The following Sunday, Brice attended Mass with her sister and a friend. On the way, she saw the lady again, between a maple and a hemlock tree. No words passed between them. Brice informed her priest of these mysterious encounters, and asked for his advice, Brice asked the woman who she was when Brice encountered her on her way home.

“I am the Queen of Heaven who prays for the conversion of sinners, and I wish you to do the same,” the woman told Brice.

The woman, now understood to be the Virgin Mary, also told Brice to “gather the children in this wild country and teach them what they should know for salvation.” Finally, before disappearing for the last time, the woman assured Brice, “Go and fear nothing, I will help you.”

Brice did so, teaching children their catechism, prayers and preparing them for the sacraments, for the rest of her life. She travelled, sometimes up to 50 miles and often on foot, instructing and asking nothing in return.

“She suffered a lot in carrying out her mission,” said Bishop Ricken. “There were a lot of arduous physical challenges in bringing the Gospel to this ‘wild country’ out here, as they called it in those days, that really manifested a faithfulness to the Lord Jesus.”

Brice was not well educated and suffered from

blindness in one eye, caused by a childhood accident with lye. But it did not stop her ministry.

Eventually, her father Lambert built a small chapel on the apparition site and people came to pray. Brice later founded a school, aided by several laywomen. She died on July 5, 1896, and is buried beside the current chapel.

In 2010, Bishop Ricken declared Brice’s visions “worthy of belief.” In 2016, the U.S. bishops made the site a national shrine. Today, Our Lady of Champion is the only Church-approved Marian apparition in the United States. The Fathers of Mercy staff the shrine and visitor center, located about 15 miles northeast of Green Bay.

Father of Mercy Tony Stephens, rector of the National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion, spoke after Vespers on Jan. 30. He noted the shrine’s role as official “actor of the cause” in petitioning the diocese to open the cause.

“My brother priests and I have witnessed firsthand the thousands of faithful who have made pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady,” he said. “And [it] has been incredibly moving to see their devotion to Our Lady and to Adele Brice. ... There are many reasons why we felt compelled to petition the diocese to investigate the result of Adele’s life. Included in these, was the belief that Adele was authentically a seer of the Blessed Virgin Mary like St. Juan Diego.”

Although 130 years have passed since her death, Brice’s influence has continued, and many people have asked for her prayers. Others hoped for her canonization.

“This area where we live here in northeastern Wisconsin is the largest Belgian settlement of immigrants to the United States,” said Father John Girotti, the Diocese of Green Bay’s vicar general and episcopal representative for the cause. “These individuals have lived on these family farms for generations and generations and generations. They have stories to share. We want to hear those stories.”

The diocesan phase of the process will now include three parts, Father Girotti explained. The first includes a historical commission of experts who will study documents of Brice’s life and work. The second will involve a theological group who will study the religious aspects of Brice’s life, asking, Father Girotti said, “how she followed the way of the Lord Jesus and lived a life, we believe, of heroic virtue.”

“‘Heroic virtue’ is a radical following of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, a person who was in love with God, loves his or her neighbors and follows the way of Jesus,” he explained.



Bishop David L. Ricken of Green Bay, Wis., signs a decree commencing the cause of beatification and canonization of the Servant of God Adele Brice at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral in Green Bay on Jan. 30. The Blessed Virgin Mary is believed to have appeared to Adele Brice in Champion, Wis., in 1859. Also pictured are Father John Girotti, left, vicar general of the Green Bay Diocese and episcopal delegate for the canonization cause; Tammy Basten, diocesan chancellor; and Father of Mercy Anthony Stephens, rector of the National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion. (OSV News photo/Sam Lucero)

The final part will include a tribunal to interview witnesses who testify about having had personal prayers answered through Brice’s intercession, or whose relatives in history were helped by the Servant of God.

Father Girotti said this process could take years. Eventually, and after much discernment, the evidence will be compiled and sent to the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints at the Vatican for the next step. That could lead to the Holy See’s recognition of Brice’s heroic virtue and the title of “Venerable.”

When asked what recent stories about Brice have stood out for him, Bishop Ricken cited a woman cured of migraines, and “just yesterday,” one of a man cured of cancer.

“The stories that happen—it’s just beautiful,” the bishop said.

Father Tony has heard similar stories, and he believes Brice is an example for anyone.

“Adele wasn’t attractive by the world’s standards. She wasn’t intelligent by the world’s standards. But in the eyes of heaven and, we hope, with the eyes of faith, we recognize her beauty, her zeal and her new status as a Servant of God; one who is helping us to reflect the love of Christ, because she was so in love with the Lord,” he said.

“We hope that Adele’s story will continue to inspire the faithful, as it has many who have come to the shrine, to humbly follow God’s will with prompt obedience and simple faithfulness, turning to him amidst adversities,” he added.

Noting that Jan. 30 was Brice’s “195th birthday,” Father Tony thanked diocesan leaders for the work “to put together this opening of this cause, which is a really special birthday gift for Adele.” †

Happiness cannot be bought, hoarded, only shared with others, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—A lack of faith in Christ leads to many delusions, such as believing the arrogant will always

rule and only money can buy happiness, Pope Leo XIV said.

The beatitudes, which show how to

love as Christ does, “become for us a measure of happiness, leading us to ask whether we consider it an achievement to be bought or a gift to be shared; whether we place it in objects that are consumed or in relationships that accompany us,” the pope said on Feb. 1.

“The beatitudes lift up the humble and disperse the proud,” he said.

Before praying the *Angelus* with visitors in St. Peter’s Square, the pope reflected on the day’s Gospel reading: the beatitudes from Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount, which begin, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven,” according to the Gospel of St. Matthew (Mt 5:1-12).

The beatitudes, which single out the lowly for God’s favor, “remain a paradox only for those who believe that God is other than how Christ reveals him,” Pope Leo said.

For example, the pope said, “Those who expect the arrogant to always rule the Earth are surprised by the Lord’s words. Those who are accustomed to thinking

that happiness belongs to the rich may believe that Jesus is deluded.

“However, the delusion lies precisely in the lack of faith in Christ. He is the poor man who shares his life with everyone, the meek man who perseveres in suffering, the peacemaker persecuted to death on the cross,” he said.

Jesus shows that history “is no longer written by conquerors, but rather by God, who is able to accomplish it by saving the oppressed,” Pope Leo said. “The Son looks at the world through the Father’s love.”

He said the faithful should not follow today’s “experts in illusion,” as Pope Francis said, because “they are unable to give us hope.” Instead, God gives hope “primarily to those whom the world dismisses as hopeless.”

It is, in fact, because of Christ “that the bitterness of trials is transformed into the joy of the redeemed,” Pope Leo said. “Jesus does not speak of a distant consolation, but of a constant grace that always sustains us, especially in times of affliction.” †

Benedictine novice professes vows at Saint Meinrad Archabbey

Benedictine Novice Douglas Allison professed temporary vows as a monk of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad in an Evening Prayer



Br. Evagrius Allison, O.S.B.

liturgy on Jan. 20 in the monastery’s Archabbey Church of Our Lady of Einsiedeln.

He had completed his novitiate, a year of prayer and study of the Benedictine way of life. As is the custom during the profession of

vows at Saint Meinrad, he was given a religious name. Novice Douglas is now Brother Evagrius.

Brother Evagrius, 25, is a native of Perrysburg, Ohio, where he was a member of St. Rose Parish. He earned a bachelor’s degree in accounting and finance at Bowling Green State University in Bowling Green, Ohio.

Before entering the monastery, he organized and helped provide Communion for homebound individuals for more than 10 years and worked for the Ohio Auditor of State. Brother Evagrius currently serves as a master of ceremonies in the Archabbey Church.

Temporary vows are typically for three years. This period offers a continuing opportunity for the monk and the monastic community to determine whether monastic life is, indeed, the right vocation for this individual. †



Pope Leo XIV

SIMPLY CATHOLIC

Rely on God's providence, knowing that he did not create worry

By D.D. Emmons

(OSV News)—God created everything: the heavens, the Earth, the trees, the flowers and every creature on the Earth. God did not create worry. Call it by any name—unease, anxiety, concern—God did not create it.

We mortals often get worried and preoccupied about something in the future that may never happen. The great American writer Mark Twain said that “worry is like paying a debt that we don’t owe.”

God is always with us. Whatever we think is going to happen, whatever we are worried about, is in the loving hands of our Creator. All we need to do is submit to him and not our own self-sufficiency.

We have heard it a hundred times: “Let go and let God.” There are and will always be thickets in our lives. God won’t take the thickets away—he didn’t do that for his Son—but he will walk with us through every circumstance we encounter.

During the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus teaches his disciples that it is useless to worry: “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear. ... Can any of you by worrying add a single moment to your lifespan?” (Mt 6:25, 27).

Instead, he tells them that God knows what they need and they should “seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be given you besides” (Mt 6:33). Then he addresses the future: “Do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself. Sufficient for a day is its own evil” (Mt 6:34).

From the lips of Jesus, we are told not to worry, that God will provide for our needs. The evil one can, of course, instill chaos and worry in our lives if we allow him.

In 1941, C.S. Lewis wrote a book called *The Screwtape Letters*. It is a series of humorous, tongue-in-cheek, short letters from Screwtape, a demon, to his nephew Wormwood, a demon in training.

It tells how the devil goes about seducing mankind. In chapter six, Screwtape discusses a man who may (or may not) be drafted into the war-time army and how the devil and his agents can keep the man worried about this situation:

“I am delighted to hear that your patient’s age and profession make it possible, but by no means certain, that he will be called up for military service. We want him to be in the maximum uncertainty, so that his mind will be filled with contradictory pictures of the future, every one of which arouses hope or fear. There is nothing like suspense and anxiety for barricading a human’s mind against the Enemy [God]. He wants men to be concerned with what they do; our business is to keep them thinking about what will happen to them.”

Lewis well describes what happens when we worry, are afraid or become anxious about an unknown future instead of living each day with God as our guide, turning to his divine providence. Screwtape is trying to lure the potential draftee away from God and to “get him to think only of the things he is afraid of.”

God has nurtured mankind down through all the



A monstrance is carried on Jan. 3 during a eucharistic procession amid the 16,000 young adults attending the SEEK26 conference in Columbus, Ohio. The Church throughout its history has encouraged believers to trust that God in his provident care is with them always and not to worry. (OSV News photo/Margaret Murray)

centuries. Thus, it is obvious from the beginning that he has had a plan for our welfare. The plan is known as divine providence, the way God governs and preserves all he made. He has directed and overseen everything that has taken place beyond creation, which included making each of us in his image.

When wickedness enveloped the Earth, God allowed a great flood to destroy it. Then he re-created everything. God brought the Israelites out of Egypt and, despite their grumblings, sustained them for 40 years in their trek across the Sinai desert. He sent his Son as the Savior of the world to suffer, take on the sins of man, die on the cross and then to rise to unending life.

Once the Son ascended back to the Father, the Holy Spirit came as our guide to the joys of heaven. None of this took place by chance but was accomplished through the goodness of our omniscient Creator. Our role in God’s providential plan is to continually praise, worship and give him our unconditional love.

In the Gospel of St. Matthew, Jesus commissioned the Apostles to go throughout Israel spreading the good news: “Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, drive out demons” (Mt 10:8). He tells them not to take any extra provisions, money or clothing.

He sent them “like sheep in the midst of wolves” (Mt 10:16). Because of their mission on his behalf, they

will be confronted before governors and kings. When that happens, he says, “do not worry about how you are to speak or what you are to say ... the Spirit of your Father [will be] speaking through you” (Mt 10:20).

Despite Our Lord’s reassurances, the Apostles must have worried how they were to accomplish this task. Jesus, reading their hearts, explains that God will provide, that he carefully watches over each one of us, saying that even if a sparrow falls to the Earth, it doesn’t happen “without the Father’s knowledge” (Mt 10:29).

St. Jerome (347-420), referring to the sparrow, said, “If the sparrows are so cheap and yet fall under the providence and care of God, how can you who are eternal by the nature of your souls be afraid that he whom you venerate as your Father will not take special care of you?”

Jesus, according to Matthew, admonishes the Apostles, as well as disciples today, that we should not give ourselves up to worry but trust in God’s love and in the words of the Lord’s prayer: “Thy will be done.” Long before Jesus, the prophet Isaiah said that even though a mother would forget her child, God would never forget us (Is 49:15).

Throughout the Bible, the Scripture writers describe many worrisome situations. Somehow the difficulties always end well because of God’s ever-present care, even if it sometimes takes many years for that resolution to occur.

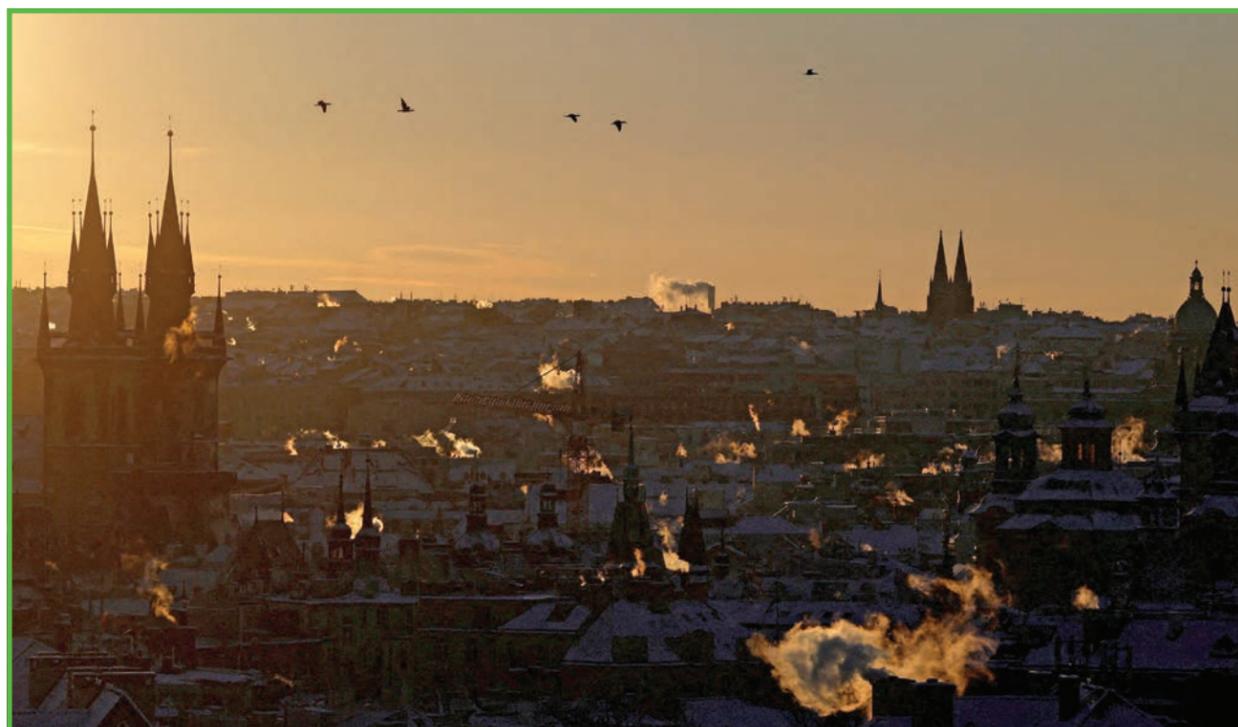
Daniel was thrown to the lions but came out unscathed. The widow of Zarephath gave her last morsel of food to Elijah and prepared to starve with her son, but God replenished her oil and flour. The Apostles worried how they were going to feed 5,000 people, only to watch Jesus multiply the loaves and fish.

There are also current examples of God’s providence. My uncle told the story of being on an aircraft carrier under attack in World War II. He watched as an enemy plane approached unscathed through the flack, but then the plane passed over without firing a shot. Obviously, a sailor in combat is fearful as well as worried, and there are hundreds if not thousands of stories like my uncle’s. Divine providence has sustained creation since Adam and Eve, and it sustains us today.

Of course, one of the most remembered lessons about worry took place in Bethany between the Lord Jesus and his friend Martha. We know the story that, while Martha rushed around making sure everything was just right, Mary sat listening to Jesus. When Martha complained, Jesus said: “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things. There is need of only one thing, Mary has chosen the better part and it will not be taken from her” (Lk 10:41-42).

There is, indeed, need for only one thing.

(D.D. Emmons writes from Pennsylvania.) †



Smoke from chimneys billows over snow-covered rooftops during sunrise on Jan. 11 over Prague in the Czech Republic. Amid life’s troubles, believers can always trust that God cares for them in his providence. (OSV News photo/David W. Cerny, Reuters)

Twenty Something/Christina Capecchi

Teen survivors' love proves 'God writes better stories than Hallmark!'

Zach Zarembinski was 18 when he suffered a massive brain bleed during a high school football game, was rushed to Regions Hospital in St. Paul, Minn., and placed in a coma. Nine days later, 16-year-old Isabelle Richard arrived at the adjacent children's hospital on the same campus after a near-fatal car crash left her in a coma.



This year, they will be married. Somehow God wove their survival stories into one beautiful love story. Zach and Isabelle, both devout Christians, will be celebrating their

romance this Valentine's Day at their favorite Italian restaurant as they continue to plan their September wedding.

"God orchestrated this in his perfect timing," says Isabelle, now 23, a Hy-Vee employee from Lakeville, Minn. "It's crazy what God can do!"

Looking back, the couple can trace the many ways God nudged them together. Zach learned about Isabelle when her mom came to the press conference announcing his release from the hospital. After nine days in a coma, his discharge gave her hope.

Their moms connected on Facebook. When Isabelle's mother shared the news that, after two and a half months, her daughter was finally out of a coma, Zach felt compelled to leave an encouraging comment online—and to come meet her in her hospital room. A photo was snapped of the two teens—Isabelle in her hospital bed, Zach crouching behind her, both smiling brightly. It was February of 2019.

In the months that followed, neither faced an easy road to recovery. Both leaned on their faith. Zach's spiritual life had been cultivated by many Catholic influences. He was in his fifth year at Hill-Murray High School in Maplewood, Minn., a respected Catholic school where a Benedictine nun served as chaplain of his football team.

Benedictine Sister Linda Soler was "a steady

presence for Zach," he said, praying for him often and striking up regular conversations when he visited her office in campus ministry. Meanwhile, Rebecca Fandrich, a theology teacher, opened his eyes to the power of the Holy Spirit. "I learned how to live with a deeper understanding of the world beyond the five senses," Zach said.

He worked to lose weight, become a runner and advance his career. Isabelle re-learned how to walk, talk and drive—all while completing high school. Five and a half years after the two had first met in Isabelle's hospital room, she received the final all-clear from her neurosurgeon. When her mom, Esther, shared the news on Facebook, Zach left another encouraging comment. Esther responded and suggested the two families go out for dinner.

"I'm so proud of you," Zach remembers telling her. At the same time, he was thinking: "Wow, she's pretty! Let me get her phone number!"

He did—and their courtship soon began. The 20-somethings discovered their shared Christian values and the remarkable way they complemented each other. In part, that balance traced back to their brain injuries: Zach's on the left, Isabelle's on the right.

"She's the creative thinker, and I handle the nuts and bolts," said Zach, who works at a Verizon store.

Strong where the other is weak. With God at the center, they move forward as one.

They're planning a September wedding in Red Wing, Minn., with their pastor from ZOE Church in Burnsville, which is associated with the Assemblies of God.

Reflecting on their journey to the altar still fills them with awe.



Zach Zarembinski and Isabelle Richard. (Submitted photo)

"God was looking out for us the whole time," said Isabelle.

"God is faithful," added Zach. "All those painful moments made me stronger and led me to Isabelle."

When people hear their story, many remark that it sounds like a Hallmark movie.

Zach has the perfect reply: "God writes better stories than Hallmark!"

(Christina Capecchi is a freelance writer from Grey Cloud Island, Minn.) †

Called to Holiness/Jaymie Stuart Wolfe

Let's not be in a rush to put the Incarnation and Christmas away

On Dec. 26, our Evangelical neighbors had their Christmas tree out on the curb, and all the stores had marked the decorations down to 50, then 75 and 90% off.

I know that there is a Catholic contingent that insists on observing the Christmas season through Feb. 2 (the feast of the Presentation of the Lord), but that always seemed a bit too long to me.



We've always maintained the holiday décor until Epiphany. But in recent years—for practical as much as liturgical reasons—we've kept it all up a week or two longer.

Time, however, marches on. In stores across America, Christmas reds and greens have morphed into hearts and shamrocks. Easter pastels are beginning to appear on some shelves. Clearly, there's something about us that makes it difficult to live in the present moment. Even the liturgical year propels us forward to the next thing. While plans may not yet be fully fleshed out, most Catholics

are already thinking about Lent.

Ordinary Time means a return to ordinary life: the sleeker, uncomplicated and functional way we most often pass through time. But while the house looks more spacious and less cluttered again, there's always something sad about packing pretty things into attic-bound boxes to be stored away. Ten months is a long time to live without Christmas.

The mystery of Emmanuel, the Word of God irrevocably made flesh, is a key to more deeply understanding everything about our faith. But—hear me out—we haven't even begun to scratch the surface. Christmas is a mystery of the highest order. We cannot clearly see or fully grasp any other aspect of our faith apart from its light. And yet, the Incarnation still baffles us, perhaps even frightens us. Two millennia of contemplation has not yet plummeted its depths or adequately grasped how Jesus of Nazareth, fully God and fully human, changes everything.

We're in good company. From the first disciples, Christians have been unpacking the mysteries of their faith. Some of the holiest hearts and the most brilliant minds

in human history have been utterly confounded by the truths we blithely rattle off in the Creed at Sunday Mass. Yet all of us, according to our ability, have been called to ponder them. Indeed, the cycle of our liturgical year is meant to help us grasp all of what God has given and revealed in Christ by drawing our attention to one mystery at a time.

And yet, the Church's catechetical focus and liturgical emphases have evolved. Through the centuries, the paschal mystery—that is, Christ's saving passion, death and to a lesser extent his resurrection—have become the lens through which we are taught to see everything else. It's understandable, but reductive, nonetheless. The question, "Why was Jesus born in Bethlehem?" can be answered simply: "To save us from our sin on Calvary." But if that is the only angle from which we view the life of Christ, our faith will be impoverished.

Most of us have been taught to see the crib in the shadow of the cross. But what if we were able to see the Crucifixion in the light of the Incarnation? What if the reason Jesus came and lived, suffered and died—and rose again—was to unite humanity and divinity in mystical marriage for eternity? What if, as some theologians (like John Duns Scotus) have suggested, the Incarnation was God's plan from the beginning, and not an Option B necessitated by sin? What if the mission of Christ wasn't just to save souls, but to redeem our bodies too? Could St. Athanasius have been right—that "God became man, so that man might become god?" Is theosis or divinization the whole point?

As we move together toward Lent and Easter, we ought to resist stuffing the full impact of the Incarnation into a box of decorations we keep in the attic of our spiritual lives until December rolls around. Christmas is good all year, and it's a mistake for us to put it away at all.

(Jaymie Stuart Wolfe is a sinner, Catholic convert, freelance writer and editor, musician, speaker, pet-aholic, wife and mom of eight grown children, loving life in New Orleans.) †

Guest Column/Richard Etienne

May we live our lives centered on rejoicing, prayer and thanksgiving

In St. Paul's First Letter to the Thessalonians, we read, "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thes 5:16-18).



Really? Constantly, consistently, without ceasing?

The first idea of rejoicing is easy to accomplish when various parts of our life are going in "our favor."

The harder part of St. Paul's instructions come into play during the trying, sorrowful or painful times in life.

However, we are being asked to trust and rejoice through all of it because God has a plan that has not been totally revealed to us yet.

Next is the concept of prayer. Could it be that St. Paul

is suggesting that *all* that we do in our lives at *all* times can be seen as a prayer? If we have the right attitude—specifically an attitude of service—can't almost every act that we undertake be "for the greater honor and glory of God"?

Additionally, could the phrase "pray without ceasing" refer to a mindset where one dedicates all of our actions—not just our words—as a gift back to God? In this way, our life becomes one huge prayer, so that whatever task that we undertake, it is only for the building of the kingdom of God.

With regard to thanks, St. Paul is helping to remind us that *everything* that we possess is a gift from God, and that we should offer thanksgiving regularly for all that we have been given. And I do not believe it is a coincidence that the Greek word "*eucharistia*" is best translated into the word "Thanksgiving" in English.

We too often deceive ourselves into thinking that what we have is purely due to our own efforts. Consistently giving gratitude to God will help keep our mindset on track.

When I was young, our parish had an older pastor who often started homilies or phrases with, "What a wonderful world it would be if ..."

Isn't that the idea? What a wonderful world it would be if every task that we undertake is centered on rejoicing, prayer and thanks!

So let us attempt to live life in this way—now wouldn't that be something! It is an ideal that we can always strive toward.

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

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, February 8, 2026

- Isaiah 58:7-10
- 1 Corinthians 2:1-5
- Matthew 5:13-16

The Book of Isaiah's third section is the source of the first reading at Mass this weekend. Scholars believe that this section was written perhaps in Jerusalem for the Hebrew remnant that had returned from exile in Babylon.

This would put this section of Isaiah at a date after the epic Babylonian captivity. As political fortunes turned, the Persian ruler Cyrus had overtaken Babylon. He decreed that Jewish exiles could return to their homeland after an absence of four generations. Indeed, probably few had ever seen their homeland.

Nevertheless, release from Babylon brought utter exhilaration to the exiles. They were free to go home!

This seemingly wondrous opportunity was bittersweet. When the exiles reached their ancestral homeland, they found deprivation and want, conditions worse than anything that they had experienced in Babylon.

In the face of the people's disappointment and anger, the prophet reaffirmed God's goodness, calling upon them to provide for those in need themselves. Then they would experience the fullness of vindication, the fullness of God's promise to give them life and peace.

St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians provides the second reading. This epistle was addressed to Christians living in Corinth, then one of the major cities of the Roman Empire. Rich and sophisticated, Corinth was a virtual center of Greco-Roman culture at the time. It also was a cesspool of vice.

Paul's message ran directly opposite to all that mattered in Corinth. Of course, skeptics scorned him, asking if the Christian Gospel made any sense. The Lord was an obstacle for many. After all, importantly for so many, the founder of Christianity, Jesus of Nazareth, had been legally executed as a common criminal and as a traitor to the empire.

The Apostle's proclamation of Jesus

in itself put mere human knowledge in its place. Paul insisted that he relied upon a source greater and more dependable than human wisdom, namely the Holy Spirit.

St. Matthew's Gospel furnishes the last reading, a collection of two brief statements by Jesus, given in highly descriptive and clear imagery.

In the first statement, Jesus tells the disciples that they are the "salt of the Earth" (Mt 5:13). In the second, the Lord admonishes followers to be the "light of the world" (Mt 5:14). These images, salt and light, are hardly unknown today. But an ancient aspect of each of them is unknown in contemporary culture.

At the time of Jesus, salt was precious. Roman soldiers were paid in salt. This is then the origin of the phrase that a person is "not worth his salt." The word "salary" derives from this practice. Salt also was unrefined. Dust or sand usually mixed with salt. The less the dust and sand, the better the salt.

Today people are accustomed to seeing bright lights at night. Darkness was a serious obstacle at the time of Jesus. Light, then, was precious in its own sense.

Jesus urges disciples to uplift the earthly society by being "salt" and "light."

Reflection

Gently, but deliberately, the Church is guiding us onward from its introduction of Jesus of Nazareth as son of the human Mary, and Son of God, and Redeemer of the sinful human race, as given at Christmas, Epiphany and the Feast of the Lord's Baptism. It challenges us to respond to Jesus.

These readings are clear. Discipleship is no mere lip service. It is the actual and intentional resembling of Christ in our daily lives.

Matthew makes this clear, however: believers have a strength upon which to draw as they illuminate the world. It is found in the grace of their faith. As disciples, they are precious. Being a disciple is demanding, but it is not impossible.

Of course, to be pure, worthy and therefore as strong as salt, free of impurities, disciples must rid themselves with the necessary help of God's grace of sin and fortify their Christian resolve. This is the task of Lent, soon to begin. †

Daily Readings

Monday, February 9

1 Kings 8:1-7, 9-13
Psalm 132:6-10
Mark 6:53-56

Tuesday, February 10

St. Scholastica, virgin
1 Kings 8:22-23, 27-30
Psalm 84:3-5, 10-11
Mark 7:1-13

Wednesday, February 11

Our Lady of Lourdes
1 Kings 10:1-10
Psalm 37:5-6, 30-31, 39-40
Mark 7:14-23

Thursday, February 12

1 Kings 11:4-13
Psalm 106:3-4, 35-37, 40
Mark 7:24-30

Friday, February 13

1 Kings 11:29-32; 12:19
Psalm 81:10-11b, 12-15
Mark 7:31-37

Saturday, February 14

St. Cyril, monk
St. Methodius, bishop
1 Kings 12:26-32; 13:33-34
Psalm 106:6-7, 19-22
Mark 8:1-10

Sunday, February 15

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Sirach 15:15-20
Psalm 119:1-2, 4-5, 17-18, 33-34
1 Corinthians 2:6-10
Matthew 5:17-37
or Matthew 5:20-22a, 27-28, 33-34a, 37

Question Corner/Jenna Marie Cooper

Catholic Church holds that ordination in the Anglican Communion is invalid

The Church of England is elevating its first woman to the role of archbishop of Canterbury, its chief diocese. Do we as Catholics see this as a problem theologically?



Answer here could be either "yes" or "no," depending on how we approach the question.

For Catholics, it would be a problem if someone were to propose that the Catholic Church should ordain women as bishops, since this goes against our well-established doctrine on the nature and purpose of the sacrament of holy orders.

As St. John Paul II recounted in his 1994 apostolic letter "*Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*," on reserving priestly ordination to men alone:

"When the question of the ordination of women arose in the Anglican Communion, Pope Paul VI, out of fidelity to his office of safeguarding the apostolic tradition, and also with a view to removing a new obstacle placed in the way of Christian unity, reminded

Anglicans of the position of the Catholic Church: 'She [the Catholic Church] holds that it is not admissible to ordain women to the priesthood, for very fundamental reasons. These reasons include: the example recorded in the sacred Scriptures of Christ choosing his Apostles only from among men; the constant practice of the Church, which has imitated Christ in choosing only men; and her living teaching authority which has consistently held that the exclusion of women from the priesthood is in accordance with God's plan for his Church' " (#1).

The Catholic Church would also disagree with any Christian theology in support of women's ordination, since it undermines the concept of apostolic succession. This refers to the Church's teaching that every bishop—along with the priests who participate in their bishops' pastoral ministry—was ordained by an older bishop who was in turn ordained by a bishop himself, forming an unbroken chain through which the authority to administer the sacraments was handed

down from the original Apostles.

But along these lines, a female archbishop of Canterbury would not be a new or especially pressing problem for the Catholic Church, since branches of the Anglican Communion have had for many decades women, ordained in that communion's understanding, serve as priests and bishops.

In any case, the Catholic Church has long held that there have not been valid Anglican ordinations at all since shortly after the Reformation era.

Historically, the Church of England began in 1534 when, for political reasons, King Henry VIII decided that the Church in his country should be independent of the bishop of Rome and led ultimately by the English crown. At the beginning of its history, all the bishops of the Church of England had been validly ordained Catholic bishops.

But as Pope Leo XIII observed in his 1896 apostolic letter "*Apostolicae Curae*" ("On the Nullity of Anglican Orders"), during the reign of King Edward VI, Henry's son and successor, a new ordination ritual for the Church of England was created. The wording of this new ritual departed from the Catholic Church's long held sacramental understanding of the priesthood. Thus, Leo XIII clarified that Anglican ordinations since that time are "absolutely null and utterly void."

It should be noted that Leo's teaching also applies to other ecclesial bodies in the Anglican communion, including the Episcopal Church in the U.S.

Because of this teaching, Catholics see Anglican priests and bishops as being like Protestant ministers, who can lead services and teach the faith in a non-sacramental sense, and not like Orthodox priests who, while not in the full communion of the Catholic Church, are nevertheless still validly ordained with apostolic succession and can therefore celebrate valid sacraments.

Insofar as some Anglicans might indeed see themselves as ministers rather than sacramental priests, in a certain sense we might even agree with them that a woman could serve as the archbishop of Canterbury, since the Catholic Church acknowledges that women are capable of non-sacramental teaching and leadership.

Yet as St. Paul VI was aware even in the 1970s, the ordination of women in the Anglican Communion does present an additional obstacle to Christian unity, and this by itself will always be a problem.

(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

I Forgive You Mommy

By Greg Hublar

If you could see what I see,
your pain and suffering would not be.
I am with Jesus, and we have never left your side;
our heart breaks for you, and the secret you think you have to hide.
We see your pain and the depth of your despair.
And we know it's a reflection of how much you really care.
You need not beat yourself up any longer.
We have forgiven you, and our love for you couldn't be stronger.
You know the answer is not in trying to forget.
And we understand in this life, you will always have regret.
But the momentary pain you caused me that day,
no longer exists, for it has long since passed away.
Mommy, the Devil hates you and wants to keep us apart.
But that won't happen, if you can but forgive yourself in your heart.
Jesus died for both you and me. And he has risen, as I can clearly see.
I am with Jesus and forever will be.
I am fully alive, and I want you here with me.
Mommy, please know how much we love you and that you're completely forgiven.
So that you might find peace and accomplish the Father's mission.
Love the Lord, with all your heart, soul, mind and strength.
Then you will see, you really can have eternal life with Jesus and me.

(Greg Hublar is a member of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in New Albany. Post-abortion healing resources available in the archdiocese and beyond can be found at tinyurl.com/HealingPostAbortion.)

Rest in peace

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

BEEZ, Barbara A., 75, St. Catherine of Siena, Decatur County, Dec. 31. Wife of George Beetz. Mother of Heidi Laudick and Jamison Beetz. Sister of Kathy Hewitt, Greg, Gus and Tom Litmer. Stepsister of David, Gary, John and Tim Grossman. Grandmother of six. Great-grandmother of five.

BENNETT, Raymond, 86, St. Joseph, Shelbyville, Jan. 4. Husband of Terri Bennett. Father of Annette Carpenter, Shelley Cazzell, Anthony and Michael Bennett. Grandfather and great-grandfather of several.

BLACKWOOD, Frances C., 80, Prince of Peace, Madison, Dec. 15. Sister of Carol Crays, Betty Gabbard, Monica Steidinger, Linda Wenning, Dan, Jimmy and Paul Little. Aunt of several.

BORDERS, Kerry, 75, St. Gabriel, Connersville, Dec. 7. Husband of Joann Borders. Father of Rob and Tony Borders. Grandfather of four. Great-grandfather of one.

BOUGHNER, Patricia, 96, St. Gabriel, Connersville, Dec. 5. Mother of Roger and Stephen Boughner. Sister of Marilyn Anderson, Phyllis Glaub, Carolyn Hall and Joyce Houseworth. Grandmother of two. Great-grandmother of four.

BUCKLEY, Carolyn, 87, St. Joseph, Shelbyville, Jan. 11. Mother of Alexis Green, Risé Smith and J. Craig Buckley.

Sister of Dean and Kenneth Karmire. Grandmother of six. Great-grandmother of four.

COLLINS, Galley, 76, St. Anthony of Padua, Clarksville, Jan. 19. Husband of Cynthia Collins. Father of Jacquelyn Singleton. Brother of Eunice Bryant, Phyllis Laker, Earl and Earnest Collins. Grandfather of four.

DWIRE, Janice E., 71, Holy Name of Jesus, Beech Grove, Jan. 2. Sister of Kevin Dwire.

EAGAN, Gina, 75, St. Roch, Indianapolis, Jan. 1. Wife of Mike Eagan. Mother of Melissa Haller, Brad and Brian Eagan. Grandmother of nine.

FRIGAND, Leslie A., 79, Christ the King, Indianapolis, Jan. 1. Sister of Linda Frigand.

GEIS, Martin, 76, St. Bridget of Ireland, Liberty, Jan. 3. Husband of Sharon Geis. Father of Crystal Ramey and Trevor Geis. Brother of Charlene Byrley, Carol Lecklider, Dennis and Rodney Geis. Grandfather of four. Great-grandfather of two.

GERO, James, 64, St. Gabriel, Connersville, Dec. 5. Brother of Amy Collins and Tami Gero. Uncle and great-uncle of several.

HALL, Virginia, 81, SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi, Greenwood, Dec. 5. Sister of Robert Smith. Grandmother of three. Great-grandmother of three.

HUDSON, Margaret, 91, St. Joseph, Shelbyville, Jan. 12. Mother of Carla and Kevin Metz.

IMEL, Michelle (Holtel), 40, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, Jan. 3. Wife of Joshua Imel. Mother of Kylie and Parker Imel and Todd Tabor. Daughter of James and Jaelyn Holtel. Sister of Joseph Holtel.

JACOB, Bertie L., 86, All Saints, Dearborn County, Jan. 11. Mother of Theresa Macdonald and Gary Jacob. Sister of Dorothy Barth, Wilma Burkey, Anna Darling, Bonnie Mills, Billy, Lawrence and Paul Weldishofer. Grandmother of six. Great-grandmother of six.

KLUG, Rita, 98,

Honoring St. Rose of Lima



Pope Leo XIV blesses a new statue of St. Rose of Lima during a ceremony on Jan. 31 in the Vatican Gardens at the Vatican. She died in 1617 and was declared a saint in 1671, the first canonized person from the Americas. (OSV News/Vincenzo Livieri, Reuters)

St. Christopher, Indianapolis, Jan. 10. Aunt of several.

KNECHT, Jerry L., 63, St. Mary, Rushville, Dec. 29. Husband of Becky Knecht. Father of Mikaylee, Morgan, Mason and Mitchell Knecht. Son of Velma Knecht. Brother of Darlene and Julie Spaeth and Brenda and Jim Knecht. Grandfather of one.

MANN, Ashley N., 31, St. Mary, Rushville, Dec. 13. Mother of Kiley. Daughter of Scott and Tracey Spaeth and James and Misty Mann. Sister of Haley Trebley and Brady Williams. Granddaughter of Mike and MaryAnn Gibbons, Cindy Mann, Virgil and Becky Siefing, Robert and Jeanie Spaeth.

MARSHALL, Kathryn, 96, St. Vincent de Paul, Shelby County, Jan. 6. Mother of Susan Lee, Sheila Marshall and Sharon Scott. Grandmother of six. Great-grandmother of 18.

MCGINLEY, James M., 89, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, Dec. 29. Father of Eileen McGinley Ford and James McGinley. Brother of Rosie Cadwallader, Nano Dillard, Chuck, Dan, Jack, Joe and Mike McGinley. Grandfather of four.

MITCHELL, Clarence B., 91, St. Gabriel, Connersville, Dec. 19. Husband of Mary Elizabeth Mitchell. Father of Gregory Mitchell. Grandfather of five.

MULLIS, Marilyn, 82, St. Meinrad, St. Meinrad, Nov. 30. Mother of Linda Buettel, Darrell, Jerry, Kurt, Scott and Tim Mullis. Sister of Virlee Howe, Anna Jacob and Bill Kerstiens. Grandmother of 15. Great-grandmother of 20.

NASH, Thomas, 66, St. Christopher, Indianapolis, Jan. 9. Husband of Jean Nash.

Father of Katherine and Sarah Nash. Grandfather of four.

PETTIT, Kenneth L., 71, St. John Paul II, Sellersburg, Jan. 6. Husband of Theresia Pettit. Father of Amber Celani, Gary, Joel and Joshua Pettit. Brother of Lori McVicker and Gary Pettit. Grandfather of seven.

PLUCKEBAUM, Maryann, 93, St. Luke the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Jan. 12. Mother of Anne Marie Cottrell, David, Michael, Paul and Steven Pluckebaum. Grandmother of 11. Great-grandmother of eight.

SCHOTT, Franklin M., 1, St. Roch, Indianapolis, Jan. 4. Son of John and Anne Schott. Brother of Bernadette, Rebecca, Veronica, Abraham, George, Joseph, Richard, Teddy and William Schott. Grandson of John and Peggy Klein and Joe and Bonnie Schott.

SMITH, Priscilla (Clements), 90, Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Indianapolis, Jan. 11. Mother of Catherine, Kenneth and Michael Smith. Sister of Beverly and Leo. Grandmother of eight. Great-grandmother of 14.

STUTES, Paul E., 87, St. Vincent de Paul, Bedford, Jan. 10. Husband of Jane Stutes. Father of Susan Diekhoff, Julie Galloway and Neil Stutes. Brother of Philip Stutes. Grandfather of eight. Great-grandfather of several.

WASHBURN, Mary Katheryn, 86, St. Louis, Batesville, Jan. 4. Mother of John Allen. Stepmother of Sheila Deikoff. Sister of Helen Ellinghausen, Sue Teasley and Anthony Gardner. Grandmother of six. Great-grandmother of four. Great-great-grandmother of two.

WEST, James C., 84, Our Lady of the Greenwood, Greenwood, Jan. 9. Father of Barbara Berta, Claire DeLano and Jeanne Phenany. Brother of Albert West. Grandfather of five.

WOOLEY, Susan, 69, St. Bridget of Ireland, Liberty, Dec. 27. Wife of Steven Wooley. Mother of Kelly Allen, Stephanie Coley, Stacey Green, Ashley McWhinney and Bradley Wooley. Grandmother of six.

WRIGHT, Jack W., 89, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Richmond, Jan. 7. Father of Joyce Deitz, Mary Flieman, Beth Hester, Judy Houseman, Cindy Johnson and John Wright. Brother of Shirley Devin. Grandfather of 22. Great-grandfather of 31.

ZUTTARELLI, James L., 73, St. Vincent de Paul, Bedford, Jan. 12. Uncle and great-uncle of several. †

Benedictine Father Germain Swisshelm ministered in Peru, worked as a carpenter

Benedictine Father Germain Swisshelm, a monk of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad, died on Jan. 24, in the monastery's infirmary. He was 91.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Jan. 29. Burial followed at the Archabbey Cemetery.

Father Germain was born on April 6, 1934, in Orrville, Ohio, and was given the name William Oliver at his baptism.

After graduating from high school in the former St. Gregory Seminary in Cincinnati in 1952, he entered priestly formation at the former Saint Meinrad College in Saint Meinrad where he later earned a bachelor's degree in philosophy and history in 1956.

That same year, Father Germain was invested as a novice of Saint Meinrad Archabbey on Aug. 14. He professed temporary vows on Aug. 15, 1957, and solemn vows on Aug. 15, 1960. Father Germain was ordained a priest on Sept. 25, 1960.

He pursued graduate studies at Indiana University in Bloomington, the University of Oklahoma in Norman, Okla., and at the University of San Marcos in Lima, Peru.

Father Germain taught from 1960-62 in

the former St. Placid Hall at Saint Meinrad. In 1962, he became a founding member of Saint Meinrad's former mission in Huaraz, Peru, San Benito Priory.

While in Peru, Father Germain taught at a high school and seminary operated by the priory. He also served as its prior from 1975-79. Additionally, Father Germain ministered as associate pastor of San Juan de Lurigancho Parish in Lima.

Quechua is a native language pre-dating Spanish colonization that is spoken by many of the people in and around Huaraz. While in Peru, Father Germain produced a Quechua-Spanish dictionary and a nine-volume New Testament manuscript in Quechua.

Returning to Saint Meinrad in 1979, Father Germain worked in the monastery's carpenter shop for several decades, celebrated Mass at its Shrine of Our Lady of Monte Cassino and was involved in Hispanic ministry. He also served as the monastic community's Mass secretary, coordinator of liturgical readings and custodian of Mass intentions.

Memorial gifts may be sent to Saint Meinrad Archabbey, 200 Hill Drive, St. Meinrad, IN 47577. †

Online Lay Ministry Formation

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis has partnered with the University of Notre Dame and Catholic Distance University (CDU) to offer not-for-credit online theology classes:

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If you are a victim of sexual misconduct by a person ministering on behalf of the Church, or if you know of anyone who has been a victim of such misconduct, please contact the archdiocesan victim assistance coordinator. There are two ways to make a report:

- 1 Ethics Point**
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www.archdioceseofindianapolis.ethicspoint.com or 888-393-6810
- 2** Victim Assistance Coordinator, Archdiocese of Indianapolis
P.O. Box 1410, Indianapolis, IN 46206-1410
317-236-1548 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1548
victimassistance@archindy.org

Pope calls for ‘healthy competition’ to unite people at Winter Games

(OSV News)—In a message to the Archdiocese of Milan, Pope Leo XIV expressed his hope that the 2026 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games will be an occasion of solidarity and bridge-building between peoples and cultures.

The papal message was read during a Jan. 29 Mass marking the arrival of the “Cross of Athletes” and the official launch of the archdiocese’s Olympic pastoral initiative, “For Each Other.”

In his message, which was signed on his behalf by Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, the pope said he hoped the Olympic Games would bring about “sentiments of friendship and fraternity, strengthening awareness of the value of sport at the service of the integral development of the human person.

“The Holy Father assures his prayers so that these days of healthy competition may contribute to building bridges between cultures and peoples, promoting hospitality, solidarity, and peace,” the message stated.

The “For Each Other” initiative, which will coincide with the Feb. 6-22 Winter Olympics and the March 6-15 Paralympics, will feature activities, performances and events hosted in parishes across Milan.

At the heart of the activities will be the 11th-century Basilica di San Babila, dedicated to St. Babylas of Antioch, where the opening Mass was celebrated and which will be known as the “Church of Athletes” throughout the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

During the liturgy, the “Cross of Athletes” was entrusted to the archdiocese by Athletica Vaticana, the Holy See’s sports association. Blessed

by Pope Francis at the 2013 World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro, the cross has been placed in chapels in the Olympic host cities of London in 2012 and Paris in 2024.

According to the Archdiocese of Milan, the cross, which will remain at the altar in the Basilica di San Babila until the end of the Paralympics, “symbolizes the close bond between sporting activities and the values of solidarity, inclusion and personal growth.”

In his homily, Archbishop Mario Delpini of Milan said the Olympic and Paralympic Games could serve as a form of rigorous spiritual education, describing the athletic competitions as a “school of asceticism” and a “school of life” where one learns how to handle both victory and defeat.

For Olympians and Paralympians, the games will be a chance to learn “what strength is needed to accept defeat without becoming depressed, to live victory without becoming arrogant, to live through the disordered reactions of others, the unexpected anger, the irritating stubbornness, the paralyzing discouragement.”

Reflecting on the presence of the “Cross of Athletes,” which features a void silhouette of Christ’s crucified body, Archbishop Delpini said the cross offered “more of a glimpse than a figure” of the body of Christ that “encourages our questions, our gaze, and our attention.

“If you want to know what love is, if you want to know if there is hope,” the archbishop said, “look to Jesus, adore the crucified and risen body, listen to his words and follow him, for he is the way, the truth, and the life.” †



Altar servers process into the Basilica of San Babila in Milan at a Mass marking the arrival of the “Cross of Athletes” on Jan. 29. The cross was entrusted to the Archdiocese of Milan by Athletica Vaticana, the Holy See’s sports association, ahead of the 2026 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games in Milan and Cortina d’Ampezzo. (OSV News photo/Archdiocese of Milan)

Employment

Editorial Assistant The Criterion

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis seeks a detail-oriented and creative Editorial Assistant to support the weekly production of its newspaper, The Criterion. The position resides within the Secretariat for Communications, supporting mission-driven storytelling across print and digital platforms.

This position is ideal for someone with basic layout/design skills (InDesign or similar), strong writing, proofreading, and attention to detail, ability to meet weekly deadlines and an interest in journalism, communications, or Catholic media.

For the Full Job Description and Qualifications, visit www.archindy.org/hr/jobs/2026-01-Editorial.html or scan the QR code.

To Apply: Send résumé, cover letter, and writing/design samples to Mike Krokos, editor, – mkrokos@archindy.org.



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Employment

Director of Marketing Communications Scecina Memorial High School

Scecina Memorial High School seeks a dynamic Director of Marketing Communications to lead and implement a comprehensive marketing and communications strategy. This position plays a critical role in advancing the school’s mission by marketing for enrollment, image, and financial support. The Director will manage the school’s website, oversee social media presence, produce key publications, and ensure consistent branding across all platforms. This individual will collaborate closely with leadership and serve on the Enrollment Management and Marketing Communications Committee.

To apply, please send your resume and cover letter to:

Ms. Magy Garcia
Assistant to the President
Scecina Memorial High School
5000 Nowland Avenue
Indianapolis, IN 46201
mgarcia@scecina.org

Director of Development Scecina Memorial High School

Scecina Memorial High School is seeking a Director of Development who will collaborate with school leadership to develop and implement strategies to cultivate, invite, and steward alumni and friends’ financial support for school priorities. The director is responsible for managing the annual Scecina Fund, special events, and special development projects. We are seeking an experienced and visionary development professional who is committed to Catholic school education, is an effective collaborator and project manager, and has strong relationship-building skills.

To apply, please send a letter of interest and resume to:

Ms. Magy Garcia
Assistant to the President
Scecina Memorial High School
5000 Nowland Avenue
Indianapolis, IN 46201
mgarcia@scecina.org

Communications Coordinator Archdiocese of Indianapolis, Secretariat for Communications

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis seeks a skilled writer and project manager to create and coordinate print and digital communications supporting ministries and pastors. The position resides within the Secretariat for Communications, supporting mission-driven storytelling across print and digital platforms.

Focused on content creation, project management, and communications strategy, the position is ideal for someone with strong writing and editing skills, experience managing multiple communications projects, comfort working across print, email, web, and design platforms, and a heart for mission-driven work in a collaborative environment.

For the Full Job Description and Qualifications, visit www.archindy.org/hr/jobs/2026-01-Communications.html or scan the QR code.

To Apply: Send résumé, cover letter, and writing/design samples to Mary King, assistant director – mking@archindy.org.



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Book aims to help women find fruitfulness amid struggles with infertility

(National Marriage Week is Feb. 7-14.)

(OSV News)—Leigh Fitzpatrick Snead wanted to write the book she wished she had as a young woman struggling with infertility.

“Most infertility books ended in pregnancy that I was reading,” Snead, the author of *Infertile but Fruitful: Finding Fulfillment When You Can't Conceive*, told OSV News. “That’s not always the story you need to hear.”



Leigh Fitzpatrick Snead

Now, she said, she wants women to know “it’s OK when the end of the story isn’t a pregnancy.” She wants them to know that they are not alone—and that they are still called to fruitfulness.

Snead, a writer, speaker and Catholic mother of four through adoption, is sending this message by sharing her own struggle with infertility in *Infertile but Fruitful*.

In her new book from Sophia Institute Press, Snead greets readers with an approachable, sincere tone as she details the sorrows and the joys experienced by her and her husband, O. Carter Snead, a professor of law and concurrent professor of political science at the University of Notre Dame in northern Indiana.

Along the way, she draws from her story to discuss fertility treatment options, Church teaching on sexuality and marriage, emotional and spiritual challenges, and adoption as a vocation. Each chapter in the nearly 150-page book concludes with a section listing practical advice and encouragement.

The book by Snead, a fellow for

The Catholic Association and co-host of the nationally syndicated radio show “Conversations with Consequences,” comes at a time when infertility is common. Around one in five U.S. married women ages 49 and younger with no prior births, struggle with infertility or are unable to get pregnant after one year of trying, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

“You’re enough. God loves you so much,” Snead said she wants women struggling with infertility to know. “The day you said, ‘I do,’ you became a family with your husband.

“Turn your eyes toward Christ, ask the saints for interventions, allow people to pray for you,” she added. “Understand that you’re made for love and for fruitfulness—and that’s not limited to your ability to conceive biological children.”

Snead saw a need for her book after writing an open letter to couples struggling with infertility published by the *National Catholic Register* in 2023. She remembered being surprised by the response: The widely-shared piece sparked a flurry of messages and conversations.

When her mentor encouraged her to write a book and someone offered to publish it, Snead realized the timing was right.

“I was ready personally ... being able to say, ‘I’m never going to be pregnant,’” she said, adding that she was approaching 50 when she began her book.

In addition to writing for younger women, Snead said she wrote for women her age who have lived through the struggle of infertility. Going beyond that, she wanted it to serve as a resource for the loved ones of women struggling with infertility and the priests who minister to them.

While her book focuses on her own story, Snead stressed that there is more than one way to live through infertility.

“There’s a real need to talk about couples who get married and they’re Catholic and they’re infertile, but they don’t adopt,” said Snead, who also serves on the board of Springs in the Desert, a Catholic infertility ministry. “They’re not called to it for whatever reason.”

In her book, Snead tells the stories of different couples who struggle or have struggled with infertility and how each couple embraced fruitfulness in their own way.

“This is about infertility and that you’re not less than or less whole because of this one thing,” Snead said of her book. “Your marriage is able to be fruitful. Your life, you dedicate it to God, you pick up your cross, you carry it. There’s lots of fruits that are born out of that.”

Snead begins her book by dedicating it to her four sons and her husband. “I wouldn’t change a thing,” she writes.

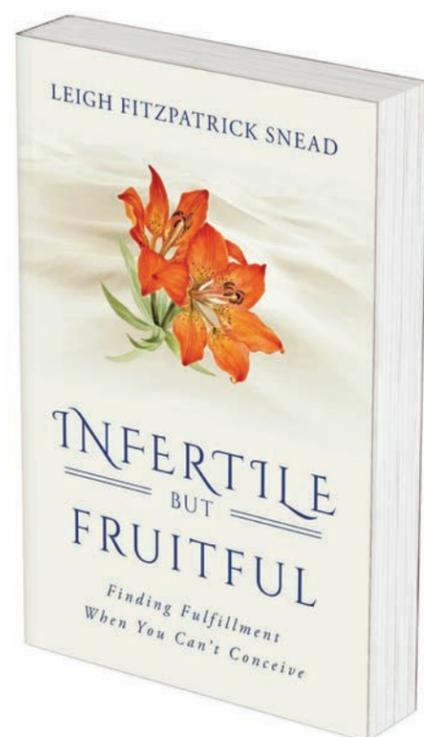
“There was this whole world of people, and I found my husband and then my four kids,” she told OSV News. “None of that was guaranteed.”

She wants her children never to think that she settled or they are a second choice, she said. “No, I just want them.”

In her book, Snead writes that her goal is to encourage dialogue. Women, she said, should be able to talk about their infertility the way other women talk about their pregnancies and births.

“Because we’re not used to talking about it, because there’s so much secrecy and shame that women feel around it, it’s a lot of suffering in silence,” she said.

For her part, Snead revealed what she



learned about Jesus Christ’s cross through her own cross of infertility.

“The tests, maybe the injections, the constant self-monitoring for signs that new life may be growing inside you all serve to remind you that you are an embodied being,” Snead said in a follow-up e-mail to OSV News. “When God became man, he suffered as a man. And we know that in that suffering is the good news of our salvation.

“When I sought comfort from Christ and brought my suffering to his feet, he drew me closer and I felt his love,” she added. “It humbled me, and led me to forget about any ideas I might have of control and give it all over to him.” †

EXECUTION

continued from page 1

nitrogen hypoxia—lethal gas—as an additional method of execution for Indiana, but that portion had been amended out before the final House vote.

Prior to the vote on the House floor, Morris had been joined at the podium by other lawmakers on both sides of the political aisle calling for the bill to be rejected.

“There was some really heartening movement of the Holy Spirit as this debate was happening and moving people’s hearts,” said Alexander Mingus, executive director of the ICC, the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Indiana. “Even those we know are supportive of the death penalty conceptually said that the firing squad is not the way to go.”

The ICC had strongly objected to the bill throughout the first half of the legislative session, along with a similar measure in the Senate that never received a vote.

Now that the Indiana General Assembly has reached its midpoint, known as crossover, bills that are still active move from one legislative chamber to another. Another death penalty-related measure—House Bill 1432—passed unanimously on a 96-0 vote and now moves to the Senate for consideration.

That bill, which the ICC supports, creates a framework to screen out anyone with a defined intellectual disability from being eligible for the death penalty.

Another pro-life measure that is moving forward is Senate Bill 236, which passed out of the Senate along a 39-10 party-line vote and has been referred to the House Committee on Public Health. The bill, authored by Sen. Tyler Johnson (R-Leo-Cedarville), would place tight restrictions on the use of abortion-inducing medications in Indiana, prohibiting their distribution or mailing in most circumstances.

Johnson, an emergency room physician, spoke of the dangers of these medications during Senate testimony

in January. His bill also would allow for civil actions to be brought against manufacturers or distributors of abortion medications for what a plaintiff would consider personal injury or wrongful death from the use of the drugs.

The ICC supports the direction of Senate Bill 236 and will continue to monitor its progress.

Legislation related to the dignity of the human person is always of utmost importance to the ICC, which represents the five Catholic bishops of Indiana in the public arena. Therefore, the ICC is tracking Senate Bill 285, which is another attempt at prohibiting homeless encampments across the state.



Roarke LaCoursiere

Under the bill, law enforcement officials first encountering individuals sleeping or camping on public property would issue a warning and offer to connect them with local shelters and other resources. Repeat violations could result in a Class C misdemeanor, which carries a standard fine of \$500 or up to 60 days in jail.

Opponents call the measure a means to criminalize homelessness. But Sen. Cyndi Carrasco (R-Indianapolis), the Catholic lawmaker who authored the bill, says the intent is to “create a moment where outreach, diversion and connection to services can occur, and to move individuals to a healthier and more stable life.”

The bill passed on a 29-19 vote on the Senate floor on Jan. 28 and now awaits further action in the House.

“This is something that we will monitor and continue to talk to people about as it moves to the House side,” said Roarke LaCoursiere, associate director of the ICC. “We will continue to discern what is going to be best for our brothers and sisters who are chronically homeless and whom this bill will affect across the state of Indiana.”

Another effort aimed at providing adequate housing for vulnerable Hoosiers has moved from the House to the Senate for consideration. House Bill 1001, a significant housing affordability measure, includes a provision that would streamline zoning to allow religious entities to build affordable housing on church property.

The ICC supports the measure, which falls under the growing “Yes in God’s Backyard” (YIGBY)

movement nationwide. YIGBY efforts encourage churches and other faith-based institutions to use their underutilized land or current structures to create dignified, attainable housing for low- and moderate-income households. They are a counterpoint to more restrictive zoning practices often labeled as “Not in My Backyard” (NIMBY).

“We are happy to see this effort move forward in the legislature,” Mingus said. “We hope it will be one piece to solving the broader puzzle of housing affordability across our state.”

Another issue of interest to the ICC and many of its allies for years—restricting access to social media for children and teens—hit a roadblock in this year’s General Assembly. Language that would have prohibited anyone in Indiana younger than 14 to have a social media account and requiring anyone between age 14 and 18 to have parental consent was removed from a broader education measure, Senate Bill 199.

Mingus said that he believes there is strong bipartisan support for efforts like these despite this year’s outcome.

“The question is how to get it done,” he said. “But we are very supportive of getting this across the finish line one day.”

In addition, the ICC is following Senate Bill 182, which aims to define gender in state statute as male or female. The measure passed the Senate and is now under consideration in the House.

“Conceptually, it’s something we are supportive of because it aligns with our God-given understanding of our Christian anthropology,” Mingus said.

This is a short, non-budget-year session of the Indiana General Assembly, made even shorter by the legislature convening a month early in December to consider redrawing the state’s congressional maps—an effort that stalled. The legislative session is set to conclude by the end of February.

“We are grateful for the many positive developments in this session that advance the dignity of the human person and protect the common good,” Mingus said. “We will continue to monitor and oppose those bills that do not align with those principles.”

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

(Victoria Arthur, a member of St. Matthew the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis, is a correspondent for The Criterion.) †



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—Alexander Mingus, executive director of the Indiana Catholic Conference