

The

Criterion

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Christ the Cornerstone

Holy Week invites us to walk with Jesus in hope, page 5.

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Christy Schmeckebier of St. Charles Borromeo School in Bloomington has been chosen as this year's recipient of the Saint Theodore Excellence in Education Award, the highest honor the archdiocese gives a Catholic school educator. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

Dad's miracle, cross-country bike ride and a child's garden help teacher to serve God

By John Shaughnessy

BLOOMINGTON—There was a time in her life when Christy Schmeckebier measured success by her accomplishments.

She competed in the Little 500 bicycle race at Indiana University in Bloomington.

She rode a bike 3,300 miles across the United States one summer—averaging 80 miles a day—to raise funds for the American Lung Association.

She also was selected for the prestigious Lilly Endowment Teacher Creativity Fellowship Award.

"These were tangible achievements, easily measured and celebrated," she notes. "Now, my perspective has changed. My biggest accomplishments are more about everyday acts of service and faith. They involve waking up each day ready to serve the person in front of me and saying 'yes' when opportunities arise to be a vessel of God's love and grace."

That's why there is something different for her about the latest honor she has received—being chosen as this year's recipient of the Saint Theodore Excellence in Education Award, the highest honor the archdiocese gives an educator.

"I'm grateful and humbled by it," says Schmeckebier

See TEACHER, page 8

Jerusalem patriarchate cancels Palm Sunday procession, postpones chrism Mass amid war

JERUSALEM (OSV News)—The Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem said wartime restrictions have forced the cancellation or postponement of key Holy Week observances, urging

the faithful to remain united in prayer despite the inability to gather for traditional celebrations.

Among the most significant changes is the cancellation of the traditional Palm Sunday procession from the Mount of Olives into



Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa

Jerusalem, an event that commemorates Jesus' entry into the city and typically draws thousands of participants.

"The traditional Palm Sunday procession, which goes up to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives, is canceled," a March 22 statement by Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Latin patriarch of Jerusalem, said. "It will be replaced by a moment of prayer for the city of Jerusalem, at a location to be determined."

The statement said the ongoing conflict has disrupted customary Lenten practices in Jerusalem, including

communal observances at some of Christianity's holiest sites.

"Due to the war, this year we were unable to experience the traditional Lenten journey in Jerusalem, with the solemn celebrations at the Holy Sepulcher and in the Holy Places of the Passion," the statement said. "Though we were able to pray and prepare personally, we felt the loss of the

See JERUSALEM, page 9

Pope appeals for peace, page 3.

Memories of a marriage in the season of Lent

(Editor's note: We asked readers to share stories, ideas and acts of joy that brought them closer to Christ and others during a previous Lent. Here is one such story.)

By John Shaughnessy

There are moments of joy that stand out in the life of a couple. And one of the best in the 26-year marriage of Elinor and Tim "Mike" Murphy occurred during the season of Lent for several years—back in the days when they lived in Illinois.

"The church we attended in Illinois had a play that ran for two weeks. It was about the death of Christ and his rising from the dead. It was titled, *The Messiah*," recalls Mike Murphy, now a member of Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ Parish in Indianapolis.

See MEMORIES, page 8

Photo: Tim "Mike" Murphy and his wife Elinor share a smile during their 26 years of marriage. (Submitted photo)





Father Edward Flanagan, the Irish-born priest who founded Boys Town in Nebraska, talks with a group of boys in this undated photo. Pope Leo XIV declared Father Flanagan, the founder of Boys Town, venerable in recognition of his heroic virtue on March 23. (OSV News photo/courtesy Boys Town)

Pope Leo XIV declares Boys Town founder Father Flanagan venerable

ROME (OSV News)—Pope Leo XIV declared Father Edward Flanagan, the founder of Boys Town, venerable on March 23, recognizing his heroic virtue and moving him one step closer to sainthood.

The pope signed the decree during an audience with Cardinal Marcello Semeraro, prefect of the Vatican Dicastery for the Causes of Saints.

The declaration grants Father Flanagan the title “Venerable.” The next step in his cause would be his beatification, which would come about through a miracle attributed to his intercession. An additional miracle after that would lead to his canonization.

Father Flanagan was born in County Roscommon, Ireland, in 1886 and emigrated to the United States at age 18. He was ordained a priest for the then-Diocese of Omaha, Neb., in 1912, and is best known for founding Boys Town, a home for orphaned and at-risk youth on the outskirts of Omaha.


“Father Flanagan made such

an impression on the hearts of people, Catholic and non-Catholic, that people still speak of him with pride and a sense of reverence, even,” Archbishop Michael G. McGovern, who was installed in Omaha in May 2025, told OSV News on March 23.

“I was always impressed by his courage,” Archbishop McGovern added. “He faced a lot of opposition and yet he kept going forward and really believed in what he was doing, and that made all the difference in the world for these youth, and so we’re very, very proud that his legacy continues. I hope that people get to know him better.”

Father Flanagan started with a rented house and five boys on Dec. 12, 1917, driven by the conviction that every child deserved care, education and love. “There are no bad boys. There is only bad environment, bad training, bad example, bad thinking,” Father Flanagan once said.

What began as a small home grew into a self-governing community west of Omaha, incorporated as a municipality



Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

March 28–April 8, 2026

<p>March 28 – 10 a.m. Archdiocesan Pastoral Council meeting at St. Bartholomew Parish, Columbus</p> <p>March 29 – 10 a.m. Palm Sunday Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis</p> <p>March 31 – 2 p.m. Chrism Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, followed by reception at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center</p> <p>April 2 – 10 a.m. Leadership Team meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center</p> <p>April 2 – 7 p.m. Holy Thursday Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral</p> <p>April 3 – Noon Way of the Cross with Knights of Columbus at American Legion Mall, Indianapolis</p>	<p>April 3 – 3 p.m. Good Friday Service at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral</p> <p>April 4 – 8:45 p.m. Easter Vigil at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral</p> <p>April 7 – 10 a.m. School Mass for Seton Catholic Schools at St. Mary Church, a campus of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, Richmond</p> <p>April 8 – 2 p.m. Virtual Evangelization Summit Planning Team meeting</p> <p>April 8 – 7 p.m. Confirmation Mass for the youths of St. Jude Parish, Indianapolis at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral</p>
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in 1934. Boys Town today includes a campus of group homes, a grade school and high school, a post office and bank, a national research hospital and a national hotline for children in crisis.

Father Flanagan became widely known to American audiences after actor Spencer Tracy portrayed him in the 1938 film *Boys Town*. His reputation extended far beyond Nebraska; following World War II, Gen. Douglas MacArthur invited him to visit Japan and Korea to advise on improving conditions for children in occupied territories.

He later traveled to Austria and Germany on a similar mission, and in 1946 he publicly condemned the treatment of children in Irish industrial schools and reformatories, a critique that a 2009 Irish government report would later vindicate.

Father Flanagan died of a heart attack on May 15, 1948, in Berlin, at age 61, while on a government-sponsored mission to assess child welfare conditions in occupied Germany. His body was repatriated and about 30,000 people paid their respects in the two days before his burial.

“The work will continue, you see, whether I am there or not, because it is God’s work, not mine,” Father Flanagan said.

His cause for sainthood was formally opened in 2012. Documentation of his life and ministry was submitted to the Vatican in 2015, and a detailed account of his virtues was presented to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints in 2019.

In the same decree, Pope Leo XIV also recognized the “offering of life” of Italian Cardinal Ludovico Altieri, bishop of Albano, who died in 1867, and declared four others venerable.

—Father Henri Caffarel, a French diocesan priest born in Lyon in 1903, was among those declared venerable. He founded the “Teams of Our Lady” in Paris in the late 1930s, a Catholic lay movement centered on married spirituality that brings together Christian couples seeking to deepen the graces of the sacrament of marriage. Now active in 75 countries, the movement grew out of informal monthly gatherings Caffarel held with married couples in a Paris parish. He died in Beauvais in 1996.

—Giuseppe Castagnetti was an Italian layman, father of 12 children and politician from Modena who served as mayor of Prignano sulla Secchia from 1945 to 1959. He became widely known for his austere spiritual life and his close relationship with St. Pio of Pietrelcina, popularly known as Padre Pio, who served as his spiritual director and before whom he pledged to wear sandals for the rest of his life. Castagnetti later joined Catholic Action and the Third Order of St. Francis. He died in 1965 and was praised for his expression of Christian virtue in ordinary life.

—Sister Stanisława Samulowska, born Barbara Samulowska in present-day Poland in 1865, entered the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul and devoted nearly her entire religious life to missionary work in Guatemala, where she served for 54 years until her death in Guatemala City in 1950.

—Sister María of Bethlehem of the Heart of Jesus Romero Algarín, born María Dolores in Seville, Spain, in 1916, was a professed religious of the Congregation of the Handmaids of the Divine Heart. She died in Sanlúcar la Mayor in 1977. †

SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral and Archabbey Church of Our Lady of Einsiedeln announce Easter liturgies

The Easter liturgical schedules for SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., in Indianapolis, and the Archabbey Church of Our Lady of Einsiedeln of Saint Meinrad Archabbey, 200 Hill Dr., in St. Meinrad, are as follows:

SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral
 —April 4, Holy Saturday—8:45 p.m. Easter Vigil at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral. Livestreaming not available.
 —April 5, Easter Sunday—10 a.m. Mass, available via livestream at ssppc.org/streaming.

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Church of Our Lady of Einsiedeln
 Times listed below for Easter services are Central Time. All services at the archabbey will be livestreamed at saintmeinrad.org/live.
 —April 4 Holy Saturday—5 p.m. vespers, 8 p.m. Easter Vigil
 —April 5, Easter Sunday—10:30 a.m. Easter Mass During the Day, 5 p.m. vespers.
 For the Easter liturgical schedules of other religious communities or parishes in the archdiocese, contact their offices. †



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Pope Leo XIV pleads for a path to peace in the Middle East

(OSV News)—As the U.S./Israel-Iran war entered its fourth week, and amid a deep humanitarian crisis throughout the region, Pope Leo XIV appealed during his Sunday *Angelus* prayer on March 22: “Persevere in prayer, so that hostilities may cease and paths of peace may finally open up, based on sincere dialogue and respect for the dignity of every human person.”



Pope Leo XIV

He said he continues to follow “with dismay” the situation in the Middle East, “which like other regions of the world is torn apart by war and violence.”

“We cannot remain silent in the face of the suffering of so many people—defenseless victims of these conflicts,” Pope Leo underlined. “What wounds them wounds all of humanity. The death and pain caused by these wars are a scandal for the entire human family, and a cry that rises to God.”

According to The Associated Press, President Donald J. Trump on the following day said that Iran “wants to

make a deal” to end the war and that talks were held on March 22 with an Iranian leader. Iran denied that such talks took place, while Pakistan’s prime minister has offered to “facilitate meaningful and conclusive talks” to end the war.

With Holy Week approaching, the pope called the faithful to move beyond the “tombs” of materialism and selfishness to embrace the Church’s promise of eternal life, inviting them to “relive the events of the Lord’s passion—the entry into Jerusalem, the Last Supper, the trial, the crucifixion, the burial—so that we may grasp their most authentic meaning and open ourselves to the gift of grace they contain.”

Christ’s grace, Pope Leo said, “illuminates this world, which seems to constantly search for novelty and change, even at the cost of sacrificing important things—time, energy, values, affections—as if fame, material goods, entertainment and fleeting relationships could fill our hearts or make us immortal.”

It is a symptom of a “longing for the infinite that each of us carries within us,” the pope said, “a need that cannot be satisfied by passing things.”

“Nothing finite can quench our inner thirst, for we are made for God, and we find no peace until we rest in him,” he continued, paraphrasing a famous line from St. Augustine’s *Confessions*.

Drawing on the Gospel story of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead, Pope Leo encouraged believers to “come out” of spiritual emptiness, live renewed lives marked by hope and love, and “free our hearts from habits, conditioning and ways of thinking which, like boulders, shut us away in the tombs of selfishness, materialism, violence and superficiality.”

In these places “there is no life,” Pope Leo said, “but only confusion, dissatisfaction and loneliness.”

With Jesus crying “Come out,” he urges people to “emerge from these cramped spaces, renewed by his grace, to walk in the light of love as new women and men capable of hoping and loving, without calculation and without measure, according to the model of his infinite charity,” the pope said, before greeting athletes running the Roman marathon.

“May sport pave paths of peace, social inclusion and spirituality,” he said. †

Reminder: Lenten podcast series wraps up with powerful Holy Week reflections

Criterion staff report

As we enter the final days of Lent, the archdiocese encourages the faithful to revisit “Seeing Through the Heart of Jesus,” the six-episode Lenten series on Archindy Vox, the archdiocesan podcast, which is available on Spotify. Introduced on Ash Wednesday, the series helps listeners reflect on Catholic social teaching as a lived spirituality shaping daily relationships, prayer and discipleship.

This week’s concluding episode, “Seeing the Paschal Mystery Through the Heart of Jesus,” focuses on Holy Week. Discover more about the liturgy of this most sacred time in the Church and how worship shapes the way we live and love.

For those who haven’t yet tuned in—or may have missed a week or two—now is the perfect time to catch up.

Episode refresher

Episode 1: Seeing All in the Image and Likeness of God

Guests include Theresa Chamblee, director of social concerns for Catholic Charities, and Deacon Kerry Blandford, parish life coordinator of St. Andrew the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis

and archdiocesan director of deacon formation, who focus on the dignity of the human person and invite listeners into a renewed Lenten posture of interior conversion.

Episode 2: Seeing Mercy Through the Heart of Jesus

Guests are Father Joseph Moriarty, pastor of St. Luke the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis, and Yadira Villatoro, administrator of religious education at St. Anthony Parish in Indianapolis, who reflect on reconciliation as healing and restoration rooted in Christ’s mercy.

Episode 3: Seeing Relationship Through the Heart of Jesus

Guests Ken Ogorek, executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Evangelizing Catechesis, and Kristina Seipel, director of discipleship and catechesis at Holy Family Parish in New Albany, explore prayer as a simple, daily relationship with Jesus that forms us to love others well.

Episode 4: Seeing Stillness Through the Heart of Jesus

Guests include Sandi Patel, director of the archdiocesan Office of Retreat and Renewal Ministry and Our Lady of

Fatima Retreat House in Indianapolis, and Tim Rathz, assistant director of operations at Fatima, who highlight the importance of quiet retreat and rest as spaces for listening to God.

Episode 5: Seeing Generosity Through the Heart of Jesus

Guests include Roarke LaCoursiere, associate director of the Indiana Catholic Conference in Indianapolis, and Jennifer Tames, assistant agency director for Catholic Charities Terre Haute, who invite listeners to see almsgiving and stewardship as expressions of trust and compassion.

Episode 6: Seeing the Paschal Mystery Through the Heart of Jesus

Guests Andrew Motyka, director of

archdiocesan and cathedral liturgical music, and Rita Lwin, coordinator of Burmese ministry for St. Pius X Parish in Indianapolis, invite listeners to walk with Jesus through the cross and into new life. Learn more about this most sacred time in the Catholic Church that commemorates the final week of Jesus’ life, culminating in his passion, death and resurrection—the sacred triduum—and how to bring the Resurrection into one’s everyday life.

All six episodes of “Seeing Through the Heart of Jesus” can be streamed on the archdiocese’s Spotify channel at archindy.org/archindyvox.

As Holy Week approaches, consider listening to the final episode—and letting this series accompany the end of your Lenten journey into Easter joy. †

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Editorial



Jim Caviezel portrays Christ with his cross in a scene from the 2004 movie *The Passion of the Christ*. (OSV News photo/Philippe Antonello, Icon Productions)

Jesus Christ should be our king during this special time of year

We're in the midst of a special time, a yearly occurrence that brings millions of people together from all walks of life.

The young, middle-aged and seniors are part of it. The event draws people from all cultures and ethnicities, focusing on the annual gathering which culminates usually in March or April, depending on how the calendar falls.

If you're thinking Holy Week leading to the passion, death and resurrection of Christ at Easter, think again.

We believe, sadly, that the National Collegiate Athletic Association's (NCAA) men's basketball championship is the most popular occurrence this time each year.

Not to be outdone, the women's NCAA basketball championship has garnered its legions of fans—in the millions as well—where people come together to root for their favorite teams through what has become known as March Madness.

There are office pools, online competitions and friendly wagers among family and friends, but should they take priority over what our liturgical calendar offers us?

We understand that there are lifetime ties for those of us in Indiana, where basketball has been “king” for well more than a century. From generation to generation, families have passed on their love of the game.

But as people of faith, we understand that basketball isn't the “king” that can lead us to eternal life.

We live in a secular society, but we believe—especially at this time of year—that faith gives us eyes to see and that the cross is the means of our sanctification.

We know that Jesus Christ, who suffered the agony of all agonies by selflessly dying on a cross to forgive our sins, is the king who leads us on the road to salvation and eternal life.

As we approach Holy Week, let us remember it is a special time for us as Catholics.

We are only days away from Easter, the chief feast in the liturgical calendars of all Christian Churches.

As we mark the triduum, we are part

of the crowd that calls for Jesus to be nailed to a tree. We must pray humbly and earnestly that, in his mercy, God will forgive us.

The triduum also leads from the upper room, where Jesus celebrated the Last Supper with his Apostles; to Calvary, where Jesus gave his life for us; to the empty tomb that showed forth his glorious resurrection.

We celebrate this paschal mystery on Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday. And it is during the Easter Vigil on Saturday night that tens of thousands—including many in the archdiocese—will be received into the full communion of the Church.

Catechumens—people not yet baptized—will be baptized, confirmed and receive their first Communion at the Easter Vigil. Candidates, who are already baptized Christians, will enter into the full communion of the Church by making a profession of faith, being confirmed and receiving their first Communion.

As believers who emulate Christ's example of hospitality, we know other Church members will offer a warm welcome to our new brothers and sisters in Christ, who are joining us on the journey to the kingdom this weekend.

We understand that we are all disciples of Jesus and members of the body of Christ. We must also remember that our mission in life includes evangelization—bearing witness to the message and work of Christ so that others may believe in him.

The Catholic Church has been criticized for various things through the years, but one thing we do right is build community.

As we approach Holy Week, let us put our basketball brackets aside and focus on what's truly important this time of year.

Whether it's March or April—or any part of the calendar year—as stewards of the living God, may we be his instruments on Earth and help share Christ's mission of salvation in our parish and in our world.

—Mike Krokos

Reflection/John Shaughnessy

First impressions of a friend, lasting impressions of our God

The name plate on the receptionist's desk reflected a touch of wisdom.

It also made me smile.

“Director of First Impressions”



One of the reasons I smiled was because it reminded me of one of my favorite experiences connected to a first impression—the beginning of my friendship with the late Irish musician and singer Joe Wilson.

Just seconds after I met Joe for the first time, he challenged me to the depths of my Irish roots. He made the offer before I even settled into a chair inside his house, where I had come years ago as a young writer.

The mischief danced in Joe's eyes as he leaned toward me and said, “I have a fine bottle of Irish whiskey that can't be bought here in the States. And it's the last bottle I have. Would you like a drink?”

Before I could answer, Joe winked and whispered, “Of course, once we take off the cork, we throw it away!”

As I considered the offer to drink a whole bottle of fine Irish whiskey with Joe, I also imagined the condition I would be in if I accepted his offer. I'd have to explain to my family, my bosses and the police that the reason I was missing for two days was because I had spent that time passed out in Joe's music room.

That image made me politely decline Joe's offer. Yet even though I didn't accept it, I did take away something far more lasting. I mean, here was someone I had never met before and within minutes, he was offering me the best he had to give.

That moment led to our friendship. And my lasting impression of Joe is that he made my life richer by knowing him.

At the same time, we know our first impressions of others and their first impressions of us haven't always been positive. We also know that first impressions can be deceiving. Then there are the first-impression times when *our* weaknesses blind us from seeing the goodness of the person in front of us.

So it was during Holy Thursday and Good Friday. And have there ever been so many defining first impressions in a whirlwind, world-changing 24 hours?

In meeting Jesus for the first time,

Pilate's fear leads him to wash his hands of Christ's fate. Herod's arrogance makes him view Jesus with contempt. A bloodthirsty crowd shouts for his death. Soldiers gamble for his clothes, never seeing the value of Christ himself. And one of the thieves being crucified next to Christ mocks him.

All *this* for our God who came into the world as one of us to save us.

Add in the scorn of the chief priest, the betrayal by Judas, the denial by Peter, and the abandonment by many of his closest friends, and it's not a stretch to think that the mental and emotional weight of all those reactions was as torturous and life-sapping as the physical pain of the scourging, the carrying of the cross and the nailing of his hands and feet into it.

Of course, a few of the first impressions during that time were poignant. The women of Jerusalem wept for Christ. Veronica showed courage in trying to comfort him. Simon, sometimes portrayed as reluctant at first, stepped up to help, to be there for Christ.

The wonder of it all is that Christ did what he did—and endured all that he suffered—for *everyone*.

Not just for the Simons and Veronicas of the world, our faith tells us, but even for Pilate, Herod, the crowd, the soldiers, the chief priest and Judas.

And even for us with our fear, our arrogance, our indifference, our denial, our weaknesses of spirit and heart.

On Holy Thursday and Good Friday, we will remember a time when the world turned away from Christ, when most of the choices and the first impressions that humanity made were far from compassion and love.

Yet even as he hung on the cross in excruciating pain, Christ offered his compassion to the good thief.

It's the ultimate first impression, part of Christ's incredible lasting impression on the world. An offer of mercy, forgiveness and love.

Then and now, Christ has made a choice. Instead of walking away from us, he chooses to welcome us, embrace us, lift us, carry us and offer his best to us.

What is the lasting impression we hope to give him in return?

(John Shaughnessy is the assistant editor of *The Criterion*. He can be reached at jshaughnessy@archindy.org.) †

Letter to the Editor

Lent is a time to examine ourselves and draw closer to Jesus, reader says

Lent can be one of those trying times of the year for Catholics. Many of us dread it because of the emphasis on sacrifice and repentance and the idea of “Catholic guilt.”

But the Church in her wisdom put Lent in place specifically for us to examine ourselves and draw closer to Jesus.

When I was an Evangelical, we had nothing like Lent because the idea was that we were already “saved,” and

nothing further was required—ever.

The Catholic idea of “saved” seems far more involved and requires a daily living of the idea.

So enjoy the fish fries, but with humility do work on yourself and become a better disciple.

**Sonny Shanks
Corydon**

Letters Policy

Letters from readers are published in *The Criterion* as part of the newspaper's commitment to “the responsible exchange of freely-held and expressed opinion among the People of God” (*Communio et Progressio*, 116).

Letters from readers are welcome and every effort will be made to include letters from as many people and representing as many viewpoints as possible. Letters should be informed, relevant, well-expressed and temperate in tone. They must reflect a basic sense of courtesy and respect.

The editors reserve the right to select

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

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

ARCHBISHOP/ARZOBISPO CHARLES C. THOMPSON



Christ the Cornerstone

Holy Week invites us to walk with Jesus in hope

This weekend, we celebrate Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord which begins the holiest week in the Church's liturgical calendar. Holy Week invites us to walk with Jesus, to follow in his footsteps, and to accompany him on the Way of the Cross. This is a great privilege that we should not take for granted.

To walk with Jesus means sharing in his short-lived triumph on Palm Sunday (Mt 21:1-11), which must have been a bittersweet moment for him knowing that less than a week later the same crowd that shouted "Hosanna!" would call for his crucifixion. It also means recalling the consolation that Jesus received six days earlier when he had dinner with his friends Mary, Martha and Lazarus (Jn 12:1-11) and was forcefully reminded that God alone has power over life and death.

Accompanying our Lord allows us to witness firsthand his anxiety when Jesus reclining at table with his disciples, was deeply troubled and testified, "Amen, amen, I say to you, one of you will betray me" (Jn 13:21). Certainly, we will join the rest of Jesus' disciples, who were deeply distressed

to hear him talk about being betrayed by one of them, and we will protest: "Surely it is not I, Lord?"

These are the Gospel readings for the first days of Holy Week, and if we are attentive, and truly want to walk with Jesus, we cannot help but share in his emotions—both positive and negative—as he completes his life's journey and fulfills the mission entrusted to him by his Father.

Holy Week invites us to ask ourselves how we would feel if we were present with him during the days that led up to his his passion, death and resurrection. More importantly, it challenges us to think seriously about our responsibilities as missionary disciples of Jesus Christ called to share this miraculous story of hope with others.

The reading of the passion narrative (Mt 26:14-27:66) is the high point of the Palm Sunday liturgy. The emotions generated by this reading are the exact opposite of the Gospel that begins the day's celebration. This is the story of our Lord's freely accepted humiliation, cruel suffering and undeserved execution as a common criminal and a blasphemous religious

outcast. Those who only days before shouted their joyful words of praise now demand Jesus's crucifixion—the Romans' most hideous form of capital punishment.

How do we who are following in Jesus' footsteps react to this familiar but horrifying story? Do we take it for granted or do we find ourselves outraged at the cruelty and injustice we are witnessing?

If we look to Jesus, we cannot help but wonder at his reactions. He does not loudly protest or actively resist the actions of the religious and secular authorities. He submits freely, and he humbly accepts the fact that what is taking place is God's will.

The Church helps us to understand the Lord's attitude by quoting from the prophet Isaiah (50:4-7):

The Lord God has given me a well-trained tongue, that I might know how to speak to the weary a word that will rouse them. Morning after morning he opens my ear that I may hear; and I have not rebelled, have not turned back. I gave my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who plucked my beard; my face I did not shield from buffets and spitting. The Lord God is

my help; therefore I am not disgraced; I have set my face like flint, knowing that I shall not be put to shame. (Is 50:4-7)

Jesus is not disgraced by the disgraceful actions of his oppressors. In fact, he gives personal witness to his powerful teaching: "Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called children of God" (Mt 5:9).

We who are following Jesus on the Way of the Cross are challenged to have the same attitude as he did. We must not tolerate cruelty or injustice and, as missionary disciples, our whole lives should be dedicated to building a just and peace-filled world. But we also do not respond to violence or injustice in kind. We do not seek revenge ("an eye for an eye"). Nor do we "shield our faces from buffets and spitting."

Holy Week invites us to walk with Jesus, to live and die as he did, in the confident hope that his resurrection from the dead—which we know will take place as the culmination of this year's Paschal Triduum—will bring us everlasting joy.

Let's have a blessed Holy Week and not hesitate to walk with Jesus in confidence and hope! †



Cristo, la piedra angular

La Semana Santa nos invita a caminar con Jesús en la esperanza

Este fin de semana celebramos el Domingo de Ramos, que da inicio a la semana más santa del calendario litúrgico. Estos siete días nos invitan a caminar con Jesús, a seguir sus pasos y a acompañarle en el Vía Crucis. Es un gran privilegio que no debemos dar por sentado.

Caminar con Jesús significa compartir su efímero triunfo del Domingo de Ramos (Mt 21:1-11), que debió de ser para Él un momento agriado al saber que, menos de una semana después, la misma multitud que gritaba "¡Hosanna!" pediría su crucifixión. Significa también recordar el consuelo que Jesús recibió seis días antes, cuando cenó con sus amigos María, Marta y Lázaro (Jn 12:1-11) y recibió un recordatorio contundente de que solo Dios tiene poder sobre la vida y la muerte.

Acompañar a nuestro Señor nos permite ser testigos de primera mano de su angustia cuando, reclinado a la mesa con sus discípulos, se turbó profundamente y declaró: "En verdad, en verdad os digo que uno de vosotros me entregará" (Jn 13:21). Sin duda, nos uniremos al resto de sus discípulos, que se sintieron profundamente afectados al escuchar que sería traicionado por uno de los

suyos, y protestaremos: "¿Acaso soy yo, Señor?"

Estas son las lecturas de los primeros días de la Semana Santa. Si estamos atentos y queramos de verdad caminar con Jesús, no podemos dejar de compartir sus emociones—positivas y negativas—mientras recorre el itinerario de su vida y cumple la misión que le encomendó el Padre.

La Semana Santa nos invita a preguntarnos cómo nos sentiríamos si hubiéramos estado presentes con Él durante los días que precedieron a su pasión, muerte y resurrección. Y, más importante aún, nos desafía a reflexionar con seriedad sobre nuestra responsabilidad como discípulos misioneros de Jesucristo llamados a compartir con los demás esta milagrosa historia de esperanza.

La proclamación del relato de la Pasión (Mt 26:14-27:66) es el momento culminante de la liturgia del Domingo de Ramos. Las emociones que suscita son exactamente las opuestas a las del Evangelio con que comienza la celebración. Esta es la historia de la humillación libremente aceptada, el cruel sufrimiento y la ejecución inmerecida de nuestro Señor como si fuera un delincuente común y un marginalizado religioso. Quienes

apenas días antes gritaban jubilosas palabras de alabanza exigen ahora la crucifixión de Jesús, la forma más horrenda de pena capital en el mundo romano.

¿Cómo reaccionamos nosotros, que seguimos los pasos de Jesús, ante esta historia conocida pero estremecedora? ¿La damos por sentada o nos indignamos ante la crueldad y la injusticia que presenciamos?

Si miramos a Jesús, no podemos dejar de asombrarnos ante sus reacciones. No protesta en voz alta ni se opone activamente a las acciones de las autoridades religiosas y civiles. Se entrega libremente y acepta con humildad que lo que está ocurriendo es la voluntad de Dios.

La Iglesia nos ayuda a comprender la actitud del Señor citando al profeta Isaías (Is 50:4-7):

El Señor Yahvé me ha dado una lengua avezada, que sabe decir al cansado palabras de aliento. Muy temprano despierta mi oído para escuchar, como los discípulos. El Señor Yahvé me ha abierto el oído, y no me resistí, ni me hice atrás. Ofrecí mi espalda a los golpes, mi cara a los que mesaban mi barba. Y no hurté mi rostro a insultos y salivazos. Pero el Señor Yahvé me ayuda, por eso no sentía

los insultos; y ofrecí mi cara como el pedernal, sabiendo que no quedaría defraudado. (Is 50:4-7)

Jesús no se avergüenza ante las deplorables acciones de sus opresores. De hecho, da testimonio personal de su propia enseñanza: "Bienaventurados los que trabajan por la paz, porque ellos serán llamados hijos de Dios" (Mt 5:9).

Quienes seguimos a Jesús en el Vía Crucis tenemos el desafío de cultivar la misma actitud que Él. No debemos tolerar la crueldad ni la injusticia y, como discípulos misioneros, toda nuestra vida ha de estar orientada a construir un mundo justo y lleno de paz. Pero tampoco respondemos a la violencia o a la injusticia con la misma moneda: no buscamos la venganza ("ojo por ojo"), ni apartamos el rostro de los "insultos y salivazos."

La Semana Santa nos invita a caminar con Jesús, a vivir y morir como Él, con la esperanza confiada de que su resurrección—que sabemos tendrá lugar como culminación del Triduo Pascual—nos traerá la alegría eterna.

¡Que tengamos una Semana Santa llena de bendiciones, y que no dudemos en caminar con Jesús en confianza y esperanza! †

Events Calendar

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

Every Wednesday:

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.

March 30

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Leave the Light On**, 9 a.m.-7 p.m., sacrament of reconciliation, no appointment needed. Information: 317-545-7681, lcoons@archindy.org.

April 1

MCL Cafeteria, 5520 Castleton Corner Lane, Indianapolis. **Solo Seniors**, 5:30-8:30 p.m., Catholic, educational, charitable and social singles—separated, widowed or divorced—age 50 and older, new members welcome, Indianapolis St. Vincent de Paul president Paul Ainsley presenting, also call about regular Friday 1 p.m. lunch events. Information: 317-796-8605.

April 2

Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St.,

Indianapolis. **Simple Soup and Bread Luncheon**, 11:45 a.m.-1 p.m., fundraiser for Catholic Charities Crisis Office, \$15, register online or pay cash at the door. Information, registration: 317-236-1411, cbush@archindy.org, tinyurl.com/ccsoupbread26.

April 3

University Park, 325 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **Way of the Cross with Archbishop Charles C. Thompson**, noon, meet on E. Vermont St. across from Indiana War Memorial, sponsored by Knights of Columbus.

Church of the Immaculate Conception, 1 Sisters of Providence., Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Way of the Cross for Justice**, 10:30-11:30 a.m. Information: Events.SistersofProvidence.org, 812-535-2952, provctr@spsmw.org.

April 5

Providence Spirituality and Conference Center, O'Shaughnessy Dining Hall, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Easter Buffet Breakfast or Lunch**, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. breakfast, 12:30-2:30 p.m. lunch, \$30 ages 11 and older, \$15 ages 3-10,

ages 2 and younger free, purchase tickets in advance by March 27. Information, registration: Events.SistersofProvidence.org, 812-535-2946, lrobinette@spsmw.org.

April 11

Avon United Methodist Church, 6850 E US Highway 36, Avon. **Stephen Ministries 50th Anniversary Celebration and Learning Event**, 8-4 p.m., \$15 includes light breakfast and snacks, additional box lunch is \$12. Information, registration: stephenministries.org/celebrateIND.

St. Michael the Archangel Parish, Parish Life Center, 3354 W. 30th St., Indianapolis. **Euchre Tournament**, doors open at 5:30 p.m., games start 6:30 p.m., must be 21 or older, cash prizes, 50/50, food and beverages available for purchase, \$10, register by April 4. Information, registration: tinyurl.com/stmichaeleuchre26, events@saintmichaelindy.org.

April 14

Church of the Immaculate Conception, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Taizé Prayer at the Woods**, 7-8 p.m., silent and spoken prayers, simple music, silence, virtual

option available. Information, livestream link: Taize.SistersofProvidence.org, 812-535-2952.

April 16

The Galt House, 140 N 4th St, Louisville, Ky. **St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities of New Albany "Giving Hope-Changing Lives" Annual Gala Fundraiser**, 5:30 p.m. doors open, dinner 7 p.m., client testimonials, live auction. Information, RSVP: 812-949-7305, info@stcharities.org.

April 17

Liter House, 5301 Winthrop Ave. Indianapolis. **Catholic Business Exchange**, rosary 6:35 a.m., Mass 7 a.m., buffet breakfast and program following, presenter TBD, \$20 members, \$25 non-members. Register by 4 p.m. April 14. Information, registration: cutt.ly/CBE-Reg.

April 18

Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. **Called to Community Women's Breakfast**, 7:30-11 a.m., sponsored by Confraternity of Christian Mothers, Mass at 7:30 a.m. followed by hot catered breakfast and full espresso bar, speaker and craft activity, \$15, register by April 4. Information, registration: 317-752-5172.

April 17-19

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Young Adult Retreat**, Benedictine Father Simon Herrmann presenting, for ages 18-35, \$50 single, \$100 double. Registration: 812-357-6611, saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

April 20-24

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Priest Retreat: Faith Stories from the Gospel of Matthew**, Benedictine Father Eugene Hensell presenting, \$625. Registration: 812-357-6611, saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

May 1-3

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Women Carrying the Light of Christ: Past and Present**, women's retreat, Dr. Kimberly Baker presenting, \$350 single, \$550 double. Registration: 812-357-6611, saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

May 12

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Day of Silence**, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., \$55, includes room, lunch, Mass and use of common areas and grounds, overnight stay available for additional \$42, dinner additional \$14.40. Registration: fm.retreatportal.com/events, 317-545-7681, lcoons@archindy.org.

May 13

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

Sisters of Providence grounds, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Earth Day Festival**, 11 a.m.-3 p.m., nature shows, craft activities, face-painting, hayrides, nature trail hikes, alpaca yoga spinning, weaving and felting demonstrations, alpaca visits, food vendors, live entertainment, free admission but donations accepted. Information: 812-535-2946, Events.SistersofProvidence.org, lrobinette@spsmw.org.

St. Joan of Arc Parish, 4217 Central Ave., Indianapolis. **Holy Flirtation: Speed Dating Event**, 1:30-5:10 p.m., includes catered dinner with wine, 12 six-minute speed dates, time for mingling, all invited to 5:30 p.m. Mass, \$35 plus \$1.92 online processing fee. Information, registration: tinyurl.com/HolyFlirtation3.

April 19

Crane Bay Event Center, 551 W. Merrill St., Indianapolis. **Light in the City Gala**, 4-9 p.m., dinner and silent auction event benefitting Lumen Christi Catholic School, includes cocktail hour, dessert dash, raffle, speaker, award presentation, \$125. Information: 317-632-3174, cdillon@lumenchristischool.org.

Fatima Feast Day Evening of Reflection, 5-8 p.m., spiritual director at the Milwaukee Archdiocesan Seminary and Fatima expert Jesuit Father James Kubick presenting, freewill donations accepted. Registration: 317-545-7681, fm.retreatportal.com/events, lcoons@archindy.org.

May 15-17

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Being "Eucharistic" People**, Benedictine Father Adrian Burke presenting, \$350 single, \$550 double. Registration: 812-357-6611, saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

May 16

Mother of the Redeemer Retreat Center, 8220 W. State Road 48, Bloomington. **The Broken Mary Project**, 9 a.m.-5:15 p.m., former radio broadcaster Kevin Matthew presenting, \$65, includes lunch. Information, registration: 812-825-4642, ext. 1, motheroftheredeemer.com.

May 22-24

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Healing Loneliness**, Benedictine Brother Zachary Wilberding presenting, \$350 single, \$550 double. Registration: 812-357-6611, saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

May 27

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Heart on Fire**, Jane Feliz Rush presenting, \$75 single, \$150 double.

April 20

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.

April 23

St. Alphonsus Liguori Parish Hall, 1870 W. Oak St., Zionsville, Ind. (Diocese of Lafayette). **Boone County Right to Life Banquet**, 6:30 p.m., dinner, speaker will address issues and ethics of IVF and embryo adoption, \$40, free tickets for student groups available, register online or mail check by April 10. Information and registration: boonecountyrighttolife.org, postmaster@boonecountyrighttolife.org. Mail checks to: PO Box 264, Lebanon, IN 46052.

St. Thomas Aquinas Church, 4625 N. Kenwood Ave., Indianapolis. **Race in the Catholic Church**, Notre Dame professor Darren Davis presenting, appetizers, wine, babysitting, free. Information: 317-253-1461, churchinfo@staindy.org.

Retreats and Programs

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

April 10-12

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Into the Ocean of Mercy**, Benedictine Father Kolbe Wolniakowski

presenting, \$350 single, \$550 double. Registration: 812-357-6611, saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

April 17

Oldenburg Franciscan

Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **A Day of Quiet Renewal**, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., \$20, \$80 with spiritual direction. Information, registration: 812-933-6437, oldenburgfranciscancenter.org.

April 17-19

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Young Adult Retreat**, Benedictine Father Simon Herrmann presenting, for ages 18-35, \$50 single, \$100 double. Registration: 812-357-6611, saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

April 20-24

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Priest Retreat: Faith Stories from the Gospel of Matthew**, Benedictine Father Eugene Hensell presenting, \$625. Registration: 812-357-6611, saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

May 1-3

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Women Carrying the Light of Christ: Past and Present**, women's retreat, Dr. Kimberly Baker presenting, \$350 single, \$550 double. Registration: 812-357-6611, saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

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May 27

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Heart on Fire**, Jane Feliz Rush presenting, \$75 single, \$150 double.

Registration: 812-357-6611, saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

May 29-31

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **St. Carlo Acutis Video Gamers Young Adult Retreat**, for young adults ages 18-35, Benedictine Father Simon Herrmann presenting, \$50 single, \$100 double. Registration: 812-357-6611, saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

June 5-7

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **TOBIT Marriage Preparation Weekend**, 7 p.m. Fri.-11:45 a.m. Sun., \$400 per couple, separate rooms, includes meals and materials. Registration: fm.retreatportal.com/events, 317-545-7681, lcoons@archindy.org.

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Spirituality of Liturgical Architecture**, Benedictine Father Lorenzo Penalosa presenting, \$350 single, \$550 double. Registration: 812-357-6611, saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

June 7-10, 11, 12 or 13

Mount St. Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Road, Mt. St. Francis. **Quilters Retreat**, three nights \$500, four nights \$600, five nights \$700, six nights \$800, commuters \$75 per day, \$100 non-refundable deposit required to hold spot, pay in one or two installments. Information, registration: mountsaintfrancis.org/quilters-retreat-1, 812-923-8817. †

Hats Off to Spring luncheon and fashion show on May 6 will benefit Little Sisters of the Poor's St. Augustine Home

The annual Hats Off to Spring luncheon and fashion show will take place at the Ritz Charles, 12156 N. Meridian St., in Carmel, Ind., from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. on May 6.

The event, presented by the St. Augustine Home Guild, is a major fundraising event benefiting the Little Sisters of the Poor's St. Augustine Home for the Aged in Indianapolis.

This year's celebration, themed "Companions on Our Journey," honors the special bond shared by the Guild, the Little Sisters and the residents they lovingly serve. The event will include

a champagne reception, shopping, luncheon and a fashion show presented by Indianapolis clothing store J. McLaughlin.

With the funds raised at this year's event, the Sisters hope to purchase a mobility-accessible vehicle to assist residents traveling to medical appointments. Funds raised beyond the cost of the vehicle will support additional needs of the St. Augustine Home.

The cost is \$65, and the registration deadline is April 15.

To register, call 317-294-1955 or go to tinyurl.com/HOTS2026. †

Deacon John Jacobi will speak at prayer breakfast at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish on April 18

Deacon John Jacobi will speak at a prayer breakfast at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, 1752 Scheller Lane, in New Albany, from 9-11 a.m. on April 18.

Deacon Jacobi will speak on "Purgatory: Purified by God's Love." He ministers at St. Michael Parish in Bradford, St. Bernard in Frenchtown and St. Joseph in Crawford County.

He also serves as archdiocesan associate director of deacon formation.

The prayer breakfast is sponsored by Our Lady of Perpetual Help's ministry of consolation. The event is free, but registration is required by April 13.

For more information or to register, contact Our Lady of Perpetual Help pastoral associate John Fey at 812-945-1647 or jfey@olpna.org. †

From immigrant roots to dynamite blast, Sacred Heart in Clinton survives and serves

By Natalie Hoefler

In the late 1800s, coal was king in Vermillion County, located along the middle of the Indiana's border with Illinois. There were numerous mines, and with them came a need for numerous miners.

It was difficult work. Yet immigrants from Europe flocked to the county seeking employment, bringing their families with them.

They came from Austria, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Russia, Scotland and more. Many of them were Catholics who settled in the town of Clinton.

At first, the Catholics were served as a mission community. But by 1889, their population had grown large enough to found a parish.

A home was converted into a church, and St. Patrick Parish was established in 1891.

But the immigrants and families kept coming. A second church was built in 1894—and outgrown within 14 years.

A third church, designed after Thurles Cathedral in Ireland, was constructed in 1909, and the parish was renamed Sacred Heart.

Nearly 120 years later, the mines have long since closed. But beautiful Sacred Heart Church still stands in Clinton, and the parishioners continue to witness to the faith in their local community.

'Very supportive' of community, each other

Father Joby Puthussery, pastor of Sacred Heart, calls the members of the parish "very supportive" of one another and of the parish's outreach ministries.

"We help the community in different ways, and [the parishioners] support in

whatever ways they can," he says.

"We always have a collection box for donations of food and specific articles requested by a local food pantry. We have a special focus on that at Advent and Lent, but it's there year-round. Every week [the parishioners] fill the basket."

The parish also supports a children's backpack program led by a local Baptist congregation at Christmas time.

Father Puthussery gratefully adds that parishioners are also "happy to support the priests. I'm very happy with the way they take care of their priests. I feel appreciated and needed there. That itself is a great feeling."

Outreach flows from love of Christ, and the parish offers several ways to express and nurture that love.

In keeping with the Sacred Heart devotion, first Fridays of the month are observed with eucharistic adoration from the conclusion of the regular 9 a.m. Mass until noon.

"We also celebrate the feast of the Sacred Heart with adoration and Mass, and then we have a parish dinner," says Father Puthussery.

And every Wednesday the rosary is prayed at the parish's outdoor Marian grotto.

The grotto, commissioned by Sacred Heart's previous pastor Father Varghese Maliakkal, is one feature Father Puthussery suggests visitors see.

He also notes the church's "beautiful, beautiful pictures in the stained-glass windows."

That the 1909 church still stands is a blessing. The same year it was built, there was an attempt to demolish the structure with dynamite.

A Nov. 17, 1909, article in the *Journal and Courier* of Lafayette, Ind., reported that "300 sticks of dynamite, enough to have blown up the neighborhood, were found in different parcels around the church. Most of the fuses had been clumsily set and failed to explode the charges."

The sticks that did explode caused \$1,000 in damage to the front of the church.

There were many guesses as to who was behind the crime—from disgruntled parishioners to angry labor union workers to an Italian mafia ring known as the Black Hand.

More than a century later, the culprits and motive remain a mystery.

'We love having visitors'

Whether or not the mafia existed in Clinton, at the turn of the last century there was an Italian immigrant community large enough that Clinton's northwest area became known as "Little Italy."

That heritage continues today with the city's Little Italy Fest, held annually for four days spanning Labor Day weekend.

"We have our famous Spaghetti Festa each day of the event," says Father Puthussery. "It's a big fundraiser for Sacred Heart."

Since he arrived as pastor in 2020, Father Puthussery has introduced another type of food to the parish: Indian.

"At times, I have conducted a cooking class with an elaborate Indian meal at the parish," says the priest who was ordained in 1999 for the Archdiocese of Imphal, India.

According to parish business manager Cheryl Phelps, "The food is so good—just delicious. He makes food in advance, then he brings a portable stove and shows you how to cook what he made."

And don't worry, says Father

Puthussery, "I make it mild since many people will be there."

The next event will be held at the parish at 6 p.m. on May 8. The \$25 cost includes the meal, a drink and dessert. Reservations are required by May 1 and can be made by calling the parish office (see below).

"If you like Indian food, this is the place to be," Phelps says. You don't want to miss this event, and we love having visitors here."

That invitation extends beyond the event, says Father Puthussery.

"Our parishioners are very proud of Sacred Heart," he says. "A lot of people come during the Little Italy Fest, but we welcome people any time of the year."

(Sacred Heart Parish is located at 610 S. 6th St. in Clinton. For more information, go to parkevermillioncatholicchurches.org. To attend the Indian meal event on May 8, call the parish office at 765-832-8468 by May 1. Mass Excursions is a periodic feature highlighting archdiocesan parishes. View past features at archindy.org/excursions.) †



St. Francis' relics returned to crypt after veneration draws 370,000 pilgrims

(OSV News)—Bells rang out over the hilltop town of Assisi on the night of March 22 as Franciscan friars closed the monthlong public veneration of the remains of St. Francis of Assisi, which drew more than 370,000 pilgrims from around the world to pray before relics of the beloved saint.

Cardinal Matteo Zuppi of Bologna, who is president of the Italian bishops' conference, presided over the closing Mass in the Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi.

"In these extraordinary days, we have experienced moments of profound communion, during which countless men and women have been able to encounter the spirit of St. Francis, finding in him an inexhaustible

source of light and hope in such a difficult time for our world," Cardinal Zuppi said in his homily. "St. Francis takes us by the hand and helps us to look at reality with authentically Christian eyes."

The veneration, which ran from Feb. 22 to March 22, marked the first time in 800 years that the mortal remains of St. Francis had been exposed for an extended public display. It is part of the Catholic Church's yearlong observance of the 800th anniversary of the saint's death in 1226.

Following the Mass, Franciscan friars gathered for a final period of prayer with the relics before they were carried in procession from the basilica's Lower Church to the crypt. Before midnight, the saint's remains were sealed inside a gilded bronze urn along with the documentation required by canon law and placed inside the stone sarcophagus in the crypt of the basilica, where pilgrims can always pray in close proximity to the relics of the saint.

According to statistics released by the basilica, more than 5,000 American pilgrims and nearly 4,000 from Poland were able to venerate the relics, along with pilgrims from more than 40 other countries, including 99 pilgrims from China and nine from Iran.

American mother

Heather Martin was one of the first pilgrims to venerate the relics. "St. Francis is by far the most important saint in my life," she said, calling the experience "utterly life-changing."

Franciscan friars from Brazil, Tanzania, India, South Korea and the Middle East also made the pilgrimage to pray before the founder of their order.

Among those present in Assisi for the closing Mass was Ukrainian Ambassador Andrii Yurash, who attended alongside 70 members of the Ukrainian community in Italy to pray for peace.

"These encounters teach us that a just and genuine peace is not an unrealistic goal," Ambassador Yurash said.

"With the blessing of St. Francis, an eternal symbol of love between peoples, our intentions can become reality."

During the period, more than 170 Masses were celebrated in the upper basilica, attended by more than 100,000 people, including 50 bishops and cardinals.

Franciscan Father Giulio Cesareo, the spokesman for the Basilica of St. Francis in Assisi, said the turnout exceeded his expectations, not only in numbers but in atmosphere.

"I really didn't expect ... the collected and joyful atmosphere that characterized the pilgrimage and veneration in the basilica: silence, patience, cell phones in pockets," he said.

Pope Leo XIV has proclaimed a special Jubilee Year of St. Francis running until Jan. 10, 2027, offering a plenary indulgence to pilgrims who visit Franciscan churches or places of worship connected to the saint.

Franciscan Father Jimmy Zammit of Toronto, now based in Rome as general defensor for the Franciscan order, shared his advice for Catholics who were unable to make the trip to Assisi, but who still want to live out the special Jubilee Year of St. Francis in a particular way.

"If our heart becomes more Franciscan, we become makers of peace," Father Jimmy told OSV News. "We seek out to help those who are less fortunate than we are to help the poor, but also to help those who are suffering because they're feeling isolated and maybe even shunned in some way." †



Franciscan friars kneel in prayer during the final moment of veneration of the relics of St. Francis of Assisi on March 2, in the Lower Church of the Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi in Assisi, Italy. (OSV News photo/courtesy Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi)

TEACHER

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[pronounced Schmeck-a-beer], the science teacher for 6th-, 7th- and 8th-grade students at St. Charles Borromeo School in Bloomington. “You never expect those things.”

Beyond the gifts she shares as a teacher, she has her own flair for the unexpected. It’s there when she choreographs an entertaining dance for the Christmas program, or when she enthusiastically takes part in a staff-versus-students’ tug-of-war, or when she shares one of the deeply personal moments from her life with her students, like the story of the moment involving her dad that she considers a miracle.

The hand of God, the touch of a teacher

“I always share the very first miracle I ever witnessed,” she says. “I was in fourth grade at St. Bartholomew School in Columbus. My dad built houses, and he was building one that day. He had done the blue foam on the exterior of the house, and he was standing on a ladder up near the second floor. The wind began to blow the ladder backward.

“He punched a hole through the foam, to try to hold onto something, but he wasn’t able. The ladder fell backward. They had rebar set for the foundation of a walk-out basement. He landed on a rebar. It went eight inches or so into his back.”

She takes a deep breath before continuing, “I remember the doctor saying that if it had been one centimeter to the right, it would have hit a vital organ and killed him. And if it had been one centimeter to the left, it would have hit his spine and paralyzed him.

“I remember being in the hospital room and my entire extended family was around his hospital bed, praying the rosary. It was such a powerful moment, and I think about the impact my dad has had on the world with his great gift of building homes for people.”

Her colleagues say the 47-year-old teacher has her own ways as a builder—building up students and building community within the school.

“Through hands-on science labs, thoughtful questioning and real-world connections, she inspires her students to explore, imagine and persevere,” wrote Tori Arther, St. Charles’ principal, in

nominating Schmeckebier for the Saint Theodore Award. “Her ability to balance high expectations with genuine support ensures that every child feels capable and confident.”

Fellow middle school teacher Michelle Goetz noted, “Christy embodies the heart of Catholic education. She lifts others up, leads with humility and radiates a joy for teaching that is contagious.”

These qualities shine through during a visit to her classroom and in conversations with her students.

“She’s nice, and she always has fun activities to help us learn,” said Brody Johnson, a sixth-grade student.

Sixth-grader Ellie Ohlrich added, “She really helps us to have a deeper understanding of what we’re learning. And she always makes sure that you’re OK. If something is going wrong, she’ll make sure you’re better.”

The teacher’s gift of compassion is especially evident in two defining moments, including during a time of heartbreak in the St. Charles community.

‘To experience a deep, profound hope’

After 10 years as a Boy Scouts leader, the mother of two sons and a daughter signed up last summer as a volunteer for the No One Dies Alone program at Bloomington Hospital.

“I was with my grandfather, my stepsister and my mother when they took their last breath,” she says. “I just know the value of having someone present because that is such a sacred moment when the soul goes on to the next heavenly realm.”

She also organized a memorial program at St. Charles in December of 2024, in response to several heartbreaking losses the school experienced in a short time.

In 2023, the school community mourned the death of 8-year-old Iris Laughlin, the daughter of the school nurse, Susan Laughlin. In 2024, Braden Urbanski, the oldest son of kindergarten teacher Jennifer Urbanski, died. That same year, Michele Graf, a beloved, long-time preschool teacher and the mother of third-grade teacher Madeline Graf, passed. In 2024, there was also the loss of Vera Miller, the infant of first-grade teacher Amy Miller.

In organizing the memorial program, Schmeckebier viewed it as a reflection of the close-knit community at St. Charles, a

place of “family” where joys and sorrows are shared deeply together.

“It just really helped us all to focus on honoring the gift of our loved ones’ lives and really being grateful to God for the gift of heaven and salvation and the hope we have in Jesus,” she says. “It just really united all of us and gave us a safe place to grieve but also to experience a deep, profound hope.”

That hope is captured in one of Schmeckebier’s favorite places on the school’s campus, Iris’ Garden, named in honor of the 8-year-old girl. It’s a scenic setting for prayer and meditation marked by a statue of the Blessed Mother.

“Hope” is also the gift she strives to share with her students now—and for their future.

“I want them to take away the message that God works through all circumstances,” she says. “He can use pain and suffering for his good and his glory. And I hope they are also inspired by the topics we study, to think about how they can use their gifts in future careers—to go out and serve the world and make a difference.”

She has set that goal for herself, too, a goal that’s reflected in the intriguing ways she is putting her Lilly Endowment Teacher Creativity Fellowship Award into play.

A journey to the heart of God

She used the first half of her fellowship award to travel to Ireland last summer with her father, her stepmother and her three children—a time of faith and family.

In 2000, she had spent eight weeks as a student teacher in Ireland, a setting where, she says, “my initial passion for science education was ignited.”

She wanted to return to the school where she trained, to visit the host family she lived with, and to draw close emotionally to her late mother for the memorable times they shared in Ireland.

There was also the desire to be spiritually renewed, “to pray along the Cliffs of Moher and the shores of Donegal once again.”

And to do it all with her children, Connor, 17, Anna, 15, and Luke, 12.



Christy Schmeckebier shares a family photo with her three children, Connor, left, Anna and Luke. (Submitted photo)

“As the mother of three uniquely different children, I have developed a profound appreciation for the distinct gifts and designs God places in each life,” she says. “One of my greatest accomplishments is raising my children to understand that their worth is not defined by worldly success, but by the fact they are deeply loved and created by God.”

She will use the second half of her fellowship award this summer to travel to France, Germany and Italy. There, she plans to explore historical sites related to several world-changing scientists with Catholic ties, including Galileo, Mercurius and Pasteur.

She views it as “a sacred pilgrimage,” one that “bridges the realms of faith and science by connecting to the legacies of Catholic innovators.”

Combined with her journey to Ireland, she believes both experiences will continue to help her transform the lives of her students.

She already knows that God has transformed her as a teacher, a mother, a person.

“I do not have all the answers or solutions,” she says. “God has taught me to walk humbly with him, praying in adoration, praying the rosary, meditating on his word, and striving to live the life he has called me to live.

“I have learned to persevere and maintain hope even when circumstances fall apart. I hope that my compassion for others and my genuine love for every human being can serve as a light that draws people closer to Christ. I know that I can’t accomplish anything on my own. Yet, as Philippians 4:13 reminds me, ‘I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.’” †



As a science teacher at St. Charles Borromeo School in Bloomington, Christy Schmeckebier often takes advantage of good weather to share lessons with her students in the school’s outdoor learning center. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

Four other educators were finalists for archdiocese’s highest honor for education

While Christy Schmeckebier of St. Charles Borromeo School in Bloomington received this year’s Saint Theodore Excellence in Education Award, the archdiocese’s Office of Catholic Schools also recognized the four other finalists for the highest honor for an educator in the archdiocese.

The four other finalists were:

- Brittney Belt**, a teacher at Pope John XXIII School in Madison.
- Maria Alejandrina Caldera**, a teacher at Holy Spirit School in Indianapolis.
- Sally Meyer**, a teacher at St. Jude School in Indianapolis.
- Kate Vu**, a teacher at St. Gabriel School in Connersville. †

MEMORIES

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“It was very popular, and Elinor financed the entire thing, from start to finish. That play was some time ago, probably 15 years ago. Every Lenten season since then, my thoughts go back to those times when so many people came together to make that play possible and showed the faith of so many people.”

That experience was one more way that Elinor’s faith had an impact on her husband.

“She has always been a faithful woman who accepted Jesus as her Savior and raised very successful children that way. She helped bring Jesus back into my life as well. Although I never lost my faith, she just helped Jesus help me to stay close to him.”

There are moments of love that stand out in a marriage, even in the times when life takes couples to places they never imagined on their wedding day.

“My wife was first treated and analyzed for Alzheimer’s 11 years ago,” Murphy notes. “Being her caregiver for this length of time, I found her faith undisturbed.

“After suffering from this dreaded disease for 10 years, she was admitted into a memory care unit of a local nursing home. She was in the company of others who also suffered from dementia, brought on by Alzheimer’s. Her condition worsened over time, but she was always smiling, a sign of her good will.”

There are moments of both heartbreak and hope in a marriage—and sometimes the two blend in a way that will touch your heart forever.

“On the last day of her life—near the beginning of

Lent this year—I received a call from the home that they were unable to wake her up,” Murphy says. “I spent the afternoon and evening with her, holding her hand and praying. She lay there, breathing deeply.

“As I sat there, someone walked into the room. I believe it was the caseworker. She said to me, ‘Go ahead and talk to her. She can still hear you.’

“So, I did. I reminded her of my love for her and of God’s love as well. I also included a few ‘sweet nothings’ and kissed her cheek. I held her hand again, and I felt her squeeze my hand. I knew then that God was with her, all the way.”

In the midst of another Lent, Murphy thinks of the love and the faith they shared.

“I miss her dearly. She was such a wonderful and beautiful woman, and I thank God for bringing her into my life. God is so great.” †

JERUSALEM

continued from page 1

community journey toward Easter.”

The statement described uncertainty surrounding upcoming Holy Week liturgies—central to the Christian faith and typically drawing large gatherings of pilgrims and local worshippers in Jerusalem.

“Now we ask ourselves about the celebrations of Holy Week, the beating heart of our faith, in Jerusalem and at the Holy Sepulcher,” Cardinal Pizzaballa said, adding the patriarchate remains in communication with civil officials and leaders of other Christian communities to determine what limited observances may still be possible.

“The restrictions imposed by the conflict and the events of recent days do not bode well for any imminent improvement,” the statement said, adding that the situation remains fluid, leaving little room for firm planning.

“The situation is constantly evolving, and it is not possible to provide definitive indications for the days to come; we will therefore be forced to coordinate on a day-to-day basis,” the statement said.

Cardinal Pizzaballa made clear, however, that large, public liturgies will not occur this year: “Ordinary celebrations open to all cannot take place,” the statement said.

The patriarchate’s chrism Mass, during which priests renew their vows and sacred oils are blessed, has also been postponed “to a date to be determined,” and it will be concelebrated “as soon as the situation allows, possibly within the Easter season,” the statement said, noting that “the Dicastery for Divine Worship has already granted the necessary approval.”

Despite the disruptions, churches in

the patriarchate will remain open, and clergy have been instructed to encourage participation in whatever forms are feasible.

The Latin patriarch acknowledged the emotional toll of the situation, describing the inability to celebrate Easter together as an additional burden amid the broader suffering caused by the U.S./Israel-Iran war.

“The harshness of this time of war, which affects us all, today bears the added burden of not being able to celebrate Easter together and with dignity,” the statement said. “This is a wound that adds to the many others inflicted by the conflict.”

Even so, the message urged resilience and perseverance in faith and prayer.

“But we must not allow ourselves to be discouraged. Though we may not gather as we would like, let us not give up prayer,” Cardinal Pizzaballa said.

Israeli authorities closed Jerusalem’s Church of the Holy Sepulcher as part of wider closures for security concerns, beginning on Feb. 28, when Israel and the United States launched attacks against Iran.

A statement from the head of Israel’s Civil Administration confirmed that “all holy sites in the Old City of Jerusalem, including the Western Wall, the Temple Mount and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, will remain closed ... for security reasons in light of the current tensions in the region.”

In a March 21 statement, the Custody of the Holy Land, a Franciscan-led Church ministry that cares for pilgrimage sites in Israel, said the Church of the Holy Sepulcher remains a place of continuous prayer despite restricted access and ongoing uncertainty over Holy Week and Easter, as friars—now praying without the faithful and unsure how long limits will



Catholic tourists from Rome carry a cross along the *Via Dolorosa*, the Way of the Cross, in the Old City of Jerusalem on March 23, 2024, the eve of Palm Sunday and the start of Holy Week. (OSV News photo/Debbie Hill)

last—appealed to Catholics worldwide to unite in prayer for an end to violence and for dialogue and diplomacy to prevail in what they described as a “time of trial.”

The Latin patriarch’s March 22 statement pointed to Scripture for encouragement, recalling Jesus’ exhortation to perseverance.

“This is the time to remember Jesus’ invitation to his disciples: ‘Pray always and do not lose heart’ [Lk 18:1],” it said.

The faithful were encouraged to pray within their homes and religious communities as a substitute for public gatherings.

“We therefore wish to compensate for these limitations with moments of prayer as families and in our religious communities,” the statement said. “I know that prayer is already being practiced everywhere, and I am comforted by the commitment to keeping spiritual tension alive.”

As a sign of unity, Cardinal Pizzaballa proposed a shared day of prayer—March 28—“reciting the rosary to implore the gift of peace and serenity, especially for those suffering because of the conflict,” the statement said.

The appeal emphasized that physical separation does not diminish spiritual unity.

“We will do so with humble hearts, certain that our prayer, even while we are physically distant, is capable of drawing upon the strength of God’s love, which unites us in a spirit of hope and trust,” it said.

“Easter, which we celebrate in the name of Christ’s passion, death and resurrection, reminds us that no darkness, not even that of war, can have the last word,” Cardinal Pizzaballa concluded. “The empty tomb is the seal of the victory of life over hatred, of mercy over sin.” †

Illinois advocates warn against effort to enshrine abortion, gender transition

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (OSV News)—Pro-life advocates on March 19 called on nearly 3,000 marchers at the Illinois State Capitol to oppose a potential amendment that they said would enshrine abortion and gender transitions, including for minors, in the Illinois constitution.

The Illinois Pro-life March highlighted Illinois as the No. 1 destination in the country for out-of-state abortions due to numerous liberal abortion laws that organizers said have left the elective termination of pregnancy mostly unregulated—and therefore risky, should serious complications occur.

“We are in, I would argue, the hardest state in the country right now for abortion” opposition, said Mary Kate Zander, president of Illinois Right to Life, the event’s main organizer, before the march.

Zander said the advocacy group has been demanding transparency from legislators, particularly about amending the state constitution to guarantee so-called “reproductive freedom.”

Illinois lawmakers would have to act on the amendment language by May 5 to put it before voters in November as a referendum.

Pro-life lobbyists have pointed out the passage of controversial bills often happens in the last hours—and even minutes—of legislative or veto sessions, and in unexpected ways, such as using an amendment to replace the text of an innocuous or routine regulatory bill with the controversial bill’s text.

Because of such tactics, “we don’t have the time to fight legislation before it’s enacted,” said Zander, a Catholic.

Illinois Right to Life has expressed concern over the possible constitutional amendment, claiming it would affect all aspects of reproduction, including the altering of one’s sexual organs.

Zander said now was the time to look closely at the issue because Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker is up for re-election in November.

In the inauguration speech for his second term in January 2023, Pritzker stated his opposition to the 2022 U.S. Supreme Court decision on *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization*, which overturned its previous precedent that held abortion as a constitutional right. He called for “constitutional protection for reproductive rights in Illinois.”

“The extremists still want to take away a woman’s right to choose, and I don’t intend to let them,” he said.

Zander said the all-encompassing “reproductive freedom” label would likely mean support for gender transitions, including for minors without parental consent.

Through two Freedom of Information Act requests and a formal complaint with the Illinois Attorney General’s Office, Illinois Right to Life was able to obtain an e-mail that showed state administration officials had discussed the possibility of submitting and putting to a vote “proposed constitutional amendments protecting both reproductive freedom and LGBTQ rights.”

“In Illinois, it’s true that abortion is widely available in our state. We believe that’s why they’ll use this reproductive freedom language, because that’s not just abortion,” Zander said. “It’s sex changes for minors without parental consent. It’s taxpayer-funded sex changes. It’s a whole long list of things that fall into this very vague category.”

“We believe that it’s a violation of the human person’s dignity to try to make a biological change that you ultimately can’t truly, permanently make to the person’s body,” she continued.

In a March 2023 document offering guidance

for Catholic health care institutions on “respecting the fundamental order of the human body,” the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ doctrine committee stated medical interventions that “exchange the sex characteristics of a patient’s body for those of the opposite sex ... do not respect the fundamental order of the human person as an intrinsic unity of body and soul, with a body that is sexually differentiated.”

Peter Breen, executive vice president and head of litigation at Thomas More Society, a major sponsor of the Illinois Pro-life March, told OSV News the Catholic-run public interest firm based in Chicago has tried to keep similar amendments off the ballots in Missouri and Nebraska, but was unsuccessful. But he said he believed those lessons can be brought to bear in Illinois and help voters realize the amendment is not necessary and “does not reflect their deepest held beliefs and values.”

“Here in Illinois, you might have a populace that is, say, moderately pro-choice on abortion, but they are certainly not in favor of some of the more radical initiatives” such as gender transition, Breen said.

Breen also announced during the rally that the Thomas More Society has prepared a lawsuit to fight aspects of Illinois’ physician-assisted suicide law, which is set to take effect in September. He told OSV News it would be filed this spring.

In the rally’s opening prayer, Bishop Thomas J. Paprocki of Springfield invoked the intercession of St. Joseph as “protector of the Holy Family” on his March 19 feast day.

He told the crowd not to be discouraged as they address issues affecting both the beginning and end of life.

“I do believe that we will be able to change minds and hearts and laws to protect all human life from conception to natural death,” he said. †

Diaconate ‘come and see’ events are scheduled throughout May

Men interested in learning more about the life and ministry of deacons and deacon formation in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis are invited to take part in a series of four “come and see” events held across the archdiocese.

The two-hour event will be held from 6:30-8:30 p.m. on Tuesday evenings on the following dates and places:

—May 5 at Christ the King Parish, 5884 Crittenden Ave., in Indianapolis

—May 12 at St. Patrick Parish, 1807 Poplar St., in Terre Haute

—May 19 at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, 1752 Scheller Lane, in New Albany

—May 26 at St. Michael Parish, 145 St. Michael Blvd., in Brookville.

These meetings will be held in advance of monthly inquiry sessions about the diaconate on Sunday afternoons that will begin in September and will continue

through the following spring.

The sessions are meant to assist men who are discerning a possible call to be a deacon. During the course of them, they may be able to apply to be accepted into a new cohort of aspirants for the diaconate that would begin formation in the fall of 2027.

The Church’s *Code of Canon Law* sets 35 as the minimum age at which a man can be ordained as a permanent deacon.

Additionally, the archdiocese also requires men to be no older than 65 at the time of their ordination.

For more information about the upcoming diaconate “come and see” events across the archdiocese or about the formation of deacons and the life and ministry of deacons in the archdiocese, visit archindy.org/deacon or contact Deacon John Jacobi at jjacobi@archindy.org or 812-946-0873. †

Priest offers five suggestions for making the most of Holy Week

(This article first appeared in the April 11, 2025, issue of The Criterion. It has been updated to mark Holy Week this year.)

By Sean Gallagher

Holy Week is the high point of the Church's liturgical year. It is a week marked by solemn and ultimately joyful liturgies in which Catholics give worship to God and enter more fully into Christ's passion, death and resurrection.



Fr. Michael Keucher

Holy Week, which takes place from March 29-April 5 this year, offers the faithful many opportunities to take part in liturgies overflowing with deeply symbolic rituals, starting with Palm Sunday and going forward to the chrisM Mass, the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday, the Celebration of the Lord's Passion on Good Friday, the Easter Vigil on the night of Holy Saturday and the joyous liturgies of Easter Sunday.

Father Michael Keucher, archdiocesan vocations director and pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Shelbyville and St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Shelby County, offered five suggestions to readers of *The Criterion* to

help them make the most of Holy Week this year.

—**During Holy Week, spend at least five minutes a day looking at a crucifix.** "Kneel if you can. Looking at the sacrifice of Jesus reminds us of the power and depths of his love. It is also a summons to us to have a similar love in return."

—**Do a technology fast one day of Holy Week.** "Focus that day on our Lord's passion. If the weather is fair, go outside and read and pray one of the Passion accounts" (Mt 26:30–27:66, Mk 14:26–15:47, Lk 22:39–23:56 and Jn 18:1–19:42).

—**Pray for priestly vocations on Holy Thursday.** "This is the day Jesus gave us the priesthood. You can find all kinds of beautiful priestly vocation prayers online. Pray especially for the priests who have given you and your children the priceless gifts of the sacraments of baptism, holy Communion, confession, the anointing of the sick and last rites and matrimony."

—**If in good health and of adult age, do a simple bread and water fast on Good Friday.** "Jesus models fasting for us and teaches us to do it. Doing this on Good Friday is a way for us to join ourselves to Christ's suffering and death."

—**Make a good confession before Easter.** "There is nothing as refreshing as having a clean conscience and a life set on God. God wants to give you a new, fresh start!" †



A priest hears the confession of a participant at the Indiana Youth Rally for Life on Jan. 22 at the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis. (File photo by Sean Gallagher)

Lenten penance services are scheduled at archdiocesan parishes

Parishes throughout the archdiocese have scheduled communal penance services for Lent. The following is a list of services that have been reported to *The Criterion*.

Batesville Deanery

March 28, 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. at St. Louis, Batesville
April 1, 9-11 a.m. and 6:30-8:30 p.m. at St. Louis, Batesville

Additional recurring opportunities for reconciliation in the Batesville Deanery:

Fridays 11 a.m.-noon at St. John the Evangelist Church of St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Decatur County
Wednesdays 5-6 p.m. at St. Charles Borromeo, Milan
Saturdays after 8:30 a.m. Mass at St. Nicholas, Ripley County, and 4-5 p.m. at St. Charles Borromeo, Milan

Bloomington Deanery

April 1, 6-9 p.m. for St. Charles Borromeo, St. John the Apostle and St. Paul Catholic Center, Bloomington, at St. Paul Catholic Center

Indianapolis North Deanery

March 30, 9 a.m.-7 p.m. at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., no appointment needed

Indianapolis South Deanery

March 28, 8:30-10 a.m. at SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi, Greenwood †



Catholic Women's Giving Circle

We cordially invite you to join us for appetizers and beverages at the 2026 launch event.

Tuesday, April 21, 2026 - 5:30-7:00pm

Woodstock Club

1301 W 38th St, Indianapolis, 46208

This initiative seeks to empower Catholic women to collectively support Catholic causes, as well as share in the camaraderie of time spent with women who share the same faith-based values.



RSVP at: <https://bit.ly/CWGC2026Launch>
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SIMPLY CATHOLIC

In death, Jesus revealed God's 'incomprehensible love' for humanity

By Fr. James Dominic Brent, O.P.

(OSV News)—According to the Gospel of St. John, in his final moment on the cross, Jesus declared: “It is finished” (Jn 19:30). The words might also be translated: “It is fulfilled”; or “It is accomplished”; or “It is completed.”

Like the declaration of his thirst, the saying is brief but contains many layers of meaning. One can uncover the layers by asking a simple question: Exactly, what was fulfilled, accomplished or completed on the cross?

The cross of Jesus Christ is the greatest work of love the world has ever known. It was a generous gift of love for God to create the world, but for God to save the world by dying on the cross for us shows his love still more.

It was generous for God to give being to all things, and generous to give being to humans made in his image and likeness. It was even more generous for him to give grace to the first human beings and establish them in the wonderful state of original justice.

But it was not enough for God to give us the world. In his love and mercy, God wanted to give us something more.

So, in his eternal wisdom, God planted a tree at the center of the garden and warned the first human beings not to eat of it lest they would die (cf. Gn 3:3). Transgression carried with it the penalty of death for them, as well as for all their descendants—not just any death—but permanent death. We might call it “Death” with a capital “D.”

Once the first humans ate of the tree, what was the good God to do? Was he to go back on his word forbidding them to eat of the fruit lest they die? Or was he to stand aloof and simply watch humanity disintegrate in Death? Would sin and Death be the last word on creation?

On the contrary, knowing full well from all eternity that the first human beings would transgress the law, eat the forbidden fruit and bring down the penalty of Death upon all humanity, the good God who loves us had already devised a plan to save us—a most astonishing plan.

Knowing the first humans would transgress, God planned to send his eternal Son to become a man to die on behalf of us all. The plan was for the eternal Son, incarnate as Jesus of Nazareth, to go to the cross with a specific intention in his heart.

His intention would be to bear in himself, yet on behalf of all, the penalty of Death coming to all on account of sin. In this way, rather than go back on his original word announcing Death to humanity for eating the forbidden fruit, God himself would bear the penalty of Death on behalf of man.



A crucifix is seen on Feb. 14, 2024, at Sacred Heart Church in Prescott, Ariz. When, just before he died, Jesus said, “It is finished,” he marked the completion of a plan God in his infinite love had for all eternity to save humanity from permanent death. (OSV News photo/Bob Roller)

In this way, God would demonstrate his incomprehensible love. He would show us a love willing not only to create us but also to die for us.

The plan of God to die for us comes to light over the whole course of Scripture. The Old Testament foretells of the suffering servant in Isaiah 53 (and elsewhere). The Psalms, too, foretell of the suffering servant in Psalms 22, 69 and 88—just to name a few. The ministry and sufferings of the prophet Jeremiah are one long prefiguration of the suffering Christ. So, too, is the mysterious figure of Job.

The revelation of the eternal plan continues in the New Testament. The prophet Simeon tells the Virgin Mary that her son was destined for contradiction (cf. Lk 2:34-35). One of the three gifts from the Magi is myrrh (cf. Mt 2:11). Myrrh is a prefiguration of the death of the Lord since in the ancient world myrrh was used as an embalming fluid. The baptism of the Lord and his temptations in the desert were also a prefiguration of his passion.

Jesus even prophesied his own passion and death more than once (cf. Mk 8:31, 9:31, Mt 16:21, Mt 17:12, Mt 17:23, etc.). To make clear that his passion and death were not going to be something that simply happened to him, the Lord tells us explicitly he would freely lay down his life: “No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down and power to take it up again; this charge I have received from my Father” (Jn 10:17-18).

Many times in his public ministry, Jesus escaped from crowds that wanted to kill him (cf. Lk 4:16-30). In the Garden of Gethsemane, however, he chose not to escape. He chose to endure the cross for us all. He chose to do so according to the eternal plan of love.

Returning to the main question, when the Lord Jesus said, “It is finished,” exactly what was fulfilled, accomplished or completed?

What was fulfilled was the eternal plan of God to send his Son to die on the cross on behalf of us all. What had been planned in eternity was now fulfilled in time. What was fulfilled, too, were all the prefigurations and prophecies of the Old Testament about his saving death. What was fulfilled were also Simeon’s prophecy to Mary, the sign of the myrrh from the Magi and the Lord’s own prophetic announcements of his passion and death.

What was fulfilled was his priestly sacrifice of himself on behalf of sinners. What was fulfilled was his divine and human purpose to die for us all out of love. What was fulfilled was the plan for the eternal Son of God now to enter into the state of utter Death. Hence, immediately after saying, “It is finished,” he bowed his head, gave up his spirit and died.

His purpose in entering into the state of Death was precisely to destroy it. Death is in principle a permanent condition except for one thing: Jesus Christ had the

power to break it. Previously, many people had come back from the dead, but all of them died once more.

On Easter Sunday, however, when Jesus Christ came back from the dead, now he lives to die no more (cf. Rev 1:18). In doing so, he broke the power of Death. He removed its sting—its permanence. He destroyed Death itself as a permanent condition. Now, as a result of his victory, no human being any longer enters into Death as a permanent condition. Rather, thanks to the victory of Jesus, human death is now merely a temporary condition. The New Testament compares it to falling asleep.

In the end, on the last day, every human body that ever has been will rise from the dustbin of history by the power of God. It will be the moment of truth for the whole of historical humanity—the whole Adam. At that moment, traditionally called the general judgment, God shall render to all human beings of all times and places according as their deeds deserve (cf. Rom 2:6; Rv 22:12).

In the meantime, how then shall we live? How shall we prepare?

First, let us remember that Christ died for us, yet God has raised him from the dead. Jesus lives now on high, and he breathes his Holy Spirit upon us. He calls us to turn to him for forgiveness and new life. He awaits our appeal for his merciful love. He is eager to show it to all who ask.

Let us also remember the words of St. John of the Cross: “At the evening of life, we will be judged on our love” (quoted in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #1022). With that truth in mind, a succinct summary of Matthew 25, let us examine our consciences.

How have I loved? How have I loved God? How have I loved my neighbor? How have I loved myself?

When we find ourselves weighed down with sin, let us fly to the sacrament of penance. For through that great sacrament, the blood of Jesus washes away our sins once more. When we come forth from the sacrament of mercy, let us, with the help of the grace we’ve just received, devote ourselves to prayer, fasting and almsgiving according to the grace and state given to each.

Lent is a yearly reminder of the need for these three practices, not just during Lent, but all year round.

In this way, through faith and hope in the Lord Jesus Christ, through recourse to his merciful love in the sacrament of penance, and through a life of prayer, fasting and almsgiving, you and I shall be prepared for the last day. Only on that day, we shall see at last the full meaning of the word: “It is finished.”

(Dominican Father James Dominic Brent, an assistant professor of philosophy at the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, D.C., is the author of *The Father’s House: Discovering Our Home in the Trinity*.) †



Accompanied by members of the Knights of Columbus, the Knights of Peter Claver and others, Archbishop Charles C. Thompson leads a praying of the Stations of the Cross on April 18, 2025, Good Friday, at the American Legion Mall in downtown Indianapolis. Catholics around the world solemnly commemorate on Good Friday the death that God had planned for all eternity to save humanity from its own permanent death. (File photo by Sean Gallagher)

Faith and Family/Sean Gallagher

Like in Holy Week, the past lives on today in our families and in the Church

I can remember like it was yesterday. Sometimes, the memory is so strong that it feels like it's happening right in the moment when it comes to mind.



In the summer of 2003, our son Michael, my wife Cindy's and my first child, and just past his first birthday, came down with a bad case of pneumonia. For a few weeks, he'd been on a roller coaster, having breathing problems, then getting better only to worsen again.

Then one day after he'd gotten a chest X-ray, we got a call from our doctor's office telling us to take Michael to the hospital in Columbus where we lived at the time.

About a day later, it was determined that the care our very sick little boy needed was beyond what that hospital could offer. So, he was sent to Riley Children's Hospital in Indianapolis.

Cindy rode with him in the ambulance. As a registered nurse, she was beside herself that she would allow her own child to become so sick, although our kind doctor in Columbus assured her that there was

nothing she could have done to prevent what was happening to Michael.

At the same time, I drove home and got what Cindy and I needed for what might become an extended stay in Indianapolis. I was on nerve and the drive to Riley seemed to take forever.

When I arrived, I found our little boy on a ventilator with a chest tube inserted by his left lung. It was a harrowing thing for Cindy and me as young parents to see.

Michael spent about two weeks at Riley and eventually had to have surgery. Thanks be to God, he recovered. Today, he's almost 24.

In a real way, those frightening days in 2003 live on in us here and now. I dare say that all families probably have moments of various kinds that they can point to that happened years ago, but live on vividly in their hearts and minds and continue to shape who they are today.

This happens in the Church and is embodied dramatically in the liturgies of Holy Week.

From its earliest days, the Church has believed that in every celebration of the Mass, the walls of time and space spiritually break down, and both the Last Supper and Christ's death on the cross on Calvary continue to take

place where the faithful gather for worship.

This belief is rooted in the beliefs of the Jewish people. For them, there's really only one Passover—that wondrous night when their ancestors were freed from slavery in Egypt. Every seder meal on Passover since then is for them a spiritual continuation of that one event in Egypt so long ago.

And, of course as we read in the Gospels, what happened at the Last Supper and on Calvary was intimately connected to the Passover.

The events in the Upper Room, on Calvary and ultimately in the empty tomb, are together that moment in our family of faith that is the Church that lives on in the hearts and minds of all believers.

But these events are not simply brought into our lives. We are also empowered by God's grace to bring our lives, with all of their crosses and blessings, to these events.

Christ invites us to join all those events in the lives of our families that live on within us to his sacrifice of himself at the Last Supper and on Calvary.

Do that this Holy Week and, indeed, at every celebration of the Mass, and you'll be amazed at how the life of Christ will flourish in your life and the life of your family. †

That All May Be One/Fr. Rick Ginther

Fasting draws us closer to our God, to our neighbor and to our whole self

The last couple of times I saw my nurse, who also assists other priests with their health needs, she suggested I embrace "intermittent fasting."

Such fasting provides many health benefits. So says she. So says a Google search.

I nod my head to this advice. Inside my head, however, there is a shaking left to right—"no!"

Since infancy, eating large quantities on a regular basis has been a personal norm. I like to live by this "normative" rule.

Two months ago, this column spoke to the coinciding of Lent and Ramadan. Two seasons with fasting, distinct in character, focus and duration.

As these seasons end, does our embrace of fasting also?

My clergy nurse hopes not. At least in my case.

Fasting for physical, mental and emotional reasons has been practiced for centuries. Its popularity has grown in past decades, especially to combat obesity and particular diseases in the United States.

Religious fasting is very ancient. While religious fasting may be reflective of self-help or self-improvement practices, its purpose is universally spiritual.

All world religions have mandates or encouragements for fasting.

Observant Jews fast on six days of the year. The two major fasts are Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) and Tish B'av (Day of the Destruction of the Temple). Fasting from food and water is the mandated practice. The fasting acknowledges sins, inspires reconciliation and mourns loss.

As I explained in a previous column, Muslims fast from food, water and smoking from sunrise to sunset during the days of Ramadan. The purpose is to cultivate spiritual discipline, gratitude and empathy

Hindus fast on new moon days and during specific festivals (e.g., Shivaratri, Saraswati and Puja).

Because Hinduism is a collection of various sects, fasting practices vary. One may refrain from food or water for a set number of days, limiting oneself to one specific

vegetarian meal each day. Or they may refrain from specific foods or drinks for a set number of days.

No matter their sect, a fast is designed to purify the body and mind, develop self-discipline and show devotion to the divine.

Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints fast from food and drink for a 24-hour period on the first Sunday of each month.

Through this practice, they draw closer to God, seek blessings and prepare to receive blessings. The money saved is donated to the church to help assist the poor and the needy.

Members of the Baha'i faith fast from March 2-March 20 (Ala, the final month of the Baha'i calendar). This is a discipline for the soul, with abstaining from food as an outer symbol of a spiritual fast.

Orthodox Christians have fasting seasons during the year, most notably "Great Lent," and extended fasts (Nativity Fast, Apostles Fast and the Dormition Fast). Weekly fast occurs on Wednesdays and Fridays. The purpose is to engender repentance, self-control and prayer.

As Catholics, we might marvel at the length and intensity of these fasting practices. Beyond our wonder, these practices share much in common.

My sister Mary has a single wooden die on her desk. Each morning, she rolls it. The clatter assaults the ears and is an immediate, poignant challenge for the day.

The six sides detail fasting from: resentment and bitterness, judging others, overspending, complaining, anger and hatred, discouragement.

Perhaps each of us can refrain from fasting from fasting as we conclude Lent.

Through our extended fast, we can draw closer to our God, our neighbor and our whole self, becoming more value-driven in Christ.

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(Father Rick Ginther is director of the archdiocesan Office of Ecumenism and Interreligious Affairs. He is retired from full-time pastoral ministry but is still active as a priest of the archdiocese.) †

Faith at Home/Laura Kelly Fanucci

When Lent is extra Lenty, let's remember we need Holy Week even more

Propped up on pillows, ice packs piled on my aching chest, I watched our parish livestream of the celebration of the Lord's Passion on Good Friday. After the painful biopsy earlier that morning, I could not make it to church—one more loss in an unexpectedly hard Holy Week.

Two weeks earlier, I had found a lump in my breast. The routine exam turned into a mammogram, then an ultrasound, then the biopsy.

That year, Lent turned into a physical suffering I carried in my body. During Holy Week, caught in the harrowing in-between, all I had was Christ's own passion to hold my anxiety and fear.

On that Good Friday, my husband had taken our five boys to church alone—and since our youngest had just turned 3, we were still firmly front-row-people: the only pew where we knew our brood had the best chance to pay attention.

But the angle of the live-stream camera between the altar and the ambo was also aimed at the front pew. So for the entire solemn service, I watched my beloved family somber-faced without me at their side. Wincing from my incisions, I wrestled with my worst fears: It looked like I was watching my own funeral. My bereaved spouse. My motherless children.

Needless to say, I wept through that Good Friday.

Holy Saturday brought extra weight as we waited for the biopsy results. Even Easter felt hard that year—especially when Easter Monday brought the news that the tumor was cancer. How could I rejoice when I felt my own mortality breathing down my neck?

Three years later, cancer-free and preparing for another Easter on the horizon, I look back on that hardest Holy Week with unexpected perspective. Not a blithe and bright "everything happens for a reason" cliché, but a bone-deep gratitude for a faith that never shies away from the hardest parts of living, that embraces Christ's own suffering as a transformation of our grief and loss.

There is nowhere we can go that God has not gone before us.

This Lent has felt extra Lenty, personally and communally. In my home state of Minnesota, friends and neighbors are still reeling from unexpected chaos, suffering, fear and violence. Our world has once again descended into the chaos of war. At home, my own list of petitions runs long and hard: a couple struggling with infertility, parents and children estranged because of mental illness, families grieving for grandparents and a community suffering from the latest gun violence.

Nearly every day I pray the same plaintive plea: "How long, O Lord?"

Yet the reality of resurrection remains the bedrock of my faith. Our family, our home and our hopes are built on this firm ground. I will not let seasons of suffering define who we are forever.

As St. John Paul II said, "We are an Easter people, and Alleluia is our song." Christ's suffering and dying transform our own, but it is his rising that gives us eternal life. No matter how long our seasons of Lent stretch, Easter is waiting for us.

In the years when life becomes extra Lenty, the gift of the triduum becomes even more clear. As a Church, we enter completely into the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus. We hold nothing back. All our personal losses and griefs are gathered into Christ's embrace on the cross—only to be transformed by the astonishing joy of Easter morning.

If this Lent, this year, or what feels like your whole lifetime has been hard and heavy, may you and those you love find hope in the promise of what Holy Week holds. When everything looks like death, God is already at work to bring new life. Even the longest Lents pale in comparison to the stunning light that Easter brings.

(Laura Kelly Fanucci is an author, speaker and founder of Mothering Spirit. Her latest book is Living Easter: 50 Days to Practice Resurrection.) †

Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, March 29, 2026

- Matthew 21:1-11 (procession)
- Isaiah 50:4-7
- Philippians 2:6-11
- Matthew 26:14-27:66

This weekend observes Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord, recalling with such great reverence Christ's traditional entry into



Jerusalem, beginning the drama and depth of Holy Week.

The liturgy includes two readings from the Gospels. The first, occurring at the blessing of the palms and as the procession of the faithful bearing the palms assembles,

reveals both the Lord's divine power, seen through the knowledge that a donkey and colt are in the village ahead, and the Lord's mission as Messiah.

He is approaching Jerusalem, more than just a city in pious Jewish minds, but the holy place in which God's temple stands, where David once reigned as king and where the prophets spoke in the name of God. It was, as it still is, the center of Jewish faith and worship. It was to be the site of the culmination of the Lord's mission.

The crowd proclaims the Lord as "son of David" (Mt 21:9). They greet the Messiah as their own legitimate king, David's heir, one who, for them, was supreme over the detested Roman emperor.

For its next reading, there is proclaimed a passage from the third part of Isaiah, one of those eloquent and expressive sections of Isaiah biblical scholars call the "songs of the suffering servant." Poetic and descriptive, these four songs laud an unflinchingly faithful servant of God who, despite abuse and persecution, remains steadfastly loyal. Christians always have seen Jesus prefigured in these beautiful poems.

In the next reading, from St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians, the stress again is on Jesus in the literary genre of poetry. Scripture scholars now believe that this passage was an early Christian liturgical hymn. Its deep understanding of the person and place of Christ is both clear and compelling.

Finally, the liturgy presents the Passion Narrative of St. Matthew's Gospel. Matthew's presentation of Jesus, even in the horrifying circumstances of the Passion, conveys powerful lessons.

First, even at this fearful time, Jesus is the Christ. Far from being overwhelmed and helpless, the Lord is majestic and totally in control. He is the victim, but a victim completely complying in free will, and committed to the Savior's mission.

While the Apostles do not come across as heroic in their loyalty, to say the least, Jesus never repudiates them. He called them. Despite their fear and cowardice, especially in St. Peter's case, their call endures. Believers sin and fall, but they can return. Sin cancels no vocation. The Lord's call is forever. Repentance is always possible.

Finally, all the intrigue, conspiracy and prejudice that surrounded Jesus fall away before the fact that the Lord triumphs. He always reigns as king, the son of David, even in an ignominious death.

Reflection

Matthew's Passion narrative is the centerpiece of this weekend's Liturgy of the Word. It is easy to lose its deep meaning by concentrating on the awfulness of all that was brought to bear upon Jesus.

Certainly, its treachery and cruelty cannot be dismissed or understated. These elements underscore the evil that genuinely exists in the world and that torments many people.

In a week, the Church will celebrate Easter. Jesus rose, but even in the dark hours of Good Friday, the Lord was almighty and victorious. Nothing then occurred without ultimately lending itself to the fulfillment of the divine plan of salvation.

The praise of the people who acclaimed Jesus' entry into Jerusalem does not illustrate fickleness just on their part. We are all fickle.

Yet the reading from Philippians illustrates not only that Jesus is Lord, but that, with the help of God's grace, we can be good disciples, even if we fall. Christ awaits us with forgiveness. No sin eternally breaks our relationship with God, unless we reject God ultimately and finally. The Lord, living and victorious, always offers us mercy, if simply we ask. †

Daily Readings

Monday, March 30

Monday of Holy Week
Isaiah 42:1-7
Psalm 27:1-3, 13-14
John 12:1-11

Tuesday, March 31

Tuesday of Holy Week
Isaiah 49:1-6
Psalm 71:1-4a, 5ab-6ab, 15, 17
John 13:21-33, 36-38

Chrism Mass

Isaiah 61:1-3a, 6a, 8b-9
Psalm 89:21-22, 25, 27
Revelation 1:5-8
Luke 4:16-21

Wednesday, April 1

Wednesday of Holy Week
Isaiah 50:4-9a
Psalm 69:8-10, 21-22, 31, 33-34
Matthew 26:14-25

Thursday, April 2

Holy Thursday
Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper
Exodus 12:1-8, 11-14
Psalm 116:12-13, 15-16bc, 17-18
1 Corinthians 11:23-26
John 13:1-15

Friday, April 3

Good Friday of the Passion of the Lord
Celebration of the Lord's Passion
Isaiah 52:13-53:12
Psalm 31:2, 6, 12-13, 15-17, 25
Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9
John 18:1-19:42

Saturday, April 4

Holy Saturday
Holy Saturday Night—The Easter Vigil
Genesis 1:1-2:2
or Genesis 1:1, 26-31a
Psalm 104:1-2, 5-6, 10, 12-14, 24, 35
or Psalm 33:4-7, 12-13, 20, 22
Genesis 22:1-18
or Genesis 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18
Psalm 16:5, 8-11
Exodus 14:15-15:1
(Response) Exodus 15:1-6, 17-18
Isaiah 54:5-14
Psalm 30:2, 4-6, 11-13
Isaiah 55:1-11
(Response) Isaiah 12:2-3, 4-6
Baruch 3:9-15, 32-4:4
Psalm 19:8-11
Ezekiel 36:16-17a, 18-28
Psalms 42:3, 5; 43:3-4
or, when baptism is celebrated,
(Response) Isaiah 12:2-3, 4bcd, 5-6
or Psalm 51:12-15, 18-19
Romans 6:3-11
Psalm 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23
Matthew 28:1-10

Sunday, April 5

Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord
Acts 10:34a, 37-43
Psalm 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23
Colossians 3:1-4
or 1 Corinthians 5:6b-8
John 20:1-9
or Matthew 28:1-10
or, at an afternoon or evening Mass,
Luke 24:13-35

Question Corner/Jenna Marie Cooper

Marriage nullity case can proceed even if an ex-spouse chooses not to participate

How do you proceed if the ex-spouse refuses to be a part of the annulment process? Are you stalled from moving forward? It seems to give the ex-spouse power over your spiritual growth and direction.



Marriage tribunals are required to inform the respondent that a marriage nullity process is taking

place and must give the respondent every opportunity to participate. At the end of the day, the process can still move forward even if the respondent chooses not to be involved for whatever reason.

To review some background information, the Church's canon law sets out a series of steps and principles in a marriage nullity process—i.e., the process for obtaining what the Church calls a "declaration of nullity" and is commonly termed an "annulment"—in order to discern the truth of whether or not a particular marriage was valid from its beginning.

Specifically, individuals actively seeking the declaration of nullity, called the petitioner, approach the Church via the local marriage tribunal with their story of why they believe there was a problem present at the very beginning of their union that was serious enough and of a such a nature that would have rendered their matrimonial commitment invalid.

An important principle in the Church's law regarding the marriage nullity process is treating both spouses as fairly as possible. The respondent is the other party involved in a nullity case.

Since the respondent was an equal party in the marriage, he or she is an equal party in a marriage nullity case and thus has all the same rights in canon law as the petitioner does, although, practically speaking, particular respondents might have varying levels of interest or concern as to what happens.

Because of this, the Church's law strictly

requires that the respondent be informed of a pending marriage nullity trial and allowed to participate in the process fully—to the point where, if this is neglected, the entire nullity trial itself might be rendered null and void (see for example canon 1620, 7 of the Code of Canon Law).

The tribunal's citation of the respondent is akin to a subpoena in secular civil law. However, unlike the secular courts that have the power to arrest or fine those who don't comply with their directives, the Church is unable to use coercive force to compel an unwilling respondent to participate.

And even if the Church could do this, there is a concern to make the experience of the marriage nullity process as pastorally sensitive as possible, meaning that the tribunal officially is appropriately reluctant to put a respondent through the emotional strain of a nullity trial if he or she is genuinely unwilling.

In light of this, if a tribunal knows for certain that a respondent is aware of his or her pending nullity case but either does not hear back from the respondent or is told explicitly by the respondent that he or she wants no further contact from the tribunal, there is a provision in canon law for declaring the respondent "absent" (see canon 1592).

This basically means that the nullity trial can move forward even without the respondent's participation, although the respondent can still opt back in at any time.

In the big picture, I think it's important to point out that a respondent never has the power to stall a petitioner's spiritual growth or healing. Even if a respondent's refusal to participate in the marriage nullity process makes it difficult for a petitioner to prove his or her case, an individual's spiritual growth is never wholly dependent on the decisions of the marriage tribunal.

(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

Jesus' Precious Blood

By John DeSantis

After Jesus was tortured
And his scourging was done
The precious blood from his wounds
Continued to run
A crown of thorns
Was placed on the top of his head
Blood dripped from the thorns
And turned his face red
Whip lashes and wounds
Covered the back of his body
And made his torn garment
Blood-soaked and shoddy
Jesus carried his cross
Made from the wood of a tree
And its weight made him fall
Three times to his knees
His executioners' work
Had still not yet been completed
And they pounded long nails
Into his hands and his feet
Then they raised his cross up
And set it into the ground
Precious blood from the piercings
Kept streaming down
The precious blood he shed
Washed away all of our sins
And when he rose in three days
Then did our redemption begin



(John DeSantis is a member of St. Michael Parish in Greenfield. Photo: The Shroud of Turin is believed by many to be the burial cloth of Christ) (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

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.

BENHAM, Eileen C., 98, St. Vincent de Paul, Bedford, February 25. Mother of Nancy Goode, Andrea Lee, Elaine Wykoff, Maureen, Alan and Bill Benham. Grandmother, great-grandmother and great-great-grandmother of several.

CARRICO, Mary (Bronger), 87, St. John Paul II, Sellersburg, March 10. Mother of Terry, Todd, Tom and Tony Carrico. Grandmother of 10. Great-grandmother of three.

CHAMPINE, Jr., William, 85, St. Bartholomew, Columbus, March 6. Husband of Brenda Champine. Father of Nicole, Leon and William Champine. Stepfather of Amy Reese and Nikolaus Hoffman. Brother of Dorothy Babic, Suzanne Hufnagel, Kathleen McHugh, Patricia Zarate, Christine, Tim and Tom Champine.

COGHILL, Steven D., 72, St. Lawrence, Lawrenceburg, Nov. 8, 2025. Brother of Jill Ford, Janice Slaughter and Mary Smith. Uncle of several.

DAVEY, Dorothy R., 96, St. Pius X, Indianapolis, March 3. Mother of

Carol Beatty, Nancy Kell, Chris Mally, Susan Tsangaris, Andrea, Brian and Kevin Davey. Grandmother of 12. Great-grandmother of two.

ENGLISH, Robert C., 83, St. Charles Borromeo, Bloomington, March 4. Husband of Carol English. Father of Erica Harrah and Aaron English. Brother of Tom English. Grandfather of one.

GENDA, Jerry, 83, St. Mary, North Vernon, March 9. Husband of Teresa Genda. Father of Kerri Morris, Eric and Mark Genda. Grandfather of four. Great-grandfather of five.

GILLMAN, Delores L., 91, St. Michael, Brookville, March 6. Mother of Eric, Greg, Jeff and Jodi Gillman. Grandmother of seven.

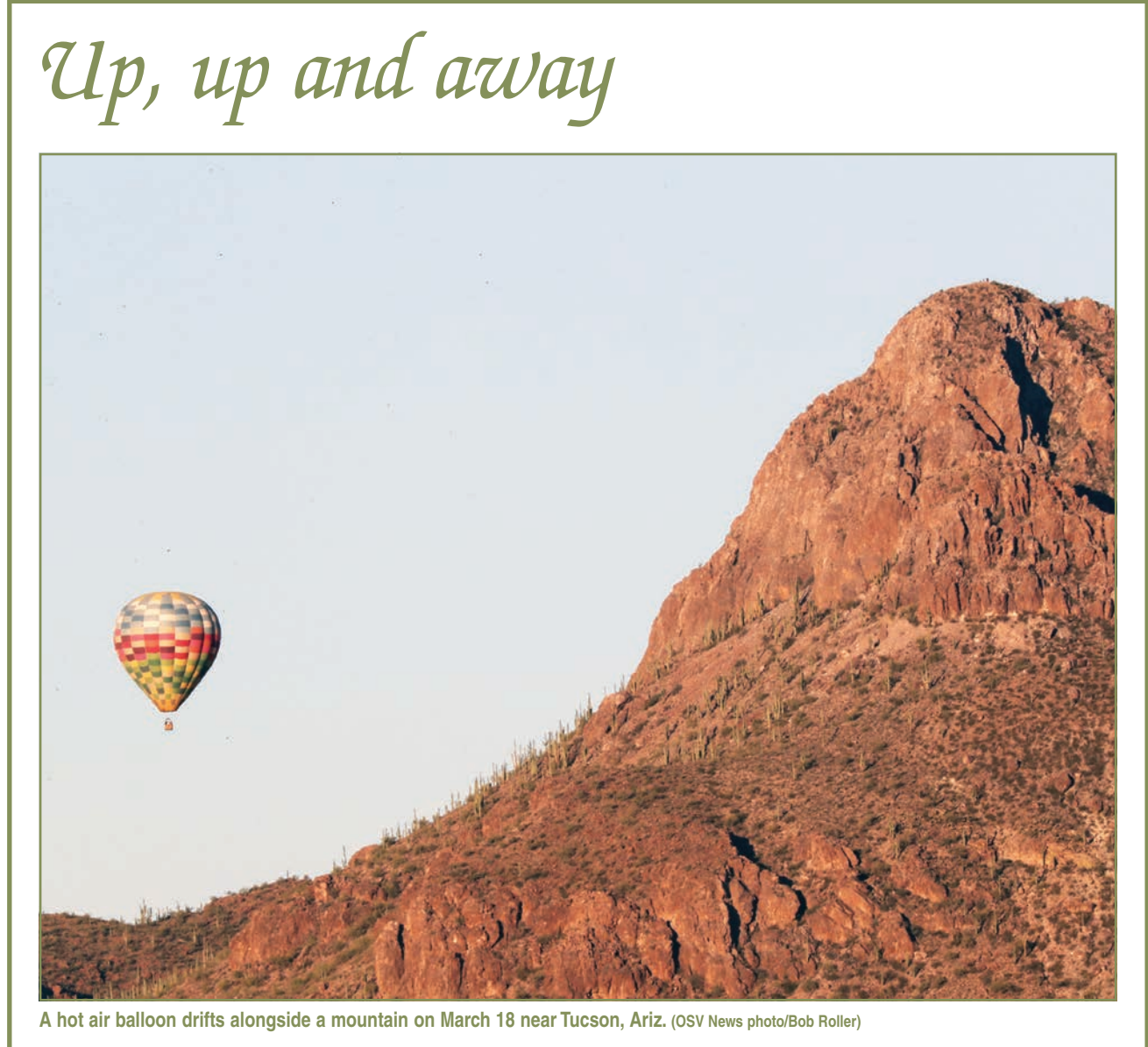
HARTIGAN, Virginia (Fox), 56, Christ the King, Indianapolis, Jan. 30. Mother of Margaret and David Hartigan. Daughter of Janet Fox. Sister of Raymond and Ryan Fox.

HELLMANN, Joan M. (Varnau), 98, St. Malachy, Brownsburg, March 3. Wife of U. Leo Hellmann. Mother of Maureen, Fred, Greg and Jim Hellmann. Sister of Mark and Tom Varnau. Grandmother of 14. Great-grandmother of 26.

HILL, James A., 65, Immaculate Heart of Mary, Indianapolis, Feb. 16. Brother of Mary Ellen, Michael and R. Martin Hill.

HURLEY, James M., 79, St. John Paul II, Sellersburg, March 6. Husband of Joan Hurley. Father of Angela Jordan and Brian Hurley. Brother of Robert Hurley.

KINKER, Mary Lou, 81, St. Mary, Greensburg, March 11. Wife of Dennis Kinker. Mother of Jane Burkert, Becky Gates, Andy



A hot air balloon drifts alongside a mountain on March 18 near Tucson, Ariz. (OSV News photo/Bob Roller)

and Greg Kinker. Grandmother of 10. Great-grandmother of three.

KLUEH, Leon, 81, St. Paul, Tell City, March 8. Husband of Sandra Klueh. Father of Jeff, Jeremy and Jonathan Klueh. Brother of Virginia Deller, Charlotte Hubert, Kathy Vaught and Kenneth Klueh. Grandfather of nine.

MEUNIER, William, 73, St. Paul, Tell City, March 8. Father of Cindy Seibert and Eric Meunier. Brother of Jane Lasher, Carol Waninger, Jim, Mike and Steve Meunier. Grandfather of five. Great-grandfather of four.

MORELAND, Mary Ann, 88, St. Martin of Tours, Martinsville, March 11. Wife of Richard Moreland. Mother of Mary Lou Draughton, Veronica, Jeffery and Richard Moreland, Jr., and Derek Tamber. Sister of David Eicher. Grandmother and great-grandmother of several.

NESTER, William, 70, St. Christopher, Indianapolis, March 3. Husband of Reda Nester. Father of Aaron and Shane Nester. Brother of Don and Robert Nester. Grandfather of two.

REINHART, James, 82, St. John the Apostle, Bloomington, March 13.

Father of Stephanie Mitchell, Michele Stanton and Adam Reinhart. Grandfather of eight. Great-grandfather of two.

SCHAEFER, Pauline M., 86, St. Meinrad, St. Meinrad, Oct. 19, 2025. Mother of Jackie Mehling, Trina Strobel and Mark Schaefer. Sister of Bettye Doogs. Grandmother of 12. Great-grandmother of 10.

THIES, Patricia A., 87, St. Louis, Batesville, March 10. Mother of Dana Breazeale. Grandmother of three.

VELASCO, Miguel A. Allende, 43, St. Bartholomew, Columbus, Feb. 28. Son of Miguel Angel Velasco Alvares

and Teofila Allende Feria. Brother of Alissa, Isidra, Laura, Marinaly, Rosario, Yuridia, Crispin, Demon, Porfirio, Pablo and Timolin. Uncle of several.

WAGNER, Kathleen L., 81, St. Louis, Batesville, March 4. Mother of Sandra Short and Daniel Wagner. Sister of Marlene Buening. Grandmother of two. Great-grandmother of three.

WALKO, Marian C., 88, St. Bartholomew, Columbus, Feb. 26. Mother of Susan Flottesmesch, Laura Montgomery and William Walko. Sister of Evelyn Staub. Grandmother of seven. †

Judge grants injunction for clergy ministry in Minneapolis ICE facility

(OSV News)—Clergy members will now be allowed entrance to give spiritual care to those being detained at an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) processing facility in the Twin Cities area.

On March 20, U.S. District Judge Jerry Blackwell granted an injunction allowing access to the Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building in Minneapolis,

following a lawsuit filed in February by an ecumenical group of Minnesota clergy, including a Jesuit priest. The Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building is named for Minnesota's first Episcopal bishop.

Blackwell said plaintiffs had met the burden of proof that their case is likely to succeed, and that restrictions on the religious freedom of clergy to minister causes "irreparable harm." He also ordered both sides to meet within four days to negotiate details over access and security, and within seven days submit a plan or, if an agreement cannot be met, submit competing proposals.

Federal officials have cited security and safety concerns in denying visitor admission to the building, but clergy have countered that the government has not provided clear, reasonable protocols for admission. (Immigrants have reportedly been held at the ICE holding facility longer than the typical 12 hours or so for processing, according to the lawsuit.)

The lawsuit, filed on Feb. 23 in the U.S. District Court for the District of Minnesota, stated, "By prohibiting faith leaders from providing essential pastoral care to individuals in ICE detention, the federal government unconstitutionally obstructs their sacred obligation to exercise their faith through ministry to community members in the greatest need of spiritual comfort."

Claimants said their First Amendment right to practice religion freely and rights under the Religious Freedom and Restoration Act were violated. They sought an injunction against being barred by the federal government and said their inability to minister under these rights has caused "irreparable injury."

"This ministry is not political advocacy. It is not symbolic presence. It is a core and non-negotiable religious obligation rooted in Scripture and centuries of practice," the plaintiffs said in their lawsuit.

The filing listed instances in December, January and February when faith leaders of the Minneapolis Area Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ and Jesuit Father Chris Collins, parochial administrator of St. Peter Claver Parish in St. Paul, Minn., tried to provide pastoral care in the Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building but were stopped.

Father Chris previously told OSV News that on the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Dec. 12, he, "an auxiliary bishop and a group of parishioners" from various locations had learned about a Catholic school student whose mother had been "swept up and taken" to the ICE facility in the Whipple building, and gathered for a spontaneous prayer service.

"They actually not only didn't let us go into the building, but wouldn't even let us on the property and pushed us across the street," said Father Chris.

In the lawsuit, the priest is also listed as having attempted to enter Whipple on Feb. 23, the day of its filing, to provide pastoral care, but was denied.

The federal government in early December began its targeted deployment of several thousand ICE agents to pursue people without legal authorization to remain in the country in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area, known as "Operation Metro Surge." Two people were shot and killed by ICE agents in separate incidents and multiple violent clashes between protesters and federal agents ensued, with federal officials announcing scaling back and troop drawdowns in mid-February.

Eight in 10 migrants arrested in the ongoing immigration crackdown across the country are Christian, the majority of them Catholic, according to a joint Catholic-evangelical report published by World Relief. †

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P.O. Box 1410, Indianapolis, IN 46206-1410
317-236-1548 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1548
victimassistance@archindy.org

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lifetime, but also a lasting charitable legacy for the causes closest to your heart.

If you would like to discuss how a CGA aligns with your planned giving needs, contact the archdiocesan Office of Stewardship and Development at 317-236-1425 or e-mail ccf@archindy.org.

(Jolinda Moore is a member of SS. Francis and Clare Parish in Greenwood and serves as the executive director of the archdiocesan Office of Stewardship and Development and the Catholic Community Foundation. Tax or legal information provided herein is not intended as tax or legal advice. Always consult with your legal, tax or financial advisors before implementing any gift plan.) †

Bishops ask House to advance bill to investigate Indian boarding school legacy

WASHINGTON (OSV News)—Chairmen of several U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) committees wrote in a letter to key House lawmakers that they support a bill that would establish an effort to investigate and document the histories and practices of Indian boarding schools, and their long-term effects on Native American peoples.

“The forced removal of children from their tribal lands and communities as part of federal boarding school policies was a moral failure that disregarded the unique culture and dignity of Indigenous peoples,” the letter stated.

It was signed by Archbishop Shelton J. Fabre of Louisville, Ky., chair of the Committee on Domestic Justice and

Human Development; Bishop John T. Folda of Fargo, N.D., chair of the Subcommittee on Native American Affairs; Bishop Robert J. Brennan of Brooklyn, N.Y., chair of the Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church; and Bishop Barry C. Knestout of Richmond, Va., chair of the Committee on the Protection of Children and Young People.

The bishops wrote to House lawmakers in the letter dated March 16 to reiterate their previous support of the Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act (H.R. 7325).

Some 87 Catholic-run Native boarding schools had operated in 22 U.S. states prior to 1978, according to a list maintained by the group Catholic Truth and Healing.

The schools were among more than 400 overseen by the U.S. federal government in the 19th and 20th centuries.

The federal government had enlisted Christian churches and organizations into operating many of these sites—a model that ran counter to the Church’s history in North America of providing Catholic education within Indigenous communities themselves and close to their families.

Under the government’s plan, they sought to forcibly strip Indigenous children of their culture and language, and assimilate them to a way of life that the government viewed as European, and therefore Christian in its eyes, even though many of these children came from families that had been Christian for several generations, living it through their Indigenous culture. Thousands of students were physically, mentally and sexually abused in the process.

The USCCB chairmen’s letter praised several aspects of the House legislation, such as the exclusion of a broad subpoena power, which it maintained “will invite greater cooperative, transparent participation across government, secular, and religious institutions to properly begin and carry forward the process of truth, healing and justice.”

The letter also praised the bill’s designation of three seats to the Federal and Religious Truth and Healing Advisory Committee “for representatives of religious communities that have historic ties to this era,” which it maintains

“invites those communities to enter formally into this dialogue as established stakeholders invested in the commission’s outcome.” It maintained the provision would allow for “direct participation from the Catholic Church and other faith traditions,” which would “help to better facilitate requests for records.”

“True healing and reconciliation are only possible through the involvement of all relevant parties,” the letter said, acknowledging that the “pain from the Native American boarding school era continues to echo today.”

Pointing to the USCCB’s pastoral framework, “Keeping Christ’s Sacred Promise: A Pastoral Framework for Indigenous Ministry,” and the late Pope Francis’ acknowledgment of the harm caused by these institutions, they said, “If enacted, we believe H.R. 7325 would help to build up that historical memory essential to learning and healing.”

The bipartisan legislation was reintroduced in February by Reps. Tom Cole, R-Okla., and Sharice Davids, D-Kansas. A Feb. 9 press release on the bill from Cole’s office identified him as a member of the Chickasaw Nation of Oklahoma and the longest-serving Native American in the U.S. House. It identified Davids as a member of the Ho-Chunk Nation of Wisconsin and one of the first two Native women ever elected to Congress.

(A copy of the letter can be viewed at: cutt.ly/USCCBTruthHealing.) †



Glenn Drapeau, director of the Dakota Language Department at the Marty Indian School, poses for a portrait outside his home in Lake Andes, S.D., on Sept. 12, 2021. He blames the old federal Indian boarding school system for upending Native American families by isolating children from their parents and tribes. “We pray our elders’ truth will be known,” Drapeau said. (OSV News photo/Callaghan O’hare, Reuters)

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Send a cover letter, résumé, and three references to Chris Walsh at cwalsh@archindy.org by April 7, 2026.

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- Approve job requisitions, professional development, and external speakers

Requirements

- Master’s degree in theology, religious education, or related field
- 10+ years of leadership and administrative experience
- Practicing Catholic in good standing
- Strong communication, leadership, and problem solving skills

Additional Information

- Evening/weekend work and regular travel required
- Role involves handling confidential information

Interested candidates are invited to submit a cover letter, résumé, and three professional references in confidence to Andrea Wunnenberg at awunnenberg@archindy.org. The application deadline is March 31, 2026.

Childhood classmates from the United States reunite with Pope Leo

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Once a young teenager wearing a cap and gown for his eighth-grade graduation photo in Chicago, today the famous former-student posed for a reunion picture wearing his papal zucchetto and cassock at the Vatican.

Pope Leo XIV, who graduated from the lower school of St. Mary of the Assumption on the city's south side in 1969, greeted and reminisced with 10 of his 82 former classmates after the general audience in St. Peter's Square on March 18.

"Sorry! I'm nervous," laughed Sherry Stone (née Blue) after a small sign saying, "God bless you, Pope Leo," slipped from her grasp when she reached out to shake the hand of her former classmate—Robert F. Prevost.

The pope proudly held up their old graduation photo as they posed for another photo together, almost 60 years later.

"Here he is, our friend, the pope," Jerome Clemens told the Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*, pointing to the black-and-white image of the 13-year-old Prevost. Clemens then showed the back of the class photo with Prevost's old autograph and his new one that was signed, "Leo XIV."

Among the small gifts they brought was the 2025 fall issue of *Air Chicago*, a color magazine produced for passengers coming through Chicago's O'Hare and Midway airports, whose cover story was the election of a pope from Chicago.

The group came to Rome and the general audience to show their camaraderie and embrace once again their former classmate—now the 266th successor of St. Peter, the newspaper reported.

John Riggio told the Vatican newspaper about the close-knit atmosphere at the



Pope Leo XIV poses with former classmates who graduated from the lower school of St. Mary of the Assumption in Chicago in 1969 after the general audience in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican on March 18. He is holding their eighth-grade graduation class photo. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

school, saying it was more like a family.

In fact, the pope's mother, Mildred Agnes Prevost, worked there as a librarian and was also actively involved with the school and parish, Stone said.

She told *The Lansing Journal* of Lansing, Ill., last May, right after her classmate's election by the College of Cardinals, that she had remembered him making a comment when they were

young, "that he wanted to grow up to be pope."

"When he was in the conclave, I thought, 'Could it be him? Could Bob be the new pope? No, probably not,'" Stone had told the *Journal*. "When I saw that it was him, I was just amazed. I was crying tears of joy."

She had said he was kind, humble and well-liked by his classmates. "He

was a super nice guy, but not nerdy."

Following his middle school graduation, Prevost went on to attend the Augustinians' St. Augustine Seminary High School near Saugatuck, Mich., where he graduated in 1973, followed by enrolling in Villanova University, an Augustinian college located near Philadelphia, where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in mathematics in 1977. †

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