



The Criterion

Serving the Church in Central and Southern Indiana Since 1960



Christ the Cornerstone

Protecting unborn children begins with loving their moms, changing hearts, page 5.

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In this photo from her family's past, Kyndi Akin, left, back row, shares a moment of joy with her parents, Margaret and Dan Akin and her brother, Scott Akin. In the front row are Kyndi's brother, Brian Akin, and sister, Jodi Clere. (Submitted photo)

Parents find God's healing presence in their extra time with their 'miracle child'

(Editor's note: The Criterion invited our readers to share their stories of how God has made his presence known in their lives. Here is another story in this occasional series.)

By John Shaughnessy

Dan and Margaret Akin faced a parent's worst nightmare. In the midst of that nightmare, they also experienced the healing presence of God.

Their story begins in 2003 when the third of their four children, then 27-year-old Kyndi, was diagnosed with cancer.

While they relied upon medical professionals for help, the family also turned to their faith community at

St. Mary-of-the-Knobs Parish in Floyd County for prayers and support.

"Kyndi went through surgeries, radiation therapy, chemotherapy and a stem-cell transplant, all with no true help," recalled Dan, a doctor who is retired now. "At this point in 2004, we thought we would lose Kyndi, and we purchased her grave plot here at St. Mary's."

During that time of fear, then-pastor Father John Geis invited Kyndi and her parents to the rectory after Mass one Sunday.

"He said a prayer and blessed Kyndi with the aid of a relic from Mother Teresa," Dan noted.

Looking back, Kyndi's parents view that moment as the

See **MIRACLE CHILD**, page 8

ICC brings voice of Church to legislature, calls on Catholics to engage on issues

By Victoria Arthur

The Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC) is once again adding its voice to important issues under consideration at the state legislature while calling on the Catholic faithful to join its efforts.



Angela Espada

The 2024 Indiana General Assembly opened for business on Jan. 8, for a short, non-budget-year session that is expected to conclude by mid-March. As state lawmakers introduce and debate

a flurry of bills on a wide range of topics, the ICC is discerning which issues and legislation are the most significant through the lens of 2,000 years of Catholic social teaching.

"While this is a short session that does not include big budget items, it is still important to stay engaged," said Angela Espada, executive director of the ICC, the public policy voice of the Catholic

Church in Indiana. "We hope that the faithful will continue to make themselves aware of important legislative issues and act as faithful citizens."

Promoting the common good and protecting the most vulnerable members of society form the basis for the Church's engagement in the public arena, Espada said. As it has for more than half a century, the ICC advocates either for or against proposed legislation in line with Catholic social doctrine.

In all its efforts, the ICC encourages the Catholic faithful to stay informed and involved on key issues and legislation and offers numerous resources to do so. The ICC website, www.indianacc.org, provides a wealth of information as well

See **ICC**, page 8

Young adults: A powerful way to start the new year—and the hopes and the challenges ahead for them

By John Shaughnessy

The pure joy of the experience still shines through in the smile and the eyes of Meagan Morrisey as she talks about the powerful way that 20,000 young adults from across the country began the new year.

For five days, Morrisey was among those gathering in St. Louis for SEEK, the annual conference led by the Fellowship of Catholic University Students, a Catholic outreach organization better known as FOCUS that invites people into a personal relationship with Christ.

From Jan. 1-5, Morrisey saw college students seeking to grow in their Catholic faith. The 28-year-old director of young adult and college campus ministry for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis also noticed the growing number of young married couples who came with their small children, and even older adults who were drawn to witness the young Church so alive.

Best of all for her was seeing those groups join in the daily

celebrations of the Mass with campus ministers, deacons, seminarians, hundreds of priests, parish and diocesan leaders, and more than 40 bishops, including Archbishop Charles C. Thompson.

"Getting to go to Mass with that many people, you hear everybody singing and responding at the same time, which is very powerful. And obviously the best part of Mass is receiving Jesus," Morrisey says. "We need something like that every so often. Just to remind you that you are not alone in the Church. It's just so beautiful to see everybody there together."



Meagan Morrisey

That insight is part of a conversation that *The Criterion* had with Morrisey about the impact of this year's SEEK conference, which drew about 250 people from the archdiocese. The conversation also captures the surprising thoughts she has about this generation of college students, the plans she has for continuing the momentum of the conference into the year ahead, and the hopes—and

See **SEEK**, page 9

Radio witness



In this Jan. 10 photo taken in the Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center in Indianapolis, Archbishop Charles C. Thompson shares his vocation story during an interview with Gordon Smith, general manager of Inter Mirifica, Inc. (operating as Catholic Radio Indy), for Smith's program "Sons of Melchizedek." The program, which airs Mondays and Fridays at 4:30 p.m. and Wednesdays at 4 p.m., features the vocation stories of clergy in the archdiocese and the Lafayette, Ind., Diocese. The archbishop's interview will air at 4:30 p.m. on Jan. 22 and 26, and 4 p.m. on Jan. 24, and will also be available as a podcast on Jan. 22 at catholicradioindy.org. Listen to Catholic Radio Indy locally by tuning in to 89.1 FM—west Indianapolis; 89.5 FM—south Indianapolis; 90.9 FM—Hamilton County, Ind.; 94.3 FM—Lafayette, Ind., or 98.3 FM—Anderson, Ind.; or anywhere by downloading the Catholic Radio Indy app from an app store, by dialing 641-793-5507, by asking Alexa to "play Catholic Radio Indy," or by clicking "Listen Live Now" at catholicradioindy.org. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)



Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

January 19–31, 2024

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>January 19 – 1:30 p.m.
Virtual Eucharistic Revival Executive Team meeting</p> <p>January 20 – 10 a.m.
Deacon ordination of Franciscan Brother John Barker at Holy Family Church, Oldenburg</p> <p>January 21 – 10 a.m.
Mass and celebration for 200th anniversary of Catholicism in Dearborn County at Chamber of Commerce, Lawrenceburg</p> <p>January 22 – 11:30 a.m.
Respect Life Mass at Indiana Convention Center and March for Life, both in Indianapolis</p> <p>January 23 – 1 p.m.
Council of Priests meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis</p> <p>January 24 – 11:30 a.m.
Strategic Pastoral Planning Initiatives meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center</p> | <p>January 25 – 10 a.m.
Leadership Team meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center</p> <p>January 25 – 6 p.m.
Hispanic young adult gathering at Archbishop's residence, Indianapolis</p> <p>January 28 – 5:30 p.m.
Mass and dinner at St. Paul Catholic Center, Bloomington</p> <p>January 30 – 11:30 a.m.
Lunch gathering with Archdiocese of Indianapolis priests, Indianapolis</p> <p>January 30 – 5 p.m.
Mass for Secretariat of Evangelizing Catechesis staff at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, Indianapolis</p> <p>January 31 – 10:30 a.m.
Catholic Schools Week Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis</p> |
|---|---|

The sick, and the world, need 'therapy' of love, pope says in message

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The "first therapy" that must be offered to the sick, and to the world, is a dose of closeness, friendship and love, Pope Francis said in his message for the World Day of the Sick.

"We came into the world because someone welcomed us; we were made for love; and we are called to communion and fraternity," he wrote in his message for the annual observance on Feb. 11, the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes.

A connection with other people "is what sustains us, above all at times of illness and vulnerability," the 87-year-old pope wrote. "It is also the first therapy that we must all adopt in order to heal the diseases of the society in which we live."

The theme chosen for the 2024 observance is from the Book of Genesis, "It is not good that man should be alone" (Gn 2:18). It was subtitled, "Healing the Sick by Healing Relationships."

In his message, released on Jan. 13, Pope Francis said Christians believe that "from the beginning, God, who is love,

created us for communion and endowed us with an innate capacity to enter into relationship with others.

"We were created to be together, not alone," he wrote. "Precisely because this project of communion is so deeply rooted in the human heart, we see the experience of abandonment and solitude as something frightening, painful and even inhuman."

Pope Francis recalled the horrible pain of loneliness endured by those who were sick or in nursing homes during the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic and had no contact with their loved ones.

"I share too in the pain, suffering and isolation felt by those who, because of war and its tragic consequences, are left without support and assistance," he said. "War is the most terrible of social diseases, and it takes its greatest toll on those who are most vulnerable."

But even in rich countries at peace, he said, "old age and sickness are frequently experienced in solitude and, at times, even in abandonment."

When a culture emphasizes the individual, "exalts productivity at all costs, cultivates the myth of efficiency," he said, it "proves indifferent, even callous, when individuals no longer have the strength needed to keep pace.

"It then becomes a throwaway culture, in which 'persons are no longer seen as a paramount value to be cared for and respected, especially when they are poor or disabled, 'not yet useful'—like the unborn—or 'no longer needed'—like the

elderly,'" he said, quoting his encyclical "*Fratelli Tutti*, on Fraternity and Social Friendship."

The pope said such thinking is reflected in "certain political decisions that are not focused on the dignity of the human person and his or her needs, and do not always promote the strategies and resources needed to ensure that every human being enjoys the fundamental right to health and access to health care." †

Who or what helped you navigate the first years of married life?

The first years of marriage bear unique challenges for newlyweds as they adjust to each other and to their new state in life.

"The first years of married life need to be 'accompanied,' and newlyweds should not be left in solitude." So says paragraph #74 of "Catechumenal Pathways for Married Life," a 2020 document of the Vatican's Dicastery for the Laity, the Family and Life. It also states that, "From the very beginning of married life, the couple needs to receive concrete assistance to live their interpersonal relationship in all sincerity" (#78).

For *The Criterion's* upcoming Spring Marriage Supplement in February, we would like to hear from

"experienced" couples as a way to help Catholic newlyweds.

What helped you overcome challenges in the early years of marriage? Was there anyone who accompanied you in your first years of married life? If so, how did they help you grow as a couple as you adjusted to marriage? If you were to accompany a newlywed Catholic couple, what would you do to help them in those first few years?

Please send your responses to Natalie Hoefler by e-mail at nhoefler@archindy.org or by mail in care of *The Criterion*, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202. Please include your parish and a daytime phone number where you can be reached. †

Jan. 23 prayer service for Christian unity is cancelled

The annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity prayer service, scheduled for 7 p.m. on Jan. 23 at North United Methodist Church in Indianapolis, has been cancelled.

Father Rick Ginther, director of the archdiocesan Office of Ecumenical and

Interreligious Affairs, is asking parishes to include sample general intercessions (petition, prayer of the faithful) during their Masses for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, which is being held on Jan. 18-25. †



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E-mail us:
criterion@archindy.org

Staff:

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



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At Mass marking Rev. King's legacy, cardinal highlights the witness of children

WASHINGTON (OSV News)—Just like the “unnamed and countless toddlers” King Herod ordered killed “to make sure that the Child Jesus would never reach maturity,”



Cardinal Wilton D. Gregory

Washington Cardinal Wilton D. Gregory said on Jan. 13, “innocent children killed in the quest for inclusive, social justice have also paid the ultimate price for freedoms enjoyed by Americans today.”

He invoked the Christmas feast of the Holy Innocents celebrated by

Catholics worldwide in his homily at the archdiocese’s annual Mass honoring the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church in southeast Washington.

“We consequently have no idea of the number or the names of those little ones that we today honor as the martyred saints whom the Church now calls the Holy Innocents,” he told the capacity crowd of about 400 worshippers.

“Nonetheless, we do know the names and the number of the innocent children who were brutally murdered as a defining part of the Civil Rights Movement at the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Ala., in 1963,” said the cardinal, wearing clerical garb embellished with colorful African textile.

People can celebrate the legacy of the slain civil rights leader and draw strength and inspiration from the witness of people, young and old, he said.

The sobering history lesson was the focal point of the annual commemorative event coordinated by the Washington Archdiocese’s Office of Cultural Diversity and Outreach and celebrated this year at a parish known as “the church on the hill” for its lofty perch overlooking Washington. The Mass came two days ahead of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, observed on the third Monday of January. This year’s holiday, on Jan. 15, fell on his actual birthday.

A multiracial, intergenerational gathering was united in a joyous, emotionally moving celebration. Worshippers sang, clapped and



Washington Auxiliary Bishop Roy Campbell Jr. gives Communion to a woman during a Jan. 13 Mass celebrating the legacy of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church in Washington. The annual Mass is sponsored by the Washington Archdiocese’s Office of Cultural Diversity and Outreach, and this year was celebrated at a parish known as “the church on the hill” for its lofty perch overlooking Washington. (OSV News photo/Mihoko Owada, Catholic Standard)



People sing during a Jan. 13 Mass to honor the legacy of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church in Washington. The annual Mass is sponsored by the Washington Archdiocese’s Office of Cultural Diversity and Outreach.

(OSV News photo/Mihoko Owada, Catholic Standard)

swayed to spirited music delivered by the archdiocese’s Gospel Mass Choir under the direction of Henry Herrera. At other times they sat silent, in rapt attention as Cardinal Gregory related history.

The cardinal recited the names and ages of the four children who were “victims of indiscriminate hatred on Sunday morning, Sept. 15, 1963”: Denise McNair, who was 11, and Addie Mae Collins, Cynthia Wesley and Carole Robertson, all of whom were 14.

They would be senior citizens today, he said, and most likely would have become wives and mothers, maybe grandmothers, if “these lives taken at a tender age” had not been ended by an explosion by Ku Klux Klan members that shook their church and the conscience of the nation.

“The nation had already heard of and been stunned by the news of the assassination of other adult victims of racial hatred and violence, including that

See MLK, page 8

Tom McNulty
BROKER/ATTORNEY
317.507.0688 • mcnultyre@gmail.com

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“If we don’t bring the good news of Christ to those who do not know him, who is going to do that?”
- Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

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Editorial



Bishop Joseph M. Siegel of the Evansville, Ind., Diocese, left, Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, center, Bishop Timothy L. Doherty, of the Lafayette, Ind., Diocese, right, and several priests concelebrate a Mass at St. John the Evangelist Church in Indianapolis before the Indiana March for Life on Jan. 23, 2023. (Criterion file photo by Natalie Hoefler)

Events offer a reminder we must continue protecting life

Our faith teaches us we are called to protect all human life from conception to natural death.

Unfortunately, some in society have other beliefs.

We see some embracing euthanasia and assisted suicide to prematurely end lives.

And despite the U.S. Supreme Court's *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* decision in June of 2022, which returned the legal issue of abortion back to individual states, some are still seeking to keep abortion legal at all costs in parts of the United States.

Ohio voters last November approved Issue 1, a measure that will codify abortion access in the state's constitution through fetal viability, typically understood to be 24 weeks gestation—and beyond, if a physician decided an abortion was necessary for the sake of the mother's life or health.

The loss marked another electoral defeat for pro-life ballot measures in the wake of the Supreme Court's *Dobbs* decision. In 2022, voters in California, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Montana and Vermont either rejected new limitations on abortion or expanded legal protections for it.

That is why—in our nation's capital, in Indianapolis and in other cities across the U.S.—we still mark the anniversary of the now-overturned Jan. 22, 1973, *Roe v. Wade* decision and continue to march for mothers and their unborn children and for the conversion of those who support abortion.

In recent issues of *The Criterion*, we have encouraged people of faith to attend the Indiana March for Life, which will be held on Jan. 22 in downtown Indianapolis.

As in years past, the 2024 Indiana March for Life schedule of events begins with a vigil at St. John the Evangelist Church in Indianapolis on the evening of Jan. 21. The vigil includes a 7 p.m. Mass, followed by eucharistic adoration from 8-10 p.m. That time will include prayer, music and a talk by one or more members of the New York-based Sisters of Life. Confession will also be available.

On Jan. 22 in the Indiana Convention Center, the public is also invited to visit pro-life booths starting at 9 a.m. prior to attending an 11:30 a.m. Mass for Life—concelebrated by four of the state's five bishops, including Indianapolis Archbishop Charles C. Thompson.

Parishioners from all five Indiana dioceses will be in attendance.

Right to Life of Indianapolis will sponsor a pre-march rally from 1-1:30 p.m. at the intersection of Georgia Street and Capitol Avenue.

Then all are invited to gather at Georgia and Illinois streets from 1:30-1:45 p.m. for the march to the south steps of the Indiana Statehouse from 1:45-2:30 p.m.

A post-march rally with speakers will take place there until 3 p.m.

For more information on the events, the schedule, travel and parking details, go to cutt.ly/INMFL2024 (case sensitive).

In announcing last November the national March for Life's theme for its Jan. 19 event in Washington—"Pro-Life: With Every Woman, For Every Child"—March for Life president Jeanne Mancini said that following the Supreme Court's ruling in *Dobbs*, she wanted to highlight the work the pro-life movement does to support women facing difficult or unplanned pregnancies.

Mancini said the theme was selected because "the false narrative around abortion, whether it's through mainstream media or the entertainment industry or academia, is that abortion is empowering and necessary."

As Catholics and people of faith, we believe nothing could be further from the truth. Mancini said as much.

"We disagree," she said. "Such fear-based messaging tries to convince women who are facing unexpected pregnancies that they're alone, that they are incapable, that they are ill-equipped to handle motherhood. We who are here today know that is just not true. We aren't saying that it's easy. But we are saying that it is right to choose life and we hold that choosing life is empowering, and that love saves lives."

In the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, there are many resources available to help expectant mothers and their unborn children in central and southern Indiana. Visit walkingwithmomsindy.org for more information.

If you are unable to attend any of the Jan. 21 and 22 events, we encourage you to pray: pray for the success of the gatherings, pray for a conversion of hardened or uninformed hearts, and pray for an end to abortion.

Please Lord, may it be so.

—Mike Krokos

Reflection/Sean Gallagher

Despite freeing of captives, suffering of Church in Nicaragua continues

"If one part [of the body] suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if one part is honored, all the parts share its joy" (1 Cor 12:26).



St. Paul wrote this statement some 2,000 years ago in a letter to the Christians in Corinth about the unity of the Church as Christ's mystical body.

The truth of these words has been witnessed to in recent days as two bishops, 15 priests and two seminarians who had been unjustly imprisoned in Nicaragua were released on Jan. 14 and sent to Rome through diplomatic efforts by the Vatican.

Catholics around the world can rejoice that these faithful witnesses to Christ are now free. They can also take rightful pride for the reason why the government of Nicaraguan dictator Daniel Ortega saw them (falsely) as a threat.

These men openly criticized the human rights abuses perpetrated by the government. Ultimately, though, the Ortega regime fears most the consistent public witness that the Church and these men give to Gospel values and how the Christian people working together with the help of God's grace are a firm foundation of a just society.

This is why, in addition to imprisoning these clergy and seminarians, the Nicaraguan government has shut down Catholic radio stations, closed Catholic universities and expelled members of St. Teresa of Calcutta's Missionaries of Charity and other religious orders.

Ortega fears the people of his country being swayed by this alternative way of living as a society, one that is based on human dignity rooted in seeing people as made in the image and likeness of God.

That is why Bishop Rolando Álvarez of Matagalpa, Nicaragua—at the center of the group of clergy and seminarians freed on Sunday—had been unjustly convicted of treason and held in captivity for more than 500 days. It was his courageous and consistent witness to the Gospel and against the government's abuses that Ortega feared the most.

In recent weeks, it appeared that even

mentioning Bishop Álvarez's name in public was a crime. Bishop Isidoro Mora of Siuna, Nicaragua, was arrested on Dec. 20, the day after he had publicly prayed for him by name in a Mass in the cathedral of Matagalpa.

While having these bishops, priests and seminarians freed from their unjust imprisonment is cause for all Catholics to rejoice, it must be remembered that Catholics across Nicaragua continue to suffer.

So, as the Church there suffers, so does the rest of the mystical body of Christ around the world. According to PillarCatholic.com, more than 110 priests, around 15% of the country's clergy, have been forced into exile since 2019. The Diocese of Matagalpa has arguably suffered the most—the number of its current priests dropping to around 20 from the 51 it had just five years ago.

The terms under which Bishop Álvarez, Bishop Mora and the rest were freed on Sunday remain unclear as this newspaper goes to print.

But one thing is known. Ortega has rid himself—at least in Nicaragua itself—of these Christian witnesses who are inconvenient to his continued dictatorial rule.

Given the continued exile of clergy from Nicaragua, it can seem that the Ortega regime is slowly succeeding in picking apart the leadership of the Church there piece by piece.

Prayers for the suffering Church in Nicaragua are needed now more than ever.

But this is not a moment to lose hope. As some clergy are forced into exile, others are ordained. Nine men were ordained as priests for the Archdiocese of Managua, Nicaragua, on Jan. 6, in the midst of this time of persecution there.

In any case, the witness of the saints from the Church's earliest days to those seen under communist governments in eastern Europe in the second half of the 20th century assures us that the consciences of the people of God, awakened and sustained by Gospel values, cannot be chained and will ultimately triumph in God's good time.

(Sean Gallagher is a reporter for The Criterion.) †

Letter to the Editor

Like Jesus, let's give God our best gift: obedience to his will and serving others

It has always bothered me: why would God, who is love personified, ask his Son to undergo tremendous suffering and a horrible death, especially when his Son had asked to let this fate pass him by, if possible?

The answer has to be that God did this for our benefit. But how does Jesus' dying a horrible death benefit us?

Could it be that an angry God demanded that a ransom of suffering and death be paid to him before our sins would be forgiven, like the human sacrifices of the Aztecs to their "gods"? But isn't such a bloodthirsty demand uncharacteristic of a loving God?

Another possible answer is that it wasn't God's demand that a price be paid to redeem us. It was our fallen nature, requiring a boost from a loving God to regain our union with him.

Jesus came not only to teach us with his words about how to live, but also to give us an example with his life of how to live.

By his suffering and death, he has put into action his words to turn the other

cheek and has enabled us to be reunited with his Father.

His courage in the face of suffering and death inspires us to live with that same courage and dedication. And he has given us the Eucharist to bind us to him in his union with the Father and the Holy Spirit, to inspire us and guide us on our way to the Father.

Adam and Eve's disobedience to God's will by choosing self over the other was replaced by Jesus' obedience to God's will by choosing others over self, even if it meant intense suffering and death.

Just as Jesus' love of his Father was rewarded with resurrection, so too will we be rewarded with resurrection if we offer God our best gift—obedience to his will and living lives of loving service to him and others.

Maybe the best answer to the question is who can comprehend the mind of God.

Mike Walro
Hanover

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Christ the Cornerstone

Protecting the unborn begins with loving moms, changing hearts

“Through the words, the actions, and the very person of Jesus, we are given the possibility of knowing the complete truth concerning the value of human life.” (St. John Paul II)

On Monday, Jan. 22, parishes and dioceses throughout the United States have committed to praying for the legal protection of unborn children.

We believe that all human life is sacred and that all of us—individuals, families, and our society as a whole—have a moral obligation to protect and defend our unborn children and all vulnerable members of our community. We believe that this moral obligation must be embedded in our laws and in the hearts and minds of all people of good will regardless of their religious beliefs or political affiliations.

In “We Are One in Christ: A Pastoral Letter on Fundamentals of Christian Anthropology,” published in 2018, I wrote:

Respect for the human person proceeds by way of respect for the principle that “everyone should look upon his neighbor [without any exception] as ‘another self,’ above all bearing in mind his life and the means necessary for living it with

dignity” (“Gaudium et Spes,” #27.1). No legislation could by itself do away with the fears, prejudices, and attitudes of pride and selfishness which obstruct the establishment of truly fraternal societies. Such behavior will cease only through the charity that finds in every man a “neighbor,” a brother.

In recent years, we have seen significant changes in legislation and public policy regarding the right to life of unborn children. Some decisions—such as the Supreme Court’s decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade*—have been most welcome.

Other actions at the state and local level (in our neighboring states of Illinois, Michigan and Ohio, for example) have been serious setbacks for the legal protection and fundamental right to life of the unborn. Clearly, our work is not done.

In fact, legal protection, by itself, will never be enough. What’s needed above all is a broad-based conversion of mind and heart that takes root in our society. This conversion must begin with each of us, and it must express itself in words and actions that are authentic, self-sacrificing and respectful of the human rights and dignity of all our sisters and brothers, whether born or unborn.

“We Are One in Christ” affirms what it means to be caring human persons and faithful missionary disciples of Jesus Christ:

The duty of making oneself a neighbor to others and actively serving them becomes even more urgent when it involves the disadvantaged, in whatever area this may be. “As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me” [Mt 25:40]. This same duty extends to those who think or act differently from us. The teaching of Christ goes so far as to require the forgiveness of offenses. He extends the commandment of love, which is that of the New Law, to all enemies. Liberation in the spirit of the Gospel is incompatible with hatred of one’s enemy as a person, but not with hatred of the evil that he does as an enemy (Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1931–1933).

This attitude—of loving the sinner while hating the sin—is especially important in the fight for legal protection of the unborn. Authentic Christian love is due to everyone, especially pregnant women who consider having an abortion.

To be pro-life is to find every opportunity to support and encourage expectant mothers and to help them make courageous choices knowing that

they are not alone. By supporting Project Rachel and other forms of ministry to those who seek healing and recovery from the woundedness of having been engaged in the abortion process, we demonstrate that we truly reverence and respect all human life.

We cannot be selectively pro-life. Either all life is sacred, or people are free to pick and choose for themselves who to love and who to hate.

Legal protection for the unborn is an essential first step, but the work we are called to do as missionary disciples of Jesus Christ extends far beyond the law. We are challenged to love others—including our enemies—in ways that will change their hearts.

To truly protect our unborn children, we must first love their mothers with the unconditional love of God. Then we must work tirelessly for the legal and social safeguards that will ensure that every unborn child is wanted and welcomed by us, the members of God’s family.

May God bless all unborn children and their mothers. May Christ dwell in their hearts through faith, and may charity be the root and foundation of their lives (Eph 3:17). †



Cristo, la piedra angular

Proteger a los niños no nacidos empieza por amar a sus madres y cambiar los corazones de otros

“A través de las palabras, las acciones y la persona misma de Jesús, se nos da la posibilidad de conocer la verdad completa sobre el valor de la vida humana.” (San Juan Pablo II)

El lunes 22 de enero, las parroquias y diócesis de todo Estados Unidos se han comprometido a rezar por la protección legal de los niños no nacidos.

Creemos que toda vida humana es sagrada y que todos nosotros—individuos, familias y nuestra sociedad en su conjunto—tenemos la obligación moral de proteger y defender a nuestros hijos no nacidos y a todos los miembros vulnerables de nuestra comunidad. Creemos que esta obligación moral debe reflejarse en nuestro marco jurídico y en los corazones y mentes de todas las personas de buena voluntad, independientemente de sus creencias religiosas o afiliaciones políticas.

“En Somos uno con Jesucristo: Carta pastoral sobre los fundamentos de la antropología cristiana,” publicada en 2018, escribí:

El respeto a la persona humana supone respetar este principio: “Que cada uno [sin excepción] debe considerar al prójimo como “otro yo”, cuidando, en primer lugar, de su vida y de los medios necesarios para vivirla dignamente” [“Gaudium et Spes,” #27.1]. Ninguna

legislación podría por sí misma hacer desaparecer los temores, los prejuicios, las actitudes de soberbia y de egoísmo que obstaculizan el establecimiento de sociedades verdaderamente fraternas. Estos comportamientos sólo cesan con la caridad que ve en cada hombre un «prójimo,” hermano.

En los últimos años, hemos sido testigos de cambios significativos en la legislación y la política pública en relación con el derecho a la vida de los niños no nacidos. Algunas decisiones—como la del Tribunal Supremo de anular el caso *Roe v. Wade*—han sido muy bien recibidas.

Otras acciones a nivel estatal y local (en nuestros estados vecinos de Illinois, Michigan y Ohio, por ejemplo) han supuesto serios reveses para la protección legal y el derecho fundamental a la vida de los no nacidos. Está claro que nuestro trabajo no ha terminado.

De hecho, la protección jurídica, por sí misma, nunca será suficiente. Lo que se necesita por encima de todo es una amplia conversión de mente y corazón que eche raíces en nuestra sociedad. Esta conversión debe comenzar con cada uno de nosotros, y debe expresarse en palabras y acciones que sean auténticas, abnegadas y respetuosas con los derechos humanos y la dignidad de todos nuestros hermanos y hermanas, hayan nacido o no.

“Somos uno con Jesucristo” afirma lo que significa ser personas humanas solidarias y fieles discípulos misioneros del Señor:

El deber de hacerse prójimo de los demás y de servirlos activamente se hace más acuciante todavía cuando éstos están más necesitados en cualquier sector de la vida humana. “Cuanto hicisteis a uno de estos hermanos míos más pequeños, a mí me lo hicisteis” [Mt 25:40]. Este mismo deber se extiende a los que piensan y actúan diversamente de nosotros. La enseñanza de Cristo exige incluso el perdón de las ofensas. Extiende el mandamiento del amor que es el de la nueva ley a todos los enemigos. La liberación en el espíritu del Evangelio es incompatible con el odio al enemigo en cuanto persona, pero no con el odio al mal que hace en cuanto enemigo (Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica, #1931-1933).

Esta actitud—amar al pecador al tiempo que se odia el pecado—es especialmente importante en la lucha por la protección legal del no nacido. El auténtico amor cristiano se debe a todos, especialmente a las mujeres embarazadas que se plantean abortar.

Ser provida es encontrar todas las oportunidades para apoyar y animar a las futuras madres y ayudarlas a tomar decisiones valientes sabiendo que no

están solas. Al apoyar el Proyecto Raquel y otras formas de ministerio para quienes buscan la curación y la recuperación de la herida que supone haber participado en el proceso del aborto, demostramos que realmente reverenciamos y respetamos toda vida humana.

No podemos ser selectivamente provida; o toda la vida es sagrada, o la gente es libre de elegir por sí misma a quién amar y a quién odiar.

La protección legal del no nacido es un primer paso esencial, pero la labor que estamos llamados a realizar como discípulos misioneros de Jesucristo va mucho más allá de la ley. Se nos desafía a amar a los demás—incluidos nuestros enemigos—de forma tal que cambien sus corazones.

Para proteger verdaderamente a nuestros niños no nacidos, primero debemos amar a sus madres con el amor incondicional de Dios. Entonces debemos trabajar incansablemente para tener las salvaguardias legales y sociales que garanticen que todo niño no nacido sea deseado y acogido por nosotros, los miembros de la familia de Dios.

Que Dios bendiga a todos los niños no nacidos y a sus madres. Que Cristo habite en sus corazones por la fe y que la caridad sea la raíz y el fundamento de sus vidas (Ef 3:17). †

Events Calendar

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

February 2

Gainbridge Fieldhouse, 125 South Pennsylvania St., Indianapolis. **Covenant Resources Miscarriage Ministry Night with the Indiana Pacers**, 7 p.m., Pacers vs. Kings, discounted prices range from \$30-58, includes free Pacers branded hat; food voucher for a hot dog, chips, and Pepsi product; chance to shoot a free throw on the court after the game, a portion of each ticket purchased will go back to the Covenant Resources Miscarriage Ministry. Information, tickets: 812-212-3463, contactus@covenantresources.org, tinyurl.com/crmmpacers24.

February 2, March 1

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

Our Lady of the Greenwood Church, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. **First Friday bilingual celebration of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus**, Mass 6 p.m. followed by adoration until 9 p.m.,

sacrament of reconciliation available. Information: 317-750-7309, msross1@hotmail.com.

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

February 3

Maryland Community Church, 4700 SR 46, Terre Haute. **Annual Soup Bowl Benefit**, 3-5 p.m., guests select bowl crafted by local artists and sample soups from local restaurants and chefs, \$30 per person. Information, tickets: 812-232-1447, jmurphy@ccthin.org, tinyurl.com/THSB24.

All Saints Parish, St. John Campus, 25743 State Route 1, Guilford. **Married Couples Event: Listening is the Beginning of Love**, 6-9 p.m., Dynamic Catholic speakers Jack and Katie Beers presenting, free, register by Feb. 1. Information: 812-576-4302, clairekeck.asp@gmail.com.

February 3, March 2

St. John Paul II Church, 2253 St. Joe Road W., Sellersburg. **First Saturday Devotion**, 8 a.m., rosary, litany, consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, confession 8-8:30 a.m. followed by 8:30 a.m. Mass. Information: 812-246-2512.

February 7

Monthly Prayer with Sisters of Providence: "Prayer on St. Valentine's Day," for single Catholic women ages 18-42, via Zoom, 7-7:45 p.m., seventh day of each month. Information, registration: Events.SistersofProvidence.org, 361-500-9505, jluna@spsmw.org.

February 12

Holy Name of Jesus Church, 89 N. 17th Ave., Beech Grove. **2411 Memorial Mass**, 1 p.m., honoring 2,411 babies aborted by Dr. Ulrich Klopfer and found on his property in 2019, reception to follow, Indiana Attorney General Todd Rokita scheduled to speak. Information: 317-784-5454.

February 13, March 12

Church of the Immaculate Conception, 1 Sisters of

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

February 15

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

February 17

St. Michael Parish, 11400 Farmers Lane NE, Greenville. **The Eucharist and Your Marriage**, 4-7 p.m., Catholic therapist and author Greg Schutte presenting, second of "Three Great Dates" events sponsored by Catalyst Catholic in New Albany Deanery (May 11, 2024: "Supporting Your Spouse's Dreams" with Steve and Jenni Angrisano), \$20 per person, includes dinner, childcare available, registration required by Feb. 11. Information, registration: catalystcatholic.org/3dates.

February 21

All Saints Parish, St. Joseph Campus, 7536 Church Lane, West Harrison. **Double Feature with noted Theology of the Body speaker Jason Evert**, 6-9:30 p.m., for adults and youths ages 13-17 accompanied by an adult, "Purified: A Life-changing Event for Families" 6-7 p.m., "Gender and the Theology of Your Body" 7-9 p.m., adoration and confession 9-9:30 p.m., \$25, \$10 discount for registered parishioners of All Saints in Dearborn County, St. Lawrence in Lawrenceburg, St. Mary in Greensburg and St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross in Bright by using code DCC at checkout. Information, registration: kimsprague@dccatholics.com, bit.ly/3PJ7RID.

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

SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi School, 5901 Oliver Branch Road, Greenwood. **Open House**, 3-7 p.m., offering Early Childhood Ministry for infants six weeks and older, preschool and grades K-8.

Information: 317-859-4673, admissions@ss-fc.org.

February 22

St. Joan of Arc Parish, 4217 Central Ave., Indianapolis. **Cor Jesu**, 7-8 p.m., night of communal prayer, adoration, Benediction and fellowship, free. Information: megt2014@gmail.com.

March 7

Monthly Prayer with Sisters of Providence: "Prayer on Women's History Month," for single Catholic women ages 18-42, via Zoom, 7-7:45 p.m., seventh day of each month. Information, registration: Events.SistersofProvidence.org, 361-500-9505, jluna@spsmw.org.

March 9

The Schrott Center for the Arts, 610 W. 46th St., Indianapolis. **The Passion of Joan of Arc Silent Film with Orchestra**, 7:30 p.m., live performance of Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra and chorus, composition by Richard Einhorn, tickets \$35-\$45, students and children free. Information, tickets: 317-940-9607, info@icomusic.org, tinyurl.com/icojoan24. †

Retreats and Programs

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

January 27

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **Holocaust Speaker: Son of a Survivor**, 9:30-11:30 a.m., son of Holocaust survivor Steve Coppel presenting, \$30. Information, registration: 812-933-6437, center@oldenburgosf.com, oldenburgfranciscancenter.org.

February 1

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Divine Wine and Art with Heart**, 5-9 p.m., artist Mandi Voegelé presenting, \$45, includes all art supplies, snacks and beverage. Registration: archindy.org/fatima, 317-545-7681, lcoons@archindy.org.

February 3

Benedict Inn Retreat & Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **Embracing the Lenten Journey: From Ashes to Resurrection Joy**, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Benedictine Sister Susan Marie Lindstrom presenting, \$75, includes lunch. Information, registration: benedictinn.org/programs, 317-788-7581, benedictinn@benedictinn.org.

February 7, March 6

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

center@oldenburgosf.com, oldenburgfranciscancenter.org.

February 9, March 8

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.

February 14

Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **Personal Day of Retreat**, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., \$40, includes private room for the day and lunch; spiritual direction available for additional \$30, must be scheduled in advance.

Information, registration: benedictinn.org/programs, 317-788-7581, benedictinn@benedictinn.org.

February 15

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

February 24

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat

House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Embracing our Threefold Call to Holiness as Priest, Prophet and King**, 8 a.m.-3 p.m., Deacon Robert Beyke presenting, \$45, includes Mass and lunch Registration: archindy.org/fatima, 317-545-7681, lcoons@archindy.org.

February 27-29

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Women of the World**, Benedictine Brother Zachary Wilberding presenting, bring Bible, \$300 single, \$425 double.

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

March 1-3

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Finding Peace in the Chaos of Life—a Silent Guided Retreat**, 6 p.m. Fri.-noon Sun., Father Jeff Godecker and spiritual director Mary Shaffner presenting, \$220, includes accommodations, program materials, breakfast, lunch and dinner on Saturday and breakfast on Sunday. Registration: archindy.org/fatima, 317-545-7681, lcoons@archindy.org. †

Wedding Reception for Married Couples dinner/dance set for Feb. 10 in Greenwood

Celebrate Marriage Ministry will hold a Wedding Reception for Married Couples dinner and dance at Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish Life Center, 399 S. Meridian St., in Greenwood, from 6-11 p.m. on Feb. 10.

The evening includes dinner, dancing with optional dance lessons and door prizes. There will be a cash bar with

beer and wine. Doors open and optional dance lessons begin at 6 p.m.

The cost is \$80 per couple or \$240 for a table of four couples. Registration is required by Feb. 3.

To register or for more information, go to tinyurl.com/CRwedreception24 or contact Marcy Renken at 317-489-1557 or info@celebratemarriageministry.com. †

Wedding Anniversaries

WILLIAM AND JEAN (STENGER) DWENGER, members of St. Louis Parish in Batesville, will celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary on Feb. 1.

The couple was married in St. Michael Church in Brookville on Feb. 1, 1964.

They have four children: Karen Addison, Mary Brill, Bill and Mike Dwenger.

The couple also has 12 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.



DAVID AND ESTHER (POPP) WHEATLEY, members of St. Mary Parish in Lanesville, celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on Jan. 18.

The couple was married in Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church in New Albany on Jan. 18, 1964.

They have four children: Sandra Krekel, David, Steven and Tim Wheatley.

The couple also has 10 grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.



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

Woman's Day of Reflection to take place at Saint Meinrad Archabbey on March 6

A day of reflection for women called "Created in the Image of God" will be offered at Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., in St. Meinrad, from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. CT on March 6.

The day will include a blend of presentations, group discussion and time for personal reflection on the meaning of the image of God for women, their relationships with God

and others, and their lives in the world.

The presenter is Dr. Kimberly Baker, associate professor of patristics at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology.

The cost to attend is \$55. For more information or to register, go to saintmeinrad.org/retreats, call 812-357-6611 or e-mail guestservices@saintmeinrad.edu. †

St. Augustine Parish is 'right at the heart of it all' in Jeffersonville

By Natalie Hoefler

Two blocks from the main thoroughfare of Old Jeffersonville Historic District. Three blocks from a walking bridge over the Ohio River connecting Jeffersonville to Louisville, Ky. Four blocks from the Ohio River itself.

As pastor Father Adam Ahern says, "St. Augustine Parish is right at the heart of it all."

The faith community was founded in 1851 and named in honor of Jeffersonville's first resident priest, Father Auguste Bessonies. While 173 years have passed, the parish still actively spreads the Gospel in the river town, particularly through outreach with the members of Most Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Jeffersonville, for which Father Ahern also serves as pastor.

"We do a lot to support the Center for Lay Ministries in Jeffersonville in their work with the homeless and impoverished," he says, including providing volunteers for the organization's food pantry and other outreach efforts to help those in need in the community.

"We are also very engaged with the local Knights of Columbus, helping with the outreach and charitable work they do.

"And our annual Advent project is a big deal where families sign up and we give them food and other necessities and small gifts. This [past] year, we took care of over 60 families."

In a faith community where "they see themselves as family and are very faithful to each other," members care for their fellow Catholics as well, says Father Ahern.

He calls the two parishes' shared homebound ministry "very robust.

"They don't just take Communion to [Catholics in] nursing homes, hospitals or sick at home. They're engaged. They sit and talk to the people they take Communion to."

In fact, both faith communities support the

homebound, not just the ministry members, says Father Ahern, noting that at Christmas "we send them a food basket, and the students at Sacred Heart School send them cards several times a year."

St. Augustine Church itself is a "must-see," he says.

The current structure was built after a fire in December 1903 destroyed the original church. Father Ahern calls the current church "stunning, particularly the interior."

The walls and high altar are made of Italian white marble, with a relief carving of the Last Supper in the middle.

The stained-glass windows depict the Joyful, Sorrowful and Glorious mysteries of the rosary (minus the "crowning of thorns" and "carrying the cross").

"The colors, paired with the white marble, are just gorgeous," he says.

He hopes to see many visitors worshipping at Mass at St. Augustine Church (call 812-282-2677 or go to jeffersonvillecatholic.org for Mass times).

"All are invited, all are welcome," he says. "Come join us and enjoy the beautiful celebration of the Liturgy of the Eucharist with the whole communion of saints here in Jeffersonville."

'The world's largest Beatles-inspired music festival'

As for a good time to visit Jeffersonville and worship at St. Augustine, Father Ahern has several thoughts.

"Last fall we had an Oktoberfest, our first big event since COVID," he says. "We hope to have it again this year."

Summer is a good time to come, too, he says, with events and concerts at the Jeffersonville Riverstage and the Big Four Station Park (which every Memorial Day weekend holds Abbey Road on the River, "the world's largest Beatles-inspired music festival," according to the event's website).

Or come in December, Father Ahern suggests, when you can drive through an underground Christmas light display at Mega Cavern in Louisville.

Father Ahern couldn't pick just one



favorite restaurant—"it depends on what you're in the mood for"—but he recommended H.M. Franks an' O'Shea's for "really good pub food," Red Yeti for "classic American food with a unique spin," Parlour for "some great brick-oven pizza," and Union Restaurant and Game Yard "where you can play cornhole, ping pong and a bunch of other games outside."

Other sites to take in include:

—Big Four Bridge, a converted railway truss providing a 2-mile round-trip walking/biking path over the Ohio River to Louisville. For more information, go to bit.ly/BigFourBridge.

—NoCo Arts and Cultural District, offering a "Story Trail" and "Paintbox Garden," with frequent pop-up markets from local artists. For more information, go to www.jeffersonvilleart.com/noco-district.

—Vintage Fire Museum, featuring fire engines and artifacts dating back to 1756. For more information, hours and

cost, call 812-282-4705 or go to www.vintagefiremuseum.org.

—Howard Steamboat Museum, located in an 1894, 22-room mansion, home of the Howard steamboat-building family. For more information, hours and cost, call 812-283-3728 or go to www.howardsteamboatmuseum.org.

—Jeffersonville Riverstage, jeffparks.org/jammin-in-jeff (2024 event list not posted as of *The Criterion* going to press).

—Annual Big Four Arts Festival, weekend after Labor Day, bigfourbridgeartsfestival.com.

(*Mass Excursions* is a monthly feature highlighting an archdiocesan parish and local attractions, encouraging a trip to the area that includes Mass with the members of that parish. Each month will highlight a parish in a different deanery to showcase faith communities throughout central and southern Indiana.) †



Pope Francis says he's not thinking of resigning, talks about blessings

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—While a pope can resign, Pope Francis said it is not something he is thinking about or worrying about now.

"It is neither a thought, nor a worry, nor even a desire; it is a possibility, open to all popes. But for the moment it is not at the center of my thoughts, my worries, my feelings," he said in an interview on Italian television on Jan. 14.

"As long as I feel I still have the capacity to serve, I will go on," the 87-year-old pope said. "When I can no longer do it, it will be time to think about it."

Pope Francis made the comments in an interview, lasting more than 50 minutes on the program "*Che Tempo Che Fa*" on Italy's Nove channel.

He also said that "in August I have to make a trip to Polynesia" and that sometime after that, he hopes to go to Argentina for the first time since his election in 2013.

Pope Francis was asked how he imagines hell if he really believes God forgives everyone who asks.

"It's difficult to imagine it," the pope said. "What I would say is not a dogma of faith, but my personal thought: I like to think hell is empty; I hope it is."

Fabio Fazio, the program's host, asked the pope if

he ever feels alone, especially when there is negative reaction to his decisions—for example, his approval of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith's declaration that a priest can offer informal blessings to gay couples as long as it is clear the Church is not equating their union to marriage.

"Yes, as you say, when you make a decision, there is a price of loneliness that you have to pay, and sometimes decisions are not accepted, but most of the time, when decisions are not accepted, it is because they are not understood," the pope responded.

Sometimes, rather than trying to understand and to have a direct, "fraternal discussion" about a decision, he said, people just hang on to their doubts and become "a resistance and make ugly conclusions.

"This has happened with the recent decision about blessing everyone," Pope Francis said.

But, he insisted, "the Lord blesses everyone, everyone. The Lord blesses everyone who is capable of being baptized, that is, every person. But then people must enter into conversation with the Lord's blessing and see what path the Lord is proposing for them."

The pastoral work of the Church, he continued, is to "take them by the hand and help them to go down that road, not condemn them from the start.

"I always tell confessors: Forgive everything and treat people as kindly as the Lord treats us. And then if you want to help people, you can talk and help them move on, but forgive everyone," he said.

Pope Francis repeated his conviction that God never

tires of forgiving people, but people tire of asking God's forgiveness.

"The Lord waits for us, he knocks at the door of many hardened hearts so that they will have the ability to recognize the wrong they are doing," he said.

Fazio asked the pope about the phrase in the classic Act of Contrition: "I detest all my sins because of thy just punishments."

"Sin deserves punishment," the pope said. But he said he believes the "literary expression" in the classic version of the prayer "is too harsh given God's love. I prefer to say, 'Because by sinning I have saddened your heart.'

"In my 54 years of priesthood—I've been a priest 54 years; I'm old," he said. "This is a confession. In these 54 years, I've only denied forgiveness once because of the person's hypocrisy. Just once. I've always forgiven everything even when I knew the person could fall again, but the Lord forgives us. He helps us not to fall or to fall less, but he always forgives."

Asked what worries him, Pope Francis responded that "some things do scare me. Some things frighten me. For example, this escalation of war frightens me."

With nuclear weapons stockpiled, he said, one wonders "how will we end up, like Noah's ark? That scares me, the capacity for self-destruction that humanity has today."

Fazio also asked the pope why he always asks people to pray for him.

"Because I'm a sinner and I need God's help to remain faithful to the vocation he has given me," the pope responded.

"The Lord called me to be a priest, a bishop," he said. "As a bishop, I have a great responsibility in the Church. I recognize my weaknesses, which is why I must ask for prayers, that everyone pray that I remain faithful in serving the Lord, that I don't end up with the attitude of a mediocre shepherd who does not take care of his flock." †



'The Lord blesses everyone, everyone. The Lord blesses everyone who is capable of being baptized, that is, every person. But then people must enter into conversation with the Lord's blessing and see what path the Lord is proposing for them.'

—Pope Francis

MIRACLE CHILD

continued from page 1

first of three signs of God’s presence that led to a turning point for their daughter.

They believe the second one occurred as they took a weeklong family vacation to Sanibel, Fla.—right before they headed to a Houston hospital to continue Kyndi’s care.

A perfect match, a full life

The family had vacationed in Sanibel for years and wanted to share it together once more, in case it was the last time for Kyndi.

“One night, there was a huge windstorm,” Dan recalled. “The next morning, we discovered a live sand dollar shell on the second-story balcony, just below the window facing the ocean. The sand dollar was unbroken from its windy journey from the ocean.”

Curious about the sand dollar, Dan spent the next day trying to learn more about it. He came across a legend that connected it to the birth and death of Christ.

The legend noted that if you closely examine one side of the sand dollar, “you’ll see that you find here four nail holes and a fifth one made by a Roman’s spear.” On the other side, there’s “the Easter lily, its center a star that appeared unto the shepherds and led them from afar.”

“When I looked it up, we felt it was a sign from God,” Dan said.

Then came the third sign they believe God gave them.

“The treatment at M.D. Anderson [the

Houston hospital] led to a bone marrow transplant,” Dan noted. “There were about 10 million in the bone marrow registry. Two matches were found in a short period of time, which was in itself amazing, and one was a perfect match. It was from a young, 23-year-old man from Germany. After the bone marrow treatment, Kyndi was free of the lymphoma.”

Kyndi lived for 16 more years. During that time, she enjoyed painting, rock climbing, cooking with her mom, and sharing time with her family, especially her three nieces and her nephew.

She was also involved in Gilda’s Club, a cancer survivors’ group named in honor of Gilda Radner, a comedienne and actress who died of cancer.

“Kyndi started going there when she got back from her transplant at M.D. Anderson,” Dan said. “She knew a lot of people, and she helped other people with cancer to deal with it.

“After she died, we had a memorial for her at Gilda’s Club. There were a lot of people who came forward to express they were going to miss her because they came to her to bounce off their feelings. She was very good in helping other cancer survivors.”

‘God is there for us’

Kyndi died of an apparent heart attack in 2019, on Nov. 25, her dad’s birthday. She was 43.

“It was devastating when she died,” her mother said. “It was so sudden.”

Dan added, “We miss her deeply, and we think about her every day. It was wonderful that God gave her more years on Earth to be with us. We cherished having her with us.”

During the viewing for Kyndi, her family gave small sand dollars to the people who came to honor her life.

“We thought it was such an inspiration to us that we thought it would be an inspiration to other people to know the significance of the sand dollar and the legend behind it,” Dan said.

Her parents also included an image of a sand dollar on her gravestone, which is also marked with the first and last lines of “The Story of the Sand Dollar”:

There’s a lovely little legend that I would like to tell, of the birth and death of Jesus found in this lovely shell.

This simple little symbol Christ left for you, (Kyndi) and me, to help us spread the Gospel through all eternity.

The heartbreak continues for her parents. So does their appreciation of God, his presence in their lives and the gift of their 16 extra years with Kyndi.

“I read about miracles in the Bible—Jesus giving sight to the blind and saving someone’s life,” Dan said.



The headstone of Kyndra “Kyndi” Akin shares some of the details of her life and the impact she had on people. (Submitted photo)

“It’s different when you live through a miracle. It taught me that miracles do exist.

“And it taught me about the power of prayer. Through all this, our church and so many people prayed for Kyndi. It transformed me from having a faith in God to knowing, without a doubt, that God is there for us.” †

ICC

continued from page 1

as access to ICAN, the Indiana Catholic Action Network. Those who sign up for ICAN receive action alerts on important legislation and ways to contact their elected representatives.

The website also links to a weekly podcast during the legislative session, which is hosted by Espada and Alexander Mingus, associate director of the ICC. In keeping with priorities outlined by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, the ICC leaders have often spoken on the concept of faithful citizenship—the duty and responsibility that Catholics have to bring their faith to the public forum.

“We invite everyone to participate, to reach out to their legislators, so that it’s the entire Indiana Catholic Action Network responding to the bills that have great moral consequence,” Mingus said.

While noting that many lawmakers have indicated they want to get through the session with “as little controversy

as possible,” Mingus said that the ICC will be interested in many key legislative priorities this year. Among them are major agenda items Gov. Eric Holcomb outlined in his Jan. 9 State of the State address, including increasing disaster relief funding, improving childhood literacy and expanding Indiana’s child care workforce to help more working parents statewide.

The ICC leaders also expect to track legislation aimed at affordable housing, legal rights for tenants and protecting children online. One issue likely to arise again is providing driving cards for undocumented Indiana residents who cannot prove their lawful status.

Indiana is home to an estimated 100,000 undocumented residents, many of whom have begun the process to become citizens, and the cards would allow them to drive legally and to purchase car insurance. The ICC has joined other advocates in supporting this legislation in the past, maintaining that it would help address basic human needs while offering larger economic and public safety benefits. Last year, driving card legislation gained more traction than it ever had before at the Statehouse after passing out of committee in the Senate, but stalling in the Appropriations Committee.

Pro-life initiatives have always been at the forefront of the ICC’s priorities, and the last few years have seen significant strides in protecting the unborn in Indiana following the U.S. Supreme Court’s overturning of the *Roe v. Wade* decision in 2022. But Espada and Mingus emphasize that pro-life efforts involve numerous other issues,

including the death penalty and assisted suicide—both of which the Catholic Church strongly opposes.

Assisted suicide is now legal in 10 states, and legislation has been introduced at the Statehouse numerous times through the years to allow the practice in Indiana. ICC leaders say they will continue monitoring developments on this issue.

“There are always bad bills that we oppose,” Mingus said. “Some of those will die quietly, and others make their way along the process and we have to be more active in our opposition. There are nearly 1,000 bills that will be filed in this session, so that’s a lot of review that we have to do, and a lot of discernment to prioritize what’s most important for the Church to speak on during a given session. We ask for everyone’s prayers as we discern these important matters.”

The ICC now has parish liaisons throughout Indiana to assist with communication and advocacy efforts but can always use more, Espada said. Information about the liaison role may be found on the ICC’s website. In addition, Espada and Mingus welcome the opportunity to visit parishes and schools to discuss their work and Catholic social teaching, which guides everything the ICC does.

“To amplify the voice of the Church, we need the interest and engagement of all Catholics in our state—particularly now, at the start of a new legislative session,” Espada said. “We thank all of those who have been active with our ICAN network in the past, and we look forward to welcoming many more to our efforts.”

For more information and ways to get involved with the ICC and its mission, visit www.indianacc.org.

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



‘There are always bad bills that we oppose. Some of those will die quietly, and others make their way along the process and we have to be more active in our opposition. There are nearly 1,000 bills that will be filed in this session, so that’s a lot of review that we have to do.’

—Alexander Mingus, associate director of the Indiana Catholic Conference

MLK

continued from page 3

of Medgar Evers earlier that same year,” the cardinal recounted. “But there is something transfixing about the violent death of a child.

“Our hearts still ache at the memory of the vicious deaths of the little ones from Newton, Conn.; Uvalde, Texas; Parkland High School in Florida, and in far too many other places in our nation from the more recent past. The death of children anywhere ought to stun us all.”

But the sacrifice of the Birmingham four proved to be redemptive.

“Sixty years ago, those four youngsters’ brutal deaths were a powerful

force that compelled the U.S. Congress finally to take legislative action that led to the Civil Rights Bill of 1964,” the cardinal said. The bill is considered the broadest civil rights legislation passed since Reconstruction.

Aligning Rev. King’s “I Have a Dream” speech and a vision of a nation where people could live together in love, peace and harmony based on the content of their character, rather than the color of their skin, the cardinal encouraged attendees “to recall his always riveting words of a dream that must challenge us all to examine the content of our own characters.” But not as a hope, fantasy or mere suggestion.

Rev. King’s words were “a challenge for all of us, no matter what our race, age or ethnic heritage. Our personal character

needs development and constant attention. Our character is the very gatehouse of the virtues that we must pursue. Our character is the foundation of our integrity,” the cardinal said.

While the four children slaughtered in 1963 did not have the opportunity to “bring their character to full flower,” they still inspire, Cardinal Gregory said. “The memory of their premature deaths encourages all of us to develop our own character according to the highest principles of our nation and our religious heritage.

“We are all prodded to take up Dr. King’s admonition and warning that we live lives of integrity that are capable of withstanding the withering scrutiny of public examination—as well as the even more perfect summons

of God himself who, as the first reading [1 Sm 3:3b-10, 19] reminds us, calls each of us incessantly.”

The cardinal concluded by highlighting the ultimate goal of the U.S. civil rights movement—“to establish a society of justice” based on content of character, not by one’s skin color, age, gender, national origin, language, IQ, political opinion or any other attribute.

“Dr. King himself paid the ultimate price of real leadership” to realize his dream, the cardinal said, “as have countless others not only in the civil rights movement” but also while fighting struggles for human dignity around the world.

The civil rights leader was assassinated in Memphis, Tenn., on April 4, 1968, when he was 39 years old. †

SEEK

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the challenges—she has for young adults in the archdiocese.

The following is an edited version of that conversation.

Q. What was one of your favorite parts of SEEK this year?

A. “This was my ninth SEEK, and there’s something different every time. I think the best part this time was that we brought people with us. It was great to be able to accompany them. It’s so much better when you bring people with you, just to see people really encounter Jesus. To be able to walk with them, to see people fully alive and very joyful in receiving the sacraments. And of course, the liturgies at FOCUS conferences are just amazing.”

Q. Seeing 20,000 young adults from across the country come together for SEEK, what are some of the impressions you have of them?

A. “I’ve really been frustrated recently about people telling me, ‘Oh Gen Z, they’re not showing up.’ I think people haven’t taken the time to actually get to know anybody in that group [which includes college students and young adults up to age 27]. Certainly, it’s good to do studies of generations and give general trends, but these college students who were at SEEK are Gen Z. They took a week of their Christmas vacation to go to a Catholic conference. They paid a lot of money, or they fundraised it. And they want answers.

“They don’t want people to hold back from them, even if it’s a really hard truth. Or they’re really bought in, and they need to know they’re not alone. They want the culture to be better. They want their peers to be better. I just think there’s a lot of misunderstanding about who is this group of people. They’re very passionate.

“They want to take ownership, and I think we set the bar too low for them. What they really want to respond to is a really high bar, that it’s going to be really hard to follow Jesus, and they’re willing to make that sacrifice. They’re willing to take ownership and responsibility. And sometimes I think we’re not offering that to them.”

Q. When you see the level of involvement they want to have and the commitment to their faith that they do have, how does that shape what you try to do?

A. “That’s a great question. We’re trying to figure that out right now. I think we could be asking more of the people we work with. A challenge always for our office is that we don’t always have direct relationships with those young adults. So how can we form lay leadership to accompany them? Whether it’s a young



St. Louis Archbishop Mitchell T. Rozanski, the main celebrant, raises the host as he celebrates Mass on Jan. 1 during the SEEK24 conference at America’s Center Convention Complex in St. Louis. More than 20,000 participants attended the Jan. 1-5 conference held by the Fellowship of Catholic University Students. (OSV News photo/courtesy FOCUS)

adult who is a volunteer at their parish or a young adult or an older person being paid at the parish. Regardless, can we form them as a leader and walk with them, pray for them and accompany them so that they can do that with young adults?”

Q. You’ve mentioned that the contingent from the archdiocese included students from Butler University, DePauw University, Indiana University, Marian University, Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis and the University of Indianapolis. The archdiocese was also represented by campus ministers, college chaplains, priests, parish leaders, archdiocesan leaders, seminarians and the archbishop. Your office brought all of them together for a dinner at SEEK. Why was that important for you?

A. “I really wanted that to happen. There’s something to be said for investing in the place where you live. So many students never think about the diocese. They maybe don’t even know what a diocese is or what we do. They don’t know that we’re there to support them or we’re praying for them. I wanted them to have the opportunity to see that we, as an archdiocese, care really deeply about them. And that we have tasks for them.

“We don’t just want them to receive all these resources and financial help from the archdiocese. We actually want them to evangelize—and that we could reach the whole Archdiocese of Indianapolis, no problem at all. With 250 people there, it would not take that much time. But they have to say yes to that. And I wanted a chance to invite them into that mission.”

Q. Talk about the importance to you of having Archbishop Thompson at the dinner.

A. “I really wanted Archbishop to be there for both ends of it. I wanted Archbishop to see how many people from his archdiocese are invested in the work that the Church is doing and who want to help him do his job well—to shepherd everybody and evangelize. And I wanted them to see that Archbishop cares about them and that he has the same goal, which is to reach people for Christ and his Church—that we’re all aligned in that.

“He gave a 10-minute address at the beginning and talked about the need for everybody to be missionary disciples. It was really cool to see him go around the room and say hello to everybody. Something I’m already thinking about for next year is that it would be cool to have a table where each of the campuses picks a student to sit with Archbishop. He’d have the opportunity to hear their stories, why they came to SEEK, and what’s it’s been like for them to be Catholic as a college student, and how they’ve come to know Jesus or maybe how they’re still getting to know him.”

Q. How do you build off the momentum and the energy of the conference?

A. “One mistake you can make is to think a conference like that will feed you for the whole year. You really have to have plans in place. One of the things I would mention is that all the talks at SEEK this year are totally free online for anybody, which is



Attendees pray during the SEEK24 conference at America’s Center Convention Complex in St. Louis on Jan. 3. More than 20,000 participants attended the Jan. 1-5 conference held by the Fellowship of Catholic University Students. (OSV News photo/courtesy FOCUS)

something new. Seekreplay.com is the web address.

“Anybody can create a free account. Then you have access to all of the content from SEEK. So that’s a great resource to listen to, share with other people or to watch in a small group and discuss. There’s something for everybody on there, truly.

“I know the energy will go away, and that’s OK. It’s not all the mountain-top moments. At the end of the day, I know I have to be faithful to all the small things I set out to do—go to daily Mass, make time to pray every morning, spend time with other people in Bible study.”

Q. What are some of the plans and goals that the Office of Young Adult and College Campus Ministry has for the year ahead?

A. “Registration for volleyball will open soon. We’re already planning for Theology on Tap. Another project we’re working on this year is how to figure out how we get everybody in a Bible study. No small task, but that’s our hope and our dream—that anybody who comes to Theology on Tap this year will be invited into a Bible study. IndyCatholic.org is the best place to access that information. You can also sign up for our newsletter on that.”

Q. What’s your hope for young adults this year, and how can you help young adults achieve that hope?

A. “My hope for them is that they would have the opportunity to know Jesus deeply and that they would feel empowered by our office to share the Gospel—and to invite their co-workers, their roommates and their friends in a bold way into a relationship with Jesus.

“Something that I worry about is that I see a lot of young adults who come from wonderful campus ministries and then they come to Indianapolis or wherever they move to, and they find all their Catholic friends and that’s it. And that’s not the point. I don’t mean that in an accusing way, but what good is it to pray every day if your co-worker is living a life of sin and they have an eternal soul, and you never took the time with them?”

“Not that we have to convert everybody, but making an effort, getting to know them, getting to know their story and inviting them to hang out with your friends. Maybe even eventually inviting them to Mass or inviting them into a small group.

“I want people to know who Jesus is, and I don’t want them to have to continue to live a life of fear and anxiety and sin. I want them to live fully alive. I want them to have authentic relationships with other people. I think people need more than ever the message of Jesus’ mercy and forgiveness. That’s what I want for people.” †

Young adult conference gives Archbishop Thompson a feeling of ‘hope and joy’

Criterion staff report

For Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, the feeling was one of “hope and joy” as he witnessed more than 20,000 young adult Catholics from across the country

living their faith at the SEEK 2024 conference in St. Louis.

The conference from Jan. 1-5 is also a reminder to all Catholics about the call to be missionary disciples of Christ, a call that comes into even

sharper focus in a year that will also feature the National Eucharistic Revival and National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis on July 17-21.

“Participating in SEEK 2024 was an inspiring and energizing experience,” Archbishop Thompson noted. “Nearly 20,000 eucharistic-centered young adults, with more than 40 bishops, gathered in faith, devotion and dedication to celebrate their Catholic identity and witness as missionary disciples of Jesus Christ.

“Given the context of this year’s SEEK conference taking place between the two Synods on Synodality, the theme of co-responsibility readily comes to mind. In a synodal Church, Pope Francis reminds us, all the baptized are co-responsible for proclaiming and carrying out the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ. Each and

every baptized member, young and old, is called to holiness and mission.”

Evangelization, catechesis and an emphasis on the Eucharist are at the heart of that mission, a theme that was ever-present in the SEEK conference and will also be the focus of the events in Indianapolis this summer.

“Especially keeping in mind the National Eucharistic Revival and upcoming Congress, to be held in Indianapolis this July, the devotion to the Eucharist was certainly evident in the celebration of Mass, eucharistic adoration and sense of missionary spirit among all those participating in SEEK,” the archbishop noted.

“As a bishop, the incredible spirit and witness of so many young adults gathering to celebrate their Catholic faith inspires hope and joy.” †



‘Especially keeping in mind the National Eucharistic Revival and upcoming Congress, to be held in Indianapolis this July, the devotion to the Eucharist was certainly evident in the celebration of Mass, eucharistic adoration and sense of missionary spirit among all those participating in SEEK.’

—Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

Ohio House votes to override governor's veto of gender bill

(OSV News)—The Ohio House voted on Jan. 10 to override Republican Gov. Mike DeWine's recent veto of legislation that bans certain types of medical or surgical gender reassignment procedures for minors who identify as transgender and also prohibits athletes from competing on sports teams corresponding with their self-perceived gender identity opposite their biological sex.



Gov. Mike DeWine

In a Jan. 10 statement, DeWine stood by his veto.

"I continue to believe it is in the best interests of children for these medical decisions to be made by the child's parents and not by the government," he said.

Supporters of prohibitions on surgical or hormonal treatments for minors who identify as transgender say such legislation would prevent minors from making irreversible decisions as children they may later come to regret as adults. Critics of such measures argue that preventing those interventions could cause other harm to minors, such as mental health issues or an increased risk of self-harm.

Likewise, supporters of prohibitions on athletes who identify as transgender competing on teams opposite their biological sex argue it would adversely affect women's sports by allowing biological male competitors who may have an advantage over them in factors including weight and size. However, opponents argue such prohibitions are unfair to athletes who identify with a gender that is not their biological sex.

Ohio law requires a legislative supermajority, three-fifths of both the House and Senate, to override a governor's veto. Senate President Matt Huffman previously told Ohio local media the Senate is likely to follow suit on Jan. 24.

In a statement, state Rep. Michael J. Skindell, a Democrat, said the legislation "will endanger the lives of transgender youths all over Ohio."

"How can we say that our duty as state legislators is to uphold freedom and equal rights when we have endless state-sponsored bullying and targeted attacks on LGBTQIA+ youth in our state?" Skindell said.

State Rep. Gail Pavliga, a Republican who backed the override, said in a statement, "I voted to empower

parents, protect children and maintain the integrity of women's sports in Ohio.

"By voting with my colleagues in the House to override the governor's veto of House Bill 68, we are sending a clear message that these are fundamental priorities for us, and hope that the Senate will join us in doing so," Pavliga said.

In April, Ohio's NBC 4 reported the Ohio High School Athletic Association reported 19 biologically male youths who identify as transgender have participated in girls' sports in the past eight years, among them six high school students taking part during the 2022-23 school year. The group said about 400,000 athletes in grades 7-12 participate in its sanctioned sports each school year.

The Ohio Catholic Conference supported the passage of the bill.

In November written testimony, the Catholic organization said it "recognizes the significant distress, pain and complications caused by gender dysphoria," but argued that "concerns about human ecology with a humility about the empirical claims regarding medical best practices for minors experiencing gender dysphoria" should restrict transitions for minors. †

Fathers & Families Center builds strong fathers to strengthen families

Walking with Moms is a monthly feature highlighting organizations that help—and need support in helping—expecting and parenting mothers in need in central and southern Indiana.

Fathers & Families Center

2835 N. Illinois St.
Indianapolis, IN 46208
317-921-5935

Services: Every child deserves a chance to succeed, the chance to live a safe, happy, and healthy life. Fathers and Families Center strengthens families and communities so they can provide that chance. The organization helps

fathers and expectant fathers develop the skills they need to be engaged and involved dads, providers and citizens. This includes helping participants get their High School Equivalency diploma; getting them job-ready and providing employment training; and offering referral services.

Its flagship program is the Strong Fathers class. This three-week course is offered monthly from 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Monday through Friday. It is designed to provide essential fatherhood/parenting skills, job readiness preparation and more.

Its Strengthening Families program works with participants and their girlfriends, partners or spouses to develop

a plan for the future through Woman Empowerment and Couples Sessions.

Items needed: Gently used (cleaned and pressed, please) men's clothes delivered directly to the center so participants can be ready for job interviews.

Financial donations: Donate online at fathersandfamiliescenter.org or make checks payable to Fathers & Families Center and send to the address at the beginning of this feature. †

Walking with
Moms in Need



Marriage ANNOUNCEMENTS

Be a part of our Spring Marriage Edition

Feb. 16 issue of The Criterion

Couples who are planning to be married between Feb. 1 and Aug. 9, 2024 in a marriage that is recognized as a valid sacramental or valid natural marriage, or couples who were wed between July 1, 2023, and Jan. 31 in such a recognized marriage and did not have their engagement announcement in *The Criterion* are invited to submit the information for the upcoming Feb. 16 Spring Marriage Edition.

Announcements can be submitted by mail using the form below or electronically at www.archindy.org/engagements.

E-mailed photos

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

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

Deadline

All announcements and photos must be received by 5 p.m. on Feb. 2.

— Use this form to furnish information by mail —

Clip and mail to: BRIDES, The Criterion, ATTN: Ann Lewis, 1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367. To submit information online go to: www.archindy.org/engagements. **Deadline with photos:** Tuesday, Feb. 2 at 5 p.m.

Please print or type:

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

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The Glenmary Sisters invite women age 30 or over to serve in our Kentucky or Missouri missions for up to three months.

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SIMPLY CATHOLIC

Liturgical calendar is meant to orient our days around Jesus

By Chene Heady

(OSV News)—The liturgical calendar is omnipresent in Catholic life.

Many parish bulletins list the liturgical days of the week and corresponding Scripture readings for Mass. In December, tables in the narthex may be piled high with free calendars that identify the principal feasts of the Church year (along with civic holidays). And, of course, each holy day of obligation is a reminder that Catholic worship is not simply a matter of showing up on Sundays. There is a larger pattern of feasts and fasts of which Sunday worship is only part.

But to say that the liturgical calendar is omnipresent is not to say that we always notice it. We often look past objects, such as street lights or telephone poles, precisely because they are pervasive. It is easy to treat the liturgical calendar merely as part of Catholicism's décor, the ornamental mantle clock with Roman numerals that looks nice but which no one really uses to tell time.

Many holy men and women through the ages, however, have set their internal clock to the liturgical calendar and have found their lives reshaped in the process—for the purpose of the liturgical calendar is to orient our days around the person of Jesus.

This process begins with Sunday worship, which is the cornerstone of the whole liturgical calendar. We celebrate Mass each Sunday in recognition that when Jesus resurrected on Easter Sunday he began the renewal of the whole world, and the universe was fundamentally changed.

But, while the resurrection is the central Christian event, every moment of the life of Jesus is a revelation of the nature and character of God. For this reason, we need not merely Sunday worship but the entire Christian year. The Church year is structured around the life of Jesus. It pursues him from the first signs of his coming in Advent to his birth at Christmas, to his trials in Lent and death on Good Friday, to the wonders of his Easter resurrection and ascension, and finally catches an apocalyptic vision of him enthroned as king in glory.

As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, quoting the Second Vatican Council's "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy," explains, "The Church, 'in the course of the year ... unfolds the whole mystery of Christ'" (#1194). The Church leaves nothing out and skips no days; she invites us to meditate on Jesus at all times and in all circumstances.

The Church's desire to see Jesus in all things, and all things in light of Jesus, also influences the scriptural readings chosen for use at Mass and in the Liturgy of the Hours throughout the liturgical year. Since Jesus is God's ultimate self-revelation to humanity, the entire human attempt to know God—the complete story of religion and all of salvation history—also culminates in him (see the catechism #102).

Inspired by this insight, the apostolic Fathers in the



Sophie Sandolo, 10, is baptized by Father Patrick Riegger, pastor of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Center Moriches, N.Y., during the Easter Vigil on April 8, 2023. The celebration of Christ's resurrection stands at the heart of the Church's liturgical year. (OSV News photo/ Gregory A. Shemitz)

early days of the Church developed the reading method known as typology.

Typology treats events and images recorded in the Old Testament as prefiguring the life of Christ and the Church. The fullness of God's revelation as expressed in Christ exposes patterns and symbols in his earlier dealings with humanity that we might otherwise miss. To give just two famous examples: Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac, who nonetheless does not die, is a type of Christ's divine sacrifice and resurrection; Noah's ark, the vessel in which humanity is saved from physical destruction, is a type of the Church, the vessel in which humanity is saved from spiritual destruction.

The Church assigns appropriate scriptural readings—generally from the Old Testament, a responsorial psalm, one from the New Testament and a Gospel passage—for Mass for each Sunday and other holy days of the year. The Old Testament reading and the responsorial psalm are often chosen because of their typological relationship to the Gospel reading.

While the basic pattern of our liturgical observances remains constant each year, our cycle of readings for these observances varies. We follow a two-year cycle for daily Mass and a three-year (A, B, C) cycle for Sundays, primarily so that we might encounter Scripture as fully as possible. The Church uses the liturgical calendar to teach us to see Christ in all the Scriptures.

Since I have already referenced it, the feast of Christ the King, the final Sunday of the liturgical year, may serve as a convenient example of this dynamic. The first reading for Christ the King in Year C is 2 Samuel 5:1-3. Here, the Israelites collectively accept David as their king. In the corresponding Gospel reading, Luke 23:35-43, the good thief on the cross acclaim Jesus, the Son of David, as his king, and becomes in death the first person to pass into the heavenly kingdom.

David's divinely ordained but temporal kingship is a type of Christ's permanent spiritual kingship.

The liturgical calendar's frequent memorials of saints teach us another method of viewing all experience in light of Christ. The saints are a diverse bunch; they include men and women of nearly every race, region, occupation, economic status and psychological temperament. In the roster of the saints, we find a template of the many ways in which salvation may be worked out, the varied human images that may comprise a reflection of the one Christ, the disparate forms his kingdom may take on Earth.

By commemorating these saints in the liturgical calendar, the Church presents us with the entire picture of human sanctity, and asks us to evaluate our life's challenges and the people around us accordingly.

The liturgical calendar, then, possesses the potential to transform the way we see the world. If we were truly sensitive to its patterns, we would view our own lives, other people, the Bible, human history and the passage of time itself differently. And the decisions we would make while seeing the world in this very different light would change us into different people.

The Church understands human nature. Human beings naturally make sense of the world by telling themselves stories. We also structure the smaller stories of our personal lives in terms of the wider and more all-encompassing tales we know.

By superimposing Scripture over the days of our lives, the liturgical calendar trains us to understand our experience in terms of Christ. We neglect this training to our own detriment. If we allow the liturgical calendar to fade into the background, lost as a mere ornament, we will still imagine our lives as a reflection of a larger story, but it will be a vastly impoverished story.

In her work *The Pantheon Papers*, the novelist and Christian humanist Dorothy Sayers vividly depicted this truth. Sayers constructed a satirical liturgical calendar for modern materialism. This new calendar exposes the secular values that too often structure our lives and our days. Here the season of Advent is replaced with the season of advertisement; Christmas is replaced with "the Birth of Science"; the feast of Easter with the feast of the Enlightenment; All Hallows with All Hollows.

In the absence of the liturgical calendar, we will structure our lives around whatever shouts at us most loudly and whatever is most materially tangible, and our lives will be correspondingly hollowed. In the liturgical calendar, the Church offers us an important tool for spiritual enrichment and renewal.

(Chene Heady, Ph.D., is associate professor of English at Longwood University in Farmville, Va., and author of *Numbering My Days: How the Liturgical Calendar Rearranged My Life*.) †

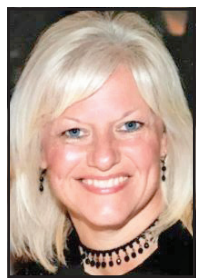


A thin blanket of snow covers a statue of Christ the King, which stands near the side entry of St. Willebrord Church in Green Bay, Wis., on Nov. 16, 2022. The solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe is celebrated on the last Sunday of the liturgical year. The Church's calendar invites the faithful to understand all of time in light of the mystery of Christ. (CNS photo/Sam Lucero)

Joyful Witness/Kimberly Pohovey

God puts the right people in our lives for just the right season

My family and I have been the recipients of great kindness through the years. As we've gone through some pretty



big challenges, there were two constants—our faith, and being lovingly surrounded by the many people whom God placed in our lives.

I was reminded of the people who have come into our lives for a season when my husband and I were discussing the recent passing of a former neighbor of ours in Fort Wayne.

Warren and his wife, Ruth Ann, lived two doors away from us. They were a retired couple who also had recently moved to Fort Wayne. We were transferred there by my husband's employer; they looked at a map and figured Fort Wayne was halfway between their two children in Illinois and Ohio. So, we both found ourselves as transplants in a new town. They wasted no time in greeting us, and in short order, they became treasured friends and adopted grandparents for our children.

They graciously welcomed us into their lives, and they were so patient and caring with our two young sons. Warren delighted in showing the boys how to fish. When we heard of Warren's passing, it reminded

me of how vital they were in our lives at a time when we most needed them.

There was even one occasion when they answered our plea at 3 a.m. to come stay at our house with the kids due to a cancer-related emergency room visit. They were always there for us.

We only lived in Fort Wayne for a few years, and although we occasionally liked each other's Facebook posts, we really hadn't seen them in years. But the memories of their kindness came rushing back, and I will be forever grateful that God placed them in our lives during that difficult season.

While we only lived in Fort Wayne briefly, it amazes me how God lined up folks he knew we would need during a challenging time.

In addition to Warren and Ruth Ann, God also orchestrated our closest friends, Donna and Joe, being transferred from Ohio to Fort Wayne as well. They lived there for an even briefer time than we did, but they were there for us to lean on throughout my husband Mark's cancer and extended recovery from sepsis.

They watched our children more times than I can count, and our 8-year-old son basically moved in with them while we experienced an extended hospital stay in Indianapolis.

After Mark recovered, they were transferred back to Ohio—just like us.

In addition, for a very short time, Mark's

sister and her husband, Shelly and Jason, were transferred to Indianapolis, which is where Mark was being treated at the Indiana University Medical Center. They opened their home to us and were able to regularly visit us at the hospital.

Again, after Mark's recovery, they were transferred out of town. I don't believe any of this was a coincidence. Rather, I like to believe God was moving people around like pieces on a chess board, trying to align the support he knew we needed.

There's a quote that says, "Some people come into our lives for a season and quickly go, while others stay and leave footprints on our heart, and we are never the same." I imagine we can all name friends and acquaintances in both categories.

After a quick online search, I found several articles all concluding the same thing: we will interact with an average of 80,000 new people during our lifetime (assuming we live an average of 78 years and aren't hermits). That's about three people a day. Of all these people you encounter, how many would you say have left "footprints on your heart?"

I believe those people are the ones who God, in his grand design, places in our lives at just the right time and in the right season.

(Kimberly Pohovey is a member of St. Jude Parish in Indianapolis. She is the director of major and planned gifts for the archdiocese.) †

Be Our Guest/

Fr. Patrick Briscoe, O.P.

Shia LaBeouf's conversion: Let's rejoice over the movement of grace

In August 2022, when *Transformers* star Shia LaBeouf revealed during a conversation with Bishop Robert



E. Barron that he had experienced a conversion and begun to attend Mass, I wrote that LaBeouf seemed to me to have undergone a genuine change of heart. He spoke regretfully of the pain and harm he had caused in his life.

More moving still was his testimony about the way that playing Padre Pio in a recent film affected him. "Pio ... saved my life, this is not just a movie or something, and I don't mean that lightly," LaBeouf told Bishop Barron. LaBeouf later told OSV News that he "fell in love with Christ" as part of his preparation for the role.

Many scorned that conversation, and not altogether unreasonably. A 2020 lawsuit by his former partner, British musician FKA Twigs, accused LaBeouf of physical, mental and emotional abuse.

Knowing his past, social media users doubted LaBeouf's authenticity, even challenging the possibility of a spiritual change of heart altogether. And last August, in the middle of all this discourse, I wrote: "I'd rather believe in the power of conversion and the healing grace of the Holy Spirit than live under the tyranny of constant cynicism and suspicion."

And so it's with that same hope that I share the news of LaBeouf's conversion to the Catholic Church. On Dec. 31, Bishop Barron confirmed LaBeouf at the Old Mission Santa Inés in Solvang, Calif.

Surrounded by the Capuchin Franciscan friars that LaBeouf had come to know so well during the production of Abel Ferrara's film *Padre Pio*, LaBeouf received the sacrament of confirmation. In today's world, where the noise of skepticism and secularism often drowns out the quiet call of spirituality, stories like LaBeouf's shine as beacons of hope.

We don't have to canonize LaBeouf. In fact, we'd do well not to ... after all, only the Church canonizes saints! We ought to pray for him. We ought to rejoice in the movements of grace that have brought him to the Church. We should hope, too, that his story will inspire others.

Our Lord's Gospel message is about the hope of conversion at its very core. Whether we're talking about Shia LaBeouf, politicians, our family members or friends, that's worth remembering. To be a Christian means that, at a fundamental level, we long for others to meet Christ as we have met him and to change.

In order for those we love to change, we have to give them space and allow room for the designs of the Holy Spirit to work. Faith is transformative, but not according to the designs or ideals we have on a purely human level. Faith is transformative according to the plans of divine providence, according to God's plans, which so often elude our understanding.

LaBeouf's story encourages us to reflect on our role in supporting converts. Are we, as a community, prepared to welcome them with open arms? Do we offer guidance, understanding and the companionship they need as they navigate this life-changing journey? After all, conversion is not merely a one-time event but a continuous process of growth and integration in the body of Christ.

And LaBeouf's conversion should

See BRISCOE, page 15

That All May Be One/Fr. Rick Ginther

Like a priest and a pope, let us pray that 'all may be one'

There are multiple origins of the "ecumenical movement" among Christians. Many men and women of note have prayed for, worked for and promoted it.



As we pray for unity on Jan. 18-25 during the annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, let me unfold the lives and work of two such individuals.

(A disclaimer: both are men, and both are Roman Catholic clergy. This is not to say that no Catholic women were involved in original 20th-century ecumenical endeavors. There is, however, a shortage of accounts of their involvement from which to draw.)

Father Paul Couturier was born in Lyon, France, in 1881. A priest of the Society of St. Irenaeus, he taught science at a

college run by his order for 40 years.

In his early 40s while on retreat, the retreat director encouraged him to expand his ministry to refugees. Russian Orthodox Christians fleeing the Russian revolution became his focus. His 12 years of work with these destitute people moved him to desire that all Christians could be joined in love and service.

The writings of Belgium Cardinal Desire-Joseph Mercier inspired him. "In order to unite, we must love one another; to love one another, we must know one another; to know one another we must go and meet one another," Cardinal Mercier wrote.

Father Couturier adapted the original Octave of the "Prayer for Christian Unity" so that it became a prayer of Christians

See GINTHER, page 15

Our Works of Charity/David Bethuram

Join us in mission to end poverty and uphold human dignity

When Alexandra and her young daughter walked into Catholic Charities' Crisis Center in Indianapolis, they were obviously in distress.



After fleeing an abusive relationship, they had become homeless. Friends and relatives allowed them to sleep on their couches for several months, but that arrangement had come to an end, and they had to move on.

With no money for childcare, Alexandra became unemployed. What seemed like an endless string of barriers and crises left Alexandra penniless and destitute. Do you know what Catholic Charities saw? We saw Alexandra in the likeness of God. We saw her dignity and we helped her find it again.

Catholic Charities models our services and programs around the prime principle of Catholic social teaching—the life and dignity of the human person.

Catholic social teaching affirms that human life is sacred and holds the dignity of the human person as the foundation of a moral vision for society. In fact, dignity is the foundation of all the principles of our social teaching. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops states: "We believe every person is precious; people are more important than things; and the measure of every institution is whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of the human person."

The director of the Crisis Center listened to Alexandra's story to be certain she understood her needs.

First, to be stable, Alexandra and her daughter needed a safe place to live and food for the next several days. The Crisis Center director contacted the director at Catholic Charities Holy Family Emergency Shelter in Indianapolis, and together they promptly began to work on securing housing for Alexandra and her daughter.

They also recognized that Alexandra needed to speak with a professional to feel safe and to help heal from her past trauma, so she was connected with a counselor partner at Catholic Charities. Alexandra was also connected to Birthline, which is a ministry of the archdiocese that offers material assistance to pregnant women and mothers of infants and toddlers. Birthline provided diapers, clothing and other necessities for Alexandra's daughter, a toddler.

So much happened in just one visit. Alexandra came to us with fear and little hope. When she left, she had a bag full of food and hygiene items, an appointment for her first counseling session, as well as appointments with Children and Family Services. Most importantly, she walked out with hope and a plan to regain the dignity of self-reliance.

Families come to us in crisis. They have nowhere to live, they cannot feed their families, they have no one to aid them. Our first step is to stabilize them

and remove them from the emergency they are experiencing.

What happens next makes Catholic Charities and the services and programs offered here truly life-changing. We offer families many wraparound services to break the generational poverty they are experiencing. After they are given food or emergency assistance to meet the immediate crisis encompassing them, our other programs wrap around them and help them stabilize.

If families have a need we cannot address, we call our professional partners in the community who can. We have skilled, compassionate case managers in all four of our pillars of care: emergency assistance, housing, children and family, and employment services. Trust is formed, relationships are made, plans and goals are identified, and hope is restored.

Throughout January, which is Poverty Awareness Month, the U.S. bishops, Catholic Campaign for Human Development and the Catholic community in the U.S. are invited to take up Pope Francis' challenge to live in solidarity with the poor.

Jesus is the good news to the poor. As his followers, may we recognize the call to be the same. How will you join us in our mission to end poverty and uphold human dignity?

(David Bethuram is executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Catholic Charities. You can contact him at dbethuram@archindy.org.) †

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

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, January 21, 2024

- *Jonah* 3:1-5, 10
- *1 Corinthians* 7:29-31
- *Mark* 1:14-20

The first reading for Mass this weekend is from the Book of Jonah, an Old Testament writing



seldom presented in the liturgy. While Jonah is the central figure in this book, he was not the author. The author is unknown. Scholars believe that the Book of Jonah was written sometime after the

Babylonian exile of the Jews.

The reading speaks of Jonah's visit to Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian Empire, located roughly in the region of modern Syria. He went there at God's command to preach conversion.

Preaching conversion in Nineveh was a tall order, and the Jews who first heard this reading knew exactly how difficult the assignment was. No city on Earth had the image of evil and vice that surrounded Nineveh.

Nineveh, after all, was the capital of Assyria. Through the centuries, many neighboring powers invaded and overwhelmed the Holy Land. None of these invaders matched the Assyrians for savage brutality.

To convert the people of Nineveh would have been regarded as almost impossible.

For its second reading this weekend, the Church offers us a passage from St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians. Paul was challenged in leading the Corinthian Christians to a fully devout Christian life. The city was what Nineveh was symbolically to the ancient Jews. Corinth was known around the Roman imperial world as a center of vice and licentiousness. This distinction said very much, since vice and lewdness prevailed throughout the empire.

The Apostle called upon the Christians of Corinth to remember that time passes quickly and that life is short. They had before them two options. The first was life in Jesus. It's a life that is everlasting, but also requires fidelity to the Gospel and its values. The other option was eternal death, awaiting those who spurn the Gospel.

St. Paul obviously urges the Corinthians to be holy.

The Gospel of St. Mark provides the last reading. First is a brief mention that St. John the Baptist "had been handed over," a phrase used to predict the arrest of Jesus on Good Friday (Mk 1:14). The reading continues to say that Jesus was preaching that the "kingdom of God is near" (Mk 1:15).

Then, the Lord calls Simon and Andrew, brothers who were fishermen, to be Apostles. He then called the brothers James and John.

For the early Christians, the 12 Apostles especially were important. From them came knowledge of Jesus. It was vital to assure and present their credentials. Thus, this Gospel carefully identifies the Apostles.

The Lord's call was sudden. They were unprepared, yet Jesus and the offer of salvation caused them to drop everything and follow him.

The call of the Apostles is instructive. They were part of the Lord's plan of salvation. They continued the Lord's work.

Reflection

The Church called us liturgically to celebrate the birth of Christ. Two weeks later, it celebrated the feast of the Epiphany of the Lord. Then, it offered us the feast of the Lord's baptism by John in the Jordan River.

These celebrations taught critical lessons about Jesus. He is human, the Son of Mary. He is also the Son of God, the Savior, assuming our sins even though Jesus was without sin.

Now, the Church tells us that Jesus calls us to eternal life. He charged the Apostles specifically to continue the work of salvation. He taught them and prepared them. The Apostles, through the Church founded upon Peter, still teach us and guide us to Christ. That was part of the Lord's plan.

These four Apostles' instant response made clear that for them nothing was more important in life than being with and following Christ.

Maybe questions for meditation are in order. What is our impression of Jesus? For us, is the Lord our great hope for finding joy and purpose in life? †

Daily Readings

Monday, January 22

Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children
2 Samuel 5:1-7, 10
Psalms 89:20-22, 25-26
Mark 3:22-30

Tuesday, January 23

St. Vincent, deacon and martyr
St. Marianne Cope, virgin
2 Samuel 6:12b-15, 17-19
Psalms 24:7-10
Mark 3:31-35

Wednesday, January 24

St. Francis de Sales, bishop and doctor of the Church
2 Samuel 7:4-17
Psalms 89:4-5, 27-30
Mark 4:1-20

Thursday, January 25

The Conversion of St. Paul
Acts 22:3-16
or *Acts* 9:1-22
Psalms 117:1-2
Mark 16:15-18

Friday, January 26

St. Timothy, bishop
St. Titus, bishop
2 Timothy 1:1-8
or *Titus* 1:1-5
Psalms 96:1-3, 7-8a, 10
Mark 4:26-34

Saturday, January 27

St. Angela Merici, virgin
2 Samuel 12:1-7a, 10-17
Psalms 51:12-17
Mark 4:35-41

Sunday, January 28

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Deuteronomy 18:15-20
Psalms 95:1-2, 6-9
1 Corinthians 7:32-35
Mark 1:21-28

Question Corner/Jenna Marie Cooper

Baptism of the Lord is part of the manifestation of his divinity to the world

QI always thought the end of the Christmas season came with Epiphany and the arrival of the Magi. A priest recently said the season doesn't end until a week later with the Baptism of the Lord. What has the baptism of the adult Jesus got to do with Bethlehem? If it's supposed to mean a "turning of the page" in the life of Jesus, wouldn't a better event be the last scriptural appearance of the Holy Family, "the finding of the child Jesus in the temple" (Lk 2:48)? (Indiana)



AIn our current liturgical calendar, the last day of the Christmas season is indeed the feast of the Baptism of the Lord. Normally, that feast is celebrated on the Sunday after Epiphany—although if Epiphany falls on Jan. 7 or 8, as it did this year, the Baptism of the Lord is celebrated the following Monday.

But it is interesting to note that traditionally, Feb. 2, the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, was considered the end of the Christmas season. We can still see a few echoes of this even today.

For instance, the Vatican keeps its Christmas tree and crèche up in St. Peter's Square until Feb. 2. And the blessing of candles customarily celebrated right before Mass for the feast of the Presentation opens with a prayer stating: "Brothers and sisters, 40 days have passed since the solemnity of Christmas. Today, the Church once again prepares to celebrate the day in which Mary and

Joseph presented Jesus in the Temple."

I would say that Jesus' baptism truly is a major "turning of the page" in Jesus' life, since, after his baptism at the hands of John the Baptist his quiet, hidden life became one of public ministry, wherein he actively sought to make his saving mission and identity known and proclaimed.

Further, the Baptism of the Lord, the Epiphany and—perhaps surprisingly—the wedding feast at Cana all connect thematically, as they are all about the first manifestations of Jesus as the Son of God. That is, they are all instances where the glory of Jesus' divine nature, which would ordinarily have been obscure and hidden to human eyes during Jesus' early life, is revealed.

At the Epiphany (a Greek word which literally means "revelation"), Jesus' glory is revealed to the Magi. Traditionally, the Church sees the Epiphany being, by extension, Jesus' manifestation to "the nations," or to all the other non-Jewish pagan cultures of the world who would not have previously known the one true God.

In the narrative of Jesus' baptism, it is revealed that he is the beloved Son of God (see Mk 1:9-11 and Lk 3:22). The wedding feast at Cana is the setting for Jesus' first public miracle, when he changes water into wine at Mary's request (see Jn 2:1-11), and as such was a revelation to Jesus' friends and disciples of his glorious divine power over nature.

The connection between these seemingly unconnected events in the life of Jesus is particularly clear and intuitive to those of us who pray the Liturgy of the Hours. For example, the *Magnificat* antiphon for Evening Prayer for the Epiphany is: "Three mysteries mark this holy day: today the star leads the Magi to the infant Christ; today water is changed into wine for the wedding feast; today Christ wills to be baptized by John in the river Jordan to bring us salvation."

All these scriptural manifestations, even those that occurred decades apart, harken back to Bethlehem, because the birth of Christ was the first and most radical revelation of the incarnate Word of God.

(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

Light in the Dark

By Gayle Schrank



(Gayle Schank is a member of St. Mary Parish in Navilleton. Photo: Pope Benedict XVI holds a candle in a window overlooking St. Peter's Square on Christmas Eve at the Vatican on Dec. 24, 2011.) (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

God wants only what is best for us
Yet He will always let us choose

When I make myself a slave to the world
I am blinded to what I will lose

We are not slaves when we call God friend
He wills that death bring our resurrection

While the world and its demanding ways
Dictate our time and unrealistic perfection

When the world is your master
There will be so many destructive things

But, when we choose to follow God
Walking through harm all goodness He brings

People cannot give us what we need
There are no laws that can fix our heart

It is only by God's goodness and mercy
That we can search for light in the dark

God wants only what is best for us
Yet He will always let us choose

When I make myself a slave to the world
I am blinded to what I will lose

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.

BARR, Madonna M., 92, St. Ambrose, Seymour, Dec. 21. Mother of eight. Grandmother, great-grandmother and great-great-grandmother of several.

BOOK, Esther J., 97, St. John the Baptist, Starlight, Dec. 20. Mother of Connie Throckmorton, Rose Mary Wright, Carl, Donnie and Kenny Book. Sister of Mary Rosenberger. Grandmother of eight. Great-grandmother of 11.

CAMPBELL, Dennis M., 68, St. John Paul II, Sellersburg, Dec. 17. Father of Adrian Baron. Brother of Theresa Wolford, Henry and Paul Campbell. Grandfather of four.

CHATHAM, Denise K., 63, Prince of Peace, Madison, Dec. 30. Wife of Rusty Smith. Mother of Corey and Curtis Chatham. Sister of Bernard, Brian, Gerald and Rodney Kelley. Grandmother of five.

DUFFY, Mary Elizabeth, 88, St. Gabriel, Connersville, Dec. 19. Mother of Judy Jobe, John, Peter and Thomas Duffy. Sister of Thomas Brames. Grandmother of five. Great-grandmother of 10.

ELSWORTH, Steve, 78, St. Jude, Indianapolis, Dec. 18. Husband of Nikki Elsworth. Father of Melanie Foraker, Corrie Rodenbeck and Donald Elsworth. Stepfather of Jack Smythe-Dillon. Brother of Mark Elsworth. Grandfather of eight. Great-grandfather of two.

FASKE, Jo Ann, 94, St. John the Baptist, Starlight, Dec. 24. Mother of Connie Senn, Carol Stephens, Joseph and Matthew Faske. Sister of AJ McKinley. Grandmother of four. Great-grandmother of five.

Patriotic Christmas tribute



National Junior Honor Society members of St. Louis School in Batesville helped serve their community by laying wreaths on the graves of veterans in St. Louis Catholic Cemetery on Dec. 17 as part of the Wreaths Across Ripley County program. Posing in front are Myra Meer, left, Ella Meer, MaryKara Wanstrath, Maggie Tekulve, Lillian Scheibler, Kathryn Mack and Calvin Padgett. In the back row are Damien Brelage, left, and Tripp Hertel. (Submitted photo by Jenny Lents)

FENDEL, Alvina E., 98, St. Meinrad, St. Meinrad, Dec. 25. Mother of Joyce Brahm. Grandmother of two. Great-grandmother of two.

GLESING, Carl L., 79, Prince of Peace, Madison, Dec. 25. Father of Cyndi White and David Glesing. Brother of Bob Glesing. Grandfather of four.

GZIBOVSKIS, Richard, 80, St. Luke the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Dec. 24. Husband of Diana Gzibovskis. Father of Anna Lorenzetto, Andrew and Robert Gzibovskis. Brother of Inese

Komisars and Rita Peteris. Grandfather of five.

HARPRING, Bernadette, 89, St. Mary, Rushville, Dec. 29. Wife of Norbert Harping. Mother of Joann Fenimore, Kristine Herbert, Carol Johnson, Linda, Brian, Edward and Lawrence Harpring. Sister of Irene Meyer, August, Carl, Cletus, Jerome and John Lamping. Grandmother of 19. Great-grandmother of 15.

HUTH, Carolyn S., 85, St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd County, Dec. 18. Mother of Myra Huls, Lisa Montgomery and Mark Huth. Sister of Charles Jerrell. Grandmother of seven. Great-grandmother of nine.

HUTT, George, 97, St. Anthony of Padua, Clarksville, Dec. 20. Father of Linda Wright, Larry and Steve Hutt. Grandfather of 20. Great-grandfather of 20.

JOHNSON, Thomas H., 73, St. Louis, Batesville, Dec. 21. Husband of Cythnia Johnson. Father of Kate, Brian and Jake Johnson. Brother of Tony Johnson. Grandfather of four.

KRESS, Josephine L., 97, St. Meinrad, St. Meinrad, Dec. 27. Mother of Janice Hagedorn, Therese Volz, David, Mike, Philip, Stephen and Tony Kress. Grandmother of 22. Great-grandmother of 53. Great-great-grandmother of four.

MARGUET, Joan (Gettelfinger), 86, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany, Dec. 19. Wife of Pat

Marguet. Mother of Beth Weber, Dan and Charles Marguet. Sister of Agnes Ernstberger, Jean Batliner, Bishop Gerald and Tony Gettelfinger. Grandmother of seven. Great-grandmother of two.

MULLOY, James J., 84, St. Mary, Lanesville, Dec. 23. Husband of Mary Francis Mulloy. Father of Erin Conlu, Michelle Lankford and Mary Kathleen Myers. Brother of Teresa King, Sheila Lauck, Janice Lind and Kathleen Tamarkin. Grandfather of five.

NELSON, Donald T., 88, St. Luke the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Dec. 19. Father of Maureen Faul, Cinthia, Daniel, Matthew and Wayne Nelson. Grandfather of 11.

NICOLAS, Kenneth, 79, St. Mary, New Albany, Dec. 16. Husband of Kerry Nicolas. Father of Brent, Christopher, Michael and Stephen Nicolas. Brother of Pat Zimmerman. Grandfather of nine. Great-grandfather of one.

PORTER, Margaret E., 91, St. Malachy, Brownsburg, Jan. 1. Mother of Mary D'Arezzo, Patricia Fox and Stephen Porter. Grandmother of nine. Great-grandmother of 13. Great-great-grandmother of two.

POWE, Carolyn L., 81, Holy Angels, Indianapolis, Dec. 24. Mother of Averil Morrisette, Aldrich and Armando Powe. Sister of Sadie Green and Hazel Moore. Grandmother of 13. Great-grandmother of six.

ROSEMEYER, Robert, 85, All Saints, Dearborn County, Dec. 19. Husband of Karen Rosemeyer. Father of Jenny Slover, Dan, Dennis, Matt, Mike and Nick Rosemeyer. Brother of Sharon Cooper, Jack and Paul Rosemeyer. Grandfather of 12. Great-grandfather of one.

SCHAEFER, William, 75, St. Paul, Tell City, Dec. 31. Brother of Mary Basham, Dr. Charles and Kenny Schaefer. Uncle and great-uncle of several.

SCHMELTZER, Loren, 88, All Saints, Dearborn County, Dec. 29. Husband of Barb Schmelzter. Father of June Brackett, Lisa Hempfling, Theresa Meadows, Susie Orndorff, Chuck and George Schmelzter. Brother of Ruth Grubbs, Linda Miller, Janet Ross and Dale Schmelzter. Grandfather of 12. Great-grandfather of nine.

SCHUMAN, Angela L., 58, St. Peter, Franklin County, Dec. 22. Wife of Ron Schuman. Mother of Brandon, Kurt and Randy Schuman. Daughter of Clare McCool. Sister of Laura Anderson, Connie Selm and Larry McCool. Grandmother of four.

SEGRIST, Donald, 64, St. Gabriel, Connersville, Dec. 17. Father of Nick Rybolt, Michelle and William Segrist. Brother of Martha Lack, Patti Minniear, Maria, Susan, Chris, Nick, Steven, Teddy, Terry and Tommy Segrist. Grandfather of five.

SOMMER, Stanley J., 85, St. Vincent de Paul, Bedford, Dec. 25. Husband of Mary Ann Sommer. Father of Shelley Meister and Steven Sommer. Brother of Eileen Miller. Grandfather of one. Great-grandfather of one.

STICKLER, David, 80, St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd County, Jan. 2. Husband of Patty Stickler. Father of Larry and Terry Stickler. Brother of Steve Stickler. Grandfather of seven. Great-grandfather of three.

STOCK, Joan C., 78, All Saints, Dearborn County, Dec. 23. Sister of Aloysius, Jim and Joe Stock. Aunt of several.

VANNOY, Elizabeth A., 84, SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi, Greenwood, Dec. 18. Mother of Stephanie Tatarek, Andrew and RJ VanNoy. Sister of Kathleen Carter, Mary Frances Doyle, Margie Litz and Donna Monaghan. Grandmother of six.

WHITMORE, Kathleen A., 72, St. Mary, Greensburg, Dec. 29. Wife of Richard Whitmore. Mother of Clayton and Samuel Whitmore. Sister of Natalie Armstrong, Karen Hardesty, Anita Kendall, Prudence, Donald, Patrick, Philip and Tim McFarland. Grandmother of one.

WILLIAMS, James A., 76, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Richmond, Dec. 22. Husband of Mary Williams. Father of Amanda Weaver and Rett Williams. Brother of Judi Burnell. Grandfather of three. †

Online Lay Ministry Formation

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

- Earn certificate in Lay Ministry
- Complete 12 courses online with ND STEP program
- CDU offers classes on Catechism of the Catholic Church
- 20% discount for all employees, volunteers, and parishioners

For more information, please log on to www.archindy.org/layministry



REPORT SEXUAL MISCONDUCT NOW

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

- 1 Ethics Point**
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Bishop Álvarez, other Nicaraguan clergy, seminarians released

MEXICO CITY (OSV News)—Bishop Rolando Álvarez of Matagalpa, Nicaragua, has been released from prison and sent into exile along with 18 imprisoned clergy and seminarians as the Nicaraguan government expelled its most prominent critic, whose presence behind bars bore witness to the Sandinista regime descent into totalitarianism, along with its unrelenting persecution of the Catholic Church.

Vatican News confirmed on Jan. 14 at 10:41 p.m. Rome time that, with the exception of one priest who remained in Venezuela, all released clergy, including Bishop Álvarez and Bishop Isidoro Mora of Siuna, had arrived in Rome “in the last few hours” and are “guests of the Holy See.”

Nicaraguan independent media 100% Noticias posted a photograph on X, formerly Twitter, of the two freed bishops concelebrating Mass in Rome.

Independent Nicaraguan media reported on Jan. 14 that the clergy and seminarians had departed Nicaragua on a flight for Rome after the government reached an agreement with the Vatican for their release and exile. Auxiliary Bishop Silvio José Báez of Managua—who was exiled from the country in 2019—also confirmed the news at his weekly Mass in Miami, and was visibly moved.

“This is the power of the people of God’s prayers,” he said. “The criminal Sandinista dictatorship of [President] Daniel Ortega has not been able to defeat the power of God.”

The Nicaraguan government acknowledged the Churchmen’s release in a Jan. 14 statement, which “deeply thanked” Pope Francis and Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, “for the very respectful and discreet coordination carried out to make possible the Vatican trip of two bishops, 15 priests and two seminarians.”

The statement continued, “They have been received by Vatican authorities, in compliance with agreements of good faith and good will, which seek to promote understanding and improve communication between the Holy See and Nicaragua, for peace and good.”

The statement struck an unusually respectful tone—far from the government’s frequent accusations of terrorism and coup mongering against Church leaders, who attempted unsuccessfully to facilitate a national dialogue after mass protests erupted in 2018 demanding Ortega’s ouster. The Nicaraguan government also severed relations with the Vatican and expelled the



Nicaraguan Bishop Rolando Álvarez of Matagalpa walks outside a Catholic church in Managua on May 20, 2022. After more than 500 days’ detention, the Ortega regime released the prelate—who has been the Nicaraguan government’s most prominent critic—from prison on Jan. 14, sending him into exile along with 18 other imprisoned Churchmen. Bishop Álvarez safely landed in Rome Jan. 14, the Vatican confirmed. (OSV News photo/Maynor Valenzuela, Reuters)

apostolic nuncio, Archbishop Waldemar Stanislaw Sommertag, in 2022. The Vatican subsequently closed its embassy in March 2023.

“We recognize the chance for direct, prudent and very serious dialogue, a responsible and careful dialogue,” the government statement said.

The release of 19 Churchmen—including Bishop Mora and more than a dozen priests detained during a wave of detentions over the Christmas period—provoked reactions of joy among Nicaraguans in exile, along with statements of defiance.

“‘Get up quickly.’ The chains fell from his wrists,” Bishop Báez said on X, formerly Twitter, quoting Acts 12:7.

“With great joy, I thank God that my brother bishops, priests and seminarians are out of prison. Justice has triumphed. The power of the prayer of God’s people has been displayed.”

Ambassador Brian A. Nichols, assistant

secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs in the U.S. Department of State, said on X that the regime “expelled 19 unjustly detained Catholic clergy, including Bishop Álvarez.

“We are reassured to see the release of these religious leaders. All people have the right to worship at home and abroad. We continue to call for the release of all those unjustly detained and the restoration of the fundamental freedoms of the Nicaraguan people,” Nichols emphasized.

Bishop Álvarez has become the face of resistance in Nicaragua, raising his voice against the increasing intolerance of the Sandinista regime—which has subdued the business community, forced the free press out of the country and attempted to control the Catholic Church.

The bishop spent more than 500 days in custody after police arrested him in August 2022 during a pre-dawn raid on his diocesan curia, where he had been holed up protesting the seizure of

Catholic media outlets. In February 2023, he was sentenced to 26 years in prison on charges of conspiracy and spreading false information—one day after he refused to leave the country.

Bishop Álvarez refused subsequent attempts at exiling him—since expulsion or refusing priests re-entry to the country after traveling abroad became a common tactic.

“The dictatorship feels safer or more comfortable with religious people outside the country than inside the country,” Arturo McFields Yescas, a former Nicaraguan diplomat in exile, told OSV News.

“When they are inside [the country] they consider them a threat, a danger, a counterweight to their official narrative. And when they are outside, [the regime] feels that they no longer have that critical voice, or that voice of truth, which spoke to the people and people listened to,” he said. †

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prompt us to think about our own conversions. “Sometimes even Catholics have lost or never had the chance to

experience Christ personally: not Christ as a mere ‘paradigm’ or ‘value,’ but as the living Lord, ‘the way, and the truth, and the life’ (Jn 14:6),” says St. John Paul II. Jesus calls each of us to know him and to love him, and for that knowledge and love to grow ever more complete.

LaBeouf has also shared that he hopes to be ordained

a deacon. We’ll see whether or not LaBeouf pursues holy orders. But in the meantime, we’ll pray that the Church will be edified by his conversion.

(Dominican Father Patrick Briscoe is the editor of Our Sunday Visitor.) †

GINTHER

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together. Rather than pray “for one another,” Christians “must pray with one another.”

Dialogue, he affirmed, must be “surrounded by an atmosphere of mutual prayer to avoid tension and sterile debate.”

Father Couturier’s passionate efforts in France ultimately spilled out into the world.

Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli, who we know as St. John XXIII, served in the Italian army, in parishes, as an army chaplain and in the Vatican’s diplomatic corps (in Bulgaria, Greece, France, UNESCO). He came to see the Church’s and the world’s need for unity.

“The central point” of Jesus’ teaching “is the love which binds all men to him as the elder brother, and binds us all with him to the Father,” he said.

His first love was pastoring. As pope, John XXIII chose to pastor the Church.

He called the Second Vatican Council,

not to change fundamental doctrines or condemn heresies, but “to bring forth the truth in such a way that would speak to the people of this time and advance the cause of Christian unity.”

Observers from all the major Christian denominations were invited—an extraordinary step! They were allowed to comment on the council Fathers’ discussions.

Good Pope John, as he was affectionately known, was “clearing away obstacles” to “foster unity and reconciliation among churches and cultures.” He once quipped, “Whenever I see a wall between Christians, I try to pull out a brick.”

He named cardinals from India and Africa—a first. He established the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity. He appointed the first-ever Catholic representative to the assembly of the World Council of Churches. And he welcomed to the Vatican numerous leaders of other Christian denominations, including the Archbishop of Canterbury.

His council gave the Church “Unitatis Redintegratio” (“Restoration of Unity”),

a document on ecumenism. Though Pope John never saw it, it was one of the most significant documents of the Second Vatican Council.

Both Father Couturier and St. John XXIII—pioneers as they and other unnamed men and women were—labored in the field of ecumenical relations. Their banner was the Gospel of John: “That all may be one” (Jn 17:21).

May that banner wave strongly in our hearts and minds. May it lead us to prayer both for and with our Christian brothers and sisters.

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

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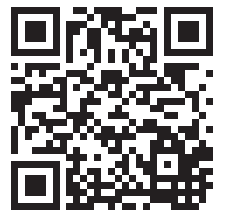
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