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Lead, Learn, Proclaim Award

St. Monica School principal nominated for national honor, page 16.

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New Catholic lawmaker aiming to help Hoosiers with disaster relief

By Victoria Arthur

A catastrophic tornado outbreak in Indiana last spring hit close to home for a new Hoosier lawmaker who now has set her sights on changing the way the state responds to disasters.



Sen. Cyndi Carrasco

Sen. Cyndi Carrasco (R-Indianapolis) witnessed the destruction caused by the March 31, 2023, twisters not far from her southside Indianapolis home

and her parish of SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi in Greenwood. At the time of the tornado outbreak, which devastated multiple areas of Indiana, she was not yet a state legislator.

But when she was chosen in an October caucus to represent Senate District 36 following the sudden passing of Sen. Jack Sandlin, the impact of those

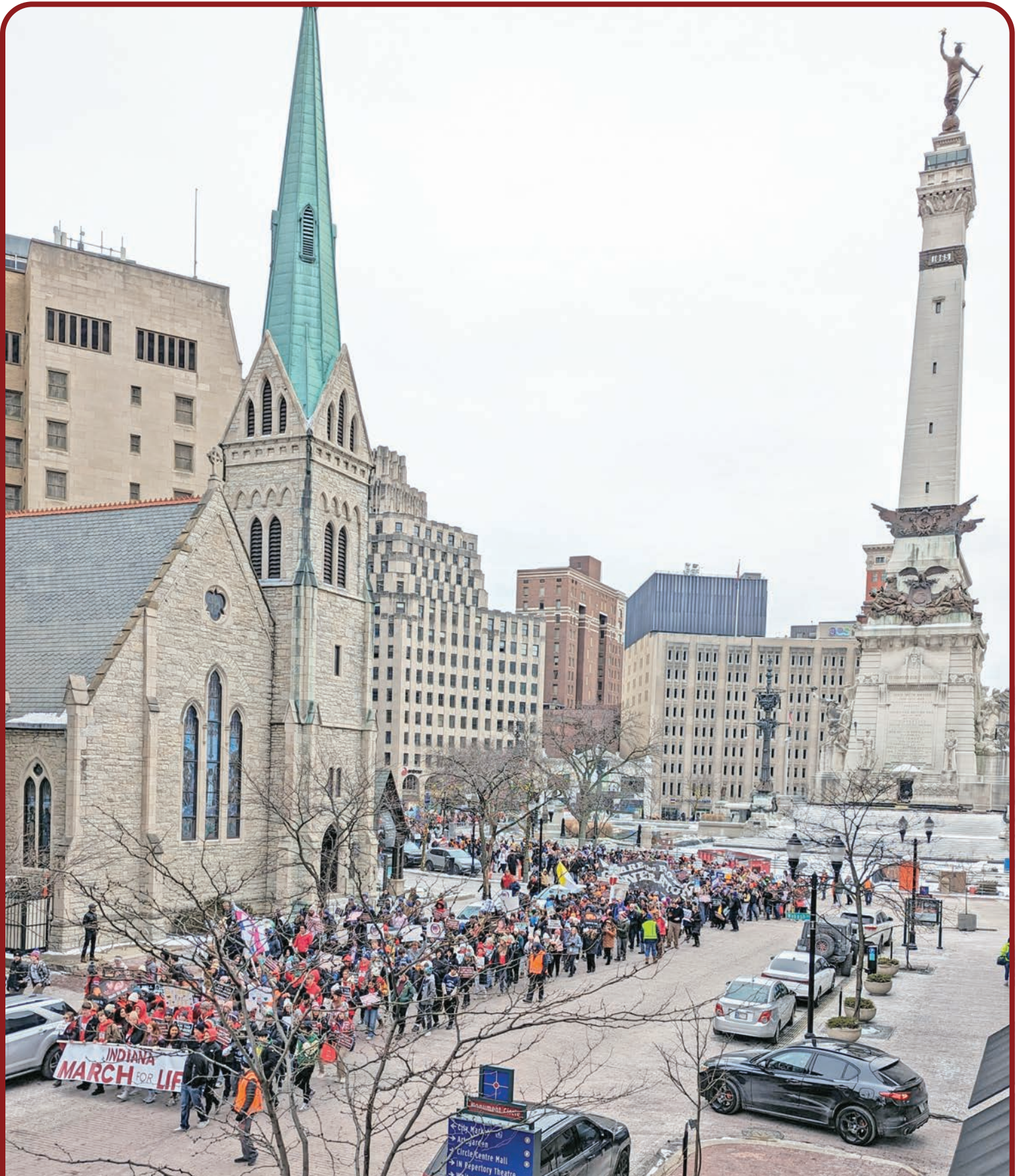


spring storms remained in the forefront of her thinking.

Now the first-time state senator has introduced her first piece of legislation at the Indiana General Assembly—Senate Bill 190—which would ease access to disaster relief and offer more resources for individuals and communities to rebuild now and in the future.

“Those images stick in my mind,” said Carrasco, whose district includes portions of southern Marion County and northern Johnson County. “In times of crisis after a disaster, the last thing you need is a very complicated

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Some 2,000 pro-life advocates march around the Soldiers and Sailors Monument—the center of Indianapolis and of the state—during the Indiana March for Life on Jan. 22. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

Sisters of Life tell record Indiana March for Life crowd ‘you are a hope to this nation’

By Natalie Hoefler

It was a united front like never before seen in Indiana as a record crowd estimated at 2,000—hailing from all corners of the state—marched through the streets of Indianapolis proclaiming the sacredness of all life and signaling hope for mothers and their children.

The Indiana March for Life in Indianapolis on Jan. 22 was the seventh such event. But it was the first one with groups from all five Indiana dioceses.

“We just came from Washington, D.C.,” said Sister Mary Grace of the Sisters of Life during a rally outside the Indiana Statehouse after the march. “And I have to say, it’s incredible to see an entire nation come together.

“But it’s a whole other thing to come to one home state and see five dioceses unite, and [to hear] all of you on your own home ground say, ‘We will refuse to cease loving women in greatest need.’”

“On behalf of those of us from states that are struggling a lot more than you, like Colorado and New York and Massachusetts, you are a hope to this nation.”

‘Exciting, energetic, fun ... and peaceful’

Whether Indiana March for Life veterans or first-time participants, students from all corners of the state were impressed by the size of the crowd.

“My friends and I were just commenting on the numbers,” said Vivian Abdalla, a junior at Guerin Catholic High School in Noblesville, in the Lafayette Diocese. She was one of a group of 42 students from the school to attend the day’s events. “We were just saying how we know that there are other pro-life groups in other high schools all around Indiana, and how inspirational it is to see them all here together.”

Those from farther away from the state’s capital, including Evansville, Fort Wayne and Gary, left as early as 6 o’clock in the

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DISASTER

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formula to determine whether or not you're going to be eligible for dollars. You need to be able to access help easily.

"We've got the dollars," she continued, "and we want to be able to help people quickly and efficiently."

More than two decades ago, the State Disaster Relief Fund (SDRF) was established to assist individuals and local governments in the aftermath of tornadoes, floods and other disasters. The SDRF is funded by sales of fireworks in Indiana and is administered by the Indiana Department of Homeland Security.

But officials with the department have identified roadblocks in state law that make accessing disaster relief funds difficult, if not impossible, for many families and communities. They have provided input to Carrasco—an attorney and former Inspector General for the state of Indiana—to help address these issues through her proposed legislation.

"The intent of Senate Bill 190 is to fix the statutory limits of the program to better serve Hoosiers," Carrasco told lawmakers during a Jan. 16 meeting of the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Transportation, which resulted in the committee's unanimous support of the measure.

Senate Bill 190 would simplify the formula used to calculate how much funding communities can receive from the SDRF following a disaster. With respect to individual assistance, the legislation would help Hoosiers by giving the state of Indiana autonomy over the program, which currently can be accessed only when the U.S. Small Business Administration declares a disaster for an impacted community.

Importantly, Senate Bill 190 also would increase the maximum amount of assistance a household may receive from \$10,000 to \$25,000.

"This will go a long way in helping Hoosiers who encounter catastrophic disaster damages," Carrasco said.

Streamlining and bolstering the state's disaster relief program is a priority of Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb. The legislation also has a strong ally in the Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC),

the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in the state.

In fact, the ICC has a deeply personal connection to Carrasco. The new state senator gives full credit to Angela Espada, the ICC's executive director, with bringing her to Indiana in the first place. When Espada was serving in her prior role as dean of students and admissions at Indiana University's McKinney School of Law in Indianapolis,



Angela Espada

she recruited the El Paso, Texas, native as a law student after recognizing her unique talents and gifts.

"The ICC is pleased to support Sen. Carrasco on her first bill," Espada said. "When I met her years ago while I was the dean of students at IU McKinney, I found her to be an intelligent, inquisitive and compassionate person. Authoring this bill, which will aid Hoosiers in need, is an example of her commitment to better the situation of others. Our state is fortunate that Sen. Carrasco has made Indiana her home."

In testifying on Senate Bill 190 at the January committee hearing, Alexander Mingus, associate director of the ICC, reinforced the numerous ways the legislation would benefit Hoosiers. In doing so he was also speaking on behalf of Catholic Charities in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, whose Disaster Preparedness and Response office serves the entire state in times of crisis.

"When a disaster strikes in Indiana, Catholic Charities is one of the first to arrive on the scene and one of the last to leave," Mingus told lawmakers.

He outlined many of the challenges and constraints that Catholic Charities and others encounter in providing help following a disaster, including dramatically increasing construction costs. Catholic Charities often steps in to cover the gap between government assistance and insurance coverage for individuals and families whose homes have been damaged or destroyed by a natural disaster.

In one example, Mingus noted that Catholic Charities replaced a roof on a three-bedroom, 1,200-square-foot house for \$8,000 in 2018. Just five years later—



Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

February 3–11, 2024

<p>February 3 – 5 p.m. Confirmation Mass for youths of St. Monica Parish, Indianapolis, at St. Monica Church</p> <p>February 4 – 2 p.m. Annual Scout Award Ceremony at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis</p> <p>February 6 – 10:30 a.m. Priest Personnel Board meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis</p> <p>February 6 – 2 p.m. Virtual National Eucharistic Congress Board of Directors meeting</p> <p>February 7 – 11 a.m. College of Deans meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center</p> <p>February 8 – 8:15 a.m. Virtual Judicatories meeting</p>	<p>February 8 – 10 a.m. Leadership Team meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center</p> <p>February 9 – 5:30 p.m. Legacy Gala Dinner in Support of Catholic Charities, Catholic Schools and Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary at JW Marriott, Indianapolis</p> <p>February 10 – 10:30 a.m. Rite of Election at St. Mary Church, New Albany</p> <p>February 11 – 2 p.m. Rite of Election at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral</p> <p>February 11 – 6 p.m. Rite of Election at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral</p>
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in the aftermath of COVID-19 and rapidly escalating inflation—the cost to replace a roof on a comparable home was \$23,000.

Jane Crady, the longtime coordinator of Disaster Preparedness and Response for Catholic Charities in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, deals with these realities every day.

Almost a year following the spring 2023 tornadoes, Crady is still working with families and mobilizing support in the hardest-hit areas. That includes Sullivan, Ind., where an EF-3 tornado with peak winds of 155 miles per hour killed three people and destroyed 200 homes on the night of March 31.

"What people don't understand is that it's not only the houses that are damaged or destroyed," said Crady, a member of St. Joseph Parish in Shelbyville. "It affects the whole community.

"This is where Senate Bill 190 comes in," she continued. "We could do so much more now. If families were only getting \$10,000 [under the current state framework], they couldn't even put a new roof on their house. Passage of this bill is going to make a big difference for people, and that's the bottom line."

At press time, the measure was awaiting consideration by the Senate Appropriations Committee.

"This is a good bill that is going to help people," Carrasco said. "One of my first priorities was to ensure that the fund is solvent for everyone. The bill will be reviewed by the appropriations committee because of the potential fiscal impact. We're just waiting for it to be assigned."

Carrasco, who serves as vice president and general counsel for the University of Indianapolis, reflected on her two decades in Indiana and her newfound role at the Statehouse.

"I've had so many wonderful opportunities, and it all started with Angela," Carrasco said. "I don't know how it can get any better. Making good decisions to help people improve their lives, helping families to thrive and succeed. ... What could be more rewarding than that?"

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

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



'When a disaster strikes in Indiana, Catholic Charities is one of the first to arrive on the scene and one of the last to leave.'

—Alexander Mingus, associate director of the Indiana Catholic Conference

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We recently spruced up this brief, weekly note and would love for you to receive it.

To start receiving this easy, engaging way of staying on top of Church events and happenings, log on to www.archindy.org/newsletter or contact webmaster@archindy.org with your e-mail address. †

Correction

There were inaccuracies in a quote attributed to Archbishop Charles C. Thompson in his homily during the Indiana Mass for Life in the Jan. 26 issue of *The Criterion*.

The paragraph, with the two corrections highlighted in italics, should read:

The Indiana March for Life has "never been about merely overturning

laws, but healing wounds, transforming hearts," the archbishop explained. "It is for this very reason that we must keep our center of gravity with the *altar* rather than the capitol, prayer rather than politics, in divine grace rather than in *human merit*, dialogue rather than condemnation, and mercy rather than demonization." †



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Love is the only path to Christian unity, Pope Francis says

ROME (CNS)—Divided Christians will draw closer to one another only by loving God and loving their neighbors, serving one another and not pointing fingers in blame for past faults, Pope Francis said.

Closing the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity with an evening prayer service on Jan. 25 at Rome's Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls, Pope Francis was joined by Anglican Archbishop Justin Welby of Canterbury and, at the end of the service, the two commissioned pairs of Anglican and Catholic bishops from 27 countries to "bear witness together to the hope that does not deceive and to the unity for which our Savior prayed."

Members of the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches, who were meeting in Rome, also participated, along with representatives of Orthodox, Protestant and Anglican communities in Italy.

In his homily, Pope Francis reflected on the theme for the 2024 celebration of the week of prayer: "You shall love the Lord your God ... and your neighbor as yourself" from Luke 10:27.

The passage comes from a Gospel story in which a scholar of the law asks Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life. After Jesus affirms the need to love God and one's neighbor, the scholar asks, "And who is my neighbor?" (Lk 10:29)

"This question attempts to divide, to separate people into those we should love and those we should shun," Pope Francis said. "This kind of division is never from God; it is from the devil."

"Only a love that becomes gratuitous service, only the love that Jesus taught and embodied, will bring separated Christians closer to one another," he said. "Only that love, which does not appeal to the past in order to remain aloof or to point a finger, only that love which in God's name puts our brothers and sisters before the ironclad defense of our own religious structures, will unite us."

Although it was not foreseen, Archbishop Welby also offered a reflection at the service, explaining that Pope Francis invited him to do so.

Christians, he said, as individuals and as faith communities, can choose to be angry or to love. "Anger imprisons us; our rivalry or dislike of our brothers and sisters cuts us off from the freedom that God offers his Church."

But, the archbishop said, "a Church caught up in the fire of the love of God through the Holy Spirit will be a Church

of reconciliation, a Church of hope, a Church of healing." It will be a Church that can "care for the millions, the billions who are by the road in pain, lost and suffering."

Christians, Pope Francis said in his homily, should never have to ask who their neighbor is because "each baptized person is a member of the one body of Christ; what is more, everyone in this world is my brother or my sister, and all together we compose that 'symphony of humanity' of which Christ is the firstborn and redeemer."

Pope Francis urged people to ask themselves: "Do I, and then my community, my Church, my spirituality, act like a neighbor? Or are they barricaded in defense of their own interests, jealous of their autonomy, caught up in calculating what is in their own interest, building relationships with others only in order to gain something for themselves?"

If it is the latter, he said, "it would not only be a matter of mistaken strategies, but of infidelity to the Gospel."

The week of prayer concludes each year on the feast of the conversion of St. Paul. At the beginning of the liturgy, Pope Francis, Archbishop Welby and Orthodox Metropolitan Polykarpos of Italy, the Ecumenical Patriarchate's representative in Rome, prayed before what is believed to be St. Paul's tomb.

According to the Acts of the Apostles, after his conversion St. Paul immediately asks, "What am I to do, Lord?" (Acts 22:10)



Pope Francis and other ecumenical leaders pray before the tomb of St. Paul before an evening prayer service concluding the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity at Rome's Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls on Jan. 25. From the left are: Anglican Archbishop Ian Ernest, Archbishop Diego Giovanni Ravelli, Orthodox Metropolitan Polykarpos of Italy, Cardinal Kurt Koch and Anglican Archbishop Justin Welby of Canterbury. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

Christians, although divided, the pope said, must also ask, "What are we to do, Lord?"

The first response, the pope said, is "pray."

"Prayer for unity is the primary responsibility in our journey together," he said. "And it is a sacred responsibility, because it means being in communion with the Lord, who prayed above all to the Father for unity."

Pope Francis and Archbishop Welby also prayed for peace, remembering particularly the people of Israel and Gaza, Ukraine, Sudan, South Sudan and Congo.

When St. Paul asked God what he was supposed to do, the pope said, the Lord told him, "Get up and go" (Acts 22:10).

"Get up, Jesus says to each of us and to our efforts on behalf of unity," the pope said. "So let us get up in the name of Christ from our tired routine and set out anew, for he wills it, and he wills it 'so that the world may believe.' " †

Biden marks Roe anniversary by supporting new abortion initiatives

WASHINGTON (OSV News)—On the 51st anniversary of the now-overturned *Roe v. Wade* decision, President Joe Biden called for the restoration of *Roe* in federal law and pledged his administration would take new steps to "protect access to safe and legal medication abortion."

Biden, the second Catholic president in U.S. history, drew a rebuke for his remarks from the chair of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities, Bishop Michael F. Burbidge of Arlington, Va.

"On the somber anniversary of the *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision that unleashed 50 years of abortion-on-demand on our country," the bishop told OSV News in a Jan. 23 statement, "the Biden-Harris Administration

reaffirmed their single-minded extremism on abortion—rather than committing real help to mothers and their unborn children.

"We are all called to serve every mother in need and every child in the womb with our love and support while also advocating for life-affirming policies that assist mothers and protect their vulnerable unborn children," Bishop Burbidge said.

The Catholic Church opposes abortion, outlining its teaching in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* that human life "must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception" (#2270).

Catholic leaders have also called for policies and actions to support women and families facing unplanned pregnancies, including calling on parishes to join the "Walking with Moms in Need" initiative. †

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Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, *Publisher* John F. Fink, *Editor Emeritus*
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Editorial



Young people associated with Catholic Action, a lay apostolate, join Pope Francis as he leads the *Angelus* from his studio overlooking St. Peter's Square at the Vatican on Jan. 28. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

Are you open to new ideas to draw closer to God? If so, consider these

Are you someone who is open to new ideas for your life, especially as you work on answering your call to holiness?

As we approach the Lenten season, which begins on Feb. 14 this year, we believe that's a good question to ask.

Many of you already have thoughts on how you will approach this 40-day season of prayer, fasting and almsgiving that begins on Ash Wednesday and ends at sundown on Holy Thursday, and we commend those who already have their plans for Lent in place. In deepening our relationship with God, our faith calls us to participate in the sacraments, help those in need around us, and sacrifice something that we value.

As the U.S. bishops remind us on their website, it's a period of preparation to celebrate the Lord's resurrection at Easter. During Lent, we seek the Lord in prayer by reading sacred Scripture; we serve by giving alms; and we practice self-control through fasting. We are called not only to abstain from luxuries during Lent, but to a true inner conversion of heart as we seek to follow Christ's will more faithfully, the bishops note. We recall the waters of baptism in which we were also baptized into Christ's death, died to sin and evil, and began new life in Christ.

If you're procrastinating or looking for ideas on how to make your Lent more fruitful, we offer a few suggestions:

—Why not plan to go to confession and receive God's healing mercy in the sacrament of reconciliation?

Starting in next week's Feb. 9 issue of *The Criterion*, we will publish a list of parishes throughout the archdiocese that will offer penance services or other special times for confession during Lent. There will be many opportunities, so why not clip out the list and pick a date to avail yourself of this beautiful sacrament?

—How about volunteering at your parish or at a charitable organization that could use a helping hand at this time of year? In central and southern Indiana, there is no shortage of people

who need us to be the hands and feet of Christ for them. Our faith calls us to enhance the life and dignity of every person we encounter.

We recently learned that Catholic Charities in the archdiocese served more than 400,000 people during the most recent fiscal year—150,000 more than its previous year. Those statistics remind us we must always be ready to provide for our brothers and sisters in need. Lent is a time when we should be renewed in our compassion for those who are hungry, suffering, or otherwise in need. And if you're not able to volunteer, maybe a financial donation to a charitable cause is worth considering.

—When we think of fasting during Lent, many of us will abstain from that extra cup of coffee, soft drink or alcohol; skip a meal; or stop satisfying our sweet tooth. But why not fast from ways we hurt others—by following through on promises made instead of failing to do so, by fasting from gossip instead of tearing others down, or by focusing more on our loved ones by abstaining from the use of social media.

This penitential season is also an opportune time to focus on discernment, which means attentively listening in prayer to where the Spirit wants to lead us.

And listening is a trait that should assist us in our universal call to holiness, which Pope Francis and many of our Church fathers have reminded us for centuries.

“Holiness is the most attractive face of the Church,” Pope Francis said in his 2018 apostolic exhortation “*Gaudete et Exsultate*” (“Rejoice and Be Glad,” #9).

He later adds, “Do not be afraid of holiness. It will take away none of your energy, vitality or joy. On the contrary, you will become what the Father had in mind when he created you” (#32).

May we strive to live our Lord's call for us each day—during Ordinary Time, Lent, Easter, Advent, Christmas and all seasons of life.

—Mike Krokos

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

Five reasons why every Catholic should still commit to march for life

While pro-lifers rightly view the landmark *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* decision as a significant



judicial victory, attending the national March for Life is more important now than ever. Here are five reasons why I think every Catholic should still be committed to the national March for Life.

Witness to the sanctity of life

Showing up to the March for Life is a public declaration of our belief in the dignity and worth of every human life, from conception to natural death.

The U.S. bishops recently reaffirmed their commitment to fighting abortion, saying, “The threat of abortion remains our pre-eminent priority because it directly attacks our most vulnerable and voiceless brothers and sisters and destroys more than a million lives per year in our country alone.”

In a society often clouded by the fog of moral relativism, our collective witness is a beacon of truth, affirming the sanctity of life from conception to natural death. This public witness is vital in continuing to build a culture of life, especially in a post-*Roe* era where the truth that every life is sacred is fiercely contested.

The need for continued advocacy

While *Dobbs* represents a monumental shift, it is not the end of the fight. The decision decentralizes the abortion debate, shifting it to state legislatures.

The national March for Life inspires and encourages those working in grassroots efforts at the state levels by building a network to exchange ideas and reinvigorate local movements. Now more than ever, we need to be actively involved in advocating for life-affirming policies and supporting leaders who uphold the dignity of life at every level of government.

Promoting a culture of life

Our participation in the march fosters a culture of life. It goes beyond the legal aspects of working to end abortion and touches hearts and minds. We march not

only in protest but also in love, aiming to inspire a change in attitudes toward the sanctity of life, motherhood and the family.

Every year, I'm touched by the women I see with signs saying they regret their abortion, or by the young mothers with a child in tow, sharing that they almost chose abortion but didn't.

Ecumenical solidarity

Prayer is an important aspect of the march. Catholics gather the night before for a Mass and Vigil at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington. Seeing so many seminarians and young religious inspires young Catholics to think about their vocation. And while plenty of attendees are Catholic, many are not.

The march brings together people of different faiths and walks of life who share a common belief in the intrinsic worth of every human life. Standing with our Protestant and Orthodox brothers and sisters—and even alongside non-Christians—is a powerful witness to the world and provides a model for exchange and collaboration.

Educating the next generation

By participating in the March, we also educate and inspire the next generation. In a world where our young people are bombarded with conflicting messages, the March gives a clear and compassionate response.

The March for Life has always been a movement of young people. Youth rallies before the march, like Life Fest, hosted by the Sisters of Life and the Knights of Columbus, connect young people to their peers, assuring them that they are not alone and inspiring them to stand up for their pro-life beliefs.

In the wake of the *Dobbs* decision, the March for Life is not just a celebration but a rallying call. It's a reminder that our work is far from over. The national legal victory is just one facet of a much broader, ongoing mission to uphold the dignity of life at all stages. Our presence at the march reaffirms our commitment to this mission, serving as a visible sign of hope, solidarity and unyielding support for life.

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

Be Our Guest/Stephen Kappes

Feb. 12 Mass, program remember unborn children tragically lost to abortion

Do you remember 9/11? It serves both to recognize and remember the terrorist attacks where 19 men hijacked four airplanes and killed more than 3,000 people on American soil on Sept. 11, 2001.

Many of you may not be familiar with the number 2,411—another atrocity that took place at the hands of one man in the Midwest.

That figure—2,411—represents the number of aborted fetal remains discovered on property owned by the late Dr. Ulrich “George” Klopfer. The abortions took place between 2000 and 2003. Klopfer had performed abortions at his Indiana facilities starting in the 1970s before his medical license was suspended in 2016 for various violations.

After Klopfer died in Illinois in 2019, his family's attorney called the Will County, Ill., coroner, who called the sheriff's department and the county attorney for assistance with a collection of human remains on Klopfer's property, discovering bodies and medical records stating that all were from Indiana.

The remains of 2,411 unborn children were eventually returned to Indiana and interred on Feb. 12, 2020, in Southlawn Cemetery in South Bend, Ind.

Klopfer's story is not so much about abortion as it is about *victimization*; it is, in my opinion, about one of the greatest atrocities ever to befall mankind.

The Knights of Columbus of the State of Indiana has deemed this event the “2411 Never Forgotten Project,” and will not sit idle while attempts are made to relegate 2411 to the National Day of Remembrance in September as just another number of abortions.

2411's significance is not just meant to document this tragedy. It is also about retaining laws requiring the mothers or the institutions performing the abortions—or elective miscarriages—to properly bury the fetuses.

All are invited to attend this year's 2411 Memorial Mass and program beginning at 1 p.m. on Feb. 12 at Holy Name of Jesus Church, 89 N. 17th Ave., in Beech Grove. This year's keynote speaker is Indiana Attorney General Todd Rokita.

A reception will follow. For more information, call 317-784-5454.

(Stephen Kappes, a member of Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Beech Grove, is also chapter president of CUF Holy Innocents.) †

ARCHBISHOP/ARZOBISPO CHARLES C. THOMPSON



Christ the Cornerstone

The Presentation of the Lord foretells both sorrow and joy

“Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you prepared in sight of all the peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel” (Lk 2:29-32).

The Gospel reading (Lk 2:22-40) for today, the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, tells the story of Simeon and Anna, two faithful Jews who in their old age were blessed to witness the required ritual presentation of the child Jesus to God in the Temple.

Anna and Simeon can be said to represent the people of Israel who had long awaited the coming of the Messiah, but as the prayer of Simeon attests, they also represent the whole human race (“all the peoples”) for whom Jesus is “a light for revelation to the Gentiles and glory for [God’s] people Israel” (Lk 2:31-32).

The Feast of the Presentation in the Temple illustrates the “both/and” principle that is a fundamental characteristic of Catholic faith.

The child Jesus is both the Son of God and the Son of Mary. He is both the fulfillment of God’s promise to Israel (the chosen people) and the

Savior of all nations and peoples everywhere (the Gentiles). Jesus can never be pigeonholed or restricted to our own understanding. As God’s only begotten Son, the second person of the Blessed Trinity, Jesus is always more than we expect. He is both God and man, and his mere presence is transformative for all who are open to his saving power.

Anna and Simeon are two people who opened their minds and hearts to God without knowing what that might mean for them. The time they spent in the Temple while waiting for the Messiah involved silence and prayer to prepare themselves to recognize and embrace the moment.

Some might say they were wasting their time waiting in the Temple for something (or someone) they do not understand.

Simeon expresses a different point of view. He thanks God for giving him the privilege of witnessing the miraculous, revelatory event that is unfolding right in front of him. He asks God to “let your servant go in peace” (Lk 2:29) because he believes that his life has been fulfilled.

Anna is equally amazed. She gives thanks to God, and she immediately

begins to evangelize—speaking “about the child to all who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem” (Lk 2:38). These two elderly witnesses are both faithful Jews and precursors of the missionary disciples of Jesus Christ, who will proclaim his Gospel to all the ends of the Earth.

Anna and Simeon are prophetic witnesses. They understand that what is happening now—the fulfillment of the law concerning firstborn sons—will have powerful future consequences. The child will be a sign of contradiction for many. He will upend the status quo and inaugurate a radically new era in world history. Simeon also prophesies that a sword will pierce Mary’s heart—causing her to become both the Mother of Sorrows and the Queen of Everlasting Joy.

This is the “both/and” reality of Christian discipleship. The only way to eternal peace and joy is through the cross of Christ. Jesus accepted his suffering and death because it was his Father’s will. Mary also accepted her many sorrows because she was confident in God’s love for her. Thus, both sorrow and joy are foretold in the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple.

The first reading for the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord (Mal 3:1-4) contains the words of the prophet Malachi:

And suddenly there will come to the temple the Lord whom you seek, And the messenger of the covenant whom you desire. Yes, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. But who will endure the day of his coming? (Mal 3:1-2)

The little child who is offered to God in the Temple today will return with purifying power and a refiner’s fire (Mal 3:1-4). He will cleanse the Temple of all abuses, and when it is destroyed, he will raise it up again in three days with his own body (Jn 2:19). Are we ready for him? Can we “endure the day of his coming”? (Mal 3:2)

The Church offers us the Cantic of Simeon (the “*Nunc Dimittis*”) as part of our Night Prayer or Compline in the Liturgy of the Hours. Following an examination of conscience, we are invited to let go of the joys and sorrows of today and to ask God to watch over us during the night.

As we celebrate the Presentation of the Lord this weekend, let’s proclaim Jesus in our words and actions to all nations and peoples everywhere. †



Cristo, la piedra angular

La Presentación del Señor presagia tanto el dolor como la alegría

“Señor, ahora despides a este siervo tuyo, y lo despides en paz, de acuerdo a tu palabra. Mis ojos han visto ya tu salvación, que has preparado a la vista de todos los pueblos: luz reveladora para las naciones, y gloria para tu pueblo Israel” (Lc 2:29-32).

La lectura del Evangelio (Lc 2:22-40) de hoy, fiesta de la Presentación del Señor, narra la historia de Simeón y Ana, dos judíos fieles que en su vejez tuvieron la bendición de presenciar la obligada presentación ritual del niño Jesús a Dios en el Templo.

Puede decirse que Ana y Simeón representan al pueblo de Israel que esperaba desde hacía tiempo la llegada del Mesías, pero, como lo demuestra la oración de Simeón, también representan a toda la humanidad (“todos los pueblos”) para la cual Jesús es “luz reveladora para las naciones, y gloria para [el] pueblo [de Dios] Israel” (Lc 2:31-32).

La fiesta de la Presentación en el Templo ilustra el principio del “tanto y el como” que es una característica fundamental de la fe católica.

El niño Jesús es a la vez el Hijo de Dios y el Hijo de María. Él es tanto el cumplimiento de la promesa de Dios a Israel (el pueblo elegido) como el Salvador de todas las naciones y

pueblos del mundo (las naciones). Jesús nunca puede quedar encasillado o restringido por nuestra propia comprensión. Como Hijo único de Dios, segunda persona de la Santísima Trinidad, Jesús es siempre más de lo que esperamos: es a la vez Dios y hombre, y su mera presencia es transformadora para todos los que están abiertos a su poder salvador.

Ana y Simeón son dos personas que han abierto su mente y su corazón a Dios sin saber lo que eso podría significar para ellos. El tiempo que pasaban en el Templo mientras esperaban al Mesías implicaba silencio y oración para prepararse a reconocer y acoger el momento.

Algunos podrían decir que estaban perdiendo el tiempo al esperar en el Templo algo (o a alguien) que no entienden.

Simeón expresa un punto de vista diferente; da gracias a Dios por haberle concedido el privilegio de presenciar el acontecimiento milagroso y revelador que se está desarrollando ante sus ojos. Le pide a Dios: “Señor, ahora despides a este siervo tuyo, y lo despides en paz” (Lc 2:29) porque considera que se ha cumplido el propósito de su vida.

Ana se siente igualmente asombrada: da gracias a Dios, e inmediatamente

comienza a evangelizar al hablar “del niño a todos los que esperaban la redención de Jerusalén” (Lc 2:38). Estos dos ancianos testigos son a la vez judíos fieles y precursores de los discípulos misioneros de Jesucristo, que proclamarán su Evangelio hasta los confines de la Tierra.

Ana y Simeón son testigos proféticos que comprenden que lo que ocurre en ese momento—el cumplimiento de la ley relativa a los hijos primogénitos—tendrá poderosas consecuencias en el futuro. El niño será un signo de contradicción para muchos. Trastocará el *statu quo* e inaugurará una era radicalmente nueva en la historia del mundo. Simeón también profetiza que una espada atravesará el corazón de María, lo que la convertirá tanto en Nuestra Señora de los Dolores como la Reina de la Alegría Eterna.

Esto es la realidad del “tanto y el como” que caracteriza al discipulado cristiano. El único camino hacia la paz y la alegría eterna es a través de la Cruz de Cristo. Jesús aceptó su sufrimiento y su muerte porque era la voluntad de su Padre. María también aceptó sus muchas penas porque confiaba en el amor de Dios por ella. Así, tanto el dolor como la alegría están presagiados en la Presentación

del Señor en el Templo.

La primera lectura de la fiesta de la Presentación del Señor (Mal 3:1-4) contiene las palabras del profeta Malaquías:

El Señor, a quien ustedes buscan, vendrá de manera repentina, lo mismo que el ángel del pacto, en quien ustedes se complacen. Sí, ya viene. El Señor de los ejércitos lo ha dicho. ¿Pero quién podrá resistir cuando él se presente? (Mal 3:1-2).

El niño pequeño que hoy se ofrece a Dios en el Templo regresará con poder purificador y fuego refinador (Mal 3:1-4) y limpiará el Templo de todos los abusos y, cuando sea destruido, lo levantará de nuevo en tres días con su propio cuerpo (Jn 2:19). ¿Estamos preparados para él? ¿Podremos “resistir cuando él se presente”? (Mal 3:2).

La Iglesia nos ofrece el Cántico de Simeón (el *Nunc Dimittis*) como parte de nuestra oración nocturna o Completas. Tras un examen de conciencia, se nos invita a desprendernos de las alegrías y las penas de hoy y a pedir a Dios que vele por nosotros durante la noche.

Al celebrar la Presentación del Señor este fin de semana, proclamemos a Jesús con nuestras palabras y acciones a todas las naciones y pueblos del mundo. †

Events Calendar

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

FISH FRIES

February 14, 16

St. Thomas More Parish, 1200 N. Indiana St., Mooresville. **Stations of the Cross and Fish Fry**, fish fry 5:30-7:30 p.m. in social hall, Stations of the Cross 6:30 p.m. in church, dinner \$11. Information: 317-831-4142, pweber@stm-church.org.

February 16

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish, gymnasium, 1842 E. 8th St., Jeffersonville. **Fish Fry**, 5-7 p.m., hand-battered fried or baked fish, cheese pizza, fresh cut onion rings, cole slaw, mac and cheese, green beans, French fries, dessert, drinks, cost TBD. Information: 812-987-6204, tammidauby@gmail.com.

St. Simon the Apostle Parish, 8155 Oaklondon Rd., Indianapolis. **Fish Fry**, 5:30-8 p.m., baked cod and salmon, fried cod, green beans, mac and cheese, French fries, peel-and-eat shrimp, bounce houses, beer, wine, sodas, \$15 adult, \$45 family. Information: 317-826-6000, saintsimonmensclub@gmail.com.

SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Parish, St. Clare Hall, Door #10, 5901 Olive Branch Road, Greenwood. **Fish Dinner Fundraiser**, 5:30-7:30 p.m., \$12 adult meal: choice of two pieces fried fish, one piece baked fish, or one grilled cheese sandwich, choice of three sides, salad or coleslaw; \$10 child meal: one piece fish (baked or fried) or grilled cheese sandwich, two sides, salad or coleslaw; extra piece of fish \$1, meals include tea, lemonade or water. Information: 317-859-4673, parish@ss-fc.org.

St. Anthony of Padua Parish, 316 N. Sherwood Ave., Clarksville. **Men's Club Annual Fish Fry**, 5-7:30 p.m., dine-in and take-out, baked fish, fried fish, oysters, shrimp,

two sides, adult dinners \$12-\$13, small dinners: \$3-\$9. Information: 812-282-2290, communications@stanthony-clarksville.com.

Seton High School, Father Hillman Hall, 233 S. 5th St., Richmond. **St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish Lenten Fish Fry**, 4-7 p.m., fried or baked cod, grilled salmon, French fries, mac and cheese, coleslaw, cheese pizza, dessert, drinks, \$12 adults, \$6 children, ages 5 and younger free. Information: 765-962-3902, lmiller@seton Catholics.org.

St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) School, 1401 N. Bosart Ave., Indianapolis. **Lenten Fish Fry**, 4:30-7 p.m., fried and baked fish, shrimp, potato soup, cheese pizza, sides, desserts, drinks, cost TBD. Information: 317-357-8352, amackell@littleflowerparish.org.

St. John Paul II Parish, 2605 W. St. Joe Road., Sellersburg. **Lenten Fish Fry**, 5-7 p.m., \$14. Information: 812-246-2512, gstrom@stjohnpaulparish.org.

All Saints Parish, St. Martin Campus, 8044 Yorkridge Rd., Guilford. **All Saints Lenten Fish Fry**, 4:30-7 p.m., hand-breaded and baked fish, fries, green beans, coleslaw, mac and cheese, cheese pizza, homemade dessert, drinks, carry-out or dine-in, adult meals \$12, children meals \$6. Information: 812-576-4302, emilyalig.asp@gmail.com.

St. John the Baptist Parish, 8310 St. John Road, Floyds Knobs. **Fish Fry**, 5 p.m., price TBD. Information: 812-923-5785, parish.navstar@gmail.com.

St. Mary Parish, 212 Washington St., North Vernon. **Knights of Columbus Fish Fry Buffet**, 4:30-7 p.m., \$15 for meal and drink, desserts freewill donation. Information: 812-346-3604, parishsecretary@stmarysnv.com.

Our Lady of the Greenwood School Cafeteria, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. **Lenten Fish Fry**, 5-7 p.m., salmon, tilapia, fish sandwiches, cheese pizza, grilled cheese, sides, desserts, prices vary. Information: 317-888-2861, olgreenwood.org, info@olgreenwood.org.

St. Jude Parish, 5353 McFarland Road, Indianapolis. **BSA Troop 51 Lenten Fish Fry**, 4-7 p.m., 1-2 fried fish fillets, baked tilapia (gluten free) or grilled cheese, French fries, macaroni and cheese, green beans, water, lemonade, tea, freewill donation. Information: 317-786-4371.

St. Anne Parish, 102 N. 19th St., New Castle. **Knights of Columbus Fish Fry**, 4-7 p.m., \$15. Information: 765-529-0933, stannechurch@hotmail.com.

St. Paul the Apostle Parish, 202 E. Washington St., Greencastle. **Knights of Columbus Fish Fry**, 4-7 p.m., \$8 adult, \$4 children. Information: 765-653-5678, mwelker@allstate.com.

EVENTS

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 10

Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish Life Center, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. **Celebrate Romance: A Wedding Reception for Married Couples**, 6-11 p.m., sponsored by Our Lady of the Greenwood Celebrate Marriage Ministry, dinner, optional dance lessons, dancing, door prizes, cash bar,

\$80 per couple, registration deadline Feb. 3. Information, tickets: 317-489-1557, info@celebratemarriageministry.com.

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

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 16

Northside Events and Social Club, 2100 E. 71st St., Indianapolis. **Catholic Business Exchange**, Gabby Hlavek, Diocese of Lafayette, Ind., director of communications, presenting

"Catholic Communications in the Digital Age," rosary 6:35 a.m., Mass 7 a.m., buffet breakfast and program following, \$18 members, \$24 non-members. Register by 4 p.m. on Feb. 13. Information, registration: cutt.ly/CBE-Reg.

February 16-19

Providence Spirituality and Conference Center, Foley Room, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Used Book Sale**, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., freewill donations. Information: 812-535-2947, events.sistersofprovidence.org, lindenleafgifts@spsmw.org.

February 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.

East Central H.S. Performing Arts Center, 1 Trojan Place, St. Leon. **E6 Catholic Men's Conference**, 8 a.m.-3 p.m., featuring speakers Reds' Hall of Famer Sean Casey, Catholic Answers' Tim Staples, Catholic evangelist Nathan Crankfield and Father John Hollowell, includes, Mass, confession, adoration, lunch, group tickets \$40, individual tickets: ages 25 and older \$45, high school through age 24 \$15, clergy and religious free. Information, registration: 812-576-4302, contact@efcatholicmensconference.com.

Concordia Lutheran Church, 305 Howard Road, Greenwood. **Right to Life of Johnson and Morgan Counties Euchre Tournament**, 9 a.m., benefits local crisis pregnancy centers, first place \$150, runners up \$50, coffee and donuts provided, bring package of diapers to enter. Information: 317-697-2441, ebrookehaskins@gmail.com. †

Retreats and Programs

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

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 Jeffrey 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.

March 2

Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis. **Lenten Letting Go**, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. \$60, includes materials and lunch. Information, registration: retreatcommunications@mountsaintfrancis.org, 812-923-8817, mountsaintfrancis.org/letten-letting-go.

March 6

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr.,

St. Meinrad. **Created in the Image of God: A Woman's Day of Reflection**, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Dr. Kimberly Baker presenting, \$55. Registration: 812-357-6611, saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

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.

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. †

Wedding Anniversaries

VERN AND RITA (ANDRES) NOLOT, members of St. Mary-of-the-Knobs Parish in Floyd County, will celebrate their 65th wedding anniversary on Feb. 7.

The couple was married in St. Mary-of-the-Knobs Church in Floyd County on Feb. 7, 1959.

They have five children: Becky Crump, Sandi, Dennis, Michael and Terry Nolot.

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



RANDY AND BARBARA (HESS) DAVIS, members of St. Paul Parish in Tell City, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Jan. 26.

The couple was married in St. Paul Church in Tell City on Jan. 26, 1974.

They have one child: Sean Davis.



NICK AND SALLY (STAMBACK) PETERS, members of St. Mary Parish in Greensburg, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Dec. 1, 2023.

The couple was married in Visitation Church in Eaton, Ohio, on Dec. 1, 1973.

They have two children: Natalie Scheibler and Justin Peters.

The couple also has five grandchildren.



MARK AND GERALYN (HOEHN) WETZEL, members of St. Michael Parish in Bradford, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Feb. 1.

The couple was married in St. Michael Church in Bradford on Feb. 1, 1974.

They have four children: Cody, Gavin, Kirk and Mark Wetzel, Jr.

The couple also has nine 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.

Teens at Indiana March for Life youth rally reminded that ‘God is pro-your-life’

By Sean Gallagher

Sister of Life Ann Immaculee, dressed in her religious community’s distinctive blue and white habit, looked out on the crowd of some 1,500 teenagers from across the state gathered on Jan. 22 in the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis.

They had come to the city, some of them departing from their homes long before sunrise, to take part in a youth rally before the Indiana March for Life on the 51st anniversary of the Supreme Court’s 1973 *Roe v. Wade* ruling that legalized abortion across the country.

Sister Ann Immaculee, with a smile on her face, quietly told them that “to be pro-life starts in our own hearts.

“God is pro-*your*-life,” she said. “And he wants you to know that you are a gift to be protected and treasured.”

Two other members of the Sisters of Life gave reflections during the rally, as well as Jill Clark, who serves on the board of directors of a home in Carmel, Ind., for single pregnant homeless women; and Eric Dessauers, a pro-life activist and student at Guerin Catholic High School in Noblesville, Ind., in the Lafayette Diocese.

Catholic singer and songwriter Sarah Kroger provided music for the event.

Several priests were on hand to share God’s mercy with rally attendees in the sacrament of penance.

‘To be pro-life starts in our own hearts’

Sister Ann Immaculee began the rally by talking about “two fundamental truths”: “God wants you to exist, and there is mercy waiting for you.”

“Before God created anything—the Earth, the stars, the oceans, the trees, the platypus—God created you, and he thought of you,” Sister Ann Immaculee said. “From all eternity before anything was, the Father dreamt of you, everything about you: your personality, your heart, the way you would love, the way you would laugh, your weaknesses, and he said, ‘I want you, I choose you.’



Father Jonathan Meyer, who serves in the four parishes of Dearborn County, talks with a youth during a celebration of the sacrament of penance on Jan. 22 in the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis during a pro-life youth rally that was part of the Indiana March for Life events.



Marci Hackert, director of youth and family ministries at Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood, looks at her 1-month-old daughter Helen, on Jan. 22 in the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis during a pro-life youth rally that was part of the Indiana March for Life events. Sarah Drake, middle, and Mia Kennedy, two teens from Our Lady of the Greenwood, sit next to Hackert.



Sister of Life Mary Immaculee gives a reflection to some 1,500 teens from across the state on Jan. 22 in the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis during a pro-life youth rally that was part of the Indiana March for Life events. (Photos by Sean Gallagher)

“Do we know that God desires us to exist? Do you know this?”

Sharing with the students a message about mercy, Sister Ann Immaculee said that “to be pro-life is to be full of hope. There is nothing in your life, nothing in anyone’s life that is too big for God’s mercy to heal and to transform.”

Sister of Life Catherine Joy Marie followed, reflecting on how people “are made for communion.”

To illustrate the power of communion among people, Sister Catherine shared a story about a woman helped by her community’s pro-life ministry. The pregnant woman had seen another woman praying the rosary by an abortion center as she entered it for the procedure.

Three years later, finding herself pregnant again, the woman, knowing the hardship her first abortion had caused in her life, remembered the praying woman when wondering where she could find help.

“She approached the woman and said, ‘You don’t know me, but three years ago I saw you here, and I went in, and I had the abortion. I’m pregnant again. Will you help me?’ ” said Sister Catherine as she narrated the story. “That’s the power of one person standing for another in need. That woman had been faithfully praying outside the



Catholic singer and songwriter Sarah Kroger, accompanied by guitarist Dom Quaglia, sings on Jan. 22 in the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis during a pro-life youth rally.

clinic for years, and most of the time didn’t think her presence really made a difference, but she still showed up.

“Her presence had touched this woman so much that three years later she still remembered,” she continued, “and knew that this was someone who’d be willing to stand with her and support her in giving life to her child.

“You have a great gift to give to your family, your friends, your neighbors, your classmates, to women who are pregnant and in need—the gift of you, your presence. With Christ, you have the capacity to love and listen someone back into life.”

Sister of Life Mary Veritas shared with the young listeners seven “practicals” for them to make the way they live each

day more pro-life: pray; have a positive self-image based on God’s love; affirm the being of other people; show forgiveness and mercy; enter into dialogue with others, especially on difficult topics like abortion; find ways to celebrate; and give of yourself.

“Ask God how he wants you to make a gift of yourself for the cause of human life,” Sister Mary Veritas said. “Ask him how he’s calling you specifically in your particular unique mission to love the people in your life, to proclaim the goodness of every human life.”

‘It’s really amazing to see the solidarity’

Eric Dessauers felt a call to share the Gospel of life first as a student at Bishop Chatard High School in Indianapolis and later at Guerin Catholic High School in Noblesville, where he is currently a senior. At both schools, he’s led pro-life student groups.

He shared how he also has taken part in peaceful pro-life protests and in defending the dignity of life in social media—often receiving in both instances sharp criticism, sometimes tied to his life as a person with dwarfism.

Despite the hurtful insults hurled at him in a protest or in comments on his pro-life Instagram posts, Eric has remained firm in his pro-life principles, convinced “that God was with me through this, that God was proud of me for fighting for what I believed in, that God saw my worth ... ”

Eric later posed a challenge to his listeners.

“Start a pro-life club at your school if there’s not one already,” he said. “It may start off slowly. But trust that people will start to join once they realize that they are not the only ones in school who want to be more vocal about the pro-life movement.

“... Even something as simple as leading a rosary for life with a couple of friends during the week can be extremely powerful. The power of prayer to our everlasting Father is endless.”

'You are a hope to this nation'



Sisters of Life Sister Mary Grace addresses the crowd during a rally outside the Indiana Statehouse in Indianapolis after the Indiana March for Life on Jan. 22. Joining her are Sisters Ann Immaculee, left, Catherine Joy Marie, Lumen Glorise and Marie Veritas. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)



A student sports pro-life stickers inside the Indiana Convention Center before the Indiana March for Life in Indianapolis on Jan. 22. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)



Daniel Renner, a junior and the president of the Knights for Life club at Bishop Luers High School in Fort Wayne, in the Fort Wayne-South Bend Diocese, holds a sign high as he cheers during a rally outside of the Indiana Statehouse following the Indiana March for Life in Indianapolis on Jan. 22. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)



Students carry signs and chant during the Indiana March for Life in Indianapolis on Jan. 22. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)



A record crowd of some 2,000 pro-life advocates participate in the Indiana March for Life on Jan. 22. Students from Mater Dei High School in Evansville, in the Diocese of Evansville, carry the banner. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)



Georgia Lieb, communications and marketing director for Bishop Luers High School in Fort Wayne, in the Fort Wayne-South Bend Diocese, holds a sign during a rally outside the Indiana Statehouse in Indianapolis on Jan. 22. Posing with her at right is Father Patrick Hake, a priest of the Fort Wayne-South Bend Diocese and chaplain at Bishop Luers. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)



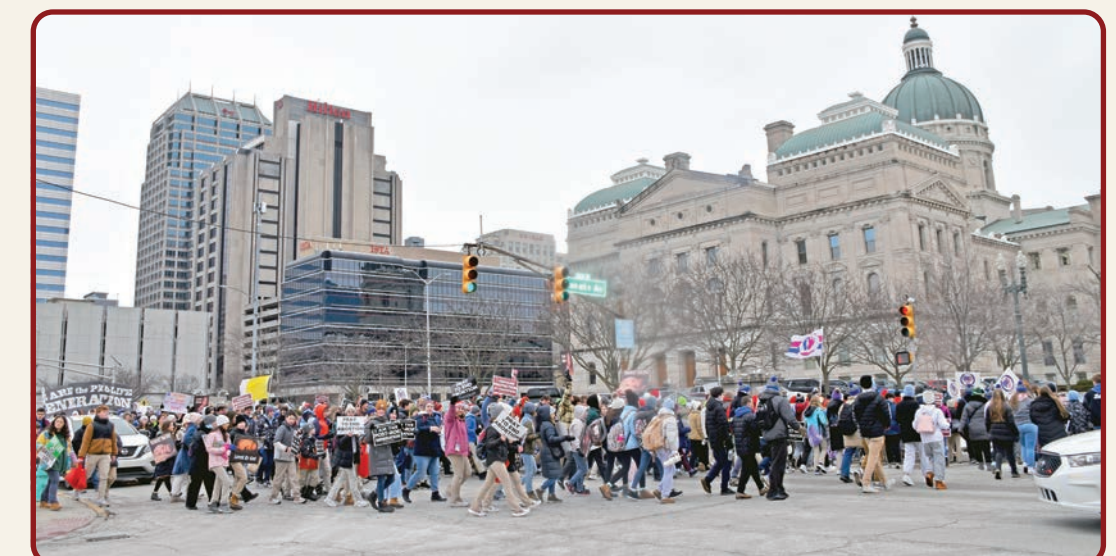
Pro-life author, speaker and actress Melissa Coles speaks during a rally before the Indiana March for Life in Indianapolis on Jan. 22. She was one of five speakers who addressed those assembling for the march. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)



Angela Minter, founder of the Sisters for Life group in Louisville, Ky., makes a point in her address during a rally outside of the Indiana Statehouse in Indianapolis on Jan. 22. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)



A young woman holds a handmade sign declaring "Our salvation began with an unplanned pregnancy!" during a pro-life rally after the Indiana March for Life in Indianapolis on Jan. 22. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)



Participants in the Indiana March for Life wrap around the back side of the Indiana Statehouse in Indianapolis on Jan. 22. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)

MARCH

continued from page 1

cold, dark morning to take part in the day's activities.

Noah Becker was one of them. The freshman at Bishop Luers High School in Fort Wayne, in the Fort Wayne-South Bend Diocese, came with a group of 40 students from the school.

He chose to come because promoting the sanctity of life "needs to be defended. Even though *Roe v. Wade* has been overturned, there's still a lot that needs to be done to help promote" the cause, he said.

A group of about 145 students and chaperones from the Evansville Diocese were also early-morning risers who came to Indianapolis. Students from Mater Dei High School in Evansville were honored this year with carrying the banner at the front of the march.

Walking with the group from that diocese was Aidan Mohr, a senior at Reitz Memorial High School in Evansville. The president of Reitz's Students for Life club was excited to participate for the first time in the Indiana March for Life.

"I've done small local ones, so I'm excited for a bigger city one," he said. "I've never been around so many Catholics [gathered] specifically for the pro-life cause—it's terrific! And the march was amazing. It was exciting, energetic and fun, but at the same time peaceful."

It was also the first Indiana March for Life for William Mulligan—another early-riser, coming from the Gary Diocese with a group of about 50.

"It was loud, and it was exciting," said the freshman from Lake Central High School in St. John, Ind. "I think if I was on Mars I could have heard those chants! But we still got our message across peacefully."

This year marked the second time Jordi Martinez Morales participated in the march. The senior at Father Michael Shawe Memorial Jr./Sr. High School in Madison said this crowd was "much bigger compared to last year. You could really feel it in your heart and everywhere around you when people were chanting, and people were just happy to be here."

'You're making an impact showing up'

The youths were obviously excited by the energy and size of the crowd marching through the streets of Indianapolis to the Statehouse.

Likewise, leaders of various groups present from Indiana's five dioceses were excited to witness to the sanctity of life at the state level.

On the ride back to Evansville, the group watched catechetical videos to help the teens process the day's events. One video featured Evansville Bishop Joseph M. Siegel.

"He explained what the importance is of a local state march, because we had gone to [the National March for Life in] D.C. for so many years," said Jeremy Goebel, the diocese's director of youth and young adults.

"He talked about local efforts being more to the heart of individuals and people in our own communities, that we need to start reaching out and listening and having more compassion."

Jim O'Connor, director of campus ministry and student life at Guerin, said he brought a group of students to participate in the last two Indiana March for Life events because the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* by the Supreme Court's 2022 *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* decision "put the impetus for pro-life legislation on the state.

"The national side is still very important, yes, but the more pressing issue for us on a personal level is here in the state."



Students of Father Michael Shawe Memorial Jr./Sr. High School in Madison hold a banner on the steps of the Indiana Statehouse in Indianapolis during a pro-life rally on Jan. 22. They are Philip Kahn, left, Leo Garcia-Nonato, Ben Guetig, Jordi Martinez-Morales, Joseph Martinez-Morales and Evelyn Vaughn. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)

Father Richard Holy, administrator of the Office of Pro-Life Activities in the Gary Diocese, agreed.

"As a diocese, we want to be a witness to the sanctity and dignity of human life, and especially to our legislators at the state level, so they continue to pass the kind of legislation that they've passed that protects the sanctity and dignity of human life."

Roseanne Kouris, Father Holy's assistant and the Gary Diocese's coordinator of marriage and family life, explained that members of the diocese used to participate in the Chicago March for Life.

Not only does that march no longer exist, she said, but by participating in the march in Indianapolis "you really feel like you're making an impact showing up. You feel like you're more part of something that actually makes a difference."

And unlike the Chicago march, she said, at the post-march rally outside the state capitol building in Indianapolis "you get to hear the people from your own statehouse talk."

'The walls of a unified state'

Nine pro-life state politicians were among those who addressed the crowd of 2,000 at the post-march rally. Marc Tuttle, president of march and rally organizer Right to Life of Indianapolis, served as emcee.

He noted that the state's Termination of Pregnancy report for July 2023—the last full month before Indiana's new law protecting most babies from abortion went into effect—showed 698 abortions. The same report for September 2023—the first full month under the new law—showed only 14.

"That's fantastic news, and we know that's not the whole story," said Tuttle. "The number of women seeking help at the pregnancy resource centers in this state went up by 33% in those same months.

"So, we are saving lives. We are leading the way with the rest of the country. But we know there are still women

out there who will seek abortions, and we have to be there for them."

One such woman was Angela Mintor, founder of the pro-life group Sisters for Life in Louisville, Ky.

"I was that woman that had abortions when I was a teenager, 17 and 18 years old, paying money for two of my babies to be killed," she said.

"We've got to learn to be such empathetic listeners that we enter into the mother's world. We need to say, 'You tell me what's going on with you. You tell me what you need from me before I tell you what you need from me.'

"And then we've got to be very intentional and continue to walk alongside the mother, and the father, and the baby, and the families and our communities."

Such accompaniment is the charism of the Sisters of Life. Sister Mary Grace shared with the crowd about a young woman her order helped.

"The thought of caring and providing for another life as a single mom, working in a factory and in danger of losing her own home, made this choice seem to her like it was impossible," she said.

The woman's "biggest encouragement" wasn't the sisters, said Sister Mary Grace.

"It was people like you, people that stepped up in her neighborhood to build a crib, to take her to an appointment, to offer prayers for her. You were the hope in her life."

Sister Mary Grace noted that, with most abortion now illegal in Indiana, some might wonder why the order chose to participate in the state's march when other states are facing larger pro-life battles.

"You're like a lighthouse for the nation," she told the enthusiastic crowd. "Why? Because you hold out hope to the entire country that a culture of life is still possible. ... No evil, no dark storm, no trial can destroy the walls of a unified state.

"So, we thank you, Indiana, for showing every state how it's done." †

YOUTH RALLY

continued from page 7

After Eric's reflection, Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend in northern Indiana took the

stage to offer a prayer to conclude the rally.

But before doing so, he recalled how he was a sophomore at a Catholic high school when the U.S. Supreme Court legalized abortion across the country in its *Roe v. Wade* ruling issued on

Jan. 22, 1973—a day that is stuck in his memory.

He spoke in gratitude for the high court's 2022 ruling in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* that returned abortion regulation to the states. And he noted his joy that Indiana has passed strong pro-life legislation.

But Bishop Rhoades said the struggle is far from over.

"What we need to change is the pro-death culture," he said. "Even though [abortion regulations] have been returned to the states, there is a culture that is growing that is against life. So, we need you, the young generation, to stand up for life as you are doing today.

"As a bishop, you give me so much hope, and I'm very proud of you."

Marci Hackert, director of youth and family ministries at Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood, enjoyed listening to the speakers at the rally with the 40 youths from her faith community who came to it.

Hackert, 36, also attended the event with her 1-month-old daughter Helen.

"It's good to be able to share my own

experience and have the baby around the youth," said Hackert, a mother of six children. "It's good for them to see her and to love on her. It's so poetic to have an infant here."

She also appreciated having the youths of her parish be around so many other pro-life teens.

"It's beautiful to have them see other people practicing their faith," Hackert said. "They don't necessarily see every day such a large number of people being pro-life, loving God and having that energy."

This year's Indiana March for Life was the third attended by Ellie Ryan, a senior at the Oldenburg Academy of the Immaculate Conception in Oldenburg.

She was amazed to see the growth in the event.

"It's really awesome to see all these kids here," said Ellie, a member of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Parish in Aurora. "It's inspiring. It makes me feel like maybe that there are a lot more people of similar mind. It's really amazing to see the solidarity that we all have together." †



Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend in northern Indiana speaks on Jan. 22 in the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis during a pro-life youth rally. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

SIMPLY CATHOLIC

Use of coats of arms in the Church dates back to Middle Ages

By Michael R. Heinlein

(OSV News)—Coats of arms in the Church, also known as ecclesiastical heraldry, is both familiar and mysterious.

Frequently seen in one form or another, coats of arms pervade our Catholic culture in numerous ways: on letters and newspapers, diocesan websites and social media pages, in Roman churches and diocesan cathedrals. Most Catholics, though, are unaware of the significance of this time-honored practice.

Steeped in tradition, ecclesiastical heraldry is a system of self-identification regulated by centuries-old traditions. It was adopted by the Church from medieval society and operates as a science and an art form with its own rules and regulations.

A heraldic achievement, also called a coat of arms, is permitted lawfully in the Church for those who occupy ecclesiastical office—for example, popes, cardinals, archbishops, bishops, monsignors, priests and religious superiors such as abbots and abbesses.

It's also permitted for ecclesiastical territories and institutions—for example, dioceses, religious orders, papal knight-hoods, basilicas, cathedrals, parish churches, schools and other Catholic institutions. While heraldry runs the risk of being seen as haughty or pompous, in reality it simply seeks to graphically herald (or announce)—in color and symbol—who and what the bearer is.

The use of artistic elements to identify personages, locations and possessions first existed in pre-Christian societies. Pharaohs of ancient Egypt offer one of the earliest precursors of heraldic practices. Their various holdings of goods and properties were identified with the symbols found in the cartouche, an oval symbol containing personal hieroglyphics with a distinct line at the bottom indicating royalty.

Likewise, the Book of Numbers provides evidence that standards and symbols were used by the tribes of the nomadic Israelites in early biblical times (see Nm 1:2, 18, 52).

Modern heraldry finds its origins with the Battle of Hastings in 1066—illustrated in the famous Bayeux Tapestry—when knights concealed by battle armor were first identified with decorated shields. Later developments incorporated the shield design into body coats, banners and even coverings for horses.

These coats of arms subsequently became synonymous with the knight's family, especially following the Third Crusade (1189-92). The shape and character of ecclesiastical heraldry are closely tied to these developments since the Church adopted many of the customs and traditions of the culture.

As feudal and belligerent Europe shifted into the structures of nobility and royalty, familial arms were used much as in ancient Egypt—to identify themselves and their possessions. Similar measures of personal identification were incorporated into items such as seals (often part of rings), which were legally mandated for use

on documents and letters as a means to provide authenticity and prevent forgery.

Because noble status and property were inherited by the oldest son through a practice known as primogeniture, younger sons were often offered for service in the Church. Familial arms continued to be used by those appointed to such ecclesiastical positions of jurisdiction and authority, although they were typically modified for ecclesiastical use by removing warlike symbols.

Many sources indicate that the first bishop known to do so

was Guy of Vergy, bishop of Autun in France in the early 13th century. A personal papal coat of arms—other than just the standard tiara and keys indicative of the papal office—was first used during the pontificate of Pope Martin V (1417-1431). Use of heraldry by all ecclesiastical officeholders became a standardized means of self-identification beginning in the 17th century.

Because a coat of arms seeks to identify its bearer, each must be unique—like a passport or Social Security number. Therefore, offices and methods for documentation and legislation for both secular and ecclesiastical heraldry were established, the most notable and enduring secular example being the College of Arms established in England by King Richard III in 1484.

Initial codification of heraldry in the Church coincided with widespread practice by the 17th century through a system of ecclesiastical headgear developed by French heraldist and printer Pierre Palliot.

Although the legal history of secular heraldry significantly weighs upon the Church's heraldic tradition, it was also shaped by the development of doctrinal, liturgical and canonical factors. The Church itself began to systematically regulate her heraldry in 1905, with Pope St. Pius X's establishment of the Heraldry Commission of the Roman Curia, an office abolished in 1960 by Pope St. John XXIII.

At the end of the subsequent decade, with the approval of Pope St. Paul VI, three specialists published "*Rubrica Araldica Vaticana*"—the compendium of rules governing ecclesiastical heraldry today. Likewise, the Vatican Secretariat of State issued "*Ut sive sollicit*" in 1969, a brief instruction on coats of arms and other honorifics for cardinals, bishops and other prelates. Current scholarly interest in the field is reinforced by the laudable and exhaustive 2014 manual of ecclesiastical heraldry published by Cardinal Andrea Cordero Lanza di Montezemolo, a leading heraldic authority and designer of Pope Benedict XVI's coat of arms.

An equally significant aspect of heraldry's regulations is the centuries' old linguistic components governing it. In effect, heraldry has its own language.

Even today, the artistic rendering of a coat of arms is accompanied by a lengthy explanation written in blazon—heraldry's own language. Coming from a word from French for "shield," blazon combines terms of Old English and French resulting in a language with a distinctive word order, vocabulary and grammar.

Blazon describes a coat of arms with such detail that it is possible to be artistically reproduced by anyone familiar with the lexicon. Coats of arms are described in Latin from the bearer's point of view, left and right for the viewer correspondingly are called "dexter" and "sinister."

A coat of arms for each ecclesiastical order, office, rank or institution contains several symbolic elements.



The coat of arms of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis was commissioned by Bishop Joseph E. Ritter in 1934. Designed by Pierre de Chaignon La Rou, of Cambridge, Mass., it comprises a blue cross on a gold field and the fleur-de-lis, symbolic of the faith brought here by French missionaries, including the first bishops of Vincennes, Ind., who were French. The fish and trident recall the Native Americans of the area, who spoke Algonquin, which means "at the place of spearing fish." Above the shield is a bishop's miter, showing that the coat of arms is that of an episcopal see.

External elements to the coat of arms describe what office and jurisdiction the bearer holds, while interior elements describe the bearer.

Starting at the uppermost part, replacing the knight's helmet or monarch's crown on the crest of secular arms, most ecclesiastical arms are topped with a galero—a hat now only used in ceremonial depictions.

The unique and central part of any coat of arms is the shield. Most shields for cardinals and bishops are impaled—a combination of two parts often indicating occupation of an office—in which the arms of the bearer's diocese are seen on the left and personal arms are on the right.

Examples of those bearing only their personal arms are titular bishops such as auxiliaries, some cardinals and officials in the Roman Curia or cardinals not ordained as bishops. Behind a bishop's shield is a processional cross denoting rank in the episcopate: One horizontal bar indicates a bishop or two indicates an archbishop.

The cross is replaced by a crosier for those with ordinary jurisdiction who are not bishops, such as abbots or the ordinaries of the Anglican Ordinariates. Because they occupy positions of jurisdiction, male and female religious superiors are entitled to bear a coat of arms, although the only one of those which might be impaled is an abbot's with the arms of his abbey.

Personal aspects of a shield also incorporate elements of the bearer's life, often depicting symbols representative of their particular devotions or patron saints, life events or genealogy. Additionally, below the shield is a motto chosen by the bearer, typically from Scripture.

Even a quick glance at a coat of arms, then, provides important information and opens our eyes and hearts to a tradition going back many centuries in the Church.

(Michael R. Heinlein is editor of *Simply Catholic*. Follow him on Twitter @HeinleinMichael.) †



This is the coat of arms of Pope Francis. The insignia borrows much from his former episcopal emblem. On the blue shield is the symbol of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits). Below it is a star and the buds of a spikenard flower, which represent respectively Mary and St. Joseph. The papal motto is the Latin phrase "*Miserando atque eligendo*," which means "because he saw him through the eyes of mercy and chose him" or more simply, "having mercy, he called him." The phrase comes from a homily by St. Bede. (CNS file)

Amid the Fray/Greg Erlandson

Mean Girls and the deep divisions in our nation, our Church

The movie, musical and now musical movie *Mean Girls* is a reminder of one of the more miserable sides of adolescence: In groups and out groups, the cool kids and the losers, the nerds and the jocks.



Unfortunately, however, in groups and out groups don't just exist in grammar schools and high schools. Social scientists say this kind of group identity is hard-wired in us. We seek the protection of our tribe, and we view outsiders with hostility.

This is one way to understand our highly polarized and politicized world today. Americans increasingly identify

with one political group and react with hostility or fear to those who are not in their group.

Political identity has become a "meta-identity," impacting not just our politics but where we live, how we pray, who we associate with. Communities are becoming more politically homogenous as we seek out like-minded people and avoid those who do not think like us.

That is one of the intriguing insights of Father Robert Aaron Wessman, the author of *The Church's Mission in a Polarized World* (New City Press). In an effort to understand the harsh divides that are separating Americans, including Catholics, Father Wessman explores the power of groups, looking at the sociological and psychological research that shows how important group

identity is, and how easily it can pit us against each other.

Surveys show that when our political identity is more and more central to how we see ourselves as members of a group, the less likely we are to want to associate with or socialize with people who are not in our group. This is most obvious this year in our presidential politics, where a Trump voter in a red state is unlikely to socialize with Biden supporters, and a Biden supporter in a blue state is unlikely to socialize with Trump voters.

Surveys suggest that as we grow more polarized, we even view these political differences the way we once viewed religious differences. Today, parents are more likely to be concerned about their child marrying someone from another party than someone from another faith tradition.

In "mean girl" terms, we identify our group as the "in group," and the other side as the "out group." Most disturbing is that often the punishment or defeat of the out group becomes our primary driver. Rather than looking for areas of agreement or compromise, we look for annihilation. "Rage motivates," Father Wessman wrote, and politicians are incentivized to stimulate this rage.

"There exists an 'us versus them' competition taking place where winner takes all, and where the common good is rarely considered," Father Wessman wrote.

For Christians, this environment is spiritually deadly.

It divides us not just into warring camps, but hate-filled ones.

Nor is the Church immune to this polarization. On a political level, red Catholics and blue Catholics are tempted to pick and choose which parts of the social gospel they highlight—a kind of cafeteria polarization. Pastors tell horror stories of how these political divides can impact parish harmony. Parishes themselves are at risk of becoming ideologically homogenous as Catholics seek out spaces where they will find others who think like them.

None of this is compatible with our baptismal bonds. "Baptism makes us members of the body of Christ," the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* reminds us. "Therefore...we are members one of another" (#1267). The catechism describes this as our "sacramental bond of unity" (#1271).

Perhaps when the Church is done with the National Eucharistic Revival, it could mount a baptismal revival. Its mission would be to help Catholics understand that their baptismal bonds transcend class, gender and most certainly political affiliation.

Such a revival would be good for the Church. Good for the nation, too.

(Greg Erlandson is an award-winning Catholic publisher, editor and journalist whose column appears monthly at OSV News. Follow him on Twitter @GregErlandson.) †

Guest Column/Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens

Will you come and show your love for Jesus in the Eucharist?

As 2024 began, I was in a hermitage in northern Minnesota doing a Holy Hour before our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament from 11:30 p.m. on Dec. 31 until 12:30 a.m. on Jan. 1. For several years, I have been awaiting the calendar to turn to 2024, because I knew that this year, the three-year Eucharistic Revival would reach its summit in the 10th National Eucharistic Congress. I believe this event, and the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage leading up to it, will have a generational impact on our country, and I was in prayer begging the Lord to make it a success.



Planning for the National Eucharistic Revival began in the spring of 2021 by meeting with evangelistic and pastoral leaders from around the country in listening sessions. A clear theme we heard was that the Catholic Church in our country needed a moment of unity to express our faith, especially our faith in the holy Eucharist.

If this Eucharistic Revival was to become a national movement it had to be going somewhere, a pilgrimage toward a national moment. We needed a gathering of the whole Church with her bishops to celebrate the gift of the Eucharist and to ask God to send his Holy Spirit upon us to renew the Church in the United States, so we might be sent forth with new missionary fire.

This longing from the Church inspired us to convoke the 10th National Eucharistic Congress. It was a big proposal to make to the U.S. bishops in November 2021, but when I proposed it, more than 90% of the bishops voted in favor. Now, the bishops of the United States are calling the whole Church to gather in Indianapolis from July 17-21.

While working on the Revival plan, I had the big idea that we should attempt to pilgrimage across the country with the Blessed Sacrament. It was the supreme knight from the Knights of Columbus who suggested

to me that we should make a cross with our procession across this country and end it at Indianapolis for the Congress.

This big idea had many logistical barriers, and at first I did not think it was possible. But with the encouragement of many priests and others, and the collaboration of a group called Modern Catholic Pilgrim, we were able to bring the dream of our National Eucharistic Pilgrimage a reality.

Thus, beginning on May 19 at the four edges of our country, we will begin a pilgrimage with Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, as much as possible on foot, to the 10th National Eucharistic Congress.

Beginning from the west at the cathedral in San Francisco; from the south at the border in Brownsville Texas; from the east at the tomb of Blessed Michael McGivney, founder of the Knights of Columbus in New Haven, Conn.; and from the north at Lake Itasca State Park, the headwaters of the Mississippi River in the Diocese of Crookston, Minn., young adult pilgrims, accompanied by priests and seminarians, will pilgrimage every day from parish to parish on the way to Indianapolis.

Each day, they will stay at a parish and begin with Mass for the parishioners and whoever else wants to join, and then the first mile will be a major procession that ends with Benediction. Those who desire can continue to join the perpetual pilgrims who will walk between 10 and 20 miles to the next parish stop.

On various days, there will be major events along the way with larger processions and Masses at cathedrals, as well as opportunities for service, fellowship and witness talks. It is a pilgrimage of prayer and adoration for our country and an opportunity to witness to the truth of Jesus Christ's presence among us. This has never been done before, and I believe it will have a profound spiritual impact.

A revival is a work of the Holy Spirit. In a time of revival, as we see in the Old Testament and even at Pentecost, the Holy Spirit comes upon people and

brings repentance, conversion, healing and fire for evangelization.

We already see this renewal of the Holy Spirit flowing from the Eucharistic Revival across our country, but July 17-21 will be a very special moment of grace. Those days will be filled with beautiful, reverent liturgies; inspiring speakers and testimonies; and beautiful opportunities for prayer and adoration.

It will be an encounter, not only with Christ in the Eucharist, but also with the entire U.S. Church in all its beautiful diversity. Most of all, this will be a moment of mission, when those who attend are inspired and equipped to go back to their parishes and share the beauty and truth of the love of Jesus Christ present in the Eucharist.

Check out the incredible schedule on our website eucharisticcongress.org. Since we began planning the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage and the National Eucharistic Congress, I have had in my heart an image I received in prayer. It is an image of Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis filled with tens of thousands of people. And then Jesus Christ, the Lord of the universe, the Lord of our country, truly present in the Blessed Sacrament, is processed in and everyone kneels. As we kneel before him, we beg the Lord to send renewal to our Church and our country.

We live in dark times, and Jesus Christ the Light of the World calls us together to set us on fire so we can bear his light to our country. Will you come and show your love for Jesus in the Eucharist? Just think of the graces that will be poured out upon us.

Jesus promised, "When I am lifted up I will draw all people to myself" (Jn 12:32). Come to the Eucharistic Congress to help us lift up Jesus Christ so all may come to know him.

(Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens of the Diocese of Crookston, Minn., is the chairman of the National Eucharistic Congress, Inc.) †

Guest Column/Richard Etienne

Father, Son, Holy Spirit: Is now a time to change your prayer routine?

Which person of the Trinity do you most frequently gravitate toward when you are praying or communicating with God?



The Father is often an early favorite when children are first learning to pray.

The image of an all-knowing, all-powerful, all-loving parent above that is always (with help from guardian angels) watching over and protecting everyone is often an especially helpful concept for young people.

Then the image of the Son becomes a comfortable companion in praying, for example, with "lectio divina" ("divine reading") as we mature. In this prayer form, one can easily journey with Jesus when

contemplating a specific narrative from Gospel passages.

A person can imagine being in the presence of Jesus in specific situations in many of the Gospel narratives (the woman at the well, the wedding at Cana, the Last Supper, Jesus calming the storm, and many other Scripture references).

I know that he has become a strong companion for me through my lifetime of prayer.

How often do you call on the person and specific blessings offered by the Holy Spirit?

In St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians, we read that "the fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control" (Gal 5:22). Who wouldn't benefit from more of any of these in their life?

In the Gospel of Luke, at the end of a passage about prayer, we hear Jesus say, "How much more will the

Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?" (Lk 11:13).

That passage is especially worth pondering as we reflect on the Synod on Synodality held at the Vatican last October. It is worth noting that, in the continuing synodal process this year, the entire focus will continue to be on listening to the Holy Spirit. Our faith teaches that every baptized person has access to third member of the Trinity.

Which person of the Trinity has become your focal point when you pray? Ask yourself: Would there be something to gain in attempting to call on a different person of the Trinity?

Is now a good time to change your routine?

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

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

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, February 4, 2024

- Job 7:1-4, 6-7
- 1 Corinthians 9:16-19, 22-23
- Mark 1:29-39

The Book of Job is the source of the first reading for Mass this weekend. The book furnishes few details about the identity of Job.



It nonetheless is one of the great literary works in the Old Testament, and one of the best remembered if not always exactly remembered.

Misreading Job has led to a phrase that

has gone into English common speech, the “patience of Job.” Clearly, though, Job was not always so patient with God.

For instance, in this weekend’s reading, Job vents his impatience. He says that life on Earth is a drudgery. Each human being, Job writes, is a slave. Personally, Job says he has been assigned “months of misery” (Jb 7:3). “I shall not see happiness again,” he writes drearily (Jb 7:7).

St. Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians provides the second reading.

In this passage from First Corinthians, Paul insists that he was free to accept the call to be an Apostle or to spurn it. He chose to accept the call.

So, he proclaims the good news. He explains the identity and mission of Jesus. It is an act of service and love given for people who otherwise would not know Jesus.

For Paul, nothing is more important than bringing people to the knowledge of Christ and to loving him.

For its final reading, the Church offers us from St. Mark’s Gospel the story of the Lord’s curing of Peter’s mother-in-law.

The story’s point is clear. Merely by touching her hand, Jesus cured the woman. She was so fully cured, in fact, that she immediately rose from her sickbed and began to wait on Jesus and the disciples. She was healthy again, but she used her health to care for others.

Lest it appear that this woman simply

resumed routine domestic chores, it should be noted that the verb used by Mark in this reference is the same verb used to describe the ministry of the angels while Jesus was tempted in the desert. For Christians, serving others, even in their physical needs, is holy and a product of union with Christ.

(This miracle long has fascinated Christians. Indeed, in the ruins of Capernaum is a site pious pilgrims identified many centuries ago as the house of Peter, where his mother-in-law was cured.)

The story continues. Jesus heals the sick and drives demons away. Then, alone, Jesus went to a distant place to pray. Simon and the others pursue him, longing to be near the Lord, needing the Lord.

At last, they find Jesus. He reminds them that the messianic mission is to reach all people.

Reflection

The Church continues to introduce us to Jesus, the Lord, the Son of God, reminding us of our need for Jesus, by putting before us in this Liturgy of the Word the images of Job, the Apostle Paul, Peter’s mother-in-law and the Apostles accompanying Jesus.

Paul very obviously gave his life to the apostolic vocation to which Jesus called him, bringing to all people the Lord’s message and mercy. It was the mission of all the Apostles, as Jesus told them. It is the mission of all Christians.

Peter’s mother-in-law, cured by Jesus, did not simply return to life as usual. But as Mark’s use of a particular verb shows, she served others, as Jesus served.

Job reminds us of who and what we are—limited human beings, whose limitations often test us and render us helpless. But the Lord is with us as our strength, our model. The Apostles realized that no other model excelled Jesus, none possesses greater wisdom or shows greater love for us. †

Daily Readings

Monday, February 5

St. Agatha, virgin and martyr
1 Kings 8:1-7, 9-13
Psalm 132:6-10
Mark 6:53-56

Tuesday, February 6

St. Paul Miki and companions, martyrs
1 Kings 8:22-23, 27-30
Psalm 84:3-5, 10-11
Mark 7:1-13

Wednesday, February 7

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

Thursday, February 8

St. Jerome Emiliani
St. Josephine Bakhita, virgin
1 Kings 11:4-13
Psalm 106:3-4, 35-37, 40
Mark 7:24-30

Friday, February 9

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

Saturday, February 10

St. Scholastica, virgin
1 Kings 12:26-32; 13:33-34
Psalm 106:6-7, 19-22
Mark 8:1-10

Sunday, February 11

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Leviticus 13:1-2, 44-46
Psalm 32:1-2, 5, 11
1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1
Mark 1:40-45

Question Corner/Jenna Marie Cooper

Catholic teaching holds that Orthodox sacraments remain valid

How is it possible that the Orthodox practice of the sacrament of the Eucharist would ever be considered as



the true body and blood of Christ from the Catholic perspective simply because of an understanding outside of the unbroken chain of apostolic succession? (Georgia)

For context, let us review what we mean when we refer to the Eastern Orthodox Churches. Historically, we believe that the one, holy, Catholic and apostolic Church was founded with the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, shortly after Jesus’ bodily ascension into heaven. As Jesus no longer physically walked the Earth as he once had, he entrusted the continuance of his saving mission to the Apostles.

The Apostles, in turn, spread throughout the world founding local Churches (in some ways, the rough precursor to our modern dioceses), and ordaining their successors (early bishops) to take their places in the shepherding of these local Churches. Many of these local Churches developed their own distinct liturgical traditions and other customs influenced by local needs and culture.

Initially, the universal Church was one unified structure of local Churches under the ultimate oversight of the pope in Rome, who was the successor to St. Peter as the leader of the Apostles. But divisions and tensions began to arise even in the Church’s first few centuries.

Some of these tensions were at least officially resolved by the early ecumenical councils, which clarified disputed questions of Catholic doctrine. However, due to some complex religious and political conflicts, as well as cultural and linguistic trends dividing eastern and western Christians, the year 1054 saw “the Great Schism,” occur.

In this event, the pope excommunicated the patriarch of Constantinople, who held pride of place among bishops in the eastern part of the Roman Empire. The patriarch in turn issued his own excommunication of the pope.

The Churches of the east, which rejected the universal authority of the pope, became known as the Orthodox Churches. Although there are some

doctrinal differences between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox, for the most part disagreement on the role of the bishop of Rome remains the major obstacle to unity between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches.

We, as Catholics, actually do believe that apostolic succession is significant and meaningful enough to allow for Eastern Orthodox Churches to have a valid celebration of the Eucharist. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* tells us: “The Eastern Churches that are not in full communion with the Catholic Church celebrate the Eucharist with great love. These Churches, although separated from us, yet possess true sacraments, above all—by apostolic succession—the priesthood and the Eucharist, whereby they are still joined to us in closest intimacy” (#1399).

Keep in mind that the apostolic succession in the Orthodox Churches goes hand-in-hand with our shared sacramental theology. That is, Catholics and Orthodox not only share belief in the real presence in the Eucharist, but also a shared understanding of the sacrament of holy orders and thus the nature of the priesthood. This is in contrast to the various western Christian communities we call Protestant, because in addition to breaking communion with the Holy Father in Rome, the sacramental theology of Protestant denominations tends to be a fairly radical departure from what we believe as Catholics.

Similarly, there are other Catholic schismatic groups—with “schism” defined as a refusal to submit to the authority of the Holy Father, as noted in canon 751 of the *Code of Canon Law*—which nevertheless have a valid Eucharist due to apostolic succession, despite their ordinations and celebrations of the Eucharist being generally illicit. One contemporary example of this would be the Society of St. Pius X.

But the Eastern Orthodox Churches are not to be confused with the many Eastern Catholic Churches. Eastern Catholics have different laws and a different liturgical tradition than Latin (aka “Roman”) Catholics, but Eastern Catholics remain in full communion with the Holy Father.

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

My Journey to God I Hear the Wind Blowing

By M. Lynell Chamberlain

I hear the wind blowing

In the valley tonight,

As the moon bathes the world

In its magical light.

Little things scurry

In the shadows on the hill,

Under a star-jeweled sky

In a world surreal.

Cloud-lace forms patterns

In the nighttime sky,

And I’m filled with such awe

That my soul longs to fly

To the heavens created

By my God, my love,

Straining to reach him

In heaven above.

(M. Lynell Chamberlain is a member of St. John Paul II Parish in Sellersburg. Photo: A mountain is silhouetted by a full moon in August 2021.) (Photo downloaded at unsplash.com and modified as a photo illustration)

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.

ADKINS, Carolyn, 80, St. Paul, Tell City, Jan. 2. Wife of Bob Adkins. Mother of Tierney Robinson, Sabrina Woolley, Aaron and Weston Adkins. Sister of Mary Ruth Raaf and Rita Schroeder. Grandmother of eight. Great-grandmother of one.

ALLEN, Steven T., 78, Good Shepherd, Indianapolis, Jan. 3. Husband of Sandra Allen. Father of Dorothy Vanderpohl, Sarah and Scott Allen. Brother of Stanley Allen. Grandfather of three.

BEST, Mary Lynn, 76, St. Mary, Greensburg, Jan. 11. Wife of Robert Best.

BIXLER, Emma L., 93, St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower), Indianapolis, Dec. 30. Mother of M. Catherine Valentine. Grandmother of two. Great-grandmother of two.

BLUE, Virginia, 93, St. Paul, Tell City, Jan. 9. Mother of Patty Dixon and Jeff Blue. Sister of Bill and Don Schum. Grandmother of three. Great-grandmother of several.

BROWN, David, 70, St. Ambrose, Seymour, Dec. 28. Husband of Mary Brown. Father of Kyle Brown. Brother of Judy Turner, Joe and Leland Brown. Grandfather of two.

BROWN, Harriett (Carter), 85, SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis, Jan. 10. Grandmother of four. Great-grandmother of one.

BRUCKMAN, Dr. Joseph, 88, Holy Family, New Albany, Dec. 20. Husband of Billie Bruckman. Father of Kathleen Clark, Deborah and Christopher Bruckman. Grandfather of four. Great-grandfather of three.

BRUNS, Delores M., 89, St. Mary, Greensburg, Jan. 5.

Mother of Kathy Flinn, Marjorie, Michael and Steven Bruns. Sister of Marieda Koors and Sheldon Hoeing. Grandmother of 10.

CARMONA, Juan A. Rocha, 38, St. Mary, New Albany, Dec. 16. Husband of Carina Zavala. Father of Gael, Mia, Sucey, Antonio and Christopher Rocha. Son of Juan Rocha Perez and Cleotilda Carmona Macias. Brother of Araceli, Maria de Los Angeles, Veronica, Zuleica, Bernardo, Luis and Mario Rocha.

CSAKANY, John, 81, Christ the King, Indianapolis, Jan. 2. Father of Michelle Mullen. Brother of Maryann Csakany. Grandfather of one.

FISHER, George Ann, 72, St. Malachy, Brownsburg, Jan. 4. Wife of James Fisher. Mother of Amanda Capps and Abigail Fisher. Sister of George Gunning. Grandmother of seven.

FRY, Elizabeth J., 81, St. Mary, Rushville, Jan. 7. Mother of Anna Jo Richards, A.J. and Tom Fry. Sister of Jean Oesterling, Bill, John and Tony Weidner. Grandmother of six. Great-grandmother of one.

GODOY-MARTINEZ, Frances V., 41, St. Anthony, Indianapolis, Dec. 15. Mother

of Nictahet Godoy and Jorge Alvarez. Daughter of Alejandro Godoy Esparza. Sister of Hugo, Jorge, Juan and Ricardo Godoy.

GRANNAN, James W., 88, Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Indianapolis, Dec. 20. Husband of Jeanette Grannan. Father of Jealyn Verhines. Grandfather of five. Great-grandfather of three.

HECKMAN, Rosemarie, 97, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, Jan. 9. Mother of Joan Hatfield, Kathy Minor, Peggy Moore, Mary, Chuck and Joe Heckman. Grandmother of 15. Great-grandmother of 24.

KIRKHOFF, Jr., George F., 94, Christ the King, Indianapolis, Jan. 2. Father of Joan Brown, Patsy Havens, Susan Sweezy, George III and James Kirkhoff. Grandfather of 14. Great-grandfather of 27.

LINCOLN, Mary J., 76, Holy Family, New Albany, Jan. 7. Wife of Don Lincoln. Mother of Angi Van Berg and Matt Lincoln. Sister of Mark, Michael, Patrick and Robert Jenkins. Grandmother of four.

MAXWELL, Mary E., 79, St. Mark the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Dec. 18. Wife of Richard Maxwell. Mother of Jarred and John Maxwell. Sister of Josephine Kerr and Rose Tapella.

MEDLOCK, Jr., William, 71, St. Mary, New Albany, Jan. 2. Father of Joshua Medlock. Brother of Michelle Thomas, Daniel and Steven Medlock.

MICHAELIS, William F., 85, Christ the King, Indianapolis, Dec. 26. Brother of Beth Beadle, Debby Busfield, JoAnne Carter, Rosemary Ryan, Lee and Rick Michaelis. Uncle and great-uncle of several.

MORRISON, Richard P., 95, St. Mark the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Dec. 30. Father of Michele Darragh and Timothy Morrison. Brother of Christine Pierle, Rosemary Schritz and Edward Morrison. Grandfather of three. Great-grandfather of three.

MUNCHEL, Brenda, 70, St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Cambridge City, Jan. 5. Wife of Thomas Munchel. Mother

of Elizabeth Pitcock, Brian and Christopher Munchel. Sister of Cheryl Perry, Susan Wessler, James and Michael Singer. Grandmother of eight.

NEYENHAUS, Charles E., 77, St. Paul, Tell City, Jan. 11. Father of Charlene Neyenhaus-Moureaux, Regina Sandage and Tim Neyenhaus. Grandfather of six. Great-grandfather of five.

PESTA, John, 80, St. Ambrose, Seymour, Sept. 5, 2023. Husband of Maureen Pesta. Father of Abigail and Jesse Pesta.

PICTOR, Henry A., 85, St. Louis, Batesville, Jan. 9. Father of Janna Irrgang, Katherine Martin, Amy, Daniel and James Pictor. Brother of Thyra Fulayter, Anna, Virginia and Thomas Pictor. Grandfather of 14. Great-grandfather of two.

PREWITT, Kacy L., 42, St. Roch, Indianapolis, Dec. 17. Mother of Adrienne, Cameron and Riley Prewitt, Jackson Morlan and Yate Prent. Daughter of Charlie and Sue

Prewitt. Sister of Haley and Matt Prewitt.

RENE, Christine R., 97, St. Mark the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Dec. 24. Mother of Toni Czenkusch, Shellie Lindgren and Concetta Palamara. Grandmother of five. Great-grandmother of five.

RILEY, Raymond F., 92, St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower), Indianapolis, Jan. 5. Husband of Barbara Gallagher. Father of Ann Marie Goedde, Cindy Rosswurm, Jeanne Watson, Dan and John Riley. Brother of William Riley. Grandfather of 14. Great-grandfather of six.

ROESSLER, Ineta (Aliff), 96, St. Mark the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Jan. 6. Mother of Karen Bloomfield, Nancy Cullom, Kathy Haycox, Alisa Nix and Gary Roessler. Grandmother of nine. Great-grandmother of six. Great-great-grandmother of seven.

ROSEMAN, Casy, 44, Christ the King, Indianapolis, Jan. 6.

Daughter of Stephen and Lee Roseman. Sister of Sean and Steve Roseman.

SCHOETTLE, Therese M., 70, St. Roch, Indianapolis, Jan. 16. Wife of Mark Schoettle. Mother of Jason, Jeremy and Ryan Schoettle. Sister of Sue Delaney and Larry Pfeiffer. Grandmother of eight.

SEUFERT, Shirley, 83, St. Michael, Brookville, Jan. 3. Sister of Cletus and Tom Seufert. Aunt of one.

SPRINKLE, Pat, 76, St. Augustine, Leopold, Jan. 11. Wife of Jim Sprinkle. Mother of Michelle Duncan and Brett Sprinkle. Sister of Sharon Gutierrez, Anna Snyder, John, Stan and Steve Austin. Grandmother of one.

STEEB, Susan, 72, St. Roch, Indianapolis, Dec. 14. Wife of Ken Steeb. Mother of Amanda Medlock and Scott Steeb. Sister of Patty Eck, Mary Jo Fox, Bill Hank and Jim Richardson. Grandmother of one. †

Celebrating St. Meinrad



Members of St. Meinrad Parish in St. Meinrad take part in a breakfast sponsored by the Tell City Deanery faith community on Jan. 21 to celebrate the feast of St. Meinrad and the patronal feast of the parish. Meinrad was a German Benedictine monk and hermit who lived in the ninth century. Einsiedeln Abbey in Switzerland was founded in 934 on the location of his hermitage. It is the motherhouse of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad. (Submitted photo)

Benedictine Father Louis Hacker served as abbot of Corpus Christi Abbey in Sandia, Texas

Benedictine Father Louis Hacker, a monk of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad, died on Jan. 10 at the monastery. He was 69.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Jan. 15. Burial followed at the Archabbey Cemetery.

Father Louis was a jubilarian of monastic profession, having celebrated 46 years of monastic profession.

Father Louis was born on Feb. 25, 1954, in Caldwell, Idaho, and given the name Dick Evande at his baptism. He grew up in Boise, Idaho, and, after completing his high school education, worked for three years with the Idaho Public Library.

Father Louis was invested as a novice of the former Corpus Christi Abbey in Sandia, Texas, on Aug. 15, 1975. He professed simple vows on Jan. 31, 1977, and perpetual vows on Jan. 31, 1980.

Father Louis received priestly formation at the college and theology levels in schools in Louisiana, Texas and Minnesota. He earned a bachelor's degree in English at Saint Joseph Seminary College in St. Benedict, La., and a master of divinity degree at St. John's School of Theology in Collegeville, Minn. Father Louis was ordained a priest on Dec. 28, 1985.

He was elected abbot of Corpus Christi Abbey on Jan. 10, 1997, and received an abbatial blessing on March 8, 1997. In addition to serving in leadership in his community, Father Louis also served as a guest master, librarian, cook and as a chaplain at a U.S. Navy air station.

He resigned as abbot on Aug. 20, 2002. After the abbey closed later that year, Father Louis provided sacramental assistance in the Diocese of Corpus Christi, Texas. He soon began the process of transferring his monastic stability to Saint Meinrad Archabbey and was received by Saint Meinrad's monastic chapter on March 10, 2008.

After joining Saint Meinrad, Father Louis assisted in the monastery's sacred music and vocations offices, as a presider at Mass in the infirmary chapel and as a confessor in the infirmary and for retreats and individual pilgrims. He also edited the monastery's weekly "Community Bulletin" and was a longtime member of the Knights of Columbus.

Father Louis is survived by two brothers, Robert Hacker of Boise, Idaho, and Vernon Hacker of Nampa, Idaho.

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

Online Lay Ministry Formation

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

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

Day of reflection



An Advent Day of Reflection for Black Catholic Women took place on Dec. 2 at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House in Indianapolis. The event was sponsored by the archdiocesan Office of Intercultural Ministries and included talks by Divine Word Father Charles Smith as well as the celebration of Mass and opportunities to receive the sacrament of penance. Opportunities for Lenten retreat and renewal experiences are featured regularly in *The Criterion*. (Submitted photo)

National March for Life pledges solidarity with moms and children

(OSV News)—Against gray skies and falling snow, thousands of people flocked on Jan. 19 to the nation’s capital for the national March for Life, gathering under the theme “With every woman, for every child,” showing their resolve amid the piercing cold to make abortion eventually “unthinkable” in the U.S.

“If not us, then who? If not now, then when?” Miguel Ángel Leyva, 21, a Catholic and third-year college student from Detroit, told OSV News.

The March for Life began in response to the U.S. Supreme Court’s 1973 decision in *Roe v. Wade*, which at the time legalized abortion nationwide, and gathered pro-life advocates from across the U.S. This year’s march—its second year since the Supreme Court overturned *Roe* in 2022—took place as winter weather put much of the country in a deep freeze, snarling transportation and canceling flights.

While the crowds appeared smaller than in years past, this year’s march showed a movement eager to up its game to help American society embrace a culture that affirms and supports the dignity of all human life, and not just for the unborn.

Levy said the presence of so many people amid the punishing weather conditions “shows there are many who are willing to serve God and stand up for what is right.”

Jeanne Mancini, president of March for Life Education and Defense Fund, and others emphasized during the March for Life rally that not only was the national march there to stay, but pro-life marches would be multiplying throughout all 50 states in the coming years.

“We will keep marching every year at the national level, as well as in our states, until our nation’s laws reflect the basic truth that all human life is created equal and is worthy

of protection,” Mancini told the thousands gathered on the National Mall.

Speaker after speaker at the rally emphasized its theme of making abortion “unthinkable,” in particular by emphasizing the culture-changing and life-saving work of pregnancy resource centers and related efforts.



Jeanne Mancini

House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., addressed the crowd and shared that he himself was once an unborn baby in an unplanned pregnancy for his parents, just teenagers at the time, who chose life.

Johnson said the U.S. House of Representatives passed two important pieces of legislation right before the march: the Pregnant Students’ Rights Act for colleges and universities to follow and another bill that prohibits the Health and Human Services (HHS) department from excluding pregnancy resource centers from obtaining federal funds.

Johnson criticized President Joe Biden for his administration’s efforts to prevent pregnancy resource centers from accessing these grants under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program.

However, speakers at the march acknowledged that the end of *Roe* came with both successes and setbacks for the pro-life movement. Rep. Chris Smith, R-N.J., a Catholic lawmaker and co-chair of the House Pro-Life Caucus, told those gathered that they should remain “undeterred.”

“We will never quit in our defense of the weakest and most vulnerable,” he said.

Aisha Taylor, author of *Navigating the Impossible: A Survival Guide for Single Moms*, took to the rally stage and reminded the crowd, “It was people like

you who helped people like me to choose life for my unborn twins.

“I am eternally grateful for that pregnancy center,” she said, adding that her presence among them was part of her pledge to “pay it forward” for all the support she had received to choose life.

Benjamin Watson, a former pro football player, said pro-life advocates must embark on “a new fight for life” that also addresses the factors behind abortion, and he connected those efforts to the wider struggle for peace and justice in society.

“*Roe* is done, but we still live in a culture that knows not how to care for life,” Watson said.

The national march also showcased organizers’ determination to mobilize the thousands gathered for immediate and effective action. At one point, Mancini invited the crowds to pull out their phones and told them to text MARCH to 73075 and “send a message to Congress that you want to protect pregnancy resource centers.

“We want to make sure Congress hears you are pro-life and we support pro-life policies,” said Mancini. She pointed to the large screens, which featured a map of the U.S. with “pins” showing in real time how many people were texting the number. As pins filled up the map, Mancini cajoled people from states lagging behind in pins. “I think California needs a little love,” she said. “Come on, Texas!”

More pins popped up on the screens. Marchers also were encouraged to take the time to visit their members of Congress in person and ask them to affirm life-affirming policies.

Before she went to the rally stage and on to march, Mancini told OSV News what she hoped people take away from the March for Life.

“I hope that they take away that the pro-life movement is about the full flourishing of both mom and baby,” she said. †

E6 Catholic Men’s Conference to take place on Feb. 17 in St. Leon

Criterion staff report

The E6 Catholic Men’s Conference, sponsored annually since 2016 by All Saints Parish in Dearborn County, will take place from 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m. on Feb. 17 at East Central High School in St. Leon in southeastern Indiana.



Sean Casey

The “E6” in the conference title refers to the sixth chapter of St. Paul’s Letter to the Ephesians in which the Apostle calls believers to take up “the armor of God” in the spiritual fight against the devil (Eph 6:11).

Speakers at this year’s conference include Tim Staples, a senior apologist at Catholic Answers, a Catholic apologetics and evangelization apostolate based in El Cajon, Calif.; Sean Casey, a former first baseman for the Cincinnati Reds and other Major League baseball teams; Father John Hollowell, who serves in the four parishes of Dearborn County; and Nathan Crankfield, who works for Hallow, a popular Catholic prayer

and meditation app, and is the host of the “Seeking Excellence” podcast. Crankfield will also serve as the conference’s emcee.



Tim Staples

The conference will include presentations by the speakers, the praying of the rosary, Mass, eucharistic adoration and Benediction. The sacrament of penance will be available throughout the event.

Tickets to the conference are \$45 for men 25 and older. Those younger than 25 can attend for \$15. Clergy and religious can attend for free. Groups of 10 or more can purchase tickets for \$40 per person.

Lunch is included in the ticket price.



Nathan Crankfield

(For more information on the E6 Catholic Men’s Conference or to purchase tickets, visit www.e6catholicmensconference.com.) †

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A childhood hardship and ‘a miracle’ help to guide a principal

By John Shaughnessy

From his own hardship as a child—and his “personal experience of a miracle”—Eric Schommer has always had a soft spot in his heart for children who face extra challenges in school and life.

When he was in the first grade, Schommer had Perthes’ disease, a rare condition that disrupts the flow of blood to the head of the thigh bone, causing the bone to deteriorate and often leaving a child with pain, a limp and limited movement of the hip joint.

“I wore a full leg brace for the duration of the diagnosis,” recalls Schommer, the principal of St. Monica School in Indianapolis. “This impacted my activities after school while running and riding bikes. It was also the focus of issues on the playground because we always played kickball.”

Left on the sidelines, Schommer found a refuge while visiting his uncle who lived at the Little Sisters of the Poor’s St. Augustine Home for the Aged in Indianapolis.

“I would visit him every week to hang out, play chess, eat in the dining room with the Little Sisters, and go to church,” he notes. “As soon as my uncle knew what was happening to me, he started praying for me intently while also attending daily Mass and multiple prayer services, with his healing intentions for me.

“Before second grade, I no longer required a brace, and X-rays showed that I no longer had Perthes. The following two years, my doctor would have me walk down the hall every time I came in for weekly allergy shots so he could show other doctors and nurses how I no longer had a limp. He cited it as a miracle, as there was an expectation of a need for a brace for several years.”

That childhood turnaround continues to affect the life and faith of Schommer, who is now 53.

“I have always believed in the power of prayer,” he says. “I do not look at prayer as a request session with God, but a way to communicate with God in such a manner that I am open to hear his call.

Sometimes, that results in miracles. Other times, people are guided to be in the right place at the right time for support. Or perhaps they have the right thing to say to help someone in need. My faith life is rooted in prayer.”

His life as an educator is rooted in his embrace of all children, especially the ones who can sometimes feel they are on the outside—including children with special education needs and children from immigrant backgrounds.

More than half—53%—of the 342 students at St. Monica School are from Latino families, while another 22% are Black, many of them from the countries of Senegal and Nigeria. Nearly 20% of St. Monica students receive special education support, and 33% of the children are taking English as a New Language classes.

“St. Monica has a large number of non-native, English-speaking students and special education students that, under Eric’s leadership, are receiving the same Catholic educational experience as any peer,” says Sarah Watson, an assistant superintendent of Catholic schools in the archdiocese.

“He also spends [one hour] one day a week in eucharistic adoration, growing this practice at the school. He invites students to adore with him and is always modeling the mission to make saints.”

That combination helped lead the archdiocese’s Office of Catholic Schools to nominate Schommer as its choice for principal for this year’s National Catholic Educational Association’s Lead, Learn, Proclaim Award.

His selection reveals a great deal about Schommer. So do two thoughts that he shares in his e-mails to anyone who contacts him through that communication.

A powerful story

The first of his two messages declares, “Celebrate our differences and unite in our values.”

“That is my motto. It articulates how I look at and how I want people to approach our community’s diversity,” Schommer says about St. Monica School. “This community is richly diverse in

cultural, ethnic, linguistic and academic families. Our diversity is what makes us who we are, and our values guide how we act.”

Schommer shares a powerful story to illustrate that belief.

“I remember having a student come to me as a senior in high school to show me his end-of-term project. It described how his attendance and participation at St. Monica and Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School [in Indianapolis] helped him better understand how similar Catholicism was to his family’s faith. The uniqueness of this story was that he was raised Muslim, and his father died when he was in fifth grade.

“According to his culture, he became the head of household at the time of his father’s death. He described the aspects that helped him become a strength for his family.”

Schommer continues, “Often we have had parents and family members come to the school to talk about issues they are having with health, finances or disagreements within the home. It brings me joy to see they view the school as a safe resource for support.”

A poignant message

The second message that marks Schommer’s e-mails is this one, “Please remember all of the relationships, people and activities that bring you closer to God.”

“A few years ago, I was listening to various conversations about how people were getting ready to spend their time over an extended break. Some were expressing a lack of hope and despair. They were looking for connections and having a difficult time finding them,” he recalls. “If I can help build connections by providing information, lending a hand or listening, then I am following my call to serve.”

Working with St. Monica’s pastor, Father John McCaslin, Schommer has emphasized eucharistic adoration as a



As the principal of St. Monica School in Indianapolis, Eric Schommer strives to connect with students through his faith and his interactions with them. (Submitted photo)

defining way to build connections with people and with God.

“Father John and I began eucharistic adoration as a weekly school opportunity to provide our children with an understanding of the Eucharist,” Schommer says. “For me, the Eucharist is an integral connection directly with Christ. I find myself drawn to a deeper prayer life when I am focused on this aspect of my faith.”

It’s a focus on faith that helps guide him as a husband to his wife of 29 years, Gara, and as the father of their two children, Emily and Jacob.

His faith also guides his efforts to become fluent in Spanish to better communicate with Hispanic parents, who struggle speaking English.

“As a school, we have been driven by a belief that all students should be provided the opportunity to have a Catholic education,” Schommer says. “I am rewarded daily while leading our team in the faith development of our students and their families. It provides me with an opportunity for daily, faith-focused conversations and interactions.

“As an educator, I find the benefit invaluable of expressing those thoughts and experiences with our youth, so they have opportunities to develop their faith life. A Catholic school environment provides the authentic opportunities to understand mind, body and spirit.” †



‘Father John [McCaslin] and I began eucharistic adoration as a weekly school opportunity to provide our children with an understanding of the Eucharist. For me, the Eucharist is an integral connection directly with Christ.’

—Eric Schommer, principal of St. Monica School in Indianapolis

Archdiocese’s Catholic schools form new partnership with accreditation program

Criterion staff report

Continuing its emphasis on an education rooted in Christ, academic excellence and the development of the whole person, the archdiocese’s Office of Catholic Schools recently announced that it is forming a new partnership with a distinctly Catholic accreditation program.

“During this Catholic Schools Week, we are pleased to announce that our new school accreditation will be imbued with our core values: mission and Catholic identity, academic excellence and Gospel values,” said Brian Disney, superintendent of the archdiocese’s 67 Catholic schools. “We are excited about the partnership and how it will help us to continue to focus on the Catholic identity of our schools.”

A press release from the archdiocese’s Office of Catholic Schools stated that the archdiocesan Catholic schools will be aligned with Lumen Accreditation, part of a new partnership with the Institute for the Transformation of Catholic Education (ITCE) at The Catholic University of America in Washington.

The partnership will begin in the 2024-25 school year.

According to Dr. Peter Kilpatrick, president of The Catholic University of America, “Lumen, a distinctly Catholic accreditation program that is centered on Gospel values with fidelity to the Church, will encourage authentic conversations and dialogue regarding Catholic identity and enable our Catholic schools to place the proper emphasis on the human person.”

The press release offered insights about the usual accreditation process for schools and the added focus that Lumen’s “distinctly Catholic” accreditation program will provide for archdiocesan Catholic schools.

“Accreditation is an important quality assurance process in which a school or diocese voluntarily seeks an external body to help it measure its effectiveness in fulfilling its mission and setting a course for continuous improvement,” the press release noted. “In this process, an accrediting body and a school mutually agree on a framework and standards of excellence—and work together to support the school community in its striving for greater attainment of those standards.

“While the above statement is true for any accreditation process, a Catholic accreditation calls schools to something greater. In a Catholic

accreditation, school communities are called to be more than successful, they are called to be faithful; faith and reason are authentic pathways to knowledge and wisdom. As such, culture is an essential element to a Catholic accreditation process which leads to the continuous improvement of a Catholic school community.”

Lumen Accreditation is committed to these results, the press release states, noting its primary goal to advance and promote “the distinctive excellence of K-12 Catholic school education.”

“The foundation of Lumen Accreditation is the Catholic Church’s rich educational heritage, which will renew Catholic schools in the search for truth, beauty and goodness,” the press release states.

“The Lumen Accreditation program was developed to unify the renewal of Catholic schools nationally. As a service to Jesus Christ and his Church, Lumen integrates foundational elements of the Church’s teachings on Catholic education and seeks to meet the needs of the individual charisms of dioceses and Catholic schools.

“With an aim toward true Christian education, Lumen Accreditation assists schools to align their community more fully to the example and teaching of Christ.” †



Brian Disney