



The

Criterion

Serving the Church in Central and Southern Indiana Since 1960



Twenty Something

Stop scrolling, start creating: a wake-up call for Catholics, page 12.

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Deacon Anthony Armbruster, left, elevates a chalice at a Mass on April 30, 2023, at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church in New Albany. Celebrating the Mass is Father Joseph Feltz, right, the parish's pastor. (Photo courtesy of Saint Meinrad Archabbey)

A question at the heart of life shows the influences that have shaped a future priest

By John Shaughnessy

It's a question everyone should consider at some point. Who are the people who have influenced you the most, who have helped you become the person you are, who have guided you to where you are meant to be in your life? As you consider that question in terms of your own life, listen to transitional Deacon Anthony Armbruster talk about the people who have shaped him toward his destiny of being ordained as a priest for the archdiocese on June 1 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. It's a list of many of the people who have made him who he is, a list that also gives revealing details into what will be

in his heart as he serves the people of the archdiocese as a priest.

The faith of family

The connection between grandparents and grandchildren can be one of the best bonds in life, and that reality shines through in Deacon Armbruster's memories. "My Papaw, Bernard Hession, had a tremendously deep spirituality, which came from his life as a farmer," Deacon Armbruster recalls. "He depended on our Lord's providence for him to provide for his family. He married my Mom, Jane, in 1953, and they spent over 60 years together, before

See **ARMBRUSTER**, page 8

Pope urges reparation to the Sacred Heart, including for the abuse crisis

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The spiritual practice of reparation "may be somewhat forgotten or wrongly judged obsolete" today, but it is essential for the promotion



Pope Francis

of justice and healing, including on behalf of those who have suffered abuse in the Church, Pope Francis said. With a sincere commitment to reparation, the hope is that even "if the irreparable cannot be completely repaired,

love can always be reborn, making the wound bearable," the pope said.

Pope Francis met on May 4 with participants in a conference marking the 350th anniversary of the 17th-century apparitions of Jesus to French St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, which included his call to promote devotion to his Sacred Heart and to make acts of reparation or penance for the times people have not recognized Christ's love.

Reparation is a concept found throughout the Bible, the pope said. "In the Old Testament, it takes on a social dimension of compensation for evil committed," being a matter of justice such as returning something that had been stolen or repairing something that was damaged.

"In the New Testament, however, it takes the form of a spiritual process, within the framework of the redemption brought about by Christ," the pope said. "Reparation is fully manifested in the sacrifice of the cross. The novelty here is that it reveals the Lord's mercy toward the sinner.

"Reparation therefore contributes to people's reconciliation between themselves, but also to reconciliation with God, because the wrong done to our neighbor is also an offense to God," he said.

See **POPE**, page 9

Meeting mental health needs is part of the mission of 'what Catholic Charities does' to offer people hope

By Natalie Hoefler

Charity seeks to help those in need. Catholic charity seeks to meet the needs of the entire person—body, mind and spirit.



David Bethuram

relationships and community dynamics." But mental health services are not always easily accessible

"Catholic Charities advocates for the holistic well-being of individuals, addressing their physical, mental and spiritual needs," says David Bethuram, executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat of Catholic Charities.

Such an approach is "in alignment with the concept of integral human development as supported by the Church," he adds, noting that mental health issues "permeate various aspects of life, impacting employment,

or affordable.

"Within the archdiocese, there is a significant deficit in behavioral/mental health services, leaving those with limited resources with few viable options," says Bethuram.

"Recognizing this gap, Catholic Charities endeavors to bridge it by offering accessible mental health support to underserved populations," accepting most insurances and offering a sliding fee scale to make the services available regardless of ability to pay. (See related column, page 12.)

Those services have expanded to two new locations since 2018.

See **MENTAL HEALTH**, page 9



Official Appointments

Effective May 1, 2024

Rev. Antony Nallukunnel, OFM Conv., appointed parochial vicar and campus minister to St. Joseph University Parish, Terre Haute.

Effective May 22, 2024

Rev. Elmer Dula, RCJ, parochial vicar of St. Patrick Parish, Terre Haute, and St. Margaret Mary Parish, Terre Haute, appointed administrator of St. Patrick Parish, Terre Haute, and St. Margaret Mary Parish, Terre Haute.

Rev. Tommy Latina, RCJ, parochial vicar of St. Patrick Parish, Terre Haute, and St. Margaret Mary Parish, Terre Haute, reappointed parochial vicar of St. Patrick Parish, Terre Haute, and St. Margaret Mary Parish, Terre Haute.

Effective May 31, 2024

Rev. Peter Marshall, pastor of St. Jude Parish, Indianapolis, appointed vice-rector of Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary, Indianapolis, for a period of six years, while remaining pastor of St. Jude Parish, Indianapolis.

Rev. C. Ryan McCarthy, pastor of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish, Indianapolis, appointed spiritual director of Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary, Indianapolis, for a period of six years, while remaining pastor of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish, Indianapolis.

Rev. Andrew Syberg, vice-rector of Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary, Indianapolis, appointed rector of Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary, Indianapolis, for a period of six years.

Effective July 3, 2024

Mrs. Elizabeth Davis appointed parish life coordinator of Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish, Terre Haute, and St. Mary-of-the-Woods Village Parish, St. Mary-of-the-Woods, for a period of three years.

Rev. Anthony Armbruster, being ordained to the priesthood on June 1, 2024, appointed parochial vicar of SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Parish, Greenwood, and St. Martin of Tours Parish, Martinsville.

Rev. Jose Aragon Briñez, CMM, parochial vicar of Holy Spirit Parish, Indianapolis, appointed administrator of St. Mary Parish, Indianapolis.

Rev. Michael Clawson, parochial vicar of St. Malachy Parish, Brownsburg, appointed parochial vicar of All Saints Parish, Dearborn County; St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Parish, Aurora; St. Lawrence Parish, Lawrenceburg; and St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross Parish, Bright.

Rev. Christopher Craig, pastor of Prince of Peace Parish, Madison, and Most Sorrowful Mother of God Parish, Vevay, reappointed pastor of Prince of Peace Parish, Madison, and Most Sorrowful Mother of God Parish, Vevay, for a period of one year.

Rev. Sean Danda, pastor of St. Malachy Parish, Brownsburg, reappointed pastor of St. Malachy Parish, Brownsburg, for a period of six years.

Rev. Timothy DeCrane, administrator of St. Rose of Lima Parish, Franklin, appointed pastor of St. Rose of Lima Parish, Franklin, for a period of six years.

Rev. Suresh Edward, parochial vicar of Annunciation Parish, Brazil, and St. Paul the Apostle Parish, Greencastle, appointed administrator of Annunciation Parish, Brazil, and St. Paul the Apostle Parish, Greencastle.

Rev. Cyprian Eranimus Fernandez, administrator *pro tem* of St. Gabriel the Archangel Parish, Indianapolis, appointed pastor of St. Gabriel the Archangel Parish, Indianapolis, for a period of six years.

Rev. John Hall, pastor of St. Anne Parish, New Castle, and St. Elizabeth of Hungary Parish, Cambridge City, granted retirement from active ministry.

Rev. John Kamwendo, pastor of St. Michael the Archangel Parish, Indianapolis, reappointed pastor of St. Michael the Archangel Parish, Indianapolis, for a period of six years and appointed associate vocations director for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

Rev. Vincent Lampert, pastor of St. Michael Parish, Brookville, and St. Peter Parish, Franklin County, and exorcist for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, reappointed pastor of St. Michael Parish, Brookville, and St. Peter Parish, Franklin County, for a period of six years, while remaining exorcist for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

Rev. Eric "Rick" Nagel, pastor of St. John the Evangelist Parish, Indianapolis, and chaplain to Indiana University Indianapolis, reappointed pastor of St. John the Evangelist Parish, Indianapolis, and chaplain to Indiana University Indianapolis for a period of one year.

Rev. Michaelprakasam Puthumaisavari, parochial vicar of St. Jude Parish, Indianapolis, appointed administrator of St. Anne Parish, New Castle, and St. Elizabeth of Hungary Parish, Cambridge City.

Rev. Oscar Rivas, parochial vicar of St. Mary Parish, Indianapolis, and St. Philip Neri Parish, Indianapolis, appointed parochial vicar of Holy Spirit Parish, Indianapolis.



Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

May 11–May 19, 2024

May 11 – 5:30 p.m.
Confirmation Mass for youths of SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Parish, Greenwood, and St. Martin of Tours Parish, Martinsville, at SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Church

May 13 – 3 p.m.
Blessing at Vagabond Mission Youth Center, Indianapolis

May 14 – 10:30 a.m.
Priest Personnel Board meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

May 14 – 6:30 p.m.
Catholic Youth Association Volunteer Awards at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis

May 15 – 10 a.m.
Department heads meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center

May 15 – 7 p.m.
Confirmation Mass for youths of St. Anthony Parish, Indianapolis, at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral

May 16 – 9 a.m.
High school visit at Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School, Indianapolis

May 16 – Noon
Lunch gathering with priests, Indianapolis

May 16 – 7 p.m.
Confirmation Mass for youths of St. Patrick Parish, Indianapolis, at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral

May 17 – 5 p.m.
Mass and vocations dinner at Indiana Knights of Columbus State Convention, Bloomington

May 18 – 2 p.m.
Confirmation Mass for youths of St. Bartholomew Parish, Columbus; Prince of Peace Parish, Madison; American Martyrs Parish, Scottsburg; and St. Patrick Parish, Salem, at St. Bartholomew Church

May 18 – 6 p.m.
Keynote address and banquet at Indiana Knights of Columbus State Convention, Bloomington

May 19 – 5 p.m.
Graduation at Our Lady of Providence High School, Clarksville

Rev. Samuel Rosko, being ordained to the priesthood on June 1, 2024, appointed parochial vicar of St. Jude Parish, Indianapolis.

Rev. Justin "Bobby" Vogel, being ordained to the priesthood on June 1, 2024, appointed parochial vicar of St. Simon the Apostle Parish, Indianapolis.

Rev. Jack Wright, parochial vicar of St. Monica Parish, Indianapolis, appointed chaplain coordinator to Cardinal Ritter High School, Indianapolis, while remaining parochial vicar of St. Monica Parish, Indianapolis.

Rev. Timothy Wyciskalla, pastor of St. Mark the Evangelist Parish, Indianapolis, appointed episcopal vicar for clergy, religious, and parish life coordinators and vice chancellor for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

Very Rev. Jeremy Gries, VF, pastor of Holy Family Parish, New Albany, reappointed pastor of Holy Family Parish, New Albany, for a period of six years.

Very Rev. Patrick Hyde, O.P., VF, pastor of St. Paul Catholic Center, Bloomington, appointed sacramental minister to St. Agnes Parish, Nashville, while remaining pastor of St. Paul Catholic Center, Bloomington.

Very Rev. Eric Johnson, VE, episcopal vicar for clergy, religious, and parish life coordinators and vice chancellor for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, appointed pastor of St. Mark the Evangelist Parish, Indianapolis, for a period of six years.

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

How to receive The Criterion's e-newsletter

Did you know that you can receive news and information about the Church in the form of a weekly *Criterion* e-newsletter? 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. †



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NEWS FROM YOU!

Do you have something exciting or newsworthy you want to be considered to be printed in The Criterion?

E-mail us:
criterion@archindy.org

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



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Seniors will soon celebrate their Catholic high school graduation

By John Shaughnessy

As seniors prepare to graduate this spring from Catholic high schools across the archdiocese, their emotions will likely be a blend of pride and relief, nostalgia and celebration.

They will draw even closer to their friends, remembering the times they've shared and promising to stay connected forever.

Many will thank the teachers and the coaches who have made a difference in their lives. They will also pose for photos in their caps and gowns with their parents, who will look at their children and wonder where the years have gone.

Amid all these rituals of graduation, there will also be an abundance of congratulations to members of the Class of 2024, including this one from Brian Disney, superintendent of Catholic schools in the archdiocese.

"Congratulations to our Catholic high school graduates throughout the archdiocese," Disney said. "We are proud of you for your accomplishments and are excited to see the continued impact you will make in our Church, communities, nation and world. Teach the world about human dignity, compassion and hope."

The superintendent applauded the graduates for how they have "demonstrated their intelligence, courage, strength and commitment by excelling in academics, athletics, performing arts and other activities."

He especially saluted the graduates for the way they have lived their faith—through their community service, their participation in the sacraments and their growing relationship with Jesus.

Disney also praised all the people who have supported and contributed to the success of this year's graduates.

"All the successes of our graduates would not be possible without their parents, their primary teachers," he noted. "The dedication and support of their priests, school leaders, teachers, coaches and staff members have contributed to their successes as well. All their opportunities are enhanced by those committed to Catholic schools, including our benefactors and prayer warriors."

The superintendent also hopes the graduates will continue to build upon the formation and education they have received in their Catholic school as they journey into the future.

"May their relationship with Jesus Christ remain strong, and may they use their gifts to bring glory to God."

Here is a listing of graduation-related information for the 12 Catholic high schools in the archdiocese.

Bishop Chatard High School in Indianapolis has a graduating class of 157 seniors.

The Baccalaureate Mass will be on May 16 at 6:30 p.m. at the school.

The graduation ceremony will be on May 19 at 2:30 p.m. at the school.

The class valedictorian is **Ian Kolbus**, the son of Katie and Ted Kolbus of Christ the King Parish in Indianapolis.

The class salutatorian is **Charles Park**, the son of Janeen and Charles Park of St. Luke the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis.

The archdiocese will be represented at the graduation by Msgr. William F. Stumpf, vicar general and pastor of St. Matthew the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis.

Brebeuf Jesuit Preparatory School in Indianapolis has a graduating class of 205 seniors.

The Baccalaureate Mass will be on May 19 at 10:30 a.m. at the school.

The graduation ceremony will be on May 19 at 4:30 p.m. at Clowes Memorial Hall on the campus of Butler University in Indianapolis.

Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School in Indianapolis has a graduating class of 111 seniors.

The Baccalaureate Mass will be on May 30 at 7 p.m. at St. Christopher Church in Indianapolis.

The graduation ceremony will be on May 31 at 7 p.m. at the school.

The class valedictorian is **Lucas Valle**, the son of Alejandro and Laura Valle of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis.

The class salutatorian is **Hannah May**, the daughter of Charlie and Katie May of St. Malachy Parish in Brownsburg.

The archdiocese will be represented at the graduation by Msgr. Stumpf.

Cathedral High School in Indianapolis has a graduating class of 294 seniors.

The Baccalaureate Mass will be on May 17 at 6:30 p.m. at the school.

The graduation ceremony will be on May 19 at 1 p.m. at the Murat Theatre of Old National Centre in Indianapolis.

The student commencement speaker will be summa cum laude graduate **Daniel Kent**, the son of Andrew and Margaret Kent of Christ the King Parish in Indianapolis.

The archdiocese will be represented at the graduation by Sarah Watson, assistant superintendent of Catholic schools.

Father Michael Shawe Memorial High School in Madison has a graduating class of 31 seniors.

The Baccalaureate Mass will be on May 24 at 7 p.m. at the school.

See HIGH SCHOOL, page 15



Drew Hasbrook, a member of the Class of 2023 of Bishop Chatard High School in Indianapolis, places a flower in a vase before a statue of the Blessed Mother during the archdiocesan North Deanery high school's graduation last May. It's one of the ways the school honors Mary, its patroness, during the month dedicated to her. (Submitted photo)

Refresher: What is the National Eucharistic Congress taking place in Indianapolis on July 17-21?

Criterion staff report

Weekly, weekend and day passes for the National Eucharistic Congress (NEC) in Indianapolis on July 17-21 are still available.

While this is the 10th such national congress, it is the first one in more than 80 years, which took place in St. Paul, Minn., in June 1941.

The NEC is part of the National Eucharistic Revival launched by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in June of 2022 as an effort to restore understanding and devotion to Christ's true presence—body, blood, soul and divinity—in the Eucharist.

The congress this July, which will take place in the Indiana Convention Center and Lucas Oil Stadium, will offer Catholics an opportunity to experience profound, personal renewal through the power of Christ's love, particularly expressed by his true presence in the Eucharist. The hope is for this renewal, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to spread to and transform the communities of all those who attend, thus returning Catholics in the U.S. to the Church's first love—the Eucharist, the source and summit of our faith.

Every day of the Congress is designed to facilitate this life-changing encounter with Jesus, regardless of where you are on your faith journey, and regardless how many days you attend.

Registrants will select their preferred series of morning impact sessions (encounter, Hispanic, family, lay evangelists, lay ministers, youths, priests) and afternoon breakout sessions. Then, gathered together as one, the whole assembly will experience the powerful revival sessions in Lucas Oil Stadium on July 17-21.

A eucharistic procession through the streets of Indianapolis will take place on July 20, and the congress will close with Mass for participants at Lucas Oil Stadium on the morning of July 21, celebrated by a papal delegate.

As the host, the archdiocese has been provided with a discount code—Indy24—for five-day passes, which reduces the cost to \$274 when purchasing up to 14 passes. Five-day passes for groups of 15 or larger are already discounted to \$299 without the code, and to \$250 for parish youth groups.

Individual day passes range from \$20-\$95, and weekend (Saturday and Sunday) passes range from \$80-\$125.

Passes for ALL children ages 12 and younger—whether for one, several or all five days—are free of charge.

To register, go to eucharisticcongress.org. †



NATIONAL EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS
WEEKLY UPDATE

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Editorial



Deacon Liam Hosty gives the blood of Christ to Scott Williams, a member of St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis, during the April 26 Mass at St. Barnabas Church in which Hosty was ordained a transitional deacon. (Photo by Mike Krokos)

Celebrate and pray for vocations during a month of May marked by excitement

It's that time of year again. We've just witnessed an exciting Kentucky Derby race in Louisville—a three-horse photo finish. We're gearing up for this year's running of the Indianapolis 500 on May 26. And we're offering best wishes to graduates taking part in commencement ceremonies in high schools and colleges across central and southern Indiana and beyond.

It is also a time to offer prayers for those students—and their families—as they move forward into the next chapter of their lives, reminding them to keep faith at the core of all they do.

In last week's May 3 issue of *The Criterion*, we shared our coverage of seminarian Liam Hosty's ordination as a transitional deacon. The liturgy was made even more special by the fact that Deacon Hosty's father, permanent deacon Tom Hosty, called forth his son to ordination during the April 27 Mass at St. Barnabas Church in Indianapolis. They are the first father and son to both be deacons at the same time in the 190-year history of the archdiocese.

But that unique event was only the beginning of this month's coverage of vocations in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

During the next three weeks, *The Criterion* will highlight stories of transitional deacons who are scheduled to be ordained priests by Archbishop Charles C. Thompson at 10 a.m. on Saturday, June 1, at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis.

This week, we are featuring a story about Deacon Anthony Armbruster. Next week, we will highlight Deacon Samuel Rosko. In our May 24 issue, Deacon Bobby Vogel will be featured. We ask that you pray for these men as they prepare to serve our parishes in central and southern Indiana—and ask that God bless them as they assist Archbishop Thompson in their call to preaching the Gospel and as missionary disciples.

Our prayers for vocations, though, should not end there.

In his prayer intention for the month of May, Pope Francis invites us to pray with him for the formation of religious and seminarians, offering petitions “that religious women and men, and seminarians, grow in their own vocations through their human, pastoral, spiritual and community formation, leading them to be credible witnesses to the Gospel.”

Released last week by the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network, the pope

described each vocation as a “diamond in the rough,” needing careful and continual cultivation.

Each vocation “needs to be polished, worked, shaped on every side,” Pope Francis said in a video accompanying his message.

He highlighted the need for religious men and women to be well-rounded, both spiritually and as people who are members of a community.

“A good priest, sister or nun must above all else be a man or woman who is formed, shaped by the Lord's grace,” he said, adding that they must be “people who are aware of their own limitations and willing to lead a life of prayer, of dedicated witness to the Gospel.”

The pope stressed that effective formation begins in the seminary or novitiate stages of a vocational journey through direct contact with others in the “enriching” experience of community life, “although sometimes it can be difficult.”

“Living together is not the same as living in community,” he noted.

The Holy Father added that religious formation “does not end at a determined moment but continues throughout life, throughout the years, integrating the person intellectually, humanly, affectively and spiritually.”

Our archdiocese continues to be blessed by the seminarians we have in formation at Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary in Indianapolis, Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad and Mount St. Mary's Seminary and School of Theology in Cincinnati. When the 2024-25 school year begins in August, we again anticipate having about 30 men in formation for the priesthood.

As Father Eric Augenstein, director of seminarians for the archdiocese, said in a video for this month's Circle of Giving dinner: “Priests are made, not born.” The real work in producing vocations happens in families and at parishes, he added.

As people of faith, we are tasked to continue planting those seeds. As Pope Francis said, we also need to continue to pray that seminarians and men and women religious may “grow in their own vocational journey through human, pastoral, spiritual and community formation that leads them to be credible witnesses of the Gospel.”

—Mike Krokos

Reflection/John Shaughnessy

Erica Wheeler, Caitlin Clark and the wonderous gift of friendship

When the Indiana Fever begin their season on May 14, the spotlight will once again focus intensely on Caitlin Clark.

Yet no matter what highlights and hardships mark her first year in the WNBA, the best story of humanity involving the 22-year-old basketball sensation may have already occurred before she makes her first ridiculously-long three-point shot or a *can-you-believe-that!* assist as a pro.

It's a story about the essence of friendship, the beginnings of that bond, and the unexpected blessing of a connection with another person that fills you with part wonder and complete joy.

Hopefully, it's a story that reminds you of a friendship in your life.

The story involves Clark and her teammate, Erica Wheeler, a veteran who has embraced Clark even though they play the same position and Clark will likely dramatically cut into Wheeler's playing time.

In a pre-season interview with the media, Wheeler talked about her immediate and joyous welcoming of Clark.

“I put it as like, you know, when you go to a different school, the first day of school you don't know anybody,” Wheeler said. “And you find that one person that says hi to you, and they become your best friend. For me, I just wanted to get ahead of it because I know this transition is tough.”

Wheeler smiled and went on to say, “It's how I was raised. I don't have no hate in my heart. I want everybody around me to win. Whether you are winning or not, I still want to push you to be great. So, for me, I just thought, like, if I get ahead of it, I'm just making it comfortable right away. ... I actually love it because I like being a big sister. I like helping first. I don't really like getting help. So, it's refreshing for me to be able to help her and be her big sister.”

And here's how Clark talked about Wheeler: “I think she's somebody that simply wants the best for people, no matter what. People can say that, but she really lives it, every day. And you can tell that she's going to push me, hold me

accountable. She's going to find ways to help me learn, but at the same time, she's going to have my back every single day, and that's something I'm really grateful for, coming into this league. Having a vet that really wants the best for you is special.”

As you read that exchange, maybe you thought of someone who made the extra, even surprising effort to welcome you at some point, to make you feel valued, to embrace you as a person, a friend.

For me, that gift came when I was in my first few weeks as a freshman in college—600 miles away from family and friends, feeling homesick, lost.

Amid that unsettling time of transition, a sophomore named Tom reached out to me, took me under his wing, and introduced me to other great people—

acts of unexpected and welcomed generosity that gave me a sense of connection, of belonging.

His gift of friendship has continued for decades, a bond that's cherished all the more for all the laughs, the smiles, the stories, the stupid moments and the deep conversations we have shared through the years—years during which his support and generosity have never wavered.

In many ways, God makes his goodness and his grace known in the world through our friendships. Our closest friends welcome us, lift us and accept us as who we are, with all our faults and limitations. They stand by us when we reach the edges of life, love and faith. Our best friends also encourage, inspire and challenge us to reach for something more.

God takes this gift of friendship to an even higher level. He offers his friendship to each of us, and he offers it unconditionally. No matter what, God accepts us with all his mercy and love. He's always

there for us, even in our darkest moments. He invites and challenges us to deepen the purpose of our lives, our bonds with other people and our relationship with him.

Take time today to reach out to a friend who has touched your life in a wondrous way.

Take time today to thank God for the gift of friendship, including his.

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

God takes this gift of friendship to an even higher level. He offers his friendship to each of us, and he offers it unconditionally. No matter what, God accepts us with all his mercy and love. He's always there for us, even in our darkest moments.

Letters Policy

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

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

The editors reserve the right to select the letters that will be published and to edit

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

Letters must be signed, but, for serious reasons, names may be withheld.

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

ARCHBISHOP/ARZOBISPO CHARLES C. THOMPSON



Christ the Cornerstone

Uplifted by Christ's ascension, let's carry on his saving work

"Men of Galilee, why are you standing there looking at the sky? This Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven will return in the same way as you have seen him going into heaven" (Acts 1:11).

The disciples of Jesus were not naturally bold or courageous. In fact, they were timid men who were scared of their own shadows.

When Jesus was arrested, nearly all of them fled. Even after the Lord's resurrection, they gathered behind locked doors out of fear, and when Jesus appeared to them and proved that he was not a ghost, they remained anxious and confused.

It's no wonder then that when Jesus ascended into heaven right before their eyes, the disciples were paralyzed with astonishment and fear. In spite of the fact that he assured them he was not leaving them forever, they had no idea what they were supposed to do next.

Jesus' last words to his disciples were not especially encouraging. As we read in St. Mark's Gospel:

Go into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature. Whoever believes and is baptized will be

saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned. These signs will accompany those who believe; in my name they will drive out demons, they will speak new languages. They will pick up serpents with their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not harm them. They will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover. (Mk 16:15-18)

It was daunting enough for simple Galilean fishermen to be told to "go into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature," but the prospect of driving out demons, picking up serpents and drinking deadly poison had to be perplexing and discouraging.

Even when Jesus promised that they would "receive power from the Holy Spirit" (Acts 1:8), they did not understand exactly what that meant.

Why did Jesus have to leave them—to return to his Father in heaven? Why didn't he stay with them and take charge of the new movement that became the universal Church? For that matter, why didn't he "restore the kingdom to Israel" (Acts 1:6) which is what devout Jews expected from the Messiah?

We don't know the answers to these questions. What we do know is that

Jesus told the disciples that "It is not for you to know the times or seasons that the Father has established by his own authority" (Acts 1:7). This means that we must trust that God's wisdom, which is far greater than our own, will establish the appropriate "times" and "seasons" for the things that will happen in his providence.

What we do know is that when Jesus sent the Holy Spirit, the same timid men who had been paralyzed by fear became bold and courageous missionaries on fire with God's truth and love. Christ's ascension into heaven opened up a whole new way of living for his disciples. Instead of holding back, allowing Jesus himself to carry on his work, the disciples now had to take responsibility for the mission he gave them: "Go into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature" (Mk 16:15).

We know from our own experience that there was no way these very ordinary men could accomplish Christ's mission without help. Everything was stacked against them. They had no money, no official status and no "grand plan" for evangelization. What they did have was the grace of God which they

received when the Holy Spirit came. By the power of the Holy Spirit (and no other power), they became bold witnesses of Jesus Christ "in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the Earth" (Acts 1:8).

St. Mark concludes his description of the Lord's ascension into heaven saying: *So then the Lord Jesus, after he spoke to them, was taken up into heaven and took his seat at the right hand of God. But they went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word through accompanying signs.* (Mk 16:19-20)

This Gospel passage almost makes it sound easy. The Lord ascended, and immediately the disciples went forth and preached everywhere. But we know it didn't happen this way. Without the grace of the Holy Spirit, none of this would have been possible. The disciples needed a lot of help, and we are no different.

As we celebrate the Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord this Sunday, let's remember to thank God for the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which make it possible for us to live the joy of the Gospel and to share the good news with all our sisters and brothers everywhere. †



Cristo, la piedra angular

Elevados por la ascensión de Cristo, continuemos con su obra salvadora

"Hombres galileos, ¿por qué se quedan de pie mirando al cielo? Este Jesús, quien fue tomado de ustedes arriba al cielo, vendrá de la misma manera como le han visto ir al cielo" (Hch 1:11).

Los discípulos de Jesús no eran audaces ni valientes por naturaleza; de hecho, eran hombres tímidos que se asustaban de su propia sombra.

Cuando arrestaron a Jesús, casi todos huyeron. Incluso después de la resurrección del Señor, se reunieron a puertas cerradas por miedo, y cuando Jesús se les apareció y demostró que no era un fantasma, seguían atemorizados y confundidos.

No es de extrañar entonces que cuando Jesús ascendió al cielo ante sus ojos, los discípulos se quedaron paralizados de asombro y miedo. A pesar de que les aseguró que no los dejaría para siempre, no tenían ni idea de lo que debían hacer a continuación.

Las últimas palabras de Jesús a sus discípulos no fueron especialmente alentadoras. Como leemos en el Evangelio de San Marcos:

Vayan por todo el mundo y prediquen el evangelio a toda criatura. El que cree y es bautizado será salvo; pero el que no cree será condenado.

Estas señales seguirán a los que creen: En mi nombre echarán fuera demonios, hablarán nuevas lenguas, tomarán serpientes en las manos, y si llegan a beber cosa venenosa no les dañará. Sobre los enfermos pondrán sus manos, y sanarán. (Mc 16:15-18)

Ya era bastante desalentador para unos simples pescadores galileos que se les dijera «vayan por todo el mundo y prediquen el evangelio a toda criatura», pero la perspectiva de echar fuera demonios, tomar serpientes con las manos y beber veneno mortal debió ser desconcertante y desalentadora.

Incluso cuando Jesús les prometió que "recibirán poder cuando el Espíritu Santo haya venido sobre ustedes" (Hch 1:8), no entendieron exactamente lo que eso significaba.

¿Por qué tuvo que dejarlos Jesús para volver con su Padre celestial? ¿Por qué no se quedó con ellos y se hizo cargo del nuevo movimiento que se convirtió en la Iglesia universal? Y en ese sentido, ¿por qué no restituyó "el reino a Israel" (Hch 1:6), algo que los judíos devotos esperaban del Mesías?

No sabemos las respuestas a estas preguntas pero lo que sí sabemos es que Jesús dijo a los discípulos que "a ustedes no les toca saber ni los tiempos

ni las ocasiones que el Padre dispuso por su propia autoridad" (Hch 1:7). Esto significa que debemos confiar en que la sabiduría de Dios, que es mucho mayor que la nuestra, definirá los "tiempos" y las "ocasiones" apropiados para las cosas que sucederán en su Providencia.

Lo que sí sabemos es que cuando Jesús envió al Espíritu Santo, los mismos hombres tímidos que habían estado paralizados por el miedo se convirtieron en audaces y valientes misioneros que ardían con la verdad y el amor de Dios. La ascensión de Cristo al cielo ocasionó que sus discípulos se abrieran a una forma de vida totalmente nueva. En lugar de contenerse, dejando que Jesús mismo llevara a cabo su obra, los discípulos tenían ahora que asumir la responsabilidad de la misión que les había encomendado: "Vayan por todo el mundo y prediquen el evangelio a toda criatura" (Mc 16:15).

Sabemos por experiencia propia que no había forma de que estos hombres tan corrientes pudieran haber llevado a cabo la misión de Cristo sin ayuda, ya que tenían todo en contra. No tenían dinero, ni estatus oficial, ni un "plan grandioso" de evangelización. Lo que sí tenían era la gracia de Dios

que recibieron cuando vino el Espíritu Santo. Por el poder del Espíritu Santo (y ningún otro poder), se convirtieron en audaces testigos de Jesucristo "en Jerusalén, en toda Judea, en Samaria y hasta lo último de la tierra" (Hch 1:8).

San Marcos concluye su descripción de la ascensión del Señor al cielo diciendo: *Después que les habló, el Señor Jesús fue recibido arriba en el cielo y se sentó a la diestra de Dios. Y ellos salieron y predicaron en todas partes, actuando con ellos el Señor y confirmando la palabra con las señales que seguían.* (Mc 16:19-20)

La imagen que ilustra este pasaje del Evangelio hace que todo parezca fácil: el Señor ascendió, e inmediatamente los discípulos salieron y predicaron por todas partes. Pero sabemos que no ocurrió así. Sin la gracia del Espíritu Santo, nada de esto habría sido posible. Los discípulos requirieron mucha ayuda, y nosotros no somos diferentes.

Al celebrar este domingo la solemnidad de la Ascensión del Señor, recordemos dar gracias a Dios por los dones del Espíritu Santo que hacen posible que vivamos la alegría del Evangelio y compartamos la Buena Nueva con todos nuestros hermanas y hermanos en todas partes. †

Events Calendar

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

May 13

Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish, Madonna Hall, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. **Confraternity of Christian Mothers: Celebration of Mothers**, 6 p.m. Mass followed by blessing and fellowship in Madonna Hall, for all Catholic women whether a parent or not, free. Information: 217-638-7433, paulabeechler@gmail.com.

May 14

Church of the Immaculate Conception, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Taizé Prayer at the Woods**, 7-8 p.m., silent and spoken prayers, simple music, silence, virtual option available. Information: Taize.SistersofProvidence.org, 812-535-2952.

St. Simon the Apostle Parish Life Center, 8155 Oaklandon Road, Indianapolis. **Helping Children Navigate Divorce and Blended Families**, 6:30 p.m., for parents who have experienced divorce, remarriage and/or blending families help their children through that transition, attorney Natalie Snyder presenting, sponsored by St. Simon's Stephen Ministry, free. Information: saintsimon.org/events, 317-826-6000, ext. 180, stephenministry@saintsimon.org.

May 15

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

May 16

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

May 16-19

Holy Name of Jesus Parish, 89 N. 17th Ave., Beech Grove. **Blessed Carlos Eucharistic Miracles Display**, Thurs. 3:30-9 p.m. with family eucharistic adoration, Fri. and Sat. 5-8 p.m., Sun. 9 a.m.-4 p.m., display of Eucharistic miracles. Free but donations accepted. Information: 317-445-9499, kristen.kloss@gmail.com.

May 17

Holy Trinity Cemetery, 2473 Green Valley Road, New Albany. **Burial for Miscarried Babies**, 4 p.m., burial service for babies miscarried at Baptist Floyd Health since Nov. 2023. Information: 812-944-0417, teri.ccna@gmail.com.

Northside Events and Social Club, 2100 E. 71st St., Indianapolis. **Catholic**

Business Exchange, 7-9 a.m., Juan Gonzalez, KeyBank president and business banking sales leader, presenting "Community Service—A Chance for All of Us to Give Back," 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 May 14. Information, registration: cutt.ly/CBE-Reg.

May 18

St. Christopher Parish parking lot, 5301 W. 16th St., Indianapolis. **St. Vincent de Paul Stuff A Truck**, 9-11 a.m., accepting clothing, household goods and linens (all in closed bags), furniture, bicycles, bicycle helmets and locks, backpacks. List of items most needed: cutt.ly/ItemsNeeded. Information: dsweeney@svdindy.org.

May 25

St. Joseph Parish, 1875 S. Cty. Road 700 W., North Vernon. **Mass and Marian Candlelight Procession**, Mass 6 p.m., candlelight procession after Mass. Information: 812-346-3604, parishsecretary@stmarysnv.com.

Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish, 520 Stevens St., Indianapolis. **Faithful Citizens Rosary Walk**, 10:45-11:45 a.m.,

meet in front of church. Information: holyroary.prolife@gmail.com.

May 27

Calvary Mausoleum Chapel, 435 W. Troy Ave., Indianapolis. **Memorial Day Mass**, noon. Information: 317-784-4439, catholiccemeteries.cc.

Our Lady of Peace Cemetery and Mausoleum, 9001 Haverstick Road, Indianapolis. **Memorial Day Mass**, 11 a.m. Information: 317-574-8898, catholiccemeteries.cc.

May 30

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

May 30-June 1

St. Simon the Apostle Parish, 8155 Oaklandon Road, Indianapolis. **Parish Festival**, Thurs. 5-11 p.m., Fri. 5 p.m.-midnight, Sat. 3 p.m.-midnight, rides, food, beer garden, games, kids' zone, Vegas room (ages 21 and older), live music: Thurs. St. Simon Idol, Fri. Rhythm Kings and Stella Luna and the Satellites, Sat. Jason Joy and My

Yellow Rickshaw, \$10 food/drink ticket per person or per family required for admission. Information: saintsimonfestival.com, 317-826-6000, saintsimonfestival.com.

St. Jude Parish, 5353 McFarland Road, Indianapolis. **Summer Festival**, 5-10 p.m., children's games, prizes, bands, food, carnival rides, live entertainment, bingo, Monte Carlo games, free admission. Information: 317-786-4371.

May 31-June 1

St. Gabriel the Archangel Parish, 6000 W. 34th St., Indianapolis. **International Festival**, 5 p.m.-midnight, carnival rides, food, music, \$5,000 raffle, beer garden, free admission, prices for food, drinks and rides vary. Information: stgabrielindy.org, 317-291-7014, ext. 0.

May 31-June 2

St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Parish, 4720 E. 13th St., Indianapolis. **Summerfest**, Fri. 5-11 p.m., Sat. 3-11 p.m., Sun. 11 a.m.-5 p.m., \$4,000 grand prize raffle, bingo Fri. and Sat., midway rides, silent auction, live entertainment, food, beer, wine, games for kids

and adults, \$10 admission for \$10 in event coupons. Information: 317-357-8352, amackell@littleflowerparish.org.

June-July 2024

CYO Camp Rancho Framasa, 2230 N. Clay Lick Road, Nashville. **Summer Camps for Youths**, ages 7-18, fees range \$130-\$815. Information, registration: campranchoframasa.org, 812-988-2839, info@campranchoframasa.org.

June 1

St. Monica Parish parking lot, 6131 Michigan Road, Indianapolis. **St. Vincent de Paul Stuff A Truck**, 9-11 a.m., accepting clothing, household goods and linens (all in closed bags), furniture, bicycles, bicycle helmets and locks, backpacks. List of items most needed: cutt.ly/ItemsNeeded. Information: dsweeney@svdindy.org.

June 2

St. Paul Parish, 814 Jefferson St., Tell City. **Parish Picnic**, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. CT, pulled pork or BBQ chicken dinners, cash/quilt raffles, live music, eat-in or carry-out dinners, free admission. Information: 812-547-7994, stpaulch@psci.net. †

Retreats and Programs

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

June 3-6

Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis. **Four-Day Directed Retreat: Silence, Reflection and Transformation**, 10 a.m. Mon.-2 p.m. Thurs., includes spiritual direction, prayer sessions, accommodations, materials and meals, \$475. Information, registration: retreatcommunications@mountsaintfrancis.org, 812-923-8817, mountsaintfrancis.org/four-day-directed-retreat.

June 5

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.

June 7

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.

June 9

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **Coffee Talks: "Pope Francis, Spirituality in the Face of Adversity,"** 10:45 a.m.-noon, Franciscan Center associate co-director Jane Schaefer presenting, freewill donation. Information,

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

June 10-15

Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis. **Quilters Retreat**, 9 a.m. Mon.-11 a.m. Fri, includes guest speaker and quilting essentials; accommodations and meals: \$575 five nights, \$475 four nights, \$375 three nights, commuter \$200, pay as you go option \$100 a day. Information, registration: retreatcommunications@mountsaintfrancis.org, 812-923-8817, mountsaintfrancis.org/quilters-retreat-1.

June 13, July 10

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

Indianapolis. **Day of Silence**, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., \$45, includes room, lunch, Mass and use of

common areas and grounds, overnight stay available for additional \$32, dinner additional

\$11. Registration: archindy.org/fatima-events, 317-545-7681, lcoons@archindy.org. †

Wedding Anniversaries

KEITH AND LORRAINE (SICH) RICHARDS

members of St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Bloomington, celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary on April 25. The couple was married in Ord Presbyterian Church in Ord, Ohio, on April 25, 1954, and was received into the full communion of the Catholic Church in 1955. They have five children: Julie Davis, Teresa Gorsage, Karen Ioannides, Tim and Trappist Brother Tom Richards. The couple also has 18 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.



DAVID AND SANDRA (FARRINGTON) PHELAN

members of St. Joseph Parish in Rockville, will celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary on May 16. The couple was married in the former St. Catherine of Siena Church in Indianapolis on May 16, 1964. They have three children: Shelby Arnell, Kelly Curry and David Phelan II. The couple also has seven grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.



THOMAS AND KATHY (NELSON) MASON

members of Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ Parish in Indianapolis, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on May 18. The couple was married in the Church of St. Benedict in Mohnton, Pa., on May 18, 1974. They have two children: Kelly Siegert and Gregory Mason. The couple also has 10 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.

Theology on Tap sessions in New Albany scheduled for Thursdays in June

Theology on Tap events will take place in the New Albany Deanery from 6-8 p.m. on June 6, 13, 20 and 27. Attendees must be 21 or older.

The events on June 6 and 13 will take place at the Lanesville Knights of Columbus St. John Paul II Council #1808 building, 8104 State Road 62, in Lanesville. Missionary Meg Hunter-Kilmer will speak on "How the Eucharist Makes Saints" on June 6. National Eucharistic Congress board treasurer and Our Sunday Visitor Institute president Jason Shanks will speak on "Miracle Man" on June 13.

The events on June 20 and 27 will take place at the New Albany Knights of Columbus Cardinal Ritter Council #1221 building, 809 E. Main St., in New Albany. Former Indianapolis Catholic

Youth Organization executive director and football coach Bruce Scifres will speak on "Beyond the Goal Line" on June 20. National Eucharistic Preacher Jesuit Father Joseph Laramie will speak on "Spiritual Warfare" on June 27.

The series is offered by Catalyst Catholic in the New Albany Deanery. The events include a meal cooked by the Knights, a cash bar and time for socializing.

Admission is \$70 for the four sessions until June 6. Admission for individual sessions is \$20 through the Sunday prior to the event, and \$25 after for registrants and walk-ins.

For more information or to register, go to catalystcatholic.org/tot or contact Kelli Reutman at 812-923-8355 or kelli@catalystcatholic.org. †

Historic St. Michael Church in Cannelton is built of sandstone and of 'dedicated' living stones

By Natalie Hoefler

Stories written in sand are washed away. But stories written in sandstone withstand the test of time.

Take St. Michael Parish in Cannelton on the Ohio River in Perry County. Its church, built of locally quarried sandstone, has stood on a hill overlooking the town since 1859.

Likewise, its generations of parishioners have carried on the faith. A stanza from a poem by Stella Miller, published in Michael Rutherford's 1986 book *St. Michael's On The Hill & St. Patrick's Church*, honors this fact:

"The years they spent in sacrifice
And toiling with a will,
Has left us with this grand old place:
ST. MICHAEL'S ON THE HILL."

'Deep roots in the community'

Danielle Corley beams with pride for the Tell City Deanery parish she has been a member of for 43 years.

"St. Michael is blessed to have a dedicated group of people with a lot of deep roots in the community and parish," says the president of the parish council. "We're proud of our church and our faith."

Corley says the 165-year-old structure is in "amazing condition," thanks to parishioners' generous, dedicated care. Its prominent location just a block from the Ohio Scenic River Byway on State Road 66 makes the structure itself a form of evangelization.

"We have people come from miles around to see it," says Corley. If a parishioner is present and a stranger asks for a tour, "They drop what they're doing and say, 'I'm happy to show you!'"

Highlights of the tour include the recently restored, 97-year-old stained-glass windows; the 74-year-old Wicks pipe organ; ropes in the entry that are still used to ring the four bells, one installed in 1860 and three installed in 1870 (while the sound of the church's clock calling out the quarter-hour can be heard throughout Cannelton); and the crypt of parish

founder Father Michael Marendt that resides below the altar.

St. Michael is made of living stones, too—its parishioners who bring the light of Christ to the local community.

One ministry Corley says "we're really proud of" sees that Catholic patients at Perry County Memorial Hospital in nearby Tell City have the opportunity to receive the Eucharist seven days a week.

The ministry, coordinated by a parishioner, includes nine volunteers from the "quad parishes," four local faith communities that share resources: St. Michael; St. Mark, Perry County; St. Paul, Tell City; and St. Pius V, Troy.

Members of the parish's St. Ann Society women's guild "do a lot of good work" too, says Corley. "One thing they do is donate each year to a backpack program that buys food to fill a food gap for children in Perry County who would otherwise be hungry."

Food also figures in an annual ecumenical effort that the women of the parish participate in. St. Michael is one of several local churches that hosts a "traveling" breakfast speaker series for women during Lent.

The parish is also known for having a "very good, very popular Lenten fish fry," Corley says. Its annual turkey bingo event the Sunday before Thanksgiving is popular, too, drawing more than 200 people last year. Winners take home a frozen turkey for their Thanksgiving dinner.

Just five days later, on the Friday after Thanksgiving, is the Cannelton Christmas parade, which includes floats.

A few years ago, parish volunteers constructed a roughly 10-foot tall wooden replica of St. Michael Church as a parade float. The reaction was exciting, says Corley: "You could hear people say, 'Oh, wow! That's that big church! That's St. Michael!'" The float has won first place in two out of the last three years.

Christmas is a lovely time to see the church, she adds.

"St. Michael Church is just gorgeous, and at Christmastime it's breathtaking. We have 12-foot trees, but they look like 5-foot trees, the ceilings are so high."

But visitors are welcome at "this grand old place, St. Michael's on the hill" anytime, Corley says.

"We love giving tours, and we just love having people join us for Mass!"

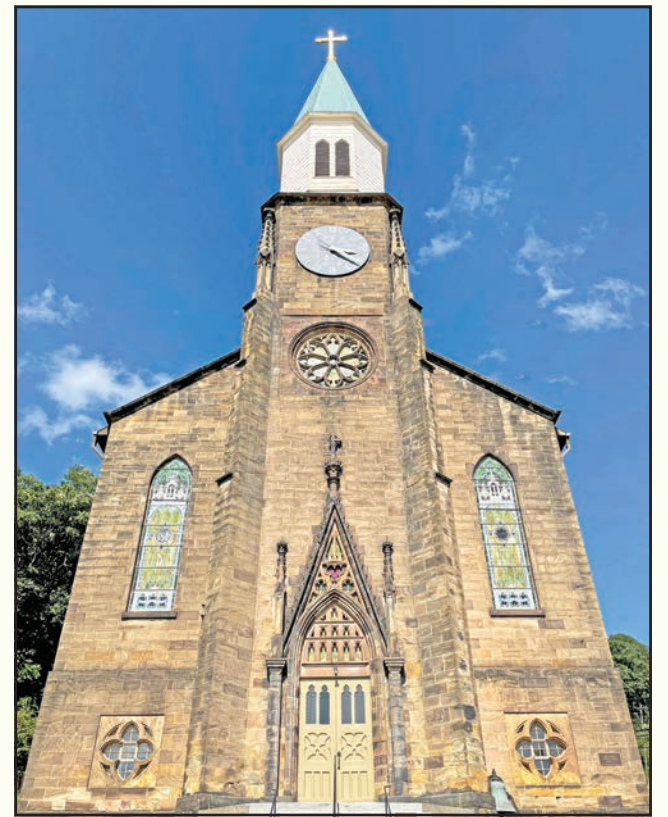
For information on Mass times, call the parish at 812-547-7994 or go to www.thequadparishes.org. Cannelton is on Central Time.

Wine, history, river views, a Celtic cross and eagles, too

While Christ's true presence in the Eucharist is the primary source of sustenance when visiting St. Michael in Cannelton for Mass, Corley recommends breakfast afterward at Julie's Tell Street Cafe or pub food and craft beer for dinner at The Pour Haus, both in nearby Tell City.

Another place to drink in the local spirit(s) is Blue Heron Vineyards & Winery in Cannelton. Taste their wines, listen to live music and enjoy views of the Ohio River. Blue Heron is particularly noted for its 20- by 22- by 4-foot Celtic cross hand carved into hillside stone by a local sculptor. According to the Blue Heron website, it is believed to be the largest *in situ* (of its own source) Celtic cross in the world. For more information on the cross, wine-tasting hours and an event schedule, go to www.blueheronvines.com.

For a taste of life in southern Indiana in the 1850s, take in an event or private tour at the Shubael Little Pioneer Village in Cannelton. Named for Shubael Little, a pioneer and first landowner of the farm where the village stands, the site includes six historic, reconstructed cabins, a mercantile, blacksmith shop, one-room schoolhouse and more. The site offers three annual events: a Dogwood Festival the last weekend in April, a fall festival and open house in October (Oct. 19-20 this year), and a candlelight Christmas tour in December (Dec. 14 this year). Private tours and school field trips can also be arranged. For more information, go to



littlepioneerivillage.org or call 812-547-8215, 812-968-9522 or 812-547-6594.

There's locks to see in Cannelton—and a dam, and the Ohio River, and eagles. See them all at Eagle's Bluff Park and Overlook. The 128-acre park includes three easy-level walking trails, picnic shelters and an observation deck overlooking the Ohio River and Cannelton Locks and Dam. Bring your binoculars to see the locks at work—lifting or dropping river vessels 25 feet in about eight minutes—or to catch sight of a majestic eagle soaring over the river or perching in a tree. For more information, go to tinyurl.com/EaglesBluff.

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



Priest's prayer garden at an Arizona parish nurtures the soul

COOLIDGE, Ariz. (OSV News)—A year ago, St. James the Apostle Church in Coolidge stood in a sea of concrete, asphalt and gravel. Waves of heat streamed off sunbaked surfaces that blinded parishioners as they dashed from their cars to the shelter of the church.

Father Alexander "Alex" Tigga arrived in Coolidge during the peak of summer, yet was undaunted by the heat and stone. The master gardener has planted gardens all around the globe, wherever he is sent as a missionary priest with the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales.

With gardens in three continents, Father Alex has



Father Alexander Tigga, pastor of St. James the Apostle Parish in Coolidge, Ariz., is pictured standing in the parish prayer garden on April 17 next to the church. (OSV News photo/Carissa Krautscheid, New Outlook)

cultivated the earth and transformed empty spaces into thriving gardens. He first learned about plants from his father, who was a farmer in India. He planted gardens at his seminary before being sent to Africa, where fruit trees he planted are still producing good fruit. "Wherever I go, I plant beautiful gardens," the priest said.

In the Diocese of Tucson, Father Alex first planted a garden in Kearny at Infant Jesus of Prague Parish, then at St. Therese of Lisieux Parish in Patagonia, which became a sort of tourist destination for visitors and photographers.

Coming from the cooler, greener Patagonia, Father Alex became pastor of St. James the Apostle Parish in July 2023. The parishioners were already eager to make a prayer garden.

After meeting and brainstorming, the parish community decided to proceed and was able to raise enough funds to create a prayer garden. "It was very dry, dead, and lifeless. So, I wanted to help bring some life to the community. There should be some life," the priest told *New Outlook*, Tucson's diocesan online news outlet.

"We started digging in July," Father Alex said. "It was very hard because it was so hot. I brought some plants from Patagonia, but they were drying away. Keeping them alive was difficult."

The pastor and his parishioners installed water irrigation, statues and benches. Now, just 10 months later, parishioners and visitors can pray in a lush flower garden nestled behind the parish office. The property is already transformed by the cooling and comforting presence of greenery, blooming flowers of every color and new fruit trees beginning to take root.

"Whoever comes, they leave happy," said Father Alex. "Many of them have started planting gardens at their own

houses. They realize they can do it. Some will ask me what to plant and when."

The spring flowers currently blessing the St. James the Apostle community were planted back in September and October. Summer blooms, such as sunflowers, bougainvillea and yellow bells were planted in February and March. "They're growing now," the pastor said. "They can bear the sun and give flowers, but we have to provide the water."

In less than a year, the parish grounds are now flourishing: existing trees grow greener than before, flowers line the gravel lot used for parish fiestas, a vegetable garden takes root behind the rectory, and the prayer garden welcomes visitors of people and pollinators alike.

While tending the plants, Father Alex also sees gardening as a way to care for his own body and soul. Physically, he said, "gardening is a good habit. It refreshes your mind and relaxes you. It gives you exercise and keeps you young. People tend to think I'm 15 or 20 years younger than I am."

Gardening also nurtures and inspires the spiritual life. "You think a lot about God's creation while gardening, and how we are participating in God's creation," Father Alex said. "It allows time for meditative prayer. The spiritual life and gardening go together. The garden helps people to pray and brings an atmosphere of prayer."

By taking part in God's creation, Father Alex is using his God-given gifts for gardening to make the world a more beautiful place. He leaves a parish more beautiful than when he found it.

"My gardens bring happiness to people," Father Alex said. "They leave smiling." †

ARMBRUSTER

continued from page 1

her death in 2017. They lived their vocation of marriage along with their love for their home parish—St. Malachy in Brownsburg.

“I would also like to acknowledge my grandma, Anne Armbruster. She married my Grandpa Armbruster in 1954. On May 26, 1987, Bob Armbruster was killed in a car accident. My grandmother would spend the next 34 years as a widow, but she would never have said she was alone.

“Her deep faith before my Grandpa’s death sustained her those 34 years, often remarking, ‘God gave me 30 wonderful years with Bob, and he asked me to give him back to him.’ This devotion to our God, along with his Blessed Mother, was something she passed on to her children, grandchildren and her great-grandchildren.

“Finally, my parents, Robert and Marijane Armbruster, along with many aunts and uncles and parishioners of St. Malachy, had an early influence on my life of faith. My parents carried on the faith of their ancestors, and they passed it on to us. They especially taught what it means to be loyal to one’s home parish by giving of one’s time, talent and treasure.”

The challenge of a friend

During his time at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad, Deacon Armbruster has become close friends with Father Devereaux King, who was ordained a priest of the Archdiocese of Nassau in the Bahamas last year.

“I will never forget one thing he told me: ‘None of what you do here in seminary matters unless you cultivate a friendship with Jesus Christ.’” Deacon Armbruster recalls. “The greatest fruit of my six years of formation is the deep friendship I have with our blessed Lord. I realized early on if I cannot be honest with our Lord, I will never be honest with myself. This challenged me to turn to Jesus at all times and for all things.

“I know that as I move away from the stability of seminary life to the unknowns of diocesan priesthood, I must trust in the great High Priest who has chosen me to do his work. And his work for me is to give glory to God in all that I do—and to work and pray for the salvation of souls.”

God’s Christmas gift

“Like most things in my life, my love for Christmas comes from my late Memom Hession,” Deacon Armbruster says. “Christmas at the farm and the days leading up to Christmas—it was her favorite time of the year. She would bake nonstop, shop at her favorite store, L.S. Ayres, and of course, go to Christmas Eve Mass. However, I think my love for this time goes beyond pure nostalgia. There is something inherently beautiful that the God of the universe became a helpless babe. God knows how much we love babies that he came as a baby.

“Our Lord’s nativity sets the tone for how we are to love our blessed Lord. Yes, I love decorating for Christmas, making homemade desserts, celebrating with family and watching those nostalgic Christmas movies. But nothing brings joy to my heart than singing ‘O Come All Ye Faithful’ on Christmas night. That song—my favorite—has such an emotional and spiritual component. After all, who is ever the same after they come and adore Christ the Lord?”

The death of an uncle

“In the fall of 2023, my family was dealt a huge blow when my mother’s oldest brother, Mike, was diagnosed with stomach cancer,” Deacon Armbruster recalls. “This was a fast-moving cancer that ended up taking his life eight weeks after his diagnosis. Toward the end of his life, I came home and offered prayers for the dying for him. Before I did that, many of my aunts, uncles and cousins filled his hospital room. I felt the pressure of leading my family through this

prayer for him, and it got overwhelming.

“I began repeating over and over, ‘Lord, give me the graces to do what you ordained me to do.’ Our good God gave me the graces to do those prayers well, and he gave me the graces I needed to preach his funeral Mass. It was a moment that significantly formed me. In a moment of tragedy, God gave me the words of comfort and hope that my grieving family needed to hear.”

The devotion of St. Bernadette

“On the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes in 2020, I watched *The Song of Bernadette* for the first time at the invitation of Father Peter DiMaria, who was a spiritual director at that time at Saint Meinrad. The life of Bernadette fascinated me, and I was moved by the movie to research the real person. As I began to learn more about Bernadette, I started seeking her intercession in my prayer. This intercession led me to draw closer to our Blessed Mother. Both of these holy women have led me closer to Christ.

“They are a great reminder that devotion to the saints always leads back to Christ. Mary as Mother keeps me close to her divine Son, where Bernadette is almost like my older sister. Being the oldest in my family, I am blessed to have a spiritual older sister who challenges me to persevere in my prayer life.”

The joyous example of mentors

Deacon Armbruster’s path to the priesthood has been influenced by many priests through the years, including his great-uncle, Benedictine Father Julius Armbruster.

“Not only do I have Father Julius’ chalice, the Benedictine spirituality he lived influences my spirituality today,” Deacon Armbruster says.

He also credits two priests from the archdiocese as having an especially powerful impact on his faith journey.

“When I look back at my early childhood years when I considered the priesthood, I remember what attracted me most was the joy Father Dan Staublin exuded in his priesthood,” Deacon Armbruster says about his first pastor at St. Malachy. “He always had a smile on his face, especially when he preached and while he celebrated Mass. He also gave me my first Communion, and I recall he made that Mass special for me and my family.”

Regarding his years as a student at Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School in Indianapolis, Deacon Armbruster recalls the influence of Father John Hollowell.

“I remember having many conversations with him,” Deacon Armbruster says. “Father Hollowell’s influence led me to a greater respect and reverence for our eucharistic Lord. Also, like Father Dan, he loved being a priest.”

The wisdom of a pope

“I really hope my own personal testimony could be the primary way I lead people to God,” Deacon Armbruster says.

“Pope Benedict XVI remarked in his encyclical, ‘*Deus Caritas Est*’ [‘God Is Love’], ‘Being Christian is not

Transitional Deacon Anthony Armbruster

Age: 28

Parents: Robert and Marijane (Hession) Armbruster

Home Parish: St. Malachy in Brownsburg

Education: St. Malachy School in Brownsburg, Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School in Indianapolis, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad

Favorite Scripture passage: “Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.’” (Jn 20:21)

Favorite saint: St. Bernadette Soubirous

Favorite prayer or devotion: Liturgy of the Hours and *Divine Intimacy*, a book of meditations

Favorite movie: *It’s a Wonderful Life*

Favorite authors: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Also, Venerable Servant of God Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen and Pope Benedict XVI

Hobbies: Camping, working at his parents’ house, driving



the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction’ [#1].

“I am a witness to this encounter with the person of Jesus Christ.”

The start of his encounter with Christ began in 2017 when he was the IT director for St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Indianapolis.

“I made it a point to arrive to the parish at 7 each morning, to spend an uninterrupted 45 minutes with our eucharistic Lord,” he recalls. “That was the encounter with the divine that Pope Benedict XVI envisioned. I hope my witness to the encounter will move others to have their own encounter.”

The support of the people in the parishes where he has lived and served

“I just want to thank the parishes that have hosted me in my time in seminary—St. Mary in Rushville, St. Mary-of-the-Knobs in Floyds Knobs, Our Lady of the Greenwood in Greenwood, St. Luke the Evangelist in Indianapolis, and SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi in Greenwood and St. Martin of Tours in Martinsville,” he said. Deacon Armbruster’s first assignment as a priest will be as parochial vicar of the last two parishes.

“All of these assignments, along with my years spent at Saint Meinrad, have prepared me to be the priest God has called me to be. I also cannot thank enough my home parish, St. Malachy, which has loved and supported me since I was reborn in the waters of baptism.”

The influence of family, friends, mentors, saints, a pope, parishioners and God himself—all will be in Deacon Armbruster’s heart on his ordination day. So will be the one approach to life he has learned from all of them.

“A life with Christ makes our life worth living.”

(For more information about a vocation to the priesthood in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, visit HearGodsCall.com.) †

‘He wants to win hearts, minds and souls for the Lord’

By John Shaughnessy

The heart of a person is often revealed in everyday moments, especially in moments where the choice is to approach them with either stress or joy.

In their friendship of six years, transitional Deacon Matt Millay has often witnessed telling moments concerning Deacon Anthony Armbruster, who will be ordained a priest for the archdiocese on June 1 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis.

“I recall many occasions where Deacon Anthony answered the call to service. For example, when he was the kitchen manager of the Unstable, I recall how he, another seminarian and I would cook on Monday evenings,” says Deacon Millay about the campus pub at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad.

“At times, those evenings were some of the most demanding nights of the week in that kitchen. No matter, he always approached

work with a contagious enthusiasm. He helped me realize that the work we were doing was not just about making good pizza, but all the more, it was about serving the wider seminary community.”

Father Sean Danda, the pastor of St. Malachy Parish in Brownsburg, saw that same quality in Deacon Armbruster when he returned to help with the parish festival.

“St. Malachy is known for its Country Fair, which was started by his mom’s family back in the late 1970s,” Father Danda says. “Each year, while Deacon Anthony was in seminary, he would come back from Saint Meinrad with two or three seminarian friends and work in his family’s pork nacho tent at the fair. Deacon Anthony loved sharing this St. Malachy tradition with his friends.”

That emphasis on joy in service will be one of the main qualities that Deacon Armbruster brings to his approach to people in the archdiocese, say the people who know him well.

“He cares deeply about others,” says Deacon Millay, a seminarian for the Archdiocese of Louisville who will be ordained in that Kentucky city on June 1. “I believe that as a priest, Deacon Anthony will bring a lively sense of Christ’s compassion and joy to the people of God.”

“He wants to win hearts, minds and souls for the Lord in a world that has largely forgotten about love of God,” Father Danda says.

As a mentor and friend during their shared time at Saint Meinrad, Father Devereaux King of the Archdiocese of Nassau in the Bahamas delights in sharing the range of Deacon Armbruster’s qualities—from “a profound devotion to our Blessed Mother” to his “impeccable skills of Christmas decorating.”

“I have never met anyone who can take a bare and tasteless space and turn it into Santa’s-Never-Ending-Christmas-Shop,” Father Devereaux says.

Mostly, the priest has witnessed his friend’s growth in significant ways during his time in seminary.

“One of the most memorable stories I have of Deacon Anthony was when he invited a group of mutual friends to a social we had at the seminary. He made those friends of ours feel like our main guests of honor. Anthony was never much of a social person, and most times he preferred to be by himself. But when I observed what he did that evening, I said to myself, ‘This friend of mine has finally found himself and, most importantly, he has found himself in Christ Jesus.’”

Describing his friend as having “the heart of a shepherd,” Father Devereaux adds, “The parish that receives this young man as their parochial vicar will be beyond blessed. He will lead those people with great confidence and open their eyes to the beauty of what God can do with a person who has grown tremendously in his Son, Jesus Christ.” †

MENTAL HEALTH

continued from page 1

Lack of access ‘to this kind of help’

Catholic Charities has offered mental health counseling in Bloomington and Indianapolis for years.

But mental health issues have been increasing, even before the COVID-19 pandemic.

A 2023 national Gallup poll shows a more than 10% increase since 2015 in the number of adults with depression. And the 500% increase in death by opioid overdose in Indiana since 1999 ([in.gov/mpd/projects/opioid-epidemic](https://www.in.gov/mpd/projects/opioid-epidemic)) cries for the need of mental health services.

As those needs have increased, Catholic Charities has responded, bringing Martinsville and Seymour into the fold of its mental health offerings.

In 2018, Catholic Charities Indianapolis (CCI) partnered with IU Health Morgan in Martinsville to offer counseling services for adults and children referred by IU Health Morgan physicians and community referrals, thanks to a Kendrick Foundation grant.

“As a mental health agency, we try to help with rural areas,” says Beth Goodrich, mental health program director for CCI. “People in small towns and rural areas frequently don’t have access to this kind of help.”

Such proved to be the case for Jackson County in central southern Indiana, as Bethuram learned in January of 2022.

‘That’s what Catholic Charities does’

It was then that the Secretariat of Catholic Charities reached out to the heads of the archdiocese’s 11 deaneries “asking if we could attend one of their clergy/pastoral staff deanery meetings to discuss the social service needs in parishes or the wider community where they minister.

“Mental health services was one of the issues that was brought up most often. That was true for the Seymour Deanery.”

Bethuram and other archdiocesan leaders later met

with Father Daniel Staublin, pastor of St. Ambrose Parish in Seymour, and a representative of Schneck Medical Center in Seymour “to discuss the possibility of Catholic Charities working in conjunction with Schneck to improve mental health services in Jackson County,” he says.

The thought became a reality through two grants Schneck Medical Center received from Indiana’s Division of Mental Health and Addiction in 2023 to address opioid and other drug addictions.

“Schneck asked us to partner with them for the mental health piece,” says Goodrich. “They were looking for an agency to partner with that serves others regardless of financial resources. That’s what Catholic Charities does.

“Plus our partnership in Martinsville showed that we had experience working in collaboration with a health care facility.”

Through the partnership, CCI was able to provide counseling services in Seymour to physician- and community-referred individuals “experiencing or at risk of opioid or substance use disorder,” Goodrich explains.

“They either needed to be in recovery for substance abuse or have a type of risk, like symptoms or family history that could lead to substance abuse.”

The goal was “to address underlying issues related to and exacerbating their substance use behaviors,” she continues. “This can include mental health conditions and symptoms like depression, PTSD [post-traumatic stress disorder], anxiety, emotional-social development delays, problem-solving, impulsivity, suicidality” and more.

‘Mental health counseling is life-changing’

Such conditions are not isolated to those recovering



‘If you’re depressed or suicidal, or whatever mental health challenges you have, getting that help is imperative. If you want to succeed and be your best self, you have to have that help. It’s like building a house without a foundation—you just have to tackle it.’

—Beth Goodrich, mental health program director for Catholic Charities Indianapolis

from substance abuse. Fortunately, the Seymour location is now able to offer physician-and community-referred mental health services to those in need beyond those dealing with drug addictions.

Goodrich emphasizes the importance of seeking counseling when any form of mental health issue arises, noting that Catholic Charities is there to help. (See related article.)

“We want to help others, especially those who are really struggling in life who have limited resources,” says the licensed marriage and family therapist. “I’ve heard some say they were turned away [from counseling] at other places. That’s just not right.

“If you’re depressed or suicidal, or whatever mental health challenges you have, getting that help is imperative,” she says. “If you want to succeed and be your best self, you have to have that help. It’s like building a house without a foundation—you just have to tackle it.”

Goodrich admits that there is still a stigma regarding seeking mental health assistance.

“That baffles me,” she says. “I’ve had clients say more than once that [counseling] has really saved their life.

“Mental health counseling is life-changing. It can help you have hope. Some might think it’s scary, but it’s not—we just want to help and are trained to do it.” †

May is Mental Health Awareness Month: Catholic Charities and local Catholic counselors can help

Criterion staff report

****For immediate, urgent mental health issues, call the national Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at 988.****

Catholic Charities offers mental health services in Bloomington and Indianapolis, and in Martinsville and Seymour with some parameters.

The following is true of each location:

—treats adults and children for anxiety,

depression, family conflicts, grief and loss, trauma, life adjustments, relationship problems, stress and attachment issues;

—offers individual, family and couples talk therapy (in person or via telehealth), play therapy for children, Theraplay therapy for attachment issues, and Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) therapy for trauma;

—accepts most insurances and offers a sliding fee scale.

For more information or to schedule an appointment through Catholic Charities:

—Indianapolis, go to helpcreatehope.org/counseling-services or call 317-236-1500, option 2, to leave a message.

—Bloomington, go to ccb.in.org or call 812-332-12621.

Those seeking mental health services in Martinsville must be referred by an IU Health Morgan physician.

For a list of vetted Catholic counselors in the archdiocese, go to tinyurl.com/MentalHealthMinistry or tinyurl.com/CatholicCounselors. †

Pope Francis calls pastors to be ‘missionaries of synodality’

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis signed a letter on synodality in the presence of parish priests and urged them to be “missionaries of synodality,” said several of the priests present.

Father Donald J. Planty Jr., pastor of St. Charles Parish in Arlington, Va., and one of the U.S. pastors at the meeting, said, “He told us, ‘I want you to take this letter, and I want you to put it into action. I want you to share it and speak to your bishops about it and speak to your brother pastors about it.’”

The pope signed the letter on May 2 as he met with more than 200 parish priests in the Vatican Synod Hall. The meeting came at the end of an April 29-May 2 gathering designed as an opportunity for the priests to share their experiences and

offer input for the drafting of the working document for the Synod of Bishops on synodality’s second assembly in October.

Father Planty, who served for a time in the Vatican diplomatic corps and in the Vatican Secretariat of State, said it was clear that what participants from around the world had in common was “love for our identity as priests and our mission as priests.”

Clearly, he said, some priests have difficulty getting parishioners to open up and share their hopes, dreams and skills—a crucial part of building a “synodal Church” where people listen to one another and share responsibility for the life of the parish and its missionary outreach.

That is not a problem in the United

States, Father Planty said. “Especially in a country of an Anglo-Saxon democratic tradition,” people are used to sharing their opinions, including with their priests. They comment after Mass or send an e-mail or phone the parish office.

“A priest who really knows his parish, loves his parishioners, has his finger on the pulse of the parish” not only through the pastoral council and finance council, but “also through other, informal settings,” he said. Such a pastor “knows his people, consults with them, listens to them, takes their advice, and ultimately that factors into his pastoral decisions and planning and actions.”

Father Clint Ressler, pastor of St. Mary of the Miraculous Medal Parish in Texas City, Texas, said spiritual discernment

adds a key factor because synodality “is not listening to the voice of the people, but the voice of God in the voice of the people.

“It isn’t just about your voices and your opinions,” he said. “We have to all be willing to then go deeper beneath those voices to try to hear what the Spirit is saying among us.”

People are hesitant about synodality when it is erroneously presented as debating “the issues that are controversial in the Church,” and “whether or not this is some new instrument to foment change in doctrine or Church teaching,” he said. When that happens, “I think it’s disturbing. It’s scary. It’s unsettling,” and it leaves some wondering, “Why are we going to let the people decide what God wants?” †

POPE

continued from page 1

In the Book of Sirach, the pope said, the author asks, “Do not the tears of the widow fall down the cheeks of God?” (Sir 35:18)

“Dear friends,” he said, “how many tears still flow down God’s cheeks while our world experiences so much abuse against the dignity of the person, even within the people of God?”

The title of the conference in Rome was “Repairing the Irreparable,” which Pope Francis said was an invitation “to hope that every wound can be healed, however deep it may be.

“Full reparation at times seems impossible, such

as when goods or loved ones are definitively lost, or when certain situations have become irreversible,” he said. “But the intention to make amends and to do so in a concrete way is essential for the process of reconciliation and the return to peace in the heart.”

Reparation as a spiritual practice, the pope said, must include “recognizing oneself as guilty and asking for forgiveness,” because it is from an “honest acknowledgment of the wrong done to one’s brother or sister, and from the profound and sincere sentiment that love has been harmed, that the desire to make amends arises.”

The explicit request for forgiveness “reopens dialogue and manifests the will to re-establish the bond of fraternal charity,” he said. And a commitment to reparation—“even a beginning of reparation or simply

the will to make amends—guarantees the authenticity of the request for forgiveness, it expresses its depth, its sincerity, it touches the heart of the other, bringing consolation and inspiring the other to accept the request for forgiveness.”

Jesus’ request to St. Margaret Mary for acts of reparation for the offenses caused by the sins of humanity indicate that “these acts consoled his heart,” the pope said. And if they consoled his heart, “this means that reparation can also console the heart of every wounded person.”

Pope Francis prayed that the conference would renew and strengthen “the meaning of this beautiful practice of the reparation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus,” and that it would find “its rightful place in the penitential journey of each baptized person in the Church.” †

SERRA CLUB VOCATIONS ESSAY

Student finds 'peace and tranquility' in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

By Quinn Anderson
Special to *The Criterion*

The Eucharist is the most important feature of our Catholic lives. Without it, my life could never be what it is today. Being in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament has changed my life in so many wonderful ways. I witnessed the most spectacular moments in the presence of the Lord at my very first Easter Vigil Mass. I was honored to be invited by our parish priest to serve in this wonderful Mass. I was awestruck by the mystery unfolding as hundreds of dimly-lit faces sang Latin chants. At midnight, a great joy spread



through the church. There was a strong feeling of the love of Jesus touching everyone in the congregation, including me. I felt true happiness and peace inside my soul. This Easter Vigil Mass showed me the great beauty in the presence of God and reawakened my faith to look at every Mass not just as singing and prayer, but as a miracle of God given to us.

I also grew a deep connection with my faith in the company of the Eucharist at Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary in Indianapolis. A few months after the start of my eighth-grade year, my religion teacher invited me to embark on this spiritual journey.

Upon arriving at the seminary, we spent the first half hour in silent adoration in the presence of the Eucharist for God's vocation. I could feel God calling to me during this time. Seeing the brotherhood, joy and

love all the seminarians had for the Eucharist had a tremendous impact on me. It opened my eyes to the possibility that I could be a servant of God in the Eucharist, and I'm seriously considering God's call to me to the priesthood.

My day at Bishop Bruté expanded my faith in the presence of Jesus' body and blood.

I was given a great opportunity to grow my faith in God when I was invited by my friends to go to a new form of adoration, Teen Hour of Power. This is provided by our parish every Sunday for the youths of the parish to grow a deeper connection with God. I decided starting off my week in prayer with God would be helpful, so I joined them.

I spent this time of adoration in deep prayer, for I was worried about the many challenges of the week. Then, I felt a strange feeling of calm

throughout my body. I was somewhat taken aback by this, but I decided to let it take over. I found God's kindness and peace that day. I am grateful for this amazing opportunity for me to connect with God. In the peace and tranquility of adoration, I discovered a great friendship with God.

The Eucharist has had a far-reaching impact on my life. It allows me to see the beauty of Jesus giving up his life for us, to grow in my faith and find a close friendship with Jesus. A life without the Eucharist is a life I can't live in.

(Quinn and his parents, Kent and Andrea Anderson, are members of Christ the King Parish in Indianapolis. He is an eighth-grade student at Christ the King School in Indianapolis and is the eighth-grade division winner in the Indianapolis Serra Club's 2024 John D. Kelley Vocations Essay Contest.) †

Catholic Olympic champion swimmer awarded Presidential Medal of Freedom

WASHINGTON (OSV News)—Adding another distinguished medal to her already sizable collection, Katie Ledecy—the most decorated woman in swimming history—was honored with the Presidential Medal of Freedom on May 3 in a White House ceremony.

A native of the Washington area and a member of Little Flower Parish in Bethesda, Md., Ledecy received the nation's highest civilian honor, along with 18 other Americans who have "made exemplary contributions to the prosperity, values, or security of the United States, world peace, or other significant societal,

public or private endeavors," according to a White House statement.

Ledecy, 27, is a three-time U.S. Olympic swimmer, a seven-time Olympic gold medalist, a 21-time world champion and a 16-time world-record breaker in her sport.

"Thank you, Mr. President and everyone at the White House today for this honor and an incredibly special day!" announced Ledecy, who also shared photographs of the event on her social media pages, following the Friday afternoon ceremony held in the East Room of the White House before

hundreds of guests.

Ledecy was among 19 recipients of the Presidential Medal of Freedom this year. The group included Jesuit Father Gregory Boyle, founder of Homeboy Industries, an intervention and rehabilitation program for gang members in Los Angeles; Elizabeth Dole, a former U.S. senator, U.S. secretary of labor and president of the American Red Cross; Medgar Evers (awarded posthumously), a pioneering civil rights leader murdered in 1963; and former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif.

"Powered by faith, family, and teamwork, Katie Ledecy is a symbol of perseverance and strength with a heart of gold that shines for the nation and for the world," President Joe Biden said before presenting the honor to the swimmer.

A graduate of Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Washington, Ledecy plans to compete in her fourth summer Olympic Games on July 26-Aug. 11 in Paris.

During the summer of 2012, Ledecy was a rising 15-year-old sophomore at Stone Ridge School of the Sacred Heart in Bethesda when she was the youngest athlete on the U.S. Olympic swim team and won her first gold medal in the women's 800-meter women's freestyle race during the London Olympics.

Before she headed off to her inaugural Summer Games, Ledecy told the *Catholic Standard*, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Washington, that to calm her nerves she always prays right before a race.

"The prayer I say is the 'Hail Mary,'" said Ledecy, adding that her faith and the sacraments give her a welcome opportunity to pause in her busy routine. "I also love going to Mass every week. It's a great chance to reflect and connect with God. [My faith] has been a big part of my life since I was born."

Although the medals, records, accolades and commercial endorsements have mounted up in the ensuing years, Ledecy is very much the same humble, hometown athletic phenom she was 12 years ago.

Following the Tokyo Summer Games, Ledecy returned to Stone Ridge in the fall of 2021 to a hero's welcome, speaking to students and answering their questions for two hours. Wearing her new, shiny gold and silver swimming medals around her neck, Ledecy spoke about her Olympic experiences and her intense swim regime, while encouraging the students to work hard and follow their own dreams.

At the time, she told the *Catholic Standard* she was grateful for her lifelong Catholic faith—something she especially relied on during the COVID-19 pandemic, and how it remained very important in her life, especially the during the difficult challenges of the global shutdown—which led to a year's postponement of the 2020 Summer Games. She recalled attending Mass virtually every week with her family whom she hadn't seen in person since December 2019.

"My faith is strong, and I realized more how important that is," she said. †

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U.S. President Joe Biden presents the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Olympic champion swimmer Katie Ledecy, a Catholic, during a ceremony at the White House in Washington on May 3. (OSV News photo/Evelyn Hockstein, Reuters)

SIMPLY CATHOLIC

Look to Mary as someone who can lead you closer to Christ

Part one of two

(OSV News)—During a visit to Naples in March 2015, Pope Francis told a gathering of priests, seminarians and religious women that one of the best ways to make sure Jesus is at the center of their lives is to “ask his mother to take you to him.”

This is the role of Mary in the Church and in our own lives—for who is closer to the Son than his mother?

Robert Fastigi, a professor of theology at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit and former president of the Mariological Society of America, answers common questions about Mary to help readers more fully understand the Church’s teachings regarding the Virgin Mary and why she is truly the “cause of our joy,” a traditional title of Mary.

As Pope Francis said in Naples, “If you don’t love the mother, the mother will not give you the Son.”

Q. What are Marian apparitions, and how can the Church decide if they are true?

A. “Through the centuries, there have been numerous reports of appearances or apparitions of Mary. Some of these apparitions have been accepted as worthy of belief by Church authorities, most especially the apparitions at Guadalupe, Mexico, in 1531; at Lourdes, France, in 1858; and at Fatima, Portugal, in 1917.

“Marian apparitions are considered to be private revelations according to what is taught in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* [CCC]. They don’t ‘improve or complete Christ’s definitive revelation, but help to live more fully by it in a certain period of history’ (#67).

“Marian apparitions can be investigated and approved by the local bishop, but in some cases, the Holy See takes over the inquiry. In 1978, Pope St. Paul VI approved a document of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith that lays out norms for discerning apparitions. Among the criteria used are the harmony of the messages with Catholic doctrine, the docility of the visionaries to Church authority and the signs of the supernatural.”

Q. Why do Catholics give so much attention to Mary?

A. “St. Teresa of Calcutta is credited with a simple response to this question: ‘No Mary, no Jesus.’ This reply gets to the heart of the matter.

“St. Paul writes in Galatians that ‘when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of woman, born under the law’ (Gal 4:4). This means that a woman named Mary—the mother of the Incarnate Word of God—is at the very center of salvation history.

“St. Thomas Aquinas taught that God, in his omnipotent power, could have restored human nature in many different ways, but he chose to redeem us by becoming incarnate of the Blessed Virgin Mary. If God freely chose to redeem us by ‘being born of a woman,’ then it necessarily follows that this woman, Mary, is central to his salvific plan.

“St. Paul VI, in his homily of April 24, 1970, at the Marian shrine of Our Lady of Bonaria in Cagliari, Sardinia,



Worshippers hold candles on May 12, 2022, at the Marian shrine of Fatima in central Portugal. Thousands of pilgrims arrived at the shrine to attend the 105th anniversary of the first apparition of Mary to three shepherd children on May 13, 1917.

(OSV News photo/Pedro Nunes, Reuters)

put it beautifully: ‘If we want to be Christian, we must also be Marian—that is, we must recognize the essential, vital, providential bond which unites Our Lady to Jesus and which opens to us the way that leads us to him.’”

Q. How can Catholics believe Mary was conceived without original sin when Romans 3:23 tells us that “all have sinned and are deprived of the glory of God”?

A. “St. Paul is making a general statement about the condition of humanity after the fall.

“He does not intend to exclude exceptions to the ‘all’ who have sinned, because Jesus never sinned nor did the good angels. In 1 Corinthians 4:5, St. Paul states that ‘everyone will receive praise from God.’ Does this ‘everyone’ include Satan, the demons and the damned?

In fact, the Catholic dogma of Mary’s Immaculate Conception developed precisely because Mary is the mother of Jesus, who ‘has similarly been tested in every way, yet without sin’ (Heb 4:15).

“The dogma of Mary’s plenitude of grace from the moment of her conception finds support in the greeting of the angel in Luke 1:28. Mary is spoken of as ‘full of grace,’ which in Greek [*“kekaritomene”*] means one who has been and continues to be ‘favored’ or ‘graced’ by God [alternate translations could be ‘completely graced’ or ‘thoroughly graced’]. Since Jesus is fully human but without sin, it was fitting, then, that he take his human nature from one who is ‘full of grace’ and thus free from all sin [original as well as personal sin].

“In the 13th century, the Franciscan theologians William of Ware and Blessed John Duns Scotus developed the idea of ‘anticipatory redemption’ or ‘pre-redemption.’ The merits of Christ were applied to Mary in anticipation of her future role as the mother of the Word incarnate.

“Thus, Mary was redeemed by Christ by being preserved from all stain of original sin. In 1854, Blessed Pius IX defined the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception as a truth revealed by God to be believed by all the faithful.”

Q. Do Catholics worship Mary?

A. “According to Catholic teaching, it is forbidden to worship any creature, and Mary is created by God—‘For no creature could ever be counted as equal with the incarnate Word and Redeemer’ [*“Lumen Gentium,”* #62]. The Second Council of Nicaea in 787 made a clear distinction between the worship due to God alone and the veneration or honor [often called in Greek *‘dulia’*] that can be given to Mary, the angels, the saints and sacred images.

“Because Mary has the titles ‘Queen of the Saints’ and the ‘Queen of the Angels,’ she can be accorded high veneration [*hyperdulia*]. Mary, though, can never receive the worship due to God alone.”

Q. Why do Catholics call Mary “the Mother of God”? How could God have a mother?

A. “It’s not just Catholics who recognize Mary as the Mother of God. Eastern Orthodox Christians also honor Mary as the *theotokos*, the God-bearer or birth-giver of God. Even Martin Luther and John Calvin in the Protestant Reformation acknowledged that Mary was the Mother of God [though Calvin did not wish people to use the title].

“Why, though, is Mary called ‘the Mother of God’? It is because she is the mother of the Word incarnate who is divine. Numerous Scripture passages identify Mary as the mother of Jesus [Jn 2:1; Mt 1:18, Mt 2:11, Mt 12:46]. Since Jesus is God [Jn 1:1], Mary must be recognized as the one who bore God in her womb.

“Mary, of course, is not the mother of the Trinity or the divine nature of Jesus. Nevertheless, the person of the Word of God was the child she conceived in her womb and the child to whom she gave birth.

“The prophecy of Isaiah 7:14 is applied to Jesus and Mary in Matthew 1:23. Mary is the virgin who gives birth to Emmanuel [God is with us] Probably the strongest Scriptural support for Mary as the Mother of God is found in Luke 1:43, where Elizabeth speaks of Mary as ‘mother of my Lord.’ The Greek word for Lord used here, *‘kyrios,’* was used as a translation of the Hebrew word for God’s personal name, *YHWH*, spoken by Jews as ‘Adonai’ or ‘Lord’ [CCC, #446].

“The belief in Mary as the Mother of God is a solemn dogma of the Catholic Church proclaimed at the Council of Ephesus in 431.”

Q. Why is the color blue associated with Mary?

A. “In the ancient world, the color blue was associated with royalty. Beginning around the year 500, Mary is displayed in Byzantine art wearing a dark blue mantle, which is a sign of her royal dignity as queen. The association of Mary with the color blue spread to the West and has continued throughout the ages.” †

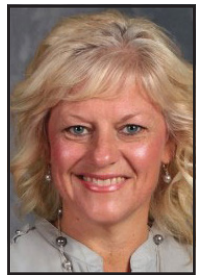


An image of the Blessed Virgin Mary as the Immaculate Conception is seen on May 30, 2023, in the Chapel of the Choir in St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican. The Church’s belief that Mary was conceived without original sin is partly based in Scripture and is of ancient origin. (CNS photo/Lola Gomez)

Joyful Witness/Kimberly Pohovey

Together, our ocean of ripples can change the world—and impact our lives

I have been thinking a lot about ripples lately. We've all seen images of a stone being tossed in the water which causes a "ripple effect" of waves in the surrounding water. The implication is that we have no idea what effect one action can have on others or the world.



Sometimes ripple effects are massive, such as when war breaks out and it spills into other countries or causes catastrophic humanitarian impacts. But I think most of the time, ripples are felt in smaller ways—most of the time unrecognized by the people involved.

In my work at the archdiocese, I have the privilege of working with individuals who have established funds to provide scholarships. Many times, when a person creates such a fund, it is done so to honor or memorialize a loved one. In honoring someone's life, they cause ripple effects in the lives of the recipients of these generous scholarships.

Twenty-three years ago, after our 3-month old son died of sudden infant death syndrome, my husband and I created a scholarship fund to provide Catholic elementary school tuition assistance at the parish we attended at the time. Not only was it a wonderful way to keep the spirit

of our little Matthew alive, but also it was unbelievably cathartic for us to know his short life had meaning in this world. I love thinking about all the ways these young people's lives have been touched by being able to continue their Catholic education, and it's heartwarming to know each of them are causing ripple effects in their respective lives and vocations.

I think that's why I have a heart for working with donors who want to create similar funds. When I say it is a privilege, I really mean it. They all impact me far more than I impact them.

When I contemplate "ripples," two families come to mind. One family lost an adult child to gun violence. While most might be bitter or resentful, this family instead listened to God's call to make a difference.

They formed a foundation which funds a variety of initiatives to impact the inner-city Indianapolis community—including trying to stem gun violence and by providing scholarships for underprivileged youth to receive a Catholic education. In a short time, they are making ripples not only in the lives of young people receiving scholarships, but also the greater community who benefit from their message of peace as a solution.

Another family lost their adult daughter while she was serving on a mission trip in Mexico. They decided to

create scholarships for young people to afford the cost of their first mission trip experience.

At a recent reception with this year's 20 scholarship recipients, I couldn't help but see each young person as a ripple. Their lives will undoubtedly be positively impacted by their mission experience, but they too will impact the lives of all those they will encounter in a variety of countries. Then, who knows how many more people's lives will experience the ripple.

Conversely, when a scholarship recipient experiences a personal encounter with Christ through serving others, they are changed. In the case of a mission trip, young people impact the underserved community they visit. But they also return from the trip rejuvenated in their faith and love for humankind, which leads them to seek more ways to serve. Yet more ripples form.

Because all mankind is connected, instead of seeing one stone forming ripples in a pond, I see an entire ocean of ripples that form a beautifully intricate web.

Personally, I might only be able to create one ripple, but together, our ripples can change the world.

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

Twenty Something/Christina Capecchi

Stop scrolling, start creating: a wake-up call for Catholics to embrace life

The latest admonition comes from a 60-year-old social psychologist whose book hit the No. 1 spot on *The New York Times'* hardcover non-fiction best-seller list.

Using a smartphone threatens a child's mental well-being, Jonathan Haidt believes, and he makes the case in his book *The Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood Is Using an Epidemic of Mental Illness*. His advice: no smartphones before high school, no social media before age 16.



Because social-media platforms design "a firehose of addictive content" that prods kids to forgo the social for the solitary, Haidt writes, they have "rewired childhood and changed human development on an almost unimaginable scale."

Adults are also addicted, which means we too must take a long, hard look in the mirror.

I speak from experience. I dropped my iPhone on Thanksgiving, and it landed with an ominous thud. The blinking neon in the upper-right corner looked like blood at a crime scene.

My phone was mostly dead.

Periodically, I could coax it back to life with an unrepeatable series of taps and a certain angle on the charger, but it never lasted. I limped along in this state for more than a month as I ensured it was properly backed up on iCloud.

Meanwhile, I learned to live without a smartphone.

Being excused from text messaging brought surprising relief. I missed other functions of my phone: the flashlight, the alarm, the navigation. (I borrowed my parents' GPS a few times. What a dandy!)

But the biggest void was the lack of aimless online scrolling. When I climbed into bed at night, I stared at the ceiling. My mind went blank. And though the quiet masqueraded as boredom, I soon recognized it for what it was: a safe space.

I learned to accept the emptiness, trusting it to renew me, to lead me down

interesting new paths. This is what it feels like to clear your mind! This is how you evaluate your day and talk to God and come up with ideas!

The black space held infinite potential.

I had been freed from an onslaught of videos, images and text, and I was returning to the driver's seat. Shouldn't I be the one who gets to decide what I think about? Am I willing to let their algorithm become my agenda?

Mostly I thought about the imagination. Do I want to create or consume? So often we have to pick one. Though I'm a writer by trade with a host of creative interests, I'd been defaulting to consumption day after day, shackled to a small glowing screen.

Now I'm writing fiction, which feels like swinging a bat with my left hand. I'm experimenting with rhyme. I'm doodling with a pencil. And I created a folder on my desktop titled "Imagination File" for fresh ideas untethered to paychecks or deadlines.

If Christians are called to imitate the Creator, then we are called to create. This means we must guard our sense of wonder, filling up on beauty like heaping bouquets of lilacs. We must open our eyes and use our hands, making something out of nothing—with words, with a paintbrush, with a half-empty fridge.

St. John Paul II issued this summons in his 1999 "Letter to Artists," writing: "You are invited to use your creative intuition to enter into the heart of the mystery of the Incarnate God and at the same time into the mystery of man" (#14).

That's as epic as it gets. But it can't happen if you're busy watching TikTok.

Earlier this spring, I spotted the perfect bench in Lower Manhattan's Washington Square Park. It was beneath a cherry-blossom tree in full bloom. I sat down and gazed upward, absorbing the outstretched pink.

Then I noticed the woman beside me, a 60-something clasping a Danielle Steel paperback and beaming. We smiled and congratulated each other on our good fortune at finding the premiere seat in the

house and our good sense to embrace it.

(Christina Capecchi is a freelance writer from Inver Grove Heights, Minn.) †

"If Christians are called to imitate the Creator, then we are called to create. This means we must guard our sense of wonder, filling up on beauty like heaping bouquets of lilacs."

Our Works of Charity/David Bethuram

A path to recovery: navigating mental health challenges with resiliency and hope

At some point, one out of every four families will face the challenge of dealing with mental illness and its impact on both a cherished family member and the unity of the family itself.



The stigma associated with mental illness compels numerous individuals to conceal the true extent of their symptoms or those of their loved ones. This stigma stands as the primary obstacle preventing individuals from accessing the necessary and beneficial treatment.

May is Mental Health Month.

Mental health improves the quality of our lives. When we are free of depression, anxiety, excessive stress and worry, addictions and other psychological problems, we are more able to live our lives to the fullest.

Peace of mind is a natural condition and is available to everyone. Mental health strengthens and supports our ability to have healthy relationships, make good choices, maintain physical health and well-being, manage the natural ups and downs of life, and discover and grow toward our potential.

According to the Mental Health Association, Indiana ranks 43rd in the nation in terms of high prevalence of mental illness and low access to care for both adults and youths.

At Catholic Charities, we witness firsthand how poverty can exacerbate mental health issues, acting as both a cause and a consequence of poor mental well-being.

Mental health is deeply influenced by the diverse factors, including inequalities within individuals' social, economic and physical surroundings. This reality necessitates active engagement from Catholic Charities staff in supporting the mental health and overall well-being of impoverished individuals, while also striving to prevent mental health challenges from leading to poverty. It's a complex endeavor, but one that yields rewarding outcomes.

Recovery from mental illness is a journey many embark on and successfully complete. It entails reclaiming a satisfying and purposeful life within a community, despite the persistent challenges of grappling with mental health issues. I advocate for a structured approach comprising six stages.

The initial phase involves recognizing the need for support. Admitting you require assistance in managing your mental health can be challenging, so this stage of recovery focuses on acknowledging the desire for change and learning to embrace support.

Next is the educational phase. This stage emphasizes gaining insight into your situation and involves

collaborating with a professional to better comprehend your specific challenges.

The third stage is taking action. Progressing through this phase involves implementing the tools acquired in the previous stage and actively working toward the desired changes in your life.

Following this is the establishment of a solid foundation. This stage aids in strengthening your coping skills, paving the way for a happier and more fulfilling life.

Commitment to the recovery process is crucial and constitutes the fifth stage. Recovery isn't as simple as flicking a switch; rather, it involves recognizing the impact of having the right tools and treatment options. Lastly, the spiritual stage is pivotal. Belief, prayer and a supportive faith community help individuals understand that the love and grace of God are essential and readily available.

Overall, embracing these stages and pillars of recovery can pave the way for individuals to navigate their mental health journey with resilience and hope.

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

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

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, May 12, 2024

- Acts of the Apostles 1:1-11
- Ephesians 1:17-23
- Mark 16:15-20

Celebrating the Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord varies from place to place. In some places, this feast will have been celebrated on Thursday, May 9. In these places, the liturgy for this weekend will be that of the Seventh Sunday of Easter. In other dioceses, including the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, the feast is celebrated this weekend. These reflections will address the readings for the Ascension of the Lord, not for the Seventh Sunday.

In the opening reading, from the first verses of the Acts of the Apostles, the author speaks first to Theophilus.

Scholars debate about the identity of Theophilus. Some believe that it is the actual proper name of a person in the early Church. Others, noting that the name is the Greek translation for "Friend of God," hold that it was not a proper name but rather something of a title of respect or endearment.

Regardless, the use of this name or title reveals the link between the Gospel of St. Luke and Acts. Both are addressed to Theophilus.

This reading is about the Ascension. It also is about the Apostles and the special role that Jesus gave them. They witnessed the Ascension, as they witnessed the other great events in the mission of Christ, the miracles, the preaching to the multitudes, the Last Supper, Good Friday and the resurrection.

Intimacy with the Lord prepared the Apostles to teach the Gospel. He commissioned them. The Holy Spirit empowered them.

Angels challenged these privileged Apostles when Jesus ascended, telling them not to look longingly to the skies, nor at each other. They instead called them to go abroad taking with them the good news of God's mercy, come what may.

Indeed, as the future unfolded, all went

abroad preaching the Gospel. And all, except one—St. John—died as martyrs for the Gospel.

For the second reading, this liturgy presents a passage from St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians. Paul prays that God will give wisdom and insight to all who follow the Lord. It is a wisdom too great to be native to humans. God must provide it.

In the reading, Paul extols Jesus as the Lord and Savior, supreme above all creation, including all humans.

St. Mark's Gospel is the last reading. The Lord commissions the Apostles to "go into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature" (Mk 16:15). He invests them with divine power, giving them authority even over the devil. They will be able to flaunt death. They will be able to cure the sick.

They will be able to act as the Lord acted. In every sense, they will represent Jesus. The Gospel concludes that as the Apostles went far and wide, the Lord "worked with them" (Mk 16:20).

Reflection

Today, the Church celebrates the ascension of the Lord. This great event, so well described in the Scriptures, is a sign of the Lord's divine identity as was the resurrection and Jesus' earlier miracles.

The story, as reflected in Acts as well as in Mark, does not end simply with an affirmation of the place of Jesus as Son of God and Savior, visibly seen during the Lord's public ministry in the Roman province of Palestine in the first century.

For us Christians today—as for all Christians who have lived since the moments recorded in these Scriptures—the story has critically strong personal implications. The Lord, crucified on Calvary, risen at Easter, is with you and me here and now. He is in our world, living, healing and saving for 20 centuries.

Christ lives through the Apostles and their successors. Through them, we hear the Lord. Through them, we meet the Lord. With their guidance, we live for the Lord. †



Daily Readings

Monday, May 13

Our Lady of Fatima
Acts 19:1-8
Psalm 68:2-3b, 4-5acd, 6-7b
John 16:29-33

Tuesday, May 14

St. Matthias, Apostle
Acts 1:15-17, 20-26
Psalm 113:1-8
John 15:9-17

Wednesday, May 15

St. Isidore
Acts 20:28-38
Psalm 68:29-30, 33-36b
John 17:11b-19

Thursday, May 16

Acts 22:30; 23:6-11
Psalm 16:1-2a, 5, 7-11
John 17:20-26

Friday, May 17

Acts 25:13b-21
Psalm 103:1-2, 11-12, 19-20b
John 21:15-19

Saturday, May 18

St. John I, pope and martyr
Acts 28:16-20, 30-31
Psalm 11:4-5, 7
John 21:20-25

Vigil Mass of Pentecost

Genesis 11:1-9
or Exodus 19:3-8a, 16-20b
or Ezekiel 37:1-14
or Joel 3:1-5
Psalm 104:1-2a, 24, 35c, 27-28, 29bc-30
Romans 8:22-27
John 7:37-39

Sunday, May 19

Pentecost Sunday
Acts 2:1-11
Psalm 104:1ab, 24ac, 29bc-30, 31, 34
1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13
or Galatians 5:16-25
John 20:19-23
or John 15:26-27; 16:12-15

Question Corner/Jenna Marie Cooper

Artificial intelligence programs cannot validly receive, dispense sacraments

Can an artificial intelligence program licitly receive the sacrament of holy orders? And regardless, what role do you think AI might be able to play in catechesis, if any? (Connecticut)



No, an artificial intelligence (AI) program cannot receive the sacrament

of holy orders (or any other sacrament, for that matter).

Sacraments can only be received by humans, as only human beings are made in the image and likeness of God. Therefore only human beings are capable of becoming more closely configured to Christ, healed and redeemed from sins or ordained to serve God's people as an image of Christ in the sacramental priesthood.

In contrast, an artificial intelligence program is fundamentally just a very sophisticated computer application. While there have been some interesting philosophical and scientific discussions about whether it might be possible for AI to eventually become advanced to the point of becoming dangerous, or to the point of developing something that resembles self-aware consciousness, this would not change the fact that AI is something entirely man-made and lacking the human immortal soul that only God can create.

An AI creation cannot be validly ordained, meaning that any fanciful attempts at "ordaining" a computer program simply wouldn't work. And although our current *Code of Canon Law* never discusses AI explicitly, my thought is that it would also be illicit—meaning not permitted by law—for any bishop to attempt to ordain an AI program in earnest.

As a corollary, an AI application also cannot confer any sacraments validly. As we learned from the recent short-lived Catholic Answers AI "Father Justin" program, even if an AI program "listens" to one's sins and generates the words of absolution, this would not constitute a valid confession or conferral of absolution in the sacrament of penance.

And although a lay person (or even a non-Catholic) can validly and licitly

baptize in an emergency, if there was a hypothetical AI robot that could pour water while broadcasting the baptismal formula over speakers, this would not result in a valid baptism.

But to address the second part of your question, I think AI could certainly have some legitimate catechetical uses. The Catholic community has already benefited from things like search engines for the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* or other magisterial documents for many years. In a similar vein, an AI program based on the catechism could potentially share the riches of the catechism in an even more user-friendly way.

That being said, I also think we need to be realistic about what AI can and cannot do for our catechetical efforts. For one thing, while AI can share information on a given topic in perhaps a more accurate or more efficient way than would be possible for many humans, nothing can replace the value of a person-to-person relationship in evangelizing and handing on the faith.

Human beings can bear a personal witness to the reality of Christ in their lives, which is something that no computer program—no matter how sophisticated—will ever be able to do.

Additionally, while I myself am not a computer scientist, my understanding is that AI, like all computer programs, can essentially only repeat information that it has been "told." AI might be able to search the internet in general, and it might be able to recognize patterns in highly sensitive ways, but it will lack the creativity and intuitive insight of a human mind.

So, for example, while AI might be able to quickly generate the relevant catechetical facts in response to a question about Catholic doctrine, AI will not be able to take into account all the pastoral nuances of why people are asking such a question and what information is really going to be helpful to them in their lives of faith. Sometimes bare facts are what is needed in answer to a question, but an experienced priest or skilled human catechist will be better able to pick up on the "questions behind the question."

(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

First Steps, Last Breath with Mary

By Peg Parke

First Steps:
Her virgin arms reach forth invitingly

Her mother's heart beats hopefully so proud

Her humble soul stares, mutely comprehending

This Child is God Who stumbles to her arms.

Last Breath:
Her virgin arms stretch forth to comfort Him

Her mother's heart beats painfully so sad

Her humble soul weeps deeply understanding

This Man is God Who hangs upon the cross.



(Peg Parke is a member of St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus. Photo: Mary is depicted in a Nativity scene in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican on Dec. 14, 2023. The Church dedicates the month of May to the Blessed Mother.) (CNS photo/Justin McLellan)

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.

BUCK, Hilda, 106, St. Lawrence, Lawrenceburg, April 28. Mother of Suzanne Luckerman, Kathy Shapiro, Dan, David and Robert Buck. Grandmother of eight. Great-grandmother of 13.

BURGMEIER, Ellen, 88, St. Mary, North Vernon, April 27. Sister of Helena Miles, Peggy Scroggins, Ann Williams and Jay Burgmeier. Aunt of several.

CHUMLEY, Alexa, 75, Most Precious Blood, New Middletown, April 20. Wife of Harold Chumley. Mother of Jodee, Lindsay and Alex Chumley. Sister of Tamera Higgins, Alfred and Leo Clements. Grandmother of four.

GROTE, Patsy, 82, Prince of Peace, Madison, April 25. Mother of Susan Turk and Charles Grote. Grandmother of five. Great-grandmother of one.

HEGARTY, Marie J., 80, Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Indianapolis, Jan. 11. Mother of Bryan, Harold III and John Ducote. Sister of Helen McGee, Patty Osburn and Ann Zaban. Grandmother of 10. Great-grandmother of three.

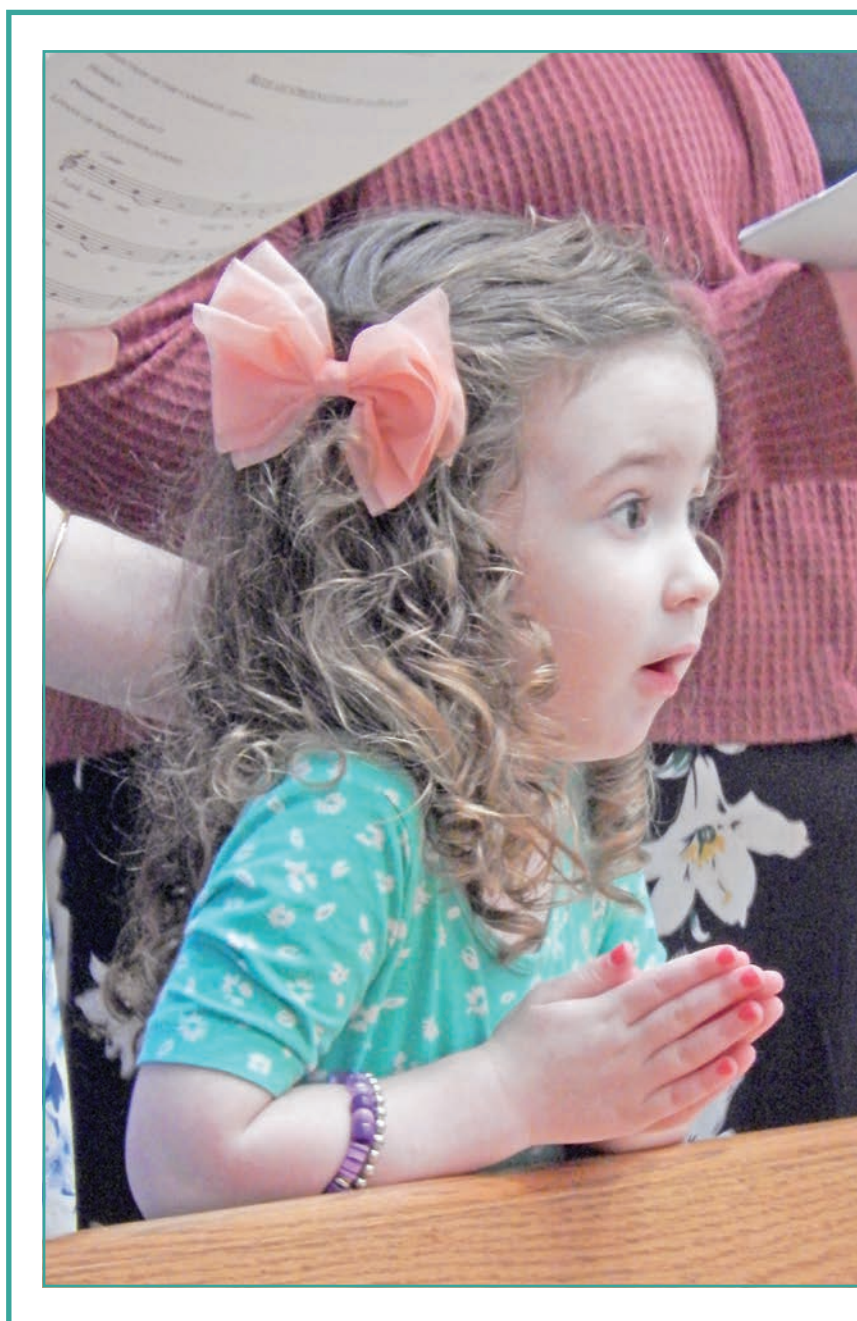
HOLLAND, Harry D., 72, St. Charles Borromeo, Bloomington, April 19. Husband of Diana Holland. Father of Sara Barthelme and Mark Holland. Brother of Joyce Bartley. Grandfather of one.

JACOB, Gary L., 72, St. Simon the Apostle, Indianapolis, April 23. Husband of Karin Jacob. Father of Ashley McCreary and Allison Sundstrom. Brother of Sherry Bluethmann, Diane Dowd, Pam Padgett, Debbie Stamas, Larry and Terry Jacob. Grandfather of two.

JONES, Suzanne B., 87, St. Luke the Evangelist, Indianapolis, April 26. Wife of David Jones. Mother of Kristin Altice, Kerry Popwics, Kimberly Rogers, Kathleen and David Jones, Jr. Grandmother of 13. Great-grandmother of six.

PEAY, Alberta M., 91, St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd County, April 25. Mother of Paula Smith and Terry Peay. Sister of Joyce, Bobby, Donnie, Joe, Kenny and Mike Schindler. Grandmother of four. Great-grandmother of one.

POPE, Leonard, 94, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Richmond, April 24. Husband of Elizabeth Pope. Father of Tamara O'Hara, Julie Roberts, Brad and Don Pope and Kenneth Ritz. Brother of Norma Mosier. Grandfather and great-grandfather of several.



Heartfelt prayer

Three-year-old Bella Becker extends her hands in prayer during an April 27 diaconate ordination Mass at St. Barnabas Church in Indianapolis. She is the niece of transitional deacon Liam Hosty, who was ordained by Archbishop Charles C. Thompson on that day. (Photo by Mike Krokos)

RICHARDS, Craig A., 65, St. Charles Borromeo, Bloomington, April 20. Husband of Jamie Richards. Father of Ellen and Carter Richards. Son of William Richards. Brother of Wendy McCarty and Tracy Richards.

ROSSMAN, Judith A. (DeVore), 77, St. Barnabas, Indianapolis, April 19. Wife of Jack Rossman. Mother of Courtney Shepherd, Russell and Ryan Rossman. Sister of Doug and John DeVore.

SCHAEFER, Helen Z., 99, St. Paul, Tell City, April 27. Mother of Larry and Terry Schaefer. Grandmother of four. Great-grandmother of 10.

STARK, Vanda Lou, 74, St. Mary, Lanesville, April 26.

Wife of David Stark. Mother of Marci Jo Warren and Patrick Stark. Sister of Wanda Dubois, Sondra Joseph, Joyce Randles and Terry Saltz. Grandmother of two. Great-grandmother of one. †

Florida law prohibiting abortion after 6 weeks gestation goes into effect

(OSV News)—A law prohibiting elective abortions after six weeks of pregnancy went into effect on May 1 in Florida, as that state also faces a ballot measure on abortion in November.

In April, the Florida Supreme Court simultaneously upheld that its state Constitution does not protect abortion access while also allowing a proposed amendment seeking to add such protections to that document to qualify for the Sunshine State's November ballot.

Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of SBA Pro-Life America, said in a statement the law is "an enormous victory for women and children, set to protect 50,000 lives a year starting today, while it has already expanded critical support for Florida's life-affirming safety net."



Remembering JDub On Mothers Day with love

JDub's letter to his mom.

Mom, if you are reading this just know nothing was your fault. You were the best mother I could ever asked for and I love you so much. I never understood why any of this had to happen to me, but I am finally at peace with everything and all the pain and suffering is gone. You and dad gave me the best life any kid could have asked for and you guys will never know how thankful I was for everything. Even though I am no longer here, I will always be here in your guys hearts. I had 23 great years of life and wouldn't change a thing. Take care of Maebre and tell her I love her, and tell mamaw and dad I love them too. Don't be sad or hurt, just know I am happy now and in a better place. I'll always love you mom, thank you for everything. - Your son Jdub ❤️

JDub's letter to his family and friends

If you are reading this my fight with cancer has come to an end. I gave it everything I had and never gave up one second, but God had other plans for me. I want to thank everyone who has been there for me through it all. I never knew how many people loved and cared about me, and I will never forget any of you. I am at peace now and all the pain is gone. I love everyone from the bottom of my heart, and I had the best 23 years of life anyone could ask for. One thing I learned through this all is never give up no matter what you are going through, and to go live your life to the fullest, go do those things you've always wanted to do and never hold grudges life is too short. I will see you all again one day, and I'll always be watching over all of you ❤️. -Love Jdub

The Florida high court upheld the state's 15-week ban on abortion on April 1, which also in effect allowed the state to enforce a six-week ban known as the Heartbeat Protection Act, which was signed by Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis in April 2023 and was on pause pending the ruling. The latter went into effect on May 1.

"These and other protections that the people of Florida greatly desire must be preserved from Big Abortion's deceptive amendment to enshrine no-limits abortion in the state constitution," she said.

Vice President Kamala Harris pointed to former President Donald J. Trump, the presumptive Republican presidential nominee, as responsible for the ban. Harris said during May 1 remarks at a campaign stop in Jacksonville that a second Trump administration would lead to "more bans, more suffering, less freedom."

White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre called the ban "extreme" during a May 1 press briefing at the White House.

During his third bid for the White House, Trump has announced that abortion should be left to the states to legislate, to the disappointment of some pro-life groups who sought a commitment from him for a federal 15-week ban.

The "Yes on 4" campaign—a coalition of groups in favor of Florida's upcoming ballot measure—argued the ban is harmful for Floridians.

When DeSantis, a Catholic, signed the bill last year, prior to his failed presidential run, he said he was "proud to support life and family in the state of Florida."

The Catholic Church teaches that all human life is sacred from conception to natural death, opposing direct abortion as an act of violence that takes the life of the unborn child. †

Online Lay Ministry Formation

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

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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

HIGH SCHOOL

continued from page 3

The graduation ceremony will be on May 26 at 1 p.m. at the school.

Numerous students are in contention for valedictorian and salutatorian honors as the school year draws to a close, according to school officials. The announcement of these honorees will be made on May 28.

The archdiocese will be represented at the graduation by Brian Disney, superintendent of Catholic schools.

Father Thomas Scecina Memorial High School in Indianapolis has a graduating class of 91 students.

The Baccalaureate Mass will be on May 23 at 7 p.m. at Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Indianapolis.

The graduation ceremony will be on May 24 at 7 p.m. at the school.

The class valedictorian is **Matthew Hentz**, son of Joe and Cheryl Hentz of St. Michael Parish in Greenfield.

The class salutatorian is **Maxwell Krause**, son of John and Sally Krause of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish.

The archdiocese will be represented at the graduation by Christopher Walsh, chancellor of the archdiocese.

Lumen Christi Catholic High School in Indianapolis has a graduating class of 9 seniors.

The Baccalaureate Mass and graduation ceremony will begin on May 16 at 5:45 p.m. at Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Church in Indianapolis.

Oldenburg Academy of the Immaculate Conception in Oldenburg has a graduating class of 38 seniors.

The graduation ceremony will be on June 2 at 1 p.m. at the Chapel of the Sisters of St. Francis in Oldenburg.

The archdiocese will be represented by Disney during a Senior Mass on May 17 at 1:30 p.m. at the Chapel of the Sisters of St. Francis in Oldenburg.

Three students are currently in contention for valedictorian honors, which will be announced during the senior awards ceremony on May 24. The students are listed in alphabetical order:

Kenlee Martin, daughter of Rodney and Kendra Martin, of Immaculate Conception Parish in Millhousen.

Sadie Wachsmann, daughter of David and Michelle Wachsmann of St. Louis Parish in Batesville.

Kate Weber, daughter of John and Jill Weber of St. Louis Parish in Batesville.

Our Lady of Providence High School in Clarksville has a graduating class of 78 seniors.

The Baccalaureate Mass will be on May 17 at 7 p.m. at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church in New Albany.

The graduation ceremony will be on May 19 at 5 p.m. at the school.

The class valedictorian is **Erin Popson**, the daughter of Todd and Claudia Popson of Holy Family Parish in New Albany.

The class salutatorian is **Nina Kruer**, daughter of Duane and Kyle Kruer of St. John Paul II Parish in Sellersburg.

The archdiocese will be represented at the graduation by Archbishop Charles C. Thompson.

Providence Cristo Rey High School in Indianapolis has a graduating class of 44 seniors.

The Baccalaureate Mass will be on May 30 at 6 p.m. at the school.

The graduation ceremony will be on May 31 at 6:30 p.m. at the school.

The class valedictorian is **Mya Lang-Martinez**, daughter of Maria Martinez-Morales.

The class salutatorian is **Ziraily Rivas Montiel**, daughter of Artemio Rivas and Brenda Montiel of St. Gabriel the Archangel Parish in Indianapolis.

The archdiocese will be represented at the graduation by Joseph Hansen, assistant superintendent of Catholic schools.

Roncalli High School in Indianapolis has a graduating class of 236 seniors.

The Baccalaureate Mass will be on May 24 at 6 p.m. at the school.

The graduation ceremony will be on May 25 at 9 a.m. at the school.

The class valedictorian is **Emily Sering**, daughter of Jill and Joseph Sering of St. Jude Parish in Indianapolis.

The class salutatorian is **Lachlan Borders**, son of Alicia and Jeff Borders of St. Roch Parish in Indianapolis.

The archdiocese will be represented at the graduation by Walsh.

Seton Catholic High School in Richmond has a graduating class of 21 seniors.

The Baccalaureate Mass will be on June 2 at 1:30 p.m. at St. Andrew Church in Richmond.

The graduation ceremony will follow on June 2 at 3 p.m. at St. Andrew Church.


The class valedictorian is **Mary Daoud**, daughter of Jacques and Lina Daoud of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Richmond.

The class salutatorian is **Robert Bagby**, son of John and Julie Bagby of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish.

The archdiocese will be represented at the graduation by Archbishop Thompson. †

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Employment

Maintenance Technician

This full-time, hourly, position is responsible for the maintenance of several buildings.

Duties include:

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- A verifiable background in building maintenance.
- A working knowledge of all building systems and components.
- The ability to evaluate and repair existing equipment.
- The ability to work with contractors, subcontractors, and suppliers.
- An ability to work with the Archdiocesan staff.
- Basic computer skills.
- Good organizational and communication skills.


If you are interested in this position, please send your resume to: dherbertz@archindy.org.

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House is looking for a part-time Groundskeeper to work 24-30 hours per week. This is an on-site, in-person role.

The groundskeeper provides a variety of services indoors and outdoors such as room set-ups, gardening, operation of lawn power equipment, and general maintenance of sidewalks and areas around the building to maintain the safety and appearance of the grounds.

Must have knowledge of lawn care and maintenance, good organization and planning skills, complete mobility in the buildings and grounds: ability to reach, bend, stoop, kneel, and stand for extended periods, and lift up to 50 pounds.

Interested persons should call Georgene Beiriger, Director, at 317-545-7681.



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Employment



Coordinator of Religious Education and Youth Ministry

The Muncie Catholic Pastorate is looking for a candidate to coordinate and oversee Religious Education and Youth Ministry for the Muncie Pastorate. This person will be responsible for the implementation of Religious Education (Grades K-5) and Youth Ministry (Grades 6-12) and overseeing sacramental prep including 1st Reconciliation, 1st Communion, and Confirmation.

For a full job description and requirements, please visit munciecatholic.com/employment. Interested candidates should send resumes to Jason Hart, Director of Evangelization, at jhart@parish.dol-in.org.

ASL Interpreters Needed!

The Disabilities Ministry of the archdiocesan Office of Catechesis is in need of American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters for special Masses and events. ASL interpreters will be paid an hourly stipend.

It is preferred that interpreters be Catholic, but those who have a strong familiarity with the Catholic Mass and other liturgical rites are encouraged to apply. It is also preferred that interpreters have an Indiana Interpreting Certificate, though allowances can be made depending on experience.

For more information, contact Jenny Bryans, Disabilities Ministry Coordinator, at jbryans@archindy.org or 317-236-1448.



Mary's month

Flowers are placed around a crowned statue of Mary on May 5 at St. Monica Church in Indianapolis. May is traditionally a month in which the Church honors the Blessed Virgin Mary. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)

Jesus asks for faithfulness, but also friendship, Pope Francis says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Jesus calls believers not only to be servants of his kingdom, as the prophets and Mary were, but also to be his friends, Pope Francis said.

“Friendship is not the fruit of calculation, nor of compulsion. It is born spontaneously when we recognize something of ourselves in the other,” he said on May 5. “Jesus, in the Bible, tells us that for him we are precisely this: friends, people beloved beyond all merit and expectation, to whom he extends his hand and offers his love, his grace, his word.”

Before leading the “*Regina Coeli*” prayer in St. Peter’s Square, Pope Francis reflected on the day’s Gospel reading from St. John in which Jesus tells the Apostles, “I do not call you servants any longer, but friends” (Jn 15:15).

Jesus does not only want to entrust humanity with his mission of salvation, the pope said, “he wants more, something greater that goes beyond goods and plans themselves; it takes friendship.”

The pope asked people to think about the beauty of friendship that they experience throughout the course of their lives, from sharing toys as children and confiding secrets to one another as teenagers to exchanging joys and worries as adults and recounting memories together as seniors.

“Let us think a moment of our friends and thank the Lord for them,” he said.

In friendship, Jesus “shares what is dearest to him” with humanity, the pope said. “All that he has learned from the Father.”

Jesus is invested in his friendship with humanity “even to the point of making himself fragile for us, of placing himself in our hands, without defense or pretense, because he loves us,” he said. “The Lord loves us; as a friend he wants our good and he wants us to share in his.

“If a friendship is true, it is “so strong that it does not fail even in the face of betrayal,” he said, noting that Jesus calls Judas “friend” even after he had been betrayed.

“A true friend does not abandon you, even when you make mistakes: he corrects you. Perhaps he reproaches you, but he forgives you and does not abandon you,” he said. †

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