



# The Criterion

Serving the Church in Central and Southern Indiana Since 1960



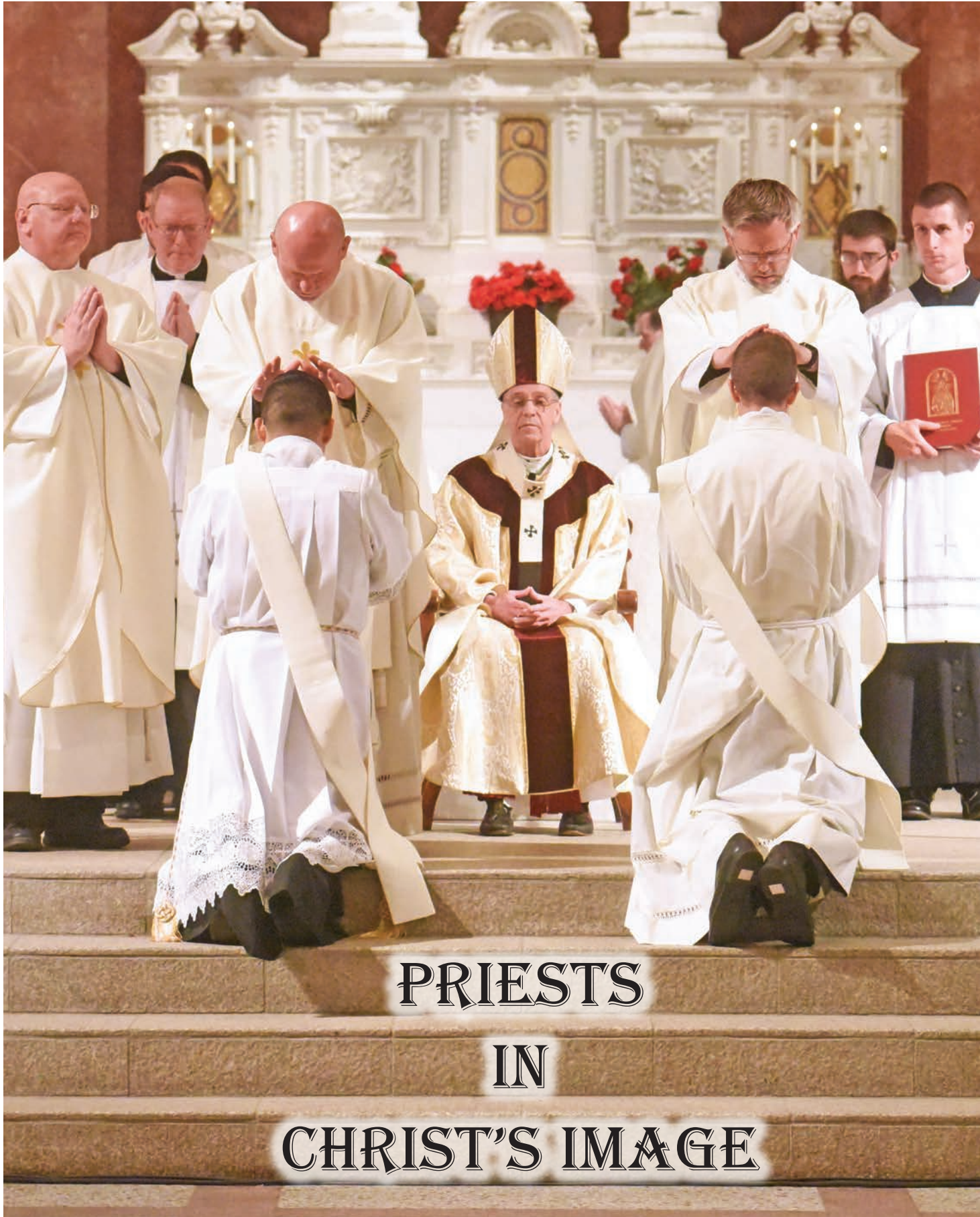
## Joyful Witness

An opportunity to remember and pray for our military, page 12.

CriterionOnline.com

June 9, 2023

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## PRIESTS IN CHRIST'S IMAGE

## Joy overflows in cathedral during ordination of two priests

By Sean Gallagher

Transitional Deacons José Neri and Jack Wright felt butterflies as they processed into SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral on June 3 at the start of the Mass during which they would be ordained priests.

This was the day that they had prepared for and prayed about for many years. It had finally come.

See more photos from the ordination, pages 8-9.

All those nerves disappeared for Deacon Wright, though, as soon as Archbishop Charles

C. Thompson laid hands on his head—the central ordination ritual that goes back to the earliest days of the Church.

“I knew in that moment that it was Jesus’ hands being laid on my head,” said newly ordained Father Wright moments after the ordination Mass. “From that moment, I’ve just felt really good.”

Newly ordained Father Neri likewise felt “excited and happy” after the liturgy.

A turning point for him during the ordination was when Archbishop Thompson used chrism oil to anoint his hands—hands he would use to celebrate the Mass and other sacraments to help the faithful grow in holiness.

“I got really emotional,” Father Neri said. “My hands were being consecrated to serve the people of God. I’ll be doing this for the rest of my life.”

See ORDINATION, page 10

Archdiocesan priests ritually lay hands on transitional Deacons José Neri, left, and Jack Wright while Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, center, looks on during a June 3 priesthood ordination Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis.

(Photo by Sean Gallagher)

## Catholic schools serve as stepping stones to Catholicism for Indianapolis family of four

(Editor’s note: This is the second in a series of articles chronicling the journey of two individuals and two families who were received into the full communion of the Church between Easter 2022 and the Easter Vigil on April 8. A second article appears on page 3 this week.)

By Natalie Hoefler

June and Ramon Toliver were thrilled with St. Lawrence School in Indianapolis. Their sons, Sidney and Justin, were earning high marks, and the non-denominational couple appreciated the faith their boys were

See FAMILY, page 15

The Toliver family smiles in St. Lawrence Church in Indianapolis after being received into the full communion of the Church during the parish’s Easter Vigil Mass on April 8. In the front row are June, left, and Justin. In the back row are Sidney, left, and Ramon. (Submitted photo)







## Praying for the synod

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson leads archdiocesan Catholics in praying the rosary on May 31 in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel of SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. Pope Francis had invited Catholics around the world to pray the rosary on May 31, the feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, for the October meeting at the Vatican of the Synod of Bishops on Synodality. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)



## Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

June 10–29, 2023

**June 10 – 10 a.m.**  
Archdiocesan Pastoral Council meeting at St. Bartholomew Parish, Columbus

**June 12-16**  
U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Spring general meeting in Orlando, Fla.

**June 19-22**  
Priest Convocation at West Baden Springs Hotel, French Lick

**June 26 – 5 p.m.**  
Vespers, Mass and dinner for Bishop Bruté Days at Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary, Indianapolis

**June 27 – 10 a.m.**  
Virtual meeting with Magis Center

**June 28 – 5 p.m.**  
Mass and certification ceremony for Spiritual Direction and Leadership Program at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, Indianapolis

**June 29 – 10 a.m.**  
Leadership Team meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

# Criterion readers embrace the joy of God's abundant blessings

(Editor's note: The Criterion invited our readers to share a favorite Bible verse or a favorite quote that helps remind them of God's presence in their lives and/or helps center them in their relationships with other people. The response has been overwhelming and has come from across the archdiocese. As always, our staff feels blessed by our readers. Here is part eight of the series, the last story featuring the responses we received.)

By John Shaughnessy

Janine Schorsch believes we all have a defining choice about the way we choose to live each day.

"Muddle through the day, one foot in front of the other, waiting for it to be over. Or search for the abundant life of blessings" that God offers us every day, she says.

Schorsch's choice to embrace the joy

of God's abundant blessings flows from her favorite Bible verse, John 10:10, "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."

"God is not stingy," says Schorsch, a member of St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross Parish in Bright. "God wants to bless us with a joy beyond our asking. Life can be difficult. We are often faced with challenging circumstances. It is a very common, human reaction to focus on all that is wrong, leading to depression and hopelessness. But that is not God's plan for me or anyone."

"I begin each day with a gratitude list. Sometimes it is as huge as my brother's scan showing no cancer in his lungs, or as small as seeing a robin."

"With God's guidance, I have always been able to find a blessing. Sometimes it is not apparent until years later, but I know it will be there. I find comfort in God's assurance that his plan for me is good, without exception."

### 'Your every act should be done with love'

The card that arrived from Charles Waltermann came with this quote from 1 Corinthians 16:14, "Your every act should be done with love."

A member of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Richmond, Waltermann also included two other Bible verses that he sees as antidotes to a prevailing human weakness.

"We humans can be so judgmental and harsh on our fellow humans than we can be on ourselves," he says.

His first recommended Bible verse is from Psalm 95:8, "If today you hear God's voice, harden not your hearts."

The second verse he shared is from Matthew 9:13, "Go and learn the meaning of these words, 'It is mercy that I desire, not sacrifice.'"

### A song of comfort

Marilyn Caldwell isn't sure where she first heard the verse, but the member of Mary, Queen of Peace Parish in Danville knows the words always provide a source of comfort for her.

"Now and then when I am discouraged, I sing to myself these words:

"Thank you O my Father  
"For giving us your Son  
"And leaving us your Spirit  
"Until our work on Earth is done."

### 'Our shared goodness, our gracious God'

When Mike Cecil came across what would become his favorite quote, it

also represented a major turning point in his life.

"This quote provided me with an 'aha' moment and fundamentally changed how I view life, religion and my relationship with God," says Cecil, a member of St. Philip Neri Parish in Indianapolis. "The 'gotcha God' of my youth, who seeks only to judge, is replaced with a loving, caring, understanding God."

The quote that created that change for Cecil is from Jesuit Father Teilhard de Chardin: "We are not human beings having a spiritual experience. We are spiritual beings having a human experience."

"As I interact with others, I am able to look beyond the details of their individual stories and to connect with the woundedness that we have in common," Cecil notes. "It is our shared goodness which I have learned to listen for and to celebrate. Our mistakes, our shortcomings, our sins are part of our humanity. They do not diminish our innate goodness or the quality of the spirit that resides within us."

"Our good and gracious God redeems us and reconciles us to our innate worth and goodness. In this, I believe we can find our collective hope and our salvation." †



Mike Cecil



'With God's guidance, I have always been able to find a blessing. Sometimes it is not apparent until years later, but I know it will be there. I find comfort in God's assurance that his plan for me is good, without exception.'

—Janine Schorsch

# Wanted: Your nominations for the archdiocese's annual Legacy Award

Criterion staff report

The list is an impressive one.

Former archdiocesan chancellor and longtime Catholic schools' leader Annette "Mickey" Lentz, the late Msgr. Paul Koetter, longtime St. Monica Parish religious education director Mary Jo Thomas-Day, and the late Deacon Marc Kellams, who served as corrections ministry coordinator for

the archdiocese. All were recognized in recent years by the archdiocese as Legacy Gala award winners.

Do you know a faith-filled individual or couple—like the group listed above—who has established a legacy through their involvement in Catholic ministry? If so, the archdiocesan Office of Stewardship and Development is asking you to nominate them for a chance to be honored at the 2024 Legacy Gala next February.

While the gala is a fundraising celebration of the gifts the archdiocese shares with people across central and southern Indiana—through its 67 schools, its outreach of Catholic Charities agencies and its formation of seminarians at Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary in Indianapolis—it also celebrates contributions that Catholics make to these efforts.

A nomination form can be found at [tinyurl.com/3jztuxsb](http://tinyurl.com/3jztuxsb). The deadline is July 11. †

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NEWS FROM YOU!

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# New Catholic at St. Michael Parish in Charlestown finds ‘purpose in life’

By Natalie Hoefler

Haley Cady was in high school when the COVID-19 global pandemic caused schools to close its doors and move to an online format.

“It wasn’t working out for me,” says Cady, 19. “I didn’t talk to my friends. I left high school, and I just started watching videos online.”

They weren’t just any videos—they were videos about Christianity. Cady, an atheist, felt called to search for meaning in life.

“I looked at [other faiths] a little,” she says. “But once I found out about the Catholic faith, it didn’t make sense to look at others because they weren’t the one Christ founded.”

Her search led her to the Catholic faith and to St. Michael Parish in Charlestown. On April 8, she was welcomed into the full communion of the Church during the Easter Vigil Mass at St. Michael Church.

“I’m a very shy person,” Cady admits.

But God gave her the grace to start her search alone, and the blessing of help along the way.

## ‘I just knew I was home’

Cady says her virtual search did not last long before she found and believed in the Catholic faith.

“Everything about it made sense—it was the first time things made sense,” she says.

But Cady encountered some hurdles in her desire to become Catholic.

“I didn’t know anyone who was Catholic, and I wasn’t sure where to start,” she says. “I just knew this was what I was being called to do, so I would just have to figure it out somehow.”

She went to a Christian church close to her home for a while before she signed up for the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) program at St. Michael.

“Getting there was a challenge because I didn’t have my driver’s license,” says

Cady. She gives credit to her parents who, despite their own lack of belief in God, faithfully drove her daughter to RCIA classes and Mass at the parish.

Cady admits to being nervous at first about worshipping at Mass, “especially the standing and kneeling.”

But, she adds, “I just knew I was home. ... Everyone was just really nice. I didn’t have that at the church by my house.”

One person in particular helped Cady feel at home—St. Michael’s pastoral associate Jessica Sarver, who became Cady’s sponsor.

“The day we first met for coffee, I was expecting Haley to have a lot of questions,” she says. “Instead, she had already found the answers to most of her questions on her own. She knew she wanted to become Catholic and was willing to do whatever was required of her.”

Though it wasn’t required, Cady took Sarver’s suggestion of getting involved in the parish by helping with Sunday school for fourth- and fifth-grade students.

“I have one older brother, so I’ve never been around kids,” she says. “I always wanted a big family, so it was great to be there and help”—a volunteer effort she plans to continue now that she’s obtained her driver’s license.

But Cady also listened to the children’s lessons. There was “a little overlap” with what she was learning in RCIA, she says, “but most of what I heard was new.”

One important lesson she learned through RCIA was a better “understanding of human nature.”

“Why we are the way we are and why the world is how it is, is all the result of the fall,” says Cady. “There’s a reason why we’re here. That opened my eyes to the fact that there’s purpose in life.”

## ‘The rest of my life to learn and grow’

Cady’s desire to become Catholic

was fulfilled during St. Michael’s Easter Vigil Mass on April 8, when she received the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and the Eucharist.

“I was really nervous, but trying not to let that get in the way of understanding what was actually happening,” she says.

What “actually happened” goes much deeper than the physical acts of receiving her sacraments of initiation.

“Becoming Catholic has changed me and how I am, my outlook on life,” she says. “Before I came to the faith, I had a hard time understanding what the purpose of life was, and whether there was any meaning in it.

“After entering into the faith, my whole outlook on the world changed. I’m now able to see the significance life has in a way I hadn’t before. Even more so on the individual level, that everyone was made for something, that they have their own vocation, and that we’re all part of a story bigger than ourselves.”

Cady admits she has “more room to grow in my faith. But with how much I’ve changed, I’m excited to see how much more I can change.”

And she’s excited about how much time she has to continue changing.

“I’m really grateful to start this journey so young,” Cady says. “When I was hearing peoples’ testimonies in RCIA, when they started, they were already married and had kids. It’s nice to start this journey now, so I have the rest of my life



Father Jeyaseelan Sengolraj, administrator of St. Michael Parish in Charlestown, baptizes Haley Cady during the Easter Vigil Mass at St. Michael Church on April 8. (Submitted photos by Jennie Lathem)

to learn and grow.”

In a bulletin piece introducing Cady to the parish prior to Easter weekend, she shared about her journey, including these closing lines:

“Anyone who knows me, knows I’m not the most outgoing of persons. I’m about as shy as a person can be, so this process hasn’t always been the easiest for me, which is why I am so grateful for everyone who has helped me on this journey. I don’t know how I could have done this without them.

“This process has changed me so much, it’s beyond words. It is truly by God’s grace that I am where I am today, and for that I’m eternally grateful.” †

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## Editorial



Life-size statues depict the corporal work of mercy of visiting the imprisoned in the Nativity scene in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican on Dec. 14, 2017. (CNS photo/Junno Arocho Esteves)

# Have we reached out to others, as if they were Christ in disguise?

We just celebrated Pentecost, the birthday of the Church two Sundays ago, and have returned to Ordinary Time on the liturgical calendar.

Like the Apostles at that first Pentecost, we, too, have been commissioned to fulfill the Church's mission of evangelization on the Earth.

The Holy Spirit, which descended on Jesus' disciples, has descended on us and is ready to work through us in our efforts to build up God's kingdom.

To be fair, the Spirit has been with us since our baptism, but Pentecost offers a reminder each year that a caring and loving God has provided us with his power and his very life in the third person of the Trinity.

The question we need to ask ourselves—and others—is: Have we allowed the Spirit to work in and through us?

One way to do this might be to reflect on the corporal works of mercy: Have you fed the hungry? Given drink to the thirsty? Given alms to the poor? Sheltered the homeless? Visited the sick? Visited those in prison? Buried the dead?

As the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) states on its website: "The corporal works of mercy are found in the teachings of Jesus and give us a model for how we should treat all others, as if they were Christ in disguise. They 'are charitable actions by which we help our neighbors in their bodily needs' [*United States Catechism for Adults*]. They respond to the basic needs of humanity as we journey together through this life."

Our reflections could include the spiritual works of mercy as well. Have you instructed the ignorant? Counseled the doubtful? Admonished the sinner? Forgiven injuries? Comforted the sorrowful? Bore wrongs patiently? Prayed for the living and the dead?

The USCCB states: "The spiritual works of mercy have long been a part of the Christian tradition, appearing in the works of theologians and spiritual

writers throughout history. Just as Jesus attended to the spiritual well-being of those he ministered to, these spiritual works of mercy guide us to 'help our neighbor in their spiritual needs' " (*United States Catechism for Adults*).

Our faith instructs us that "love of God and love of neighbor" are the two greatest commandments, and making a commitment to fulfill the corporal and spiritual works of mercy offers a beautiful witness as missionary disciples to do just that. These can also be opportunities to bring light to situations that are enveloped in darkness.

The time after Pentecost should also be a time to follow the Holy Spirit, because everything is on the move—including the Church. That movement should include us as well.

If you've heard Archbishop Charles C. Thompson speak or read any of his writings during his nearly six years as shepherd of the Church in central and southern Indiana, you know he likes to reference Pope Francis and our universal shepherd's wisdom.

One word the archbishop has consistently used as he talks about the mission of the Church, citing the Holy Father, is "accompaniment." We are called to accompany our brothers and sisters on their faith journeys, Archbishop Thompson has said on many occasions, and that implies "movement," he has noted.

As we continue marking Ordinary Time, let us pray it is a Spirit-led time for all of us, a time to allow God's grace to move us and work through us.

As St. Maximilian Kolbe, the saint of Auschwitz, wrote, "My little children, remember, holiness is not a luxury, but a simple duty."

Holy Spirit, guide our lives, and let your wisdom fill our hearts. Pour out your love on us, so we can share it with others.

And in this process, may we be instruments of saving grace to others.

—Mike Krokos

Be Our Guest/Bishop Robert Reed, OSV News

## 'Viaticum': Food for the journey

It took my teacher Sister Lydia probably 90 seconds to tell us the story of St. Tarcisus. It was a moment in time, but



I have never forgotten that story because I was very impressed.

During the third century, Christians had to meet secretly to avoid persecution. A boy named Tarcisus (as a child hearing this, I imagined him

to be my age, perhaps a little older), volunteered to take the holy Eucharist to Christians in prison.

On his way there, he was recognized by a group of friends, who invited Tarcisus to play in their games. Knowing that he was a Christian and curious about

what Tarcisus carried, the gang of boys tried to pry it from the fold of the garment in which he'd been holding it. At some point, the group of boys evolved into an angry mob that overcame Tarcisus, who went down under their blows. He died as he was being carried away, with *viaticum*—food for his journey home—still clutched to his chest.

Through Sister's telling that brief story, this little kid sitting near the back of classroom 1-A learned that belief in Jesus' true presence in the Eucharist goes back to the earliest days of Christianity—and has always been worth defending—and that for God, heroism, holiness and love for the Eucharist has never been exclusively reserved to adults only. Young girls and boys, too, are capable of loving Jesus so much that they would die for him. Age has never been a barrier to holiness.

"*Viaticum*" is a Latin word meaning, literally, "provisions for the journey," and the word itself was more commonly used in connection with the offering of Last Rites—in the sacrament of extreme unction, after the last anointing and prayers for a person dying or in danger of death. The "provisions" given for that final exercise of life are nothing less than the precious body and blood of the Lord Jesus.

The merest crumb of the sacred Host, or the merest drop of the precious blood, contains Christ entire, and this Communion is meant to provide the spiritual sustenance necessary for the

soul's passage to encounter God and receive both his justice and his mercy.

But the truth is, the Eucharist is food for all the days of our lives—sustenance that brings the flesh and blood reality of the incarnate God, the Lord Jesus Christ, into our very veins and sinews for our spiritual, physical and yes, mental well-being.

What a tremendous gift Jesus left for us in this most Blessed Sacrament! How incredibly fortunate are we to know that God is this close to us—that he feeds us with himself, the living bread come down from heaven. When we pass near a tabernacle, and certainly when we receive him at Mass or in a sickbed, we are as close to heaven on Earth as possible. It is the bread of angels we consume, a mystery we grasp only with faith's consent.

*What a tremendous gift Jesus left for us in this most Blessed Sacrament! How incredibly fortunate are we to know that God is this close to us—that he feeds us with himself, the living bread come down from heaven.*

The fathers of the Second Vatican Council taught that the Eucharist is the "source and the summit of the Christian life." In other words, for a life to be truly Christian, Jesus in the Eucharist is meant to be not merely a part of a person's existence but the reality from whom everything in her or his life flows—and the goal toward whom everything in this life moves.

And so, as we make this arduous journey together, we rely on this heavenly food. Can we survive without Jesus on Sunday? How about today?

"Give us this bread always," the crowd said to Jesus. And then he declared, "I am the bread of life ... whoever comes to me will never be hungry; whoever believes in me will never thirst" (Jn 6:34-35).

The holy Eucharist is true food for this challenging road; it is true consolation for the wounds we endure as we persevere. And so "*viaticum*" is a word

worth re-embracing within the practice of our faith, for its potent reminder that, like the young, put-upon Tarcisus, we walk this road with Jesus the Christ.

(Bishop Robert P. Reed is an auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Boston, pastor of St. Patrick/Sacred Heart parishes in Watertown, Mass., and president of the CatholicTV network. He is chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Communications.) †

## 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](mailto:criterion@archindy.org). †



## ARCHBISHOP/ARZOBISPO CHARLES C. THOMPSON



# Christ the Cornerstone

## Let's begin the Eucharistic Revival's parish year with enthusiasm

*"I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world" (Jn 6:51).*

This Sunday, June 11, is the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (*Corpus Christi*).

This feast day is an important moment in the Church's liturgical calendar because it calls our attention to one of the most sacred mysteries of our Catholic faith: the real presence of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. We believe that Jesus Christ, who lived, died and rose from the dead 2,000 years ago, is truly present—body and blood, soul and divinity—in the bread and wine that we receive each time we go to holy Communion.

We call this the "Real Presence" of the Lord because it is so much more than a symbolic remembrance. It's the real thing, the person of Jesus Christ, who is truly present in the sacred bread and wine that are transformed by the prayerful action of a priest who invokes the power of the Holy Spirit during Mass. Christ is present whenever Mass is celebrated, and he gives himself to us in the most intimate way imaginable each time we

receive him in the Eucharist.

*Corpus Christi* celebrates this great mystery. It also provides us with opportunities to share this incomparable truth of our faith with others. The traditional *Corpus Christi* procession, in which the exposed Sacred Host is carried through city streets or the open countryside and culminates in a period of eucharistic adoration, is a great way to spread the good news that Christ is with us here and now and forever!

Last year on *Corpus Christi*, we inaugurated the diocesan phase of the three-year National Eucharistic Revival sponsored by the Catholic bishops of the United States. The year began with a special event on June 19, 2022, featuring two Masses at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, a festival of faith, family and service, and a eucharistic procession through downtown Indianapolis, culminating in a holy hour at St. John the Evangelist Church.

This year, the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of the Lord will inaugurate the parish phase of the National Eucharistic Revival. According to Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis, "This year promises to be the most impactful

phase of this multi-year response to the Holy Spirit. For the Eucharistic Revival to be successful, parishes must fulfill their key role in boldly proclaiming the Gospel. With Pope Francis, we must understand that the parish is not an outdated institution; precisely because it possesses great flexibility, it can assume quite different contours depending on the openness and missionary creativity of the pastor and the community" (*"Evangelii Gaudium,"* #28).

Resources for the participation of parishes in this phase of the National Eucharistic Revival are available at [eucharisticrevivalindy.org](http://eucharisticrevivalindy.org), and every parish in central and southern Indiana has been strongly encouraged to participate in as many ways as possible given their circumstances. We are confident that the parishes of our archdiocese, which have proven to be so dynamic and resourceful in the face of many challenges, including the pandemic, economic crises and widespread social unrest, will rise to this occasion and help make the National Eucharistic Revival a great success here in southern and central Indiana.

Revival of the Catholic community's reverent and enthusiastic participation in the Sunday Eucharist and in devotion to

the Blessed Sacrament is a top priority for the Church in the United States. We are committed to making a positive, hope-filled response to the negative statistics that have been widely publicized about Mass attendance and about many Catholics' failure to understand the Church's teaching about Christ's real presence in the Eucharist.

My prayer is that all of us can join together and participate actively in this special moment in our Church's life. On *Corpus Christi* this year, let's begin the Eucharistic Revival's parish year with great enthusiasm. And let's pray together in the words of Pope Francis:

*"For in the warmth of his presence, our lives change. Without him, everything would truly be gray. Adoring the Body and Blood of Christ, let us ask him with our heart: Lord, give me the daily bread to go forward. Lord, satisfy me with your presence!"*

Christ gives us everything—his body and blood, soul and divinity—each time we receive him in holy Communion. What he asks in return is that we be true missionary disciples who minister to others through the lived experience of the Eucharist.

May the Eucharist give us the strength to serve others as Christ has sacrificed himself for us. †



# Cristo, la piedra angular

## Comencemos con entusiasmo el año parroquial del Renacimiento Eucarístico

*"Yo soy el pan vivo que descendió del cielo. Si alguno come de este pan, vivirá para siempre; y el pan que yo daré es mi carne, la cual daré por la vida del mundo" (Jn 6:51).*

Este domingo 11 de junio celebramos la Solemnidad del Santísimo Cuerpo y la Sangre de Cristo (*Corpus Christi*).

Esta festividad es un momento importante en el calendario litúrgico de la Iglesia porque llama nuestra atención sobre uno de los misterios más sagrados de nuestra fe católica: la presencia real de Nuestro Señor en el Santísimo Sacramento. Creemos que Jesucristo, que vivió, murió y resucitó hace 2,000 años, está realmente presente—en cuerpo y sangre, alma y divinidad—en el pan y el vino que recibimos cada vez que comulgamos, lo que denominamos la "presencia real" del Señor porque es mucho más que un recuerdo simbólico. Es algo real, la persona de Jesucristo, que está verdaderamente presente en el pan y el vino sagrados que se transforman mediante la oración de un sacerdote que invoca el poder del Espíritu Santo durante la misa. Cristo está presente siempre que se celebra la misa, y se entrega a nosotros de la manera más íntima imaginable cada vez que lo recibimos en la Eucaristía.

*Corpus Christi* celebra este gran misterio y nos brinda la oportunidad de compartir con los demás esta verdad incomparable de nuestra fe. La tradicional procesión del *Corpus Christi*, que lleva la hostia sagrada expuesta por las calles de la ciudad o por el campo y culmina con un tiempo de adoración eucarística, es una excelente forma de difundir la buena noticia de que Cristo está con nosotros aquí, ahora y siempre.

El año pasado, el día del *Corpus Christi*, inauguramos la fase diocesana del Renacimiento Eucarístico Nacional, de tres años de duración, patrocinado por los obispos católicos de Estados Unidos. El año comenzó con un evento especial el 19 de junio de 2022, con dos misas en la catedral de San Pedro y San Pablo, un festival de fe, familia y servicio, y una procesión eucarística por el centro de Indianapolis, que culminó con una hora santa en la iglesia de San Juan Evangelista.

Este año, la solemnidad del Santísimo Cuerpo y Sangre del Señor inaugurará la fase parroquial del Renacimiento Eucarístico Nacional. Según el obispo Andrew H. Cozzens, presidente del Comité de Evangelización y Catequesis de la Conferencia Episcopal de Estados Unidos, "este año promete ser la fase de mayor impacto de esta respuesta plurianual al llamado del Espíritu Santo.

Para que el Renacimiento Eucarístico tenga éxito, las parroquias deben desempeñar una función esencial a la hora de proclamar decididamente el Evangelio. Tal como expresa el papa Francisco, debemos comprender que «la parroquia no es una estructura caduca; precisamente porque tiene una gran plasticidad, puede tomar formas muy diversas que requieren la docilidad y la creatividad misionera del Pastor y de la comunidad" (*"Evangelii Gaudium,"* #28).

Los recursos para la participación de las parroquias en esta fase del Renacimiento Eucarístico Nacional están disponibles en [eucharisticrevivalindy.org](http://eucharisticrevivalindy.org), y se ha animado encarecidamente a todas las parroquias del centro y sur de Indiana a participar de todas las formas posibles dadas sus circunstancias. Confiamos en que las parroquias de nuestra Arquidiócesis, que han demostrado ser muy dinámicas e ingeniosas frente a muchos desafíos, como la pandemia, las crisis económicas y el malestar social generalizado, estarán a la altura de las circunstancias y contribuirán a que el Renacimiento Eucarístico Nacional sea un gran éxito aquí, en el centro y el sur de Indiana.

Reavivar la participación reverente y entusiasta de la comunidad católica en la eucaristía dominical y en la devoción al Santísimo Sacramento es

una prioridad absoluta para la Iglesia en Estados Unidos. Nos comprometemos a dar una respuesta positiva y llena de esperanza a las estadísticas negativas que se han difundido ampliamente sobre la asistencia a misa y sobre la incapacidad de muchos católicos para comprender la doctrina de la Iglesia sobre la presencia real de Cristo en la Eucaristía.

Ruego por que todos podamos unirnos y participar activamente en este momento especial de la vida de nuestra Iglesia. Comencemos con gran entusiasmo el año parroquial del Renacimiento Eucarístico en este *Corpus Christi* y elevemos juntos la plegaria del papa Francisco:

*"Porque al calor de su presencia, nuestras vidas cambian. Sin él, todo sería verdaderamente gris. Adorando el Cuerpo y la Sangre de Cristo, pidámosle de corazón: Señor, dame el pan de cada día para seguir adelante, Señor; sácíame con tu presencia."*

Cristo nos lo da todo—su cuerpo y su sangre, su alma y su divinidad—cada vez que lo recibimos en la sagrada comunión; lo que nos pide a cambio es que seamos verdaderos discípulos misioneros que ministren a los demás a través de la experiencia vivida de la eucaristía.

Que la Eucaristía nos dé la fuerza para servir a los demás como Cristo se ha sacrificado por nosotros. †



# Events Calendar

For a list of events for the next four weeks as reported to The Criterion, log on to [www.archindy.org/events](http://www.archindy.org/events).

## June 13

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

## June 14, 28, July 12

McGowan Hall, 1305 N. Delaware St., Indianapolis. **Theology on Tap**, 6-9 p.m., summer speaker series for young adults ages 18-39, free admission. Information: [emastronicola@archindy.org](mailto:emastronicola@archindy.org), 317-592-4006.

## June 15

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

**Registration deadline for Sept. 17-26 Pilgrimage to France, Portugal and Spain**, sponsored by Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish, spiritual director Msgr. Mark Svarczkopf, \$4,499 per person

double room occupancy, does not include lunches or driver/guide tips. Information, registration: 317-414-9063, [vsperka@gmail.com](mailto:vsperka@gmail.com).

## June 16

Northside Events and Social Club, 2100 E. 71st St., Indianapolis. **Catholic Business Exchange**, presenter TBA, 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 June 13. Information, registration: [cutt.ly/CBE-Reg](http://cutt.ly/CBE-Reg).

## June 17

Griffin Bike Park, 10700 Bono Rd., Terre Haute. **Quick Quack 5k Trail Run**, 6:30-7:30 a.m. registration, 8 a.m. 5k race, benefitting Terre Haute Catholic Charities, chip timing, refreshments, register by June 11 for T-shirt; \$30 individual, walk-ups welcome; \$100 families of four to eight members, register by June 16. Information and registration: [cutt.ly/QuickQuack](http://cutt.ly/QuickQuack).

## June 19

**Sr. Thea Bowman Black Catholic Women Monthly Prayer Gathering**, via Zoom,

third Monday of each month, sponsored by archdiocesan Black Catholic Ministry, 7 p.m. Join meeting: [cutt.ly/SrTheaPrayer](http://cutt.ly/SrTheaPrayer), meeting ID: 810 3567 0684 or dial-in at 301-715-8592. Information: Pearllette Springer, [pspringer@archindy.org](mailto:pspringer@archindy.org), 317-236-1474.

## June 21

Calvary Mausoleum Chapel, 435 W. Troy Ave., Indianapolis. **Mass**, 2 p.m. Information: 317-784-4439, [catholiccemeteries.cc](http://catholiccemeteries.cc).

## June 22

Victory Field, 501 W. Maryland St., Indianapolis. **Catholic Night at Victory Field**, 6 p.m. gates open, 7:05 p.m. game start, Indianapolis Indians vs. Columbus Clippers, benefitting St. Vincent de Paul Society of Indianapolis, Thirsty Thursday discount food and drink, \$10 (plus \$2.50 service fee) for SVdP ticket block. Tickets: [fevogn.com/event/Stvincent0622](http://fevogn.com/event/Stvincent0622). Information: 317-924-5769 ext. 238, [dsweeney@svdpindy.org](mailto:dsweeney@svdpindy.org).

## June 23-24

Christ the King Parish,

5884 N. Crittenden Ave., Indianapolis. **Summer Social**, 6 p.m.-midnight, live music, kid's area, food, beer and wine, \$1 admission. Information 317-255-3666.

## June 24

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](mailto:holyroary.prolife@gmail.com).

## June 25

Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, Pump House Studio, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis. **Bluegrass Jam**, 5:30 p.m., free. Information: [franciscansusa.org/bluegrass-jam](mailto:franciscansusa.org/bluegrass-jam).

## June 29

Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, Benedictine Room, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **Catholic Charities Refugee and Immigrant Services Volunteer Information Session**, 10-11 a.m., refreshments provided. Information, registration: [cutt.ly/CCRIS](http://cutt.ly/CCRIS), Laura Sheehan,

[lsheehan@archindy.org](mailto:lsheehan@archindy.org).

## July 5

MCL Cafeteria, 5520 Castleton Corner Lane, Indianapolis. **Solo Seniors**, 5:30 p.m., Catholic, educational, charitable and social singles—separated, widowed or divorced—age 50 and older, new members welcome, also call about regular Friday night dinner events. Information: 317-796-8605.

## July 7

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

Our Lady of the Greenwood Church, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. **First Friday bilingual celebration of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus**, Mass 6 p.m. followed by adoration until 9 p.m., sacrament of reconciliation available. Information: 317-750-7309, [msross1@hotmail.com](mailto:msross1@hotmail.com).

St. John Paul II Church, 2253 St. Joe Road W., Sellersburg. **First Friday Devotion**,

11:45 a.m., litany, consecration to the Sacred Heart, Divine Mercy Chaplet followed by noon Mass. Information: 812-246-2512.

## July 8

St. John Paul II Church, 2253 St. Joe Road W., Sellersburg. **First Saturday Devotion**, 8 a.m., rosary, litany, consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, confessions 8:10-8:30 a.m. followed by 8:30 a.m. Mass. Information: 812-246-2512.

## July 9

Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, Pump House Studio, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis. **Bluegrass Jam**, 5:30 p.m., free. Information: [franciscansusa.org/bluegrass-jam](mailto:franciscansusa.org/bluegrass-jam).

## July 11

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](mailto:Taize.SistersofProvidence.org), 812-535-2952. †

## Retreats and Programs

For a complete list of retreats as reported to The Criterion, log on to [www.archindy.org/retreats](http://www.archindy.org/retreats).

## June 29

Benedict Inn Retreat & Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **Peace and Nature Garden Walk**, 7-8:30 p.m., Benedictine Sister Angela Jarboe presenting, free will contribution. Registration: [benedictinn.org/programs](http://benedictinn.org/programs). Information: [benedictinn@benedictinn.org](mailto:benedictinn@benedictinn.org), 317-788-7581.

## June 30

Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis. **Painting with Padre: Paul Cézanne**, 6-9 p.m., Conventual Father Vincent Petersen facilitator, painting supplies and snacks provided, bring beverage to share, registration required, \$40, limited to 12 participants. Information, registration: [lnkiy.in/4-28-paulczanne](mailto:lnkiy.in/4-28-paulczanne), [retreatcommunications@mountsaintfrancis.org](mailto:retreatcommunications@mountsaintfrancis.org), 812-923-8817.

## July 5

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **Contemplative Prayer**, in

person or via Zoom, 2-3:30 p.m., Franciscan Sister Olga Wittekind presenting, freewill donation. Information, registration: 812-933-6437, [center@oldenburgosf.com](mailto:center@oldenburgosf.com), [oldenburgfranciscancenter.org](http://oldenburgfranciscancenter.org).

## July 7

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **A Day of Quiet Renewal**, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., \$20, \$70 with spiritual direction. Information, registration: 812-933-6437, [center@oldenburgosf.com](mailto:center@oldenburgosf.com), [oldenburgfranciscancenter.org](http://oldenburgfranciscancenter.org).

## July 8

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **The Art of Living with Death**, 9:30-11:30 a.m., psychologist Richard Brendan presenting, \$30, \$45 with CEU. Information, registration: 812-933-6437, [center@oldenburgosf.com](mailto:center@oldenburgosf.com), [oldenburgfranciscancenter.org](http://oldenburgfranciscancenter.org).

## July 10, 17

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

Indianapolis. **"The Chosen" Season 3: Discussion and Dinner Series**, 5:30-8:30 p.m., fifth and sixth of eight Monday sessions (Aug. 7), episode viewing and discussion, \$16 per session, includes dinner, popcorn and refreshments. Registration: [ftm.retreatportal.com/events](http://ftm.retreatportal.com/events), 317-545-7681, [lcoons@archindy.org](mailto:lcoons@archindy.org).

## July 11

Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **Personal Day of Retreat**, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., \$40, includes private room for the day and lunch; spiritual direction available for additional \$30, must be scheduled in advance. Information, registration: [benedictinn.org/programs](http://benedictinn.org/programs), 317-788-7581, [benedictinn@benedictinn.org](mailto:benedictinn@benedictinn.org).

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Divine Wine and Mandala Art**, 5:30-9 p.m. art therapist Kris Scifres presenting, \$45 includes meal and

program. Registration: [ftm.retreatportal.com/events](http://ftm.retreatportal.com/events), 317-545-7681, [lcoons@archindy.org](mailto:lcoons@archindy.org).

## July 13

Mount Saint Francis Center

for Spirituality, Pump House Studio, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis. **New Horizons: Emerging Artists Discussion Panel**, 6 p.m., featuring four local artists in exhibit, gallery hours:

Mon. and Wed. 11 a.m.-2 p.m., Thu. 4-7 p.m., free. Information: [franciscansusa.org/event/new-horizons](http://franciscansusa.org/event/new-horizons). †

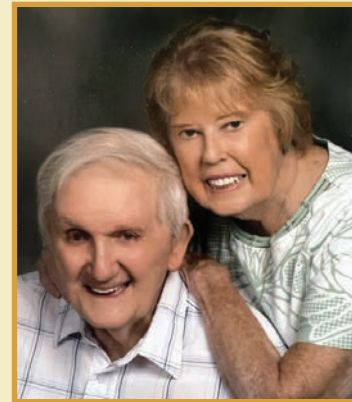
## Wedding Anniversaries

**WILLIAM AND JEAN (KENNARD) WISE**, members of Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ Parish in Indianapolis, celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary on April 18.

The couple was married in St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Church in Indianapolis on April 18, 1953.

They have five children: Anita Himes, Beverly, Cindy, Chris and Dan Wise.

The couple also has six grandchildren and two great grandchildren. †



**DANIEL AND MARIKAY (FELLER) ALLGEIER**, members of St. Louis Parish in Batesville, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on June 16.

The couple was married in St. Louis Church in Batesville on June 16, 1973.

They have two children: Brian and Chad Allgeier.

The couple also has four grandchildren. †



**MIKE AND LINDA (SMITH) O'CONNELL**, members of St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Bloomington, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on May 26.

The couple was married in SS. Peter and Paul Church in Petersburg, Ind. (Evansville Diocese), on May 26, 1973.

They have one child: Sean O'Connell.

The couple also has two grandchildren. †



## June 16-18 retreat in Bloomington will focus on hearts of Jesus and Mary

A "Hearts of Jesus and Mary" retreat will take place at Mother of the Redeemer Retreat Center, 8220 W. State Road 48, in Bloomington, on June 16-18.

Once reserved to privileged souls, devotion to the hearts of Jesus and Mary became a mass phenomenon a few centuries ago, and received fresh impetus in the last century. The consideration of their love for us moves us to respond with love and to make reparation for those who do not.

The retreat will be led by Franciscans of the Immaculate Father John Lawrence Polis. Each day includes retreat sessions and the opportunity for Mass, confession, adoration and time for group and private prayer.

The cost is \$50.70 for those ages 19 and older. Those ages 18 and younger may attend free with a parent. The cost includes Saturday lunch and dinner. Overnight accommodations are available for an additional cost.

For more information or to register, call 812-825-4642, ext. 1. †

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



# ‘Go with all your heart’ theme captures last school Mass and graduation at Holy Cross

By John Shaughnessy

For 126 years, the students, families and staff of Holy Cross Central School in Indianapolis have embraced its impact on their lives and their faith with a combination of pride and love.

And as the last week of the school’s existence started on the morning of May 22, this year’s students and staff showed their love and pride in the messages that were emblazoned on the fluorescent lime T-shirts that they all wore into the school Mass on that day.

The words on the front of the shirt proclaimed, “Wherever you go, go with all your heart,” while the back of the shirt simply stated, “Holy Cross Central, 1897-2023.”

Most endings in life are emotional, deeply touching the heart, and so it is with the impact of the difficult decision to close Holy Cross. Archbishop Charles C. Thompson acknowledged that reality when he came to celebrate that Mass with the school community in the gym where countless children have played sports through the years, where countless families in need have come to get baskets of food for the holidays, and where countless alumni have returned through the years to celebrate their bonds and their memories of a school and a parish that have forever touched their lives.

“As we come together today, there’s a lot of different emotions, a lot of different feelings, and they range from sadness to hurt to anger—all sorts of understandable emotions,” the archbishop said to the students and staff at the beginning of the Mass.

At the same time, Archbishop Thompson noted that the Apostles had experienced similar emotions right before Jesus ascended into heaven, and Jesus had assured them that everything will work out, that he and the Holy Spirit will be with them always—a theme the archbishop continued in his homily.



After celebrating an all-school Mass with the students and staff of Holy Cross Central School in Indianapolis on May 22, Archbishop Charles C. Thompson met and greeted every child and teacher in the school.

“The Spirit will be with us in all the different changes in our lives,” the archbishop assured the students as he walked among them during his homily. “I know you’re each going through changes. Some of you are getting ready to go to high school and other different schools. Wherever you may go, remember what Jesus promised to the Apostles. He promised that he will be with us always. Allow the Spirit to guide us wherever we go.”

Archbishop Thompson also encouraged the students to remember the most important lesson they’ve learned during their time at Holy Cross, beyond the lessons of math, science, language arts and history.

“The most important thing given to you is the forming of your soul, your conscience, to learn about God’s love,” the archbishop said. “He gives us especially the person of Jesus Christ as our brother, as our friend, and more importantly, as our Savior. Carry that with you throughout your lives. Let your relationship with Jesus continue to grow in your lives.

“And those gifts of the Holy Spirit, may they continue to bear more fruit as you go forth, carrying the spirit of all you have gained here at Holy Cross. Like the Apostles, continue to go out and do great things, not in our name but in his name. Wherever you go, keep Christ at the center. I wish you all the best, and be assured of my prayers.”

In the moments immediately following the archbishop’s homily, a burst of heartfelt emotion echoed through the gym as the Holy Cross students loudly and beautifully sang the hymn, “Thy Word”.

*When I feel afraid, think I’ve lost my way, still you’re right beside me. And nothing will I fear as long as you are near. Please be near me to the end.*

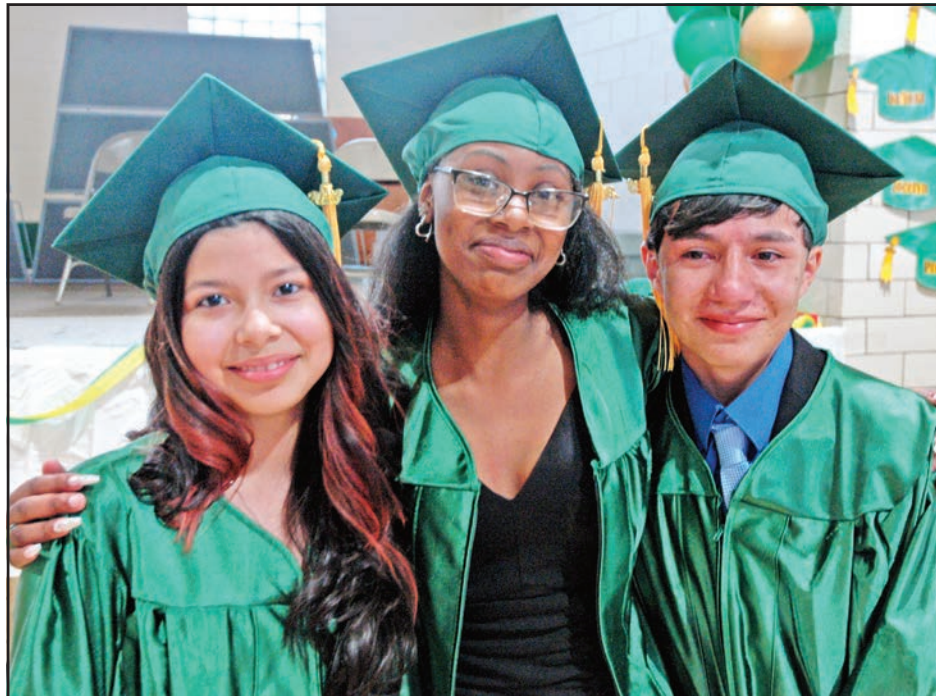
*I will not forget your love for me, and yet my heart forever is wandering. Jesus, be my guide, hold me to your side. And I will love you to the end.*

In these lyrics, there are measures of hope, love, trust and faith amid an uncertain world, measures that have always been part of the legacy of Holy Cross Central School in its 126 years, first for wave after wave of Irish immigrant families and more recently for Hispanic immigrant families.

These measures of hope, love, trust and faith amid an uncertain world carried over into the last eighth-grade graduation at Holy Cross that occurred on the evening of May 24—two days after the Mass with the archbishop.

The graduation ceremony began with the 13 eighth-grade students—in their green caps and gowns and their gold tassels—quietly processing into the gym to the song, “Christ, Be Our Light.”

Soon, co-valedictorians Delilah Rivera and Elkin “Santiago” Vera Lamprea gave speeches in both English and Spanish,



After their graduation ceremony at Holy Cross Central School in Indianapolis on May 24, Ashley Aguilar Perez, left, Ashaundi Copeland and Elkin “Santiago” Vera Lamprea share a moment of togetherness. (Photos by John Shaughnessy)

reflecting the dual cultures and languages that mark the lives of so many Holy Cross students.

And after receiving their diplomas on the gym’s stage that has a huge Celtic cross painted on the main wall, the graduates carried a rose with them as they walked into the rows of seats where their loved ones beamed at them. In 13 touching moments, each graduate gave their rose to someone special in their lives—and soon were enveloped in a bear hug filled with tears, with both youths and adults not wanting to let go of each other.

Moments later, Father Jeffrey Dufresne, pastor of nearby St. Philip Neri Parish, gave the graduates a blessing, telling them that God will be with them always and encouraging them to always seek their true home—heaven.

And before the ceremony ended, principal Cara Swinefurth hit the perfect note for an evening touched with nostalgia, endings, beginnings, joy, tears, uncertainty and lasting love.

“Here is what I know for sure,” she said directly to the graduates. “Home is not a place. It’s a feeling. Home is the feeling of love and friendship and acceptance. It’s continuing to create your art and music and writing. It’s taking care of yourself and those you love. It’s having a practice of prayer and serving others.

“This legacy that has been Holy Cross Central for 126 years goes with you and continues through you. And you are just the young people to do it. We are proud of you. We miss you already. Wherever you go, go with all your heart.”

When the ceremony ended, the hugs, tears and smiles flowed between the graduates and their parents, the graduates and their teachers, and the graduates

themselves—an outpouring of love for Ashley Aguilar Perez, Marcos Arias, Baylie Bertram, Jaiden Brock, Ashaundi Copeland, Dulce DeLeon, Leonel Molina Gomez, Da’iona Nunley-Vasquez, Delilah Rivera, Jocelyn Tapia, Elkin “Santiago” Vera Lamprea, Preston Williams and Micheal Wyatt.

With tears in his eyes, Santiago talked about the impact of his years at Holy Cross—a school that was started 126 years ago by the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods on the foundations of prayer, education and service.

“It’s special here,” said Santiago, one of 11 graduates who will continue their education at Father Thomas Seccina Memorial High School in Indianapolis. “I’ve spent a lot of time here with my friends, my teachers and families. It’s helped me be the best person I can be.”

Standing nearby, Da’iona added, “I’ll miss my friends and my teachers. They made a big difference in my life. They helped me accomplish a lot of things, and they supported me. Being here has meant a lot to me.”

As the 13 graduates of the Holy Cross Class of 2023 left the gym that evening, they did so as part of a remarkable, extended family of people who had found a home in Holy Cross Parish and its school for 126 years—people who embraced that connection of faith and family with deep love and pride.

As the graduates and their families headed home, that love and pride were captured in the huge signs on the windows near the entrance to the school:

“Una Vez Santa Cruz

“Siempre Santa Cruz

“Once Holy Cross

“Always Holy Cross.” †

## Holy Cross families find new homes for their children in nearby Catholic schools

By John Shaughnessy

As Holy Cross Central School in Indianapolis closed on May 26, most of its families have already enrolled their children into nearby Catholic schools for the 2023-24 academic year, according to archdiocesan school leaders.

That transition includes families choosing St. Andrew the Apostle School in Indianapolis. (Those interested in registering their children at the school can call 317-832-4980.)

Holy Cross families have also enrolled their children into Central Catholic School, Our Lady of Lourdes School, St. Philip Neri School and St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) School, according to archdiocesan school leaders.

“We are very appreciative of the surrounding Catholic schools who have made

room in their schools, and enrolled in other services or supports, to help support our Holy Cross students and families’ transition,” said Ronda Swartz, executive director of the archdiocese’s Mother Theodore Catholic Academies, which will include St. Andrew, Central Catholic, Holy Angels and St. Philip Neri schools for the 2023-24 school year.

Swartz also noted that many of the staff members at Holy Cross Central School “will go on to other Catholic schools to teach or work.”

An all-school Mass with Archbishop Charles C. Thompson on May 22 and the eighth-grade graduation ceremony on May 24 were among the last chapters of the storied history of Holy Cross Central School and the former Holy Cross Parish, which was merged into nearby St. Philip Neri Parish in 2014.

According to a letter sent to Holy

Cross families in January, the closing of Holy Cross Central School was a difficult decision made by Father Jeffrey Dufresne, the pastor of St. Philip Neri. The decision was connected to the physical deterioration of Holy Cross Church.

In part, the letter to the Holy Cross families stated, “When Holy Cross Parish was merged into St. Philip Neri Parish in 2014, all Holy Cross assets and liabilities became the assets and liabilities of St. Philip Neri. At that time, St. Philip Neri began to work with community partners to address the future of the Holy Cross Church building; however, a satisfactory solution did not emerge.

“Therefore, after several years of prayer and consultation, Father Jeffrey Dufresne, the pastor of St. Philip Neri, determined that it was in the best interest of the parish to seek a new owner for the

entire Holy Cross Campus. The sale of the property will strengthen the financial position of St. Philip Neri to continue preaching the Gospel and serving the people of the Near Eastside.”

Since January, Holy Cross Central staff and archdiocesan school leaders have strived to help families transition their children to another Catholic school in Indianapolis for the 2023-24 school year.

“Change is not easy, but it is one thing we can be sure of,” Swartz said.

“I was reminded as I attended the final Mass at Holy Cross Central School that change in our lives is inevitable. Archbishop Thompson did a wonderful job recognizing that change is hard and uncomfortable. He did an even better job as our leader of reminding us that Jesus is always with us, in the good times and the bad times.” †



# 'THE JOY OF THE PRIESTHOOD'



Retired Father James Bonke exchanges a sign of peace with newly ordained Father José Neri during a June 3 ordination Mass in SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. Father Jack Wright was also ordained during the Mass. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson ritually lays hands on transitional Deacon Jack Wright during the June 3 ordination Mass. Assisting at the Mass is Father Patrick Beidelman, right, rector of SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral. (Photo by Mike Krokos)



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson preaches a homily during the June 3 ordination Mass in SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis while concelebrating priests and transitional Deacons José Neri, second from right, and Jack Wright listen. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)



Newly ordained Father Jack Wright blesses a family during a reception at the Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center in Indianapolis following the June 3 ordination Mass. (Photo by Mike Krokos)

Transitional Deacons Jack Wright, foreground, and José Neri lay prostrate in prayer during the praying of the Litany of the Saints during the June 3 ordination Mass. (Photo by Mike Krokos)



Father Michael Keucher, second from left, and Father Eric Augenstein ritually lay hands on transitional Deacons José Neri and Jack Wright during the ordination Mass on June 3. Father Keucher is archdiocesan vocations director. Father Augenstein is archdiocesan director of seminarians. Assisting during the Mass is seminarian Isaac Siefker, left. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)



Catholics from across central and southern Indiana kneel in prayer on June 3 in SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis while Archbishop Charles C. Thompson prays the eucharistic prayer during a Mass in which he ordained Father José Neri and Father Jack Wright as priests. They join him at the altar as concelebrants. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson ritually gives a chalice and paten to newly ordained Father José Neri during the ordination Mass on June 3. Assisting at the Mass is seminarian Isaac Siefker, center. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)



Fares Caluseriu, right, strikes timpani drums as Andrew Motyka, director of archdiocesan and cathedral liturgical music, left, leads him, a choir, brass players and other instrumentalists during the June 3 ordination Mass. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)





Transitional Deacon Jack Wright, right, stands with his parents, Dotty and John Wright, on June 3 in SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis at the start of a Mass in which Deacon Wright was ordained a priest. (Photo by Mike Krokos)



Transitional Deacon José Neri, left, stands with his parents, Maria Lopez and Apolinar Neri, and his sister Denidedt Neri, on June 3 in SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis at the start of a Mass in which Deacon Neri was ordained a priest. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

## ORDINATION

continued from page 1

The excitement and joy of these two new priests overflowed also from the hearts of their friends and family, dozens of priests, deacons and religious who serve in the archdiocese and Catholics from across central and southern Indiana who filled the cathedral for the ordination Mass. And Archbishop Thompson, too.

As the last ritual of ordination began—an exchange of the sign of peace of the archbishop and the priests at the Mass with the new priests, now wearing priestly vestments—Archbishop Thompson turned to the congregation and said, “Don’t they look good? I get to be the first to welcome them.”

The congregation responded with spontaneous loud applause that lasted for more than 20 seconds.

### The challenge and joy of the priesthood

In a liturgy that celebrated the priesthood, Archbishop Thompson reflected in his homily on both the glory and the challenge of priestly life and ministry, frequently reminding the transitional deacons seated before him of how the priesthood is rooted in Christ.

The ordination promises of prayer, celibacy and obedience the transitional deacons were about to make, Archbishop Thompson said, “lack any quality of integrity apart from keeping one’s focus on Jesus Christ, the great high priest, good shepherd and healer of souls.”

“Remember, you belong to something greater than yourselves,” Archbishop Thompson said. “Not just this presbyterate. Not just this archdiocese. Not just the universal Church. But always to Christ, always being a priest in his image.”

In being a priest conformed to Christ, Archbishop Thompson called those he was soon to ordain to be “particularly attentive to the vulnerable and those on the margins of society.”

A priest, he said, “must be an instrument of mercy, a bridge-builder and reconciler both within and outside the confessional. He must never forget that he is merely an instrument in leading others to encounter the person of Jesus Christ and one another as the body of Christ.”

Looking up at the transitional deacons, Archbishop Thompson added, “We can never get in the way of that relationship, but always be the one that facilitates that intimacy.”

Later, Archbishop Thompson listed qualities a priest needs to have to meet the challenges of evangelization in the 21st century.

“The priest must be capable of collaboration, dialogue, listening, walking with others, teaching truth with charity, responding rather than reacting and, most importantly, being Christ-centered rather than ego-centered or ideology-driven.

“If this sounds a bit overwhelming, that’s because it is—apart from the grace of holy orders, prayer, humility, ongoing formation, continual conversion and fidelity to the magisterium of the Church.”

After placing such a challenge before the transitional deacons, Archbishop Thompson concluded his homily with gratitude and a prayer.

“We give thanks and praise to God for those before us who courageously and generously respond to the call to the sacred order of ordained priesthood,” he said. “We pray that those men prove to be holy and faithful priests who remain faithful to Jesus Christ, head and body, drawing continued grace from word and sacrament to carry out his mission in service to the people of God.

“In fidelity to Jesus Christ and his Church, may our brothers exude the joy of the priesthood.”

### ‘A wonderful apostle for Jesus’

John and Dotty Wright were filled with joy at their son’s ordination.

“We looked at each other this morning over breakfast and said, ‘You know, when you really think about it, this is the very, very best day of our life,’” recalled John Wright after the ordination Mass. “Barring none. It isn’t even close.”

Dotty Wright spoke of her high hopes for her son.

“He’s a wonderful apostle for Jesus,” she said. “He’ll bring so many souls to Jesus. It doesn’t get any better than that. I think he’s going to make a wonderful priest.”

Jack Wright, Father Wright’s grandfather, did much to guide his grandson back to the faith when he was a young

adult and to nurture in his heart a love of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

At the start of the ordination Mass, he offered a prayer to Mary for his grandson.

“I asked her to pray for Jack, to guide him and help him be a good priest for Jesus,” Jack Wright said. “I know she will.”

Rita Wright, his grandmother, called the ordination “a dream come true.”

“I think he’ll be a wonderful priest,” she said. “He’s just so humble and such a good boy. When they called him Father Jack today, the tears flowed. It was awesome.”

The June 3 ordination was a special one for Father John McCaslin, pastor of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis. It’s the home parish of Father Neri and where Father Wright will serve as parochial vicar starting in July.

“It’s very exciting,” said Father McCaslin. “I’ve known Father José for years as a seminarian. I’m excited and happy for him and for our community to get to celebrate with him.

“I’m looking forward to having Father Jack join us and work in the field together to serve the community at St. Monica.”

Father Todd Goodson was Father Neri’s pastor at St. Monica when the new priest was a high school student. In July, Father Neri will join him in ministry at Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood.

“I’ve watched him over the years,” said Father Goodson of Father Neri. “He’s got a great family who has nurtured him in his faith. It’s been great to watch him go from your average high school kid to a priest who’s ready for ministry and excited to do it.”

Maria Lopez, Father Neri’s mother, was filled with emotion as she spoke about her son after the ordination Mass.

She recalled how when her son was a little boy growing up in Mexico, he would sneak away from home to attend prayer services at their town’s church on Sundays with her mother, Father Neri’s maternal grandmother.

“I didn’t understand [why he did this],” Lopez recalled. “He would do that with my mother from a very young age. ... Now I realize, he was called to the priesthood.”

Her mother watched a livestream of the ordination Mass from her home in Mexico.

“She is praying a lot for him now, that he will be a good priest for our Lord,” Lopez said.

Lopez is adding her prayers for her son.

“We pray that he will be a good priest, that he keep God at the center of his life,” she said, “and that he takes the responsibility that God has given him to save many souls, that many souls are saved through his words and by his example, more than anything.”

Father Neri’s father, Apolinar Neri, said he is praying that his son will be “a good priest, and that God guides him where he has put him. He has been with him since he was young. [I pray that] he moves forward as a good priest with a good parish community.”

Father Neri is looking forward to beginning ministry at Our Lady of the Greenwood.

“I’m excited,” he said. “I’m super happy for my assignment to Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish with Father Todd Goodson. He was the first priest that I approached to talk to about the priesthood. He’s been very supportive.”

For Father Wright and Father Neri, their ordination was the culmination of years of formation, and the doorway to an exciting future.

“It’s exciting,” Father Wright said. “There are so many things in front of us that we haven’t done before.”



Newly ordained Father José Neri, left, and Father Jack Wright pose with Archbishop Charles C. Thompson on June 3 in the rectory of SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis after the Mass in which the two priests were ordained. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

(Editor Mike Krokos contributed to this article. For more photos from the June 3 ordination of Father José Neri and Father Jack Wright, visit [www.CriterionOnline.com](http://www.CriterionOnline.com). For more information about a vocation to the priesthood in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, visit [HearGodsCall.com](http://HearGodsCall.com).) †



# SIMPLY CATHOLIC

## Holy Spirit enlivens the Church through sacred Scripture

By Stephen J. Binz

(OSV News)—The Bible is the “word of the Lord”: an inspired library of narrative, poetry, letters and literature that God has spoken to us, to benefit our lives.

So, why is it that many Catholics encounter Scripture only during the readings at Sunday Mass? Pope Benedict XVI understood the challenge of making the Bible an intimate part of our daily lives, which is why he issued a personal plea to each of us to live more fully and consciously in the word of God, “so that the Bible may not be simply a word from the past, but a living and timely word.”

In his 2010 apostolic exhortation “*Verbum Domini*” (“The Word of the Lord”), Benedict emphasized three things: individual Bible reading, using Scripture in liturgy, and teaching and employing the word in the Church’s expanding mission to the world.

He recognized that looking at the historical nature of salvation in what is called “historical-critical research” is important, but he also stressed that the divine element of Scripture is essential.

Benedict reminded us that we must avoid a split between scientific exegesis and *lectio divina* (a prayerful way of reading Scripture) as well as between the literal and spiritual senses of Scripture, so that we may experience the word of God, living and addressed to each of us in the here and now.

The ancient practice of *lectio divina* consists of establishing a dialogue through reading God’s word and responding to that word in prayer. As St. Augustine said, “When you read the Bible, God speaks to you. When you pray, you speak to God.”

The process involves several movements: A person reads a passage of Scripture, meditates on the words, prays to God in response to them, contemplates God’s gift of a changed heart and finally arrives at some self-giving action.

Origen, one of the earliest masters of *lectio divina*, encouraged people studying the Bible to “search diligently and with unshakable trust in God for the meaning of the divine Scripture, which is hidden in great fullness within.”

Pope Benedict encouraged prayerful Scripture reading for individuals, along with actions that he hoped would deepen their relationship with Jesus. Those actions include having a Bible in every home.

The New American Bible is most often used during Mass in the United States, while the English Standard Version (Catholic Edition) is gaining ground in other countries such as the United Kingdom and India. The Revised Standard Version (Catholic Edition or Second Catholic Edition) and New Jerusalem Bible are also widely used.

Catholic Bibles—from which all other Bibles have emerged—contain certain books that are not in the Protestant canon, so be sure to use a Catholic edition.



Pope Francis gives a Bible to a man in a wheelchair at the end of Mass on Jan. 26, 2020, in St. Peter’s Basilica. The Mass marked the first Sunday of the Word of God, a new annual celebration encouraging Catholics to know and read the Bible. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

Pope Benedict recommended knowledge of biblical personages, events and sayings, including memorization of some key verses. Practicing *lectio divina* exposes us to many verses that can become part of our personal spiritual treasury. Some verses to commit to memory might include: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Mt 22:39); “Whatever you do, do all for the glory of God” (1 Cor 10:31); and “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (Ps 119:105).

Benedict suggested Catholics use Scripture as a source of guidance to problems, a response to our questions, a broadening of our values, and the fulfillment of our aspirations. He also encouraged the whole Church to realize the movements of the Holy Spirit, explaining that the same Spirit who acted in the incarnation of the

Word in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and guided Christ throughout his mission, continues to sustain and guide the Church in both proclamation and action.

This Spirit of truth inspired the authors of sacred Scripture to commit the message of salvation to writing, and this same divine Spirit reveals the fullest meaning of the sacred texts to the Church.

The Bible is the Church’s book, and our faith recognizes it as God’s own communication, rendered through the human words we need. It is written by the people of God for the people of God, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. For this reason, the Church is the primary setting for the interpretation of sacred Scripture.

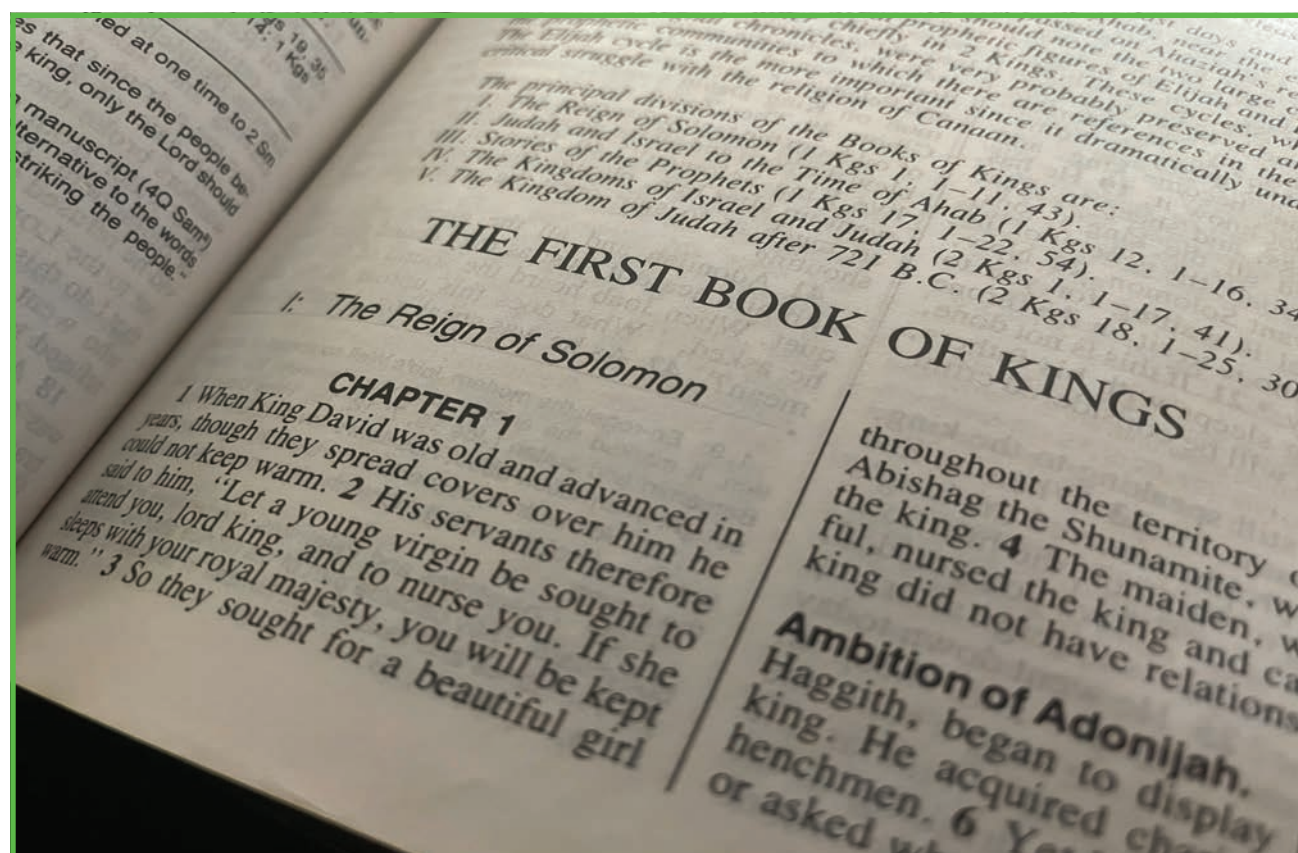
In “*Verbum Domini*,” Pope Benedict encouraged the Church to use the Bible unsparingly, permeating pastoral activity and catechesis with the spirit of sacred Scripture through reading. He encouraged attentive contact with and application of the biblical texts. He also suggested training for catechists and pastoral ministers at institutes for biblical studies and centers of formation, where they can be prepared to understand, live and proclaim the word of God.

Benedict urged that the Bible be given a visible place of honor in churches, even outside of liturgical celebrations.

Pope Benedict also exhorted the Church to recover its missionary nature, reminding us that the word engages us not only as hearers of divine revelation, but also as its heralds. He called for an increase in ecumenical study amid discussion and celebrations of the word of God.

He reminded the Church of Jesus’ prayer to the Father that his disciples might be one, so that the world may believe (Jn 17:21), and promoted the shared listening to Scripture in ecumenical work.

Pope Benedict wrote: “Listening together to the word of God, engaging in biblical *lectio divina*, letting ourselves be struck by the inexhaustible freshness of God’s word which never grows old, overcoming our deafness to those words that do not fit our own opinions or prejudices, listening and studying within the communion of the believers in every age: all these things represent a way of coming to unity in faith as a response to hearing the word of God.”



A Bible is opened to the beginning of the First Book of Kings. In his 2010 apostolic exhortation “*Verbum Domini*” (“The Word of the Lord”), Pope Benedict XVI reminded the faithful that the Holy Spirit enlivens the Church in many ways through the Bible.

(OSV News photo/Megan Marley)

(Stephen J. Binz is a biblical scholar and an award-winning author of more than 60 books.) †



Joyful Witness/Kimberly Pohovey

## An opportunity to remember and pray for our military

It's Memorial Day weekend. Friends are visiting from out of town. We spend a glorious day at the lake house of another friend. We eat, drink and enjoy a three-day weekend. We dutifully and proudly display our American flag every Memorial Day, and I've said a quick prayer after viewing a social media post reminding me of the holiday. But I have to admit, that has been the extent of my observance.

This Memorial Day was a bit different. Not that I did anything earth-shattering, but I certainly gave the holiday more thought and prayer this year.

You see, about three months ago, when visiting friends in Columbus, Ohio, on a lazy Saturday afternoon with no plans, we decided to check out the newly opened National Veterans Memorial and Museum.

As we crept through the displays, I found myself overcome with emotion. I didn't really have any expectations for this museum experience, but I quickly found myself drawn in by the personal connections the curators carefully undertook to tell the stories of these veterans who served in horrific wars. The entire display is told through firsthand accounts and poignant photos of soldiers—from all branches of the military—who bravely defended our country throughout America's history.

My husband and I are both the type who try to read every word of every display when visiting a museum. We live in such a fast-paced, flash-in-the-pan culture where we are shocked or overcome one minute and on to the next funny meme the next. But taking the time to intentionally read each display and connect emotionally with each story, each person who courageously served our country, was a game-changer for me.

My father served in the Army at the close of World War II. My father-in-law served in Korea. Our cousin's husband served in Vietnam. None of them divulged much detail about that time in their lives.

While I've always had a healthy reverence for those who answer the call to duty, I really haven't known anyone who has personally shared what they went through. I have to believe that the majority of Americans, like myself, have no tangible connection to veterans or those currently serving in the military. And because of that lack of connection, it is easy to take for granted the sacrifice these brave men and women—and their families—endure or have endured for the sake of our freedom. That is not just a shame, it's a travesty.

As I wound around the displays, I found I was trailing behind a group of four men. I couldn't help but overhear their conversations, and all of a sudden, I was transported to their firsthand accounts.

I listened as one man said, "Hey, I served with that guy," while pointing to a

photo. Another, when viewing the Vietnam display, bowed his head and seemed to only verbally get out a "man." But his teary eyes spoke volumes. At times, they laughed and punched each other in the arm, recalling funny incidents. At other times, they were completely silent, lost in their thoughts and remembrances; and the air seemed heavy.

At the end of the museum, we came to an art display of paintings, sculptures, drawings and 3D materials all created by veterans using art as a means to cope with their post-traumatic stress disorder. At that display, I finally caught up with the group of veterans. I said I assumed they had served in the military. They answered affirmatively, and I thanked them for their service. They said they were in town for the funeral of a military buddy, and while in Columbus they were eager to check out this museum. They told me it was both amazing and hard, but that they were grateful for a space to remember.

Experiencing the museum through their eyes and conversation was a memory I will treasure. And I think for all the Memorial Day's to come, I will pray extra hard for the safety and well-being of our troops currently serving and thank God for the countless men and women whose sacrifice enable our continued freedom.

(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

## 'Find the heart of the work': wisdom from Tomie dePaola

The U.S. Postal Service just released a stamp that bursts with nostalgia: an homage to the beloved author and



illustrator Tomie dePaola. It depicts his best-known character, Strega Nona, who earned him a Caldecott Medal in 1976, clutching her pasta pot and smiling at her peacock.

The stamp inspired me to sift through my Tomie dePaola collection—his saint books, his condensed histories, his quirky stories and spooky tales. So much of Tomie's Catholic upbringing appears in his richly colored folk art—the nuns and friars, the churches and baptisms—and the depiction of family life often mirrors his own Irish-Italian rituals.

Tomie treated young readers with intelligence, addressing their natural questions about life and death with books like *Nana Upstairs and Nana Downstairs* and the hauntingly beautiful *The Clown of God*.

Painting in his New Hampshire studio in a 200-year-old barn, Tomie worked out his own aging. Books like *Now One Foot, Now the Other* and *Quiet* celebrate a gentler, slower pace. The very titles of some later books capture his philosophy of life: *Angels, Angels Everywhere, Let the Whole Earth Sing Praise* and *Look and Be Grateful*.

Tomie was once asked to offer guidance for creators of children's books. Advice for artists often doubles as advice for living.

His response did not disappoint. "If I look at my early things, it's not there yet," Tomie said. "I'm too full of myself, too full of showing off, showing how well I could crosshatch, for instance. I think that's the progression of a young artist. You show off and then you—or I—suddenly find the heart of the work. I suddenly began to be faithful to the heart: the humor, the pathos, whatever is there."

In the age of Instagram, not showing off can feel countercultural. We view other people's lives as highlight reels filmed at golden hour and put to acoustic music. We are tempted to play along.

All ages are guilty. We show off on playgrounds and in boardrooms. We brag, we fake it, we one-up each other.

Overcoming the desire to show off is a turning point in the spiritual life. It is the beginning. It's a launching pad for all worthy endeavors—be it the development of a craft or a relationship. It enables us to say important things.

"I don't know." "I don't like that." "I'm scared." "I need help." "I was wrong."

We can confess fear and remorse, and we can express delight and affection.

"I'm excited!" "I'm amazed!" "Wow!" "I love you!" "I want to be with you." (My favorite kindergartener says this to me, and it feels like the ultimate compliment.)

There is freedom in reaching this point and also responsibility. We are free to simply embrace what is, rather than force what we want it to be.

But this doesn't come easy. We must pay attention long enough and open our hearts wide enough to recognize the heart of the matter. And then, as Tomie instructs, we must be faithful to it.

What is the heart of your work? What is the crux of your vocation when you step back and consider the big picture?

It's not the to-do list, the meeting agenda, the meal plan. It's not our commitments—that stuffy space between calendar and clock.

Our Works of Charity/David Bethuram

## Structured and unstructured play can benefit children

Summer presents an opportunity for kids to take a break from the increasing demands of the school year. Playing and socializing aren't simply ways to pass the time; they



are valuable tools for learning how to create meaningful relationships, foster communication, acquire new expertise, and ultimately improve self-worth. Camps and community programs, as well as musical and athletic activities offer enriching experiences for kids to attain these essential goals.

Reflecting on our childhood, we likely remember playing with our friends during lunchtime. This could include engaging in a simple game of tag, sporting activities, or even battling imaginary adversaries from our favorite cartoon character. To us, playtime was perceived as a period where we could take a breather from studying. Mental health specialists explain that play is of equivalent importance to our growth as it is to any school-related subject.

Engaging in play is a natural and pleasurable way for children to remain physically active, healthy and content. Allowing children to choose their own play is essential in promoting their physical and mental well-being and teaching them crucial life skills. For these reasons, children need the opportunity for informal play from infancy to adolescence.

Play is essential for a child's healthy growth and development. When children engage in freely chosen play, they have the autonomy to explore their environment, express their creativity, and even problem-solve under their own terms.

Freely chosen play allows them to lead the activity and determine their own course of action, without any directives from adults. This allows them to gain valuable skills such as confidence, self-esteem, resilience, social skills and curiosity, as well as improve their physical fitness, agility, stamina, coordination and balance. As such, freely chosen play is

essential to enhance children's cognitive, physical, social and emotional well-being.

Playing can be an effective way to help children develop their social skills through interactions with others. Through listening, paying attention and exchanging experiences, a child can better learn how to explore and express their feelings, establish self-discipline and gain insight to emotional aspects of life.

Parents and others who care for kids can strengthen their bond with children by engaging in play activities with them. However, it's best for the parent or caregiver to let the child take the lead and follow his or her ideas. It's vital to give children plenty of time to play and grant them the autonomy to decide what they want to do. Too much direction from an adult could be detrimental to the child's enjoyment of their playtime.

Parents should encourage their children from birth to stretch their boundaries and build their skills. Teach them basic skills such as riding a bicycle, swimming and practicing road safety.

Explain that making mistakes is important, that they should try again, and to trust in themselves. Provide them with fun opportunities for play and set limits for their safety. To promote unstructured play, limit the time children spend on digital devices. Create technology-free zones in the home, such as during meals, outdoors, before bed and in bedrooms.

Instead of relying on digital devices to keep children quiet, focus on talking, playing games or reading books together. Model appropriate screen time by limiting your own and talking with your children about their online activity.

As parents and grandparents, we can appreciate the benefits of both unstructured and structured play. Let's cherish our time together and show children how to recognize God's presence in all that we do!

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

Guest Column/Fr. Patrick Briscoe, O.P.

## In honoring anti-Catholic activists, L.A. Dodgers strike out

The Los Angeles Dodgers will be honoring the so-called "Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence" after all. After a back-and-forth that caught national attention, the baseball franchise has ultimately decided to present the Community Hero Award to the LGBTQ activist group at the stadium's Pride Night, to be held on June 16.

For those who are not aware, the

"Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence" are a group of gay men who dress in drag as Catholic religious sisters and who self-describe as "a leading-edge order of queer and trans nuns."

When the Dodgers first announced the honor, Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida, a Catholic, was one of the first public figures to oppose the Dodgers' invitation. In a letter to Major League Baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred, Rubio asked: "Do you believe that the Los Angeles Dodgers are being 'inclusive and welcoming to everyone' by giving an award to a group of gay and transgender

drag performers that intentionally mocks and degrades Christians—and not only Christians, but nuns, who devote their lives to serving others?"

The senator's question hits the ball out of the park. The problem with honoring the "Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence" is that the group, at its core, is founded on a mockery of the Catholic faith. The group's motto—"Go forth and sin some more"—is directly derived from Jesus' words in the Gospel (Jn 8:11), words that echo what practicing Catholics hear said in the confessional.

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See CAPECCHI, page 14



**The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, *Corpus Christi* /**

Msgr. Owen F. Campion

# The Sunday Readings

Sunday, June 11, 2023

- Deuteronomy 8:2-3, 14b-16a
- 1 Corinthians 10:16-17
- John 6:51-58

This weekend, the Church celebrates the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, or as it is traditionally



known by its Latin name, *Corpus Christi*. Feasts in the Church have a dual purpose. They call Catholics to celebrate with faith the person or event recalled by the feast. They also are opportunities for the Church to instruct

the faithful in a point of belief considered particularly important, as drawn from the experience of Jesus or the saint commemorated, or from a doctrine held by the Church.

In this weekend's feast, the Church invites us to join in the celebration of the Eucharist as we participate in the Mass and receive Communion, and the Church instructs us about the Eucharist.

As its first reading, the Church presents a passage from the Book of Deuteronomy. One of the five books of the Torah and heavy with references to the Exodus, Deuteronomy recalls the passage of the Hebrews from Egyptian slavery to the promised land.

Moses, the central figure, speaks in this reading, reminding the people that they owed their survival to God. When they were lost in the barren desert, with no hope for finding food, God gave them manna to eat. God guided them through the wilderness.

For its second reading, the Church gives us a selection from St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians. The synoptic Gospels of St. Matthew, St. Mark and St. Luke record the Last Supper in detail. This reading from First Corinthians also records the institution of the Eucharist.

Parallel accounts among these biblical sources tell us about the Lord's providing the Eucharist, but their similarity and very presence in the New Testament tell us how important the Eucharist was for the first Christians.

St. John's Gospel furnishes the last

reading. It is among the most profound and loveliest passages in the entire Scriptures. In this reading, Jesus declares, "I am the living bread come down from heaven. If anyone eats this bread, he shall live forever; the bread I shall give is my flesh, for the life of the world" (Jn 6:51).

The Lord spoke these words, almost certainly, in Aramaic. They were recorded in the Gospel in Greek. The English version is a further translation. Despite the years and the translations, it is clear that Jesus spoke of the Eucharist as we understand it today. He used no symbolic phrases, no vague suggestions that the Mass merely remembers his self-sacrifice on Calvary. He said, "I am the living bread come down from heaven."

The Eucharist is the flesh and blood of the risen Lord. The link between the Eucharist and the Lord's sacrificial gift of himself on Calvary is clear from the text. The Eucharist is the flesh of Jesus given "for the life of the world."

**Reflection**

For centuries, the Church has called the physical consumption of the eucharistic species as "holy Communion." Of course, it is holy. It is Jesus, the Son of God, and the Savior.

"Communion" is a further, more deeply descriptive term. This term's incorporation of "union" is clear. In receiving the Eucharist, we are united with Jesus. We receive the "body, blood, soul and divinity" of Christ into our very body and soul. It is the most complete of unions.

The first syllable recalls the Latin preposition "cum" or "with." In the Eucharist, we unite with Christ. Catholic piety always has celebrated this fact. We are also united with other believers, with the community of believers, which we know as the Church.

God has given us the Eucharist as manna was God's gift to the Hebrews. We rejoice that, in Communion, we are united with the Lord. Important to remember, we are united with the whole Church and we act as part of the Church. †

## Daily Readings

**Monday, June 12**

2 Corinthians 1:1-7  
Psalm 34:2-9  
Matthew 5:1-12

**Tuesday, June 13**

St. Anthony of Padua, priest and doctor of the Church  
2 Corinthians 1:18-22  
Psalm 119:129-133, 135  
Matthew 5:13-16

**Wednesday, June 14**

2 Corinthians 3:4-11  
Psalm 99:5-9  
Matthew 5:17-19

**Thursday, June 15**

2 Corinthians 3:15-4:1, 3-6  
Psalm 85:9ab, 10, 11-14  
Matthew 5:20-26

**Friday, June 16**

The Most Sacred Heart of Jesus  
Deuteronomy 7:6-11  
Psalm 103:1-4, 8, 10  
1 John 4:7-16  
Matthew 11:25-30

**Saturday, June 17**

The Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary  
2 Corinthians 5:14-21  
Psalm 103:1-4, 8-9, 11-12  
Luke 2:41-51

**Sunday, June 18**

Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time  
Exodus 19:2-6a  
Psalm 100:1-2, 3, 5  
Romans 5:6-11  
Matthew 9:36-10:8

**Question Corner/Jenna Marie Cooper**

### Sacrament of penance can be celebrated outside a confessional

Our parish priest has decided to forego the confessional and now stands at the foot of the altar and makes



us go to confession to him right out in the open, where anyone can see or walk by. I feel very exposed and don't like it. Is this licit? (New York)

Confessions heard "out in the open" are not invalid and can be licit in some circumstances.

One historic case that comes readily to mind is St. Damien of Molokai who, after he contracted leprosy from the people he served, would shout his confessions to a priest on a boat just off shore, to avoid spreading his highly contagious disease. To give a less extraordinary modern-day example, sometimes children's confessions will be heard out of earshot but in full view of their parents as a way of complying with various "safe environment" policies.

However, the Church generally

envisions the sacrament of confession to be celebrated in a more private setting. In the current *Code of Canon Law*, canon 964, 1 tells us that: "The proper place for hearing sacramental confessions is a church or oratory." Canon 964, 3 goes on to specify: "Confessions are not to be heard outside a confessional without a just cause."

In canon law, there is a much lower bar to classify something as a "just cause" than there is for a "grave cause." In colloquial terms, a "just cause" is a reasonable motivation, whereas as a "grave cause" refers to extremely dire circumstances.

It could be that your parish priest sees a just cause for having confessions out in the open, so it might be good to have direct but respectful conversation with him about this practice.

However, canon 964, 2, specifies that conferences of bishops "establish norms regarding the confessional," and that confessionals are required to include "a fixed grate between the penitent and the confessor in an open place so that the faithful who wish to can use them freely."

The norm for confessionals established by U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, approved by the Holy See in 2000, states that they must be "clearly visible, truly accessible" and "provide a fixed grille between the penitent and the confessor." The norm noted that "provision should also be made for penitents who wish to confess face-to-face."

Whatever the case may be for the reason why your pastor has set his policy regarding the sacrament of penance, you are not required to make your own confession out in the open. You can always ask your priest to hear your confession in a more discreet place. And you are always free to seek the sacrament of reconciliation at another parish that makes more regular use of a confessional or perhaps at a local shrine or other Catholic place of prayer where confessions are heard.

We wear white for baptism, and first Communion and we get married in white. Are we supposed to always wear white for all of the sacraments? Does it really matter what we wear? (Florida)

No, white clothing is not strictly required for any sacrament, although in many cases wearing white can be a beautiful and fitting custom.

The only time white clothing is necessary in the context of a sacrament is during the rite of baptism itself, when the newly-baptized is presented with a symbolic white garment with the words: "You have become a new creation and have clothed yourself in Christ. Receive this baptismal garment and bring it unstained to the judgment seat of our Lord Jesus Christ, so that you may have everlasting life."

Even here, it's worth noting that the ritual itself allows for this part to be omitted from the baptismal celebration "if circumstances suggest."

(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](mailto:CatholicQA@osv.com).) †

### My Journey to God

## Let Me

By Lynell Chamberlain

Let me share your love with all the world.  
Let me never bring you shame.  
Let me live my life praising you,  
Not seeking someone to blame,  
For all the woes that come to me  
Are gifts that help me change.

My problems aren't the problem,  
My attitude toward them is.  
For problems show my weaknesses  
And provide the spiritual grist  
To grow in love and enlightenment,  
Not merely to exist.

(Lynell Chamberlain is a member of St. John Paul II Parish in Sellersburg. Photo: The life-size icon of St. Ephrem of Syria, a doctor of the Church, is seen in this undated photo. The icon features stanzas from the liturgy and prayers in Syriac text and notes. He fought the heresies of Gnosticism and Arianism by his writings, including poems and hymns. His feast day is June 9.)

(CNS photo/courtesy of Mothana Butres)





# 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.

**BILLMAN, Edward E.**, 87, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis, March 1. Husband of K. Martin Billman. Father of Kathy Bouchez, Jim and John Billman. Grandfather of eight. Great-grandfather of two.

**BROWN, Robert**, 87, St. John Paul II, Sellersburg, May 10. Husband of Jill Brown. Father of Melissa Leezer and Donnie Brown. Grandfather of four. Great-grandfather of one.

**CALLENDER, Michelle L.**, 53, SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi, Greenwood, April 29. Wife of Michael Callender. Mother of Jacob and Matthew Callender. Daughter of Donna Roser.

**DUNBAR, Betty**, 77, St. Peter, Franklin County, May 21. Wife of Melvin Dunbar. Mother of Bethany Hartman, Melanie Lindsey, Michael and Nicholas Dunbar. Sister of Bertie Bauman, Cindy Ross, Connie Wintz, Butch, Gary and Mark Knecht. Grandmother of eight. Great-grandmother of 11.

**GARAB, Joyce**, 70, St. Joseph, Corydon, May 14. Mother of Jenny Faith and Alex Bradley. Sister of Joan Will. Grandmother of two.

**GOSS, Frederick**, 80, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Richmond, May 19. Father of Doug, Gregg, Mark and Rick Goss. Brother of Sheila Aheila Atkins, Charlotte Miller and John Goss. Grandfather of nine. Great-grandfather of three.

**HASSING, Yoko M.**, 82, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis, March 5. Mother of Amy Pankoe and Andy Hassing. Grandmother of two.

**KLASERNER, Alice C.**, 86, All Saints Parish, Dearborn County, May 19. Mother of Anne Menkedick, David, John and Steve Klaserner. Sister of Kathleen Moster, Mary Ann Spialek, Bob, Precious Blood Father Jim and Tom Gaynor.

Grandmother of nine. Great-grandmother of 10.

**NAGLE, Janet T.**, 90, St. Pius X, Indianapolis, May 18. Mother of Christy Brown, Joni Nagle and Angie Sams. Grandmother of four.

**PATTON, Ann (Furst)**, 94, St. Vincent de Paul, Bedford, May 6. Mother of Katherine Fisher, Elizabeth Gilmore and Thomas Patton. Grandmother of eight. Great-grandmother of three.

**REICHERT, Cathy A.**, 70, SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi, Greenwood, April 19. Wife of Steve Casse. Stepmother of Blake, Dustin and Josh Casse. Stepdaughter of Louis Reichert. Sister of Debbie Kubik.

**RICHART, William L.**, 92, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany, May 15. Uncle and great-uncle of several.

**ROUGEAU, Adelle**, 94, St. Jude, Indianapolis, May 9.

Mother of Lynn Barker, Cindy Connor, Cherie Hussion and Russel Rougeau. Sister of Jeanne Beschta. Grandmother of nine. Great-grandmother of four.

**STILES, Max**, 69, St. Vincent de Paul, Bedford, May 18. Husband of Gayle Stiles. Father of Traci, Kyle and Trent Miller. Brother of Steve Stiles. Grandfather of one. †

## A Sunday in the country



Bales of hay sit on May 28 in a field in rural Decatur County. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

## BRISCOE

continued from page 12

Other Catholics took to the public square, and the Dodgers rescinded the invitation.

But then pressure mounted from the other side. Publications like *Rolling Stone* churned out articles with titles like, “Conservatives Bully L.A. Dodgers Into Dropping Charity Drag Group from Pride Night.” But for Catholics,

this is a matter of the integrity of our faith. How dare the Dodgers consent to this kind of bigotry that demeans the contributions Catholic sisters have made to our society!

While members of the “Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence” may well have performed laudable charitable work—namely, caring for AIDS patients at the height of the outbreak—that service is inextricable from the fundamentally anti-Catholic character of the group, which was founded on Easter Sunday 1979.

Caving to pressure from the LGBTQ lobby, the Dodgers decided to reinvite the “Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence.” In reissuing the invitation to the group, the Dodgers apologized to the “Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence” and members of the LGBTQ community. But what about Catholics? What about our sisters?

The Dodgers’ decision is a political one—one that calculates it is easier to offend Catholics and mock the

Catholic Church rather than to oppose the LGBTQ lobby in California. This group didn’t have to be honored. But clearly leaders in the Dodgers organization decided to make a statement by celebrating these men.

By deciding to reinvite the activist group, the Dodgers might win a peaceful moment from the LGBTQ lobby, but many others lose. The public loses, for reducing questions about human sexuality to the frivolity and shallow displays of men in drag. Christians lose, because the unseemly parody of faith impacts anyone who actually believes. Catholics lose, because once again our faith is openly mocked in the public square. But the biggest losers are women religious, whose noble example of self-sacrifice and service is grotesquely caricatured by this group and its members.

Countless women religious have dedicated their lives to public service in the United States. They built hospitals and schools and orphanages. They have taught and nursed the most vulnerable in our country for centuries. That legacy should be cherished, not thrown beneath the feet of jeering crowds at a Pride Night publicity stunt. It is offensive and divisive. And the Dodgers should be ashamed of themselves.

(Dominican Father Patrick Briscoe is editor of *Our Sunday Visitor*. Follow him on Twitter @PatrickMaryOP.) †

## CAPECCHI

continued from page 12

It’s none of the day-to-day shuffle. It’s how we make people feel.

It’s how we spend our precious time, how often we laugh and pray and play, whether we notice the sunset and the birdsong and utter “how great Thou art.”

It’s not what we do, but why we do it and who we are—our identity rooted in Christ, his beloved sons and daughters.

Find the heart and cling to it. Everything else will fall into place.

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

*St. Catherine of Siena*

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P.O. Box 1410, Indianapolis, IN 46206-1410

**317-236-1548 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1548**  
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# FAMILY

continued from page 1

learning—in religion classes, at school Masses and through athletics.

But the couple was learning, too.

“As a mom, you have those questions after school—how was school today, what did you learn?” says June. “They’d talk about what they learned about the faith.

“We’ve gone to a lot of school events, and that in and of itself is evangelism, I think. We came to understand the Catholic faith through their experience. That and the school ministry reaching out to families and homes—that’s how it happened to us.”

“It” was a call for the family to become Catholic. During the Easter Vigil Mass on April 8 at St. Lawrence Church in Indianapolis, June, Ramon, Sidney and Justin Toliver were welcomed into the full communion of the Church as they were baptized, confirmed and received their first Eucharist.

But there were other incidents June experienced throughout her life that pointed her—and by extension, her family—to the faith. The call first came to her in the sixth grade on a stage during a school play.

## ‘It just drew us into the Catholic faith’

Around the age of 13, June played a nun in a grade school production of *The Sound of Music*.

“That’s where my curiosity about the Catholic faith started,” says June, who was raised in the Church of God. “I decided I wanted to become a nun.

“I started watching EWTN [Eternal Word Television Network] and Mother Angelica. My mom saw my interest, so she bought me my first rosary. She had wanted to be Catholic, but her parents wouldn’t let her, so she allowed me to explore Catholicism.”

Years later, Ron Klene, June’s Catholic co-worker, recommended she switch her oldest son, Aaron, from a public middle school to a Catholic school.

“So, Aaron was enrolled in St. Matthew [the Apostle School in Indianapolis], and that was the beginning of our journey,” says June.

She recalls a moment driving Aaron home from St. Matthew and asking about his day.

“We had a visitor today,” he told her. “It was a priest, and he told us something really important. He said our first vocation is to serve Christ.”

“I’ve never forgotten that, that he was impacted like that at a young age,” says June. Aaron went on to graduate from Cathedral High School in Indianapolis and now has a family of his own.

The Tolivers later sent Sidney and Justin to St. Lawrence School, close to where June’s father lived.

When her father died, it was her friend Klene who took her to “my real first Mass” at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis.

“I got a blessing from the priest,” she says. “After Mass, Ron took me to a side [niche] and prayed to Mary on behalf of my father.

“That was kind of like the moment that I really committed in my heart that I would eventually join the Catholic faith.”

As the couple attended school functions, Masses and volunteer opportunities at St. Lawrence, “It just drew us into the Catholic faith,” says Ramon, who was raised Methodist.

“And then we had a major event that happened with June.”

## ‘God was great—he got us through it’

In 2020, in the midst of the global pandemic and in

the midst of working on a doctoral degree in education leadership at Ball State University in Muncie, Ind., June was diagnosed with a brain tumor.

“You could see the bump on my head from it,” she says.

An MRI showed the tumor to be “the size of a grapefruit” and situated in a particularly sensitive area involving veins that supplied blood to the heart.

“They told her there was a 50-50 chance of success [with a proposed surgery],” Ramon says. “The doctors had to go to a board to even do the surgery,” Ramon says.

The operation lasted eight hours. It was a success—the tumor was completely removed, and follow-up MRIs continue to have shown no signs of more tumors.

“Nothing ever stopped,” Ramon recalls. “She had her surgery, came back home and continued working on her doctorate.” June now teaches for the online Indiana Connections Career Academy while completing her dissertation.

That’s not to say dealing with the tumor was easy.

“There have been side effects,” Ramon admits. “She’s got some hearing problems, and in some ways she’s still recovering.

“It’s just been a slow process. The whole family went through that whole process. We were all affected by that [ordeal]. But God was great—he got us through it. And we had really good support at St. Lawrence.”

With school being online at the time due to the COVID-19 pandemic, June says the school’s teachers reached out with care and concern for Justin, who is now 13. And 17-year-old Sidney—who was then a freshman at Father Thomas Scecina Memorial High School in Indianapolis—speaks of the messages of support and prayers he received on social media from his classmates and friends.

June says she felt the effects of the many prayers.

“I was in so much pain after the surgery,” she recalls. “But something inside me—I just felt the presence of the Lord, like I do now when I [receive] Communion. I felt Christ with me during that journey.

“And so after I came out of that experience, I just wanted to make sure that I fulfilled that lifelong dream of becoming Catholic.”

## ‘The best water I ever felt’

While cheering on Justin at St. Lawrence football, basketball and soccer games, June befriended Megan Smith. She shared with Smith her desire to become Catholic, and Smith told June about the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) program at St. Lawrence.

“A lot of the questions that I had throughout my lifetime coming from a Protestant faith were answered through the RCIA process,” says June. “I just felt at home.”

The RCIA process also impressed Ramon.

“You go there and they just meet you where you are,” he says. “And it’s not just [someone] telling you things and that’s that. It’s about teaching you things about God and the Church, and there is Scripture and readings and other things you can learn from.”

That learning culminated in the Easter Vigil Mass, when the Tolivers received the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and the Eucharist.

“It was definitely an awakening,” says Ramon about receiving the sacraments. “I just felt brand new.”

Before turning 50, he says, he thought “this ride” called life “would never end.” But after hitting that 50 mark, he realized the ride “would one day come to a stop.

“After the Easter Vigil and being baptized and knowing now I have a place I can go when my ride ends, it makes life totally different.”

Baptism left an impression on Sidney and Justin as well.



Sidney Toliver receives the sacrament of confirmation from Father Vincent Gillmore, administrator of St. Lawrence Parish in Indianapolis, in St. Lawrence Church during the parish’s Easter Vigil Mass on April 8. In the front row are Sidney’s parents Ramon, left, and June Toliver. In the back row is June’s sponsor Megan Smith, left, Sidney’s sponsor St. Lawrence School principal Andy Maxson, and, partially obscured, St. Lawrence School social studies teacher Mary Grace Raciti, sponsor of Justin Toliver, partially obscured by Father Gillmore. (Submitted photo)

“After I was baptized, I felt clean, like whatever sins that I had were gone,” says Sidney, an incoming senior at Scecina and a member of the school’s varsity football team. Justin agrees.

“That was probably the best water I ever felt,” says the soon-to-be eighth-grader.

He chose St. Peter as his confirmation saint because “he wasn’t perfect, but he really loved Jesus. I just want to love Jesus like he did.”

Sidney chose St. Joseph, as did Ramon, who calls the saint “very patient. He really dealt with a lot, you know, and being a dad is tough.”

St. Therese of Lisieux’s “little way” called to June—“her ministry of being able to make a big impact by being small, by being little, and how we rely heavily on Christ to do all our work.”

## ‘It was just amazing’

June sees her and her family becoming Catholic as proof that “God can move in small ways to make great things happen.”

For her, the first move was her co-worker friend, Klene, suggesting sending her oldest son to Catholic school.

“I felt Ron there with me at the [Easter Vigil] Mass,” she says of her friend, who is now deceased. “I knew he would have been so happy.”

Then there were the small, accumulated experiences through St. Lawrence School—school functions, volunteer opportunities, athletic events, school Masses.

Those little experiences led to great relationships with coaches, parents and teachers.

In fact, it was Justin’s social studies teacher who served as his sponsor. And St. Lawrence principal Andy Maxson, who had been Sidney’s social studies teacher at the school, became his former student’s sponsor.

As for June, she chose Smith, her fellow St. Lawrence sports-mom and friend, as her sponsor. Ramon also found his sponsor through St. Lawrence athletics.

“Greg [Stephens] has been coaching there for years. That’s how I met him, by coaching, and we just bonded from there,” says Ramon, who coaches fourth- and sixth-grade boys basketball for the school.

“It was like the school family and the church family became part of our family,” says June. “It was really beautiful.

“This is a really, really special church. Very special. We love that we’re a part of this community. I wish everyone could have the experience we had becoming Catholic—it was just amazing.” †

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# Pope prays for Indian train crash victims during *Angelus*

BALASORE, India (OSV News)—Government authorities on June 4 were working to get rail services back in operation in the district of Balasore after the deadliest train crash in India in decades killed 275 people and injured at least 1,000 on June 2.

Investigators said the crash involving three trains may have been caused by signaling failure.

At the Vatican, Pope Francis during his Sunday *Angelus* remembered the victims of the crash. “May our heavenly Father receive the souls of the deceased into his kingdom,” he said, echoing a papal telegram sent to the apostolic nuncio of India. The pope on June 4 also assured the injured he is close to them and their families.

CNN and other news outlets reported on June 4 that the death toll was lowered to at least 275, after officials found that some victims had been counted twice during the chaos that followed the crash. The number of injured was reported variously as about 900, more than 900 and at least 1,000. Two days after the crash, news outlets were consistently reporting at least 1,000 injured. By June 4, rescue efforts had ended and the derailed cars had been removed from the tracks.

The crash occurred in Odisha state in eastern India about 137 miles southwest of Kolkata, the home of St. Teresa and her Missionaries of Charity. Kolkata is in the neighboring state of West Bengal.

The Associated Press reported that chaotic scenes erupted at night after the derailment around 7 p.m. local time on June 2. According to the BBC, citing Indian officials, several carriages from the Shalimar-Chennai Coromandel Express derailed in Balasore district, hitting a stationary goods train. Several of its coaches ended up on the opposite track. Then the third train—Howrah Superfast

Express traveling from Yesvantpur to Howrah—hit the overturned carriages.

Father Lijo George, social work director of the Balasore Diocese in Odisha state, was coordinating the Catholic Church’s voluntary work at the accident site, with priests, religious sisters and lay Church volunteers helping the wounded.

The priest told UCA News on June 3 that for some time after the accident he saw that “many trapped in the mangled compartments of the crashed trains [had] yet to be brought out.”

“By 10 p.m. [on June 2] we were able to rescue the survivors. After that, it was about picking up dead bodies,” Sudhanshu Sarangi, director of Odisha state’s fire and emergency department, told AP. “This is very, very tragic. I have never seen anything like this in my career.”

In a June 3 telegram, Pope Francis said he was “deeply saddened to learn of the immense loss of life caused by the train crash,” and assured “all affected by this tragedy of his spiritual closeness.”

The pope entrusted the souls of the deceased “to the loving mercy of the Almighty,” and sent his “heartfelt condolences to those who mourn their loss.” He offered prayers “for the many injured and for the efforts of the emergency service personnel,” invoking upon everyone “the divine gifts of courage and consolation.”

A man named Suryaveer told the BBC his mother and my grandmother were on the train, going to the city to buy medicine. He found his grandmother alive, but his mother died in the crash.

Father George told UCA News that the bodies of the deceased were taken to a school “and another building close to Balasore district hospital where hundreds injured are undergoing treatment.”

“Our priests and nuns along with Church volunteers are helping the



A drone view shows derailed coaches after three passenger trains collided in Balasore district in the eastern state of Odisha, India, on June 3. At least 275 people died, and at least 1,000 others were injured. (OSV News photo/Reuters)

wounded passengers in the hospital to contact their family members and relatives,” the priest said.

The Church volunteers also were arranging food, clothing, masks, gloves and other assistance to the rescue teams and medical teams working in the hospital with limited space, he said.

“Doctors and other paramedical teams from nearby areas have already reached the hospital and are providing treatment to the injured passengers and surgeries are also going on for those in need,” the priest said.

“The people are kept in hospital corridors and other places in the hospital campus following shortage of beds, but everyone is taken care of,” Father George added.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a message said he was “distressed by the train accident in Odisha. In this hour of grief, my thoughts are with the bereaved families. May the injured recover soon.”

CNN and other news outlets quoted Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw as saying the accident had occurred “due to a change in electronic interlocking” and that an investigation would show “who was responsible for that mistake.”

The Catholic bishops’ conference of India in a statement offered “prayers and sympathies on the sad demise of so many people” and wished for quick recovery of the injured.

The bishops also called on the government “to find out the cause of such a huge mishap and to take steps to see that in future such massive tragedies are avoided.”

India is the world’s most populous country with 1.42 billion people. It has the largest train network under one management in the world. Despite government efforts to improve rail safety, several hundred accidents occur every year on India’s railways. †

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