



The

# Criterion

Serving the Church in Central and Southern Indiana Since 1960



## Indiana Catholic Conference

Resource helps guide Catholics on medical, end-of-life decisions, page 7.

CriterionOnline.com

December 1, 2023

Vol. LXIV, No. 9 75¢



Mary and Joe Abella and Felix and Viviane Minza and their five daughters have bonded in a special way as members of St. Jude Parish in Indianapolis. (Photo courtesy of Jen Buechler of 21 DreamS Photography)

## A mother's desperate prayer, an offer of help and a child's birth bond two families

By John Shaughnessy

It's a timeless challenge for all of us. The challenge especially comes to life during the Advent and Christmas seasons in these words: "Each of us is an innkeeper who decides if there is room for Jesus." That challenge sets the stage for a heartwarming story involving two groups of strangers who connected in a church in the archdiocese. As the mother of four girls—all under the age of 10 at the time—and pregnant with her fifth child, Viviane Minza

knew the moment was rushing toward her when she would desperately need help. So just as she has always done during times of great concern and immense joy in her life, she knelt and prayed to God to be there for her and the people she loves. She had prayed to God when she and her husband Felix were married in 2009 in their homeland of West Africa. She had prayed to him when they started a new life together in the United States in 2012. She had also prayed to God when she vowed to name all their children after the Blessed Virgin Mary, as a way of

See MOTHER, page 9

## Bishop Rhoades sees providence at work in Eucharist, synodality coming together

By Sean Gallagher

Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend in northern Indiana was the only person from the Hoosier state to take part in the meeting of the Synod of Bishops on synodality held on Oct. 4-29 at the Vatican.



Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades

While parishes and dioceses around the world helped to prepare for this synod meeting, the Church in the U.S. launched its three-year National

Eucharistic Revival and began planning for the National Eucharistic Congress to be held on July 17-21 next year in Indianapolis.

In an interview with *The Criterion*, Bishop Rhoades reflected on the providential nature of the universal Church's consideration of synodality happening at the same time as the Church in the U.S. began its focus on the Eucharist.

He also spoke about the synod's completion of its exploration of synodality when it meets next October, expressing his hope that its documents will focus more on the Eucharist and will give greater emphasis to the teaching charism of those in ordained ministry and especially bishops.

The following interview is edited for clarity and content.

**Q. How might Catholics in Indiana understand the eucharistic revival and synodality in light of each other? How, on the one hand, might synodality help Catholics grow in their love for the Eucharist? And how, on the other hand,**

See RHOADES, page 8

## 'Children don't have skills or tools' to cope with mental health issues alone

(Editor's note: This is the third in an occasional series of articles addressing mental health, including the role of faith in seeking wholeness. Future topics will include marriage and family, addictions and the role of spiritual direction.)

By Natalie Hoefler

When I was quite young, perhaps 4 or 5 years old, there was a time when I visited a woman named Mrs. Shaw at my pediatrician's office. She wasn't a typical doctor. Instead, her office was warm and cozy. We'd sit on the floor and play games or sit at a table and color. What I didn't know at the time was that Mrs. Shaw was a children's counselor. I was having trouble sleeping because of nightmares. My parents couldn't figure out why, and I didn't have the ability at that age to verbalize my emotions.

My mom tells me Mrs. Shaw used the playtime to ask me questions to help me talk about my feelings. She must have been good—all I remember was having fun, and later the nightmares stopped.

Not every child who has nightmares needs to see a counselor. But children can struggle with real mental health issues.

Their stage of mental development, however, provides different challenges, since their minds have not developed the skills to process and verbalize emotions.

On the other hand, they take faith at face value, says licensed mental health counselor associate Dana Padilla, a member of

See CHILDREN, page 8

**Mental Health and Wholeness**  
*mind~body~spirit*





Archbishop Charles C. Thompson shares a smile and a hug with his father Charles C. Thompson, Sr., as family members presented the Eucharistic gifts to the archbishop during his installation Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis on July 28, 2017. (Criterion file photo by Natalie Hoefler)

## Charles C. Thompson, Sr.—the father of Archbishop Thompson—dies at 83

Criterion staff report

Charles Coleman Thompson, Sr., the father of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, died on Nov. 24. He was 83.



Charles C. Thompson, Sr.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Nov. 27 at St. Francis Xavier Church in Mount Washington, Ky. Burial was in St. Charles Cemetery in St. Mary, Ky. When he was installed as shepherd of the archdiocese on July 28, 2017,

Archbishop Thompson described his father as “the greatest example of faith, hope and charity of any man I know.”

“And if I bear your spirit as I bear your name, this Archdiocese of Indianapolis will be blessed,” Archbishop Thompson continued, addressing his dad.

After the Mass, the elder Thompson spoke with *The Criterion* about how he and his wife Mary Joyce had always tried to be loving parents to the archbishop and his siblings.

“We’ve tried to support him in every way we could,” said Thompson, who was a retired inspector for General Electric. “We do the same for our other children, too. That’s just the way our family is.”

In another *Criterion* article preceding Archbishop Thompson’s installation, the archbishop described the atmosphere of faith that his parents created in the family home as he grew up.

“I’m from a very Catholic family,” Archbishop Thompson said. “My parents have just a wonderful ease. They’re very salt-of-the-earth kind of people. They just live their faith day by day. We prayed the rosary every night together. We said grace at all meals. It was just natural. It was almost like breathing for me.”

Charles Coleman Thompson, Sr., was born on Aug. 20, 1940, in St. Joseph, Ky., to the late Jack and Mildred (Martin) Thompson, the 11th of their 13 children.

He and his wife, Mary Joyce (Thomas) Thompson, who survives, grew up in Kentucky’s “Catholic Holy Land” in a rural central part of the state.

“We grew up in the country, out in Marion County,” said the archbishop’s father in a 2017 article in *The Criterion*. “We all went to church regularly. Our parents raised us to do the right thing, and that’s what we tried to do.”

He and Mary Joyce later moved to Louisville, where they were longtime members of St. Bernard Parish.

Thompson is survived by his beloved wife of 63 years, Mary Joyce; his daughter Lori Wilson and his sons, Archbishop Charles and Kenny Thompson; his brother Dennis Thompson; seven grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren.

Memorial gifts may be sent to: St. Bernard Parish, 7500 Tangelo Dr., Louisville, KY 40228; St. Francis Xavier Parish, 155 Stringer Ln., Mount Washington, KY 40047; any local council of the Knights of Columbus; or any local chapter of Hospitarius. †

## Spiritual adviser to synod to give presentation on Dec. 6 at cathedral

Dominican Father Timothy Radcliffe, spiritual advisor to the recent assembly of the Synod of Bishops on synodality at the Vatican, will speak on his experience of the synod meeting at 4 p.m. on Dec. 6 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. The public is invited to attend.

A scripture scholar and former master of the Order of Preachers, the British Father Timothy led synod delegates in a three-day retreat prior to the Oct. 4-29

meeting and gave reflections during the gathering.

During the retreat, the priest cited several religious order leaders as examples synod participants could look to “about the art of conversation.”

“St. Benedict teaches us to seek consensus; St. Dominic to love debate; St. Catherine of Siena to delight in conversation; and St. Ignatius of Loyola, the art of discernment,” he told his listeners. †



### Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

December 3–10, 2023

<p><b>December 3 – 10:30 a.m.</b> St. Maurice Parish 175th Anniversary Mass at St. Maurice Church, Napoleon</p> <p><b>December 5 – 3:30 p.m.</b> Indiana Bishops’ Province meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis</p> <p><b>December 6 – 9 a.m.</b> Indiana Catholic Conference meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center</p> <p><b>December 7 – 10 a.m.</b> Leadership Team meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center</p> <p><b>December 7 – 3:30 p.m.</b> Catholic Community Foundation Advisory Board meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center</p> <p><b>December 7 – 5:30 p.m.</b> Mass for Little Sisters of the Poor’s Christmas Celebration at St. Luke the Evangelist Church, Indianapolis</p> <p><b>December 7 – 6:30 p.m.</b> Little Sisters of the Poor’s Christmas Celebration at Meridian Hills Country Club, Indianapolis</p>	<p><b>December 8 – 10 a.m.</b> Mass at Marian University in Bishop Chartrand Memorial Chapel, Indianapolis</p> <p><b>December 8 – 11:30 a.m.</b> College Student Engagement on the Synod at Marian University, Indianapolis</p> <p><b>December 9 – 11 a.m.</b> Presentation for Catholic Medical Guild Association at Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Church, Indianapolis</p> <p><b>December 9 – 3 p.m.</b> Mass for Feast of St. Juan Diego at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis, followed by reception at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center</p> <p><b>December 10 – noon</b> Mass for pastor installation and blessing of Marian grotto and Stations of the Cross at St. Lawrence Parish, Indianapolis</p>
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## Media must show, promote respect for human dignity, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—An important part of the mission of Catholic media is to forgo the shocking, sensational or superficial when such stories present the people involved as less than human and unworthy of respect, Pope Francis said.

“You have a vocation to remind us, in a simple and understandable style, that beyond the news and scoops, there are always feelings, stories, flesh and blood people to be respected as if they were your own relatives,” the pope said on Nov. 23 with members of several Italian Catholic media groups.

“We see from the sad news of these days, from the terrible news of violence against women, how urgent it is to educate for respect and care: to form men capable of healthy relationships,” the pope told members of the Italian Federation of Catholic Weeklies, the Italian Periodical Press Union, the Corallo Association and the AIART Media Citizens Association.

“To communicate is to form people. To communicate is to form society,” he told those involved in print, television, radio and digital communications. “Do not abandon the path of education: it will take you far!”

Pope Francis also asked the Catholic

communications professionals to advocate for measures that protect people’s privacy and protect weaker members of society—especially children, the elderly and people with disabilities—“from the intrusiveness of the digital world and the seductions of provocative and polemical communication.”

“Please,” he said, “do this fearlessly, like David against Goliath: with a small slingshot he brought down the giant. Do not just play defensively but, remaining ‘small inside,’ think big, because you are called to a great task: to protect, through words and images, the dignity of people, especially the dignity of the small and the poor, God’s favorites.”

Citing the example of Blessed Carlo Acutis, who knew the dangers of media but also knew how to use it to promote the faith, Pope Francis urged the communicators to be creative and willing to take risks to promote Christian values.

“Go against the grain,” he urged them. “Speak about fraternity in an individualistic world; about peace in a world at war; about attention to the poor in an intolerant and indifferent world. But this can be done credibly only if you first bear witness to what you say.” †



**Phone Numbers:**  
Main office..... 317-236-1570  
Advertising..... 317-236-1585  
Circulation / Subscriptions ... 317-236-1425

**Price:** \$22.00 per year, 75 cents per copy

**Postmaster:**  
Send address changes to *The Criterion*, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367

**Web site:** [www.CriterionOnline.com](http://www.CriterionOnline.com)

**E-mail:** [criterion@archindy.org](mailto:criterion@archindy.org)

Published weekly except the last week of December, the first week of January and every other week from June to August (*summer schedule*). Mailing address: 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367. Periodical postage paid at Indianapolis, IN. Copyright © 2023 Criterion Press Inc. ISSN 0574-4350.

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*The Criterion* (ISSN 0574-4350) is published weekly except the last week of December, the first week of January and every other week from June-Aug.

1400 N. Meridian St.  
Indianapolis, IN 46202  
317-236-1570  
[criterion@archindy.org](mailto:criterion@archindy.org)

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Criterion Press Inc.  
1400 N. Meridian St.  
Indianapolis, IN 46202


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# Bishop Cozzens hopes to see ‘hearts set on fire’ with eucharistic love at congress

Second of two parts

By Sean Gallagher

For three years, Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens of Crookston, Minn., has been the point person for U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) for its three-year National Eucharistic Revival and the National Eucharistic Congress, which will be held on July 17-21 next year in Indianapolis.

He’s experienced many inspiring moments and faced unexpected obstacles in leading both.

Visiting Indianapolis recently for the National Catholic Youth Conference, Bishop Cozzens spoke with *The Criterion* about the blessings and challenges that have come with the revival and in the planning for the congress.

The following interview is edited for clarity and content.

**Q. It was two years ago when the National Catholic Youth Conference was in Indianapolis that the bishops in the U.S. announced that the National Eucharistic Congress would be held here in July 2024. Have the intervening couple of years of preparation for the Congress been challenging and maybe fruitful for you? And how has all this activity maybe contributed to your anticipation for the Congress?**

A. “In order to plan the National Eucharistic Congress, the U.S. bishops founded a [non-profit] corporation, which has a board of five bishops and four laypeople. We had to hire a staff to be able to execute the congress.

“So, anyone who’s ever done a startup knows how much work that is, and how, in the beginning, you don’t know what you don’t know. So, there has been a lot of incredible work and planning. Now there’s a staff of 16 full-time people who are planning the congress.

“Of course, we’ve had to help raise funds with this. We’ve had to learn logistics. We’ve had to learn from what other groups have done. And we’ve had to learn a bunch of things we didn’t know about—like hotel rooms, transportation and security.

“And, of course, we’re not just planning the congress. We’re also planning the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage, which are the four routes to Indianapolis that pilgrims will be taking on their way to Indianapolis.

“All of those things are going to be beautiful and inspiring events. But they couldn’t have happened without the dedication of employees, people who are really dedicated, working hard and really mission-driven to make this event a success. And also without generous benefactors, people who believe that what we’re doing will have an impact on the country.

“So, we’ve learned a lot over the last two years about what it actually takes to put this kind of event on.

“It makes me realize that if it’s this hard, it must be really good, because nothing really good comes without a cost.

“There’s been a lot of learning and there’s always a lot of struggles and there’s always obstacles that you don’t know you’re going to run into. But, to me, all those point to the fact that the Lord’s doing something beautiful.

“There are going to be lots of beautiful grassroots movements as we go. We saw

that in our test pilot program, which we did last summer here in Indiana, where we [walked] 110 miles between Fort Wayne and South Bend.

“We asked parishes to host us for the night. And every parish was different. They really took on the project. Some had all their first Communion kids lined up to greet the Blessed Sacrament as it comes into the parish on the pilgrimage. And they organized all-night adoration.

“We even had one Protestant church put up signs about the Eucharist with ‘This is my body’ from the Scriptures on them. And then they served lunch to the pilgrims as they came by. So, I think it’s going to be really a beautiful grassroots experience.”

**Q. Talk about how you’ve seen the work of God’s providence in the planning for the revival and the congress.**

A. “It’s definitely been a Holy Spirit-led experience, especially when you consider we actually started planning it before COVID.

“Bishop [Robert E.] Barron had the idea in November of 2019 that we should do some kind of national initiative to restore eucharistic faith. I was a chair-elect of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis, and Bishop Barron was the chair.

“We met with leaders of other committees in January and February of 2020, and everybody was supportive of doing something. We were going to bring it to the bishops’ meeting in June. And then, of course, the world changed in March, and we never had the meeting in June. It wasn’t until November of 2020 that, when I became the chair, we were able to bring this idea to the bishops.

“By that time, COVID had happened. So, there was a great amount of support and even a sense of God’s providence. We were prepared to begin to go right away. That was because God had been preparing us for something we didn’t know was coming.

“But it’s truly been an experience of the Holy Spirit just to see all the apostolates, all the parishes, all the people who’ve taken on this movement as their own across the country. The response has been much greater than I expected.

“I think there are 19,000 parishes in the country, and we hoped to have parish point persons for the parish year [the second year of the three-year revival] in 5,000 parishes. We thought that would be really good, especially when a lot of parishes are combined. So, we thought that’d be roughly a third of all parishes.

“But we have 8,000 parish point persons. And we’re headed for 9,000. We might hit 10,000 before Christmas.

“To think that we could be in over half the parishes with our small group study, with all the materials that we’ve given for this—that’s, I think, unheard of for a USCCB initiative.”

**Q. How has seeing the impact of the revival and hoping and planning for the impact of the congress had an effect on your own eucharistic faith, your own relationship with Christ and the Eucharist?**

A. “I’ve always been committed to the daily holy hour, ever since I became a priest. I got convicted about that by Archbishop Fulton Sheen and his preaching about that.



Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens of Crookston, Minn., raises his hands in personal prayer after Communion during the Nov. 18 closing Mass of the National Catholic Youth Conference at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis. Assisting at the Mass at right is archdiocesan transitional Deacon Samuel Rosko. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

“But it definitely has made it more important. And what’s been beautiful is the opportunity to teach so much on the Eucharist. God prepared me. I taught the Eucharist to seminarians for about seven years before I became a bishop.

“I loved to teach that class. I used to always ask that they put the class right before Mass, so we could go from studying the Eucharist to celebrating in the Eucharist, which we did every day.

“So, then it’s been beautiful to sort of begin to teach that to the people and to invite people to experience all the dimensions of the Eucharist.

“The Eucharist is really, as St. John Paul II said, ‘the secret of my day.’ It’s the secret of my life. It gives meaning to all my activities.

“I believe the ultimate goal of the eucharistic revival is not actually about statistics. It’s about hearts that are set on fire with love for Jesus in the Eucharist. And the more hearts that are set on fire, the more that Jesus in the Eucharist will be shown to the world.”

**Q. What words of encouragement might you have for people to consider taking part in the congress next summer?**

A. “A revival is a work of the Holy Spirit, not a work of the bishops. And the Holy Spirit will come and revive our Church in response to the persistent petition of the Church.

“So, come to Indianapolis to be part of the revival and to open your heart to encounter Jesus yourself, but also to pray that God would send the Holy Spirit upon our country in a new way, and especially on the Church in the United States so that we might be strengthened in our hearts to be who God wants us to be.”

(To read part one of this two-part interview, visit [www.CriterionOnline.com](http://www.CriterionOnline.com). For more information on the National Eucharistic Revival, visit [eucharisticrevival.org](http://eucharisticrevival.org). For more information on the National Eucharistic Congress, including on how to get tickets for it, visit [eucharisticcongress.org](http://eucharisticcongress.org).) †



## Pope’s prayer intentions for December

- **For persons with disabilities**—We pray that people living with disabilities may be at the center of attention in society, and that institutions may offer inclusive programs which value their active participation.

See Pope Francis’ monthly intentions at [archindy.org/popesintentions](http://archindy.org/popesintentions).



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## Editorial



Israeli Americans and supporters of Israel hold signs as they gather in solidarity with Israel and to protest antisemitism during a rally on the National Mall in Washington on Nov. 14 amid the ongoing conflict between Israel and the Palestinian group Hamas. (OSV News photo/Elizabeth Franz, Reuters)

# Antisemitism is always unchristian

*“Every human being, Christian, Jewish, Muslim, of any people or religion, every human being is sacred, is precious in the eyes of God and has the right to live in peace. Let us not lose hope: let us pray and work tirelessly so that the sense of humanity may prevail over hardness of heart.”* (Pope Francis)

The Oct. 7 widespread terrorist attacks by Hamas against Israel has triggered expressions of antisemitism here in the United States and across the globe. Why would unspeakable acts of violence occasion such deep-seated feelings of hatred against the Jewish people? Sympathy for the Palestinian people is one thing, but it cannot justify the kind of vile and hateful words and actions that are increasingly common among people of various ethnic and religious backgrounds who despise the Jews.

All Christians should condemn antisemitism unequivocally. Antisemitism is unchristian. To hate Jews is to hate Jesus, Mary, Joseph and all the Apostles. It is to despise the people chosen by God to reveal his presence among us, and it serves to discredit the Old Testament and the heritage we have received from the holy women and men who prepared the way for the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ.

As Pope Benedict XVI wrote, “It is no accident that the Jews who have been most condemned to suffering, the most battered and wretched, and who did not have to wait for 1940-45 to be in ‘Auschwitz,’ became the people of revelation, who have known God and made him visible to the world.”

There is something special about the Jewish people. They are the race chosen to reveal the invisible creator God to the world, and we Christians believe that this unique responsibility—given to the sons and daughters of Abraham—was carried to its fulfillment in the birth of Jesus of Nazareth.

The unique and unparalleled mission given to the Jews by God continues today. When they are true to their identity as God’s special people, the Jewish people are living witnesses to the love and mercy of God and to his fidelity to the promises made to all who trust in his Word. As Pope St. John Paul II said in 1986 during a visit to a synagogue in Rome:

*The Jewish religion is not “extrinsic” to us, but in a certain way is “intrinsic” to our own religion. With Judaism therefore we have a relationship which we do not have with any other religion. You are our dearly beloved brothers,*

*and, in a certain way, it could be said that you are our elder brothers.*

So, when Christians say that they hate Jews, they are really hating themselves and rejecting the “intrinsic” relationship that has existed between Christians and Jews from the beginning of the Church’s existence.

Sadly, antisemitism among Christians is not new. The past 2,000 years have witnessed many inexcusable instances of violence and injustice committed by Christians against their Jewish sisters and brothers.

We should condemn these most regrettable chapters of Christian history, and work to ensure that antisemitism is never again allowed to influence the thinking or behavior of followers of Jesus Christ. If we can see clearly that antisemitism is unchristian, we can’t help but reject the perverted ideas and emotions that give rise to antisemitic acts.

As Pope Francis said recently, “Every human being, Christian, Jewish, Muslim, of any people or religion, every human being is sacred, is precious in the eyes of God and has the right to live in peace.”

This means, of course, that the Palestinian people—both Christians and Muslims—have inalienable rights that must be recognized by the Israeli government and by the international community. But the indiscriminate violence of terrorist organizations like Hamas and its manipulation of Palestinians in Gaza as human shields completely undermine the efforts of true peacemakers, and makes it difficult if not impossible to guarantee the well-being of both Palestinians and Israelis.

Pope Benedict XVI, quoting Pope Pius XI, once wrote: “Spiritually, we are Semites. The Church therefore is opposed to every form of antisemitism, which can never be theologically justified.”

We must oppose every form of antisemitism, wherever and whenever it occurs, because it is an affront to God’s special people and because it deliberately defies God’s will. We Catholic Christians must never again allow the blind rage of antisemitism to overcome our God-given responsibility to build the peace of Jesus Christ in our world.

All people deserve the dignity and respect that are due to God’s children. May we resist every temptation to forget this fundamental truth of our Christian faith.

—Daniel Conway

Be Our Guest/Tony Magliano

## Making abortion unthinkable

Think of a newborn baby. In your mind’s eye, marvel at the beauty, the complexity, the mystery of this tiny human being.



And consider that this baby just didn’t magically somehow appear at birth, but rather was exquisitely knitted together in the mother’s womb through a myriad of mathematically incalculable, step by step, perfectly ordered cellular processes, resulting in the formation of organs, blood, bones and muscles all interacting with each other to form the most wonderful reality in all of God’s marvelous creation—a human life!

Be inspired by the marvelous nine-minute TED Talks’ video “Conception to Birth” (<https://bit.ly/47i2GiX>). And please widely disseminate it as part of a much needed massive, comprehensive, ongoing strategy to educate as many children and adults as possible about the beauty and the truly awesome wonder of the conception and miraculous development of each human life inside the womb of every mother!

Social media, podcasts, television and radio ads, billboards, homilies, church bulletins, university seminars, peaceful demonstrations with photos, and school curriculums are some of the routes we need to take to educate society regarding the wondrous scientific facts associated with human development in utero.

It has been said that all social engineering is preceded by verbal engineering. When enough people allow themselves to accept words presented to them in a false context, lies replace truth.

A powerful example here is that those who promote abortion often claim that the legal option to have abortions is a matter of protecting “reproductive rights.” On the contrary, abortion is not about whether to reproduce or not, it’s about brutally destroying what has already been produced—a human baby. Any issues regarding reproductive rights come before the child is conceived.

Therefore, as people of faith in the Lord Jesus—who is the truth—an essential part of our calling as missionary disciples is to promote the truth.

As essential as it is for us to

mount well-organized, comprehensive educational strategies, it is also vitally important to commit ourselves to being legislatively active.

Well-coordinated, comprehensive pro-life legislative efforts are especially needed as pro-abortion groups—particularly in the U.S.—are aggressively mounting a strategy to enshrine into state constitutions the guarantee that abortion on demand will be the law of each state.

The recently-passed referendum in Ohio, for which a clear majority of Ohioans voted, may likely ban the most effective pro-life laws in Ohio and prevent the possibility of passing future laws designed to protect unborn human life. This is an extremely serious setback for pro-life advocates.

This should be a wake-up call for us to redouble our efforts—not only in the U.S. where more than 800,000 abortions occur annually—but globally. A large number of countries allow abortion for numerous reasons, resulting in 73 million abortions taking place every year worldwide.

War itself is at war with the unborn.

According to *The Guardian*, it is estimated that 50,000 pregnant women in Gaza are facing uncertainty about how they will give birth due to the destruction of 14 hospitals and 46 clinics and a blockade of essential supplies.

One woman, Noor Hammad, 24, said, “I have no idea where I will give birth to my daughter and how I will receive her without shelter or clothes.”

Dr. Zaher Sahloul, president of MedGlobal, said, “As hospitals turn off the last of their equipment due to lack of fuel, neonatal wards are falling dark, and newborns and mothers are suffering.”

Just as advocates for the unborn need to better realize that war is an enemy to the unborn, anti-war advocates need to better understand that abortion is war upon the unborn. So, let us pray for peace on Earth, and in the womb.

And may we remember that God is the

God of life! And in his awesomeness, he continues to wondrously create unborn life—and all life.

Our God-given mission is to nonviolently protect and cherish all life.

(Tony Magliano is an internationally syndicated Catholic social justice and peace columnist. He is available to speak at diocesan or parish gatherings. He can be reached at [tmag6@comcast.net](mailto:tmag6@comcast.net).) †

*On the contrary, abortion is not about whether to reproduce or not, it’s about brutally destroying what has already been produced—a human baby. Any issues regarding reproductive rights come before the child is conceived.*

## 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

## This Advent, let's prepare our hearts for Christ's coming

*"Jesus said to his disciples: 'Be watchful! Be alert! You do not know when the time will come' "* (Mk 13:33).

The Church is renewed each year with the Advent season. The old year—with its sorrows, frustrations and failed attempts to change human hearts and behaviors—is left behind, and a new season of hope is begun.

Expectations are high. The Lord is coming again. He brings with him the promise of peace, and we know that his peace is sorely needed in our divided, war-torn world.

During Advent, we cry for peace—and for the joy of Christ—in our hearts and our world. *Maranatha!* Come, Lord Jesus, Prince of Peace! What better time to revive our devotion to the holy Eucharist than during this season of heightened longing and anticipation for Christ our Savior?

This Advent, we renew our efforts to be a synodal Church, a community of believers who listen attentively for God's will and who pray fervently for the grace to respond to God's word with generous hearts. This Advent, we also recommit our Church to a

eucharistic revival that is intended to draw all of us closer to the Lord Jesus, who is both with us now in the great sacrament of his body and blood, and who is coming again in glory.

The Gospel reading for the First Sunday of Advent (Mk 13:33-37) is a wake-up call. We dare not allow ourselves to be lulled into a false sense of satisfaction with the status quo. The Lord is coming at a time when we least expect him, and our comfortable, indifferent lives will be greatly disturbed by his presence and by the demands he will make on us. We are advised to be watchful and alert, and we are challenged to take seriously all the things that Christ has told us to observe if we want to be his faithful missionary disciples.

The first reading for this Sunday (Is 63:16b-17, 19b, 64:2-7) gives voice to the cry of God's people who long for his coming:

*Why do you let us wander, O Lord, from your ways, and harden our hearts so that we fear you not? Return for the sake of your servants, the tribes of your heritage. ... Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down, with*

*the mountains quaking before you ... while you wrought awesome deeds we could not hope for, such as they had not heard of from of old. No ear has ever heard, no eye ever seen, any God but you doing such deeds for those who wait for him. Would that you might meet us doing right, that we were mindful of you in our ways!* (Is 63:17, 19; 64:2-4)

The prophet extols the people of Israel (and all of us) to be prepared for the Lord's coming by "doing right" and by being mindful of God's ways in our daily lives.

In the second reading (1 Cor 1:3-9), St. Paul expresses his confidence that "you are not lacking in spiritual gifts as you wait for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 1:7). By the power of the Holy Spirit, we are given everything we need to ready ourselves for Christ's coming again. "He will keep you firm to the end, irrepensible on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ," St. Paul assures us. "God is faithful, and by him you were called to fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor 1:8-9).

We receive the grace we need to renew our minds and hearts this Advent season by our faithful participation in

the Church's prayer and sacramental life (especially the Eucharist), and by our watchful observance of all God's commandments—especially the great command to love God and our neighbor as ourselves.

"Watch, therefore; you do not know when the lord of the house is coming, whether in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning," Jesus tells us. "May he not come suddenly and find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to all: 'Watch!' " (Mk 13:35-37).

As we begin this new Church year, let's dedicate ourselves to a renewal of purpose as missionary disciples of Jesus Christ. Let's draw closer to him in the Eucharist and in our living out of the baptismal promises that define our mission as individual and families, and as a Church.

Together, let us pray the words of Psalm 80:

*O shepherd of Israel, hearken, from your throne upon the cherubim, shine forth. Rouse your power, and come to save us.* (Ps 80:2-3)

Come, Lord Jesus, to save us from our personal sins and from the sins of the world. Help us to be watchful and ready when you come again! †



# Cristo, la piedra angular

## Este Adviento, preparemos nuestros corazones para la venida de Cristo

*"Pero ustedes, presten atención y manténganse atentos, porque no saben cuándo llegará el momento"* (Mc 13:33).

La Iglesia se renueva cada año con el tiempo de Adviento. El año viejo—con sus penas, frustraciones e intentos fallidos de cambiar los corazones y comportamientos humanos—queda atrás y comienza una nueva temporada de esperanza, en la cual depositamos grandes expectativas.

El Señor viene nuevamente. Trae consigo la promesa de la paz, y sabemos que su paz es muy necesaria en nuestro mundo dividido y asolado por la guerra.

Durante el Adviento, clamamos por la paz, y por la alegría de Cristo, en nuestros corazones y en nuestro mundo. *Maranatha!* ¡Ven, Señor Jesús, de la Paz! ¿Qué mejor momento para reavivar nuestra devoción a la Sagrada Eucaristía que esta época de grandes anhelos y anticipación de la llegada de Cristo, nuestro Salvador?

En este Adviento, renovamos nuestros esfuerzos por ser una Iglesia sinodal, una comunidad de creyentes que escucha atentamente la voluntad divina y que reza fervientemente para obtener la gracia de responder a la Palabra de Dios con corazones generosos. En este Adviento, también volvemos a comprometer a nuestra

Iglesia con un renacimiento eucarístico que pretende acercarnos al Señor Jesús, que está con nosotros ahora en el gran sacramento de su Cuerpo y de su Sangre, y que viene de nuevo en la gloria.

La lectura del Evangelio del primer domingo de Adviento (Mc 13:33-37) es un llamado a despertar. No nos atrevamos a quedar embelesados por una falsa sensación de satisfacción con el *statu quo*. El Señor viene en el momento en que menos lo esperamos, y nuestras vidas cómodas e indiferentes se verán muy perturbadas por su presencia y por las exigencias que nos planteará. Se nos aconseja que estemos vigilantes y alerta, y se nos reta a que nos tomemos en serio todo lo que Cristo nos ha dicho que observemos si queremos ser sus fieles discípulos misioneros.

La primera lectura de este domingo (Is 63:16b-17.19b; 64:2-7) da voz al clamor del pueblo de Dios que anhela su venida:

*¿Por qué, Señor, nos has apartado de tus caminos? ¿Por qué has endurecido nuestro corazón para que no te honremos? Por amor a tus siervos, y por las tribus de tu heredad, ¡vuélvete a nosotros! Hemos llegado a ser como aquellos de los que nunca fuiste señor; ¡como aquellos sobre los cuales nunca fue invocado tu nombre! Cuando tú descendiste e hiciste maravillas*

*que nunca imaginamos, los montes temblaron ante ti. Nunca antes hubo oídos que lo oyeran ni ojos que lo vieran, ni nadie supo de un Dios que, como tú, actuara en favor de aquellos que en él confían!* (Is 63:17, 19; 64:2-4).

El profeta exhorta al pueblo de Israel (y a todos nosotros) a prepararse para la venida del Señor "haciendo lo correcto" y teniendo en cuenta los caminos de Dios en nuestra vida cotidiana.

En la segunda lectura (1 Cor 1:3-9), san Pablo expresa su confianza en que "nada les falta en ningún don, mientras esperan la manifestación de nuestro Señor Jesucristo" (1 Cor 1:7). Por el poder del Espíritu Santo, se nos da todo lo que necesitamos para prepararnos para la segunda venida de Cristo. "El cual también los confirmará hasta el fin, para que sean irrepensibles en el día de nuestro Señor Jesucristo—nos asegura san Pablo—. Fiel es Dios, quien los ha llamado a tener comunión con su Hijo Jesucristo, nuestro Señor" (1 Cor 1:8-9).

Recibimos la gracia que necesitamos para renovar nuestras mentes y corazones en este tiempo de Adviento mediante nuestra participación fiel en la oración y la vida sacramental de la Iglesia (especialmente la Eucaristía), y mediante nuestra observancia vigilante de todos los mandamientos de Dios, especialmente el gran mandamiento de

amar a Dios y a nuestro prójimo como a nosotros mismos.

"Así que ustedes deben mantenerse despiertos, porque no saben cuándo vendrá el señor de la casa, si al caer la tarde, o a la medianoche, o cuando cante el gallo, o al amanecer—nos advierte Jesús—. No sea que venga cuando menos lo esperen, y los encuentre dormidos. Esto que les digo a ustedes, se lo digo a todos: ¡Manténganse despiertos!" (Mc 13:35-37).

Al comenzar este nuevo año eclesial, dediquémonos a renovar nuestro propósito como discípulos misioneros de Jesucristo. Acerquémonos a él en la Eucaristía y en nuestra vivencia de las promesas bautismales que definen nuestra misión como individuos y familias, y como Iglesia, y juntos recemos las palabras del Salmo 80:

*"Pastor de Israel, ¡escucha! Tú, que guías a José como a una oveja, y que estás entre los querubines, ¡manifiéstate! En presencia de Efraín, de Benjamín y de Manasés, ¡manifiesta tu poder y ven a salvarnos!"* (Sal 80:1-2).

Ven, Señor Jesús, a salvarnos de nuestros pecados personales y de los del mundo. ¡Ayúdanos a estar despiertos y preparados para cuando vuelvas! †



# 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).

## December 5

Ritz Charles, 12156 N. Meridian St., Carmel, Ind. **Right to Life Indiana Christmas Gala**, 5:30 p.m. VIP sponsor reception, 6:30-9 p.m. dinner and program, Super Bowl champion and author of *The New Fight for Life* Benjamin Watson keynote speaker, Christian musician Ordan St. Cyr, \$100, table of 10 \$1,000. Information, reservations: [irtl.org/gala](http://irtl.org/gala), [mwilliams@irtl.org](mailto:mwilliams@irtl.org), 317-413-9123.

## December 6

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.

Marian University Hall Theater, 3200 Cold Spring Road, Indianapolis. **Advent Concert**, 6:30 p.m., Catholic composer John Angotti with Marian University Sacred Choir, followed by penance service during holy hour with praise and worship music in Bishop Chartrand Memorial Chapel, free. Information: 317-955-6000, [jgarcia@marian.edu](mailto:jgarcia@marian.edu).

## December 7

**Monthly Prayer with Sisters of Providence: "Prayer on Christmas,"** for single Catholic women ages 18-42, via Zoom, 7-7:45 p.m., seventh day of each month. Information, registration: [Events.SistersofProvidence.org](http://Events.SistersofProvidence.org), 361-500-9505, [jluna@spsmw.org](mailto:jluna@spsmw.org).

## December 9

Providence Spirituality and Conference Center, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Christmas Fun at the Woods and Providence Community Bake Sale**, bake sale 12:30-4:30 p.m., Christmas Fun 1:30-4:30 p.m., event includes Santa Claus and North Pole Zone with alpacas. Information: 812-535-2812, [spsmw.org/events](http://spsmw.org/events), [amiranda@spsmw.org](mailto:amiranda@spsmw.org).

Holy Trinity Parish, 100 Keely St., Edinburgh. **Spanish Women's Conference (in Spanish only)**, 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m., *en español*, speakers include Marian University in Indianapolis director for the Initiative for Parish Renewal (*Renovación*) Oscar Castellanos and Holy Spirit Parish in Indianapolis

associate pastor Marianhill Father José Ferney Aragón Briñez, includes Mass, adoration, confession, lunch, \$30. Information, registration: 317-261-3381, [chernandez@archindy.org](mailto:chernandez@archindy.org).

## December 9-10

Christ the King School, Tuohy Hall, 5884 Crittenden Ave., Indianapolis. **4th Annual Jack Shockley Memorial Blood Drive**, 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., also accepting gently used hats, gloves and new socks for Mother Theodore Catholic Academy grade schools. Information, registration: [tinyurl.com/warrior4peace23](http://tinyurl.com/warrior4peace23), 317-207-0291, [contact@warriors4peace.org](mailto:contact@warriors4peace.org).

## December 10

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](http://franciscansusa.org/bluegrass-jam).

St. Mary Parish, 1331 E. Hunter Robbins Way, Greensburg. **Come Home for Christmas: Christmas Cantata**, 5 p.m., Christmas story shared through song, freewill donations accepted. Information: 812-663-8427, [parishoffice@stmarysgreensburg.com](mailto:parishoffice@stmarysgreensburg.com).

[stmarysgreensburg.com](http://stmarysgreensburg.com).

Holy Name of Jesus Church, 89 N. 17th Ave., Beech Grove. **59th Annual Christmas Concert**, 5 p.m., adult and children's choirs perform traditional and sacred Christmas music with orchestra, tickets \$5. Information, tickets: 317-784-5454, [parishadmin@holyname.cc](mailto:parishadmin@holyname.cc).

## December 11

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

## December 12

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

St. Malachy Church, 9833 E. County Road 750 N., Brownsburg. **A Most Wonderful Christmas**, 7 p.m., Indianapolis Symphonic Band

and St. Malachy choir Christmas concert, featuring St. Malachy organist Hector Sacedo, free. Information: 317-852-3195.

## December 14

Southport Presbyterian Church, 7525 McFarland Road, Indianapolis. **Christmas Remembrance**, 7-8:15 p.m., sponsored by Franciscan Health and Franciscan Hospice Bereavement, open to those who've lost a loved one, includes music, grief support time, singing of traditional Christmas carols, candle-lighting ceremony, fellowship and refreshments, attendees may bring photos of their loved ones for display at the front of the sanctuary, free. Information, registration: 317-528-2636.

## December 15

Northside Events and Social Club, 2100 E. 71st St., Indianapolis. **Catholic Business Exchange**, Indiana Supreme Court Justice Hon. Derek R. Molter presenting "Faith in Government," 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 Dec. 12. Information, registration: [cutt.ly/CBE-Reg](http://cutt.ly/CBE-Reg)

## December 16

St. John the Evangelist Church, 126 W. Georgia St., Indianapolis. **Sacred Music Festival and Caroling**, 6 p.m., three parish choirs perform sacred music of Palestrina, Bainton, Duruflé, Lauridsen and more, followed by caroling through the streets of Indianapolis, hot drinks and light refreshments provided, free. Information: 317-635-2021, [office@stjohnsindy.org](mailto:office@stjohnsindy.org).

St. Luke the Evangelist Church, 7575 Holliday Dr., E., Indianapolis. **Concert by Vox Sacra: "How Far is it to Bethlehem?"** 7 p.m., concert featuring archdiocesan *schola* Vox Sacra, includes works of Anton Bruckner, Domenico Bartolucci, Gerald Near, *4 Motets pour le temps de Noël* (4 Motets of Christmas) by Francis Poulenc and more, free. Information: [amotyka@archindy.org](mailto:amotyka@archindy.org).

St. Bartholomew Parish, Parish Hall, 1306 27th St., Columbus. **Jazz for the Season**, 6 p.m. Italian meal, concert 7:30 p.m., freewill donations for music ministry and adult literacy program accepted. Information: 812-379-9353, ext. 1237, [bminute@stbparish.net](mailto:bminute@stbparish.net). †

## 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).

## December 16

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Organ Workshop and Concert**, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. CT, recital at 3 p.m., Nolan Snyder presenting, \$55. Registration: [saintmeinrad.org/retreats](http://saintmeinrad.org/retreats).

## December 24-26

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Christmas Celebration at Saint**

Meinrad Archabbey, opportunity to join monastic community in their Christmas Eve and Christmas Day prayer and liturgies in the archabbey church, fellowship and socials with monks and other guests, \$300 single, \$425 double. Registration: [saintmeinrad.org/retreats](http://saintmeinrad.org/retreats).

## December 29-31

Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality,

101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis. **Greccio 800**, Fri. 4 p.m.-Sun. 1 p.m., retreat celebrating 800 years of the Nativity scene St. Francis shared with the people of Greccio, Italy, Franciscan Father Jack Clark Robinson and Third Order Franciscan Dennis Feece presenting, \$150 commuters, \$250 includes two nights' accommodations and four meals. Information, registration: 812-923-8817, [tinyurl.com/msfgreccio800](http://tinyurl.com/msfgreccio800). †

## Archbishop Thompson to celebrate special Mass for St. Juan Diego feast day on Dec. 9

A bilingual Mass marking the feast of St. Juan Diego will be celebrated by Archbishop Charles C. Thompson and concelebrated by Father Jose Neri at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., in Indianapolis, at 3 p.m. on Dec. 9. A reception will follow across the street at the Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center.

Attendees are welcome to wear traditional Mexican attire to the Mass and reception, which are sponsored by the

archdiocesan Intercultural Ministry Office. Music at the reception will be provided by the music ministry "Nelly y Carolos," natives of Puerto Rico. Youths from Central Catholic School in Indianapolis will perform a traditional Aztec dance in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

The event is free. For additional information, contact Felix Navarrete, archdiocesan Hispanic Ministry coordinator, at 317-597-3751 or [fnavarrete@archindy.org](mailto:fnavarrete@archindy.org). †

## College students sought to teach Totus Tuus summer youth program

Totus Tuus is seeking college students to teach its 2024 summer program for youths in first through 12th grade at six archdiocesan parishes from May 29-Aug. 2, with a break from June 29-July 5. The deadline to apply is April 30.

Totus Tuus is a summer Catholic youth program dedicated to sharing the Gospel and promoting the Catholic faith through evangelization, catechesis, Christian witness and eucharistic worship. Its weeklong Parish Summer Catechetical Program assists parents and parishes in evangelizing and catechizing their youths by supplementing the work they are currently doing.

The methodology, structure and content of Totus Tuus are concerned not only with teaching the faith but also with igniting the hearts of the team members and the young people they encounter. The result has been the formation of young adults who continue to dedicate themselves to the Church's mission of evangelization along with many vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

Applicants for this paid position

must be a high school graduate, a practicing Catholic, have received the sacrament of confirmation, have a working knowledge of the Catholic faith and have a desire to work with youths.

They must be willing to learn and experience the faith, work with a team, respect team dynamics, strive for a stronger prayer life, teach children and travel.

Missionaries are chosen based upon their desire to teach the faith, love of children, energy, enthusiasm and for their individual leadership skills. To run a week of the Totus Tuus Summer Program smoothly, missionaries adhere to a well-defined schedule rooted in a structured prayer life.

Training is included, and a short break will take place in early July. Missionaries will also have the opportunity to attend the National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis on July 17-21, 2024, with meals and lodging included.

For more information or to apply, go to [www.archindy.org/totustuus](http://www.archindy.org/totustuus) or contact Anita Bardo, archdiocesan Evangelization coordinator, at 317-236-1466. †

## Wedding Anniversaries

**PAUL AND DORIS (GREIN) JEWETT**, members of St. Ambrose Parish in Seymour, celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on Nov. 28.

The couple was married in St. Ambrose Church in Seymour on Nov. 28, 1963.

They have one child: AnnMarie Johnson.

The couple also has four grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. †



**KENNETH AND CAROL (MAJEWSKI) EWALD**, members of St. Pius X Parish in Indianapolis, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on Dec. 1.

The couple was married in St. John the Baptist Church in South Bend, Ind. (Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend), on Dec. 1, 1973.

They have one child: Michael Ewald. †



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.



# Resource helps guide Catholics on medical, end-of-life decisions

By Victoria Arthur

Illustrated and illuminated by Church teaching, a free resource is now available to help Catholics in Indiana express their health care wishes in advance if they are one day unable to do so themselves.

*A Catholic Guide to an Advance Directive* is a booklet designed to help individuals and families navigate the often complex medical, emotional and spiritual issues surrounding treatment preferences and end-of-life care.

"This resource gives clear direction about these issues from a Catholic moral teaching perspective," said Alexander Mingus, associate director of the Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC), which produced the booklet. "We hope it can be a helpful guide for individuals, family members and even entire parishes, and we want everyone to know that it's available free of charge from the ICC."

The booklet, which is available upon request at [icc@archindy.org](mailto:icc@archindy.org), includes background on moral and ethical considerations for Catholics regarding health care decision-making. It also outlines an advance directive, which is a document allowing individuals to state their health care preferences in the event of a serious illness or life-threatening situation, particularly when people are rendered incapacitated and unable to express their wishes.

In addition, the booklet includes two copies of an Indiana Catholic advance directive—incorporating a statement of faith—that can be completed and signed.

"Advance directives are a way to give your family peace of mind," said Dr. Elliott Bedford, an ethicist based at Ascension St. Vincent Hospital in Indianapolis. "They're a means of helping you think about and express what you want so that your family doesn't have to guess."

Bedford, who serves as director of ethics integration for Ascension Indiana, says he regularly shares the advance directive resource with families at the hospital, particularly in the intensive care unit. But he emphasized that ideally, conversations about health care wishes should occur long before a family is faced with a dire medical situation.

"This is something that prudent, responsible adulthood calls us to do," Bedford said. "Advance care planning is not just about end-of-life issues."

In fact, Bedford said that completing an advance directive—particularly appointing a designated health care representative—should be a priority for

everyone once they reach adulthood at 18.

"The first question I ask people to consider is, 'Who will speak for you if you couldn't speak for yourself?' That person would have to speak in the patient's voice," Bedford said. "So first, designate that person, and then tell that person and everyone else who might be involved, 'These are the things I would want.'"

"People don't even have to focus on specific medical treatments. Instead, they should talk about their goals. 'I want to see my daughter graduate from high school. I want to see her get married.' It's about what you find meaningful and valuable in life."

Bedford, a member of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish in Carmel, Ind., in the Lafayette Diocese, added that undertaking this type of planning is "what we are called to do as Catholics." He praised the content and design of the advance directive resource, which he said reflects "the beautiful guidance of the Catholic Church in its long tradition." Fittingly, the chosen cover art is "The Death of St. Joseph," a 19th-century painting depicting the Holy Family as St. Joseph departs his earthly life with the Virgin Mary and Jesus at his side.

The booklet is an updated and redesigned version of an earlier resource the ICC released in 2007. It undertook the revisions to reflect legislation that passed the Indiana General Assembly in 2021, when lawmakers simplified and streamlined state law concerning advance directives.

"Respect for the dignity of life is the basis of Catholic social teaching," said Angela Espada, executive director of the ICC, the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Indiana. "Respecting the dignity of those who may not be able to care for or speak for themselves is crucial. We supported lawmakers' efforts two years ago to eliminate much of the confusion that had existed with regard to advance directives. Now people can appoint a representative with the certainty that their faith-directed wishes will be adhered to by that representative."

Dr. Daniel Capes, a hospice and palliative medicine specialist with Community Health Network in Indianapolis, guides families through these types of conversations every day.

"Medical care—particularly as one develops a chronic illness or is potentially nearing their end of life—gets really, really complicated," Capes said. "Advance directives help navigate people through a medically and emotionally complex time."

For Catholics, Capes added, there are



Displayed are copies of *A Catholic Guide to an Advance Directive*, produced by the Indiana Catholic Conference. (Submitted Photo)

moral questions to consider based on Church teaching, which makes the ICC resource particularly helpful. Capes said there are many misconceptions about where the Church stands on certain issues, with people often assuming that life must be preserved at all costs.

"The Church does a beautiful job of upholding life and the dignity of life balanced with individual autonomy," said Capes, a member of St. Joan of Arc and Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary parishes, both in Indianapolis.

Capes often helps patients complete advance directives in his office or in their hospital room. Like Bedford, however, he encourages people to consider and discuss their medical wishes long before the need arises.

"Ideally, you shouldn't be in a crisis to have these conversations," Capes said. "The number-one thing I always tell people, no matter how old they are, is to at least have a health care representative or a health care power of attorney. It doesn't have to be a spouse or even a family member. It can be a friend. But it must be someone who knows you very well."

For those nearing the end of life, Capes said that proper advance planning offers tremendous comfort for patients and their loved ones.

"It's incredibly beautiful to see a person who is ready for death and at

peace about it," he said.

Bedford echoed those thoughts.

"What I love about Church teaching is that when all of this is done well, there is such beauty that you see at the end of life," he said. "[Advance planning] takes the decisions off the shoulders of your loved ones and allows a grace and peace to enter into the situation. Then you can focus on the right priorities and on being with each other."

To receive a free print copy of *A Catholic Guide to an Advance Directive*, e-mail [icc@archindy.org](mailto:icc@archindy.org) or call 317-236-1458. Electronic versions of the document are available in both English and Spanish at [indianacc.org/bishopsstatements](http://indianacc.org/bishopsstatements). The printed version is available in English and will be available in Spanish soon.

To follow the work of the ICC, visit [www.indianacc.org](http://www.indianacc.org). This website includes access to ICAN, the Indiana Catholic Action Network, which offers the Church's position on key issues. Those who sign up for ICAN receive alerts on legislation of interest to the Church and ways to contact their elected representatives. The 2024 session of the Indiana General Assembly will begin in early January.

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

## Advent penance services are scheduled at parishes throughout the archdiocese

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

### Batesville Deanery

Dec. 1, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. at All Saints, St. Martin Campus, Dearborn County  
 Dec. 5, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Greensburg  
 Dec. 6, 6:30 p.m. at St. Vincent de Paul, Shelby County  
 Dec. 12, 6:30 p.m. at St. Catherine of Siena, St. John the Evangelist Campus  
 Dec. 12, 6:30-7:30 p.m. at St. Michael, Brookville  
 Dec. 13, 6-8 p.m. at Immaculate Conception, Millhousen  
 Dec. 14, 7 p.m. at St. Louis, Batesville  
 Dec. 14, 7 p.m. at Holy Family, Oldenburg  
 Dec. 15, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. at St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Aurora  
 Dec. 15, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. at St. Joseph, Shelbyville  
 Dec. 19, 6:30-7:30 p.m. at St. Michael, Brookville  
 Dec. 20, 6-8 p.m. at St. John the Baptist, Osgood  
*Additionally, recurring opportunities for reconciliation in the Batesville Deanery are as follows:*  
 Weekends of Dec. 9-10, 16-17 and 23-24 before and after weekend Masses at St. Maurice, Napoleon

### Bloomington Deanery

Dec. 6, 6 p.m. for St. Charles Borromeo, St. John the Apostle and St. Paul Catholic Center, Bloomington, at St. Paul Catholic Center  
 Dec. 12, 6 p.m. at St. Martin of Tours, Martinsville

Dec. 12, 6:30 p.m. at St. Vincent de Paul, Bedford  
 Dec. 13, 6:30 p.m. at St. Jude the Apostle, Spencer  
 Dec. 14, 7 p.m. at St. Agnes, Nashville

### Connersville Deanery

Dec. 1, 5:30 p.m. at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Holy Family Church, Richmond  
 Dec. 13, 6:30 p.m. at St. Gabriel, Connersville  
 Dec. 14, 6 p.m. at St. Mary, Rushville

### Indianapolis East Deanery

Dec. 11, 9 a.m.-7 p.m. at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., no appointment needed

### Indianapolis North Deanery

Dec. 17, 2 p.m. at St. Thomas Aquinas  
 Dec. 18, 7 p.m. at St. Matthew the Apostle  
 Dec. 19, 7 p.m. at St. Lawrence

### Indianapolis South Deanery

Dec. 5, 5-6 p.m. for St. Ann and St. Joseph (West Deanery) at St. Ann  
 Dec. 6, 7 p.m. for St. Jude, Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ and St. Mark the Evangelist at St. Jude  
 Dec. 13, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. at Our Lady of the Greenwood, Greenwood  
 Dec. 14, 6:30 p.m. for Holy Name of Jesus, Beech Grove, and Good Shepherd at Holy Name of Jesus  
 Dec. 16, 8:30-10 a.m. at SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi, Greenwood

### Indianapolis West Deanery

Dec. 5, 5-6 p.m. at for St. Ann (South Deanery) and St. Joseph at St. Ann

### New Albany Deanery

Dec. 5, 6:30 p.m. at St. Michael, Bradford  
 Dec. 5, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Lanesville  
 Dec. 14, 7 p.m. at Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany  
 Dec. 15, 6:30 p.m. at St. Anthony of Padua, Clarksville  
 Dec. 15, 6:30 p.m. at St. John Paul II, Sellersburg  
 Dec. 15, 7 p.m. at St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd County  
 Dec. 19, 6:30 p.m. at St. John the Baptist, Starlight  
 Dec. 20, 7 p.m. at St. Michael, Charlestown (English and Spanish)  
 Dec. 21, 6:30 p.m. at St. Francis Xavier, Henryville

### Seymour Deanery

Dec. 14, 6-8 p.m. at Prince of Peace, Madison  
 Dec. 20, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at St. Ambrose, Seymour

### Tell City Deanery

Dec. 10, 2 p.m. CT at St. Paul, Tell City  
 Dec. 13, 6:30 p.m. CT at St. Boniface, Fulda

### Terre Haute Deanery

Dec. 5, 7 p.m. at St. Benedict, Terre Haute  
*Recurring opportunities for reconciliation in the Terre Haute Deanery are as follows:*  
 Thursdays 6:30-8:30 p.m. and Saturdays 3:30-5 p.m. at St. Joseph University †



# RHOADES

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## might their experience of the Eucharist help grow their being part of a synodal Church?

A. “The Eucharist makes the Church. Christ makes us into his body through it. He comes to us and that creates our unity. We are one body in Christ. And we even speak of receiving the Eucharist as holy Communion. This is what unites us to Christ and to one another. It makes the body of Christ. We are a eucharistic Church.

“Synodality is all about communion. It’s all about walking together. That’s what the word means. We’re walking together as brothers and sisters in Christ to the promised land of heaven. The Israelites, the people of God, as they walked through the desert, were fed with manna. The same with us. We’re nourished by the new manna, by the Eucharist in our journey to our heavenly homeland.

“So, the Eucharist is really central here. It’s central to the whole notion of communion, which is the first major theme of the synod. It’s communion, participation and mission.

“The Eucharist also strengthens us for mission. We receive the grace we need to live our faith, to live eucharistic lives, lives of self-giving love.

“To me, it’s all very connected. We are sent on mission, having been nourished by the body and blood of Christ to bring Christ’s love and presence into the world. Everything we do in our service of the poor, all of our ministries and apostolates, are to spread the Gospel by our words and our deeds. That’s what the Eucharist nourishes us to do. We’re to live eucharistic lives.

“It unites us as one body in communion. And it strengthens us for mission. Those are two integral parts of synodality.

## Q. Do you think that it’s providential that the Church in the U.S. is inviting the faithful to participate in this revival and have their relationship with Christ in the Eucharist re-enlivened by God at the same time that the universal Church is exploring synodality?

A. “I think it is providential. But I would add one thing.

“I would like to see more eucharistic emphasis in the synodal documents moving forward. There is a huge amount of attention on baptism. We become Christians united to Christ when we are baptized.

“But I think there needs to be greater emphasis on how the Eucharist is the greatest of the sacraments. That would also help us understand the relationship, for example, within the Church, of the

ministerial and the common priesthood, the distinctiveness of the sacrament of holy orders and its relationship to all the baptized.

“There is this sacrament of holy orders that shouldn’t be diminished. We want to recognize all of us, our brothers and sisters in Christ, in baptism. At the same time, there needs to be an appreciation of the role of those who have received the vocation of the ministerial priesthood in particular.

“And then the role of the magisterium and the bishops, for example, in discernment in the life of the Church.

“This is where some controversial issues came up, in matters of doctrine that came up. I think we have to recognize the charism received by those who have received holy orders, particularly the bishops in union with the pope, in discerning, for example, matters of doctrine, faith and morals. I think that needs greater emphasis.

“It was there at the synod. And you can see it in the synthesis document. But I think some don’t recognize the importance of that.

“The second chapter of ‘*Lumen Gentium*’ [the Second Vatican Council’s “Dogmatic Constitution on the Church”] on the people of God is very prominent [in the synthesis document] because of the whole idea of all of us equal in dignity walking together. But remember that the third chapter of ‘*Lumen Gentium*’ was on the hierarchical Church.

“And though we must avoid all clericalism or authoritarianism in the Church, that doesn’t mean that we become egalitarian as if there isn’t a special charism given by the Holy Spirit to those who are the successors of Peter and the Apostles.”

## Q. In about eight months, the eucharistic revival will culminate in the National Eucharistic Congress here in Indianapolis where tens of thousands of Catholics from across the country will gather as one in their love for Christ in the Eucharist. How might you hope that the congress could contribute to Catholics in the U.S.’s experience of a synodal Church?

A. “I think it’s going to be an experience of part of what synodality is, and that’s the communion aspect, the communion of the Church.

“They’ll be gathered with fellow Catholics from all over the country in worship of God. It will be a diverse group, racially, ethnically and in language. That’s all part of synodality and the communion of the Church, the unity in diversity.

“That’s an essential element of synodality. I certainly experienced that very much at the synod in bishops and



Pope Francis greets Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Ind., on Oct. 10 in the Paul VI Audience Hall at the Vatican during the assembly of the world Synod of Bishops. (OSV News photo/Vatican Media/CPP)

other delegates from all over the world.

“It is very connected to mission, because when we gather, I’m sure we’re going to hear a lot about how every person is called to be a missionary disciple. That’s an aspect of synodality. It’s the aspect of co-responsibility in mission.

“That’s part of the congress and the eucharistic revival. We definitely need more people who will be engaged in that, so that we’ll really bring about the new evangelization and a reinvigoration of the Church in the United States.

“But it’s not just our work alone. It’s by the grace of God and by the grace of the holy Eucharist. That’s where we get strengthened and nourished to live the Gospel in our words and deeds.

“That’s why prayer was so important in the synod. This isn’t just getting together like the U.S. Congress or Parliament. This is about gathering in the Spirit, gathering with Christ as our head and discerning his will for the Church, how we move forward in mission.”

## Q. A year from now, the Synod of Bishops’ consideration of synodality will be over. The Church in the U.S. will have experienced its eucharistic congress. How do you hope that both will enliven the efforts of Catholics across the U.S. to be active missionary disciples, sharing the Gospel in their everyday lives?

A. “The word that comes to mind is

conversion. There’s a need for conversion here.

“We have problems. One of the problems is division and polarization. This whole synodal process is aimed at building communion and trying to overcome some of that division that’s there, because we’re not going to be effective if we’re not together in communion.

“So, I think that both the congress and the synod hopefully will build unity within the members of the body of Christ. Our unity of faith is so important. And our love for one another is so essential. That’s the spiritual part that I’m really hoping that [will take root] through the exercise of the synodal process, but even more by the grace of God, especially the grace of the Eucharist.

“It really has to do with interior conversion. It’s by growing in our own Christian lives, and only through that, that we’re going to be true missionary disciples. So, our own growth in Christ and our own growth in holiness that we’re all called to is part of synodality, too.”

*(To read “A Synodal Church in Mission: Synthesis Report,” the document issued by the Synod of Bishops at the conclusion of its meeting in October, visit [bit.ly/SynodalChurch](https://www.vatican.va/press-releases/2023/10/10-synod-report-2023-10-10.html). To read the first part of The Criterion’s interview with Bishop Rhoades, visit [CriterionOnline.com](https://www.criteriononline.com).) †*

# MOTHER

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honoring Jesus through his mother.

And now on this Sunday morning at Mass, just 11 months after moving to Indiana from Illinois, she offered another prayer to God. She asked him to give her help when her fifth child was ready to be born.

As Viviane prayed in a pew at St. Jude Church in Indianapolis with Felix and their four daughters nearby, Mary and Joe Abella were in the pew behind them. Mary noticed the vibrant-colored, distinctly African clothes that the young family wore. Even more, Mary easily saw that the mother of the family was well along in her pregnancy.

Seeing the young, pregnant mother made Mary think of being pregnant with her own five children, who were now all grown. She remembered how when they lived in Fort Wayne, she relied on her neighbors to help her and Joe with their children when they needed to go to the hospital for the delivery of their latest child.

She also remembered a moment nearly 20 years earlier, shortly after she, Joe and their family moved to Indianapolis and chose St. Jude Parish as their faith community. In those early days, they attended a dinner at the parish. And the one lasting memory that Mary still has of that dinner is that the other people at the table didn’t include them in their conversation and their celebration.

Ever since then, Mary and Joe have always made the time to welcome new people to the parish. And that’s what they did on that Sunday morning after Mass to Viviane, Felix and their four daughters, Marie-Immaculee, Anne-Marie, Marie-Victoire and Marie-Felicite.

Their welcome soon became more profound.

## ‘It was like a miracle for me’

“We introduced ourselves and said hi,” Mary recalls about that moment in January of 2022. “They said they had moved from Illinois, and they were living in an apartment. That got me to thinking that they don’t know anybody because you don’t meet anyone in an apartment. She was very pregnant, and I thought she would have no one to watch the kids when they have the baby.”

Mary shared that thought with Joe and told him she was going to offer to watch the four girls when it came

time for Viviane and Felix to go to the hospital for the delivery of their baby. When Mary made that offer to Viviane, the younger woman was touched and stunned.

“I had been praying to God in the pew. ‘How am I going to do this when I have to go to the hospital? Lord, help me,’ ” Viviane recalls. “When she asked me, it was like a miracle for me. As I was talking to God, God was talking to her.”

Mary gave both her cell phone number and home phone number to the couple, telling them to call at any time, whenever they had to rush to the hospital. Mary then enlisted the help of three other women from the parish in case she wasn’t available for some reason—Noreen Poorman, Lucy Bedwell and Phyllis Winkler.

Mary and Joe also invited the Minzas to breakfast one Sunday after Mass to try to relieve any doubts that Viviane and Felix may have had about their offer of help.

“The kids had a blast, playing with all our grandkids’ toys,” Mary recalls.

Then came the early morning of March 2 of that year—a morning when Viviane’s contractions became painful, a morning that soon became filled with touches of panic, hesitation and generosity.

## ‘In America, no one has time’

When Viviane awoke in pain from her contractions, it was near five in the morning. Felix knew he had to get her to the hospital right away, but he didn’t know if he should call Mary because it was so early. Viviane told him he shouldn’t because of the time.

So, he rushed Viviane to the hospital, placed her in the care of a nurse, and drove back home to their four daughters who were still asleep at about 6 a.m. He thought again about calling Mary. He remembered how she said to call her at any time, while wondering how she would react if he did.

“In America, no one has time,” Felix says. “Everybody is so busy.”

Still, he picked up his phone and called Mary. She made the time, arriving 15 minutes later. That morning, she took care of the two younger girls while the two older ones boarded a bus for school and Felix returned to the hospital to be with Viviane.

As the hours passed, Felix worried that he was taking too much of Mary’s time, so he sent her a text message saying he was coming home because the baby wasn’t ready to be born yet. She



The circumstances around the birth of Marie-Reine Minza have led to an ongoing special connection between her family and Mary and Joe Abella. (Photo courtesy of Jen Buechler of 21 Dream5 Photography)

texted him back, “Oh, my goodness! Stay there!”

So, he did.

“I thought it would just be for an hour or two,” Felix recalls. “When she said what she did, I just thought, ‘Wow! God is behind everybody.’ ”

When Mary had to leave in the afternoon, Noreen Poorman came to relieve her, helping the children with their homework and making sure they had everything they needed for their showers.

That day, Viviane gave birth to their fifth child, Marie-Reine.

Mary continued to help the family until Viviane and the baby came home two days later.

## ‘She shows us the real love of God’

In the 21 months since Marie-Reine was born, the once strangers have shared meals together. In her previous business as a decorator, Mary helped Viviane and Felix get new furniture at a substantial discount. And when Mary and Joe moved to a new home recently, Viviane helped them pack and settle into their new place.

Still, the most lasting part of their connection shows in the laughter, the joy and the love they share when they look

back together at that first offer of help.

Some of the laughs they share come when Felix smiles as he recalls his initial doubts about the intent of Mary’s offer.

“I asked Viviane that if those people come to help, aren’t they going to charge us? She said, ‘They are people from church, and I prayed to God before Mary asked me.’ I said, ‘Let’s see if no bill comes later.’ ”

Mary, Felix and Viviane laugh heartily at that story.

For Mary, the welcome and the offer of help are reflections of what Christ calls people to do in their lives—to make room in their hearts for others, including strangers, to see Jesus in them.

“We’re supposed to be hospitable and sensitive to other people’s needs,” she says. “Joe and I are really big into trying to reach out to people when we sit near someone we haven’t seen before. We know how it feels to not have any connection.”

This time, the bond is deep. Viviane considers Mary as a guardian angel to her family.

“It’s very good to be connected to her,” Viviane says with a smile as she looks at Mary. “She shows us the real love of God.” †

# CHILDREN

continued from page 1

St. John the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis.

“So, you can tell them God understands them and loves them, and they don’t question it,” she says. “They feel comforted.”

This article addresses some of the causes of childhood mental health issues, the importance of addressing them and the benefit of using faith in the healing process.

Weighing in with Padilla are licensed clinical social worker Michelle Frossard, director of school counseling for St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities (SECC) in New Albany, and Antonia Seman, a licensed mental health counselor at Emmaus Catholic Counseling in Clarksville.

## ‘They pick up on more than we think’

One of the greatest contributing factors to children’s mental health issues that Seman sees are problems within the family.

“If there are broken families, parent issues or marital issues, children are just so sensitive to those things,” she says. “They pick up on more than we think.”

Padilla agrees.

“I think so much of it starts with the family,” she says. “You see more and more the breakdown of the family, whether it be through divorce, separation, poor sibling relationships or lack of siblings at all, or even in cases where a parent works far away.”

Education-related stress is another source of mental

health issues for the young students Padilla sees.

“So many of the kids I see, the amount of stress I see from their classes, it’s grown exponentially,” she says.

She recalls reading an article comparing the expectations of first-graders in 1979 versus 2019.

“The 1979 expectations were telling left from right and counting to 10,” she says. “In 2019, the expectations were so much higher: counting to 100 by two, five and 10, reading simple books.”

More recently, Padilla and Seman have seen issues arise from the effects of isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“I think there’s an uptick because of doing everything virtually,” says Padilla. “It’s not normal for anyone, and the younger the person, the more it impacts them. We’re seeing the effects of it now, that lack of face-to-face interaction.”

Seman agrees, noting, “We were made for relationship. So, when relationships are struggling around us it impacts our mental health—especially children, because they’re finding out what feelings are and what relationships mean to them. So, [isolation was] a struggle for them.”

## ‘A sign something could be going on’

If a child is experiencing a mental health issue, don’t look for them to verbally ask for help. Rather, look instead for emotional or physiological symptoms, says Frossard.

“We see symptoms like tummy aches or school avoidance” in the five Catholic schools in southern Indiana SECC contracts with to provide school counselors, she says. “Most schools have a nurse, so that

log can be checked for regular visits to see if there’s a symptom, or to see if they’re missing a lot to determine if there’s something that might need to be addressed.

“Sometimes it comes out as anger, which is often an emotional bodyguard,” Frossard adds.

Padilla also sees certain child behavior as a red flag to an underlying mental health issue.

“Often when a parent comes to me for issues with a child, it’s almost always a behavior issue first,” she says. “They’re acting out with tantrums, talking back, showing disrespect for teachers.”

Seman adds isolation and withdrawal to the list of symptoms pointing to a bigger issue in a child.

“If they’re avoiding activities or people or places that they used to enjoy, that’s a sign that something could be going on,” she says.

## ‘Unaddressed issues grow over time’

All three specialists agree: Whether it’s physiological issues, behavior issues, negative self-talk or withdrawal, abnormal patterns should be addressed as soon as possible.

“Children don’t even know what questions to

themselves,” says Seman. “Unaddressed issues grow over time and can turn into negative feelings toward the self. They will come out as an adult—and bigger than when the issue started. That will have a ripple effect on their family, their children, their work.”

She advises parents to talk with their children when negative behaviors or patterns arise.

“Try to come from a place of curiosity,” Seman says. “Word [your concern] along the lines of, ‘I’ve seen this [behavior or issue] lately. I’m curious. Can you tell me more?’ Or ‘This doesn’t seem like your normal self. Can we talk about this?’

“Normalize their feelings. Say, ‘I’ve had feelings like that before, too. That’s normal. If you’re open to talking to me, I’d love to talk with you, or maybe we can find someone you’re comfortable talking to.’ ”

Having parents involved in addressing a child’s mental health issue is essential, says Frossard.

“I can’t say enough about supportive caregiving,” the social worker notes. “If I’m working with a kid, I’m working with their parents, partnering with them and talking with them. Telling them, ‘You’re the expert here. You know your child.’ ”

Parents talking with their children about issues helps children develop emotional skills later in life, Padilla adds.

“Children often don’t even know what questions to

ask,” she says. “So, the parent can express their own feeling: ‘I feel really sad that grandma died.’ And [the child] can say, ‘Oh! That’s what I feel!’ Or ‘Oh! It’s OK that I feel this way.’ They learn from the parent about how to cope.”

Even if counseling is sought, parents play a crucial role in resolving a child’s mental health issue, says Padilla.

“While I do see children for therapy, I like to refer to it as family counseling,” she explains. “Because when my client is a child, truly the whole family is involved.”

## ‘The simple tenets of our faith can help’

Family is where the foundations of well-being are laid. When that foundation includes the Catholic faith, seeking a Catholic counselor for a child can have added benefits.

“If the family is Catholic, you can trust that a Catholic counselor will give feedback and help in line with what you teach at home, as opposed to lines of thinking that might be against what the Church teaches,” says Seman, the owner and founder of Emmaus Catholic Counseling.

She sees this truth to be especially relevant with gender dysphoria.

“Before opening my practice, I worked in a community mental health center,” she recalls. “A third to half of the children I saw were struggling with gender identity—that’s not including the high schoolers.”

Being required to “write letters” in support of

gender-transitioning processes and procedures—which the Catholic Church oppose—proved a moral dilemma for Seman. She founded her practice to avoid such moral conflicts.

“Secular therapy is not all bad,” she says. “Some secular therapists may have far more training with a particular issue.

“But if the issue is related to identity or things not as severe, I would recommend a Catholic therapist.”

For Padilla, she sees the basic teachings of Catholicism being particularly helpful to young children.

“The simple tenets of our faith can help them get through so much,” says Padilla, an independent counselor in Greenwood.

Children more readily embrace truths like, “You are not alone” and “God is with us,” she says.

“I think kids can understand the soldiers were mean to Jesus, so he understands your pain when someone is mean to you. Faith can help them understand the moment and make more sense later on.”

Talking with kids about hardships Jesus, Mary and the saints endured “can make them feel like they have companions,” says Padilla.

But the most important truth to share with children—“especially if there’s bullying, if they’re feeling lonely or with divorce”—is that God loves them, she says.

“Children believe it more truly and simply. They don’t feel the need to question it.

“That can be such a comfort, that God is there even if we can’t see him, that he loves you and is going through this with you.” †



# Parishes prepare to host Our Lady of Guadalupe celebrations

**Criterion staff report**

The following Masses and special events for the feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe throughout central and southern Indiana were reported to *The Criterion*.

**Holy Spirit Parish**, 7243 E. 10th St. Indianapolis.  
—Dec. 11: 10 p.m. Mass in Spanish  
—Dec. 12: 7 p.m. bilingual Mass

**St. Ambrose Parish**, 325 S. Chestnut St., Seymour.  
—Dec. 12: 4-6 a.m. *mañanitas*; 4:30 p.m. rosary; 6 p.m. Mass

**St. Anthony Parish**, 337 N. Warman Ave., Indianapolis.  
—Dec. 9: Feast of St. Juan Diego, 6 p.m. Mass in Spanish; 7 p.m. rosary in Spanish  
—Dec. 10: 8:30 a.m. Mass in Spanish; 9:30 a.m. rosary in Spanish  
—Dec. 11: 6 p.m. traditional dance; 6:30 p.m. serenade; 7:30 p.m. choir in church; 8 p.m. dance; 8:30 p.m. choir; 9 p.m. apparitions re-enactment; 9:30 p.m. families sing; 10 p.m. *mariachi*; 11 p.m. Mass in Spanish  
—Dec. 12, midnight-1 a.m. *mariachi*; 5:45 p.m. Mass in Spanish; 6:45 p.m. rosary in Spanish, followed by fellowship

**St. Bartholomew Parish**, 1306 27th St., Columbus.  
—Dec. 11: 9-11 p.m. devotional activities; 11 p.m. Mass  
—Dec. 12: midnight *mañanitas*; 6 p.m. Mass, followed by dinner

**St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, St Mary Campus**, 720 N. "A" St., Richmond.  
—Dec. 12: 6:30 p.m. Mass, social following in school gym

**St. Gabriel the Archangel Parish**, 6000 W. 34th St., Indianapolis.  
—Dec. 11: 7 p.m. rosary followed by youth apparitions re-enactment, dances, choirs, *mariachi*  
—Dec. 12: midnight *mañanitas* and Spanish Mass; 6 p.m. bilingual Mass; 8 p.m. Mass in Spanish

**St. Joseph Parish**, 1125 E. Broadway St., Shelbyville.  
—Dec. 12: 6 p.m. rosary; 6:30 p.m. Aztec dance;

7 p.m. Mass; 8 p.m. apparitions re-enactment; 8:30 p.m. *mañanitas*; 9 p.m. fellowship in cafeteria

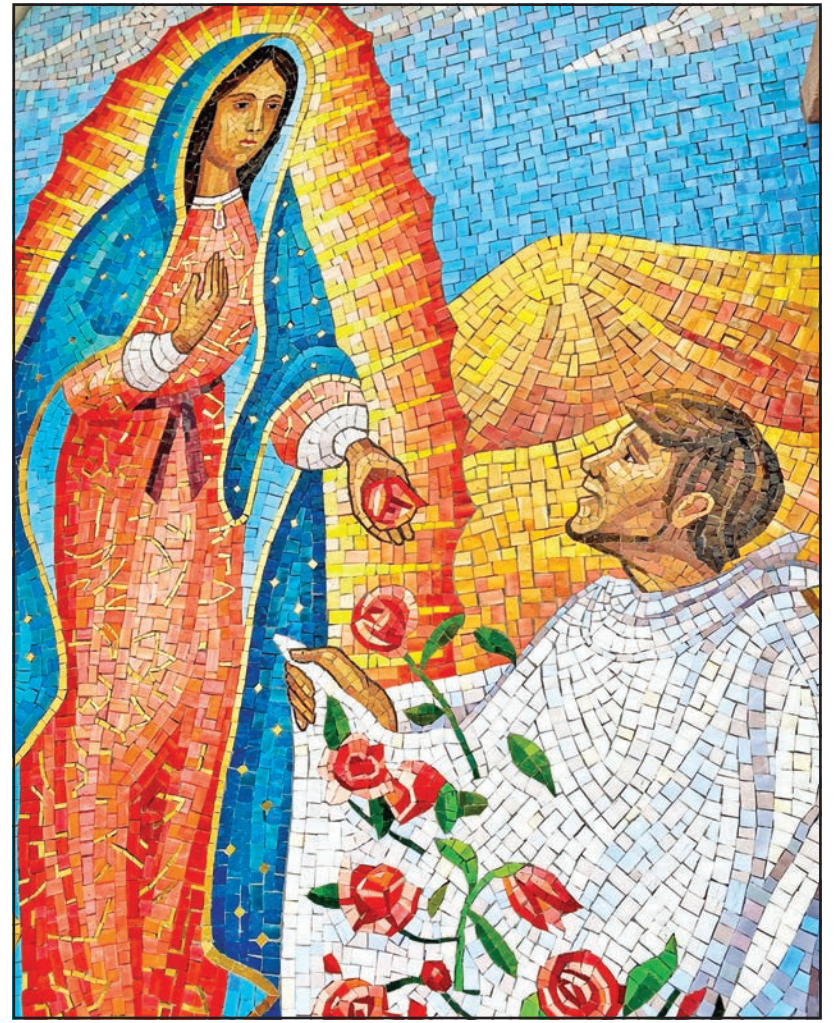
**St. Lawrence Parish**, 6944 E. 46th St., Indianapolis.  
—Dec. 3-11: 7-8 p.m. novena in church  
—Dec. 11: 10:30 p.m. Aztec dancers; 11 p.m. Mass in Spanish  
—Dec. 12: midnight *mañanitas* and *mariachi*; 6:30 p.m. Aztec dancers; 7 p.m. Mass in Spanish, 8 p.m. apparitions re-enactment

**St. Mary Parish**, 317 N. New Jersey St., Indianapolis.  
—Dec. 11: 8 p.m. outdoor procession; 9 p.m. rosary; 10 p.m. Mass in Spanish; 11 p.m. *danza*  
Dec. 12—midnight *mañanitas*; 6:30 p.m. rosary; 7 p.m. *danza*; 7:30 p.m. Mass in Spanish; 8:30 p.m. fellowship

**St. Mary Parish**, 415 E. Eighth St., New Albany.  
—Dec. 11: 10 p.m. rosary; 10:45 p.m. apparitions re-enactment; 11:15 p.m. hymns and serenades  
—Dec. 12: 6 p.m. rosary; 7 p.m. bilingual Mass, followed by dinner in Trinity Hall

**St. Monica Parish**, 6131 N. Michigan Road, Indianapolis.  
—Dec. 11: 7 p.m. *mañanitas*, rosary, apparitions re-enactment, *mariachi*  
—Dec. 12: midnight Mass in Spanish with Aztec dancers; 6 p.m. Mass in Spanish followed by procession with Aztec dancers, reception in gym with music and *Chinelos* dancers

**St. Patrick Parish**, 950 Prospect St., Indianapolis.  
—Dec. 9: Feast of St. Juan Diego 7 p.m. Mass in Spanish  
—Dec. 11: 11 p.m. Mass followed *mariachi*  
—Dec. 12: 6:30 a.m. *mañanitas* with *mariachi*; 7 p.m. Mass in Spanish



A mosaic depicts Our Lady of Guadalupe giving St. Juan Diego roses at a Guadalupe shrine at St. Juan Diego Catholic Church in Pasadena, Texas, on Dec. 13, 2021. (CNS photo/James Ramos, Texas Catholic Herald)

**St. Paul Catholic Center**, 1413 E. 17th St., Bloomington.  
—Dec. 11: 10 p.m. presentation of the story of Our Lady of Guadalupe and St. Juan Diego followed by music  
—Dec. 12: midnight Mass, followed by *convivio* (breakfast gathering) at 1 a.m.†



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# SIMPLY CATHOLIC

## Saints provide model of Advent preparation for coming of Christ

By Bert Ghezzi

(OSV News)—Advent prepares us for Jesus' coming at Christmas and for his coming into our lives afresh. No one knows how to get ready to welcome Christ better than the saints.

They express their love for Christ by putting him first in their hearts. They make room for him by clearing out the clutter of sins and faults. The saints pursue holiness by embracing the Lord's teaching and lifestyle.

They respond to his graces by practicing spiritual disciplines like prayer, Scripture study, fasting and almsgiving. And the saints express their love for God by reaching out to others with the good news. They especially dedicate themselves to caring for the poor and marginalized.

So, let's make the most of this Advent and spend it with four representative saints, imitating the ways that they opened their hearts to Jesus.

### —St. Thérèse of Lisieux (1873–1897)

We are attracted to St. Thérèse because she was an ordinary person. Raised in a faithful Catholic family, she was doted on by her father, teased by her sisters and suffered the pain of loss.

Her youth was troubled by her mother's death and by two sisters entering religious life. But on Christmas 1887, Thérèse experienced a conversion that released her spiritual sadness. "Love filled my heart. I forgot myself, and henceforth I was happy," she said.

The next year, when Thérèse was only 15, her bishop allowed her to join the Carmelite monastery at Lisieux. She wanted to become a missionary and a martyr, but soon realized that neither option was open to a cloistered nun.

So, she sought the Holy Spirit for another way to serve the Lord Jesus. Reflecting on Scripture, Thérèse learned to do the loving thing in every situation, which she discovered was the fuel that fired the faith of martyrs and saints. Doing the least of actions for love became the secret of what she described as her "little way."

What does a 19th-century nun have to do with us? Juggling the duties of family, work or school, navigating freeways and keeping up with the digital world, we don't have much time for pursuing holiness, do we?

But that's where Thérèse sets the example for us. Her simplicity shows us that we, too, can be holy right in the middle of our everyday lives.

### —Venerable Matt Talbot (1856–1925)

For 16 years, Venerable Matt Talbot was a daily drunk. Then one day, an unanticipated conversion transformed him and he became a model penitent following Jesus Christ.

As a child of a poor family in Dublin, Matt had to forgo school for a job. After a year of basic education, he



A statue of St. Thérèse of Lisieux is seen at the National Shrine of St. Thérèse in Darien, Ill. St. Thérèse is known for seeking holiness by doing "the loving thing in every situation." (CNS photo/Nancy Wiechec)

started working for a wine merchant. And Matt started drinking heavily at the early age of 12.

His father beat him and made him change jobs—but nothing could stop Matt's habit. He said that when he was intoxicated, he occasionally thought about the Blessed Mother and prayed an off-handed Hail Mary. Matt speculated later that she had something to do with his conversion.

One day in 1884, everything suddenly changed. Matt had been out of work several days and expected his buddies to take him drinking. When they snubbed him, he made a decision that transformed his life.

When he arrived at home, his mother said, "You're home early, Matt, and you're sober!" He replied, "Yes, mother, I am, and I'm going to take the pledge." The next day he went to confession and made a sobriety pledge for three months.

But Matt extended three months of going without alcohol into 41 years. In 1891, Matt found community support by joining the Franciscan Third Order. He lived the rest of his life quietly, working and praying. St. Paul VI declared him venerable in 1975.

At a time when addictions to alcohol, other drugs and pornography are running rampant, Matt Talbot stands as an exemplar of the ways to freedom and holiness through Jesus.

### —Blessed Anne Mary Taigi (1769-1837)

A model woman, Blessed Anne Mary managed a large household in Rome for nearly five decades. She handled finances with little money, patiently cared for a difficult extended family and entertained a constant stream of guests. She did all this full of faith and good cheer.

At age 21, Anne Mary married Domenico Taigi, a servant in a Roman palace. They had seven children, two of whom died in childbirth. Early in her marriage, Anne Mary experienced a religious conversion. She simplified her life, initiating practices of prayer and self-denial that she pursued the rest of her life in following Jesus Christ.

Anne Mary took the spiritual lead in her family. The day began with morning prayer and Mass, and ended with reading the lives of the saints and praying the rosary.

The Taigis had little of their own, but Anne Mary always found ways of providing for those who had less. She also took in her hard-to-get-along-with parents and her widowed daughter, Sophie, with her six children.

Domenico's violent temper often disrupted the family. But Anne Mary was always able to calm him and restore peaceful relationships. In his old age, Domenico gave this touching tribute to his wife:

"With her wonderful tact, she was able to maintain a heavenly peace in our home. And that even though we were a large household full of people with very different temperaments.

"I often came home tired, moody and cross, but she always succeeded in soothing and cheering me. And due to her, I corrected some of my faults. If I were a young man and could search the whole world to find such a wife, it would be vain. I believe that God has received her

into heaven because of her great virtue. And I hope that she will pray for me and our family."

We may imagine that becoming a saint requires heroics like founding a religious order or converting people in faraway places who have never heard of the Gospel. But Blessed Anne Mary shows us that the daily faithful care of a family requires more than enough heroism to make us holy.

### —Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati (1901-1925)

Pope St. John Paul II celebrated Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati as a man of the Beatitudes.

Athletic and strong, he devoted himself to the weak and malformed. He was wealthy, but he lived in poverty so he could give everything to the poor. He was gregarious, but a lover of solitude. He was rambunctious, the life of every party and a practical joker, but at prayer he was solemn, reflective and quiet.

As a teenager, Pier Giorgio made friends of the poor in Turin's back streets and gave them whatever he had—his money, his shoes, his overcoat. "Jesus comes to me every morning in holy Communion," he replied to a friend who asked why the hovels did not repulse him. "I repay him in my very small way by visiting the poor. The house may be sordid, but I am going to Christ."

Pier Giorgio saw the need for social change to relieve the causes of poverty. As a university student, he decided to major in mechanical engineering so that he could work with miners, who were especially disadvantaged. He was a leader in student political organizations and actively opposed Benito Mussolini and the fascists.

At the same time, he was the organizer of student parties, games and ski trips to the Alps where he would lead his friends in prayer. Afterward, they relaxed and enjoyed food, wine, cigars and songs.

Blessed Pier Giorgio has become a hero of contemporary young adult Catholics. They recognize his high Christian ideals, still held while pursuing the same pleasures that they enjoy. They gravitate to this handsome and charming saint who delighted in reciting the poetry of Dante, praying the rosary in a booming voice and spending a night in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

### —Christ's final coming

Advent anticipates not only Jesus' coming to us as a baby in Bethlehem. It also looks forward to his final coming in glory.

Since the heavenly Father alone knows the day of the end, the Lord cautioned us always to be watchful and to conduct ourselves in uprightness. When Jesus comes as the bridegroom to wed the Church, we do not want to be as unprepared as the five foolish virgins in Jesus' parable (see Mt 25:1-13).

So, this Advent, following the saints, may we decide always to love God above all and to do the loving thing in every circumstance.

(Bert Ghezzi is the author of many books including *Voices of the Saints* and *The Power of Daily Prayer*. He lives near Orlando, Fla.) †



Italian Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati was a struggling student who excelled in mountain climbing. He had complete faith in God and persevered through college, dedicating himself to helping the poor and supporting Church social teaching. He died at 24 and was beatified by Pope St. John Paul II in 1990. He is pictured in an undated photo. (OSV News file photo)



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

## Transgender baptism: How the secular media misinterpreted Pope Francis

It felt like there was a seismic shift in Church teaching concerning transgenderism in recent weeks. And that's because so many headlines got the story wrong.



*The New York Times*, for example, reported: "Pope Francis, who has made reaching out to LGBTQ Catholics a hallmark of his papacy, has made clear that transgender people can be baptized, serve as godparents and be witnesses at church weddings, furthering his vision of a more inclusive Church."

### So what actually happened?

—Responding to pastoral questions in a doctrinal note issued from the Vatican, Pope Francis and Cardinal Víctor Manuel Fernández offered a nuanced response to several pastoral questions.

The document, signed on Oct. 31 and posted on the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith's (DDF) website on Nov. 8, addresses the participation of "transsexual and homo-affective persons" in baptisms and weddings. For our purposes here, I'll just address the question of whether or not a transgender person, even one who has undergone medical intervention, can be baptized.

Before we get to that, recall that Pope Francis has consistently and unequivocally denounced transgender ideology throughout his pontificate.

Speaking in Hungary in April, the Holy Father warned Hungarian civil authorities from falling prey to the

"ideological colonization" of gender theory. A month before, he said the same thing to the journalist Elisabetta Piqué of *La Nación*: "Gender ideology, today, is one of the most dangerous ideological colonizations."

In 2016, Pope Francis told the bishops of Poland, "Today children—children!—are taught in school that everyone can choose his or her sex. Why are they teaching this? Because the books are provided by the persons and institutions that give you money. These forms of ideological colonization are also supported by influential countries. And this [is] terrible!" His encyclical letters—including "*Amoris Laetitia*" and "*Laudato Si*"—warn against gender ideology.

The pope has not reversed Catholic teaching. We receive our bodies as male or female. This is settled perennial Catholic teaching, grounded in Scripture and sound philosophy. Under no circumstances can the note from the DDF be read as approval of transgender ideology or the idea of gender identity.

### So what exactly does the note say?

—How to interpret the note regarding baptism, the document provides nuanced guidance, emphasizing pastoral prudence. It urges that each situation be carefully considered to safeguard the sacrament, prevent scandal and address any doubts about the moral or subjective disposition of the person involved.

The document instructs that a transgender person be admitted to baptism under the same conditions as the rest of the faithful. What are those?

In order to be baptized, the Church teaches in the *Code of Canon Law*: "For an adult to be baptized, the person must have manifested the intention to receive baptism, have been instructed sufficiently about the truths of the faith and Christian obligations, and have been tested in the Christian life through the catechumenate" (#865). Accepting Jesus Christ and seeking baptism means renouncing error, rejecting Satan and embracing Catholic teaching, including teaching on human sexuality.

The note reaffirms the Church's teaching that baptism, when received without repentance for serious sins, imparts a "sacramental character" that is indelible but does not in that instance confer sanctifying grace.

It would remain, on my reading of the note, inadvisable to admit a post-operative transgender person to the sacrament who has not clearly embraced Church teaching. In such a case, scandal and confusion would inevitably ensue. Additionally, as the document clarifies, no sanctifying grace would be conferred.

In essence, the Vatican's recent guidance does not signify a substantive change in Church teaching but rather emphasizes the need for pastoral prudence, careful discernment and an unwavering commitment to perennial Catholic teaching.

In a word, it underscores the Church's duty to accompany her sons and daughters on the path to conversion while upholding the sanctity of the sacraments and avoiding scandal among the faithful.

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

Guest Column/Scott P. Richert

## Cookies straight from the oven: a powerful Advent lesson on delayed gratification

When my sisters and I were young, my mother would spend all of Advent baking cookies and making candy. That may hardly seem remarkable; after all, countless millions of Christmas cookies are baked and consumed every year between Thanksgiving and Christmas Day.



But my mother didn't eat any of the cookies she baked, and neither did we—not before Christmas, that is. Every sugar cookie, Polish wedding cake, fruit cookie, square of fudge and chunk of peanut brittle was packed away in vintage green Tupperware or metal tins (depending on whether they were intended for us or for relatives and friends), to be brought out only once Christmas Day had dawned.

Four or five decades later, that seems remarkable, because what economists call "delayed gratification" is simply not part of American life anymore—and that's as true of Catholics and other Christians as it is of the average American.

Fifty years ago, the question "What do you want for Christmas?" meant something different than it does today, when a couple of clicks on Amazon can satisfy the desire of a child of any age with next-day (or even same-day) delivery.

When I was a child, I thought as a child, which meant that, of course, I wanted to eat just one sugar cookie hot out of the oven or sneak one piece of fudge. But Mom never let me do so, because satisfying my desire wasn't the point of her baking. In fact, if anything, the purpose of all of her preparations throughout Advent was the opposite: to increase my desire, and to direct it toward its proper end.

If you eat it before Christmas, a Christmas cookie is just a cookie.

### A bigger lesson

My mother entered into eternal life in the early morning hours of Nov. 1, All Saints Day. Through the days and nights before she quietly passed from us, my father and my sister Monica and I held those hands that had mixed and shaped and baked all of

those cookies just a few feet away from where the hospital bed was set up in the living room of the house that had been our family home for all but a handful of months of my parents' 56 years of marriage. Polish wedding cakes and peanut brittle were the last things on our minds as we prepared ourselves and one another for a life without her.

But a few days later, when Father Charles Hall, the priest who had anointed Mom seven weeks earlier and who would celebrate her funeral Mass on Nov. 6, asked us for a particular memory of Mom that would help him to understand who she really was, the first thing that came to mind was her Advent baking. Everything we do reveals something about where our heart lies. Too often, by necessity as much as by choice, we are caught up in the here and now. There's work to be done, bills to be paid, clothes to be washed, children to be fed.

But as much as necessity may seem to force our hand, there's an element of choice in our actions as well. And that choice involves not simply what we do but why we choose to do it. I do not know, and of course, I cannot ask her now, whether Mom intended to teach us a lesson with her Advent baking.

But as we talked with Father Charles, we realized that she had done just that.

To be a Christian means to live always with a sense of longing, of that joyful expectation tinged with sorrow that comes from knowing that the greatest desire of our heart will never be fulfilled in this earthly life. That, perhaps more than any other part of the Christian experience, is a reality that the modern world rejects.

A few hours after our mother passed from this life, my sister and I stood beside our father in the church where we had first received the gift of faith, and we sang with all the saints in glory of the life yet to come.

And as we prayed for the repose of my mother's soul, we gave thanks for the years we had spent with her, and for the cookies and candy through which Mom had prepared us all for living that day and the rest of our lives in the deep longing for, and joyful expectation of, our reunion before the throne of God.

(Scott P. Richert is publisher for OSV.) †

*Everything we do reveals something about where our heart lies. Too often, by necessity as much as by choice, we are caught up in the here and now. There's work to be done, bills to be paid, clothes to be washed, children to be fed.*

Guest Column/Richard Etienne

## As farmers, as Christians, we are called each day to sow seeds of faith

I come from a family of farmers. We sow seeds.

We don't control how they grow or what influences the surrounding environment will have on each seed as it matures.



And although we can sometimes influence some conditions that impact that final crop, in the end, we don't often see those final products.

My sister is a religious education teacher in a Catholic elementary school in Beech Grove. Incidentally, she is also a Benedictine sister. Three of my brothers are priests. One has

additionally been given the responsibility of being an archbishop.

I have also been involved in "farming." I was blessed to have played a role in establishing a "To Encounter Christ" retreat movement in the Evansville Diocese during my 10-year professional career in full-time youth

ministry. I planted seeds of faith and watched as many of those seeds bore fruit.

I still "farm" in the many relationships that I now have in retired life, but especially in the family relationships of my children and grandchildren.

My youngest sister also raised three children and now is very involved in the faith development of her four grandchildren.

This to me, is another form of "farming."

We have all been involved with sowing seeds of faith for large parts of our lives. That is the job of every baptized person: to spread and sow the seeds of faith wherever we find ourselves in life.

Usually, it is in very small ways when a conversation arises that allows us to add a Catholic Christian perspective to an ongoing dialogue.

And in some very special situations, there are moments in which a person may find themselves that allow for a dramatic impact for witnessing to the Gospel—for example, in very large assemblies when

given the opportunity to speak.

"A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path and was trampled, and the birds of the sky ate it up. Some seed fell on rocky ground, and when it grew, it withered for lack of moisture. Some seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew with it and choked it. And some seed fell on good soil, and when it grew, it produced fruit a hundredfold" (Lk 8:5-8).

In the end, a farmer doesn't have ultimate control over the soil and where the seed lands. Sometimes they won't know the outcome of a "crop" in which he or she may have played a role in sowing.

Our faith teaches us to sow seeds as part of our vocation as missionary disciples.

As a farmer, are you doing your part?

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



First Sunday of Advent/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

# The Sunday Readings

Sunday, December 3, 2023

- Isaiah 63:16b-17, 19b, 64:2-7
- 1 Corinthians 1:3-9
- Mark 13:33-37



This weekend, the Church begins Advent. It begins the use of biblical readings from Year B of its three-year cycle of Sunday Mass readings.

It also is the start of a new liturgical year. Each liturgical year is carefully planned so that the seasons and major feasts guide us through our worship into a closer relationship with Christ and the Church.

The first reading for Mass this weekend is from the third section of Isaiah, composed when the Jews were in a difficult situation. Years before, Hebrews exiled to Babylon had been allowed to return to the Holy Land. But this return brought the exiles home to no paradise. Life was miserable.

The prophet called for faith in God, not only as almighty but as unrelentingly true to the covenant, to the divine pledge that he would protect his chosen people.

The prophet appealed to God in the name of the people for relief, but without saying that the people are being treated unfairly. That was the case at least in terms of God's care for them, although the prophet made clear that sin led the people away from God. This estrangement has produced their woes.

St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians provides the next reading. Counseling the Christians of Corinth was a challenge for Paul. Not only did temptation and vice surround them at every turn, but they were also a quarrelsome community. Paul had to call them to faithfulness. He also had to try to influence them to put aside their differences with each other.

He saw the disciples there as having enormous religious potential, despite all odds produced by their surroundings and the human inclination to sin. He knew through the help of God's grace that he could draw them more closely to God and infuse the goodness of Christianity into the circles in which they moved.

St. Mark's Gospel is the source of the last reading. It offers us a theme

found often in the New Testament, namely that Christ will come to Earth again. In this second coming, the Lord will be the great victor and judge of all creation.

By the time the Gospels were written, even in the case of the Gospel of Mark, considered by many as the oldest of the four as they now exist, Christians were numerous and geographically distributed enough to catch the public eye. Yet they were still too small to stand up to their enemies. The culture was an enemy. Soon, the political system would be an enemy.

Being a Christian became a capital crime, as the martyrs were horribly to know.

Understandably, the atmosphere was tense, uncertain and frightening. Thoughts of the second coming naturally were appealing. Jesus will come again, but we know not when. We in fact do not know the future.

In the meantime, we must acknowledge God, live in his law and trust in our reward.

If we are with God, we need not fear.

## Reflection:

The prayers of the Mass are the united statements of all believers, spoken through and by the celebrant, to proclaim our faith and our trust in Almighty God.

We speak with the priest, in our faith and worship. But are we sincere? Are we good Catholics? Does the priest praying the prayers at Mass represent our genuinely authentic faith, our commitment to Christ?

Mark's Gospel greatly assists us in forming solid faith. Only God is permanent and real.

Advent is an opportunity to receive the gift of union with God, to realize that his love for us is real.

If we respond to the opportunity God gives us in Advent, then Christmas becomes not a national holiday, or even a holy religious commemoration. It becomes a moment when we encounter God, firmly believing that Jesus will come again. Here and now we can know the Lord. †

## Daily Readings

### Monday, December 4

St. John Damascene, priest and doctor of the Church  
Isaiah 2:1-5  
Psalm 122:1-9  
Matthew 8:5-11

### Tuesday, December 5

Isaiah 11:1-10  
Psalm 72:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17  
Luke 10:21-24

### Wednesday, December 6

St. Nicholas, bishop  
Isaiah 25:6-10a  
Psalm 23:1-6  
Matthew 15:29-37

### Thursday, December 7

St. Ambrose, bishop and doctor of the Church  
Isaiah 26:1-6  
Psalm 118:1, 8-9, 19-21, 25-27a  
Matthew 7:21, 24-27

### Friday, December 8

The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary  
Genesis 3:9-15, 20  
Psalm 98:1-4  
Ephesians 1:3-6, 11-12  
Luke 1:26-38

### Saturday, December 9

St. Juan Diego Cuauhtlatotzin  
Isaiah 30:19-21, 23-26  
Psalm 147:1-6  
Matthew 9:35-10:1, 5a, 6-8

### Sunday, December 10

Second Sunday of Advent  
Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11  
Psalm 85:9-14  
2 Peter 3:8-14  
Mark 1:1-8

## Question Corner/Jenna Marie Cooper

### Church has no set guidance on when to put up, take down Christmas trees

When I was a kid, we put up the Christmas tree on Christmas Eve and took it down a day or two after Christmas. As an adult, I put the tree up a day or two after Thanksgiving and left it up until Jan. 2. Now as a Catholic, what is the best way for me to handle the Christmas tree? When does it go up and when does it come down? (Indiana)



Unlike certain other kinds of holiday decorations, such as an Advent wreath, a Christmas tree is neither a sacramental nor part of a liturgy. Because of this, there are no strict right or wrong answers as to when a Catholic should put up or take down a Christmas tree. Yet depending on your family's own particular holiday traditions and spiritual needs, there are some dates that might be especially appropriate in your own household.

In terms of when to put up a Christmas tree, there is nothing to prevent a Catholic from setting up a Christmas tree right after Thanksgiving if they so choose. But for other families waiting until Christmas Eve to set up a tree could be a helpful

way of respecting the season of Advent as a time of quiet and even penitential preparation for the coming of Christ at Christmas. In contrast to the secular emphasis on pre-Christmas celebrations, waiting until Christmas to set up a tree makes it clear that Advent is not Christmas, but rather its own important season of waiting.

And, of course, it's always possible to find a middle ground between these two extremes. For example, perhaps a family could set up a Christmas tree earlier on during Advent, but only start decorating it closer to Christmas. Or, you could

take some cues from our liturgy as for when to set up your Christmas tree. One option would be to wait until *Gaudete* Sunday, the third Sunday of Advent when rose vestments are used at Mass and the Church's prayers specifically tell us to rejoice at the closeness of Jesus' upcoming birthday.

Another liturgically fitting day to set up a Christmas tree would be on Dec. 17, one week before Christmas Eve. This is the day when the Church starts praying the "O antiphons," which are the inspiration for the Advent hymn "O Come, O Come Emmanuel." They appear before the Gospel at daily Mass and before the "Magnificat" in Evening Prayer in the Liturgy of the Hours.

The beginning of the "O antiphons" marks a shift in the Church's liturgy, where Christmas is anticipated with a more immediate sense of urgency.

You can use a similar sense of liturgically informed prudential decision-making when deciding when to take down your Christmas tree. Although, in my own opinion, it's good to keep in mind that for Catholics Christmas Day is just the very beginning of a whole Christmas season.

The Church celebrates the octave (the eight days) following Christmas almost as though it were Christmas day itself. So, Jan. 2, the day after the octave concludes, could be a good day to take down a Christmas tree. Still, you would be more than justified in keeping your tree up even longer.

Jan. 6 is the traditional date of the feast of the Epiphany or "Three Kings' Day," a feast which marks the last day of the 12 days of Christmas. But on the Church's liturgical calendar, the Christmas season doesn't end until the feast of the Baptism of the Lord, which the Church ordinarily celebrates the Sunday after Epiphany.

Finally, even if Ordinary Time begins on the Monday after the feast of the Baptism of the Lord, the latest feast in our celebration of the incarnation is actually the feast of the Presentation of the Lord on Feb. 2. This is the last day that the Vatican keeps up their Christmas tree and crèche in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican, so a Catholic who follows suit can hardly be criticized for keeping up their Christmas decorations until this point.

(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

### Beautiful Jesus

By Vicky Roosa

Beautiful Jesus  
Wonderful Son  
Born for all ages  
His kingdom to come.

Love never ending  
Arms open wide  
For you and for me  
He suffered and died.

O how I love you  
With all my heart

You called me by name  
From my very start.

How can I thank you  
How can I serve  
Your love and forgiveness  
I do not deserve.

So here is my heart  
Forever to hold  
To soften and open  
Caress and to mold.



(Vicky Roosa is a member of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Richmond, where she serves as parish catechetical leader. Photo: A teenager raises her eyes heavenward in a song of praise after receiving Communion during the closing Mass of the National Catholic Youth Conference in Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis on Nov. 18.)

(Photo by Natalie Hoefler)



# 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.

**AMBERGER, George F.**, 94, St. Louis, Batesville, Nov. 5. Father of John Amberger. Brother of Bernard Amberger. Grandfather of three. Step-grandfather of two. Great-grandfather of four.

**BAYS, Janice**, 83, St. Joseph, Corydon, Nov. 10. Mother of Jolene Downs, Jaime, Jay and John Bays, Jr. Sister of JoAnn Jeffries, June King, Jean and Jeffrey Vaughn. Grandmother of 10. Great-grandmother of 13.

**BULACH, Antoinette**, 100, St. Peter, Brookville, Sept. 30. Mother of Dorothy Frensemeier and Joe Bulach. Grandmother of six. Great-grandmother of 12.

**CAMPBELL, Marilyn A.**, 77, St. Ann, Jennings County, Nov. 8. Wife of William Campbell. Mother of Amy Henderson and Brad Campbell. Sister of Janet Campbell, Patty Cardinal, Kathy Hurley, Linda Kovacich, Joann Wernke, Bill, Philip and Tony Daeger. Grandmother of three.

**DEAK, Judith A.**, 84, St. Mark the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Oct. 18. Mother of Jane Jennings, Laurie, Dan, Michael and Paul Deak. Sister of Rosie Padgett and Basil Pflumm. Grandmother of 17. Great-grandmother of nine.

**DELL, William M.**, 67, St. Bartholomew, Columbus, Nov. 6. Brother of Coleen Silvergerg, Nick, Rob and Tom Dell.

**DREWES, Jean Marie**, 90, St. Michael, Brookville, Oct. 31. Mother of Deborah Kaiser, Diane, David and Stephen Drewes. Sister of Florence Lunsford, Ohmer, Jr., Orville and Virgil Kunkel.

Grandmother of eight. Great-grandmother of eight.

**ELLIOTT, Patricia M. (Throw)**, 89, Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Indianapolis, Nov. 3. Mother of Mary Hasty, Daniel II, Michael, Timothy and William Elliott. Grandmother of 20. Great-grandmother of several.

**FREIBERGER, Eugene A.**, 94, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany, Nov. 1. Father of Janice, Brent, Lane, Mark and Philip Freiburger. Grandfather of eight. Great-grandfather of 16.

**GAYNOR, Ruth M.**, 97, All Saints, Dearborn County, Nov. 10. Mother of Mary Jane Stuerenberg, Dennis, Jake,

John and Ronald Gaynor. Sister of Ellen Bulach, Joan Hoffmeier and Betty Ripperger. Grandmother of 18. Great-grandmother of several.

**GOLDSMITH, Arthur F.**, 96, St. Louis, Batesville, Nov. 8. Father of Connie Bowman, Cathy Laugle, Carla Oesterling, Carin Walsman, Jim, Joe and John Goldsmith. Grandfather of 21. Great-grandfather of 33.

**HOUSEWORTH, Richard E.**, 84, St. Gabriel, Connersville, Oct. 31. Husband of Joyce Houseworth. Father of Rhonda Barnett, David and Marshall Houseworth. Brother of Ramona Penland. Grandfather of eight. Great-grandfather of 10.

**HUTCHINSON, Kevin J.**, 60, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, Oct. 21. Brother of Ellen Gwinn, Gail, James and Robert Hutchinson. Uncle and great-uncle of several.

**JARBOE, Henry C.**, 90, St. Paul, Tell City, Nov. 11. Father of Cathy Hammack, Dale, Jeff, Mike Jarboe. Grandfather of 11. Great-grandfather and great-great-grandfather of several.

**JENDREK, John**, 86, St. Mary, Mitchell, Sept. 21. Husband of Diane Jendrek. Father of Diane Elliott. Stepfather of Chris, Daniel and Michael McCrory. Grandfather of 11. Great-grandfather of four.

**KARBOWSKI, Donald W.**, 90, St. Louis, Batesville, Oct. 31. Father of David, Michael and Thomas Karbowski. Grandfather of six. Great-grandfather of six.

**MCGOWAN, Hugh**, 79, St. Pius X, Indianapolis, Nov. 7. Husband of Jeanmarie McGowan. Father of Mary Ellen Landry, Hugh and Mike McGowan. Brother of Mary Beth Crossin and Bill McGowan. Grandfather of five.

**MEYER, Gregory T.**, 67, Holy Family, Oldenburg, Nov. 3. Brother of Mary Moorman, Janet Rehberger, Shirley Rennekamp, Harold and John Meyer. Uncle of several.

**MURPHY, Brian D.**, 52, St. Pius X, Indianapolis, Nov. 1. Husband of Tracy Murphy. Father of Emma and Liam Murphy. Son of Judy Murphy. Brother of Maureen Lopp, Nora Schmutte, Dan and Kevin Murphy.

**OBERTING, Barbara K.**, 68, St. Mark the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Oct. 21. Wife of Kenneth Oberting. Mother of Michelle, Toni and Kenny Oberting. Sister of Eileen Yeakley. Grandmother of three.

**PONGRACZ, Margaret M.**, 85, St. Bartholomew, Columbus, Nov. 6. Mother of Denise Langhenry, Phillip and William Pongracz. Sister of Theresa and Tom Wontorek. Grandmother of four. Great-grandmother of two.

**RICHARDSON, Elizabeth J. (Deatrick)**, 79, St. Joseph, Corydon, Nov. 10. Mother of Lisa and Marc Richardson. Sister of Patricia Grismore, Teresa King, Juanita Krough, Janice Lind and Ron Deatrick. Grandmother of two.

**SPETH, Thomas**, 84, St. Mark the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Oct. 13. Husband of Edith Speth. Father of Lisa Delaney, Darleen Kahl, Ginger Macy, Theresa Smith, Michelle Strack, Kevin Cauble and Tom Speth. Brother of Angie Egan and David Speth. Grandfather of 24. Great-grandfather of 42.

**WALKER, Walt**, 95, Prince of Peace, Madison, Nov. 6. Father of Shirlee Clevenger. Grandfather of four. Great-grandfather of seven.

**WUESTEFELD, Nathan A.**, 71, St. Peter, Franklin County, Oct. 23. Husband of Judy Wuestefeld. Father of Tina Werner and Tim Wuestefeld. Brother of Clarice Conroy, Connie Lattire and Lois Lunsford. Grandfather of three. †

## Celebrating Black Catholic history



Choir members sing during a Black Catholic History Month Mass on Nov. 18 at the Basilica of St. Patrick's Old Cathedral in New York City. The liturgy was co-sponsored by the Archdiocese of New York and the Diocese of Brooklyn, N.Y. In 1990, the National Black Catholic Clergy Caucus designated November as Black Catholic History Month to celebrate the history and heritage of Black Catholics. (OSV News photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)

### Online Lay Ministry Formation

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

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### REPORT SEXUAL MISCONDUCT NOW

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

- 1 Ethics Point Confidential, Online Reporting**  
[www.archdioceseofindianapolis.ethicspoint.com](http://www.archdioceseofindianapolis.ethicspoint.com) or 888-393-6810
- 2 Victim Assistance Coordinator, Archdiocese of Indianapolis**  
P.O. Box 1410, Indianapolis, IN 46206-1410  
**317-236-1548 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1548**  
[victimassistance@archindy.org](mailto:victimassistance@archindy.org)

## Providence Sister Loretta Picucci ministered in education, served the poor

Providence Sister Loretta Picucci, a member of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods in St. Mary-of-the-Woods, died on Nov. 9 at Mother Theodore Hall on the campus of her religious community's motherhouse. She was 82.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Nov. 21 at the Church of the Immaculate Conception at the motherhouse in St. Mary-of-the-Woods. Burial followed at the sisters' cemetery.

Sister Loretta was born on June 23, 1941, in Chicago. She entered the Sisters of Providence on Sept. 12, 1964, and professed final vows on Aug. 15, 1967.

Sister Loretta earned a bachelor's degree in Latin at Loyola University Chicago in Chicago. During her 59 years as a member of the Sisters of Providence, Sister Loretta ministered

in Catholic schools for 14 years in Illinois, Indiana and Washington, D.C. She later committed herself to serving in California, Illinois and Mississippi in such ministries as day care, teaching English as a second language and Hispanic ministry.

Sister Loretta retired to the motherhouse in 2018, where she dedicated herself entirely to prayer.

In the archdiocese, she served at the former St. Mary-of-the-Woods School from 1967-68, the former Holy Cross Central School from 1977-81 and Providence Retirement Home in New Albany.

Sister Loretta is survived by a sister, Josephine Mooney of Pittsburgh.

Memorial gifts may be sent to the Sisters of Providence, 1 Sisters of Providence Road, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN 47876. †



# God plants a seed in everyone; help it flourish, pope tells chaplains

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—  
Be courageous in caring for and accompanying others, helping them to dream big, cultivating their unique gifts



Pope Francis

and flourishing, Pope Francis told university chaplains and pastoral workers.

“The work of education is a true mission in which individuals and situations are accepted with all their lights and shadows—their

shadows, too—with a kind of ‘parental’ love,” the pope said.

“This facilitates in a unique way the growth of those seeds that God has sown within each person,” he said on Nov. 24 in an audience at the Vatican with people taking part in a conference

on pastoral care in Catholic universities, sponsored by the Dicastery for Culture and Education.

Pope Francis told them he had “three approaches that I consider important to your service: to appreciate differences, to accompany with care and to act courageously.

“Each person must be accompanied as he or she is, and that is where the dialogue, the journey and progress begin,” he said, explaining the importance of seeing and appreciating people’s different qualities with patience, openness and creativity.

As the prophet Isaiah said, God “creates the brightness of the sun, but does not despise the flickering light of ‘a dimly burning wick’” (Is 42:3), referring to accepting people’s “lights and shadows” with love, the pope said.

“Believing in the vitality of the

seeds that God sows,” he said, means accompanying and caring “for what is silently growing and coming to light in the, at times, confused thoughts, desires and affections of the young people entrusted to you.

“Your attitude has to be more than just apologetic, dealing with questions and answers, prohibitions: do not be afraid to confront those realities,” he said.

There are “certain ideological currents within the Church, in which people end up being reduced to a figure that is flat, without nuance” and without the “edges,” “shadows,” breadth and depth of real individuals, he said.

Uniformity does not make people flourish, he said. “If we wisely value a person for who he or she is, we can make that person into a work of art.”

Jesus himself “teaches us the art of

caring” and “how to draw out the best from his creatures, by caring for whatever is most fragile and imperfect in them,” the pope said.

“Care for all of them, without seeking immediate results, but in the sure hope that, when you accompany young people and pray for them, miracles spring up,” he said.

The pope also encouraged his audience to “act courageously” since “nurturing the joy of the Gospel in the university environment is an indeed exciting yet demanding undertaking” which requires courage and taking risks.

“Where there are no risks, there are no fruits: this is a rule,” he said.

He told them to do everything they can to help young people “dream and aspire to the measure of Christ: to the height, breadth and depth of his love.” †

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## Employment

**Administrative Assistant**  
**St. Pius X Catholic Church**  
7200 Sarto Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46240  
ksweeney@spxparish.org

St. Pius X is looking for a full-time Administrative Assistant to join the parish staff. As the point of “first contact,” this position is vital to the integrity and professionalism of the Parish Offices. It is critical that this position supports the goal of ensuring efficient operation of the Parish Offices. It is also important that this employee understands and supports the Mission and purpose of the Roman Catholic Church and St. Pius X Parish and be able to participate fully in the practice of the Roman Catholic Faith.

The basic job functions include daily opening and closing of parish administration office. Receiving and placing telephone calls. Greeting guests and parishioners to the parish office. This person should have excellent people and organizational skills with the ability to multi-task: Handle a high

volume of telephone calls with courtesy, speed, accuracy and patience. Some other tasks include:

- Work independently with minimal supervision. Self-motivated, and a sense of discretion.
- Computer proficiency (MS Office—Word, Excel and Outlook).
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills.
- Maintains office record filing system.
- Able to maintain a friendly and professional presence in person, on telephone, email and written correspondence.
- This position will need to be flexible as new tasks come up. Perform auxiliary duties for the parish as requested.

For immediate consideration email: [parish@spxparish.org](mailto:parish@spxparish.org).

## Employment

**Assistant Superintendent, Secondary Education**

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis Office of Catholic Schools, located in downtown Indianapolis, is seeking a full-time Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education to serve as a resource to clergy, administrators, teachers, staff, students, and families in the areas of curricular support, communications, business management, policy guidance, and data analysis. The duties of this position also include serving as a member of the Archdiocesan Schools Team with the Superintendent and other Assistant Superintendents in a mission-driven, Christ-centered, and student-oriented environment.

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis serves Central and Southern Indiana Catholics in over 120 parishes. There are 53 parish schools, 5 archdiocese schools, 6 private/religious order schools, and 3 consortium schools in the heart of Indianapolis. These 67 schools serve over 22,000 students in grades pre-kindergarten through grade 12. With open doors, open arms, and open hearts, the Office of Catholic Schools supports the formation of young people through holistic, engaging, and academically excellent programming that integrates faith, culture, and life as modeled by our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

The position requires a master’s degree in education, business, or a related field and at least five years of educational or business leadership experience, preferably involving school leadership (paid or volunteer) and preferably in Catholic education. Applicants should be professed and practicing Roman Catholics with a deep commitment to Catholic education. Candidates should also have experience in development and/or marketing efforts and be both proponents and role models of lifelong learning.

Applications are due by January 19, 2024. Candidates are expected to be available to assume the responsibilities of the position by July 1, 2024, or sooner.

Please e-mail cover letter, resume, and list of references, in confidence, to Dr. Brian Disney, Superintendent of Catholic Schools, at [bdisney@archindy.org](mailto:bdisney@archindy.org).

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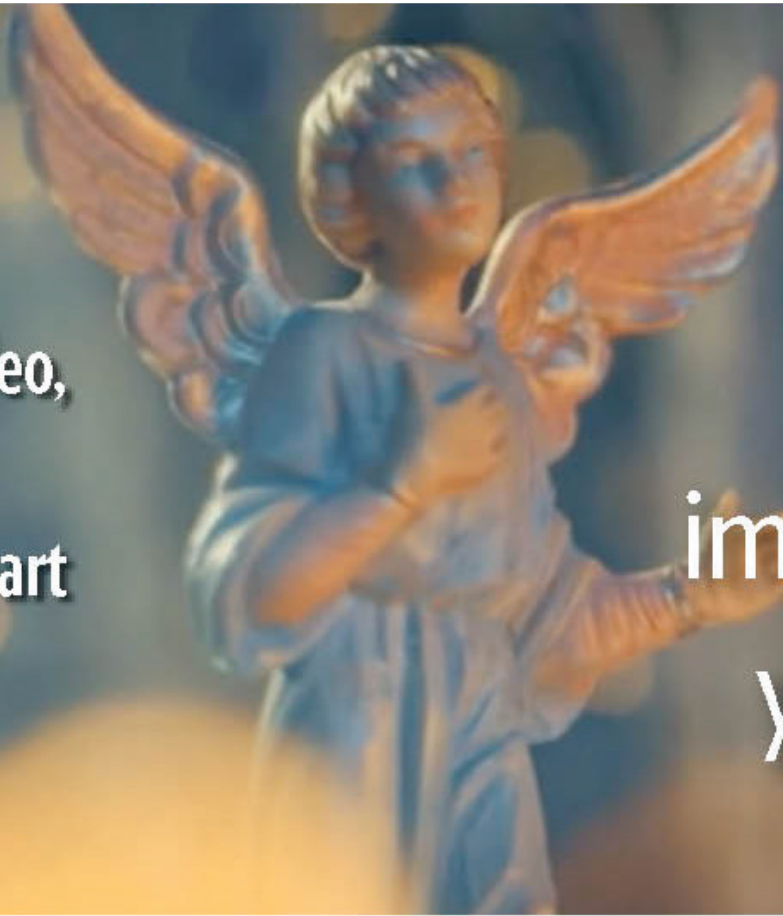
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