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Criterion

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Evangelization Outreach

Every adult can play a key role in ministering to teens, page 12.

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A cross in the sea: a couple's gift to the community that gave them a faith home

By John Shaughnessy

The sight of the large, brightly-colored cross in the middle of the sparkling blue-green waters of the Caribbean Sea is stunning and dreamlike.

Just off the coast of an island in the Central American country of Honduras, overlooking the beach community of Punta Gorda, the cross is a beacon of Christ's love during the day, and its reflection glows and shimmers across the water when it's illuminated at night by a solar light.

Both views make a person wonder how the cross got there, why it was put there and, mainly, who dreamed of it.

After all, the setting of the cross in the sea is the stuff of dreamers and believers.

As stunning as the cross is, so is the knowledge that it is the creative vision of two former members of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Indianapolis—Matt and Nikki Javit.

Having lived in the island community for the past two years, the married couple of 18 years wanted to create a gift to show their gratitude for how they have been embraced so warmly by members of the local Catholic parish who have made them feel so much a part of their community.

"We just wanted to give back because of the kindness they've

See **CROSS**, page 8

As a brightly-colored cross stands out in the Caribbean Sea, Matt and Nikki Javit, former members of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Indianapolis, pose for a photo on the beach of Punta Gorda, Honduras. The Javits shared the cross with members of the faith community of St. Ignatius Parish in Punta Gorda, in appreciation for the way they have embraced the couple during the past two years of living there. (Submitted photo)



Encouragement, adoration are key to fostering priestly vocations, CARA report shows

(OSV News)—Personal encouragement and eucharistic adoration are crucial in fostering vocations to the priesthood, according to data from a newly released report.

On April 15, the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., released the 2024 "Survey of Ordinands to the Priesthood," a report made directly to the Secretariat of Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

The report comes in advance of the 61st annual World Day of Prayer for Vocations, celebrated this year on April 21, the Fourth Sunday of Easter, which is also known as Good Shepherd Sunday in the Latin Church. The Gospel passage (Jn 10:11-18) for the Mass highlights Jesus' role as the Good Shepherd.

The online survey, which CARA has overseen since 2006, was completed by 392 of the 475 total ordinands for 2024 from both diocesan and religious order seminaries who were invited to participate. The ordinands represented 128 dioceses and 29 religious institutes in the U.S.

In the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, Archbishop Charles C. Thompson is scheduled to ordain as priests three transitional deacons—Deacons Anthony Armbruster, Samuel Rosko and Bobby Vogel—at 10 a.m. on June 1 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis.

Most 2024 respondents said they had first considered a vocation when they were 16 years old, and their average age of ordination was 34, a number consistent with the range of 33-37 reported since 1999.

Two thirds (67%) of the ordination class is white; 18% Hispanic or Latino; 11% Asian, Pacific Islander or

See **VOCATIONS**, page 9

Parishioners' voices are heard at synod listening sessions

By Sean Gallagher

Catholics from across central and southern Indiana gathered recently to help contribute to the preparations for the second assembly of the Synod of Bishops on synodality that will be held at the Vatican in October.

Listening sessions were held on March 16 at St. Mark the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis and on March 23 at St. John Paul II Parish in Sellersburg.

A report on the sessions has been submitted to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, which will compile similar reports from dioceses

across the country and then send a report to the Vatican in preparation for the October meeting. The local report, in English and in Spanish, is posted on the archdiocesan website at www.archindy.org/synod.

See **SYNOD**, page 9

Photo: Ken Ogorek, executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Evangelizing Catechesis, speaks on March 16 at St. Mark the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis during a Synod of Bishops listening session. (Submitted photo)



Pope Francis pleads for military restraint in the Middle East

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The morning after Iran launched hundreds of drones and missiles at Israel, Pope Francis pleaded with nations to avoid a further escalation of the violence.

“I make a heartfelt appeal for a halt to any action that might fuel a spiral of violence with the risk of dragging the Middle East into an even greater conflict,” the pope said on April 14 after reciting the “Regina Coeli” prayer with visitors in St. Peter’s Square.

According to the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*, Iran launched 330 exploding drones and missiles at Israeli military facilities late on April 13 and early on April 14. The vast majority of the weapons were intercepted.

Pope Francis told thousands of people gathered in St. Peter’s Square, “I am following in prayer and with concern, also sorrow, the news that has come in the last few hours about the worsening of the situation in Israel because of the intervention by Iran.

“No one should threaten the existence of others,” the pope said. “Instead, all nations should take the side of peace, and help the Israelis and Palestinians to live in two states, side by side, in security.”

Israelis and Palestinians have a “deep and legitimate desire” to live peacefully and independently, he said, “and it is their right! Two neighboring states.”

Once again, Pope Francis urged Israel and Hamas to stop the fighting in Gaza “and let the paths of negotiation be pursued with determination.

“Let that population, plunged into a humanitarian catastrophe, be helped; let the hostages kidnapped months ago be freed at once,” he said, referring to the hundreds of Israelis taken hostage by Hamas in October.

“So much suffering,” he said. “Let us pray for peace. No more war, no more attacks, no more violence! Yes to dialogue and yes to peace!”

Later in his remarks, addressing children and inviting them to participate in the first celebration of World Children’s Day at the Vatican in May, Pope Francis said everyone needs young people’s joy and their hopes “for a better world, a world at peace.

“Brothers and sisters, let’s pray for the children who are suffering because of wars—there are so many—in Ukraine, in Palestine, in Israel, in other parts of the world, in Myanmar,” he said. “Let’s pray for them and for peace.” †

Many opportunities for unique Mass experiences available during National Eucharistic Congress

Criterion staff report

It is only fitting that a national congress focused on the Eucharist would have multiple opportunities for the celebration of the Eucharist—including in different forms.

So it will be during the National Eucharistic Congress (NEC) in Indianapolis on July 17-21.

On July 18-20, three Masses will be celebrated at 8:30 a.m.—one in English at Lucas Oil Stadium, and one in Spanish and one specifically for youths, both at the Indiana Convention Center.

Participants will also have several liturgy options at 4 p.m. on July 18 and 19—some at the convention center and some off-site.

At the convention center, 4 p.m. Mass options include Mass in English on July 18 and 19, and also in Vietnamese on July 19.

The off-site 4 p.m. options on July 18 and 19 offer a chance to celebrate the liturgy in a different form. One is the traditional Latin Mass (according to the 1962 Missal), which will be celebrated at Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Church at 520 Stevens St. in Indianapolis. The other is the Eastern Catholic Divine Liturgy at St. Athanasius the Great Byzantine Church at 1117 Blaine Ave., also in Indianapolis. Two forms, two days—an opportunity to worship at each!

In the place of afternoon Mass opportunities on July 20, a eucharistic procession will take place in the streets of Indianapolis from 3-5 p.m.

The Congress itself closes on July 21 with a Mass from 10 a.m.-noon in Lucas Oil Stadium. This special Mass will be celebrated by a papal delegate, with hundreds of priests and bishops from throughout the United States and music by the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra. †



NATIONAL EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS WEEKLY UPDATE



Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

April 19—April 27, 2024

April 19–2 p.m.
Virtual National Eucharistic Revival Bishops Advisory Group meeting

April 20–11 a.m.
Confirmation Mass for youths of St. John the Baptist Parish, Osgood; St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Decatur County; St. Mary Parish, Greensburg; St. Maurice Parish, Napoleon; and Immaculate Conception Parish, Millhousen, at St. Mary Church, Greensburg

April 20–3 p.m.
Confirmation Mass for youths of Holy Family Parish, Oldenburg, at Holy Family Church

April 21–2 p.m.
Confirmation Mass for youths of St. Charles Borromeo and St. John the Apostle parishes and St. Paul Catholic Center, Bloomington; St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Bedford; and St. Agnes Parish, Nashville, at St. John the Apostle Church, Bloomington

April 22–12:30 p.m.
High school senior visit at Roncalli High School, Indianapolis

April 23–10 a.m.
Spring business meeting for priests and parish life coordinators at Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish, Greenwood

April 23–2 p.m.
Council of Priests meeting at Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish, Greenwood

April 24–noon
Lunch gathering with priests, Indianapolis

April 24–7 p.m.
Confirmation Mass for youths of Christ the King and Immaculate Heart of Mary parishes, Indianapolis, and Holy Name of Jesus Parish, Beech Grove, at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis

April 25–10 a.m.
Leadership Team meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

April 25–2 p.m.
Legal Team meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center

April 25–7 p.m.
Confirmation Mass for youths of Our Lady of Lourdes and Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ parishes, Indianapolis, at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral

April 27–10 a.m.
Diaconal ordination of seminarian Liam Hosty at St. Barnabas Church, Indianapolis

April 27–5 p.m.
Confirmation Mass for youths of St. Pius X Parish, Indianapolis, at St. Pius X Church

Is your child, grandchild or student receiving first Communion this spring? Let us know what it means to you

We are now in a special time of year when children across the archdiocese will soon be receiving their first Communion.

It’s a life-changing embrace of the sacrament that will be celebrated with great joy by parents, grandparents, other family members and the teachers and other faith-filled leaders who help prepare children for this momentous

moment of their Catholic faith.

Hoping to capture the joy of this time, *The Criterion* is inviting parents, grandparents and the children’s instructors to share what it means for them to see and experience this celebration of Christ’s gift with the children, who hold a special place in his heart.

Teachers are also encouraged to share with us what your students feel—and are anticipating—about receiving the Eucharist for the first time, in their own words.

We will also welcome any photos of this faith-filled celebration of the sacrament of the Eucharist at your parish.

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



(OSV News photo/Bob Roller)



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E-mail us: criterion@archindy.org

Staff:

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



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Cardinal Dolan, delegation continue visit in Israel and Palestine following Iran's attack on Israel

(OSV News)—Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York said he and other members of a delegation traveling in Israel and Palestine “feel safe and secure” on April 14, after Israel defended itself overnight from unprecedented Iranian drone strikes and missiles.

“That wasn’t true in the middle of last night when the air raid sirens went off and when we had to go down and seek security at Notre Dame Center,” he said in an April 14 video on social media posted that day from Bethlehem. “But right now things look good, and we’re grateful for that. And thanks for all of your expressions of concern.”

The cardinal was traveling in Israel and Palestine on April 12-18 as chairman of the Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA), which supports the Catholic Church in the Middle East, Northeast Africa, India and Eastern Europe.

Despite the events of the previous night, “This Sunday in Bethlehem, all does seem calm and bright,” he said.

Joseph Zwilling, communications director for the Archdiocese of New York, previously confirmed the delegation’s safety in Jerusalem to OSV News in the early morning hours on April 14. The delegation was staying at Notre Dame of Jerusalem Center, which supports researchers in the Holy Land and offers hospitality to pilgrims.

The pastoral visit, led by Cardinal Dolan and other CNEWA leaders, marked the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Pontifical Mission for Palestine, established by Pope Pius XII in 1949 and placed since its inception under the administration of CNEWA.

Israel’s military reported that Iran launched more than 300 attack drones, cruise missiles and ballistic missiles against Israel overnight on April 13-14. Most were intercepted before they could reach Israel’s airspace, but some got through. The Associated Press reported Iran’s attacks injured at least one person—a young Bedouin child—in southern Israel and also caused damage to a military base.

Iran’s bombardment was in retaliation for an April 1 airstrike in Syria that killed two Iranian generals in an Iranian consulate. Iran has accused Israel of the attack, but Israel has neither confirmed nor denied responsibility.

CNEWA communications director Michael La Civita told OSV News on April 14 that the pastoral visit continued after the airstrikes. “We celebrated Mass

this morning in the Latin parish in Beit Jala—packed,” he said. “After touring the convent grounds of the Salesian sisters in the Cremisan Valley, we had lunch, then prayed in the grotto of the Church of the Nativity. Currently, we are in the Aida Refugee Camp outside Bethlehem.

“All is well, thank God,” La Civita continued. “The cardinal is getting a thorough review of the work of the Church in the shadow of where the Prince of Peace was born.”

For security reasons, the full itinerary of the visit was not being released, La Civita told OSV News prior to the trip.

Cardinal Dolan had planned to reprise previous visits to Ephpheta Paul VI Institute (Effetà Betlemme), a school for hearing-impaired children in Palestinian territories; the House of Grace, which supports prisoners, at-risk youths, families in need and Holocaust survivors; and the Notre Dame des Douleurs (Our Lady of Sorrows) Home, which serves disadvantaged elders.

In a video posted to social media on April 13 by The Good Newsroom, the New York Archdiocese’s media outlet, prior to the airstrikes, Cardinal Dolan walked in sunglasses along a walled street in Jerusalem as he described his first 24 hours there.

“Shabbat shalom, folks,” said the cardinal, cheerfully wishing viewers a “peaceful Sabbath,” explaining that it was Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath. “We’re off to a great start.”

In the video, the cardinal said he spent Friday evening sharing a Sabbath dinner with two rabbis and Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, the Latin patriarch of Jerusalem. He noted he was on his way to visit with Cardinal Pizzaballa again, would celebrate a Mass for CNEWA and then attend a luncheon.

Cardinal Dolan said CNEWA is “giving tremendous humanitarian and pastoral aid to the Church in this sacred soil, for the educational, the charitable, the health



Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York, center, offers Mass at the Our Lady of Peace chapel in the Notre Dame of Jerusalem Center on April 13. The cardinal was reportedly safe in Jerusalem amid Iran’s unprecedented missile and drone attacks on Israel that began later that evening. (OSV News photo/Sinan Abu Mayzer, Reuters)

care. And they don’t ask for baptismal certificates, so they’re serving Muslims, are serving Jews, they’re serving Catholics, they’re serving Christians, you name it.”

In his April 14 video, the cardinal spoke about the Creche, a refuge for abandoned children in Bethlehem, run by the Daughters of Charity. He commended the sisters’ work, which he saw firsthand during his visit the previous day.

“They take abandoned babies. They take babies that are not wanted,” Cardinal Dolan said. “And they said to me, ‘Every time we get a new baby on our doorstep, every time we find a new baby who has no one to care for him or her, we feel that it’s Christmas all over again. As another one of God’s children is born, we have the honor to love them so tenderly and care for them.’”

He continued, “Those are messages of inspiration that you get here in the Holy Land, that I think can give the people the resilience and hope for which they’re famous.”

Msgr. Peter Vaccari, who serves as president of both CNEWA and the Pontifical Mission to Palestine, accompanied Cardinal Dolan on the pastoral visit.

The trip was planned prior to Hamas’ Oct. 7, 2023, surprise attack on Israel—coinciding with a Sabbath and Jewish

holiday—on some 22 locations, which led Israel to declare war on Hamas, pounding the Gaza Strip with airstrikes and launching a ground invasion. The war’s casualties include at least 1,139 people killed in Israel and more than 33,600 people killed in Gaza, including at least 13,000 children, and another 460 people killed in the West Bank. Hamas continues to hold some 130 Israeli hostages in Gaza, with at least 30 presumed dead.

In an interview with OSV News published on April 4, La Civita said Cardinal Dolan did not plan to visit the Gaza Strip, but planned to meet with hostages’ families.

“The Church always has to keep open the windows to dialogue,” said La Civita, who accompanied the cardinal. “The cardinal is going there as the chair to be that instrument, that symbol of showing another way ... so that we hopefully have just peace.”

Asked about danger due to the war, especially after seven humanitarian aid workers were killed by an Israeli missile strike in Gaza on April 1, La Civita said the delegation was undeterred.

“This is where you have to have faith that we will be protected by the Lord,” he said, “through the intercession of the Blessed Mother.” †

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Editorial



Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens of Crookston, Minn., elevates the Eucharist during his installation Mass at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Crookston on Dec. 6, 2021. (OSV News photo/CNS file, Dave Hrbacek, *The Catholic Spirit*)

Eucharist proclaims Christ's death until he comes again

The following quotation from St. Paul is the earliest written account of the institution of the Lord's Supper in the New Testament. The narrative emphasizes Jesus' action of self-giving and his double command to repeat this action "in remembrance of me:"

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was handed over, took bread, and, after he had given thanks, broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes. (1 Cor 11:23-26)

Paul tells the Church of Corinth, and by extension all of us, that when we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim Jesus' death until he comes again. This makes the reception of holy Communion an act of evangelization. Eucharist is never a purely private devotion. It is always a proclamation of the Gospel and, therefore, an action of the whole Church united with Christ in this great sacrament of our salvation.

According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, "The Eucharist is the efficacious sign and sublime cause of that communion in the divine life and that unity of the people of God by which the Church is kept in being. It is the culmination both of God's action sanctifying the world in Christ and of the worship men offer to Christ and through him to the Father in the Holy Spirit" (#1325).

This makes our reception of the holy Eucharist something profoundly personal—our intimate communion with the person of Jesus Christ—and something that is done in union with the whole Church. The catechism goes on to say that "the Eucharist is the sum and summary of our faith" and that "by the eucharistic celebration we already unite ourselves with the heavenly liturgy and anticipate eternal life, when God will be all in all" (#1327, #1326; 1 Cor 15:28).

Considering the sacredness of what we are doing when we receive the Eucharist—as individuals and as a

community of faith—there is no way we can afford to take this action for granted.

St. Paul urged the Corinthians to receive the holy Eucharist in a worthy manner. The consequences of an unworthy (or irreverent) reception of the Lord's body and blood are quite serious. If we eat and drink unworthily, without having grasped and internalized the meaning of Christ's sacrificial gift of himself to us, St. Paul says we are guilty of a sin against the Lord himself (1 Cor 8:12).

The only proper way to celebrate the Eucharist is with a deep and abiding reverence for what this sacrament is (the source and summit of Christian life) and for what it does (unites us with God and with all creation). A casual or indifferent reception of the holy Eucharist denigrates the profoundly sacred actions that the sacrament gives witness to—God's action sanctifying the world in Christ and the worship owed to him by us.

St. Paul urges each of us to reflect on what it is we are doing when we consume the Lord's body and drink his blood. The action we perform is something sacred. It is a proclamation of the Lord's death that binds us to live as his disciples, to worship him with great reverence and to treat one another as members of the one family of God.

In a few months, our archdiocese will host the first National Eucharistic Congress in 83 years. This spiritual event will bring tens of thousands of pilgrims to Indianapolis on July 17–21. At the congress, pilgrims will gather to experience profound, personal renewal through the power of Christ's love. Like a new Pentecost, this transformation will flow out from Indianapolis to bring revival in our communities as the Church returns to her first love—the source and summit of our faith.

At the heart of this National Eucharistic Congress are St. Paul's words to the Corinthians, and to all of us, "for as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes" (1 Cor 11:26).

—Daniel Conway

Be Our Guest/Sr. Constance Veit, L.S.P.

The way to find happiness

In his message for the World Day of Prayer for Vocations this year, Pope Francis acknowledges the fact that every vocation—from marriage to consecrated life and priesthood—involves a call from God embracing our entire existence.



Realizing that every path in life is a call from God is worth pondering.

"Each year, the World Day of Prayer for Vocations invites us to reflect on the precious gift of the Lord's call to each of us, as members of his faithful pilgrim people, to participate in his loving plan and to embody the beauty of the Gospel in different states of life," Pope Francis wrote. "Hearing that divine call ... is the surest way for us to fulfill our deepest desire for happiness.

"Our life finds fulfillment when we discover who we are," he continued, "what our gifts are, where we can make them bear fruit, and what path we can follow in order to become signs and instruments of love, generous acceptance, beauty and peace, wherever we find ourselves."

I'd like to reflect on two aspects of the Holy Father's message—that God is calling each of us to participate in his loving plan, and that our acceptance of his plan is the surest way to find personal fulfillment.

When we speak of someone having a "calling," we generally assume this means a call to priesthood or religious life. But this is a narrow understanding of the concept of vocation.

God has a plan for each of us; he is calling each of us to a specific vocation, which may or may not involve full-time service in the Church.

Realizing that God has a plan for us—and discerning what this plan is—is essential to our personal growth as we mature from childhood to adulthood.

As the pope says, it's a matter of discovering who we are, what our gifts are and where we can make them bear fruit.

Do we take into account that our personal gifts have been "received"?

This is what St. Paul was trying to teach the Corinthians when he said, "What do you possess that you have not received? But if

you have received it, why are you boasting as if you did not receive it?" (1 Cor 4:7)

Looking back on my own vocation, I realize that as a youngster I didn't look at my abilities and blessings as gifts given to me by God. I didn't even understand that God had a plan for my life—I thought that life was all about *my plans!*

I began volunteering with the Little Sisters of the Poor and the elderly—not because I felt God calling me to religious life or because I was committed to improving the lives of elderly people in need—but simply because I thought community service would "look good" on my college applications.

In just a few weeks, however, I discovered qualities within myself that I never knew existed—gifts like love and empathy for the elderly and joy in making them happy—and I came to the conviction that caring for the elderly—giving my life for them—was my God-given purpose and my mission in life.

Discovering who I was, what my special gifts were and where I could make them bear fruit, led me to experience a sense of personal fulfillment and lasting joy. Despite life's inevitable ups and downs, this joy and purpose have never waned; they have endured for almost 40 years now!

Even when I was quite self-absorbed and ignorant of his ways, in his kindness God came to meet me where I was and to make himself known to me. This encounter, though completely unexpected, was very real.

When I look back at my own vocation, I often think of the words Pope Benedict XVI addressed to young people during his inaugural homily on April 24, 2005: "With great strength and great conviction, on the basis of long personal experience of life, I say to you, dear young people: Do not be afraid of Christ! He takes nothing away and he gives you everything. When we give ourselves to him, we receive a hundredfold in return. Yes, open, open wide the doors to Christ—and you will find true life!"

If you think God might be calling you to a vocation of service, feel free to e-mail me at serenity@littlesistersofthepoor.org.

(*Little Sisters of the Poor Sister Constance Veit is director of communications for the Little Sisters of the Poor in the United States and an occupational therapist.*) †

Letter to the Editor

Let's build a Catholic culture in a secular world, reader says

There are people who would prefer to debate about Pope Francis for an hour than to pray the rosary.

Catholicism is a religion, first and foremost. Political ideology, culture wars, which flavor of Catholicism is best—all are secondary to our relationship with Jesus Christ and our spiritual formation. Our relationship with God is what needs to come first. A solid prayer life is more important than virtue-signaling or trying to be a theologian.

Catholic culture must avoid disintegrating into merely cultural Catholicism. We must avoid dumbing down our faith through cultural discord, but rather, nourish our spiritual lives on

the classic foundations of our rich Catholic intellectual and liturgical tradition.

We should always be about building a Catholic culture that is evangelical, liturgical, spiritual and missionary.

We should drink deeply from the Scriptures, sacred tradition, the divine liturgy, and communally partake in many of the traditional practices of our faith.

Each parish should be a bridge between the secular world and Catholic culture, and each one of us should be building blocks in that bridge.

Kirth N. Roach
Order of Carmelite Discalced Secular
Indianapolis

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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

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Christ the Cornerstone

The path to true happiness: A love that's poured out for others

In the first reading for the Fourth Sunday of Easter (Acts 4:8-12), St. Peter boldly proclaims his faith in Jesus. The Apostle has cured a man, a cripple, in Jesus' name. He insists that he has not done this good deed by his own authority or by any earthly skill or power. Rather, "it was in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazorean whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead; in his name this man stands before you healed" (Acts 4:10).

Peter goes on to say that this should not be seen as an isolated instance of Jesus' power. Quoting Scripture, he says that Jesus "is the 'stone rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone.' There is no salvation through anyone else, nor is there any other name under heaven given to the human race by which we are to be saved" (Acts 4:11-12). The holy name of Jesus is to be revered above all other names. He alone is the foundation on which our salvation is built.

The image of the cornerstone appears in both the Old Testament (Ps 118) and in the New Testament (Mt 21; Acts 4). In the ancient world, the choice of a cornerstone was critical

to successful building. The longevity of the structure depended on it, as its position bore the weight of what was gathered to it and, as a result, the cornerstone served as a reference to properly angle and place all other stones. Stones were "rejected" until a cornerstone was found to be worthy.

To say that a stone rejected by the builders has become the cornerstone is to acknowledge a power greater than us. It's an affirmation that God's wisdom is deeper and more insightful than human judgment. God's choice of the cornerstone rejected by the builders means that God's standards are different from human standards. What God sees as essential for the strength and sustainability of his creation far exceeds anything we can see without the help of God's grace.

When Peter says that Jesus—the man rejected, crucified and risen from the dead—is the cornerstone, he is proclaiming that God's standards for human life and freedom are radically different from anything we could know by our own experience. Humility, not arrogant pride, service rather than self-seeking, and the love that empties itself

for the sake of others, are the foundation on which happy lives are built. Wealth, power and social standing are illusory; they cannot sustain us in the long run.

Prior to his episcopal ordination, every bishop-designate is expected to choose a motto, a short phrase that would serve as an indicator of his ministry as a bishop. Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin chose "Rejoice in the Lord." His predecessor, Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein, chose "Seek the Face of the Lord." Their mottos became readily associated with their ministry as bishops, especially recognizable as the titles of their weekly columns in *The Criterion*.

I chose "Christ the Cornerstone" because I believe that everything I say and do as a bishop must be founded on the person of Jesus Christ. Without him, I can do nothing, and unless my words and actions are founded on him, I will not be able to carry out the mission entrusted to me at the time of my episcopal ordination. Because "Christ the Cornerstone" is the title of this column, I am reminded every week of my responsibility to ground these reflections on the person and teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ.

During this Easter season, we remember joyfully how much God loves us. His wisdom is greater than anything we can imagine, and his love is more substantial and more powerful than anything that exists in creation. His decision to build the Church on a cornerstone rejected by the religious and secular leaders of his day serves as a vivid reminder that God's ways are not our ways, and that God's judgment is infinitely more reliable than ours.

The Gospel reading for this Sunday (Jn 10:11-18) uses a different but equally powerful image:

Jesus said: "I am the good shepherd. A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep" (Jn 10:11). In Jesus' time, a shepherd was not the first choice for political, economic or social status. Shepherds were outsiders, people "on the peripheries," as Pope Francis says. The fact that Jesus identifies himself in this way once again suggests a standard that is greater than mere human wisdom.

As we continue to celebrate this Easter season, let's remember that, as faithful followers of Jesus, we must recognize that the wisdom of God far exceeds anything we can come up with on our own. †



Cristo, la piedra angular

El camino hacia la verdadera felicidad: Un amor que se derrama por los demás

En la lectura del Evangelio del cuarto domingo de Pascua (Hch 4:8-12), san Juan Evangelista proclama con valentía su fe en Jesús: El Apóstol ha curado a un hombre, un tullido, en nombre de Jesús. Insiste en que no ha realizado esta buena obra por su propio poder ni por ninguna fuerza o poder terrenal. Más bien, "que este hombre está aquí delante de ustedes, sano gracias al nombre de Jesucristo de Nazaret, crucificado por ustedes, pero resucitado por Dios" (Hch 4:10).

Pedro prosigue y afirma que esto no debe verse como un caso aislado del poder de Jesús, y citando las Escrituras, declara que Jesús "es la piedra que desecharon ustedes los constructores y que ha llegado a ser la piedra angular. De hecho, en ningún otro hay salvación, porque no hay bajo el cielo otro nombre dado a los hombres mediante el cual podamos ser salvos" (Hch 4:11-12). El santo nombre de Jesús debe ser reverenciado por encima de todos los demás nombres y solo Él es el cimiento sobre el que se construye nuestra salvación.

La imagen de la piedra angular aparece tanto en el Antiguo Testamento (Sal 118) como en el Nuevo (Mt 21; Hch 4). En el mundo antiguo, la elección de una piedra angular era fundamental para el éxito de una

construcción. La longevidad de la estructura dependía de esta, ya que su posición soportaba el peso de lo que se acumulaba sobre dicha piedra y, en consecuencia, la piedra angular servía de referencia para angular y colocar correctamente todas las demás piedras. Las piedras eran "rechazadas" hasta que se encontraba una piedra angular digna.

Decir que una piedra rechazada por los constructores se ha convertido en la piedra angular es reconocer un poder superior a nosotros. Es una afirmación de que la sabiduría de Dios es más profunda y perspicaz que el juicio humano. La elección por parte de Dios de la piedra angular rechazada por los constructores significa que las normas de Dios son diferentes de las humanas. Lo que Dios considera esencial para la fuerza y la sostenibilidad de su creación supera con creces cualquier cosa que podamos ver sin la ayuda de la gracia de Dios.

Cuando Pedro dice que Jesús—el hombre rechazado, crucificado y resucitado de entre los muertos—es la piedra angular, está proclamando que las normas de Dios para la vida y la libertad humanas son radicalmente diferentes de cualquier cosa que pudiéramos conocer por nuestra propia experiencia. La humildad, no el orgullo arrogante, el servicio en lugar del

egoísmo, y el amor que se vacía por el bien de los demás, son los cimientos sobre los que se construyen las vidas felices. La riqueza, el poder y la posición social son ilusorios; no pueden sostenernos a largo plazo.

Antes de su ordenación episcopal, se espera que cada obispo designado elija un lema, una frase corta que sirva de faro para su ministerio como obispo. El cardenal Joseph W. Tobin eligió "Alégrense en el Señor"; su predecesor, el arzobispo Daniel M. Buechlein, eligió "Busca el rostro del Señor." Sus lemas se asociaron fácilmente a su ministerio como obispos y los reconocemos también en los títulos de sus respectivas columnas semanales en *The Criterion*.

Elegí "Cristo, la piedra angular" porque creo que todo lo que digo y hago como obispo debe fundamentarse en la persona de Jesucristo. Sin él, no puedo hacer nada, y a menos que mis palabras y mis acciones se fundamenten en él, no podré llevar a cabo la misión que se me confió en el momento de mi ordenación episcopal. Dado que "Cristo, la piedra angular" es el título de esta columna, cada semana recuerdo mi responsabilidad de fundamentar estas reflexiones en la persona y las enseñanzas de nuestro Señor Jesucristo.

Durante este tiempo de Pascua,

recordamos con alegría cuánto nos ama Dios. Su sabiduría es mayor que cualquier cosa que podamos imaginar, y su amor es más sustancial y más poderoso que cosa alguna que exista en la creación. Su decisión de construir la Iglesia sobre una piedra angular rechazada por los líderes religiosos y seculares de su época sirve como vívido recordatorio de que los caminos de Dios no son los nuestros, y que el juicio de Dios es infinitamente más fiable que el nuestro.

La lectura del Evangelio de este domingo (Jn 10:11-18) utiliza una imagen diferente pero igualmente poderosa:

Jesús dijo: "Yo soy el buen pastor. El buen pastor da su vida por las ovejas" (Jn 10:11). En la época de Jesús, un pastor no era de los más destacados en cuanto a estatus político, económico o social; eran forasteros, gente "de las periferias," como dice el Papa Francisco. El hecho de que Jesús se identifique de este modo sugiere una vez más una norma superior a la mera sabiduría humana.

Mientras seguimos celebrando esta temporada de Pascua, recordemos que, como fieles seguidores de Jesús, debemos reconocer que la sabiduría de Dios supera con creces cualquier cosa que se nos ocurra por nuestra cuenta. †

Events Calendar

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

April 22

St. Bartholomew Church, 1306 27th St., Columbus. **Our Common Home: An Earth Day Concert**, 6 p.m., featuring St. Bartholomew Adult and Children's Choir and Fairlawn Presbyterian Chancel Choir, free admission, donations accepted. Information: 812-379-9353.

April 25

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

April 27

Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish, 520 Stevens St., Indianapolis. **Faithful Citizens Rosary Walk**, 10:45-11:45 a.m., meet in front of church. Information: holyrosary.prolife@gmail.com.

White River State Park, 801 W. Washington St., Indianapolis. **St. Vincent de Paul Love Your Neighbor 5K Run/Walk**, prices for one-three participants: 5K ages 23 and older \$34 through

April 26, \$39 on site; ages 22 and younger \$25; \$5 discount per person when registering four or more. **One-mile Fun Run**: one-three participants: \$24.99 through April 26, \$29.99 on site; \$5 discount per person when registering four or more. Walk-ups welcome. Information, registration: 317-924-5769, ext. 238, dsweeney@svdpindy.org, svdpindy.org/neighbor.

St. Agnes Parish, 1008 McLary Road, Nashville. **Evangelization 101 Workshop**, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., hosted by the archdiocesan Office of Evangelization, \$20 (self-pay or contact your parish to see if they will assume the cost), register by April 22. Information: 317-236-1466, abardo@archindy.org.

St. Jude Parish, 5353 McFarland Road, Indianapolis. **Together in Holiness Marriage Enrichment Conference**, 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m., \$64 couple, \$40 individual, online registration ends April 25, child care \$5 per child, includes Mass, presentations, lunch, opportunity for adoration and confession.

Information, registration: togetherinholiness.org/indianapolis, 832-779-1070, heather@forlifeandfamily.org.

May 3

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

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

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

May 3-4

White Violet Center, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-

Woods. **Spring Plant Sale**, Fri. 11 a.m.-5 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m.-3 p.m., organically grown vegetables, herbs, cut flowers. Information: spsmw.org/events, 812-535-2932, wvc@spsmw.org.

May 3-5

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Life-Giving Wounds Retreat**, 7 p.m. Fri.-5 p.m. Sun., retreat for adult children of divorce or separation, \$275 ages 18 and older, \$185 college students or ages 18-25 in need of financial assistance, includes accommodations, materials, meals, sponsored by archdiocesan Office of Marriage and Family Life. Information, registration: marriageandfamily.archindy.org/lgw, gross@archindy.org, 317-592-4007.

May 4

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

St. Anne's Golf Club, 360 E. County Road 350 N., North Vernon. **Missy's Hope Golf Scramble**, 8 a.m., benefitting Missy's Hope Maternity Home, four mulligans, 50/50 draw, lunch provided, \$200 per four-person team, hole sponsor \$100 with your sign at choice of hole. Information, registration: 812-767-2897, peggydyerbland@yahoo.com, tinyurl.com/missyshopedonate (choose golf scramble from dropdown).

Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish parking lot, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. **St. Vincent de Paul Stuff A Truck**, 9-11 a.m., accepting clothing, household goods and linens (all in closed bags), furniture, bicycles, bicycle helmets and locks, backpacks. List of items most needed: cutt.ly/ItemsNeeded. Information: dsweeney@svdpindy.org.

May 5

Roncalli High School, 3300 Prague Road, Indianapolis. **Katie's Walk for Hope**, check-in 11 a.m., walk starts at noon, 12th

annual event in memory of Katie Lynch benefitting families affected by childhood cancer, 1-mile route from Roncalli High School football field to St. Jude Parish pavilion, \$15 students, \$25 adults, \$125 family. Information, registration: 317-502-1979, tinyurl.com/katies5K2024, katies5kwalk@gmail.com.

May 7

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

May 9-11

St. Joseph Parish, 228 E. Hendricks St., Shelbyville. **Spring Festival**, Thurs. 6-9 p.m., Fri. 6-11 p.m., Sat. 3-11 p.m., food, beer garden, \$2,000 raffle, rides and amusements by Poor Jack, free admission. Information: 317-398-8227, kellie@sjsshelbyville.org. †

Retreats and Programs

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

May 3

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **A Day of Quiet Renewal**, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., \$20, \$80 with spiritual direction. Information, registration: 812-933-6437, oldenburgfranciscancenter.org.

May 3-5

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Young Adult Retreat**, Fri. 5 p.m. (Vespers) - Sun. 1 p.m. (lunch), for young adults ages 18-39, quiet day of reflection with spiritual direction available, includes overnight accommodations and meals, \$50 single room. Registration: 812-357-6501, yae@saintmeinrad.edu.

May 4

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Burning**, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. CT, Jane Feliz Rush presenting, \$55 single, \$110 double. Registration: 812-357-6611, saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

May 14

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

May 17-19

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Benedictine Spirituality 101**, Benedictine Father Adrian Burke presenting, \$300 single, \$425 double. Registration: 812-357-6611, saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

Mother of the Redeemer Retreat Center, 8220 W. State Road 48, Bloomington. **The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius**, 6 p.m. Fri.-11 a.m. Sun., Franciscan Friars of the Immaculate Father Ignatius Manfredonia presenting, \$241 includes room and meals. Information, registration: 812-825-4642, ext. 1.

May 18

Oldenburg Franciscan Center,

22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **7 Keys to Unlock True Happiness**,

9:30-11:30 a.m., Catholic author and speaker Sandra Hartlieb presenting, \$30, Zoom

option available. Information, registration: 812-933-6437, oldenburgfranciscancenter.org. †

Disabilities Awareness Mass set for April 28 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral

The archdiocese's annual Disabilities Awareness Mass will take place at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., in Indianapolis, at 10 a.m. on April 28. A reception will follow across the street at the Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St. Archbishop Charles C. Thompson will preside at the Mass. Those from the special needs community will serve in liturgical roles during the Mass, such as ushers, lectors and altar servers.

The Disabilities Awareness Mass is sponsored by the Disabilities Ministry of the archdiocesan Office of Catechesis. All are invited to the Mass and reception.

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

To learn more about catechesis for persons with special needs in the archdiocese, visit www.archindy.org/specialneeds. †

Benedict Inn gift shop final closing sale to take place on April 27 and Mon.-Fri. through May 17

Shop INN-Spired, located in the Benedict Inn Retreat & Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., in Beech Grove, is holding its final closing sale. The sale begins on April 27 from 9 a.m.-3 p.m., then continues on Monday-Friday from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. through May 17.

Everything in the shop must be sold. The shop sells books, music, unique gifts, religious items and jewelry. Many items

have been prayerfully made by the sisters. All items will be marked down 50%-85%.

The gift shop will officially close with the Benedict Inn Retreat & Conference Center on May 31 to make way for the new Our Lady of Grace Monastery being built for the Sisters of St. Benedict.

For more information or to inquire about possible Saturday hours, call 317-788-7581. †

Saint Meinrad Archabbey to offer Sunday rosary procession pilgrimages throughout May at Our Lady of Monte Cassino Shrine

Saint Meinrad Archabbey is offering several pilgrimage opportunities in the form of rosary processions at its Our Lady of Monte Cassino Shrine each Sunday in May at 2 p.m. Central Time. The shrine is located at 13312 Monte Cassino Shrine Road in St. Meinrad, one mile east of the Archabbey off State Road 62.

Considered "pilgrimages" in the sense of traveling to a sacred place out of devotion and a desire to grow in holiness, each event will begin with an opening hymn and a short sermon, followed by a rosary procession. The services end with the Litany of the Blessed Virgin and a hymn. Homily presenters and topics for the pilgrimages are:

— May 5: Benedictine Father Sean Hoppe, "Pokrova—Under the Veil of Mary"

— May 12: Benedictine Archabbot Kurt Stasiak, "Mary, Assumed Body and Soul into Heaven"

— May 19: Benedictine Brother Gregory Morris: "Mary: Witness, Prophet, and Temple of the Holy Spirit"

— May 26: Benedictine Brother Zachary Wilberding, "Mary and the Trinity."

Dedicated in 1870 and completed in 1873, the shrine's design is based on a picture of an early shrine of Our Lady of Einsiedeln in Einsiedeln, Switzerland, the motherhouse of Saint Meinrad Archabbey. The monks of the archabbey named the local shrine Monte Cassino after the abbey in Italy where St. Benedict lived in the sixth century.

Rosary pilgrimages are offered at Monte Cassino Shrine in May and October, months dedicated to the Blessed Mother.

For more information on the rosary pilgrimages, contact Krista Hall, Saint Meinrad director of communications, at 812-357-6480 or via e-mail at khall@saintmeinrad.edu. †

Wedding Anniversaries

DEAN AND KIMBERLY (PEPPER) STECHER, members of SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Parish in Greenwood, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on April 20.

The couple was married in St. Jude Church in Indianapolis on April 20, 1974.

They have two children: Melissa and Rob Stecher.

The couple also has three grandchildren. †



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

Pope Francis grants plenary indulgences for participants in the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage and Congress

(OSV News)—Participants in the National Eucharistic Congress and related National Eucharistic Pilgrimage now have opportunities to receive plenary indulgences, Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), announced on April 9.

“It is with gratitude to the Holy Father that we receive his Apostolic Blessing upon the participants in the National Eucharistic Congress, and for the opportunity for Catholics in our country to obtain a plenary indulgence by participating in the events of the Eucharistic Revival,” he said in a USCCB statement.

According to the statement, Archbishop Broglio, who also leads the U.S. Archdiocese for the Military Services, had requested that a plenary indulgence be available to Catholics who participate in the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage and that “he or another prelate be designated to impart the Apostolic Blessing with a Plenary Indulgence” to the faithful joining the National Eucharistic Congress.

The requests were granted in two separate decrees by the Apostolic Penitentiary, a Vatican office which grants the use of indulgences “as expressions of divine mercy,” the statement said. Both decrees were approved by Pope Francis.

The congress and preceding pilgrimage are efforts of the National Eucharistic Revival, a three-year initiative of the U.S. bishops that began in 2022 to inspire greater understanding of and love for Jesus in the Eucharist. Held in Indianapolis on July 17-21, the congress aims to bring together tens of thousands of Catholics for liturgies, devotions and well-known Catholic speakers.

Beginning on the weekend of May 17-18, 24 young adults in four groups are traveling thousands of miles to the congress from starting points in California, Connecticut, Minnesota and Texas. Pilgrims in this National

Eucharistic Pilgrimage plan to travel—often by foot—with the Eucharist in a monstrance, with stops along the routes for Mass and eucharistic adoration at local parishes and national shrines. The “perpetual pilgrims” anticipate thousands of Catholics from across the country will join them at pilgrimage events or journey with them for segments of the routes.

Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens of Crookston, Minn., chair of the board of directors of the National Eucharistic Congress, told OSV News that the “tradition of giving an indulgence for pilgrimages and important celebrations is ancient.

“We are grateful to the Holy Father through the Apostolic Penitentiary that offers this blessing to those who are seeking to grow in greater purity of heart through the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage and Congress,” he said. “These events will be great moments of conversion which this indulgence points to as we seek to be free from the effects of our sins. We are grateful for the Holy Father’s blessing on these events.”

He added, “Pope Francis himself said that [the] ‘National Eucharistic Congress marks a significant moment in the life of the Church in the United States,’ and he prayed that the National Eucharistic Congress would guide men and women throughout our country to the Lord who, by his presence among us, rekindles hope and renews life.”

According to the *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church*, “Indulgences are the remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven. The faithful Christian who is duly disposed gains the indulgence under prescribed conditions for either himself or the departed. Indulgences are granted through the ministry of the Church which, as the dispenser of the grace of redemption, distributes the treasury of the merits of Christ and the saints.”

One may obtain indulgences for other



Priests walk in a eucharistic procession on Oct. 21, 2023, at the Shrine of Our Lady of Martyrs in Auriesville, N.Y., during the New York State Eucharistic Congress on Oct. 20-22. Participants in the National Eucharistic Congress and related National Eucharistic Pilgrimage will have opportunities to receive plenary indulgences, Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, announced on April 9. (OSV News photo/Jeff Witherow, Catholic Courier)

people, but can only apply them to the souls in purgatory. One may also obtain the indulgence for oneself. But one cannot apply an indulgence to another living person; that person (unlike someone in purgatory) can still obtain one for himself or herself.

The plenary indulgence for the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage is granted to anyone who participates in the pilgrimage between May 17 and July 16, as well as to elders, people with infirmities and “all those who cannot leave their homes for a serious reason and who participate in spirit with the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage, uniting their prayers, pains, or inconveniences with Christ and the pilgrimage,” the USCCB statement said. To receive the indulgence, an individual must fulfill the usual conditions: sacramental confession, Communion and prayer for the intentions of the Holy Father.

In granting the indulgence, the Apostolic Penitentiary requests that all priests with appropriate faculties “present themselves willingly and generously in administering the sacrament of penance” to pilgrimage participants, according to the statement.

The second decree of the papal blessing with plenary indulgence for the National Eucharistic Congress empowers Archbishop Broglio or another prelate assigned by him to impart it, following

Mass, to the faithful participating in the congress. As is the case with the previous indulgence, Catholics must be truly repentant of their sins, be motivated by charity and meet the usual conditions of sacramental confession, Communion and prayer for the intentions of the Holy Father.

However, Catholics who “due to reasonable circumstances and with pious intention” cannot be physically at the congress may also receive the indulgence if they have participated in Mass and received the blessing through media communications.

“Through the efforts of the revival over the last two years, we have been building up to the pilgrimage and congress that will offer Catholics a chance to experience a profound, personal revival of faith in the Eucharist,” said Archbishop Broglio. “Pope Francis continues to encourage and support us as we seek to share Christ’s love with a world that is desperately in need of him.”

The National Eucharistic Revival continues after the congress through 2025 with a “Year of Missionary Sending.”

(For more information on the National Eucharistic Congress, including how to purchase tickets for it, visit eucharisticcongress.org. For more information on the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage, visit eucharisticpilgrimage.org.) †



NATIONAL Eucharistic Congress

St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities’ Adoption Bridges of Kentuckiana in New Albany helps birth parents, adoptive parents and children

Walking with Moms is a monthly feature highlighting organizations that help—and need support in helping—expecting and parenting mothers in need in central and southern Indiana. For a list of organizations highlighted in the past, go to www.archindy.org/walkingwithmoms.

St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities’ Adoption Bridges of Kentuckiana
702 E. Market St.
New Albany, IN 47150
502-585-4369
slowery@steharities.org
www.steharities.org/adoption-bridges



Program Director: Stefanie Lowery

Birth parent services: adoption information, parenting resource information, emotional support and advocacy, adoption planning, financial assistance, legal representation for the adoption process, choice of adoptive parents, photos and update letters.
Adoptive parent services: full domestic adoption program, home studies and post-placement services for domestic and independent adoption, preparation and training, support groups and advocacy, assistance

with creating profile for birth parent consideration, birth parent outreach and matching, international home study and post-placement services. Currently accepting new prospective adoptive parents.

Items currently most needed: Comfort items for birth parents while in the hospital, such as robes and pajamas (small-2x), fuzzy socks, travel size toiletries. Also, liquid hand soap and refills, paper towels, tear-free baby body wash and shampoo, diapers (especially sizes 2, 3 and 6), plastic-free and sensitive baby wipes, disinfectant wipes, toilet paper, Swifter Wet Jet pad refills, liquid dishwasher detergent. See full Amazon wish list at tinyurl.com/ABOKWishList. Items can be sent to or dropped off in person at the address above, marked specifically for Adoption Bridges of Kentuckiana.

Volunteer opportunities: St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities Marie’s Blessings, which helps supply basic needs to pregnant and parenting mothers. Contact Erin Goodlett at egoodlett@steharities.org. Administrative volunteer opportunities, contact Cathy Reid at creid@steharities.org.

Financial donations: Go to www.steharities.org and click on donate or send checks for Adoption Bridges of Kentuckiana to address above. †

Walking with
Moms in Need



CROSS

continued from page 1

shown us for over two years,” Matt says. “We just wanted to put that in a representation of the cross. We couldn’t think of a better way to do that than a cross.”

The cross is one part of the larger story of how the bonds of faith have also become the bonds of an extended family of people from two seemingly different worlds.

The foundations of a dream

We all have our dreams—dreams of places we will go, things we will do, lives we will touch.

For Matt and Nikki, living their dreams has become one of the main foundations of their lives, complemented by another one—their willingness to let God guide them in their dreams.

That combination led the couple to make an 800-day journey around the world from February 2017 to May 2019, a trip of a lifetime that encompassed 35 countries, five continents and countless adventures.

Their 27-month trip also led them into an even deeper appreciation of their Catholic faith as their adventures included experiencing Holy Week in Peru, making a pilgrimage to Fatima in Portugal, and persisting through a thunderstorm as they climbed the same dirt hill that St. Thomas did as he fled angry locals in India.

They saved extensively before they made that trip and tried to cut expenses along the way, including house-sitting for two cats in exchange for housing in Switzerland, and house-sitting for a dog in exchange for housing in Singapore.

That journey also made their marriage a better and closer one, they say. And they have no regrets that they gave up some prime earning years to take that journey—with Matt being a sales executive at the time and Nikki being a pharmacist.

“People looked at what we were doing as a risk in some ways,” Matt said after that journey. “We both were at peaks in our careers. But we had a deep faith in ourselves and in each other and in God—to know there was something out there that was pulling us.

“We knew God was guiding us.”

They also made every effort to follow God on that journey. Matt downloaded the daily Mass readings in English on his Kindle app.

“I knew we would go to all these different churches, and they sometimes wouldn’t speak our language,” he said. “We went to hundreds of churches and attended Mass many, many times.

“Going to Mass was a way of being thankful for all you have and asking for guidance in the week ahead. It was also a huge part of the travel experience. Going to churches is a way to experience the locals and get something authentic.”

In planning the trip, Matt and Nikki focused on “traveling with the sun.” So, their direction always led them toward warm weather and as many beaches as possible as they started in South America, spent two summers in Europe, lived 2 1/2 months in India, and experienced three months in South Africa, six weeks in Japan and six months in Southeast Asia before finishing their trip with a tour of Australia, Fiji and New Zealand.

So, when the couple looked for some place to move two years ago, the lure of sunshine, warm weather and sandy beaches was among the reasons that Honduras called to them.

“It checked all of the boxes for us after our time traveling the world,” Matt says. “Amazing weather, nature setting, peaceful environment, safe and secure,



Matt and Nikki Javit, former members of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Indianapolis, join in a group photo with their fellow members of St. Ignatius of Loyola Parish in Punta Gorda, Honduras. (Submitted photo)

within the U.S. time zones for working remote, welcoming people, easy flights to the U.S., English-speaking for the most part, a cultural change and exposure to new things, low cost of living, solid internet, residency opportunity and tons to do.”

Shortly after they arrived, there was also the feeling that God had led them to the faith community of St. Ignatius of Loyola Parish in Punta Gorda.

Building from a base of trust

From the beginning, the combination of the lively music at the Mass—complemented by the sounds of drums, tambourines and clapping—drew the couple in, leaving them with smiles.

So did the reception they received from the members of the parish who proudly embrace their Garifuna heritage as descendants of people from Central Africa, West Africa and the Caribbean Island of St. Vincent.

“We felt super welcomed when we moved here and started going to the Catholic church,” Nikki says. “And just slowly spending time with the people in the community, whether it be on Sunday during or after church, or during the weekday to go grab some food or hang out at some local spots. I think over time, we really felt connections and bonds with people in the community.”

As the relationships grew, so did the trust between the couple and the community.

“Over time, a few opportunities arose for us to really extend a helping hand to people who needed assistance with clothing or food or something like that,” Nikki says. “People who had health issues came to me as they know that I’m in health care. We’ve also been able to help provide school supplies for children, and Matt had a wonderful stint where he was handing out sports equipment.”

Building off those moments, the couple also saw ways that the church needed repairs and updates to the building.

“When you’re on an island and the ocean is right there, the wind, the salt and all the weather really have a huge wear-and-tear on the building and the structures within the building,” Matt says. “We’ve both been involved for the last 20 years in different ways with outreach. So, we understand that you don’t want to come with your own ideas right off the bat. You want to hear their ideas in which ways that you could potentially help. So that’s what we did.”

They also reached out to their former faith community at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Indianapolis, with Matt asking the congregation for help during a few Masses during a weekend visit last summer.

“We raised a little under \$16,000,” Matt recalls. “The upgrades that went to the church from those funds were massive.”

The upgrades included remodeling two bathrooms, updating the electricity, repairing the roof and pews, fixing the water drainage system, improving the sound system and buying a new tabernacle.

“We were never approached to do the things we did because they’re fine without us,” Matt says. “They’ve always been here. They will always be here. But we’re just trying to do our small piece of helping them as we can.”

And the community did its part, Nikki notes.

“It was a really neat experience to watch the community come together to help with these repairs,” she says. “When people in Punta Gorda saw the repairs that were going on, it was awesome to see people who were not working come around and ask how they could lend a helping hand. And to see the little kids, either before or after school, come around to pick up trash outside and clean up and just make everything look beautiful.”

That connection and cooperative effort especially came together in the creation of the cross.

A vision of faith and love

The inspiration for the cross—and the placing of it in the sea—came from the 800-day journey that the couple made.

They remembered climbing the same dirt hill that St. Thomas did as he fled angry locals in India. They remembered the story that while St. Thomas prayed at the top of that hill, the Blessed Mother appeared to him, assuring him he would be successful in his efforts to lead people in the area to Christ. They also recalled the huge golden cross that was erected at the top of the hill, and how they reached it in the middle of a downpour, with thunder crashing around them.

“Nikki and I probably went to six to eight different crosses around the world, just based on the fact that a cross was either built there or there was something that inspired it to be there at that time,” Matt says. “I knew a cross could bring more people—bring more people to the church, bring more people to think about God. So that’s how we saw this as that gift to this community.”

Matt and people from the community worked together on creating the cross from two huge wooden beams. Then they painted it white and added small mosaic tiles of yellow, orange and red to the cross.

“We covered it in fiberglass and a gel that is water resistant, similar to how they build boats here,” Matt says about the process that included taking the cross into the sea on two surfboards. “We put a post in the ground with PVC and concrete as if we were building a dock. The base is all top-grade steel ordered from the United States. It should last many, many years.”

Matt particularly made sure of the location of the cross.

“It lines up with the altar of the church. So, when the doors are open at Mass and the priest is at the altar, he can see the cross in the ocean from the altar. That’s the importance of the placement there.”

Beyond the cross’ faith-based connection, the couple and the community believe it will also serve as a tourist attraction that will help sustain the church in the future.

“There is a lot of tourism that already does come to this town,” Matt says. “Based on our travels, we saw that crosses can draw tourism. The idea is the tourists will visit, take photos, say a prayer, light a candle and donate money to help this community make sure the church stays there. By creating a self-sustainable model of income, we can use this money for ongoing repairs and such.

“And as the church becomes more beautiful with art that looks like them—black- and brown-colored images—more people in the community will come as well, bringing their children. With more money, more children’s programs can be built. It’s a long vision, but we’ve laid a foundation that will make it possible.”

It’s a vision based upon faith and love.

“People are the same around the world, no matter the color of their skin or their economic background,” Matt says. “People typically want love, security, food on the table. That’s what being part of this community really reflects to me and Nikki. At the end of the day, it’s all love and joy.

“We get that every time we’re in Mass with the people around us. And every time we visit the town, we just are overwhelmed with the love of the people because they greet us and they’re happy to see us.”

Matt pauses and adds, “That’s God and Christ coming through all of that.”

(To view a short video of how the cross was created and placed in the sea, go to www.youtube.com/shorts/39bVbwyG95E. To see a selection of photos of the faith community of St. Ignatius of Loyola Parish in Punta Gorda and to learn more about it, visit the website, pgcatholicchurch.org.) †



From a viewing point inside St. Ignatius of Loyola Church in Punta Gorda, Honduras, a brightly-colored cross adds an extra touch to the beauty of the Caribbean Sea. (Submitted photo)

VOCATIONS

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Native Hawaiian; and 2% are Black or African American. About one quarter (23%) of the ordinands are foreign-born—coming to live in the U.S. on average 14 years ago at 22 years old—with Mexico (5%), Vietnam (4%), Colombia (3%) and the Philippines (2%) the most common countries of origin among them.

A majority of ordinands (82%) said they grew up with both their parents as Catholic, and 29% reported having a relative who was a priest or religious.

More than half of the respondents (60%) had completed an undergraduate or graduate-level degree prior to entering the seminary, with business, liberal arts, philosophy and engineering topping the areas of study. Between 32% and 42% had attended a Catholic elementary school, high school or college.

Most ordinands (70%) had worked full time before entering the seminary, particularly in education (21%), business (16%) and Church ministry (13%).

CARA's executive director, Jesuit Father Thomas Gaunt, told OSV News that direct encouragement of young men

to consider priestly life is a "perennial factor" in vocations, with 89% of the respondents, or nine in 10, reporting they had received such support—usually from a parish priest (63%), friend (41%) or parishioner (41%).

"You could almost say that ... no one shows up at the seminary who was not encouraged," Father Gaunt said. "We generally see that men were encouraged by one, two, three, four different people in their life."

Eucharistic adoration also emerged as significant in vocational

discernment, with 75% of the respondents noting they had regularly prayed before the Blessed Sacrament prior to entering the seminary. The

rosary was also a favorite devotion for 71% of those surveyed; another 40% practiced *lectio divina*, or meditative prayer with Scripture. †



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson ritually lays hands on then-transitional Deacon José Neri on June 3, 2023, in SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis during a liturgy in which Deacon Neri and Deacon Jack Wright were ordained as archdiocesan priests. Seminarian Isaac Siefker, left, assists at the liturgy. (File photo by Sean Gallagher)

Parish priests are lifeline to Church's mission, Cardinal Gregory says

ROME (CNS)—The success of the Synod of Bishops on synodality will much depend on including parish priests in the process, said Cardinal Wilton D. Gregory of Washington.



Cardinal Wilton D. Gregory

Of the more than 360 bishops, religious and laypeople who participated in the first assembly at the Vatican last October, the small number who were ordained priests "were scholars, missionaries [or] they were engaged in leadership in religious communities," he said.

"Not that those other participants weren't generous and insightful," he said, but in his 40 years as a bishop,

his experience has been that "a number of people may know who the bishop is, they all know who the pastor is."

The parish priest is the Church's "point of contact, and if we lose contact with our people through their priests, it disables the mission of the Church," he told Catholic News Service on April 10 at the Pontifical North American College in Rome, where he was to receive the annual Rector's Award on April 11.

Cardinal Gregory had served as an auxiliary bishop of Chicago before leading the Diocese of Belleville, Ill., and then the Archdiocese of Atlanta; he was named archbishop of Washington in 2019 and then elevated to the College of Cardinals the next year.

Pope Francis personally invited the 76-year-old native of Chicago to attend the synod on synodality in Rome.

"There was a lack of parish priests present" at the first assembly, Cardinal Gregory said, noting the importance of the upcoming gathering of 300 parish priests from all over the world to make their contribution to the ongoing synod process by sharing their experiences of parish life.

Parish priests are the ones who "serve the folks in the pew, Sunday after Sunday after Sunday," he said. The gathering of parish priests, which will be held on April 28-May 2 outside of Rome, was needed "because if the synod is going to be a success, it really needs to keep its roots in the Sunday pew."

The priests, selected by bishops' conferences and Eastern Catholic Churches, also will have the chance to dialogue with Pope Francis as part of responding to the first assembly's report requesting more active involvement of deacons, priests and bishops in the synodal process.

Because there will only be one to four priests representing each bishops' conference and Eastern Catholic Church, Cardinal Gregory said it would be important for the priest delegates to "use media to pass on what they did, what they heard, what they said.

"After all, 300 priests is a good delegation, but it's a small representation of the total number of priests who are engaged directly in pastoral ministry," he said.

Just as priests are being asked to "follow up more effectively with their parishioners and learn how to listen to and to learn from criticism and also support" as part of the synodal process, he said, bishops, too, should be showing their support of their priests, even in the simplest of ways.

"Long before the synod and in every diocese that I've served in," he said, he has always shared messages and comments he receives complimenting one of his priests for something they did.

"I always send that complimentary letter to the priest himself, along with my letter of thanks to the individual who thought enough of a pastor to say something nice," he said.

"That builds a relationship with the priest and the bishop that says, 'You know, he contacts me not necessarily because I've done something wrong, but because I've done something right.' And that's very important. Our guys need to know that the bishop is grateful," he said.

The success of the synod, Cardinal Gregory said, will be seen with "an increase in the contact that people, ordinary people, the faithful of God, have with their priests," their bishop and with the pope. Success will be recognizing that the pope "is not an individual who governs the Church simply from the desk of the papal apartment" and that the bishop and pastor are not leaders who simply manage or direct activities from afar.

"To have a successful synod outcome, it has to tighten the bonds that unite us, even going into those areas where most people had not been before. And unfortunately, sometimes where bishops haven't been before, that is, in the midst of their flock," he said.

"Isn't that one of Pope Francis' favorite early terms, the smell of the sheep?" the cardinal asked. "You've got to have the smell of the sheep." †



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson poses on March 16 at St. Mark the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis with Burmese members of the Indianapolis South Deanery faith community and Father John Mang, its parochial vicar. A synod on synodality listening session was held at the parish on March 16.

(Submitted photo)

SYNOD

continued from page 1

Last October, bishops, priests, religious and lay Catholics from around the world took part in the first meeting of the synod on synodality. Meetings of Catholics from around the world were held more than a year before that meeting—including some in the archdiocese—that helped in the preparations for the Vatican gathering.

Ken Ogorek, executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Evangelizing Catechesis, helped guide the two recent listening sessions at which nearly 100 Catholics from more than 12 parishes took part.

"The process we used was very intentional in allowing each person to share her or his feelings and thoughts uninterrupted while folks around the table listened deeply," Ogorek said. "When asked, near the end of each session, participants expressed great appreciation for the process—even saying that what was modeled for them can be employed effectively in their parish settings."

This format mirrored the process, known as "conversations in the Spirit," that was used at the first assembly of the Synod of Bishops on synodality.

"I think the process used throughout this synod, ... or a modified version of the

process, can help get meeting participants over the hump of collective monologues and into the territory of deep, authentic listening to each person present," Ogorek said. "We might not all agree on everything. But when people know they've been heard, they can be willing to embrace teaching and direction with a sense of peace in the midst of challenge."

The report on the listening sessions noted that its participants emphasized the need for the Church "to be more welcoming and inclusive"; "the importance of acknowledging and embracing the teaching of our Church"; and "the value of lifelong learning in the faith—especially as it helps equip us for mission."

According to the report, one participant connected the purpose of the listening sessions to the overall mission of the Church.

"All of these listening sessions mean next to nothing if they are not for the primary and definitively outlined purpose of saving souls," the participant said.

"I encourage people to read our report and ponder, prayerfully, what the Holy Spirit might be telling us at this time," Ogorek said. "Jesus figures prominently in our report—as he should. Let's continue praying for synod participants, especially the Holy Father as he strives to know and do God's will for our Church as well as the whole world." †



St. George, pray for us

This embroidered piece featuring St. George came to the U.S. with Palestinian Christian ancestors who now live in the greater Indianapolis area. A martyr of the Church, St. George is considered the patron of knights, soldiers, scouts, fencers and archers. He is also invoked against the plague and leprosy, and against venomous snakes. His feast day is on April 23.
(Submitted photo by Stella Hooker-Haase)

Leaders urge calm after second Sydney stabbing declared ‘terrorist attack’

(OSV News)—Australian religious and political leaders have called for calm and unity after the attempted murder of an Assyrian Orthodox clergyman at his church’s altar in Sydney’s western suburbs, just days after a separate knife attack claimed six lives in Sydney’s Bondi Junction mall.

Assyrian Orthodox Bishop Mari Emmanuel, who rose to prominence during the COVID-19 pandemic for his fiery YouTube sermons, was stabbed at 7:10 p.m. on April 15 at the altar of Christ the Good Shepherd Church in Wakeley, an independent church he established in 2015.

In a now-removed livestream, a man in dark clothing could be seen approaching the altar and stabbing Bishop Emmanuel multiple times before congregants rushed up to stop the attack.

Terrified screams could be heard before the stream was ended and deleted.

The 16-year-old attacker was quickly restrained by the congregation, some of whom were injured in the attempt.

The attacker in turn suffered severe injuries from the angry crowd that quickly formed, with police later confirming social media photos and rumors that at least one of his fingers was severed.

Paramedics treated Bishop Emmanuel at the scene, later taking him to Liverpool Hospital where he was reportedly recovering well from non-life-threatening injuries.

New South Wales Police said the attacker had been restrained prior to their arrival, and was arrested and taken to an “undisclosed location.”

An estimated 2,000 men quickly converged on the church after the attack, with police responding by deploying the riot squad.

Catholic Weekly photographer Giovanni Portelli was on the scene as the riot hit its peak and saw police, wielding shotguns and assault rifles, deployed to the church as tensions rose.

Batons and pepper spray were used to disperse the crowd around 10:15 p.m. Two police officers were injured, after being hit with bricks, fence pickets and other debris, and several police cars were destroyed.

Members of the community were still cleaning up broken glass, smashed cars and debris the following morning, with the church closed.

New South Wales Premier Chris Minns confirmed on April 16 the stabbing was a “terrorist act” after convening a council of religious and community leaders overnight to call for calm.

Australian Federal Police Commissioner Reece Kershaw said at a press conference with Prime Minister Anthony Albanese the same day that police will allege the attack was “religiously motivated” and also called for calm.

Faith leaders worked hard to ease concerns in the community, with Archbishop Anthony Fisher of Sydney urging believers to respond with “prayer and peace” rather than fear or anger.

“Houses of prayer have traditionally been places of peace and solace, refuge and sanctuary, and so the video footage of the attack upon a religious leader during a religious service inside a church has been especially confronting,” the archbishop said.

“The images of the violence that subsequently occurred outside the church are also confronting,” he continued. “We have seen these types of events in other countries but, up until now, Australia has

been largely free from this type of blatant violence in and around places of worship.

“Every person in this country, be they bishop or priest, rabbi or imam, minister or congregant, should be able to worship in safety, without fear that they might be subject to acts of violence while gathering in prayer.”

Archbishop Fisher urged the faithful “to not respond to these events with fear, avoiding places of worship because they are worried about further attacks, nor with anger, engaging in acts of reprisal or revenge. The best response to violence and fear is prayer and peace.”

Fairfield-based Syriac Catholic priest Father Lenard Ina, a neighboring clergyman who knows Bishop Emmanuel well, said he will forgive his attacker.

“I think Bishop Mari will forgive the person who did this, but will also expect him to be judged under the law,” Father Ina told *The Catholic Weekly*. “I know his personality, and I think he will use what has happened to him to show the face of Jesus.”

Bishop Robert Rabbat of Australia’s Melkite Greek Catholic Eparchy told *The Catholic Weekly* that many people in Sydney’s multicultural community have come from places where innocent people, including priests, were killed in churches, “which is always hard to comprehend.

“Especially from Iraq, but also Syria, Lebanon and other places where they were hurt and were happy to come here, where it is safe to practice their faith with their leaders,” he said.

The bishop said some members of his own church were wondering whether their houses of prayer would remain oases of peace in Australia.

“We also have to try to understand the people who were praying with

Bishop Mari Emmanuel or waiting to listen to his spiritual talk,” he added.

“When you see someone who is dear to you or who you look up to suddenly being attacked, unfortunately sometimes the emotions make you behave in a way you usually would not, especially as some people may have witnessed something overseas and the images come back to mind.”

Overnight, Premier Minns had met with Christian and Muslim leaders, police, and government representatives, to issue a joint statement rejecting “violence in all its forms.”

Maronite Catholic Bishop Antoine-Charbel Tarabay, leader of Sydney’s large Maronite community, attended the meeting and also called for continued prayer and restraint in a separate statement.

“On behalf of the Maronite Eparchy of Australia, we unequivocally denounce violence in all its forms and express deep concern over the incidents that took place last night in Wakeley,” said.

The Australian National Imams Council likewise condemned the attacks as “horrifying” and having no place in Australia, “particularly at places of worship and toward religious leaders.”

Bishop Emmanuel was a bishop of the Assyrian Ancient Church of the East before establishing Christ the Good Shepherd Church in Wakeley, and is no longer listed among the clergy of the Assyrian Church’s Archdiocese of Australia, New Zealand and Lebanon.

A statement from the church on April 16 said, “We are taught to honor the image of God, not through vengeance and justice, but in adopting the spirit of humility, love and peace.” †



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Parishioners pray and grieve at St. Patrick’s Church, in Sydney’s Bondi neighborhood, in the wake of the horrific knife attack at Bondi Junction on April 13. (OSV News photo/Patrick Lee, *The Catholic Weekly*).

SIMPLY CATHOLIC

Bishop selection process involves wide confidential consultation

By Michael R. Heinlein

(OSV News)—As the choice of a bishop potentially can guide and shape the journey of a given diocese or archdiocese for sometimes decades at a time, the nomination and appointment of bishops in the Church is one that has a significant impact on the lives and ministerial focus of Catholics in almost every segment of the Church.

The process of how these new shepherds are appointed to their new sees remains largely unknown, or at least largely opaque, to many.

Let's take a closer look at the complex undertaking of choosing a new bishop, one which originates with the needs of a local diocese and extends all the way to the desk of the pope.

Before looking at the process today, it's important to realize that the process of how a bishop is chosen has changed and developed much during the Church's 2,000-year history. Bishops are the successors of the Apostles. As the number of Apostles dwindled—primarily through their martyrdom—their closest collaborators were chosen and appointed to fulfill their role among the faithful.

In the patristic era, it was common for the clergy of a diocese to elect their bishop. There is one instance when that still occurs today—namely, when the College of Cardinals (formally considered as senior clergy of the Diocese of Rome) elects a new bishop of Rome—a new pope.

In some cases, historical evidence shows that bishops were selected by the people of the diocese. There are many situations in the Middle Ages where secular rulers demanded the right to select bishops, resulting in some cases where the episcopal office became more political in nature than pastoral.

Some national governments today still maintain privileges of consultation on bishops nominated in their territories.

Some particular dioceses throughout the world today—particularly about half of the Latin Church dioceses in Germany—have governing councils of clergy called “chapters,” which play a role in choosing the diocesan bishop. Likewise, patriarchal Eastern Churches select their own bishops and then request approval by the pope.

Despite these more irregular paths for selecting bishops that still exist today, the practice of selecting bishops in the Latin (Roman Catholic) Church generally follows a process that results in a decision made by the pope himself.

But the task would be fraught with difficulties if the pope had to navigate his way through selecting bishops on his own, especially considering that at least one bishop is nominated somewhere in the world every day. Moreover, collegiality is essential to the episcopate, so wide collaboration and consultation is expected. Appointments are generally to fill positions for archbishops, bishops or auxiliary bishops at the diocesan level. Each is handled in similar, yet slightly different, ways.

The current process for selecting bishops typically begins locally. Each diocese is part of a larger grouping—these larger territories are called metropolitan provinces, each with an archbishop.

Any bishop in a province is invited to submit names of priests whom they believe would do well to serve as a bishop. Normally, bishops in a province meet at least yearly, and the province's archbishop circulates the names he has collected along with a résumé of each priest.

Together, the bishops of the province discuss the nominated priests and take a vote to decide which names should be recommended. This list then is submitted to the country's apostolic nuncio, the pope's personal representative in a country and a pivotal player in the process of selecting bishops there. The current apostolic nuncio in the United States is French-born Cardinal Christophe Pierre.

Needing a new bishop

A diocesan bishop is selected when a vacancy of that office is created in a given diocese. Bishops are required to submit their request for retirement at age 75, although it is not effective until the pope accepts it. Bishops may also resign before the mandatory age, albeit for a grave reason such as debilitating illness or some other situation that prevents them from fulfilling their ministry. A vacancy can also be created when a bishop is transferred from one diocese to another.

As bishops are nearing retirement or suffering from ill health, they may sometimes request or be given a coadjutor bishop. A coadjutor serves alongside the diocesan bishop, also known as the ordinary, and effectively serves as his co-administrator and fills the role of diocesan vicar general. Coadjutors will automatically succeed the diocesan bishop at the time of his 75th birthday, his death, early resignation or his reassessment.

The research phase

When deliberating on candidates for diocesan bishops, the

nuncio will find out as much as possible about the diocese in question. A report is compiled by the current bishop or diocesan administrator after consultation with various officials within the diocese.

During this process, the nuncio could make contact with people in diocesan offices, certain clergy as well as previous bishops of the diocese in question or other bishops in the province.

Once the nuncio shortens his list of candidates, he seeks the input of as many as several dozen people who know the candidates in consideration by asking them to respond to a questionnaire completed in strictest confidentiality.

After the nuncio has reviewed all of this information, he composes a report of three candidates—called a “terna”—in which he notes his preferences. All this material is forwarded to the Vatican's Dicastery for Bishops.

In those cases where an archbishop is to be selected, a *terna* is usually composed for currently serving bishops. The process operates in a slightly different way. Typically, bishops from the suffragan sees—those dioceses grouped with an archdiocese in a given province—are first considered, although sometimes something of a nationwide search applies. Other archbishops in the United States might be consulted, too. This all depends on the position of the diocese or archdiocese within a country and its unique needs. This is true also in more prominent dioceses with a large population, etc.

Selecting auxiliary bishops

The procedure for nominating and selecting auxiliary bishops—those bishops appointed to give assistance to a diocesan bishop—largely follows the same process, with a few exceptions.

In this case, the diocesan bishop typically inaugurates the process by submitting the request for an auxiliary to the nuncio. A report is usually compiled with statistics of the diocese, which give a rationale for the need. Auxiliary bishops are usually given to dioceses that have a large population or other needs that warrant one or more auxiliary. Some American archdioceses, such as Chicago and Los Angeles, have several.

The diocesan bishop will ordinarily prepare the *terna* of candidates, which he turns over to the nuncio. They are then investigated by the nuncio and his staff before their names are submitted to the Dicastery for Bishops.

The Dicastery

When the prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops—currently American-born Cardinal Robert F. Prevost who, before he became a bishop, was a member of the Order of St. Augustine—approves the dossier submitted by the nuncio, the process moves ahead to select a bishop for a given post.

The prefect chooses a member of his staff to create a summary of the information submitted by the nuncio, which in turn is submitted to the entire dicastery—staffed by bishops and cardinals from around the world. The dicastery members discuss bishop appointments twice monthly on average. Two Americans currently serving on the Dicastery for Bishops are Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin of Newark and Cardinal Blase J. Cupich of Chicago.

The terna

Members of the dicastery discuss the candidates and take a vote. They can either support the nuncio's recommendation, choose another candidate in the list to move to the top of the *terna*, or ask that another *terna* be composed.

The pope picks

The process finally draws to a close when the prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops meets privately with the pope. During the meeting, he presents the *terna*, given in a particular order with the dicastery's choice at the top.

At this final stage, the pope can do one of four things. He may agree with the dicastery's proposal; he may choose another candidate on the list; he may ask for a new *terna* to be submitted; or, more unlikely, he could choose his own candidate.

The nominee

Within a few days, the pope's decision is rendered to the dicastery. Once the nuncio is informed, the nominee is contacted by the nuncio and given the option to accept the appointment. Nominees may refuse episcopal office, but it is rare and must be for a good reason.

When an affirmative answer is given, the nuncio arranges with the Holy See to set a date to make an announcement of the appointment. There is usually a two- to four-week period before the public announcement. During this time, the bishop-designate is not allowed to discuss his appointment.

The entire process of nominating and appointing a bishop usually takes six months to a year from the date a diocese



Archbishop Christophe Pierre (now a cardinal), apostolic nuncio to the United States, right, and other bishops applaud as Archbishop Charles C. Thompson sits for the first time in SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis on July 28, 2017, during the Mass in which he was installed as the seventh archbishop of Indianapolis. (File photo by Sean Gallagher)

becomes vacated due to sudden resignation, death or transfer of the diocesan bishop, or when an auxiliary is requested. In the case of a bishop reaching retirement age, the selection process often will happen before the retirement of the outgoing bishop is accepted. Bishops-designate are to be ordained within three months of their nomination, according to Church law.

Many things need to be decided by the new bishop or bishop-designate, who must tend to a series of tasks and decisions. Here is a short list and some context:

—Press conference: A diocese typically holds a press conference the day a new bishop is announced. This is to answer the media's questions and introduce the new appointee. A bishop-designate may wear a pectoral cross once nominated and wear a bishop's cassock with scarlet piping and the amaranth zucchetto, or skull cap.

—Coat of arms: With design choices made by each bishop, a coat of arms incorporates symbols, colors and shapes that represent significant events, people or places in the life of the bishop. Steeped in tradition, ecclesiastical heraldry is a regulated system of self-identification, adopted by the Church from medieval society.

—Motto: Typically chosen from Scripture, although not necessarily, each bishop chooses a quotation or phrase that describes himself or his ministry or serves as something of an inspirational guidepost for the same. A bishop's motto is generally incorporated into his coat of arms.

—Symbols of office: Each bishop typically designs his ring and crozier for his use, although sometimes he receives them as gifts from a former bishop who might have been his friend and mentor or priests from the diocese that he is leaving or going to. He will also choose the vestments he will wear at his ordination, including a mitre (bishop's hat) for the occasion.

—Date and place of ordination: New bishops are typically ordained in the cathedral church of the diocese where they will serve as bishop, although sometimes there is the need to choose a larger venue to accommodate larger numbers wishing to participate. A feast day or other convenient date is chosen within that time period.

—Attending clergy: Usually each bishop-designate chooses two priests to accompany and assist him during the ordination liturgy. These are typically close friends of the new bishop, and they do not fill a major role. They are something like a best man at a wedding.

—Ordaining prelates: According to tradition, three bishops are present at the ordination of a bishop, although only one is ultimately required for validity. Usually the archbishop of the province will serve as the principal consecrator, while the new bishop chooses two co-consecrators. These are often the new bishop's immediate predecessor and the bishop of his home diocese or other bishop friends.

—“Bishops' school”: Typically held each fall and organized by the Vatican's Dicastery for Bishops, newly ordained bishops are brought together in Rome from around the world to be introduced to officials in the offices of the Roman Curia with whom they will communicate most. It also aids in fostering a sense of universal collegiality among bishops.

(Michael R. Heinlein is editor of *Simply Catholic*. E-mail him at mheinlein@osv.com. Follow him on X, formerly Twitter, @HeinleinMichael.) †

Journey of the Heart/Jennifer Burger

Easter and the Eucharist remind us we are 'Resurrection people'

Easter Sunday may seem like it was a while ago, but I love that we are still able to greet everyone with a joyful Happy Easter! I appreciate the liturgical seasons in the Church that call us to orient our hearts and minds and our very lives around the person and life of Jesus. However, sometimes our lives do not always seem to follow suit.



Sitting in adoration on the Monday of Holy Week, I was giving thanks to our Lord for the many blessings in my life—with special thanks for the beautiful wedding we had just shared with our daughter and her new husband that Palm Sunday weekend. My heart was so full of love and joy—it felt like Easter already!

I began to wonder if this is what my posture should look like going into Holy Week, and if I ought to feel less joyful to “appropriately” enter this time of walking with our Lord in his Passion.

The Easter Triduum led me there later that week, but during this time in prayer in my state of bliss, I could not deny what I was feeling, and I'm certain that God

did not want to take that away from me either.

It was our day of reconciliation at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House in Indianapolis, and I was aware that there were some in that chapel who perhaps were getting ready to or who had just laid down their burdens, pains and sorrows.

I was reminded that in Christ, we carry his dying and his resurrection. I was also reminded that during Holy Week and the Easter season there would be joy and sorrow: babies would be born, and people would die; some would lose their jobs, and others would discover new opportunities; some would celebrate their first Easter together, and others would experience their first Easter without a loved one; some would enter the Church while others would remain fallen away.

Even during my daughter's wedding, there were tender moments of both joy and sorrow, including knowing that my son-in-law's mom, who passed away 6 ½ years ago, was not with us. The silent tears of her family and friends in attendance and the heartfelt speeches echoed her loss, but there was also a beauty in it that brought a sense of deeper joy—a peace—because it was shared.

In Christ, one's suffering becomes our

suffering, and one's joy becomes our joy. We support and celebrate each other this way as Christians. It is the life of Christ in us. It is a life that is shared in its totality. I couldn't think of a more beautiful way to walk through life than with each other and with Christ.

When we come together, our lives intersecting in times of joy and sadness, there at the center of these crossroads, we find Christ. It is love itself. It is the sacrificial love of Jesus on the cross and his life-giving love in the Resurrection. It is Easter.

Yes, Easter is the “feast of all feasts” in the liturgical calendar, but it is also a season for all time. We have access to Easter in the celebration of the Eucharist at every Mass, and we carry this love within us as we are sent out, sharing our lives with others.

“We are resurrection people,” St. Pope John Paul II once said, “and Alleluia is our song.” Let us celebrate it well and all year long! *Happy Easter!*

(Jennifer Burger is program manager at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House in Indianapolis and a member of St. Simon the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis. She is also a spiritual director.) †

Evangelization Outreach/

Rachel Gilman

Every adult can play a key role in ministering to teens

You have probably heard the phrase, “It takes a village to raise a child” many times in your life and probably agree with that sentiment. I do.



We've seen time and time again that the more caring and loving adults that are present in teenagers' lives, the more they feel loved, valued and seen. This same sentiment is true when it comes to helping a

teen develop and embrace their faith and become a lifelong disciple of Christ.

It truly does take an entire Church community to support our young people on their faith journey. We have many amazing professional youth ministry leaders who help us to do this in our parishes. But the truth is, we can't leave the role of forming and supporting our youths to just them; it is the responsibility of all of us.

In a sense, we are all youth ministers. We are all called to minister to and invest in youths when we encounter them in our own spheres—whether that be as a parent, a coach, a teacher, a pastor, a parishioner or a youth ministry leader or volunteer.

You may not realize it, but you have the power to greatly impact a teen and their faith simply by investing in them in the spheres in which you encounter them. You don't need to be a professional youth minister or have a theology degree to love, care for and walk with a teen in their faith. You just need to be authentically yourself and embrace each encounter with a teen truly for what it is: an opportunity to show God's love to them.

A teacher can embrace being a youth minister by caring for a student who is struggling by checking on them regularly. A coach can embrace being a youth minister by caring about their athletes' well-being and by uniting faith and sports through prayer at practices and at games.

Even in the smallest of ways, choosing to invest in a teen in whatever role you play in their life goes a long way in helping them feel loved, accepted and ensuring they have a space where they can experience and grow in their faith.

Our youths need each and every one of us to be open to assuming the role of a youth minister in their lives.

One of our goals in the archdiocesan Office of Youth Ministry is to support and equip all adults in embracing their role as youth ministers to teens in their areas of influence. In August, we will be hosting an event, “Into the Heart,” that invites adults from all spheres—teachers, parents, youth ministers, pastors, youth ministry volunteers, coaches and others—to gather together to be inspired, renewed and empowered in our shared role of ministering to and engaging in the lives of young people.

Will you join us in sharing the joy of investing in young people and their faith? All adults are welcome to attend “Into the Heart” from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. on Saturday, Aug. 10, at Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish, 335 S. Meridian St., in Greenwood, to be formed and supported as we all strive to work together to walk with young people in our faith communities.

Visit our website at archindyym.com to register or for more information as it becomes available.

(Rachel Gilman is director of the archdiocesan Office of Youth Ministry within the Secretariat for Evangelizing Catechesis. She can be reached at rgilman@archindy.org.) †

That All May Be One/Fr. Rick Ginther

Passover celebrates Jews' liberation from slavery into freedom

(We are in the Easter season. Ramadan ended on April 8, and Jews are about to enter Passover. What follows is a description of the seder meal, the feast that begins Passover. My thanks to Dr. Alan Bercovitz, who is Jewish, for the following column.)



Each year on the Hebrew calendar, Passover begins on the 15th day of the month of Nisan. By the Hebrew calendar, the current year is 5784.

This corresponds to our western calendar: sundown on April 22, 2024. Passover ends at sundown on April 30 (Nisan 22).

Passover and Easter are both springtime celebrations. Let's think about how similar these traditions are.

Redemption and hope are themes shared at both Passover and Easter. We are all called on to celebrate, observe, pray and share with our families and friends.

As Passover begins, families gather for the Seder meal.

Seder means “order.” All Jewish seder meals worldwide follow the same 14 parts in the same prescribed order, just as our ancestors did in times past.

We read from the Hagaddah (“the telling,” a book which guides the Seder meal). The Torah (first five books of the Bible) commands us to tell this story to our children and grandchildren, as our parents and grandparents did in times past.

As we gather, the leader has before him/her the Seder plate. On the Seder plate rests:

—*The Pesach*. A roasted bone, symbolic of the special lamb brought to the temple as an offering to God.

—*Moror*. Bitter herbs, symbolic of the bitterness of slavery.

—*Charoses*. A combination of apples, cinnamon, nuts and wine, symbolic of the clay used by the slaves to make bricks for the Pharaoh.

—*Beitsa*. An egg, symbolic of continuity of life, for there is no beginning and no end.

—*Karpas*. Parsley, symbolic of new life and a feeling of hope.

—Wine. Drunk four times, symbolic of God's four promises of freedom.

—Salt water, symbolic of sad, bitter tears shed by the slaves of ancient Egypt, and those who are not free today.

—*Matzoh*. Unleavened bread. As the Jewish people fled Egypt, there was no time for bread to rise.

—Elijah's Cup. The prophet Elijah is invited to enter all homes during the Seder meal.

At Passover, we tell the story of our redemption from slavery.

Moses, whose name means “drew him out of the water,” was saved from the Nile River by Pharaoh's daughter. He was raised as the Pharaoh's grandson. As he grew, and as the Jewish people were enslaved, God told Moses to go to the Pharaoh and say, “Let my people go.”

When Pharaoh refused, God punished Egypt with 10 plagues, the last being the death of firstborn sons.

The Jewish people marked their doorposts with the blood from a sacrificed unblemished lamb, a sign that the angel of death should pass over their homes and spare their first-born sons.

Because of these plagues, Pharaoh told the Jewish people they could leave. In their haste, they did not have time to leaven the dough.

When they reached the Red Sea, Pharaoh changed his mind and demanded his army secure their return to slavery. Through God, Moses parted the Red Sea, allowing the Jewish people to go forth into freedom.

Passover celebrates this liberation from slavery into freedom. We celebrate this history and re-tell this story as the Torah commands.

We both remember and observe. We invite family, friends and even strangers into our home, as we are told, “Let those who are hungry come and eat.”

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

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

No, Richard Dawkins, cultural Christianity is not enough

In a striking turn of events, renowned atheist and evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins recently declared himself a

“cultural Christian” during an interview with Rachel S. Johnson of LBC. Dawkins' declaration was sparked by his reaction to the mayor of London's decision to celebrate Ramadan rather than Easter with 30,000 lights on Oxford Street.



Well known for his critical stance on religion, Dawkins expressed dismay at promoting Ramadan over Easter. Surprisingly, he defended the cultural

trappings of Christianity in England, which he perceives as a fundamentally Christian nation.

Dawkins' comments underscore a significant but often overlooked conversation in the West. While Dawkins does not embrace Christianity's spiritual tenets, his appreciation for its cultural and moral contributions to society raises an intriguing paradox: Can the values and achievements attributed to Christianity in the West be preserved without genuine belief?

This question is particularly relevant for Catholics and the broader Christian community. It compels us to reflect on the depth of our commitment to our faith and its role in shaping our civilization.

Cultural Christianity, such as Dawkins identifies with, appreciates the aesthetic and moral fruits of the faith without embracing its heart—the belief that Jesus Christ is Lord and that a personal relationship with him matters. However, preserving Western values and achievements that Christianity has influenced—such as human dignity, moral responsibility and the pursuit of the common good—requires more than a superficial attachment to its traditions and moral outlook.

Christianity is a radical thing. The Gospel demands transformation, calling for personal conversion and a lived relationship with God. This

See BRISCOE, page 15

Fourth Sunday of Easter/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, April 21, 2024

- Acts of the Apostles 4:8-12
- 1 John 3:1-2
- John 10:11-18

The Acts of the Apostles again is the source for the first reading for Mass this weekend in the Easter season.



St. Peter, once more the spokesman for the Apostles, is filled with the Holy Spirit. He is not speaking on his own.

In this passage, Peter restores a person unable to walk to wholeness, declaring that this

miraculous event came not as the result of his own power, or of any earthly power, but through the power of Jesus.

Continuing, Peter makes it clear that Jesus, the source of Peter's power, was indeed crucified on Calvary. He is the Son of God and the Savior. Jesus is the gateway to eternal life itself, the single source of God's favor and everlasting life.

The First Epistle of St. John provides the second reading. It and two other epistles ascribed to the Apostle John are splendid in their superb use of language.

This reading declares that true believers are "children of God" (1 Jn 3:1). It is a powerful concept, meaning that through and in Jesus, believers become much more than merely creatures of God. They truly are God's adopted children.

The Scriptures have many titles and names for God. He is the master, the creator, the king and the almighty. In this reading, God is the Father. The title conveys all that the relationship between a child and an earthly father suggests.

The final reading is a passage from St. John's Gospel in which Jesus is described as the Good Shepherd. This title, occurring elsewhere in the New Testament with many echoes of the Old Testament, offers lessons in itself.

In the Greek, the language of the Gospel, "good" means "ideal." Jesus is the perfect shepherd. Jesus not only leads the sheep, but risks everything—even life itself—for the sheep. The image has overtones of the

Lord's sacrificial death on Calvary.

Another lesson is that we are sheep. Sheep are not aggressive. They are not predators. They are shy, easily the prey of vicious enemies that capitalize on the sheep's innocence and vulnerability. Humans resemble sheep, as humans unsuspectingly so often are exposed to the dangers of sin and to the meanness of sinful persons. The Lord protects us.

In the agrarian world of that day's Israel, Jesus used images familiar to everyone, such as shepherds and sheep. He wanted all to understand and to know God, his mercy and love and the potential of all to live in this love.

Reflection

For weeks, the Church has celebrated the Resurrection. And it still celebrates the Lord's risen life this weekend.

In these readings, the Church reminds us that the Resurrection was not just an event that came and went. Instead, it is with us now. How? Peter brought people to God. He brought God's life-giving power to them. His successors continue in this wondrous exchange.

In our inevitable limitations, we humans everlastingly ignore our own vulnerability and inflate our strengths. We are at the mercy of death-dealing and devious forces, some with human faces. Some come from within us. We must admit to these realities.

Jesus is our Good Shepherd, ready to sacrifice earthly life itself to protect us from death.

We need the Lord. Without him, we risk eternal death, helpless before our enemies. He alone guides us to peace and to life.

The Lord, however, does not invade our hearts. We are free to choose for ourselves, in a dramatic personal selection of life in Christ or eternal death.

With the help of God's grace, we must convert and commit. Essential to eternal life is a total and absolute commitment to God, through Jesus.

It is that simple, that basic. †

Daily Readings

Monday, April 22

Acts 11:1-18
Psalm 42:2-3; 43:3-4
John 10:1-10

Tuesday, April 23

St. George, martyr
St. Adalbert, bishop and martyr
Acts 11:19-26
Psalm 87:1-7
John 10:22-30

Wednesday, April 24

St. Fidelis of Sigmaringen, priest and martyr
Acts 12:24-13:5a
Psalm 67:2-3, 5-6, 8
John 12:44-50

Thursday, April 25

St. Mark, Evangelist
1 Peter 5:5b-14

Psalm 89:2-3, 6-7, 16-17
Mark 16:15-20

Friday, April 26

Acts 13:26-33
Psalm 2:6-11
John 14:1-6

Saturday, April 27

Acts 13:44-52
Psalm 98:1-4
John 14:7-14

Sunday, April 28

Fifth Sunday of Easter
Acts 9:26-31
Psalm 22:26-27, 28, 30, 31-32
1 John 3:18-24
John 15:1-8

Question Corner/Jenna Marie Cooper

Sins absolved in sacrament of penance can still have ongoing effects

QI have a confession question. I have heard that past sins, either venial or mortal, even after confessing them stay with you somewhat and only really get dismissed after your soul is scrubbed clean by time in purgatory. So, would someone with a very bad past who does a turnaround, goes to confession, receives absolution



and leads a good life going forward still be responsible for past sins? (Rhode Island)

A There are many layers to your question, but the short answer is that we are truly and fully forgiven from our sins when we receive absolution after a good confession. However, sacramental absolution by itself doesn't necessarily resolve all the consequences of our sins.

Canon 959 of the *Code of Canon Law* reflects this reality when it notes that one of the requirements for sacramental absolution is that penitents be truly sorry for their sins, and that they "intend to reform themselves" (or, as this is sometimes translated, that they have "firm purpose of amendment").

In other words, forgiveness of sin in the sacrament of penance can only come about if penitents are willing at the time of confession to do what they need to do in their lives outside the confessional to bring their lives into harmony with God's law.

On an observable natural level, it might seem fairly obvious that a sacramental confession does not automatically fix all the negative aspects of a situation our sins may have caused.

For example, if a man were to confess intentionally inflicting major damage to someone else's property, that newly forgiven sin would still, in a sense, stick with

the penitent insofar as he would still be responsible for repairing the damage—and might even need to face secular criminal charges.

In a similar but less dramatic way, people who confess a tendency to lose their temper with their family members would still need to work toward improving the relationships that may have been injured by their unkind words or actions. Other people's hurt feelings do not instantly go away as a result of sacramental confession.

With respect to your question specifically, people who repented after years of habitual sinful behavior might still have a lot to do to resolve the problems their sins may have caused—though we can assume that this burden would be made much lighter by the grace of the sacrament.

The idea that sin has consequences also extends to the idea of purgatory. God does not punish for sins that he himself has forgiven through the sacrament. But purgatory is not intended to be a form of divine punishment, strictly speaking. Rather, purgatory is meant instead to be a time of healing from the negative spiritual effects of our sinfulness.

Many sins have the potential to hurt other people (and sometimes also ourselves) in earthly or bodily ways. But all sin unavoidably wounds the soul of the one who commits it. Even venial sins can make us less capable of loving God and receiving his love, and this spiritual damage does not necessarily go away just because the sin that caused the damage has been forgiven. Purgatory is a state that God in his mercy gives to us so that our souls may be strengthened and purified so as to be made ready to enter into the full glory of heaven.

Given that purgatory is a state of existence in eternity and thus outside of our experience of time, how this strengthening and purification happens and is experienced remains a mystery.

That being said, there are things we can do on Earth to heal our souls and hopefully shorten our time in purgatory. For one thing, a fervent prayer life can draw us closer to God, preparing us for a heavenly life in his direct presence. And it has been traditionally understood that if we, with the help of God's grace, patiently bear the sufferings we naturally experience in this life, this can help us grow more detached from sin and the passing things of this world so as to set our hearts more firmly on God alone.

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

My Journey to God

Beloved child

By Lauren Smith

you are loved.
I love you.

you are not annoying.
I take delight in you.

you are not ugly.
you are beautiful.
I made you.

you are not a bother.
I take delight in you.

Beloved,
you are Mine.
Fear not.

you are not stupid.
you are simple.
I made you.

Beloved,
you are Mine.

you are not selfish.
you are innocent.
And I love you.



My child,
you are Mine.

Beloved child,
you are Mine.

(Lauren Smith is a member of St. Paul Catholic Center in Bloomington. Photo: A girl is pictured in a photo on a playground in Los Angeles.) (OSV News photo/Lucy Nicholson, Reuters)

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.

BERG, Joyce A., 71, St. Michael, Bradford, Jan. 28. Mother of Kelly Church and Michael Berg. Sister of Linda Barylski, Martha Kays, Patricia Schwartz, Jill, Jeff and Randy Blessinger. Grandmother of two.

BLANFORD, Robert E., 92, St. Mark the Evangelist, Indianapolis, March 13. Brother of Jeanine Binder. Uncle and great-uncle of several.

BRUCE, II, John M., 67, St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower), Indianapolis, March 27. Husband of Barbara Bruce. Father of Beth, Dawn, Julie and John Bruce and David Gerber. Brother of Kathy Bruce, Elissa Kaupisch and Donna Stahmer. Grandfather of nine.

BURGAN, Norma Jean, 93, St. John Paul II, Sellersburg, March 29. Mother of Patty Landers, Bill and Bob Burgan. Grandmother of nine. Great-grandmother of 20. Great-great-grandmother of 10.

DEXIMO, Apolonio, 76, Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Indianapolis, March 25. Husband of Edna Deximo. Father of Christina, Alain and Mark Deximo. Grandfather of five.

FESSEL, Benjamin R., infant, St. Michael, Bradford, Oct. 1, 2023. Son of Kevin and Michelle Fessel. Brother of Abigail, Brody and Bryce Fessel. Grandson of Robert

and Vicki Fessel and John and Susan Knoll.

FISHER, Patricia A., 84, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Richmond, March 25. Mother of Kim Hawkins, Debbie Reimsnyder and James Fisher, Jr. Grandmother of 14. Great-grandmother of 20.

GEARY, Nancy J., 87, St. Joseph, Corydon, March 25. Wife of James Geary, Sr. Mother of Elizabeth Costello, Susan Sanchez, Barbara Vergin, Kathleen and James Geary, Jr. Sister of William Mikesell. Grandmother of six. Great-grandmother of three.

GOINS, Deanna, 55, Prince of Peace, Madison, March 30. Mother of Alex and Reggie Perry. Daughter of Gene and Janet Jones. Sister of Mark Jones. Grandmother of four.

GRAY, Grover, 85, St. Paul, Tell City, April 1. Father of Jeff and Rick Gray. Brother of Sage Critchelo. Grandfather of three. Great-grandfather of one.

HACKL, Christine, 96, St. Luke the Evangelist, Indianapolis, March 23. Mother of Elizabeth Brainard, Ellen Fagan, Dorothy Reiser, Martha Smith, Christine Walsh, Albert, Jr., Frederick and Robert Hackl. Grandmother of 31. Great-grandmother of one.

HOEHN, Norbert J., 86, St. Michael, Bradford, Oct. 28, 2023. Husband of Mary Catherine Hoehn. Father of Connie Mudd, Eileen, Jason, Jonathan, Marty and Nathan Hoehn. Grandfather of 11. Great-grandfather of five.

JAMES, Ronald E., 72, St. Augustine, Leopold, April 2. Husband of Carol Flamion. Father of Niki Brown, Jami Smith, Chad, Keith and Robby James. Brother of Eletta Bryant, Earlene Preher, Ramona Simpson, Joe, Kenny, Paul and Randy James. Grandfather of 13.

JOERGER, Lawrence, 89, All Saints, Dearborn County, April 1. Husband of Marilyn Joerger. Father of Laura Hartman, Ruth Hendrix, Linda Todd, Rita Wissel, Kelly, Bob and Larry Joerger. Brother of Alice Lamping. Grandfather of 20. Great-grandfather of 37. Great-great-grandfather of three.

Rwanda remembers



Participants hold a candlelit night vigil on April 7 at the BK arena in Kigali, Rwanda, during a commemoration event known as “Kwibuka” (“Remembering”) to mark the 30th anniversary of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. (OSV News photo/Jean Bizimana, Reuters)

KAUFMAN, Jacquelyn E., 60, St. Michael, Bradford, Feb. 20. Wife of Jim Kaufman. Mother of Jessica Brewer, Jillian and Josephine Kaufman. Sister of Janet Emily-Smith, Michael and Patrick Emily. Grandmother of one.

LEE, Rhonda L., 46, St. Joseph, Corydon, March 22. Wife of Christopher Lee. Mother of Brittney Pettit and Jonathan Cissell. Daughter of Deborah Lawalin. Sister of Brad, Daniel and Jason Lawalin. Grandmother of three.

MATHENA, Joyce A., 84, Holy Family, New Albany, March 24. Wife of James Mathena. Mother of Lynette Long, Kim Payne and James Capehart. Sister of Ronald Lindquist. Grandmother of 10. Great-grandmother of six.

MORIN, Jerome A., 83, St. Luke the Evangelist, Indianapolis, March 25. Father of Sara Bartelmann. Brother of Rosemary Gornowicz, Joan

Graves and Andrew Morin. Grandfather of two.

O’FARRELL, Julia A. (Jennings), 92, Sacred Heart of Jesus, Indianapolis, Feb. 23. Mother of Kathleen Cook, Brigid Taylor, Mary, Brian, Pat and Thomas O’Farrell. Grandmother of 11. Great-grandmother of seven. Great-great-grandmother of one.

PFEFFER, Sylvia K., 77, St. Matthew the Apostle, Indianapolis, Dec. 18, 2023. Aunt of several.

POVINELLI, Narcisso G., 89, St. Jude, Indianapolis, March 28. Father of Ruth Copeland, Debi Murphree and Anthony Povinelli. Brother of Frank Povinelli. Grandfather of 11.

ROBERTSON, Kathleen T., 66, Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Indianapolis, March 8. Wife of David Robertson. Mother of Thomas Fritsche and Jonathan Robertson. Sister of Maureen Mathes and Christopher Meehan. Grandmother of eight. Great-grandmother of two.

ROBINSON, Phyllis (Eichenberger), 83, Holy Family, New Albany, March 30. Mother of Mary Miles, Carrie Spencer, Daniel, Kenneth, Robert and William Eichenberger. Grandmother of 31. Great-grandmother of 30.

RUMPF, Terri I., 68, Holy Family, New Albany, Jan. 6. Sister of Joan Greening and Gay McKay. Aunt of one.

SCHENCK, Bernard E., 85, St. Michael, Bradford, Sept. 9, 2023. Husband of Rosalie Schenck. Father of Rebecca LaFlamme, Pamela Waller, Bernard, Jr., and Mark Schenck. Brother of Martha Neuner and Alvin Schenck. Grandmother of 17. Great-grandmother of 14.

SMITH, Donald C., 81, Holy Family, New Albany, Jan. 30. Husband of Kathy Smith. Father of Christopher Russell and Matthew Smith. Brother of Nancy Abel, Ann Baker, Brenda Falkenstein, Charlotte Mooney and Glenn Smith. Grandfather of six. Great-grandfather of one.

TABARD, Sharon (Miller), 83, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, March 12. Mother of LeeAnn Andrews, Tracy Miller-Moran, Dawn Pritchett and Melissa Ventresca. Sister of Forest Child. Grandmother of 12. Great-grandmother of 11.

WEILER, Lucille, 93, St. Mary, Rushville, April 8. Mother of Karen Jenkins, Melissa Lee, Darlene Marlow, Marilyn Weiler-Koster, Kevin and Ron Weiler. Sister of Bernice Harmeyer, Kathleen Knue and Wilfred Schwegman. Grandmother of 12. Great-grandmother of nine.

WHITAKER, Shirley A., 92, St. Michael, Bradford, Feb. 9. Mother of Marilyn Crumbo, Jim III and Joseph Whitaker. Sister of Bernard and John Alvey. Grandmother of 13. Great-grandmother of 23.

WILLIAMS, Donald E., 86, Christ the King, Indianapolis, March 31. Husband of Theresa Williams. Father of Molly and Mike Williams. Grandfather of four. Great-grandfather of three. †

Pope Francis turns Rome catechism class into ‘school of prayer’

ROME (CNS)—Pope Francis took over the catechism classes at St. John Vianney Parish on the far eastern edge of Rome to inaugurate his “School of Prayer.”

The pope went, unannounced, to the parish after school on April 11 and met with about 200 children, Vatican News reported.

He spoke to them about prayer and answered their questions. He also brought them chocolate Easter eggs and rosaries.

Archbishop Rino Fisichella, pro-prefect of the Dicastery for Evangelization’s section for new evangelization, which is coordinating preparations for the Holy Year 2025, had announced the “School of Prayer” in January.

The archbishop said the project would be like the pope’s “Fridays of Mercy” initiative during the extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy in 2015-16, when the pope visited people on the “peripheries,”

including babies in a neonatal unit, a center for the blind and a housing project to illustrate the corporal works of mercy.

Pope Francis has asked Catholics around the world to observe 2024 as a “year of prayer” in preparation for the Holy Year.

The pope’s lesson for the children focused on the theme of prayers of thanksgiving, the Dicastery for Evangelization said in a statement afterward.

“It is important to say thank you for everything. For example, if you go into someone’s house and you don’t say thank you or may I or hello, is that nice?” he asked. “The first word is ‘thank you.’”

Pope Francis gave each of the children a large folder with his coat of arms on the cover and, inside, a special prayer of thanks composed for the occasion; the prayer thanked God for the gift of life, the gift of parents, the gift of creation and, especially, “the gift of your Son, our brother and Savior, friend of the small and the poor.”

“You taught us to call you ‘Father,’ and with your word you call us to live as true sons and daughter, to be brothers and sisters who walk together in the grace of the faith we received with our baptism,” the text continued. “Thank you, Lord, who loves us.”

Pope Francis asked the children if they pray, and one of the youngsters said his family prays before they eat.

“You said something important,” the pope told him. They should all thank the Lord for the food they eat and for giving them families.

Alice, who is 10, asked, “How can I thank the Lord when I’m sick?”

“Even in dark times, we have to thank the Lord because he gives us the patience to tolerate difficulties,” the pope responded. “Let’s say together: ‘Thank you, Lord, for giving us the strength to tolerate pain.’”

Sofia, who will receive her first Communion in a few days, said it is hard to thank God when there are wars.

Pope Francis said there is always something to thank God for, and he shared a piece of advice: “Before you go to sleep think, ‘What can I thank the Lord for?’ And give thanks.” †



Pope Francis

Online Lay Ministry Formation

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

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

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



REPORT SEXUAL MISCONDUCT NOW

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

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



Golden Shamrock Award

Prince of Peace Catholic Schools in Madison recently honored Carol Vaughn and her late husband Raymond Vaughn with its 2024 Golden Shamrock Award, the highest honor the schools give.

The couple shared a great love for the schools and volunteered extensively through the years at both Pope John XXIII School and Father Michael Shawe Memorial Jr./Sr. High School. Raymond Vaughn was a graduate of the first Shawe class of 1956, and the couple sent their six children to both schools, with several grandchildren and great-grandchildren continuing the family tradition.

As Carol Vaughn holds the 2024 Golden Shamrock Award, she is joined in the first row by her daughters Susan Prystawski, left, and Lisa Vaughn. The couple's sons form the back row: David Vaughn, left, Charlie Vaughn, Bernard Vaughn and John Vaughn. (Submitted photo)

BRISCOE

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transformation extends beyond individual lives, influencing societies through acts of charity, the pursuit of justice and the cultivation of peace.

Historical evidence abounds of the pivotal role Christianity has played in the development of Western institutions, including the concept of human rights, the foundation of hospitals and universities, and significant contributions to art, science and philosophy. These contributions were not merely the result

of a cultural identity, but flowed directly from belief in the Christian understanding of the world and our place in it.

Dawkins' reflections on the importance of Christianity, even as a cultural marker, illustrate the void that would be left should genuine belief continue to wane. The cultural and ethical framework Christianity provides cannot be sustained in perpetuity without the nourishment of sincere faith. A culture detached from its spiritual roots gradually loses its vitality, becoming unable to defend the very values it cherishes against the erosive forces of nihilism and moral relativism.

The challenge for Christians, then,

is not merely to uphold a cultural identity but to live authentically according to the teachings of Christ. This requires a fundamental commitment to evangelization. We must continually enrich our understanding of the faith and reach out to others to invite conversions.

Cultural Christianity is insufficient for the preservation of the West's greatest values and achievements. Pope Benedict XVI once said, "The conviction that there is a Creator God is what gave rise to the idea of human rights, the idea of the equality of all people before the law, the recognition of the inviolability

of human dignity in every single person and the awareness of people's responsibility for their actions." Believing in God, or not, has consequences.

As Dawkins inadvertently highlights, the beauty, ethics and institutions shaped by Christianity are not merely historical artifacts to be admired, but are manifestations of faith that will only continue to offer meaning and direction if people believe it to be true.

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

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Employment

ASL Interpreters Needed!

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

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

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

Maintenance Technician

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

Duties include:

- Completing repairs, preventative maintenance and maintenance tasks on buildings and grounds.
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- An ability to work with the Archdiocesan staff.
- Basic computer skills.
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If you are interested in this position, please send your resume to: dherbertz@archindy.org.

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Employment

Parish Marketing and Communications

St. Pius X Catholic Church and School in Indianapolis, IN, is currently seeking a full-time Marketing and Communications Specialist. Ideal candidate will have experience in creating content that will build and maintain a positive image for our parish and school. The Specialist will be developing and implementing communications strategies, media relations, social and digital media, article writing, video production, advertising/marketing initiatives, and other communication support as needed.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES: Creating, editing, and publishing print and electronic content, including written pieces, still photography, audio-video, and electronic newsletters. Communication vehicles include but are not limited to, the parish bulletin, Constant Contact, eCatholic website management, newsletters, and social media outlets (Hootsuite).

Maintain esthetically pleasing signage in the parish buildings such as posters, bulletin boards, and gathering space displays, and design exterior banners. Manage special projects as needed.

Proficiency in Google and Microsoft (Publisher) is needed. Adobe Cloud (InDesign, Photoshop, Illustrator, etc.) and Canva. Desire a graphic designer to help "tell our story" in compelling ways.

QUALIFICATIONS: Moral life according to the teachings of the Catholic Church. Excellent project management and organizational skills, excellent verbal and written communication.

EDUCATION: Bachelor's degree in Marketing, Communications, English, Media, or related experience.

For Immediate Consideration, Send applications or inquiries to
Kevin Sweeney: ksweeney@spxparish.org



Principal position vacancy: St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Elementary School, Richmond, Indiana St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Elementary School, located in East Central Indiana, is seeking a principal effective with the 2024-2025 academic school year. Candidates who are practicing Catholics will understand and embrace the mission to build and reinforce our strong academic program and Catholic identity through faith-based leadership, professional development, and a commitment to excellence. Candidates must possess a passion for student achievement and a commitment in accompanying students in spiritual growth. He or she should be skilled at hiring, training, retaining teachers and staff, developing and implementing an appropriate curriculum, and teamwork. Candidates must complete the official online application at Archdiocese of Indianapolis website: tinyurl.com/setonprin24 by April 22, 2024. Contact: Anne Krieger, Office Manager, Administrative and Teacher Personnel; Email: akrieger@archindy.org.



New formation program begins for Hispanic ministry leaders

Criterion staff report

A new Hispanic ministry formation program recently began at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad.

The program, whose initial session was held on Feb. 24, includes 102 catechists and leaders from the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, Archdiocese of Louisville, Ky., Diocese of Evansville, Ind., and Diocese of Owensboro, Ky. It resulted from months of study, discernment and planning.

The demographic changes that are shaping the Catholic Church in the United States are compelling leaders to respond through pastoral action to the growing number of native Spanish speakers who are Catholic, noted Felix Navarrete, archdiocesan director of Hispanic Ministry.

With that in mind, the Continuing Formation and Hispanic and Latino Ministry offices at the seminary, in collaboration with archdiocesan and Hispanic ministry offices in other dioceses, have begun training catechists and catechetical leaders in Spanish.

Of the participants, 48 are from the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, including parishioners from Columbus, Seymour, Charlestown, New Albany and other parishes throughout central and southern Indiana.

“The need for formation for new leaders in the peripheries of our archdiocese is increasingly evident,” Navarrete noted, “which makes this program serve as support for the ministerial function of our parish priests, especially in communities like Charlestown, where the Hispanic/Latino presence has had considerable growth in recent months.”

“They are very excited. We have heard very positive things, and they want to continue in the formation,” said Father Jeyaseelan Sengolraj, pastor of St. Michael Parish in Charlestown,



Felix Navarrete, archdiocesan director of Hispanic Ministry, front, poses outside the main entrance of Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad with archdiocesan parishioners who are taking part in a new Hispanic ministry formation program. (Submitted photo)

referring to a group of parishioners who attended the first study session.

During the session, participants were able to learn about the *Directory for Catechesis*, approved by Pope Francis in 2020, in addition to learning how to develop listening sessions in small groups, get introduced to the history of salvation, and exchange experiences with people from other dioceses.

“While I am responsible for ensuring everything goes well, being with the group inspires my own faith and commitment to following Christ,” said Agnes Kovacs, director of the Office of Continuing Formation and associate director of the Graduate Theology Programs at Saint Meinrad. “It is a great blessing to find the living faith of the

people, even if my Spanish is poor to understand everything.”

“It would be difficult to find more cheerful, attentive and grateful participants than the people who drove several hours each way to attend the event,” she added. “May our efforts be multiplied in all dioceses.”

What for some is just a training experience could mean the beginning of a process of spiritual enrichment for others, Navarrete explained, where faith plays a fundamental role.

“This is what we need, for people to find this opportunity as a new beginning, both in their personal and community life,” he said, “an awakening that allows them to see the evangelizing mission as a personal need. ... For this, our

commitment, as agents of formation, is to keep the Gospel alive and transmit it in a simple, understandable way, which adapts to the cognitive level of people without transgressing sound doctrine.”

The phrase “new evangelization,” made popular by St. John Paul II, is reflected in the reality of our communities today, Navarrete added. “Catechetical training is not limited to a group of intellectuals but is open to those who have the desire to learn and serve. This is a theological reality. Jesus calls us not because of our abilities, but because of our will, and then he trains us.”

(For more information on Saint Meinrad's Office of Hispanic and Latino Ministry, visit tinyurl.com/StMHisLatMin.) †

Comienza nuevo programa de formación para líderes del ministerio hispano

Reportaje del personal del *The Criterion*

Recientemente comenzó un nuevo programa de formación ministerial hispana en el Seminario y Escuela de Teología Saint Meinrad en St. Meinrad.

Este programa, que comenzó el 24 de febrero, incluye 102 participantes, entre catequistas y líderes del Ministerio Hispano. Es el resultado de meses de estudio, discernimiento y planeación, que involucra la participación activa de cuatro diócesis incluyendo nuestra Arquidiócesis de Indianápolis, y la Diócesis de Evansville en Indiana, y la Arquidiócesis

de Louisville y la diócesis de Owensboro en Kentucky.

Los cambios demográficos que están dando forma a la Iglesia Católica en los Estados Unidos nos obligan a responder mediante la acción pastoral al creciente número de hablantes nativos de español entre nosotros que todavía se consideran católicos, dijo Félix Navarrete, director arquidiocesano del Ministerio Hispano.

Ahora, las oficinas de Formación Continua y Ministerio Hispano y Latino del Seminario y Escuela de Teología Saint Meinrad, en colaboración con las oficinas arquidiocesanas del Ministerio Hispano,

comenzaron la formación de catequistas y líderes catequéticos en español.

De los participantes, 48 son miembros de nuestras parroquias de Indianápolis y las ciudades del sur, incluyendo Columbus, Seymour, Charlestown y New Albany y de otras parroquias en el centro y sur de Indiana.

“La necesidad de formación para nuevos líderes en las periferias de nuestra Arquidiócesis es cada vez más evidente, lo que hace que este programa sirva como un apoyo en la función ministerial de nuestros párrocos, especialmente en las comunidades como Charlestown, donde la presencia Hispana/Latina ha tenido un crecimiento considerable en los últimos meses,” dijo Navarrete.

“Están muy emocionados, hemos escuchado cosas muy positivas y quieren continuar en la formación,” expresó el Padre Jeyaseelan Sengolraj, pastor de la Iglesia de San Miguel en Charlestown, refiriéndose al grupo de feligreses que participó de la primera sesión de estudio.

Durante la primera sesión, los participantes pudieron conocer y tener una visión general del Directorio para la Catequesis, aprobado por el Papa Francisco en 2020, además de aprender a desarrollar sesiones de escucha en pequeños grupos, introducirse en la Historia de la Salvación, e intercambiar experiencias con personas de otras diócesis.

“Si bien soy responsable de asegurarme de que todo vaya bien, estar con el grupo inspira mi propia fe y compromiso de seguir a Cristo. Es una gran bendición encontrar la fe viva de la gente, incluso si mi español es deficiente para entenderlo todo. Sería difícil encontrar participantes

más alegres, atentos y agradecidos que las personas que condujeron varias horas en cada sentido para poder asistir al evento. ¡Que nuestros esfuerzos se multipliquen en todas las diócesis!” manifestó Agnes Kovacs, quien es la directora de la Oficina de Formación Continua y directora Asociada de los Programas de Teología de Saint Meinrad.

Lo que para muchos es una experiencia más de formación, para otros podría significar el inicio de un proceso de enriquecimiento espiritual, en donde la fe juega un papel fundamental, dijo Navarrete.

“Esto es lo que necesitamos, que las personas encuentren esta oportunidad como un nuevo comienzo, tanto en su vida personal como comunitaria, un despertar que les permita ver la misión evangelizadora como una necesidad personal,” dijo Navarrete, “y para esto, el compromiso de nosotros, como agentes de formación, es mantener vivo el evangelio, y transmitirlo en forma sencilla, entendible, que se adapte al nivel cognitivo de las personas sin trasgredir la sana doctrina.”

La frase “nueva evangelización,” popularizada por San Juan Pablo II, la vemos reflejada en la realidad de nuestras comunidades de hoy, dijo Navarrete. “La formación catequística no está limitada para un grupo de intelectuales, sino que está abierta a quienes tengan el deseo de aprender y servir, y esta es una realidad teológica, Jesús nos llama no por nuestras capacidades, sino por nuestra voluntad, y luego nos capacita.”

(Para obtener más información sobre la Oficina de Ministerio Hispano y Latino de Saint Meinrad, visite tinyurl.com/StMHisLatMin.) †



Luz Elena Niño, a la izquierda, y Evangelina Delgado, miembros de la Parroquia San Miguel en Charlestown, están trabajando con su sacerdote en el desarrollo del ministerio hispano en su parroquia. (Submitted photo)