

THE
Eucharist
GOD'S GREATEST GIFT

 **The Criterion**

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In anticipation of the National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis on July 17-21, this special issue celebrates the impact of the Eucharist and eucharistic adoration on people's lives of faith.



San Francisco Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone elevates a monstrance as he blesses the California city as part of the beginning of the western route of the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage on May 19. (OSV News photo/Bob Roller)



A display showing Blessed Carlo Acutis and a monstrance is seen near his tomb at the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Assisi, Italy, in this Oct. 3, 2020, file photo. The U.S. bishops chose Blessed Acutis as the patron of the first year of a three-year National Eucharistic Revival. The Italian teen, who is set to be canonized by Pope Francis, had a great love of the Eucharist and used his technology skills to build an online database of eucharistic miracles around the world. The National Eucharistic Congress will be held on July 17-21 in Indianapolis. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

Embracing the Journey: ‘The Eucharist is the highway to heaven’

“The Eucharist is the highway to heaven. When people sit in the sun, they become tan, but when they sit before Eucharistic Jesus, they become saints.”
—Blessed Carlo Acutis

Those words from soon-to-be-saint Carlo Acutis speak beautifully about the Eucharist, which another saint of our time, Pope St. John Paul II, called our Catholic faith’s “greatest gift.”

Acutis, who died at age 15 in 2006, spoke profoundly in his short life about his love for the Eucharist and his devotion to the Blessed Mother. Drawing from these sources, he was able to use his computer skills to create an online database of eucharistic miracles around the world. In that effort and in his life, he offers a prophetic witness of how all people, young and old, can live their vocation in service to the Gospel—no matter how long or short their earthly journey.

His life also offers affirmation that today’s young people—Acutis would be in his 30’s if he were alive today—have a saintly role model who grew up in their lifetime. And his devotion to the Eucharist is something people of all ages can learn from and embrace.

As we approach the National Eucharistic Congress (NEC) scheduled for July 17-21 in Indianapolis, the staff of *The Criterion* has compiled a special issue focusing on the Eucharist. Many are new articles written by our staff; others are stories from past issues that have strong eucharistic ties that we felt are worth sharing again.

Among the new stories is a conversation with our shepherd Archbishop Charles C. Thompson about the NEC. He talks extensively about the impact that the Eucharist and eucharistic adoration have had in his life and can have in people’s lives, including helping them draw others closer to Christ.

The regular July 5 issue of *The Criterion* is the center 12 pages of this commemorative issue. The majority of our weekly features are included there.

We hope and pray the stories shared in this commemorative publication help each of you on your eucharistic journey. Blessed Carlo Acutis, pray for us!

—Mike Krokos, editor



Catholics joining the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage’s visit to the National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion on June 16 in Champion, Wis., begin a 1.7-mile eucharistic rosary procession. An estimated 2,000 people turned out for the day’s events. (OSV News photo/Sam Lucero)

“Then he took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me.’ ”

—Jesus (Luke 22:19)

Deepening 'a eucharistic heart' guides Archbishop Thompson's faith and his hopes for the Eucharistic Congress

By John Shaughnessy

Looking back across the years, Archbishop Charles C. Thompson remembers the moment as a pivotal time in his life.

Similar to most people at some point in their lives, the archbishop—then a young seminarian—was experiencing a moment of anxiety in which he knew he had to turn to God for help.

"I was very shy when I went to seminary," the archbishop recalled about his early days at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad in the early 1980s. "I was supposed to read at Mass the next day for the first time in community, and I was very anxious.

"I just went and sat before the Blessed Sacrament for an hour that night. I remember saying, 'God, if you want me to be a priest, you have to help me get over this fear.' I just remember a peace came over me. And that's what I've experienced over the years."

The archbishop shared that story during a conversation with *The Criterion* about the upcoming National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis on July 17-21, a conversation in which he also talked extensively about the impact that the Eucharist and eucharistic adoration have had in his life and can have in people's lives, including helping them draw others closer to Christ.

Here are key insights from that conversation.

The need for the Eucharist in our lives

"At confirmations, I sometimes remind people that we have the Indianapolis 500, and these cars zoom around the track. But they have to come in for pit stops. Because without the fuel, they can't make it to the finish line," the archbishop noted. "The Eucharist is our fuel.

"That's why it's not a mere symbol for us. That's why it's so important for us to understand that the Eucharist is the body and blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ. This is what nourishes and sustains us to carry on the mission entrusted to us—to bring the good news of Jesus Christ to others. We don't get to the finish line on our own without God's grace and without the grace of the Eucharist."

A recommendation for making the most of eucharistic adoration

"It's a surrender," Archbishop Thompson began. "For me, I think of John the Baptist, 'I must decrease. He must increase' [Jn 3:30]. I have to surrender myself. Ultimately, we're pouring out our hearts and our minds to Christ.

"I love the Emmaus story, how Jesus appears to the two disciples, and lets them pour out their hearts. Once they've emptied themselves, he now can speak to them, and they hear. How do we empty ourselves so we're ready to be filled with his grace, his peace, his mercy, his wisdom—whatever we need to recognize God's plan at work in our lives, even amidst the hardship and pain, the suffering and uncertainty? It's being able to be silent and patient and let him speak to us."

The importance of eucharistic adoration in his life

"Praying before the Blessed Sacrament has always been a part of my life for as long as I can remember," the archbishop said. "I remember moments in my life, whether in seminary, as a priest, as a bishop, that I take my concerns—whatever's weighing on my heart or my mind—and sit before the Blessed Sacrament. How do I give it over to him?"

"It's not so much a power I feel as a peace, that I'm not alone in this. Christ takes it upon himself. Just as we share in the Eucharist, we share in the responsibilities and the challenges and the hopes and the fears and the concerns. I've had a great peace come over me very often. It's pretty much a daily thing."

His experience of celebrating Mass for the first time 37 years ago and now

"In some ways, the first time was almost surreal," the archbishop said. "You know who you are as a human being. You know your faults and your weaknesses and



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson elevates the Eucharist during a Mass on June 29, 2020, in SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. In describing the impact of the Eucharist, the archbishop says, "It's Jesus at work here in the lives of people." (File photo by Sean Gallagher)

your humanness. You see other priests that you admire as being holy men of God, men who seem so dedicated and faith-filled and spiritual. And all of a sudden, you're now the one doing it. And you're thinking, 'How can this be? I'm not near to what those guys seem to be.'

"There are many ways to appear holy, but authentic holiness is when we're in full communion with the will of God. I remind myself that it's not how we feel or our own way of thinking, but how are we truly in communion, discerning the will of God. That's what fills us, what's lacking in us.

"So, as I'm consecrating the host, I'm reminded that—as the saints have said through the centuries—it's not the merit of the man. It is God's grace working through me, despite all the limitations of my humanity, that fills me as I consecrate the host. I knew that 37 years ago, and I think of it even today."

The gift and the experience of sharing the Eucharist with the faithful

"The great thing for any priest, hopefully, is the reminder that something greater than ourselves is at work here, something much greater than anything I can conceive, let alone manufacture—that is, Christ himself," Archbishop Thompson said. "It's Jesus at work here in the lives of people. Jesus is being presented through my hands, but it's Jesus that they take with them.

"As Jesus said at the Last Supper, 'This is my body, this is my blood. Do this in memory of me' [Lk 22:19-20]. He gave us that grace. He made that reality possible to us by his own institution of the Eucharist for all time, not just on that night. Obviously, that's what gives meaning to Good Friday. When he dies on the cross, and blood and water flow from his side, it represents that what he did on Holy Thursday is now being given to us for all time, that it's perpetuated throughout the course of salvation history."

His hopes for the National Eucharistic Revival and Congress

In talking about his hopes, Archbishop Thompson emphasized a thought shared by Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens of the Diocese of Crookston, Minn., who is the chairman of the board of the National Eucharistic Congress Inc.

"I love the words that Bishop Cozzens has used as a key focus of the revival and the Congress: 'We are cultivating a eucharistic heart.' What we want to do is cultivate a eucharistic heart in the people of God, within ourselves. The Eucharist derives from a Greek word that means to 'give thanks.' So, how are we as a people rooted in a deep awareness of gratitude—that all we are and all we have is a gift from God?"

"Our life, our being, our dignity, everything about us, is rooted in God's grace—having been created in God's image, and having been given his Son and his passion, death and resurrection for our salvation.

"I like those words, 'cultivating a eucharistic heart.' That's a good way to think of how this revival and congress will hopefully instill in us a deeper awareness of that eucharistic heart—as individuals, as families, as parishes, as dioceses, as a Church throughout the United States."

Connecting the National Eucharistic Congress to the larger community

"One of the things we've talked about around here is how does this connect not just to Catholics but our larger community," the archbishop said. "Every time we come to Mass, there is a transformative aspect to that. We really never leave the same as we came in. In opening ourselves to receiving grace through word and sacrament, we're transformed. So, the eucharistic revival and congress is all about being transformed.

"We need to be open to encounter and conversion. Conversion is a lifelong process for all of us. And that conversion happens by our willingness to be open to encounter. To encounter, first and foremost, the person of Jesus Christ in word, sacrament and service. To encounter him in our relationships, whether it's a stranger, someone we meet or a longtime friend, or someone with whom we work or for whom we work.

"So, there's that transforming aspect of impacting our community and our world. It's how will this lead to the deepening of our eucharistic heart. Our faith in the Eucharist should underlie how we go about transforming the world with the good news of Jesus. Our conversations have been about, 'What will the community look like after the Eucharistic Congress? Will our community, our city, be any better off?'"

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"Jesus has made Himself the Bread of Life to give us life. Night and day, He is there. If you really want to grow in love, come back to the Eucharist, come back to that Adoration."

—St. Teresa of Calcutta

Joy marks a Cinderella moment and 'the greatest love ever'

By John Shaughnessy

It was a touching moment of communion—on a day when children were about to receive their first Communion.

In the hours before the Mass a few years ago, a group of mothers held a brunch for their daughters, a time of bonding before this life-changing moment.

As all the first-arriving girls glowed like visions of angels in their white dresses, tights, shoes and veils, one of their second-grade classmates came in and immediately noticed how she didn't fit in with the way her friends looked.

"She was coming into the Church on her own," recalls Kerry Schlimgen, parish catechetical leader for St. Simon the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis.



Kerry Schlimgen

"Her dad is a single dad, and he's not Catholic. And he did not understand that the girls wear white dresses. He had his daughter in a beautiful dress, but it wasn't white. When she walked in, she recognized that she didn't have a white dress on. And while it's not about the dress, it is important for a little second grader to fit in.

"All the moms noticed that, and within—it seemed like 10 minutes—these moms came in with white dresses, tights, shoes and headpieces. We had a Cinderella moment with her. She picked the dress she wanted. She found the shoes that fit and the tights that fit. She found the perfect thing she wanted for her hair. Her dad got her dressed. All the girls were waiting outside the door, and when she came out, they all just clapped and hugged her.

"It was such a sweet little moment of unity, of how our community is just one."

'There's nothing more beautiful we can give these kids'

Even as she shares that touching story, Schlimgen knows in her heart that there was a greater moment of unity and beauty awaiting the girls and the boys in the sacrament of the Eucharist that day.



Savannah Cagna glows on the day this spring that she received her first Communion at St. Simon the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis.

It came later when the children received the body and blood of Christ for the first time.

And that moment of unity and beauty occurred again at St. Simon Parish on the weekend of April 27-28 when 99 children received their first Communion in three Masses at the parish church.

"The theme we really concentrate on is living through Christ, with Christ and in Christ," says Schlimgen, who prepares the children for the sacrament with the help of her assistant, Ashley Hyre. "I want them to know who they are receiving. I tell them, 'You are receiving Jesus Christ, the greatest love ever. Let Jesus dwell in you all the days of your life.'"

The impact of receiving Communion for the first time left its mark on the second-grade students.

"Receiving the Eucharist felt like I was hugged by Jesus," said Olivia Perry. "To receive the Eucharist, you feel like you are brave, and it is amazing."

Rhys Braun noted, "I had Jesus in my body and heart, and it was wonderful."

The joy for Skylar Parsons was overwhelming: "Receiving the Eucharist made me feel loved, so so so loved."

Simon Hull said, "It was really like a miracle to receive Jesus."

Witnessing the children receive the Eucharist still touches Schlimgen, even after 10 years of preparing them and their families for the sacrament.

"I am weeping the whole time, the Holy Spirit is inside of me, and I'm trembling because I am just overjoyed," she says. "It's overwhelming and unbelievable that we have a Savior who has done what he has done for us, and he remains in this holy, catholic Church."

"I want them to hold on to Jesus Christ all the days of their life. Christ is the pre-requisite to a successful life. I mean, you could go on and do whatever you want, but if you do it without Christ, you haven't completed your mission. Because we were created for Jesus. It's the greatest love that will ever enter you and dwell inside of you. There's nothing more beautiful we can give these kids."

Her love of the Eucharist—and the children receiving that sacrament for the first time—also shows in the special way she helps prepare the second graders and their families for the sacrament of reconciliation.

'We see emotions. We see joy'

"We used to do one or two reconciliation nights when all the families would come, but it would be more social than a holy experience," Schlimgen notes. "We wanted to make it to be realistic, of what it was meant to be—very sacred."

Now, each family has their own dedicated time in church for the sacrament of reconciliation. The lights are turned down low, creating a sense of calm. In that atmosphere, the child preparing for his or her first Communion lights a candle, drawing the flame from a larger candle that's called "the Christ candle."

"We tell them that Jesus is the light of the world.



Elle Dalesandro of St. Simon the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis receives the Eucharist from Deacon James Wood as part of her first Communion at the parish church this spring. (Photos courtesy of Jennifer Driscoll Photography)

And we remember that we are a part of Jesus Christ, and we are called to be his disciples and be the light of the world," Schlimgen says. "So, the flame burns within us because Jesus lives within us, and the more we receive the sacraments and the more we stay close to God, the brighter that light will shine."

As life-changing as the sacrament of the Eucharist can be, so is the impact of the sacrament of reconciliation in this moment for the children and their families.

"I could write a book about the stories that have happened during this moment of reconciliation," Schlimgen says. "We work just as much with the families as we do with the children. We see emotions. We see joy."

"It's tender to see a mom and dad who have had some issues in their relationship come together for their child and see them say the family prayer together and how it impacts them. They will reach out and talk about Christ and forgiveness for themselves and their marriage and their relationship. We've seen reconciliation happen in families because of the way we do this. It's so beautiful to be there and watch God moving the wind as he does."

That thought leads Schlimgen back to a focus on the Eucharist and the impact she wants it to have on people's lives. She talks about how she stresses to families the need to make their child's first Communion a continuing presence in their lives, to keep them coming back for Mass to deepen their relationship with Christ.

"I believe in Jesus Christ," she says. "I believe in family, and I believe in each soul. And I believe in the holy, catholic Church and the sacraments. And I see Jesus reaching down, presenting himself to us in every sacrament, every minute."

"I just wish every soul would come to know their Creator and live for the greatest love ever, and that is Jesus Christ." †

ARCHBISHOP

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Connecting the congress to the mission of the universal Church

"As the host bishop, I'm part of the National Eucharistic Revival and Congress board," the archbishop noted. "One of the things I've tried to keep before us is that the eucharistic revival and congress have to be connected with everything else about the Church."

"How is this connected to synodality? When Pope Francis talks about synodality, he always connects it to the Eucharist. We need to make sure we're connecting the eucharistic revival and congress with

synodality. And also with 'Laudato Si,' care of creation, and all of our social justice teachings and all of our respect life principles. It all has to connect."

Being involved in the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage and hosting the congress

Since the celebration of Pentecost on the weekend of May 18-19, the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage has been making its way to Indianapolis along four routes—north, east, south and west—across the country.

Archbishop Thompson will take part in the St. Juan Diego route coming from the south on July 9, as a monstrance containing the Holy Eucharist is passed to him by Archbishop Shelton T. Fabre

of the Archdiocese of Louisville, Ky., the place where Archbishop Thompson grew up, was ordained a priest and served for 24 years before being named bishop of the Evansville Diocese in Indiana in 2011.

"They requested that I'd be on the Louisville side, since I'm a son of the Archdiocese of Louisville, and walk across the bridge with Archbishop Fabre from Louisville—where I came from, to where I am now," said Archbishop Thompson, who has led the Church in central and southern Indiana since 2017. "I'm humbled that Louisville would want me to be involved like that. I've been gone from there 13 years. That connectedness is very important to me."

After receiving the monstrance from

Archbishop Fabre, Archbishop Thompson will lead a eucharistic procession to Jeffersonville, first for a planned prayer service with Archbishop Fabre at Big Four Park and then to St. Augustine Church in Jeffersonville.

On July 16, Archbishop Thompson will celebrate a noon Mass at St. John the Evangelist Church in Indianapolis for the pilgrims who have traveled from the four points of the country. The congress begins the next day, on July 17.

"It's an honor that the congress will be in Indianapolis," the archbishop said. "A little overwhelming, too. We're a little anxious. We want to make sure everything gets done well and represents the local Church and the local community well." †

Dear young people, do we want to be happy and joyful? Let us love Jesus in the Sacrament with all our hearts.

—St. John Bosco

From heartbreak to love, woman embraces the Eucharist's grace in her life, her work

By John Shaughnessy

She apologizes for crying, but the tears are fitting and natural as Jessica Inabnitt talks about the greatest loss in her life.

Sitting in her office, with a wall sign behind her desk proclaiming, "Do small things with great love," Inabnitt points to a nearby framed photo of her son Tyler on his graduation day from high school.

"My son passed away in 2009," she says, wiping tears from her cheeks. "He was 18 when he passed, a freshman at Ivy Tech. He committed suicide. Very tragic and unexpected."

She then shares a thought that has grown deep in her heart since her son's death.

"We had fallen away from Mass and making it a priority. There was a lot of guilt I had to work through. But the Lord is so good to us," says Inabnitt, a member of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis.

"There's some good coming out of this. The Lord makes good out of everything."

That goodness began to grow for her about 10 years ago when a friend invited her to share a holy hour of eucharistic adoration—at 11 p.m. on Fridays.

"At first, I said, 'What are we doing? This is Friday night. I'm not going to want to go.' But very quickly that changed. Just the peace that happens during eucharistic adoration," she says. "There's nowhere else where you find that peace."

"When you've reached the end of the week and you've worked through the struggles of life and work, and you just sit in that time and reflect, it changes your heart. It changes your whole outlook on things that you stress about, that you're anxious about, that you're angry about. You take those things to the Lord, and you let them go. I became more grounded in all those things because of that holy hour."

Her conversations with God have included some tough ones about Tyler.

"I got to express myself to the Lord," she says.

"Nobody thinks you should go in there and yell at him, but



The deep love between a mother and her child shines through in this photo of Jessica and Tyler Inabnitt. (Submitted photo)

he already knows you're mad at him, so you might as well get it off your chest. You ask all these questions, but there's also the beauty and the grace that come from eucharistic adoration and prayer in front of Christ. You start to recognize the graces. There was a lot of peace in there."

The grace and the peace have blossomed even more in her appreciation of receiving the Eucharist, a time that draws her close to Tyler. In her readings about the faith, she has embraced the thought that when people receive Communion, not only is Christ present, but they are also surrounded by "all the angels and the saints and the cloud of witnesses" during that time.

"All those who passed before us are right there with us," she says. "I always imagine Tyler with me at Mass, receiving Christ at the same time as I am."

Her relationship with Christ has also led to a deep commitment to two of the principles he has asked all people to embrace—to serve others and to strive to bring them closer to him.

She served as the director of mission and discipleship for women at St. John the Evangelist Parish for six years.

"During my time at St. John, it was a lot about building my prayer life and building my relationship with the Lord so that I could inspire others and bring others to understand the Lord is there for them in a very personal relationship—and how to engage that relationship, how to stay in that relationship and lean on the Lord for all things.

"It was a life-changing experience for me. It was a time of great growth for my faith, and it was also spiritually rewarding to watch the growth of the women in the parish in their faith journeys, too."

For the past three years, she has worked as the director of refugee services for the archdiocese's Catholic Charities Indianapolis, helping people from around the world make the transition to life in the United States after fleeing from such countries as Afghanistan, Congo, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Venezuela.

"These refugees have been invited by the U.S. government to come here and resettle here," she says, noting that Catholic Charities Indianapolis will assist about 500 refugees this year, providing help with housing, health care, employment, cultural orientation and education for their children.

"Everything we do is to help them toward their



As the director of refugee services for the archdiocese's Catholic Charities Indianapolis, Jessica Inabnitt uses her love of the Eucharist to guide her in helping refugees from around the world make a successful transition to life in the United States. Here, she poses for a photo with two members of her staff, Ahmad Ghaznawi, center, a job placement specialist who is a refugee from Afghanistan, and Anthony Khual, a cultural orientation specialist who is originally from Myanmar. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

self-sufficiency. We are helping them resettle so they can be successful here."

She views the work as a mission of human dignity.

"We serve folks from all different religions and cultures. My growth and my love of the Eucharist have grounded me to understand that, at the very core, we serve because of human dignity and respect of life.

"Refugee resettlement doesn't always get included in sanctity of life discussions, but it is absolutely part of it. If we fight against the death penalty and we support life in the womb, we also need to put refugees and immigrants in that category as right to life."

Her devotion to the Eucharist and eucharistic adoration has her looking forward to the National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis on July 17-21.

Besides attending the event each day, she also plans to volunteer at St. John the Evangelist Church, which will serve as a perpetual adoration chapel during the congress, with the Eucharist being exposed each day for 24 hours.

She also plans to be in Lucas Oil Stadium when tens of thousands of people come together for eucharistic adoration.

"Just to think that Jesus is going to be in Lucas Stadium with so many people in adoration—the power of that prayer is overwhelming. I get emotional about it—how life-changing it will be, and possibly how world-changing it will be. All those prayers in the presence of Jesus."

She anticipates that moment will bring her even closer to two of the most cherished relationships she has known in her life.

"I am Christ's beloved daughter," she says. "His love for me is greater than I can ever imagine. He brings good out of everything. Even through my stubbornness, he's there for me, and he loves me."

"And I get to know Tyler better through knowing the Lord, through my relationship with Christ." †

A desire for the Eucharist leads a young adult home to his faith

(This story is a shortened version of the one that first appeared in The Criterion on May 3, 2024.)

By John Shaughnessy

We all want that feeling of home—a place where we are welcomed, where we feel we belong.

On a cold night of sleet and rain in early April of this year, 26-year-old Kevin Bedel entered a place that has provided a sense of home for him.

He walked into the brightly-lit gym of St. Luke the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis, smiling as he anticipated

the connection of friendship, community and faith that has unfolded nearly every Wednesday night this spring for him and another 159 young adult Catholics who participate in the IndyCatholic volleyball league.

And while Bedel's involvement in the league gives him a setting where he feels he belongs, it also reflects an even more significant homecoming for him—his return to his Catholic faith.

"I was part of a Protestant group for a while, and I found there was something missing from their worship," says the red-hair, bearded Bedel.

"You'd go to church, and it was

very feel-goody. But something was missing.

"And what was missing was the body and blood of Jesus Christ. The Catholic reverence and our celebration of the Eucharist is what I was missing—the real, true presence of Jesus Christ. It hit me at a Good Friday service at St. Monica two years ago. Getting to adore the cross, it was like, 'Yep, this is home. This is where I grew up. I was away, but now I'm home.'"

The reconnection to his faith became a bridge to increased friendships for Bedel, a member of St. Christopher Parish in Indianapolis.

"I said, 'Well, if I'm going to pursue

my faith, I need to be involved in the community.' And coincidentally, it worked out to get into volleyball. I found out about it through a friend at St. John the Evangelist Parish downtown. He said you should sign up for volleyball.

"I had a lot of fun and made a lot of really good connections. You know by nature of everyone being Catholic that they all have the same values, and that they generally have the same morals. You know it's a good group of people before you even step foot into the building. After being around the community only a few times last year, I was so welcomed by everyone." †

"Out of the darkness of my life, so much frustrated, I put before you the one great thing to love on Earth: the Blessed Sacrament. ... There you will find romance, glory, honour, fidelity and the true way of all your loves on Earth, and more than that: Death."

—J.R.R. Tolkien, author

Putting Jesus at the center: Bloomington parish experiences fruits of a decade-long eucharistic revival

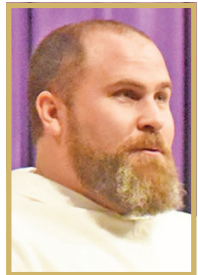
By Sean Gallagher

Tens of thousands of Catholics from across the United States are expected to take part in the National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis on July 17-21.

The event promises to be the culminating event of the National Eucharistic Revival, launched in 2022 with the goal of renewing the life of the Church in the U.S. through deepening Catholics' relationship with Christ in the Eucharist.

A parish that has already embraced that goal is St. Paul Catholic Center in Bloomington, which primarily serves Catholic students at Indiana University (IU).

"We made a conscious decision to put Jesus Christ at the center of it," says Dominican Father Patrick Hyde,



Fr. Patrick Hyde, O.P.

St. Paul's pastor. "And Jesus comes to us primarily in the sacraments, especially the Eucharist."

The parish's revival, 10 years in the making with that emphasis on the Eucharist, has led to several transformative results.

More than 20 IU graduates have served as missionaries for the Fellowship of Catholic University students (FOCUS). At least a dozen graduates have become seminarians or entered religious life. And just in the past year, Father Patrick officiated at 11 weddings of IU alumni.

"For me, the most rewarding part is to see that what we gave them here was something that could feed them forever," he said. "To see the myriad ways that they're living out their faith in participation in parishes, in young adult ministries, in working for the Church, as professionals, as husbands, wives, mothers and fathers is the really neat part."

The eucharistic revival that's taken place at St. Paul, Father Patrick added, is something that he believes can happen anywhere—at urban, suburban and rural parishes of any size.

"If you make that generous gift of self and time and effort for the Lord, he will never be outdone in generosity," he said. "The beautiful thing about the eucharistic revival is that the Lord is not calling an inner-city parish to have the same kind of revival as a Newman center or a rural parish."

Receiving and sharing the Eucharist

When the staff at St. Paul sought a decade ago to put Christ at the center of an attempt to renew its campus ministry, it began this effort by making the Mass, eucharistic adoration and the sacrament of penance more available for IU students.

The purpose of the revival at St. Paul was ultimately to renew the faith of IU students, to form "young men and women to have their own eucharistic renewal and revival, a conversion of heart, mind and life to Christ," said Father Patrick.

Jackie Parkes experienced such a conversion when she was a student at IU from 2016-20.



Jackie Parkes

That power of a relationship with Christ in the Eucharist washed over her in the June after her freshman year on the feast of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, traditionally known as *Corpus Christi*. That's when the fact hit her that the Church's belief in Christ's real presence in the Eucharist "wasn't just some random teaching that someone made up.

"Jesus himself taught it," she said. "If this is true, this will radically change our lives. If Jesus himself was here, we would be filling football stadiums. People would be camping out. People would be traveling to come and see Jesus in the flesh, in person."

This led her to "wrestle with the question of how my time could best be spent." As a college student, many demands were made on her time, and countless opportunities for both fun and personal growth abounded. But Parkes' experience of Christ in the

Eucharist focused her use of her time like a laser.

"My time was best spent growing in relationship with the Lord, particularly through the Eucharist," she recalled. "He was giving himself fully to me in the Eucharist and I wanted to receive that.

"And I wanted to help other people do the same, to understand the truth and reality of Jesus' full presence in the Eucharist. If I've been given this great gift, I wanted that for other people, too."

Other people at St. Paul were experiencing that draw to Christ. During her time at IU, Parkes noticed attendance at the parish's mid-day Mass increase from a handful of worshippers to dozens, "and, on a good day, closer to 100 people."

'To know and love Jesus as a person'

Since graduating from IU in 2020, Parkes has served as a FOCUS missionary for the past four years in Wisconsin, following in the footsteps of FOCUS missionaries who mentored in the faith at IU. Later this summer, she will go to work as a regional program director for FOCUS at its Denver headquarters.

And she's not alone in experiencing the transformative power of the Eucharist at St. Paul.

Augie and Gabi Bigot are starting to explore how their Catholic faith, which was deepened at St. Paul, will shape their lives as spouses.

Married last December at St. Alphonsus Liguori Parish in Zionsville, Ind., in the Lafayette Diocese, Gabi is currently a medical student at Marian University in Indianapolis, while Augie works as a business information technology consultant.

Gabi, who graduated from IU a year ago, was attracted to spending time at St. Paul in her freshman year because of students she met there, but also because of the power of Christ's presence in the Blessed Sacrament in eucharistic adoration.

"I knew that that was where truth was and where Christ was," she said.

Augie, who had been active in his faith while growing up in Carmel, Ind., still "felt like something was missing" when he went to IU. Getting involved at St. Paul and opening himself to the Mass, eucharistic adoration, Bible studies and retreats helped him realize that what had been missing was an understanding of the purpose of it all, which he discovered was "to know and love Jesus as a person, because he is one."

Focusing on this relationship with Christ led Augie to him in the Eucharist.

"Jesus knew that to be really good friends you have to see each other, so he physically brings himself to me and everyone under the appearance of bread and wine in the Eucharist," he said. "But because I knew him who loves us so, he invited me to reach out to others and share that same love with them."

The love he experienced in Christ he shared in a special way with Gabi, whom he met when they were both IU students.

They realized early on that their relationship might be important to them both, so they took it to prayer.

"At the end of a 54-day novena, we were like, 'Yep, we're supposed to be together,'" recalled Gabi.

Seeking God's guidance was important to Gabi because of the eucharistic revival she experienced at St. Paul through adoration and daily Mass.

"There was an abundance of peace that I had never had before in my life," she said. "My complete viewpoint on how I look at daily living really changed. My days became, 'How does God want me to live today?' instead of, 'What's my to-do list?' What am I actually supposed to be doing to glorify God and not necessarily what I think is the right thing to be doing?"

The faith that Augie and Gabi share, centered on a love for Christ in the Eucharist that was deepened in them at St. Paul, is now at the heart of their marriage.

"I thank God every day for the wonderful gift of my wife and recognize that he put Gabi in my life to help me grow closer to him, but also put me in her life to help her grow closer to him," Augie said. "However easy it is to lose sight of him amidst the craziness of daily life, we want to strive to keep him at the middle of everything.



Augie and Gabi Bigot, married last December, are graduates of Indiana University in Bloomington who had their faith renewed at St. Paul Catholic Center during a eucharistic revival that's been going on in the parish during the past 10 years. (Submitted photo)

"I'm quite of the opinion that if we can spend our time and energy working on that, he can take care of the rest."

Being one with Christ in the Eucharist

Although St. Paul is a parish primarily focused on college campus ministry, Father Patrick said that the eucharistic revival it has experienced during the past decade can happen at parishes of all sizes in big cities and small towns.

What's key, though, is for parish leaders to avoid responding to proposed changes in ministry with "We've tried that before, and it didn't work" or "That's just not how we do things."

"If we continue down the path that we have been following for the past 30 to 40 years in terms of young Catholics leaving the Church and us continuing the same programs that [haven't] stemmed that tide, then we're, in a sense, signing our own death warrant," Father Patrick said. "If we're going to go out, let's go out boldly and courageously."

Starting a eucharistic revival in parishes can involve adding the Eucharist to programs already happening. But it takes determination and sacrifice to do that, Father Patrick said.

"We're holding everyone to a higher standard," he said. "Are we willing to spend time together as a parish pastoral council praying before the Blessed Sacrament for 15 to 30 minutes before we have a meeting?"

While aspects of a eucharistic revival in parishes can vary from community to community, Father Patrick is certain it can happen because of Christ's gift of himself in the Eucharist that he offers to all.

"The Lord is calling us to be one with him and become one with him in his body in the realities that we face," Father Patrick said. "This is the gift that he offers to the whole Church in all times and in all places." †

"Know for certain that the time you spend with devotion before this most divine Sacrament will be the time that will bring you the most good in this life and will console you the most in your death and in eternity."

—St. Alphonsus Mary Liguori



'An amazing opportunity': High school's eucharistic procession touches hearts

(Editor's note: This story is a revised version of the one that first appeared in The Criterion on January 26, 2024.)

By John Shaughnessy

Katie Hibner is often moved by the way high school students live their faith, but there are still times when they exceed even her hopes.

One of those moments occurred when Roncalli High School in Indianapolis held its first eucharistic procession on Nov. 3, 2023.

"Honestly, I was amazed that we pulled it off with so many people," said Hibner, the director of campus ministry at Roncalli where about 1,100 students attended during the 2023-24 school year. "We had never done it before. The students were prepped really well, but really what was so amazing—and I got teary-eyed quite often during it—was just the extreme reverence that our students and our staff showed. It was unbelievable."

Hibner was also thrilled by the impact it had on the students.

"A lot of students said they'd never done it before, and they enjoyed it. In fact, it was a half day of school when we did it. Students told me, 'Man, I really thought about not coming to school because it was a half day, but I really wanted to see what this is all about.' So, they came, and they were pleasantly surprised. It was a really cool experience."

Being part of the procession also was powerful for Hibner, who watched it unfold from a defining perspective.

"I was very fortunate enough to stand in the back of the line," she said. "As the students were weaving into the procession, I followed the back of the line. As I looked in front of me, I thought, 'O my gosh, I am so lucky to be part of it!' It was such a humbling, very cool feeling for me that I got to be involved in the planning of it.

"It's just a reminder that the Church is so big, and our faith is so much bigger than us."

Roncalli strived to keep the momentum of the eucharistic procession continuing forward during the school year.

"We have adoration twice a week before school," Hibner said. "On Wednesday mornings, we have students who lead music during it. On Fridays, it's a silent adoration. Both are really well-attended. Once



Father Stephen Giannini, pastor of SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Parish in Greenwood and St. Martin of Tours Parish in Martinsville, carries a monstrance on Nov. 3, 2023, during a eucharistic procession at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis. (Submitted photo)

they go the first few times, it's like, 'O my gosh, I really do need this!'

Ava Maled is a Roncalli student who has embraced every part of the school's efforts to celebrate the importance of the Eucharist in a person's life. She said she loves eucharistic adoration because she's able "to look at God and have God look back at me because he's truly present in the Eucharist."

She also views the school's eucharistic procession

as a taste of the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage that is headed to Indianapolis for the National Eucharistic Congress on July 17-21.

"People are processing to it from all four corners of the country," Ava said. "I thought it was cool to have a mini-experience of what will be happening in our country. It was an amazing opportunity to worship and see all of your classmates gathering to worship the same God as you." †

New Catholics speak of the power of receiving their first Eucharist

By Natalie Hoefler

Each year since I started working as a reporter for *The Criterion* in 2013, I've been blessed with telling the stories of individuals throughout central and southern Indiana who have been received into the full communion of the Church, primarily during a parish Easter Vigil Mass.

One of the most touching moments for me as I interview these new Catholics is the awe and love they express for Christ in the Eucharist.

Many share the anticipation and eagerness they felt receiving their first Communion. Some shed tears at the memory of the moment. Others struggle to find words that adequately convey the experience.

Here are quotes from new Catholics who shared the impact of their first Communion and what Christ's true presence had come to mean to them after a lifetime without the Eucharist.

"A lot of people don't understand the huge pull and desire to have the Eucharist. ... You have no idea how happy I am, how excited I am to be receiving the Eucharist. The

sacraments, to me, are very dear."
—James Foutz, *St. John the Apostle Parish in Bloomington, 2014*

"It was really emotional. After Communion, I sat in the pew and I felt something. I just started crying. It's hard for me to cry, but it happened. I felt that power."
—Gilles Nouns, *St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis, 2015*

"My first holy Communion was beautiful. I came back to my pew, and all I could say over and over was, 'Thank you, thank you, thank you.'"
—Daniel Tews, *Annunciation Parish in Brazil, 2016*

"I like the feeling of God being present [in the Eucharist], that I'm actually worshipping the living God."
—Cassandra Guerra, *St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in Fortville, 2019*

"You're taking in the body of Christ—it's not a symbol. You're literally ingesting Christ into your soul and body to be one of his disciples."
—Brian Hall, *St. Lawrence Parish in Indianapolis, 2021*

"After Communion, I just felt happiness."
—Judy Townsend, *St. Gabriel Parish in Connersville, 2021*

"Not being able to take Communion every day was the worst! I wanted that so bad, especially after understanding what it meant. [Upon receiving Communion at the Easter Vigil Mass,] I'm crying. And Father says, 'Adam, the body of Christ.' I said, 'Finally! Amen!'"
—Adam Scott, *St. John the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis, 2022*

"[Receiving the Eucharist] was amazing—the sanctity of that and understanding that every little, tiny morsel is God and Jesus. To realize that is very profound. If you think about it, if you pray about it, if you're really earnest about it, it can be life changing. You can feel whole again, transformed."
—Gayle Blackburn, *St. Malachy Parish in Brownsburg, 2022*

"[Receiving the Eucharist] was like receiving my first kiss from my

beloved. It was grace on grace."
—Gayle Griffiths, *All Saints Parish in Dearborn County, 2022*

"[Receiving the Eucharist] was the most beautiful thing. I actually felt it heal my soul. I felt I was in my deepest bond with the Lord, and I felt my soul being healed."
—Olivia Smith, *St. Paul Catholic Center in Bloomington, 2023*

"It was joyful, it was amazing—I was overwhelmed with emotions. I was so happy—I couldn't believe how happy I was! I went back to the pew and just started crying. I've never cried when I was happy before, but I couldn't stop."
—Aubrey Bihl, *St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Richmond, 2024*

"[Receiving Communion] was everything I'd been waiting for. To think—Jesus' body and blood. There is something so beautiful and intimate about it."
—Jessica McClain, *SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Parish, Greenwood, 2024* †



" 'Well, if it's a symbol, to hell with it.' ... I realize now that this is all I will ever be able to say about it, outside of a story, except that it is the center of existence for me; all the rest of life is expendable."

—Flannery O'Connor, author



Father Michael Keucher, pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Shelbyville, carries a monstrance holding the Blessed Sacrament at the head of a eucharistic procession on June 23, 2019, at the Batesville Deanery faith community. The procession ended with the blessing of the Divine Mercy Chapel, a new perpetual adoration chapel in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. (File photo by Sean Gallagher)



Father Josh Johnson of the Diocese of Baton Rouge, La., presides over Benediction on Nov. 22, 2019, during a night of eucharistic adoration during the National Catholic Youth Conference at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis. (File photo by Sean Gallagher)



Bishop Hre Kung, left, of the Hakha Diocese in Myanmar, celebrates Mass at St. Barnabas Church in Indianapolis on Aug. 4, 2019. Concelebrating is parochial vicar Father Eustace Thang, who ministers to the Chin Catholics of the parish. (File photo by Natalie Hoefler)



A priest incenses a monstrance as part of an evening of adoration on Jan. 5, 2019, during the SEEK 2019 conference in the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis. Behind the priest, approximately 17,000 college students, religious, campus ministers and others knelt in worship of Christ's presence in the Blessed Sacrament within the monstrance. (File photo by Natalie Hoefler)



A woman wearing traditional Korean attire receives the Eucharist during a Mass for Asian and Pacific Islanders at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis on April 12, 2015. (File photo by Natalie Hoefler)



Father Jonathan Meyer, pastor of All Saints Parish in Dearborn County, second from left, and Deacon Robert Decker, join several altar servers and other parishioners in praying before the Blessed Sacrament on March 1, 2017, in the Batesville Deanery faith community's new perpetual adoration chapel on its St. John the Baptist campus in Dover. (File photo by Sean Gallagher)



Father Vincent Lampert, pastor of St. Michael Parish in Brookville, joins in a photo with the children of the parish who received their first Communion on April 21. Spring is traditionally the time when parishes throughout central and southern Indiana celebrate the milestone of children's first Communion (Submitted photo)



Marianhill Father Jean Bosco Ntawagusira, administrator of Holy Angels and St. Rita parishes in Indianapolis, offers the Eucharist to a woman during a Mass celebrating Africa Unity Day at St. Rita Church on June 4, 2023. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)



Father Jayaseelan Sengolraj, pastor of St. Michael Parish in Charlestown, holds a monstrance with the Blessed Sacrament as he leads members of the parish in a eucharistic procession on June 2, the feast of the Body and Blood of Christ, or *Corpus Christi*. (Submitted photo)



A eucharistic procession is seen making its way around the campus of Roncalli High School in Indianapolis as part of the National Zomi American Eucharistic Congress held at the school on July 8-10, 2022. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)



“O boundless charity! Just as you gave us yourself, wholly God and wholly man, so you left us all of yourself as food so that while we are pilgrims in this life, we might not collapse in our weariness but be strengthened by you, heavenly food.”

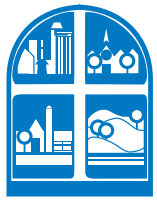
—St. Catherine of Siena



“Very beautiful and joyful too is the spectacle of Christian brotherhood and social equality, which is afforded when men of all conditions, gentle and simple, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, gather round the holy altar, all sharing alike in this heavenly banquet.”

—Pope Leo XIII





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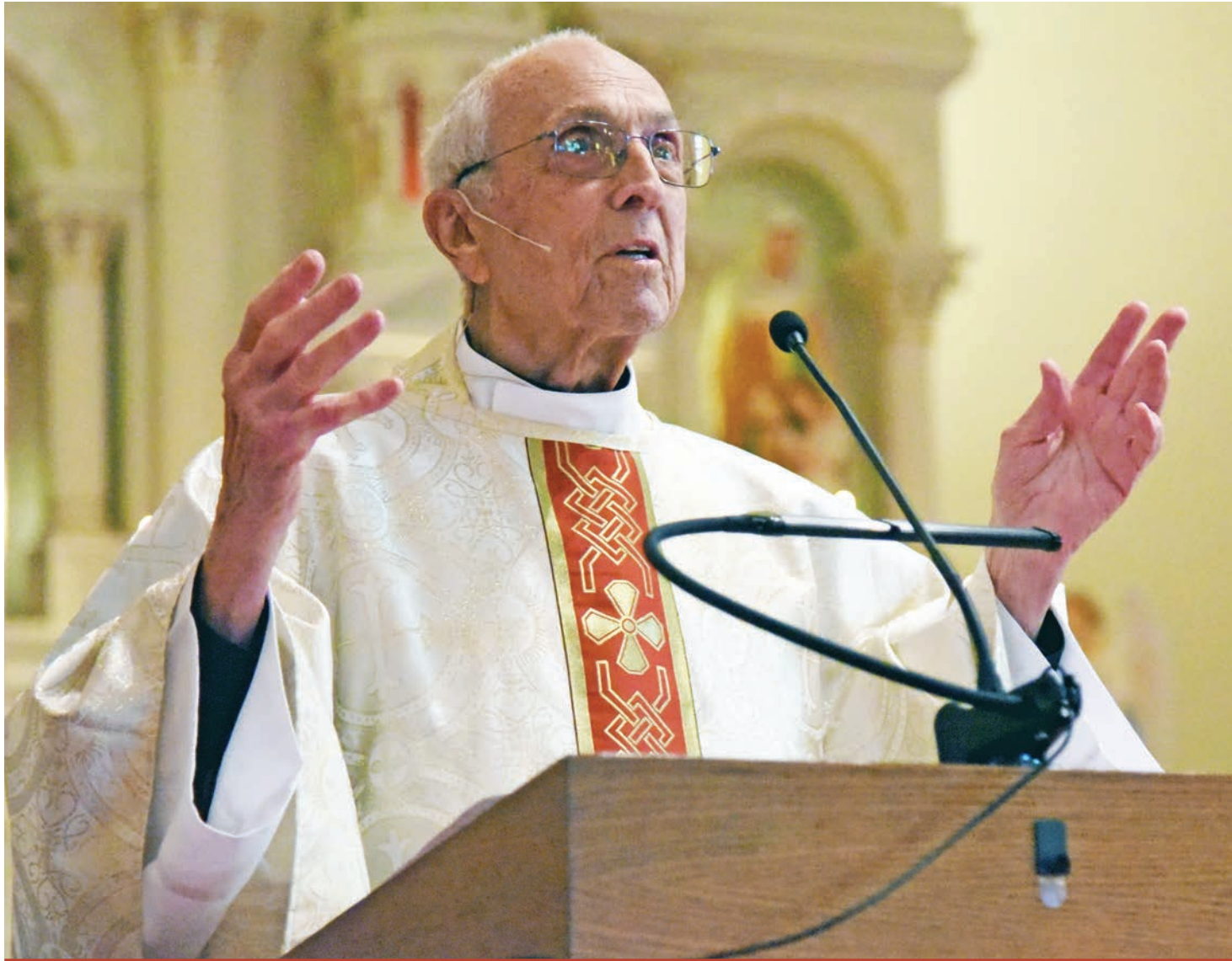
Amid the Fray

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Father Paul Landwerlen preaches a homily during a May 4 Mass at St. Joseph Church in Shelbyville that celebrated the 70th anniversary of his ordination as an archdiocesan priest. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

Open the Church's doors to evangelization, pope tells new archbishops

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—While Jesus entrusted St. Peter with the keys to the kingdom more than two millennia ago, and his modern-day successor conferred



Pope Francis

apostolic authority to newly appointed archbishops on June 29, it is ultimately God who holds the power to open the Church's doors and lead the Christian community forward in its mission of evangelization, Pope Francis said.

In his homily during Mass for the feast of SS. Peter and Paul on June 29, the pope reflected on the Apostle Peter's liberation from prison after an angel opened his cell. The pope said God "is the one who sets us free and opens the way before us".

He also noted that the Christians Peter sought out after his liberation did not believe he was knocking at their door, mistaking him for an angel.

"This point is significant: the doors of the prison were opened by the Lord's strength, but Peter then found it hard to enter the house of the Christian community," he said. "How many times have communities not learned this wisdom of the need to open the doors!"

Before 33 newly appointed archbishops gathered in St. Peter's Basilica to receive their palliums—woolen bands worn by archbishops to symbolize their pastoral authority and unity with the pope—Pope Francis underscored the model of St. Paul as one who "discovers the grace of weakness.

"When we are weak, he tells us, it is then that we are strong, because we no longer rely on ourselves, but on Christ," the pope said.

Yet he explained that relying on Christ "does not lead to a consoling, inward-looking religiosity like that found in a few

See ARCHBISHOPS, page 2B

At 96, priest continues to show youthful vitality after 70 years of ministry

By Sean Gallagher

SHELBYVILLE—On May 3, 1954, Father Paul Landwerlen lay prostrate in prayer on the floor of the Archabbey Church of Our Lady of Einsiedeln in St. Meinrad during a Mass in which he was ordained an archdiocesan priest.

During a May 4 Mass at St. Joseph Church in Shelbyville to celebrate the 70th anniversary of his ordination, Father Landwerlen shared with the worshippers what was going through his mind at that moment 70 years earlier.

"I thought, 'How many years can I do this? At least 25? Maybe 50? Maybe I'll go for 50,'" recalled the 96-year-old priest with a laugh. "Today, it's 70."

Since Father Landwerlen is only the third priest in the history of the archdiocese to reach 70 years of priestly life and ministry, it's understandable that Catholics of Shelby County where Father Landwerlen lives in retirement wanted to celebrate his anniversary.

Although Father Landwerlen didn't want an anniversary celebration, he explained why he ultimately agreed to it.

"It isn't about me," said Father Landwerlen during his

See LANDWERLEN, page 11B

Archbishop honors CYO volunteers and shares a poignant reminder about sports

By John Shaughnessy

On an evening when the archdiocese's Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) celebrated the contributions of its outstanding volunteers, Archbishop Charles C. Thompson offered his praise too, while also sharing the best advice he has heard recently.

"Christians aren't called to be like other Christians. Christians are called to be like Christ," the archbishop said in repeating that advice. He then added that true success comes in sports and life "when we strive to be Christ-like, when we keep Christ at the center of our lives."

See CYO, page 2B

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson poses for a photo with the recipients of the St. John Bosco Award, the highest honor given by the archdiocese's Catholic Youth Organizations. The honorees are Kevin Sowinski, left, Thomas O'Gara, Dennis Southerland, Jerry Ross, Edward Tinder, Antoinette Maio Burford, John Gause and Frankie Medvescek. (Submitted photo)



ARCHBISHOPS

continued from page 1B

movements in the Church today,” noting instead that St. Paul’s encounter with God ignited within him “a burning zeal for evangelization.”

Both SS. Peter and Paul “witnessed firsthand the work of God, who opened the doors of their interior prisons but also the actual prisons into which they were thrown because of the Gospel,” he said, as well as the “doors of evangelization, so they could have the joy of encountering their brothers and sisters in the fledgling communities and bring the hope of the Gospel to all.”

After the entrance procession, deacons brought out the palliums from the tomb of St. Peter for Pope Francis to bless them. The palliums, made from the wool of lambs blessed by the pope on the feast of St. Agnes—who is often depicted with a lamb to symbolize purity—emphasize the role of the archbishop as a pastor who guides and protects his flock.

Pope Francis remained seated during the Mass—Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, dean of the College of Cardinals, was the

main celebrant at the altar—but stood during the sign of peace to greet Orthodox Metropolitan Emmanuel Adamakis of Chalcedon, who attended the Mass as part of a delegation from the Ecumenical Orthodox Patriarchate of Constantinople.

Among the 33 archbishops were Archbishop Christopher J. Coyne of Hartford, Conn., (formerly an auxiliary bishop and apostolic administrator of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis) and Archbishop Thomas R. Zinkula of Dubuque, Iowa.



Archbishop Christopher J. Coyne

Archbishop Coyne said increased societal division has found its way into the Church, but said that the chair of St. Peter remains as a “symbol of unity” for Catholics, “irregardless of who sits in it.”

As a result, the Church’s pastors are called to be “unifiers,” the archbishop told CNS. “People are feeling isolated, that’s why we want to bring them to

communion. People are feeling angry and feel they have meaningless lives, that’s why we want to have them know the full meaning of life, which is in Jesus Christ. “Everything we do as Christians,



Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

July 9–23, 2024

<p>July 9 – 6 p.m. National Eucharistic Pilgrimage, passing of monstrance from Archdiocese of Louisville to Archdiocese of Indianapolis on Big Four Bridge, Louisville, Ky.</p> <p>July 15 – 4 p.m. Mass for Asian and Pacific Island National Encounter at Indiana University, Indianapolis</p>	<p>July 16 – Noon Mass for National Eucharistic Pilgrimage participants at St. John the Evangelist Church, Indianapolis</p> <p>July 17-21 National Eucharistic Congress, Indianapolis</p> <p>July 23 – 4:30 p.m. Mass for National Association of State Catholic Conference Directors at St. John the Evangelist Church, Indianapolis, followed by dinner</p>
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especially as Catholics, should never be anything that leads to division, anger,” but rather action that “brings us together as brothers and sisters,” Archbishop Coyne said. †

CYO

continued from page 1B

That message captures the efforts of the youths and adults who were honored in the CYO’s Volunteer Awards Ceremony at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis on May 14.

Noting the volunteers’ impact, Archbishop Thompson focused on the incredible teamwork of CYO staff members, volunteers, coaches, parents and referees who work together for the benefit of children and youths, saying, “We remember how many people it takes to make things happen, and how we work together and not rely upon ourselves. We rely upon each other to build on each of our gifts and talents, and trust in God’s grace.”

The archbishop then offered a gentle, poignant reminder about the perspective that must be kept by everyone involved in the CYO.

“The CYO is an important facet of the ministry of service in the archdiocese, but it’s only effective to the point that we remember to keep the focus on the child and not on folks trying to relive their childhood,” Archbishop Thompson said. “Parents and coaches, the focus has to be on the child. If we want to keep them in the game, we have to keep the focus on them and not ourselves.”

Toward that goal, the archbishop said that while competition is good and needed, the emphasis should be on “friendly competition” that doesn’t endanger relationships or the person. Instead, it should be focused on developing children and youths “in mind, in body and spirit.”

Those reminders dovetailed nicely with the Gospel that was shared during the ceremony, from Matthew 18:1-5.

When the disciples asked Christ, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”, he called to a child, placed the child in their midst and said, “Amen, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

“And whoever receives one child such as this in my name receives me.”

During his homily, Archbishop Thompson also tied together the celebrations of Christ’s resurrection, his ascension into heaven and the Holy Spirit’s outpouring on the Apostles at Pentecost—and how they all impact our lives today.

“Immediately after Jesus ascended into heaven, the disciples had to discern where God was leading them, what the Spirit was asking them to do,” the archbishop said. “They had to constantly discern how the Lord God was calling them and how they would continue to carry

on the mission of Jesus. They could not do that without the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

“We live on the other side of that. We live in a time where the Holy Spirit has come down upon us, hopefully in the parents, coaches and referees who work so hard for CYO, who are living out the baptismal call to be Christ-like. We do that in many ways in our vocations as priests, religious, deacons, married life. But also in the various ways we serve” other people.

At the same time, the archbishop stressed, Christ is still with us in our lives, continually offering himself in the Eucharist, giving us his body and blood “that continues to nourish us and sustain us in our ministries like CYO and all of our schools and parishes and health care, and all the ministries that we do.”

That message connected to the words that Archbishop Thompson shared with the volunteers, their families, their friends and several parish priests at the beginning of the ceremony.

“As we come together,” he said, “we call to mind we are indeed the body of Christ, united together as one.”

(During the ceremony, eight individuals were honored with the CYO’s highest honor, the St. John Bosco Award. The Criterion will feature these recipients in an upcoming issue.) †

CYO recognition highlights volunteer efforts of adults and youths

2024 St. John Bosco Award

Parish recipients

Christ the King Parish—Kevin Sowinski
Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish—John Gause
Mary Queen of Peace Parish, in Danville—Frankie Medvescek
St. Pius X Parish—Thomas O’Gara
St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Parish—Antoinette Maio Burford

Former Catholic Youth Organization employee recipients

St. Jude Parish—Jerry Ross
Dennis Southerland

St. Pius X Parish—Edward Tinder

2024 Msgr. Albert Busald Award recipients

Chris the King Parish—Claire Bidmead and Mike Felts
Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish—Jennifer Neale and Paula Ryan
SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Parish, in Greenwood—Dominic and Holly Eble
St. Barnabas Parish—Brad Dozier and Kyle Heidelberg
St. Jude Parish—Judd Lawrie
St. Mark the Evangelist Parish—Brianna Kurasz
St. Pius X Parish—Josh Marsh
St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Parish—Angie Mackell

St. Thomas Aquinas Parish—Eileen Walthall

2024 Spirit of Youth Award recipients

Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish—Jack Kaplan
Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ Parish—Isaac Gomez-Alejo, Gianna Miller and Mary Renshaw
St. Roch Parish—James Guthrie
St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Parish—Reanna Holiada and Alex Losano

2024 Edward J. Tinder CYO Official of the Year Award recipients

Steve Grohovsky and Jeff Wellner, both of St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Parish



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Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Terre Haute marks 100 years as 'home'

By Natalie Hoefler

TERRE HAUTE—June is a special month for members of Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Terre Haute. Since 1856, the Catholic Church has dedicated that month to the parish's namesake, the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

But this particular June was especially memorable as the parish marked its 100th anniversary with a special Mass celebrated by Archbishop Charles C. Thompson on June 8.

In his homily, he noted historical hallmarks from 1924 to present—globally, nationally, locally, in the Church and in the century-old northern Terre Haute faith community.

“Through it all, the priests, religious, parishioners and now pastoral life coordinator of Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish have remained committed to prayer, worship, Scripture, sacraments and service to those in need,” the archbishop said.

More than 'brick and mortar'

From the dedication of the combined church/school building in July of 1924, to the dedication of the current church in June of 1956, to producing two of the archdiocese's first permanent deacons in 2008, to the present, Archbishop Thompson observed that “divine grace has enabled the vibrancy of Sacred Heart [of Jesus] Parish to strive for a century, enabling the faithfulness of the people of God to the baptismal call of holiness and mission.”

He commended “folks like Barbara Black”—Sacred Heart's parish life coordinator since 2010—“and others [who] have stepped up to taking leadership roles for the parish life and ministry. So many of you have done that. So many before you have done this.”

Referring to 2 Cor 4:18 from the day's second reading, Archbishop Thompson noted that “the people of the parish have focused with the eyes of faith on that which is eternal rather than transitory, striving to be Christ-centered as a community of believers, relying on the Holy Spirit to fill up what may be lacking in human merit.”

Because members of the parish have been “rooted in seeking to do the will of God,” the archbishop continued, the faith community has “withstood the test of time amid all the ups and downs, ecstasies and turmoil.”

“The people of all faiths throughout Terre Haute and Indiana are better for it—not just Catholics, but the many who have been served, Catholic and non-Catholic. More so than brick and mortar, it is the united witness of a Christ-centered community of believers that remains a beacon of hope, comfort, assurance and healing to those overwhelmed by life.”

In closing, Archbishop Thompson offered advice for all Catholics: “In keeping with the parish's namesake, we would all do well to devote ourselves to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.”



Deacon Steven Gretencord, left, and Archbishop Charles C. Thompson lift the chalice and paten during a Mass in Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in Terre Haute celebrating the faith community's 100th anniversary on June 8. Deacon Gretencord, a son of the parish, was a member of the first class of deacons ordained in the archdiocese in 2008. Father Stephen Giannini, second from right, served as pastor of the parish from 1997-2002 and as its priest moderator from 2010-2013. Father Darwin Winters, right, served as the parish's pastor from 2005-2010 and now serves as its sacramental minister. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)

'Just where we've always been'

The celebration of the parish's 100th anniversary began in June of 2023 with a dinner celebration, Black told *The Criterion*.

To celebrate the faith community's century of serving the northern Terre Haute area, the parish participated in a “Thousand Acts of Kindness” project during the last year.

“We asked parishioners to do acts of kindness and write them” on individual paper hearts provided by the parish, Black explained. The hearts were displayed on

a decorative tree at a dinner held after the Mass.

Another project undertaken to mark the parish anniversary was the research and writing of a 60-page parish history booklet.

Black credits longtime parishioner Karen Goehl with the effort.

“It took hours and hours of work,” she said. “Karen pored through bulletins and the [archdiocesan] archives and everything. And God bless her, she came up with a wonderful history of the parish.”

See ANNIVERSARY, page 12B



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Marriage

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Be a part of our Fall Marriage Edition

August 23 issue of *The Criterion*

Couples who are planning to be married between Aug. 9, 2024, and Jan. 31, 2025, in a marriage that is recognized as a valid sacramental or valid natural marriage, or couples who were wed between Jan. 31 and Aug. 9, 2024, in such a recognized marriage and did not have their engagement announcement in *The Criterion* are invited to submit the information for the upcoming Aug. 23 Fall Marriage Edition.

Announcements can be submitted by mail using the form below or electronically at www.archindy.org/engagements.

E-mailed photos
Photos should be saved in jpg format and be at least 500 kb. Color photos are preferred. We recommend sending a photo where the couple's faces are close to each other. Please send the photo as an attachment to the e-mail: alewis@archindy.org. Subject line: Spring Marriage (Last name). In the e-mail, please include the information in the form located below.

If it is not possible to e-mail a photo, a photo can be mailed with the bottom form. Please no photocopies or laser prints. To have the photo returned, please include a return addressed envelope with a postage stamp on it.

Deadline
All announcements and photos must be received by 5 p.m. on Aug. 9.

— Use this form to furnish information by mail —

Clip and mail to: BRIDES, The Criterion, ATTN: Ann Lewis, 1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367. To submit information online go to: www.archindy.org/engagements. **Deadline with photos:** Tuesday, Aug. 9, at 5 p.m. Please print or type:

Name of Bride (first, middle, last)		Daytime Phone	
Mailing Address	City	State	Zip Code
Name of Bride's Parents (first, last)			
City		State	
Name of Bridegroom (first, middle, last)			
Name of Bridegroom's Parents (first, last)			
City		State	
Wedding Date	Church	City	State

Photo Enclosed
 Return photo
 No Picture

Signature of person furnishing information	Relationship	Daytime Phone
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Project Rachel

Experience Hope and Healing After Abortion

Upcoming Rachel's Vineyard Retreat in the Indianapolis Area

July 26-28, 2024

For Confidential Help Contact
317-452-0054 or projectrachel@archindy.org
All Calls and Locations Are Confidential.

A Special Word to Those Who Have Had an Abortion ...

Do not give in to discouragement and do not lose hope...
If you have not already done so, give yourselves over with humility and trust to repentance. The Father of mercies is ready to give you his forgiveness and his peace ...
~Saint John Paul II, *The Gospel Life*



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, *Publisher*
Mike Krokos, *Editor*

John F. Fink, *Editor Emeritus*

Editorial

An urgent call to protect the unborn, and to care for mothers and families in need

It's hard to believe it's been two years since the U.S. Supreme Court overturned decisions which allowed abortion on demand in our country for nearly 50 years.

On June 24, 2022, the court issued its historic decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, which involved a Mississippi law banning abortion after 15 weeks, in which the state directly challenged the high court's previous abortion-related precedents in *Roe v. Wade* (1973) and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* (1992). In *Dobbs*, the court ultimately overturned its own prior rulings, undoing nearly a half-century of its own precedent on the issue and returning the regulation of abortion to state legislatures.

But our work is far from over to protect every unborn child conceived in its mother's womb.

Reflecting on the anniversary of the 2022 court decision, Bishop Michael F. Burbidge of Arlington, Va., chair of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Committee on Pro-Life Activities, said, "It is a day for thanksgiving to God for answering our prayers and blessing the many years of hard work. This anniversary calls us to reflect on where we have been and where we are going. The reversal of *Roe v. Wade* brought new opportunities to protect innocent human life. While some states have done this, others have enacted extreme abortion policies. Children have been left vulnerable to abortion until the moment of birth. Kansas, Michigan and Ohio drastically expanded access to abortion."

States including Maryland and Florida have ongoing efforts to enshrine abortion protections in their state constitutions on the ballot. Other states are following suit seeking to support abortion initiatives this November.

Beyond the states working to strengthen abortion protections, others in society—including some members of Congress and the current administration of President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris—are working hard to again make sure abortion is as accessible as it was when *Roe* was the law of the land. We need to continue to pray for the conversion of their hearts, reminding them that God calls each of us to protect all human life—from conception to natural death.

"... Congress has been promoting many pro-abortion policies while largely ignoring our calls to prioritize maternal health and support for children and families in need," Bishop Burbidge said in his statement. "In the spirit of faithful citizenship, I urge Catholics to engage their elected officials on all issues endangering life."

Engaging elected officials and educating our brothers and sisters in Christ about the horrors of abortion and its aftermath must be at the heart of our message and mission as we continue our support for the unborn.

Jeanne Mancini, president of the March for Life organization, told OSV News in a recent article that after *Dobbs*,



Bishop Michael F. Burbidge of Arlington, Va., leads a eucharistic procession inside the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington on June 9. (OSV News photo/Mihoko Owada, *Catholic Standard*)

there was "so much confusion about what that means and anger and frustration from people who are confused about the inherent dignity of the unborn child and how abortion impacts women. So, I think that we're still very much in the middle of that reverberation."

When discussing abortion policy, Mancini said, pro-life advocates should strive "to get very clear" on the specific state, law or situations involved "because there's a lot of misinformation out there right now."

As reported in OSV News, in the years following the *Dobbs* decision, some women in states that restricted abortion said they were denied timely care for miscarriages or ectopic pregnancies or experienced other adverse pregnancy outcomes as a result of medical professionals' hesitation due to unclear abortion legislation. But pro-life activists said laws restricting abortion contained exceptions for such circumstances. Their opponents claimed bill texts insufficiently addressed those circumstances or lacked clarity on exceptions. We must call on all who write these proposals to make sure they clearly state what exceptions exist for each piece of legislation.

Bishop Burbidge said the ongoing National Eucharistic Revival and the upcoming National Eucharistic Congress on July 17-21 in Indianapolis are opportune times for the Holy Spirit to inspire our efforts. "Christ's real presence in the Eucharist has the power to transform our own hearts and the heart of our culture. ... Strengthened by our eucharistic Lord, each of us must rededicate ourselves to serving the cause of life."

He continued, "May our Catholic parishes continue to welcome, embrace and accompany women facing unexpected or challenging pregnancies, offering material, emotional and spiritual support. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the countless individual Catholics who have dedicated themselves to parish and community initiatives, like Walking with Moms in Need. May we never tire of sharing Christ's message of mercy with all who are suffering in the aftermath of an abortion."

Please Lord, let us continue to be strong in our battle protecting the unborn and let you light overwhelm this darkness. May it be so.

—Mike Krokos

Be Our Guest/ Bishop Robert E. Barron and Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades

Federal agencies distort truth, threaten religious freedom with rules regarding gender ideology

The Church celebrates the month of June in dedication to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, who pours out his



Bishop Robert E. Barron

never-ending love to humanity. This love is offered to each of us, yet we are reminded that love cannot exist without truth because he who loves us is truth itself (Jn 14:6).

As bishops, we are thus compelled to address recent efforts to distort the truth through the proliferation of "new rights" by federal agencies, which aim to codify, and in effect, further advance in society, what Pope Francis lately called the "ugliest danger" of our time.



Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades

During the past several years, federal agencies have been working methodically to promote gender ideology at the expense of the rights of people of faith. Recently, that steady march became a sprint. During three weeks in April and May, federal agencies issued eight separate rules enshrining gender ideology in law.

We saw this coming. In 2022, U.S. bishops began alerting Catholics and people of good will to proposed federal regulations that do harm to Catholic institutions and undermine the common good.

Chairmen across multiple U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) committees focused on problems coming from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the U.S. Department of Education (USDE).

Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan and Cardinal Blase J. Cupich took to *America Magazine* to warn Catholics about an HHS regulation that would require Catholic hospitals to perform gender transition surgeries. And the USCCB undertook significant efforts to explain to these federal agencies how their proposed rules would do harm. On the Title IX and Section 1557 regulations alone, USCCB action alerts generated more than 37,500 total comments filed by concerned Catholics.

In the end, it seems to have made little difference. A common pattern runs through these new rules. First, they require charities and social service providers to assent to or participate in gender ideology in various ways. One rule requires foster parents to affirm their children's asserted gender identities. Another says having

sex-separate bathrooms at work is sexual harassment. Yet another contorts a law against disability discrimination into a requirement to accommodate gender identity claims. And so on.

The rules then make vague assurances that the agencies respect religious freedom, while pointedly refusing to provide any real guarantee that anyone's religious freedom will actually be honored. In many cases, faith-based organizations are told exemptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

We need to be really clear here. These rules promote an ideological worldview at odds with the foundational order of human nature. In doing so, they also threaten the viability of Catholic institutions, such as hospitals, migration and refugee services, and adoption and foster care agencies. This regulatory regime harms the common good and undermines the Church's good works in service of the human person.

Our belief in the dignity of the human person underpins all our charitable services. Our special care for migrants, orphans, the poor and the sick flows from this powerful reality—which we affirm to be both biblical but also available to natural human reason—that every individual has an "ontological dignity," which is "indelible and remains valid beyond any circumstances in which the person may find themselves." Indeed, persons who struggle with gender dysphoria have infinite dignity, and they deserve our love and respect as persons created in the image of God.

But this same principle of human dignity is also what animates our defense of unborn life, our promotion of marriage, our teaching that each person's sexual identity—rooted in his or her biological sex—ought to be received as a gift from God, and our concern for religious freedom. Our commitment to serving in the world cannot come at the expense of our commitment to life, marriage and the nature of the human person.

Despite the challenges we face, discouragement has no place in the good news of the Gospel. Catholics will continue to serve the least of our neighbors—in love and truth—come what may.

(Bishop Robert E. Barron is the bishop of the Diocese of Winona-Rochester, Minn., and chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth. Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades is the bishop of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Ind., and chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee for Religious Liberty.) †

Letters Policy

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

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

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

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

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

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

ARCHBISHOP/ARZOBISPO CHARLES C. THOMPSON



Christ the Cornerstone

Celebrating a friendship with Jesus in the gift of the Mass

“If the Eucharist shapes synodality, then the first step we should take is to celebrate the Mass in a way that befits the gift, with an authentic sense of friendship in Christ. Liturgy celebrated with authenticity is the first and fundamental school of discipleship. Its beauty and simplicity should form us prior to any other organized formation program.” (2023 Synod Synthesis Report, Part I: Synodality: Experience and Understanding, #3 “Entering the Community of Faith: Christian Initiation”)

One of the four pillars of our three-year National Eucharistic Revival is “Reinvigorating Worship.”

Webster’s Dictionary defines “reinvigorating” as giving renewed strength or energy to something. The synonyms suggested include: to arouse, energize, perk up or stimulate. However, as important as it is to celebrate liturgies that are vibrant (not dull or boring), the reinvigoration called for in the Eucharistic Revival means something fundamentally different.

First of all, we are not responsible for giving life to our worship, especially the holy Eucharist. That is the work of the Holy Spirit who breathes divine life

into all creation, including our acts of thanks and praise to God.

Our role in the reinvigoration of worship is to make room for the Spirit of God by being receptive to God’s word, by opening ourselves to the gift of Christ’s real presence in the holy Eucharist, and by our “full, conscious and active participation” in the liturgies and devotional practices we celebrate as a community of faith.

To borrow a phrase used of Pope Benedict XVI when he visited the United States in 2008, our liturgies should be “Alive in Christ.” This means that they should resonate with an authentic sense of the presence of God in word and sacrament as well as in the experience of *koinonia* (community), and they should reflect a keen awareness of the mission entrusted to us as disciples of Jesus empowered by the Holy Spirit. We do not give life to our worship. Our worship reinvigorates us!

Secondly, sacred worship is not necessarily loud or busy. To reinvigorate our worship is to make it more prayerful and more beautiful. Moments of silence and contemplation can contribute to vibrant liturgy, raising our minds and hearts to God, even as an engaged

congregation achieves full participation in the liturgy by prayerful listening and by joining in the acclamations and responses with enthusiasm.

Sometimes we make the mistake of thinking that our liturgies will be more vigorous if we make them more appealing to modern taste. So, we introduce different forms of popular music, or we seek to make our homilies more entertaining. This approach usually backfires. Sacred worship is not a form of entertainment. Certainly, our music must be inspiring, and our homilies should be accessible to all, but in a fundamentally different way than the “shows” that we watch outside of worship.

Finally, authentic worship draws people into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. It satisfies our hungry hearts by nourishing us with the body and blood of our Savior and by uniting us with all our brothers and sisters in Christ. Vibrant worship is life-giving. It restores our faith, renews our hope and fills us with the unconditional, everlasting love of God.

As Pope Francis consistently reminds us, our Church does not exist for its own sake. We are gathered into the one body of Christ for the sake of the mission that he has given us: to go out to the whole

world and proclaim his good news to everyone. A vigorous worship service is one that renews and strengthens us for the work we are called to do in Jesus’ name.

All of us are aware that in the United States, and in many other, but not all, parts of the world, Sunday Mass attendance has been declining for decades. The National Eucharistic Congress that we are hosting in Indianapolis on July 17–21 is intended to be a positive response to this disturbing trend. Before, during and after this historic occasion, we seek to raise high the sacred host and to remind ourselves and everyone we meet that Christ is present among us and that we are truly “Alive in Christ!”

Please join in welcoming the thousands of pilgrims who are traveling from all over our country and beyond to celebrate the 10th National Eucharistic Congress here in the United States in Indianapolis, the Crossroads of America.

May we gather as one community of faith, hope and love in friendship with Jesus Christ. And may we enthusiastically accept this opportunity to allow the Holy Spirit of God to reinvigorate our worship and to renew us in carrying out our work as missionary disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ. †



Cristo, la piedra angular

Celebremos la amistad con Jesús en el don de la misa

“Si la Eucaristía da forma a la sinodalidad, entonces el primer paso que debemos dar es celebrar la misa de un modo acorde con el don, con un auténtico sentido de la amistad en Cristo. La liturgia celebrada con autenticidad es la primera aula y la más fundamental en la escuela del discipulado. Su belleza y sencillez deberían ser nuestra base de formación antes que cualquier otro programa de preparación estructurado.” (Informe de síntesis del Sínodo de 2023, parte I: Sinodalidad: Experiencia y comprensión, #3 “Ingreso en la comunidad de fe: La iniciación cristiana”).

Uno de los cuatro pilares de nuestro Avivamiento Eucarístico Nacional de tres años es “Revitalizar el culto.”

El diccionario de la Real Academia Española define la palabra “revitalizar” como “dar más fuerza y vitalidad a algo.” Entre los sinónimos de este lema se encuentran reavivar, reactivar o reanimar. Sin embargo, por muy importante que sea celebrar liturgias que sean dinámica (no sosas ni aburridas), la revitalización que exige el Avivamiento Eucarístico significa algo fundamentalmente diferente.

En primer lugar, no somos responsables de dar vida a nuestro culto, en particular a la sagrada Eucaristía, ya que esa obra le corresponde al Espíritu Santo quien infunde vida divina a toda

la creación, incluidos nuestros actos de agradecimiento y alabanza a Dios.

Nuestro papel en la revitalización del culto consiste en dar cabida al Espíritu de Dios siendo receptivos a la Palabra de Dios, abriéndonos al don de la presencia real de Cristo en la sagrada Eucaristía y mediante nuestra “participación plena, consciente y activa” en las liturgias y prácticas devocionales que celebramos como comunidad de fe.

Tomando prestada una frase utilizada cuando el Papa Benedicto XVI visitó Estados Unidos en 2008, nuestras liturgias deberían estar “vivas en Cristo.” Esto significa que deben resonar con un auténtico sentido de la presencia de Dios en la Palabra y los sacramentos, así como en la experiencia de la *koinonia* (comunidad), y deben reflejar una aguda conciencia de la misión que se nos ha confiado como discípulos de Jesús facultados por el Espíritu Santo. No damos vida a nuestro culto sino que mediante la oración nos revitalizamos.

En segundo lugar, el culto sagrado no es algo que necesariamente requiera de aspavientos o ajetreos. Revitalizar el culto significa hacerlo más piadoso y más bello. Los momentos de silencio y contemplación pueden contribuir a una liturgia vibrante, elevar nuestras mentes y corazones hacia Dios, al igual que una congregación comprometida logra la plena participación en la liturgia

mediante la escucha orante y uniéndose a las aclamaciones y respuestas con entusiasmo.

A veces cometemos el error de pensar que nuestras liturgias serán más vigorosas si las hacemos más atractivas al gusto moderno y por ello introducimos diferentes formas de música popular, o buscamos hacer más entretenidas nuestras homilías. Sin embargo, este enfoque por lo general resulta contraproducente ya que el culto sagrado no es una forma de entretenimiento. Ciertamente, nuestra música debe ser inspiradora y nuestras homilías deben ser accesibles para todos, pero de una forma fundamentalmente diferente a los “espectáculos” que vemos fuera del culto.

Por último, el culto auténtico atrae a la gente hacia una relación personal con Jesucristo que satisface nuestros corazones hambrientos al alimentarnos con el Cuerpo y la Sangre de nuestro Salvador y nos une a todos nuestros hermanos y hermanas en Cristo. La adoración vibrante es vivificante; restaura nuestra fe, renueva nuestra esperanza y nos llena del amor incondicional y eterno de Dios.

Como nos recuerda constantemente el Papa Francisco, nuestra Iglesia no existe por sí misma. Estamos reunidos en el único cuerpo de Cristo en aras de la misión que nos ha encomendado: ir por todo el mundo y proclamar a

todos la Buena Nueva. Un servicio de adoración vibrante es aquel que nos renueva y fortalece para el trabajo que estamos llamados a realizar en el nombre de Jesús.

Todos somos conscientes de que en Estados Unidos, y en muchas otras partes del mundo, aunque no en todas, la asistencia a la misa dominical ha ido disminuyendo desde hace décadas. El Congreso Eucarístico Nacional que celebraremos en Indianápolis este mes, del 17 al 21 de julio, pretende ser una respuesta positiva a esta inquietante tendencia. Antes, durante y después de esta ocasión histórica, procuramos elevar en alto la hostia sagrada y recordarnos a nosotros mismos y a todos los que nos encontremos que Cristo está presente entre nosotros y que estamos verdaderamente ¡Vivos en Cristo!

Los animo a que se unan a darle la bienvenida a los miles de peregrinos que viajan desde todo nuestro país y más allá para celebrar el X Congreso Eucarístico aquí en Indianápolis, la llamada Encrucijada de Estados Unidos.

Que nos reunamos como una comunidad de fe, esperanza y amor en amistad con Jesucristo y que aceptemos con entusiasmo esta oportunidad de que el Espíritu Santo de Dios vitalice nuestro culto y nos renueve en el desempeño de nuestra labor como discípulos misioneros de nuestro Señor Jesucristo. †

Events Calendar

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

July 8

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

July 8-16

Carmelite Monastery, 59 Allendale, Terre Haute. **Mass and Novena to Our Lady of Mount Carmel**, 6-7 p.m. confession, 7 p.m. novena prayer and rosary followed by Mass, Franciscan Father Albert Hasse celebrant and homilist, free. Information: 812-299-1410, marygrace@heartssawake.org.

July 9

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

July 10

McGowan Hall, 1305 N. Delaware St., Indianapolis. **Theology on Tap**, 6-9 p.m., Verso Ministries pilgrim formation manager Joan Watson presenting, for ages

18-39, includes presentation, full bar, food trucks and socializing, free admission. Information: 317-592-4006, emastronicola@archindy.org.

July 11

Victory Field, 501 W. Maryland St., Indianapolis. **Catholic Night at Victory Field**, 6 p.m. gates open, 7:05 p.m. game start, sponsored by Catholic Business Exchange, Indianapolis Indians vs. Columbus Clippers, Bark in the Park: bring dogs to enjoy the game from left and center field lawn, dog tickets \$7, Thirsty Thursday discount food and drink, \$12 (plus \$2.73 service fee) for CBE ticket block. Tickets: tinyurl.com/cbeindians24. Information: jliston@catholicbusinessexchange.org.

July 13

St. Roch Parish parking lot, 3600 S. Pennsylvania St., Indianapolis. **St. Vincent de Paul Stuff A Truck**, 9-11 a.m., accepting clothing, household goods and linens (all in closed bags), furniture, bicycles, bicycle helmets and locks, backpacks. List of items most needed: cutt.ly/ItemsNeeded. Information: dsweeney@svdpindy.org.

July 13-14

All Saints Parish, Dearborn County, St. John the Baptist Campus, 25743 State Route 1,

Guilford. **Chicken Dinner and Summer Festival**, Sat. 5 p.m.-midnight, Sun. 11 a.m.-9 p.m., food, beer garden, B&G ice cream, kiddie land, raffles, live music, Sun. only chicken dinner served beginning at 11 a.m., free admission. Information: 812-576-4302, emilyalig.asp@gmail.com.

July 14

Holy Angels Parish, 740 W. 28th St., Indianapolis. **National Eucharistic Congress Kickoff Concert**, 3 p.m., sponsored by Holy Angels and St. Rita parishes in Indianapolis, freewill donations. Information: 317-926-3324.

July 15-19

Mount St. Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis. **Art and Science Camps**, ages 7-11, 9 a.m.-noon Art and Nature Camp, \$175; 1-4 p.m. Science and Nature Camp, \$175; both camps, \$325. Information and registration: 812-923-8817, mountsaintfrancis.org/kids-summer-camp.

July 17

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

St. Louis School cafeteria, 17 E. St. Louis Pl., Batesville. **Father Ed: The Story of Bill**

W.'s **Spiritual Sponsor**, 7 p.m., author Dawn Eden Goldstein presenting on Alcoholics Anonymous founder Jesuit Father Edward Dowling, copies of Goldstein's book available for purchase and signing, coffee and cookies, free. Information: 812-934-3204.

July 18

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

July 19

Northside Events and Social Club, 2100 E. 71st St., Indianapolis. **Catholic Business Exchange**, Indiana state senator and University of Indianapolis vice president and general counsel Cyndi Carrasco presenting "From the Border to the Senate: Living a Purpose Driven Life," rosary 6:35 a.m., Mass 7 a.m., buffet breakfast and program following, \$18 members, \$24 non-members. Register by 4 p.m. on July 16. Information, registration: cutt.ly/CBE-Reg.

July 26-August 5

Providence Spirituality and Conference Center, Foley Room,

1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Summer Used Book Sale**, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., includes books, CDs, DVDs, freewill donation for items, concurrent clearance sale at Linden Leaf Gifts. Information: Events.SistersofProvidence.org, 866-996-2947, lindenleafgifts@spsmw.org.

July 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: holyroary.prolife@gmail.com.

St. Mary Parish, 777 11th St., Mitchell. **Chicken Dinner and Craft Fair**, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., food, raffle, door prizes, craft vendors, silent auctions, cake walk, meals \$10. Information: 812-849-3570, stmarysmitchell294@gmail.com.

July 27-28

All Saints Parish, Dearborn County, St. Martin Campus, 8044 Yorkridge Road, Guilford. **Summer Festival**, Sat. 5 p.m.-midnight, Sun. 11 a.m.-9 p.m., food, beer garden, B&G ice cream, kiddie land, raffles, live music, Sun. only chicken dinner

served beginning at 11 a.m., free admission. **5K Country Run/Walk**, Sun. 9:30 a.m., \$20 (\$2.20 online registration fee), register at tinyurl.com/StMartinRun24. Information: 812-576-4302.

July 28

SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **Filipino Mass**, 2-3 p.m., every fourth Sunday of the month, free. Information: mariasolito@gmail.com.

St. Augustine Parish, 18020 Lafayette St., Leopold. **Church Picnic**, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. CT, \$12 fried chicken dinners (cash only), dine-in or carry-out, ice cream, hamburgers, raffles, quilt wheel, half pot drawing, free admission. Information: 812-843-5143, staughc@psci.net.

July 29-August 1

St. Monica Parish, 6131 N. Michigan Road, Indianapolis. Encoun-ter Summer Intensive: **A Four Night Experience of the Encoun-ter School of Ministry**, 6-9 p.m., \$75, \$35 for clergy, religious, seminarians, \$40 for parish/ministry professionals and college students, \$25 per individual day. Information: 317-795-491 2, indianapolis@encounterschool.org, encounterschool.org/Indianapolis. †

Retreats and Programs

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

Events and retreats can be submitted to The Criterion by logging on to www.archindy.org/events/submission, or by mailing us at 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202, ATTN: Ann Lewis, or by fax at 317-236-1593.

Catholic Francophone Community invites all to Mass in French and summer meal at St. Monica on July 14

ACAFADI (Apostolat des Catholiques Francophones de l' Archidiocèse d' Indianapolis) invites all to worship at a Mass in French at St. Monica Church, 6131 N. Michigan Road, in Indianapolis, at 5 p.m. on July 14, followed by a light meal on the St. Monica campus.

Indianapolis is home to Catholics from several nations whose native language is French. Through the

apostolate, the Mass has been offered monthly in French for the last decade. Currently the monthly Mass is celebrated on the second Sunday of the month at 5 p.m. at St. Monica Church.

Everyone interested in Francophone cultures is welcome to attend the Mass and light meal.

For more information, e-mail acfadi2014@gmail.com. †

Indianapolis premiere of Tolton Speaks documentary will take place at Marian University on July 16

The Indianapolis premiere of the documentary *Tolton Speaks* will take place at Marian University, 3200 Cold Spring Road, in Indianapolis, from 6:30-9 p.m. on July 16.

A reception will be held at 6:30 p.m., along with a viewing of Father Tolton sculptures. The documentary will be shown from 7-8:30 p.m., followed by a question and answer session with retired Bishop Joseph N. Perry of Chicago, postulator for Father Tolton's sainthood cause.

The documentary tells the priesthood

journey of Father Augustus Tolton, America's first recognized Black Catholic priest whose cause for sainthood is under investigation.

Born into slavery and prohibited from entering any seminary in the United States, Father Tolton defied odds and social expectations in becoming a priest. Learn about his extraordinary story through expert interviews, historical documents and his words as told through never-before-seen letters.

For more information, send an e-mail to contact@warriors4peace.org. †

Wedding Anniversaries

TERRENCE AND MARY (SALITROS) MCGINLEY, members of Holy Spirit Parish in Indianapolis, will celebrate their 55th wedding anniversary on July 5.

The couple was married in Holy Spirit Church in Indianapolis on July 5, 1969.

They have two children: Kelli Collins and the late Erin Gamble.

The couple also has six grandchildren.



TOM AND LAURIE (GUEST) DAEGER, members of St. Mark the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on June 29.

The couple was married in the First Christian Church in Shelbyville on June 29, 1974, and received dispensation to be married there.

They have two children: Deanna Daeger Merkel and Tom Daeger, Jr.

The couple also has five grandchildren.



PATRICK AND MARILYN (FISCHER) DAGES, members of Most Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Jeffersonville, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on July 13.

The couple was married in Good Shepherd Church in Frankfort, Ky., on July 13, 1974.

They have three children: Kathy Wallace and Kelly and Kerry Dages.

The couple also has six grandchildren.



CARL AND KATHY (ORTEGA) PEARSON, members of St. Susanna Parish in Plainfield, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on June 8.

The couple was married in St. Columba Church in Chicago on June 8, 1974.



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.

SIMPLY CATHOLIC

Daily prayer is a way to experience the eternity of God here and now

By Celia Wolf-Devine

(OSV News)—Regular prayer has always been regarded as an essential part of Christian life. In the psalms, the believer is compared to a tree planted by a stream that still bears fruit, even in times of drought, remaining full of sap and green, even in old age.

Jesus is the one who can give us living water, as he tells the Samaritan woman (Jn 4:10). Prayer is an important way in which we can open ourselves to receive this so that we, too, can remain full of sap and green amid the trials of life. “O God, you are my God/it is you I seek!/For you my body yearns:/for you my soul thirsts,/In a land parched, lifeless,/and without water” (Ps 63:2).

Our desire for God is a sign that God is already at work in us, calling us to him. Realizing this puts prayer in a new light. It is not just something we do; it also involves inviting God to work in us—to transform us and conform us more to Christ.

God is, in fact, present when we pray. The 17th-century Carmelite Brother Lawrence, author of *The Practice of the Presence of God*, put it this way: “You need not cry very loud; he is nearer to us than we are aware of.” Whether we are speaking words or singing or simply being silent, this sense of our longing for God and the reality of his presence should be a kind of constant background to our prayer.

If you know you need to pray more, but keep finding yourself getting to the end of the day and finding you have not prayed, you should think about what is holding you back.

“I’m too busy.” Don’t think of prayer as another thing you have to do, but as an opportunity to disengage yourself from the rush of practical activities and experience some of the leisureliness and eternity of God. Even a short period of this sort of prayer is like finding an oasis in the desert.

We also feel embarrassment. We may be afraid to invite God in because we want everything to be clean and orderly, but we know that much is chaotic, conflicted, misshapen, even ugly.

The answer is twofold. First, just as you would visit someone out of friendship regardless of a messy house, so Jesus wants to visit us. Second, if we wait until everything is orderly and beautiful, we will wait forever, because it is only the action of the Holy Spirit that can purify our hearts.

Our sinfulness in general can overwhelm us sometimes, as when St. Peter cries, “Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man” (Lk 5:8). But Jesus came to call sinners and shared meals with tax collectors and prostitutes.

We also fear that God will take us over or ask us to give up things to which we are attached. God always leaves us free. He may, in fact, ask us to give up something we are attached to. But if he does that, he will



A young man prays during a May 19 Mass at the Cathedral of St. Mary of the Assumption in San Francisco. Making prayer a deliberate part of daily life can open people to the “eternity of God,” writes Celia Wolf-Devine. (OSV News photo/Bob Roller)

gradually lead us to see it differently and be less attracted to it.

If, like most of us, you have already tried to do everything your own way and made a mess of things, the idea that God really does know what is good for us better than we do begins to look pretty plausible.

We all want to experience God’s presence and not just believe that he is present. But don’t assume you are not experiencing it because you are not having a conversion experience like Saul on the road to Damascus or a great mystical moment like those of St. Teresa of Ávila.

Dramatic experiences can and do happen. But more ordinarily, the sense of God’s presence is subtle and intermittent: a feeling that you are not alone, a moment of heightened life and peace, a sense of being held and stilled or comforted in times of sorrow or anguish, or perhaps a sudden clarity that reveals something deep about yourself and your situation.

The background image we have of God is very important for prayer. If you envision him as a harsh judge, this will get in the way of openness and trust. You might experiment with some images that are common in mystical literature. Imagine yourself as clay in the hands of a potter or as a house you invite him to come dwell in, or perhaps as the bridegroom of your soul.

Mystics have employed many images. God as a powerful deliverer, coming to drive out all darkness and evil, is an image that may feel appropriate sometimes. I sometimes think of myself as a drowning swimmer and Jesus as the lifeguard coming to save me, so I feel moved to stop thrashing around, relax and let him lift and carry me. Or I think of sunbathing in his light, letting it warm me, being a flower that turns toward the light and opens its petals, or following his lead as I would follow the lead of a dancing partner.

A good analogy in Scripture is a garden. We are dry, bramble-infested ground which God weeds and waters and softens so we can bring forth fruit. We want to be like the good soil in the parable of the sower

(Lk 8:4-15)—like those who “hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bring forth fruit with patience” (Lk 8:15).

Lock prayer into your daily routine. A short period of prayer first thing in the morning before you turn on your computer, cellphone or TV is an especially valuable practice. We need to invite Christ to the world, so spend some time with him first before you get entangled in your daily activities.

Pray before you make your list and let God give you his perspective on what is important. It is OK to sip your morning tea or coffee as you start. One way to structure it is the following:

—Read a little Scripture and see what stands out for you. The daily Mass readings are a good choice. Praying parts or all of the Church’s Liturgy of the Hours is also a time-tested fruitful way of praying with the Scriptures.

—Bring to God whatever is on your mind: things left over from yesterday, your emotions, your worries and fears, difficult situations you expect to encounter today, and try to let go of them. Offer him thanks for bringing you to the start of another day.

—A good opening prayer is the traditional morning offering prayer: “O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer you my prayers, works, joys, and sufferings of this day for all the intentions of your Sacred Heart, in union with the holy sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world, for the salvation of souls, the reparation of sins, the reunion of all Christians, and in particular for the intentions of the Holy Father. Amen.”

—Say or sing some sort of Holy Spirit invocation.

—Ask God to help you surrender to him, to let him dwell in you more deeply and live in him and for him more today than yesterday. Be sure to leave some quiet time.

—As in the morning offering prayer above, invoke Jesus in his Sacred Heart. I use the Litany of the Sacred Heart.

—Say a prayer of thanksgiving and ask for God’s guidance and protection throughout the day.

If you are bothered by distractions, just return gently to the prayers and don’t get upset at yourself for your poor concentration. Turn your worries into prayers for that situation. Keep a writing pad next to you for insights or things you need to do.

Don’t pick at yourself or worry about whether you are doing it right. And don’t get discouraged if you don’t see quick results—either in the feelings you experience or in overcoming your faults.

God can work in us at all sorts of levels that we are not aware of. Just be faithful to prayer, ask him to transform your heart, putting your desires in the right order so the compass needle of your soul points to him, the true north, and trust he will complete the good work he has begun in you.

(Celia Wolf-Devine writes from Rhode Island.) †



Genevieve O’Connor reads the Bible in Connelly Chapel on the campus of DeSales University in Center Valley, Pa. Praying with Scripture is a time-tested way of being drawn into a closer relationship with God. (CNS photo/Chaz Muth)

Twenty Something/Christina Capecchi

Flower crowns and Disney drama give a spotlight to some of our saints

St. Thérèse of Lisieux is getting the Disney treatment, thanks to a talented Catholic artist. Fabiola Garza, 37, a character artist for Disney Creative Group in Orlando, brought six female saints to life in her stunning new picture book *Princesses of Heaven*, published by Word on Fire Spark.



The book was a labor of love for the night owl, who worked around her day job at Disney to research, write and illustrate it.

"I had some late nights that turned into mornings," said Fabiola, a member of Holy Cross Parish in

Orlando. "It was rough."

But the more she read about the saints—particularly their first-person writings—the more committed she became to the project.

"I feel a change within me when I spend my time reading that," Fabiola said. "It inspires you to greater holiness. It makes you feel so connected across time to all the saints."

Then came the sifting and culling, identifying little details from lengthy biographies to spark kids' imaginations. "I let all the information settle in me," she said, "and then I see what stays with me."

The drawing process is always a joy for Fabiola, who has done many high-profile projects for Disney. She draws digitally, creating layers in Photoshop.

There's something striking about seeing St. Joan of Arc and St. Kateri Tekakwitha presented as Disney heroines: doe-shaped eyes, heart-shaped lips, a gentle wind ever rippling through their dresses and tresses.

It's not that these saints are diluted or dumbed down. Rather, they are elevated, given the star treatment that was once limited to the likes of Ariel and Aurora. That's the idea, Fabiola says: These real women deserve a place on the loftiest rung in kids' imagination.

"I want to help children see the faith in the light that they would see a fairytale, with the same enchantment," Fabiola said. "That's an important concept to bring back to our faith, to retain the joyful wonder."

When we see St. Thérèse of Lisieux riding in a horse-drawn carriage, leaning out the window with breathless anticipation, it feels like a Disney scene, the big break for peasant-turned-princess. A longtime dream has finally been fulfilled!

This carriage is not headed for a castle but a convent. St. Thérèse is entering religious life.

To see that milestone depicted with such radiance is powerful. It feels like a landmark, a first for picture books: Disney beauty paired with Catholic joy. As a reader, you want every little girl to see it, to recognize that following God's path brings the kind of lasting peace that makes a heroine glow from the inside out.

Thankfully, many girls have. The book was published in March with an unusually big print run of 25,000. Less than a month later, it sold out.

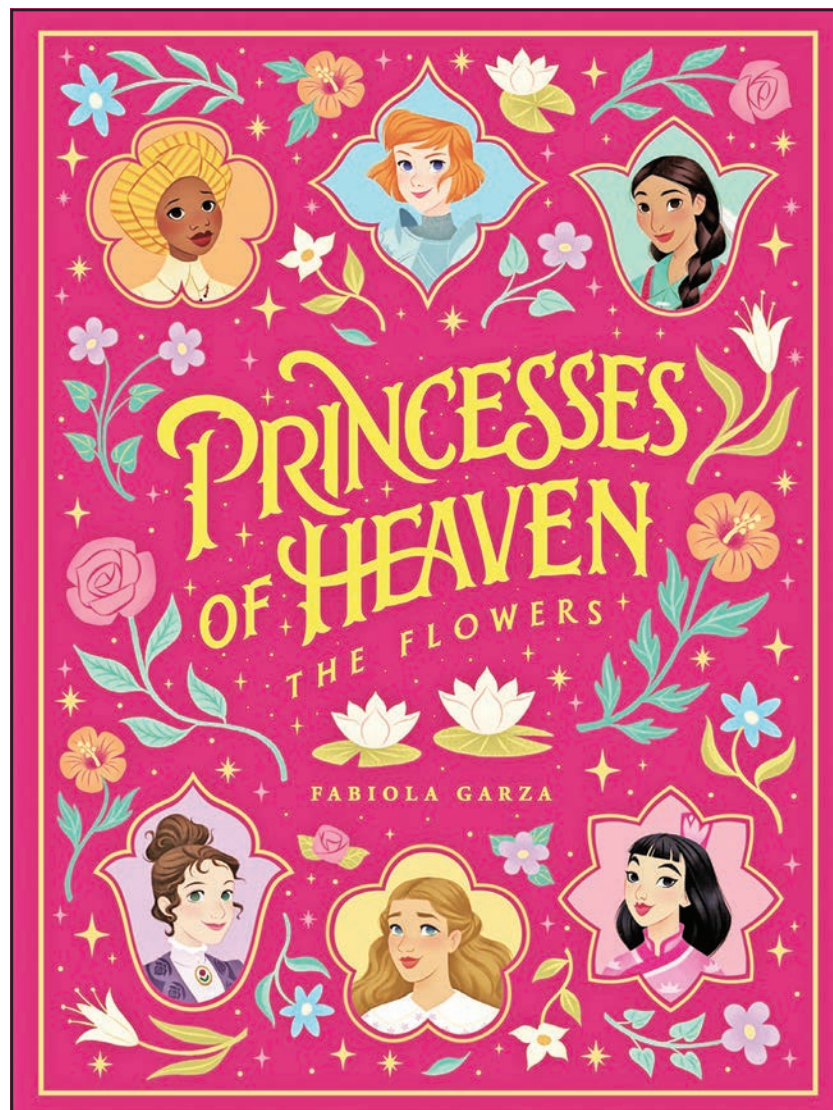
This month, the second print run—twice as large—is available. As a separate purchase, Word on Fire is also selling a locket designed by Fabiola for the book.

Anecdotally, she's hearing of its impact. One mom took her daughters to a park and they began playing "Princesses of Heaven," deciding what would be on their heavenly crowns and turning the playground into a convent. Another group of girls there was doing the exact same thing.

"Oh," the mom said to the other parent, "you must have *Princesses of Heaven*, too."

"Yes," the other parent responded.

Fabiola couldn't believe it. "I was an absolute puddle of gratitude to the Lord," she said. "I couldn't have thought of that in my wildest dreams. I can't in any way



attribute that to myself. God had something he wanted to do with this. I'm so grateful to be a part of it."

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

Amid the Fray/Greg Erlandson

Raise a glass in celebration, toast one of life's most rewarding adventures

I must have skipped the chapter in my "how to parent" instruction manual where it talked about weddings. Not my wedding, of course, but all the weddings of my kids, the friends of my kids and the kids of my friends.



For me, the year 2024 is turning into a banner year for nuptials, including the wedding of one of my sons. Yet we have been invited to at least five other weddings this year as well. We are swamped by the logistics of attending. We get save-the-date cards with a photo of the couple, then the actual wedding invitations. We negotiate wedding websites to R.S.V.P. and to send gifts. In case you didn't know, department store gift registries are now as old-fashioned as department stores. It is far busier for some of our children, who have even more weddings to attend, bridesmaid dresses to buy, bachelor parties to throw, and travel and hotel expenses to cover.

I can't complain, however. My wife and I are cheered by this nuptial rush, for the statistics about young people getting married have been falling for years. Marriage has been in something approaching

freefall since the 1960s. Catholic marriage rates have been dropping precipitously as well.

Some of this freefall is due to a rampant distrust of institutions that harkens back to Mae West ("Marriage is a great institution, but I'm not ready for an institution yet"). Some of it reflects a distrust of the Church itself. Some of it is cautiousness about commitment in an era of divorce. And some of it is the result of a crisis in dating.

We are hearing far too many stories of young men and young women (and some not-so-young men and women) who want marriage, but are not finding suitable partners. Even worse are the stories of young men and women who don't know how, or are afraid, to ask someone out on a date. Colleges are even offering dating instruction courses, for which there appears to be a real need. Young men tell me they are afraid that any expression of interest may be interpreted as harassment, and young women tell me of men who seem to be mired in perpetual adolescence.

And for parents who worry about their single children, it is usually made absolutely clear to them that they are not allowed to play matchmaker. Meanwhile, their (quite wonderful) children wait and wait for lightning to strike. But I digress.

What I want to tell all the couples that are getting

married this year is that they should not focus on the wedding day. It is just one day, after all. It is not worth going into debt for or causing all your friends to go into debt for. The destination, the trappings, the dress—these are all irrelevant when compared to what this day signifies the start of: a shared life together.

After 41 years of marriage, I can testify that (a) marriage is great, (b) marriage does take work (on oneself), and (c) all the effort is worth it.

For Catholics, the challenge and the joy of "becoming one flesh" is that the couple is committing to helping each other become more like Jesus, that is to grow in life-giving and generous love. That is why we get married, why we hope to have children, why we make a lifelong commitment. Marriage is an ongoing seminar in selflessness. It's not always easy. We even fail at times. But after 41 years of marriage, I can testify that the rewards are greater than anything those young couples can imagine right now.

So raise a glass and toast the beginning of one of life's most rewarding adventures.

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

Guest Column/Paul Etienne

A father's wisdom reminds us we need to take time to pay it forward

When I was young, I distinctly remember my Dad saying, "There are two kinds of people in this world—givers and takers. Don't be a taker."



I don't think the decision is quite that stark (an either/or) but the question remains at one's core: is a person basically going to be more of a giver or more of a taker (both/and)?

Part of our adult life as Christians is struggling with this issue: allowing others to do things for us at times, as well as on other occasions, watching for appropriate avenues to assist others in need who have come into

our lives.

One organization to which I have chosen to dedicate

some of my time and energy is Habitat for Humanity. There is a misconception for some that applicants to this program are "given" houses. This is not an accurate portrayal because these individuals are required to put in many hours of "sweat equity" before they can eventually qualify to purchase a home and begin making payments on their mortgages. There is much education and training that is required ... because a home is not a blessing if one can't first pay for it, and secondly, maintain it over time.

It is only after all of these steps have been completed that—assuming that the applicant has made all of the mortgage payments for a considerable percentage of the mortgage's length—the few remaining payments are "forgiven" at the very end of the process.

In the Book of Isaiah, the prophet encourages "sharing

your bread with the hungry, sheltering the oppressed and homeless; clothing the naked when you see them, and not turning your back on your own" (Is 58:7).

And Matthew's Gospel reads, "Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison, and not minister to your needs? He will answer them, 'Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for the least of these you did not do for me'" (Mt 25:44-45).

Are there any special ways that you can engage in service to others who might be struggling with any of these basic needs? What specific action steps could make this service possibility a reality?

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

Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time/

Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, July 7, 2024

- Ezekiel 2:2-5
- 2 Corinthians 12:7-10
- Mark 6:1-6

The Book of Ezekiel furnishes the first reading for Mass this weekend. The prophet speaks in the first person. He says that he literally heard God speaking to him. God told Ezekiel that he was sending him to the Israelites who had rebelled against his holy law so that they would be called to forsake their disloyalty and return to him.



God, speaking to Ezekiel, recognizes certain traits about humans. They are stubborn, and they can be very stubborn in their blindness. This blindness prompts them to choose their way rather than the way of God. It is folly for them. Yet, God does not desert them.

St. Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians supplies the second reading. As an aside, this reading includes Paul's revelation that he himself had been given "a thorn in the flesh" (2 Cor 12:7). For almost 2,000 years, people studying this epistle have wondered what this thorn might in fact have been. Some have thought that it was a chronic illness or disability, perhaps epilepsy. Others think it simply was the temptation to sin.

No one has a conclusive answer. What is clear is that life had its challenges for Paul, as it does for everyone. It is important to remember that in the pious Jewish mind of the time everything bad, including physical problems, resulted from sin. The loving, merciful God does not directly will such misfortunes upon people. They bring trouble upon themselves.

When Paul writes that Satan brought this burden upon him, he was speaking from this context.

The message is not simply that Paul had difficulties, whatever they were. It is not that he persevered despite these difficulties. He persevered, but it was because God's strength empowered him. The Apostle encouraged the Corinthian Christians, and encourages us, to be faithful to God. God will provide for us.

For its last reading this weekend, the Church presents a reading from St. Mark's Gospel.

In this reading, Jesus speaks in a synagogue. People who are not Jewish often today regard synagogues principally to be churches in Judaism. They are not churches, and they properly were not places of worship in the time of Jesus. At that time, for Jews, the temple in Jerusalem was the one place of worship.

Synagogues were places of prayer, but

Daily Readings

Monday, July 8

Hosea 2:16, 17b-18, 21-22
Psalms 145:2-9
Matthew 9:18-26

Tuesday, July 9

St. Augustine Zhao Rong, priest, and companions, martyrs
Hosea 8:4-7, 11-13
Psalms 115:3-10
Matthew 9:32-38

Wednesday, July 10

Hosea 10:1-3, 7-8, 12
Psalms 105:2-7
Matthew 10:1-7

Thursday, July 11

St. Benedict, abbot
Hosea 11:1-4, 8c-9
Psalms 80:2-3, 15-16
Matthew 10:7-15

Friday, July 12

Hosea 14:2-10
Psalms 51:3-4, 8-9, 12-14, 17
Matthew 10:16-23

Saturday, July 13

St. Henry
Isaiah 6:1-8
Psalms 93:1-2, 5
Matthew 10:24-33

Sunday, July 14

Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Amos 7:12-15
Psalms 85:9-14
Ephesians 1:3-14
or *Ephesians 1:3-10*
Mark 6:7-13

Monday, July 15

St. Bonaventure, bishop and doctor of the Church
Isaiah 1:10-17
Psalms 50:8-9, 16-17, 21, 23
Matthew 10:34-11:1

Tuesday, July 16

Our Lady of Mount Carmel
Isaiah 7:1-9
Psalms 48:2-8
Matthew 11:20-24

Wednesday, July 17

Isaiah 10:5-7, 13b-16
Psalms 94:5-10, 14-15
Matthew 11:25-27

Thursday, July 18

St. Camillus de Lellis, priest
Isaiah 26:7-9, 12, 16-19
Psalms 102:13-21
Matthew 11:28-30

Friday, July 19

Isaiah 38:1-6, 21-22, 7-8
(Response) *Isaiah 38:10-12, 16*
Matthew 12:1-8

Saturday, July 20

St. Apollinaris, bishop and martyr
Micah 2:1-5
Psalms 10:1-4, 7-8, 14
Matthew 12:14-21

Sunday, July 21

Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Jeremiah 23:1-6
Psalms 23:1-6
Ephesians 2:13-18
Mark 6:30-34

they were essentially places to learn and discuss the Scriptures. Hence, Jesus stood and spoke about the Scriptures.

He amazed everyone. His wisdom was profound. He clearly understood God's revelation. Nevertheless, in their human limitations, many did not recognize Jesus as the Son of God.

Again, as an aside, some short explanation of the reference to the brothers and sisters of Jesus mentioned in this passage is needed (Mk 6:3). Jesus was identified as the son of Mary, but who are the brothers and sisters? Were they the children of Mary and Joseph?

From the earliest times of Christianity, the strongest and best supported scholarly belief has been, as the Church definitively teaches, that Mary was a lifelong virgin. Jesus was her only child. One possibility is that these brothers and sisters were Joseph's children by a previous marriage. If so, they would have legally and culturally been regarded as siblings of Jesus, although their mothers were different persons.

Reflection

Two strong and enlightening lessons come from these readings. First, all humans are like the ancient stubborn and rebellious Israelites, like the imperceptive people of Nazareth. They could not always put two and two together. We always cannot be right. We fail to understand. We make mistakes.

Second, we are inclined to resist the truth because we lean toward sin, the ultimate selfishness.

As God sent Ezekiel, God most especially sent Jesus to show us the way to eternal life. Jesus is the source of all wisdom. He is the Son of God. †

The Criterion will not have an issue next week due to its summer schedule. The reflection of Msgr. Campion for Sunday, July 14, will be posted at www.archindy.org/campion.

Question Corner/Jenna Marie Cooper

Church teaching on contraception based on Scripture, tradition and natural law

QA Catholic doctor who has to prescribe birth control pills as part of his job does not agree with the Church's teaching on contraception. He says the Bible does not talk about contraception. If contraception is stopped completely, abortions will go through the roof. Doesn't it make sense for third world countries to use contraceptives rather than deal with numerous single moms who cannot afford to raise children? (Location withheld)



AIt looks like we could break your question down into three distinct but interrelated ones.

First, although birth control is not explicitly forbidden in the Bible, there are a few passages in Scripture which strongly suggest the sinfulness of contraception.

For example, Gn 38:8-10 gives an account of how Onan was punished by God for engaging in non-fruitful intercourse. And in St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians, he condemns "pharmakeia" (see Gal 5:20). "Pharmakeia" is a Greek word often translated as "sorcery," but it is also the root of our English word "pharmacy" and in a literal sense can refer to the administration of drugs. So, there is some thought that St. Paul might have intended to condemn the use of whatever drugs, herbs or chemicals the ancient world would have used for contraceptive purposes.

We, as Catholics, look not only to Scripture for moral guidance, but also to the authoritative teaching of the Church's magisterium, i.e. the teaching authority of the pope together with the bishops throughout the world, in harmony with the Church's sacred traditions and its understanding of natural law.

We need to keep in mind that most of today's usual contraceptive methods are a relatively recent phenomenon in human history. Therefore, logically we would need to turn to more recent Church documents to address those birth control methods which have come about as a result of the modern technology of the 20th and 21st centuries. One excellent place to start is Pope St. Paul VI's 1968 encyclical letter "Humanae Vitae" ("Of Human Life").

In addition to restating the Church's traditional teaching on contraception, Paul VI also reflected on some of the societal consequences of widespread artificial contraceptive use, noting that among other things: "A man who grows accustomed to the use of contraceptive methods may forget the reverence due to a woman, and, disregarding her physical and emotional equilibrium, reduce her to being a mere instrument for the satisfaction of his own desires, no longer considering her as his partner whom he should surround with care and affection" (#17).

Reflecting on your second question, it does not automatically follow that less or no artificial contraception usage will cause a great increase in abortions. The core of the Church's teaching on contraception is, essentially, respect for not only the sacredness of the marital act but also for women and their capacity to conceive and bear new life.

Contraception promotes a less reverential attitude toward sexuality which leads to casual sexual encounters. And it is the increase in casual sex which actually fosters the conditions for unexpected pregnancies at risk for abortion.

To your third point, we need to respect the dignity of those in developing nations and to be careful about inappropriately judging their needs according to our own cultural lens. Adults in developing nations are just as capable of chastity and self-control as those of us in the first world. There is no reason to assume that a cultural love of large families is a problem, let alone a "problem" that could or should be "fixed" by ready access to artificial contraception.

Finally, it's always good to keep in mind that in Catholic moral teaching, we do not believe that the "end justifies the means." The Church teaches that deliberately and purposefully seeking to separate the procreative and unitive aspects of the marital act is intrinsically wrong. Even if artificial contraception was a real solution to the practical issues you mention, this would not be an argument in favor of its morality.

(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.) †

Submit prose or poetry for faith column

The Criterion invites readers to submit original prose or poetry relating to faith or experiences of prayer for possible publication in the "My Journey to God" column. Submitted pieces should not exceed 30 80-character lines or 60 40-character lines.

E-mail submissions for consideration—including name, address, parish and a telephone number—to nhoefler@archindy.org.

Poems may also be mailed to "My Journey to God," The Criterion, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367. Please note, however, that mailed submissions will not receive a reply unless the piece is selected for publication. †

Event offers cultural unity at the doors of the National Eucharistic Congress

Criterion staff report

As nearly 400 people accepted an invitation to experience a new bilingual Pentecost event in the archdiocese, Brie Anne Varick felt the Holy Spirit at work among them.

“When prayer ministry began and we began to pray with people, I was nervous because my Spanish is at a beginner’s level,” said Varick, director of the archdiocesan Office of Human Life and Dignity. “I wasn’t sure if I would know how to pray for the people coming to us with their intentions. But like the first Pentecost, language did not matter.

“My prayer partner and I prayed, and the Holy Spirit came. We witnessed healing, love, joy and peace as people came to receive the Holy Spirit.”

The event took place on May 18 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. It was sponsored by the archdiocesan Office of Hispanic Ministry and leaders of the local Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR) apostolic movement.

Mass was offered in Spanish by Father Michael Keucher, archdiocesan vocations director and spiritual advisor of the CCR movement.

A eucharistic procession followed the Mass, flowing from the cathedral and across the street to the Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, for a time of adoration, music, prayer and praise.

The gathering, noted Felix Navarrete, archdiocesan Hispanic Ministry coordinator, offered an opportunity to unite in faith hundreds of people of different races and cultures: Hispanics, Blacks, Filipinos and Anglos.

“The account of Pentecost in the Acts of the Apostles came to life during the adoration vigil. Hundreds of faithful, in unanimity, worshipped in the presence of Jesus in the Eucharist,” Navarrete said.

“The account of the coming of the Holy Spirit describes that everyone ‘began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them to speak’ [Acts 2:4], and that was precisely what happened at that moment; the evening had a single language! It was not necessary to be a polyglot to understand what was happening in that place, because what they spoke was the language of faith and charity.”

Father Keucher said he felt “the Holy Spirit working so strongly in holy Mass, in the people I prayed over after the Mass, in the worship and praises of the people throughout the whole evening. The same Holy Spirit at the first Pentecost was no doubt present, and he filled the whole place so powerfully!”

Varick was also moved by all that transpired during the evening.

“When Felix suggested this event be bilingual, I felt the Lord affirm that desire in my soul and sensed that the Lord wanted to move powerfully this Pentecost to bring unity to his Church,” said Varick.

“God confirmed that at the Pentecost Vigil, as many gathered to worship our Lord at Mass and in adoration. As we began to pray in adoration, I heard the Lord say, ‘Look at my children, look at how beautiful they are!’”

Encounter Ministry’s prayer teams were on hand to pray with those present, Navarrete said, but language differences were not an impediment. “Faith and charity—as theological virtues—are universal gifts that do not need to be understood, but lived,” he noted.

Deacon Tom Hosty, director of the archdiocesan Department of Pastoral Ministries, said the eucharistic procession was the highlight of the event for him.

“As I walked down the center aisle of the cathedral behind Father Keucher, who was holding the Blessed Sacrament, I was able to witness the reaction of all the people as our Lord passed by them,” Deacon Hosty said. “They were all focused on him and in awe.

“So many people had their cellphones out to record the moment. It was an amazing scene of faithful awe in the presence of our Lord. This reverent awe continued as we gathered in Assembly Hall for adoration.”

Like his fellow deacon, Deacon Emilio Ferrer-Soto of St. Patrick Parish in Indianapolis said the evening was “an incredible celebration of the feast of Pentecost!”

“It was truly inspiring to see the Holy Spirit at work among us, reminding us of the first Pentecost when our Church was founded,” he said. “As we commemorated this special day, I couldn’t help but feel the Spirit stirring in my heart, just as it did for those early disciples.”



Father Michael Keucher, archdiocesan vocations director and spiritual advisor of the local Catholic Charismatic Renewal apostolic movement, processes with the Eucharist from SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis to the Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center after a Pentecost liturgy on May 18. (Submitted photo)

Cheri Bush, Catholic philanthropic advisor for Catholic Charities, said she was overcome with joy and brought to tears as she watched the eucharistic procession cross Meridian Street after the liturgy.

“As I stood near the doors of the Catholic Center and greeted everyone, I heard God whisper that many of the faces I saw are gifts to this country because of the great faith that they bring with them,” she said. “I felt great hope and understood, perhaps for the first time, what Pope John Paul II meant by his reference to the ‘new evangelization.’”

Navarrete said the gathering tied in nicely to the ongoing National Eucharistic Revival and the upcoming National Eucharistic Congress on July 17-21 in Indianapolis.

“Our efforts as pastoral leaders have been turned toward the propagation of the faith through the recognition of the real presence of our Lord Jesus Christ in the holy Eucharist—which over time has come to be considered a simple ‘sign’ for many Catholics around the world—and the promotion of eucharistic adoration that does so much good for our communities.” †

Evento brinda unidad cultural a las puertas del Congreso Eucarístico Nacional

Reportaje del personal del *The Criterion*

Cuando cerca de 400 personas aceptaron la invitación a participar en un nuevo evento de Pentecostés que se llevaría a cabo de manera bilingüe en la Arquidiócesis, Brie Anne Varick sintió que el Espíritu Santo actuaba entre ellos.

“Cuando comenzó el ministerio de oración y empezamos a rezar con la gente, estaba nerviosa porque mi nivel de español es de principiantes,” recordó Varick, directora de la Oficina de Vida Humana y Dignidad de la Arquidiócesis. “No creí que pudiera rezar por las personas que acudían a nosotros con sus intenciones. Pero al igual que en el primer Pentecostés, la lengua no importaba. Mi compañero de oración y yo rezamos, y el Espíritu Santo acudió a nosotros. Fuimos testigos de curación, amor, alegría y paz mientras la gente acudía a recibir el Espíritu Santo.”

El evento tuvo lugar el 18 de mayo en la Catedral de San Pedro y San Pablo en Indianápolis y fue patrocinada por la Oficina del Ministerio Hispano de la Arquidiócesis y los líderes del movimiento apostólico local de la Renovación Carismática Católica (RCC).

El padre Michael Keucher, director de vocaciones de la Arquidiócesis y asesor espiritual del movimiento RCC, celebró la misa en español, a la cual le siguió una procesión eucarística que partió de la catedral y cruzó la calle hasta el Centro Católico Arzobispo Edward T. O’Meara, donde se desarrolló una velada de adoración, música, oración y alabanza.

El encuentro, señaló Félix Navarrete, coordinador del Ministerio Hispano de la Arquidiócesis, ofreció la oportunidad de unir en la fe a cientos de personas de diferentes razas y culturas: hispanos, afroamericanos, filipinos y anglosajones.

“El relato de Pentecostés que leemos en Hechos de los Apóstoles cobró vida durante la vigilia de adoración. Cientos de fieles, al unísono, adoraron la presencia de Jesús Eucaristía,” comentó Navarrete. “El relato de la venida del Espíritu Santo describe que

todos ‘empezaron a hablar en otras lenguas, según el Espíritu les daba que hablasen’ [Hch 2:4], y eso fue precisamente lo que ocurrió en ese momento; ¡una misma lengua los unía a todos esa tarde! No era necesario ser políglota para entender lo que ocurría en aquel lugar, porque lo que hablaban era el lenguaje de la fe y la caridad.”

El padre Keucher dijo que sintió que “el Espíritu Santo obraba fuertemente en la santa misa, en la gente por la que recé después de la misa, en la adoración y las alabanzas de la gente durante toda la velada. El mismo Espíritu Santo del primer Pentecostés estaba sin duda presente, ¡y llenó todo el lugar de una forma muy poderosa!”

Varick también se sintió conmovido por todo lo ocurrido durante la velada.

“Cuando Félix sugirió que este acto fuera bilingüe, sentí que el Señor afirmaba ese deseo en mi alma e intuía que el Señor quería moverse poderosamente este Pentecostés para traer la unidad a su Iglesia. Dios lo confirmó en la vigilia de Pentecostés, cuando muchos se reunieron para adorar a nuestro Señor en la misa y en la adoración. Cuando empezamos a adorarlo en oración, oír decir al Señor: ‘¡Miren a mis hijos, miren qué hermosos son!’”

Según cuenta Navarrete, los equipos de oración del Ministerio estuvieron prestos para rezar con los presentes durante el encuentro y las diferencias lingüísticas no fueron un impedimento. “La fe y la caridad, como virtudes teológicas, son dones universales que no necesitan ser comprendidos, sino vividos,” señaló.

El diácono Tom Hosty, director del Departamento de Ministerios Pastorales de la Arquidiócesis, dijo que la procesión eucarística fue para él lo más destacado del acto.

“Mientras avanzaba por la nave central de la catedral siguiendo al padre Keucher, quien llevaba el Santísimo Sacramento alzado, presencié la reacción de toda la gente cuando nuestro Señor pasó junto a ellos,” recuerda el diácono Hosty. “Todos estaban concentrados

en él y maravillados. Mucha gente sacó sus teléfonos celulares para grabar el momento. Fue una escena de asombro piadoso ante la presencia de nuestro Señor y ese temor reverente continuó cuando nos reunimos en el salón de actos para la adoración.”

Al igual que su compañero, el diácono Emilio Ferrer-Soto, de la parroquia de San Patricio de Indianápolis, dijo que la velada fue “¡una increíble celebración de la fiesta de Pentecostés! Fue realmente inspirador ver al Espíritu Santo obrando entre nosotros, recordándonos el primer Pentecostés, cuando se fundó nuestra Iglesia,” expresó. “Mientras conmemorábamos este día tan especial, no pude evitar sentir que el Espíritu se agitaba en mi corazón, igual que ocurrió con aquellos primeros discípulos.”

Cheri Bush, asesora de filantropía de Caridades Católicas, dijo sentirse embargada por la alegría y se le saltaron las lágrimas al ver la procesión eucarística cruzar la calle Meridian tras la liturgia.

“De pie a las puertas del Centro Católico, mientras saludaba a todo el mundo, oír a Dios susurrar que muchos de los rostros que veía son regalos para este país por la gran fe que aportan. Sentí una gran esperanza y comprendí, quizá por primera vez, lo que el Papa Juan Pablo II quería decir con su referencia a la ‘nueva evangelización.’”

Navarrete dijo que la reunión encajaba perfectamente con el Avivamiento Eucarístico Nacional que se celebra actualmente y el próximo Congreso Eucarístico Nacional que se llevará a cabo del 17 al 21 de julio en Indianápolis.

“Nuestros esfuerzos como líderes pastorales se han volcado en la propagación de la fe a través del reconocimiento de la presencia real de nuestro Señor Jesucristo en la sagrada Eucaristía, que con el tiempo ha pasado a ser un simple ‘signo’ para muchos católicos de todo el mundo, y la promoción de la adoración eucarística que tanto bien hace a nuestras comunidades.” †

LANDWERLEN

continued from page 1B

homily at the May 4 Mass. “It’s about God. That’s what this is all about. You’re not celebrating me. I really didn’t do anything. God did it all.

“It’s about his blessings and his love for us—the Eucharist, the Mass. Without the priest, there would be no Mass, no Eucharist. This is our heavenly liturgy. It’s something that was ordained in heaven. This is from God.”

A Holy Spirit-inspired priest

In a later interview with *The Criterion*, Father Landwerlen explained that his vocation to the priesthood emerged when he was an eighth-grade student at St. Joan of Arc School in Indianapolis in the early 1940s. A member of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods who taught him then suggested that he might make a good priest.

Father Landwerlen became an archdiocesan seminarian after his sophomore year at Cathedral High School in Indianapolis. He then received 10 years of priestly formation at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad.

Close to his ordination, he received a letter from the Providence sister who had planted the seed of his vocation 12 years earlier, a sister whose name Father Landwerlen has now forgotten.

“She said she had been praying all those years that I would be a priest,” Father Landwerlen recalled. “I had forgotten about her.”

He added, “People don’t realize that God hears your prayers when you pray for seminarians and pray for priests.”

During his 70 years of ministry, Father Landwerlen has always been a parish priest, never serving in schools or in archdiocesan administration.

After his ordination in 1954, he was assigned as an assistant pastor of then-St. Andrew Parish in Richmond (now a campus of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish). It was a fellow assistant pastor there at the time, Father Anthony Spicuzza, who showed him the ropes of parish ministry.

“He took me under his wing, and he really showed me what to do,” Father Landwerlen said. “He showed me everything. He was really great.”

After serving for five years in Richmond, Father Landwerlen ministered for another five years at another St. Andrew Parish—this one in Indianapolis. He went on to be assistant pastor at St. Ambrose Parish in Seymour.

He first became a pastor in 1968, being assigned to St. Mary Parish in Mitchell and Our Lord Jesus Christ the King Parish in Paoli. This was followed by stints as pastor in Indianapolis at the former Holy Trinity Parish and St. Gabriel the Archangel Parish, and at St. Thomas More Parish in Mooresville.

In 1997, Father Landwerlen became pastor of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Shelby County, where a great-grandfather of his had been a parishioner after emigrating to the U.S. from Germany. He led St. Vincent for 16 years until he retired from active ministry in 2013 at the age of 85.

Since then, Father Landwerlen has continued offering sacramental assistance across the archdiocese as his health allows.

He smiles when sharing how people think he’s a lot younger than 96.

“I don’t feel young physically,” he said with a laugh.

“But, you know, every time I preach it seems like you can almost feel the Holy Spirit speaking through you.”

‘He is my hero’

Father Landwerlen opened his heart to the power of the Holy Spirit in the 1970s. He started to be involved in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal when he attended summer conferences for priests at the Franciscan University of Steubenville in Steubenville, Ohio.

That experience came at a crucial time for him in his priestly life and ministry.

“I was kind of shaky on my vocation at that time,” Father Landwerlen remembered. “I wasn’t seeing that I was doing a whole lot of good as a priest. You know, you do the same thing over and over. Do you really touch people? Are you really moving them? Are you changing their lives? You don’t see that.

“Going to Steubenville for a couple of summer conferences really helped me see how important the priesthood really is.”

This understanding helped him gain a new perspective on ministry as a parish priest that has stuck with him ever since.

“I just feel that the Mass, preaching to the people and hearing confessions are the things that really touch people’s hearts,” Father Landwerlen said. “They go away with something.

“When a priest preaches, if he does his best, God will touch souls. Sometimes, they’ll hear things that the priests really doesn’t realize he’s saying or maybe he hadn’t even planned.”

Margaret Haehl, a member of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Shelby County, is grateful for the time she had Father Landwerlen as her pastor.

“He taught us that we were family,” she said. “We needed to get along and love one another. And in his actions, he showed that. It was quite easy to follow him.”

Haehl has been amazed at how her former pastor shows such youthful vitality at his age, riding a horse

when he was 84 in a celebration of the 175th anniversary of St. Vincent’s founding as he portrayed the Batesville Deanery faith community’s founding circuit riding pastor, Father Vincent Bacquelin.

He’s even done skydiving in retirement.

“His age is no problem whatsoever,” she said. “Why, he was 90 when he jumped out of an airplane.”

That ageless love for life—and the faith—teaches Haehl and other Catholics in Shelby County a lesson.

“We can do it,” Haehl said. “Don’t ever give up. Just keep giving to the Lord.”

That’s a lesson from Father Landwerlen that Father Michael Keucher takes to heart.

The pastor of St. Vincent



Father Paul Landwerlen, administrator at the time of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Shelby County, reads a proclamation about the faith community’s 175-year history after riding a horse onto its grounds on June 24, 2012. St. Vincent’s founding pastor Father Vincent Bacquelin rode on horseback to minister to Catholics throughout central and eastern Indiana. (Criterion file photo)

de Paul and of St. Joseph Parish in Shelbyville who, at 39, is young enough to be a grandson of Father Landwerlen, spoke glowingly of the elder priest at the May 4 anniversary Mass.

“Father Paul is my confessor,” Father Keucher said. “He is my example in all things priestly. He is my advisor. ... He is my brother and friend. He is my hero. And I truly mean it. He is my hero because, for 70 years, he has celebrated Mass faithfully every day.”

Father Keucher, who also serves as archdiocesan vocations director, went on to estimate the number of Masses that Father Landwerlen has likely celebrated in 70 years of priestly ministry: more than 50,000, adding, “I cannot begin to fathom how many souls owe part or even all of their salvation, their eternal salvation, to this priest who, today, celebrates 70 years as a priest.”

While Father Landwerlen is modest in assessing his 70 years of priestly life and ministry in the archdiocese, he is certainly thankful for it.

“My greatest feeling is great gratitude to God,” he said. “Thanksgiving to God. He’s given me a chance to live this long and to do this much. I look at myself and I’m not anybody important, but yet God has used me.” †



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ANNIVERSARY

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While “proud and honored” to have written the booklet, Goehl admitted there were times when, reading the parish’s 2,080 bulletins, she wondered, “Why did I volunteer to do this?”

But she said she learned “so many interesting things” in her research.

One fact that impressed Goehl was the role several women played while the organization of the parish was just beginning.

“This group of women went to [parish founder] Father [Aloysius] Duffy in 1921 and said, ‘You know what? We think you’re going to need some women to help you with the church and growing the church.’ And so, he formed the Altar Society” in 1922, she said.

Skip Lenne might not remember that far back, but as a lifetime Sacred Heart of Jesus parishioner, the 87-year-old has many fond memories of the faith community—festivals, fundraisers, serving as an altar boy, past parish anniversaries, the construction of the current church and more.

He graduated from the parish’s former school when it and the church were in one building.

“We had two grades in each classroom,” he recalled. “We went to Mass first thing every morning.”

Skip married his wife Linda in 1959. The couple raised their five children in a home about two blocks from the church. While most of their children have moved away from the area, one daughter and one grandchild are still members of the parish.

Linda couldn’t imagine being anywhere else: Sacred Heart of Jesus is “just where we’ve always been.”

‘It’s just a sweet parish’

As a new chapter unfolds for the parish, another is ending. Black retired on July 1 from two parish life coordinator positions—at Sacred Heart of Jesus since 2010 and simultaneously at St. Mary-of-the-Woods Parish in St. Mary-of-the-Woods since 2022.

At a dinner following the Mass, she received accolades from Father Darvin Winters, the parish’s pastor from 2005-2010 and its sacramental minister since 2019.

“Barb, you are a blessing in many ways,” he said. “There’s going to be a great void and certainly a kind of a sadness to see you go. ... Thank you for all that you’ve done for Sacred Heart.”

Black, who also once served as the parish’s director of religious education in the late 1990s, said she enjoys “looking back and remembering all those people who made this parish so alive and so vibrant.”

When she asked for volunteers to carry the offertory gifts during the anniversary Mass, Janis Shook was happy to help.

“It’s just a sweet parish,” said Shook, a member of the faith community since 1979. “The parish, from my



Skip and Linda Lenne enjoy a moment after being recognized as longtime members of Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Terre Haute during a dinner celebrating the faith community’s 100th anniversary on June 8. At 87, Skip is a lifelong member of the parish, while Linda has been a member since the couple married in 1959. (Photos by Natalie Hoefler)



Barbara Black, who retired on July 1 after serving since 2010 as parish life coordinator for Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Terre Haute, receives applause from members of the choir—and the congregation—at the end of a special Mass in Sacred Heart of Jesus Church marking the faith community’s 100th anniversary on June 8.

perspective, is family. I know lots and lots of people who have been there for years, as long as I have. And we’ve all been close. It’s just a nice, nice parish.”

Goehl said the faith community is “great at caring for parishioners and taking care of each other.”

She also lauded the parish for its community outreach: helping northern Terre Haute’s Table of the Good Shepherd food pantry, providing brown bag lunches to residents of housing for low-income families and supporting Terre Haute Catholic Charities’ ministries.

“Probably the most important thing is that we are a community of believers, and that it’s not about a building—it’s about us as a community. Everybody works together. There’s a lot of friendships.”

Skip agreed.

When asked what Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish meant to him, he had one word: “Home.” †



United in the Eucharist

THANK YOU for your incredible generosity and support of the United Catholic Appeal, which has raised more than \$5.44 million to sustain vital ministries in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. Your dedication to our mission is truly inspiring, and it is because of your unwavering commitment that we can continue making a meaningful impact in our community.

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Together, United in the Eucharist, we are making a profound difference in the lives of so many.



Family gives up sleep, makes time to rest with God



(Editor's note: This story is a shortened version of the one that first appeared in The Criterion on April 5, 2024.)

By John Shaughnessy

As the parents of seven children ranging in age from 2 to 17, Meg and Brian Bauer always appreciate a night of good sleep. Yet once a month, they set that dream aside for something they consider more essential for themselves and their family.

On first Fridays at St. Michael Church in Greenfield, the members of the Bauer family take part in eucharistic adoration from 11:30 p.m. to 12:30 a.m.

"Sometimes, it's my husband. Sometimes it's me. Sometimes it's our eldest daughter," Meg says. "Often times, we'll even take the younger ones with us, even if they end up falling asleep.

"It's a good, quiet, restful period to try to listen to God, listen to Jesus, and be there in his presence—to

make the effort to show up and be there with Jesus. I'm really thankful that my husband and I work to make that happen. But it does take effort to show up and be there."

Their 12-year-old daughter Mary speaks for her siblings when she shares how her family has embraced the blessing of eucharistic adoration in their lives.

"For me, it gives an opportunity to know you're in the presence of God completely in the Eucharist," Mary says. "That's your time where you can just freely listen to him and ask him for help."

That monthly commitment connects to a daily ritual in the family life of the Bauers, who gather around a family altar in their home to pray together every night.

"We do special prayers for different things going on in our family's life," Meg says. "It helps raise and recognize the importance of prayer and seeing God in everyday life." †



For Meg and Brian Bauer and their seven children, members of St. Michael Parish in Greenfield, a focus on eucharistic adoration brings them closer to Jesus. (Submitted photo)

Hispanic Ministry / Felix Navarette

What is the power of the Eucharist in your life?

The Eucharist is everything, and without him I have nothing!

Since my childhood, faith has been an essential part of my life, I remember attending church frequently, and visiting Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament's chapel accompanied by my grandmother, who continues to be a source of inspiration to me despite

not being physically among us. She introduced me to eucharistic adoration on Thursdays every week. There began a love story that will have no end.

In the relationship that God wants to maintain with us—even knowing that he does not obtain any benefit—there is, in a certain way, a kind of mutual thirst. It's there on our part toward him, as an almost instinctive response, typical of

our mortal nature, as also from him to us. In the latter case, God not only wants to communicate or reveal his lordship to us, he also seeks to dwell among us and remain forever under the appearance of bread.

The words of St. Thomas Aquinas in his well-known hymn "*Adoro te devote*" perfectly describe the feeling that wells up in my heart when I contemplate the presence of Jesus in the sacred host. This experience of "*submitting the heart completely and surrendering completely when contemplating him*" has been a great help in my adult life, both in the development of my vocation as a husband and father of four children, and in the exercise of my ministry through the last 12 years.

That help has especially been apparent in the moments of tribulation when everything seemed to collapse around me. All hope seemed to be extinguished after my wife seriously suffered the

consequences of medical negligence during the birth of our youngest son, which left her in intensive care for a week and having to stay almost a month in the hospital. Although that situation seemed to be a slow ordeal, and in the face of not very encouraging prognoses, God acted miraculously, as he sometimes does.

Leaving many people speechless, my wife recovered her health after dozens of procedures. What happened? How did that occur? Well, during all this time that seemed not to pass, in the moments that I could escape from the hospital, I visited Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament in a nearby chapel. My prayer consisted of two things: the recovery of my wife, and the spiritual strength that I needed to move forward. And Jesus listened to me, I'm sure of that!

All that time in his presence was an opportunity for comfort and renewal. I remember it as if it were yesterday, even though almost nine years have passed since that opportunity in which Jesus

wanted to make himself known more deeply to us. How great is God!

How do we stay standing in the midst of difficulties? Where does the strength to move forward come from? How are we so resilient? These are very common questions of our limited humanity. Amid such questions and our humanity, the Eucharist is food for the soul.

Pope Urban IV expressed that reality in the bull that instituted the feast of *Corpus Christi*: "*The Eucharist truly restores and nourishes, it satisfies to the highest degree not the body, but the heart; not the flesh, but the spirit; not the viscera but the soul.*"

Meanwhile, if in my life there is suffering, sadness or anxiety, the recipe will always be the same: frequently consume a small *piece of bread* that is transformed into the body of Christ—and give up completely. It's practical, personal and powerful.

(Felix Navarette is the coordinator of Hispanic ministry in the archdiocese.) †

Ministerio Hispano / Felix Navarette

¿Qué poder tiene la Eucaristía en tu vida?

¡La Eucaristía lo es todo, y sin Él no tenga nada! Desde mi niñez, la fe ha sido parte esencial en mi vida, recuerdo asistir a la iglesia con frecuencia, y visitar la capilla del Santísimo Sacramento acompañado de mi abuela materna —quien continúa siendo hasta hoy, a pesar de no estar físicamente entre nosotros, una fuente de inspiración para mí— ella era *Dama Salesiana* de nuestra Parroquia San Juan Bosco, y me introdujo a la adoración eucarística los jueves de cada semana. Ahí comenzó una historia de amor que no tendrá final.

En la relación que Dios quiere mantener con nosotros —aún sabiendo que El no obtiene ningún beneficio— existe, de cierta forma, una especie de sed mutua, tanto de nosotros hacia Él, como una respuesta casi instintiva, propia de nuestra naturaleza mortal, como también de El hacia nosotros. En este último caso, Dios no solo quiere comunicarse o revelar su Señorío a sus creaturas, sino que busca

morar entre nosotros, y permanecer por siempre bajo las apariencias del pan.

Las palabras de Santo Tomás de Aquino en su muy conocido himno *Adoro te devote* —que de hecho es uno de mis favoritos— describen perfectamente el sentimiento que brota de nuestros corazones al contemplar la presencia de Jesús en la Sagrada Hostia. Esta vivencia de "*someter el corazón por completo y rendirnos totalmente al contemplarlo*", ha sido de gran ayuda en mi vida de adulto, tanto en el desarrollo de mi vocación como esposo y padre de cuatro hijos, como en el ejercicio de mi ministerio por los últimos 12 años, pero, sobre todo en los momentos de tribulación cuando todo parecía derrumbarse a mi alrededor, y la esperanza parecía apagarse luego que mi esposa sufría gravemente las consecuencias de una negligencia médica durante el nacimiento de nuestro menor hijo, que la dejó en cuidados intensivos

por una semana, y casi un mes internada en el hospital. Aunque aquello parecía ser un calvario lento, y ante los pronósticos no muy alentadores —que caracterizan a algunos profesionales de la ciencia— Dios obró milagrosamente, como suele actuar a veces, dejando a muchos sin palabras y mi esposa recobró la salud tras decenas de procedimientos. ¿Qué sucedió? ¿Cómo ocurrió aquella proeza? Bueno, durante todo este tiempo que parecía no transcurrir, en los momentos que podía escaparme del hospital, visitaba a Jesús en el Santísimo Sacramento en una capilla cercana, mi oración consistía en dos cosas, la recuperación de mi esposa, y la fortaleza espiritual que necesitaba para seguir adelante, y El me escuchaba, ¡de eso estoy seguro! Todo ese tiempo ante su presencia, era una oportunidad de consuelo y renovación, ¡lo recuerdo como si fuese ayer! Han pasado casi 9 años desde aquella oportunidad en la que Jesús

quiso darse a conocer más profundamente a nosotros. ¡Qué grande es Dios!

¿Cómo nos mantenemos en pie en medio de las dificultades? ¿De dónde provienen las fuerzas para seguir adelante? ¿Cómo somos tan resilientes?, son preguntas muy comunes de nuestra humanidad limitada. La Eucaristía es alimento para el alma, lo he escuchado muy a menudo —aunque solo logré comprobarlo al atravesar situaciones complejas— sí, ¡es cierto! "*La Eucaristía restaura y nutre verdaderamente, sacia en sumo grado no el cuerpo, sino el corazón; no la carne, sino el espíritu; no las vísceras sino el alma.*" Papa Urbano IV dijo en la bula que instituyó el *Corpus Christi* en 1264. En tanto, si en mi vida hay sufrimiento, tristeza, o ansiedad, la receta será siempre la misma: Tomar con frecuencia un *pedacito de pan* y rendirse por completo. Es práctico, personal y poderoso. †

"The effect proper to this Sacrament is the conversion of a man into Christ, so that he may no longer live, but Christ lives in him; consequently, it has the double effect of restoring the spiritual strength he had lost by his sins and defects, and of increasing the strength of his virtues."



—St. Thomas Aquinas

A grandparent's desire: Sharing a lasting inheritance across the generations

By John Shaughnessy

While grandparents will gleefully admit that they enjoy spoiling their grandchildren, they have even greater desires for this generation of their family:

They want their grandchildren to know how much they love them. Just as meaningful to them, they hope their grandchildren will embrace the values they have built their lives on—qualities they hope will live in their grandchildren's hearts forever.

That reality shines through in three notes from grandmothers to *The Criterion*, grandmothers who shared their joy in witnessing their grandchildren receive their first Communion—the foundation of the Catholic faith.

At 89, Connie Schneider sent a handwritten letter, apologizing that her arthritis might make it difficult to read. But it was crystal clear from her words how blessed and touched she felt to see her youngest grandchild receive the Eucharist for the first time.

She wrote, "On May 20th, Clara Evelyn Rose Borgert with her classmates processed into St. Pius X Church in Indianapolis singing, 'This Little Light of Mine.' At St. Pius, each family has a whole pew. Parents and child sit at the end, and grandparents, godparents and other family members sit with them. At Communion time, mom, dad and child go up and receive Communion as a family.

"Each family is the only one receiving. Does it take longer? Yes. Is it worth it? Absolutely. Family is the root of faith so making first Communion a family affair is only natural."

Schneider has the same belief about the power of prayer in a person's life, a gift she is pleased that her granddaughter Clara has embraced.

It's easy to imagine Schneider's smile and joy as she wrote, "Clara would come in every night and say her prayers—'God bless mommy and daddy, grandma and me, and all my aunts, uncles, cousins, friends, and all the children that need help.' Then she would add, 'And Fritz, Goldie, Ruby [pets that had died] and Frances, Izzy and Honey [living pets]. I think she has a little St. Francis [of Assisi] in her.'"



Janine Schorsch and her granddaughters Eden, left, and Brooke are all smiles on April 14, the day that Brooke received her first Communion at St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross Church in Bright. (Submitted photo)

In closing, Schneider wrote, "Clara is my last grandchild to make her first Communion. At 89 years old, I never expected to see this beautiful ceremony. Thank you, God."

Judy Hagedorn of St. Mark Parish in Perry County in southern Indiana also sent a short note about the first Communion of her great-grandson, Gabriel Foley. It took place on May 5 at St. Alphonsus Liguori Church in Zionsville, Ind., in the Lafayette Diocese.

Hagedorn also included a photo of her and Gabriel beaming together with three other great-grandchildren.

"It is so wonderful to see how serious and responsible they take the sacrament," she wrote. "It gives you faith that our Church will survive."

Janine Schorsch of St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross Parish in Bright began her note, "I love the Eucharist. I love being a grandmother. I love teaching. On April 14, I was blessed to celebrate all three."

As a volunteer for the family faith formation class at St. Teresa, Schorsch helps with children in kindergarten through the second grade. She helped the second-grade children prepare for their first reconciliation and their first Communion, a class that included her granddaughter, Brooke.

"I was included in the joy—and sometimes the anxiety—felt as they prepared for these sacraments," she recalled. "Brooke was so concerned with 'doing it right'—afraid that she would make a mistake. I remember pointing to Jesus on the crucifix. 'Brooke, do you see Jesus with his arms stretched out? He loves you so very much and is just waiting for you to come to him for a big hug.'"

Focusing on that day of first Communion, Schorsch wrote, "Entering the church that Sunday, I was met by Brooke. She was radiant in her long, white dress, with a white veil draped over her beautifully curled hair. We hugged in joy. I reminded her that when she left church, she would be carrying God within her.

"When it came time for Communion, I witnessed such innocence, such reverence shining forth from them! I was overwhelmed with the love that I felt for these children and the love in which Jesus holds us all."

In the joy of that day for Brooke, Schorsch also spent some time focusing on Eden, her 12-year-old granddaughter and Brooke's older sister.

"Eden made her first Communion during the COVID restrictions," Schorsch wrote. "Only her mother was able to attend. There were no group photos, no congregation in attendance. It was a stark contrast to the experience of her younger sister.

"After Mass, I asked to go to a quiet place with Eden. I shared with her the ways that I have seen her grow spiritually, and, especially, how she has carried God into the world through her actions. I was able to celebrate with her the fruits of her own first Communion."

Summing up that day, Schorsch noted, "As God's plan always is, it was beautiful. All praise and glory to God!"

A faith embraced across the generations—that's the true inheritance that many grandparents long to share with their grandchildren. †



After Clara Borgert received her first Communion at St. Pius X Church in Indianapolis on May 20, she posed for a photo with her grandmother, Connie Schneider, second from right, and her three godparents, Carol Untrauer, left, Annette Rhine and Mark Borgert. (Submitted photo)



Judy Hagedorn beams with her great-grandson, Gabriel on May 5, the day he received his first Communion at St. Alphonsus Liguori Church in Zionsville, Ind., in the Lafayette Diocese, sharing the moment also with her great-grandchildren, Abigail, Elizabeth and Noah. (Submitted photo)

"This is the logic of the Eucharist: we receive Jesus who loves us and heals our fragilities in order to love others and help them in their fragilities."

—Pope Francis

Couple shares smiles, stories and struggles in bringing the Eucharist to the vulnerable

By John Shaughnessy

Their smiles keep coming as they take turns sharing stories.

Tom Meier begins with the memory of a woman he visited at Franciscan Health hospital in Indianapolis, where for years he has brought the Eucharist to Catholic patients as an extraordinary minister of holy Communion.

"There was this little Asian woman that I visited not too long ago," Tom says, his face glowing in appreciation. "I asked her if she wanted to receive Communion, and she goes, 'Oh, to receive my Jesus would be the best thing today!'"

"Her faith was so obvious. It touched my heart."

Jane Meier had the same feeling when she recently entered the hospital's maternity unit. She walked into a room where a young couple felt blessed by the arrival of their child.

"It was so thrilling to be able to share the Eucharist with a couple who just had a new baby," Jane says, beaming. "They're receiving the Eucharist, and they know they want to be good parents. That's awesome. I love that. I told them, 'Jesus is with you, walking with you.'"

Yet perhaps the best story from Tom and Jane, who are both 85, is their own.

How they met in first grade. How Jane told her mom in the fifth grade that she was going to marry Tom and become a nurse. How they became even closer to Jesus when their daughter nearly died. How they recently celebrated their 62nd wedding anniversary. How their embrace of the Eucharist has been a journey, including serving the past 40 years as eucharistic ministers.

And how even that journey toward Christ has been—and still is—a struggle at times.

'We're trying, we're trying'

Having any struggles about his faith seems odd for Tom when his background is considered.

A retired pharmacist, he has a master's degree in theology. He has served as a eucharistic minister, a pastoral assistant and a parish life coordinator at Good Shepherd Parish in Indianapolis, where he and Jane are longtime members. For about 15 years, he was also a chaplain at Franciscan Health, where he and Jane began bringing Communion to Catholic patients in 2020.

"One of the things that I think many Catholics struggle with—and we're no different—is I hear about people who say, 'I couldn't live without the Eucharist, the Eucharist is everything to me.' They have such a sense of the reality of the Eucharist—the body and blood, soul and divinity of Christ—that they're almost filled with it," Tom says. "But I'm no different than many others.

I say, 'I believe, Lord, but help my unbelief.'

"We talk about this a lot. How can we develop a greater appreciation for the Eucharist? Well, everything that we read says that if you want to grow closer to Jesus, pray more. So, we spend a lot of time in prayer—the rosary, morning prayer, evening prayer. And we do an Ignatian Examen at the end of the day. I don't know if it's getting me closer—she's always been there—but we're trying. We're trying."

Jane nods and notes that their efforts to draw closer to Christ through the Eucharist have increased through the years, in the challenges and joys of life.

"Part of it is growing older," she says. "When you're young, you have so much going on, so many things that you're thinking about and doing, and raising kids—all that. As we have aged, we have dealt with some things in our family. Our daughter had sepsis and almost died when she had her second child. Things like that make you closer to Jesus. When we need Jesus, he's there. That's what we've found out. And we continue to find that out."

Their years of bringing Communion to Catholic patients in the hospital have been part of that journey, that growth.

"Probably one of the best blessings we get is that our faith grows through the faith we see in others," Tom says.

Jane adds, "To be able to take Jesus and give him to people who are suffering and see what that means to them, it's an incredible blessing."

'How can I not be grateful?'

Tom and Jane made their last rounds as eucharistic ministers at the hospital on June 25. As that day of retirement neared, they reflected on that volunteer experience and what it has meant to them.

They view the experience as a gift, getting to share that time together, getting to share stories with each other of the patients they have met, knowing it has brought them even closer to each other. Those reasons are why they encourage other couples to volunteer together as eucharistic ministers in a hospital ministry.

At the same time, they have seen a trend among patients that saddens them.

"One of the things I've been aware of is that older people really want to receive the Eucharist," Jane says. "Middle-aged people not so much. And younger people not so much even more. I've been discouraged by that."

Still, they try to keep the focus on their own journey, including an emphasis on being more grateful for the blessings they have.

"A lot of times my prayers are, 'Forgive me for being so ungrateful when I see all the suffering I see,'" Tom says. "How can I not be grateful for my blessings of



In their 40 years as extraordinary ministers of holy Communion, Tom and Jane Meier have shared the Eucharist with many people, drawing closer to Christ through their efforts. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

health when I see someone who is in fair worse straits than I am, when they're hooked up to all kinds of equipment, when they're stage 4 cancer patients who have just a little time left?"

When he receives the Eucharist at Mass, Tom shares this thought with Jesus, "Thank you for the opportunity to receive you into my body. Help me to be part of your body."

In that spirit of drawing closer to Christ, Tom notes, "One of the things I've done recently is say, 'Jesus, touch my tongue. Let my words be your words—kind words, not critical. Guard my tongue, and guard my eyes. Keep my eyes focused on what you want me to be focused on. And most of all, make my heart as tender as your Sacred Heart.'"

He laughs and adds, "That's one of the things that has evolved. A lot of it is the age I am. Jesus says, 'Hey, Tom, you don't have that much time left. Don't screw around.'"

Despite retiring from the hospital, the couple plans to bring the Eucharist to their friends with health issues, who are homebound.

"I do believe that getting close to the Eucharist is a journey," Jane says. "It's such a blessing the more I realize what I'm receiving. When we go to bed at night, we thank God that we were able to receive the Eucharist."

"The more things that happen in your life, you realize that it's Jesus who has given his life for us. And before he gave his life for us, he said, 'I'm going to do this for you. I'm giving you my body to live with you, to walk with you. I will be with you physically.' It's a hard concept, but the older you get, the more it feels real. It's such a gift." †

Worship and Evangelization Outreach / Anita Bardo

'My faith is no longer a gift to keep to myself'

As I think back to my younger years, I did not fully grasp the significance of the Eucharist. When I received the sacrament in second grade, I knew it represented Jesus' body and blood, his true presence.

Yet understanding the importance of prayer before and after receiving the Eucharist was crucial. Before receiving, it was acknowledging his sacrifice for us, and after, it was expressing gratitude for his sacrifice.

As I began to pray more frequently through the years, my understanding of the significance of the Eucharist has deepened. Serving as the director of faith formation and youth ministry for my

parish gives me the opportunity to share my insights on the sacraments with others. Teaching Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) classes has helped me recognize the eagerness of candidates and catechumens to learn more about the Eucharist. Their curiosity and enthusiasm has motivated me to examine in greater detail the teachings of the Church.

The impact of my sharing has been revealed to me through the years.

Most recently, I had a 60-year-old woman in my RCIA class. She shared with me that it was always her desire and prayer to join the Catholic Church. Her family and children weren't supportive. It was her own conviction that allowed her to say yes. She thanked me for sharing my faith story, adding that my encouragement and patience helped her as she walked through her journey.

During one class, she was having

trouble understanding about the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. She also asked me to explain the part in the Our Father where we say, "Give us our daily bread." I told her that God gives us nourishment each day to sustain us through the concerns and challenges of our lives. She told me she is grateful for each day and that she shares that perspective with others. She now has a group chat with her family and friends, sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with them.

The value of sharing my faith has enriched my life in ways I cherish deeply. Every Sunday and during Mass, being in the tabernacle's presence is a blessing for me. The tabernacle gives me a deeper understanding of my faith. It encourages me to keep growing in my faith. I strive to live in a manner that reflects the importance of my faith to me. I also strive to share my

beliefs and experiences with others.

The act of sharing my faith is valuable to me because it allows me to be vulnerable, where I was not always. I began to feel even more empowered to share my faith with others when I began working for the archdiocese. My faith is no longer a gift to keep to myself, but to share it with family, friends and other people who come into my life.

I have accepted that I am being formed. It's a feeling I have embraced and enjoy. God's grace is beautiful, and I will continue spreading my joy with all those I encounter.

(Anita Bardo is the coordinator of evangelization and discipleship for the archdiocese and the director of faith formation and youth ministry at St. Rita Parish in Indianapolis, where she is a member.) †



"If the angels could be jealous of men, they would be so for one reason: Holy Communion."

—St. Maximilian Kolbe



New Albany Catholic selected to give video witness at National Eucharistic Congress

By Natalie Hoefler

NEW ALBANY—There is only one lay person from central and southern Indiana who will address tens of thousands of Catholics at the upcoming National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis.

The person is Mark Hublar, a member of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in New Albany and a professional speaker and advocate for respect, opportunity and inclusion of those with special needs in the workplace.

The topic is a passion of Hublar, who was born with Down syndrome in 1964.

He was one of only four people chosen nationally to offer a witness talk, each in a separate short video, to be shown during the congress' four evening revival sessions in Lucas Oil Stadium on July 17-20. Hublar's video will be shown during the evening session on July 20.

"These sessions are the main gatherings for all attendees," says Joel Stepanek, vice president of programming and administration for the National Eucharistic Congress. "We anticipate attendance on those evenings being around 47,000."

When Jaime Reyna, multicultural and inclusivity leader for the congress, asked Jenny Bryans if she knew someone associated with the archdiocese's Disabilities Ministry who might be interested in being involved in the congress, Hublar immediately came to Bryans' mind.

"I knew that Mark had done a lot of speaking engagements for many events around the country and was very passionate about his Catholic faith," says Bryans, archdiocesan Disabilities Ministry coordinator. "He spoke at one of the SPREAD [Special Religious Education and Discipleship] summer retreats and has spoken at March for Life rallies in Indianapolis. I thought he would be the perfect fit for what Jaime was looking for."

She was right.

"Mark's story is beautiful," said Stepanek. "We were moved by his faith and the faith of his family and wanted to highlight that at the 10th National Eucharistic Congress."

Hublar's witness includes his gratitude for the many gifts God has blessed him with: his talent for speaking, the ability to live on his own, the opportunity to earn a college degree and the chance to speak nationally—including at a Congressional hearing—on behalf of

"friends like me."

But three gifts top his gratitude list: God, his faith and the love and support of his family.

"I'm grateful for my mom and dad choosing not to put me in an institution like the doctor said when I was born," Hublar said while being recorded for the video in his New Albany apartment on May 29.

Mark's mother Linda Hublar, who was also filmed that day, shared her memories of that day.

"They told us he'd never do anything—walk, talk, show emotion," she told *The Criterion*. "It was sad in the beginning, only because we thought of all the things that he was going to miss out on. ... I never dreamed all this was going to happen."

Her husband Al Hublar agrees. He helps manage his son's business, Mark Hublar Speaks, and was included in the video.

"God is good," said Al in an interview after the filming. "He's just directing Mark's path. I have prayed to God to help me as Mark's father. I pushed Mark to some extent, and he pulled me. But [God] always put him in the right position."

He is in awe of his son's opportunity to share his message via video during the National Eucharistic Congress.

"Of all the places Mark has spoken around the country, this is the pinnacle," Al said.

As for Mark, he's "really looking forward" to attending the congress with his dad on July 17-21.

"I've never been up from 8 in the morning 'til 11 at night for five days and four nights before," he said. "That's going to be really something."



Casey Shaffer of Colorado-based Lux Lab Production House snaps a shot of Mark Hublar, middle, with his parents Linda and Al Hublar in Mark's New Albany apartment on May 29 for a short video featuring Mark to be shown at an evening revival session in Lucas Oil Stadium during the National Eucharistic Revival in Indianapolis on July 17-21. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)

But best for him will be tens of thousands of people hearing the message in his video:

"There's always a reason that we're alive now. I know that God has faith in [those with disabilities], and what makes me really happy is for them to succeed in their life." †

Sight Unseen / Brandon A. Evans

The ghostly grace of adoration

I struggle with eucharistic adoration.

As a belief that I only came to in adulthood, the reality of the Eucharist is much more challenging in practice than in intellectual assent.

I just don't know what to do in adoration or what I'm supposed to be getting out of it. It isn't natural to me, and I don't understand why it's so special to people.

After all, there are small chapels the world over where people are praying, crying, reading, singing, even sleeping. People who are sitting in serene silence.

There are grand eucharistic processions where so many seem transfixed, their eyes aglow with love and wonder.

There must be something there. This is the Church's greatest treasure laid out before us.

But I can't see it. I can't see *him*. Prayer, focus, imagination, they all fail in the end. Nothing seems to make any connection.

I stay but a few minutes in adoration and leave with the burdens I brought in: the expectation that my own efforts could force success and the expectation that I'd get something for it.

There is advice I've heard multiple times before, though, that seeks to remedy such a sorrowful, selfish ailment: that you ought to realize when sitting in the presence of the exposed Eucharist, grace comes into your soul as sunshine would warm your skin on a summer day. You walk away glowing with his divine light.

Still, I find that even such a beautiful analogy limps. It's too strong for me. Not all things that come from the sun are so bright and obvious.

Neutrinos are tiny particles blasted out of our star in such quantity that they are more numerous than anything else in the universe. 100 trillion of them hit our body every

second. And all of them pass right through. They are so slight—so insignificant—that they continue on through the Earth as though it wasn't even there.

But every great once in a while one of these "ghost particles" strikes an atom in our body and interacts with it. Yet there is no change in us, no notice given. Life carries on.

Such an event in the world of grace is different, though. Doing great things with the nearly imperceptible is one of God's favorite tricks, and Christian history is absolutely filled with his ability to pull it off.

When I sit before the Blessed Sacrament, it's not my imagination or holiness or even belief that matter. It's not my own efforts, nor does the sun have to beam blindingly. I just have to be there.

And in doing so, that ghostly grace works in its own way. Most of it may pass through without notice, on its way to someone or somewhere else, but it's no worry.

It is exactly in not expecting anything—in being happy with the smallest portion and delighting in sensing no effect—that peace is found.

Peace that when I sit, unaware, some little, *little*, part of God's life may strike my own as a small seed planted to lie dormant until its time, or as a silent power nudging my path *ever so slightly* in another direction.

The grace of God does not need a bounty: amidst that flow of invisible light bursting forth from every monstrosity there is *something* of it that will find you, even if you walk out of the door disheartened.

God smiles, because he has worked what he intended, and given you what you needed. You just might not know it yet.

(*Sight Unseen* is an occasional column that explores God and the world. Brandon A. Evans is the online editor and graphic designer of *The Criterion* and a member of St. Susanna Parish in Plainfield.) †

"Next to the Blessed Sacrament itself, your neighbor is the holiest object present to your senses."

—C.S. Lewis, author

For 34 years, grateful teacher shares one of God's greatest gifts with children

By John Shaughnessy

One of the challenges of life is to keep finding joy, beauty and freshness in your world, from the work you do to the most valued relationships you have.

For the past 34 years, Beth Summers has been a second-grade teacher at Holy Family School in New Albany, a position that also comes with the responsibility of preparing her students to receive their first holy Communion.

So Summers is aware of the dangerous slide that can come when the years pass and people start to approach their work, their relationships and their life with a sameness, a staleness that leads them to take for granted what's important, beautiful and life-sustaining—including what she considers as one of God's greatest gifts.

"I feel if you have Jesus in your life and you're receiving the Eucharist, there is always hope," says Summers, a mother of three grown sons. "Sometimes, we go up to receive Communion and maybe we're not thinking about the actual sacrifice that Jesus made for us. I believe it's so important to remember that sacrifice."

To make that sink in for her students—and fresh for herself—Summers adds a special touch to her yearlong preparations.

She used it right before 32 of her students received their first holy Communion on April 27 in the parish church.

'My greatest hope for the rest of their lives'

"First Communion week is my favorite time of year," she says with a joy that marks every word. "And my most favorite time is when we re-enact the Last Supper."

That process begins with a meditation exercise



Beth Summers, a second-grade teacher at Holy Family School in New Albany, helps prepare her students for the sacrament of the Eucharist by having them re-enact scenes from the Last Supper, including Jesus washing the feet of his Apostles. (Submitted photo)

during which everyone shuts their eyes and imagines they're in the room with Jesus on Holy Thursday.

"I pretend that I'm Jesus and the kids are all the disciples," Summers says. "We form our desks in a U-shape, and it's covered with purple tablecloths. We bake bread in the class, we have sparkling grape juice, and we say the words that the disciples and Jesus said. And we do the feet washing in the class. At first, they're a little nervous, and they giggle a little bit. Then they really embrace it and take it seriously. You can see they're taking such care in washing each other's feet."

"We try to give them, as close as possible, the experiences of being a real disciple of Jesus, of how those disciples felt when Jesus had them at the Last Supper. That's why I love re-creating the Last Supper. Not only does it help the children, but it helps me to stay close to Jesus. I remember what happened to him later that night on Holy Thursday. It makes me continue to be grateful for what Jesus did—sacrificing himself for us on the cross."

That feeling stayed with her students as they received their first Communion.

"It made me feel special because it was my first time receiving the Eucharist," says Grace Sanchez. "I experienced Jesus in my heart."

Her classmate, Amelia Wilburn, notes, "It made me feel safe and closer to God."

Another second-grader, Elizabeth Kaelin, says, "It made me feel good because Jesus is in my heart, and I will always be with him."

Summers hopes those feelings of gratitude and connection with Christ continue with the children.

"I actually give them a little notecard that says, 'May you keep Jesus as close to your heart as he was on your first Communion day.' That's my greatest hope for the rest of their lives—that they keep Jesus in their lives, and that they continue to come to church and receive Communion."

'Just a true example of Christ's love'

While Summers has kept that hope with each class, she has also continued to have the feeling of fighting back tears as she watches the girls in their white dresses and the boys in their suits approach the altar to receive the Eucharist for the first time.

"It's very hard for me not to cry," she says. "I can tell that they're very proud. They've worked hard to prepare to understand everything about the body and blood of Jesus. I tell them this is one of the most important moments of their lives."

After 34 years, Summers is now at the point where she is helping prepare a second generation of families for first Communion. She helped prepare Sara Raelson—the pre-kindergarten teacher at Holy Family—when Raelson was a second-grade student in 1994, and all three of Raelson's children.

"I have just loved Beth since I was a student of hers, and when the time came, we knew we wanted her to be the homeroom teacher for our children," Raelson says. "She has just always radiated positivity and is just a true example of Christ's love."



Beth Summers, a second-grade teacher at Holy Family School in New Albany, poses for a photo with Hadleigh Stocksdale, one of the students she helped prepare to receive the sacrament of the Eucharist on April 27 in the parish church. (Submitted photo)

Summers stays close to the Eucharist in another defining way, as an extraordinary minister of holy Communion for her school and her parish.

"I am able to distribute Communion to both my current and former students during our all-school Masses," she exclaims. "That is definitely one of the perks of my job."

Summers has never lost the joy, the beauty and the freshness of her love for the Eucharist. As she shares that love with her students, she also keeps it at the heart of her life.

"I sometimes think of all the children I've prepared for first Communion," she says. "Sometimes you feel like you want to do something that's a big, great thing for the world. Finally, I focused on trying to make small differences in small things. In my little corner of the Earth, I feel like I'm making a difference in leading the children to Jesus." †

Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ

By Natalie Hoefler

I bow before the real and true,
Hidden but physical,
Mystical presence
Of God Himself,
The Word made flesh.
He who created all,
Who was, is and ever will be
Allows me, desires me—
A broken sinner yet treasured
As His beloved—
To consume Him as food.
It is here that I meet Him,
Here that we embrace.
He, Love incarnate, surrounds me
And enfolds me in His Heart.

He infuses my soul
with grace abundant,
With all I need and more
To continue my journey
And to nourish others with His love.
Oh precious beating Heart
Of my good and gracious Lord,
I praise you and adore you
For such love and mercy
That you show your broken,
Flawed, imperfect daughter.
Come into the home of my heart,
And make it to beat in unison
With your perfect, holy Heart.
Remain and abide there,
And transform me, I pray,
Into That which I consume.



(This poem originally appeared in the June 11, 2021, issue of The Criterion. Natalie Hoefler is a member of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis and is a reporter for The Criterion. Photo: Father Leo Patalinghug incenses the Blessed Sacrament in Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis on Nov. 19, 2021, during the National Catholic Youth Conference. Assisting him is Liam Hosty, then a seminarian and now a transitional deacon for the archdiocese.) (File photo by Natalie Hoefler)

"If we eat and drink the very body and blood of Jesus, we become what we eat. We become conformed to him. We become Christified. That's why the doctrine of the Real Presence matters so much."

—Bishop Robert E. Barron of the Diocese of Winona-Rochester, Minn.

The hope of Christ's presence in our lives shines through in a eucharistic procession

(Editor's note: Tens of thousands of people are expected to participate in an eucharistic procession through the streets of Indianapolis on July 20. The potential impact of that procession can be viewed in two scenes from the archdiocese's eucharistic procession in Indianapolis on June 19, 2022.)

By John Shaughnessy

As the joyous sounds of church bells echoed through downtown Indianapolis on June 19, 2022—celebrating the arrival of the archdiocese's uplifting eucharistic procession along the streets of the city—about 1,000 people poured into St. John the Evangelist Church, filling it to overflowing for adoration of the Eucharist.

Being a part of that breathtaking moment at the start of a three-year eucharistic revival in the archdiocese deeply moved Jane Pollom. So did an encounter she had before entering St. John, as she followed the procession along Georgia Street.

"There was a young man standing on the street," recalled Pollom, a member of St. Pius X Parish in Indianapolis. "I asked him if he knew what was happening. When he said he didn't, I explained the Eucharist to him. I told him that Jesus is coming out to you in the streets."

"I explained to him that Jesus wants him to partake of him. He asked, 'Can I come in?' I said, 'Yes, come in and kneel down in adoration.' He did. I just told him to open his heart. He's in there kneeling down now. If all of this can win a heart, it's a success. It's an opportunity for the rest of us to invite people on the street to see the real presence of Jesus."

Pollom's story was just one of many from the sun-kissed, blue-sky day—a day when the essence of Christ's teaching about the gift of the Eucharist overflowed throughout the start of the archdiocese's eucharistic revival.

Joe Wilhelm felt both the stress and the responsibility of being the driver of the float that transported the monstrance containing the Eucharist through downtown Indianapolis and to St. John Church.

"I worried every time I hit a bump," Wilhelm said

with a relieved smile after the completion of the 1.7-mile journey of the procession from the Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center at 14th and Illinois streets to St. John. "I felt I was riding the brake the whole time."

Driving his red pickup truck, the member of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish in Indianapolis was also responsible for setting a comfortable pace for the estimated 500 people who participated in the procession—a crowd that swelled to nearly 1,000 by the time the procession entered St. John.

Still, through it all, Wilhelm focused on "the honor to be able to pull the float with the Blessed Sacrament on it to start this eucharistic revival."

"The Eucharist is what everything should revolve around," he said. "It keeps us on track and keeps Jesus in our lives. It's both comforting and fills me with hope—just to have the feeling that Jesus is present with us, and he's guiding our lives." †



Catholics from across central and southern Indiana follow a float carrying the Blessed Sacrament during a June 19, 2022, eucharistic procession on Illinois Street in downtown Indianapolis. The procession was part of the start of the National Eucharistic Revival in the archdiocese. (Photo courtesy of Cantaloupe.tv)

Plan now for National Eucharistic pilgrimage parish stops and processions in the archdiocese from July 8-16

Criterion staff report

The National Eucharistic Pilgrimages—originating from eastern, northern, southern and western areas of the United States—began on May 17.

Upon entering the archdiocese—anywhere from July 8 (south) to July 14 (north)—each route will include parish stops and processions as outlined below. For more detailed information such as times and activities, visit the link listed at the end of each list or call the parish in question. (Note: Details are subject to change.)

All routes end at St. John the Evangelist Church, in Indianapolis, on July 16, in time for a noon Mass celebrated by Archbishop Charles C. Thompson. To attend this Mass, registration is required via any of the route links listed below.

Those who wish to participate in one or more of the processions within the archdiocese might also consider registering via the links listed below. Registration is not required for the local pilgrimage events prior to the July 16 Mass, but those who do will receive e-mails with specific route and related information.

For more information on the national pilgrimage, go to eucharisticpilgrimage.org.

Elizabeth Ann Seton (eastern) Route

Planned stops and eucharistic processions:

—St. John, St. Martin and St. Paul churches of All Saints Parish, Dearborn County, July 8-10, with processions from St. John to St. Paul and from St. Paul to St. Martin on July 9;

—St. Vincent and St. Joseph churches, Shelbyville, July 11-12, with a 1-mile procession from St. Joseph to Sunset Park in Shelbyville on July 12;

—St. Michael Church, Greenfield, July 12-14, with a 1-mile procession around the parish grounds on July 14;

—Holy Spirit Church, Indianapolis, July 14-15, with a procession to St. Philip Neri Church, Indianapolis, on July 15;

—St. Philip Neri Church, July 15-16, with a procession to St. John the Evangelist Church, Indianapolis, on July 16.

For more detailed information, go to tinyurl.com/NEPEastRoute or call the parish in question.

Marian (northern) Route

Planned stops and eucharistic processions:

—St. Luke the Evangelist Church, Indianapolis (after a 9-mile procession from Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church in Carmel, in the Lafayette Diocese), July 14-15, with a procession to St. Joan of Arc Church, Indianapolis, on July 15;

—St. Joan of Arc Church, July 15-16,

with a 3-mile pilgrimage to Holy Angels Church, Indianapolis, on July 16;

—Holy Angels Church, July 16, with a 3-mile procession to St. John the Evangelist Church, Indianapolis, on July 16.

For more detailed information, go to tinyurl.com/NEPNorthRoute or call the parish in question.

Juan Diego (southern) Route

Planned stops and eucharistic processions:

—Big 4 Park, Jeffersonville, July 9, 6:30 p.m. prayer service with Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, followed by a procession to St. Augustine Church, Jeffersonville;

—St. Augustine Church, July 9-10, with a procession to St. Mary-of-the-Knobs Church, Floyd County, on July 10;

—St. Mary-of-the-Knobs Church, July 10-11, with a procession to Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, Mt. St. Francis, on July 11;

—Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, July 11;

—Our Lady of the Greenwood Church, Greenwood, July 11-12, with a 1-mile procession around parish grounds on July 12;

—St. Mark the Evangelist Church, Indianapolis, July 12-14;

—Good Shepherd Church, Indianapolis, July 14-16;

—Holy Name of Jesus Church,

Beech Grove, July 15, with a 1/2-mile procession in Beech Grove neighborhood;

—Good Shepherd Church, July 16, with a procession to St. John the Evangelist Church, Indianapolis.

For more detailed information, go to tinyurl.com/NEPSouthRoute or call the parish in question.

St. Junipero Serra (western) Route

Planned stops and eucharistic processions:

—St. Patrick Church, Terre Haute, July 12, with a 1 1/2-mile procession to St. Joseph University Church, Terre Haute;

—St. Joseph University Church, Terre Haute, July 12-13;

—Sacred Heart Church, Terre Haute, July 14, with a procession around parish grounds;

—St. Susanna Church, Plainfield, July 15, with a 9-mile procession to St. Joseph Church, Indianapolis;

—St. Joseph Church, Indianapolis, July 15, with a 4-mile procession to St. Anthony Church, Indianapolis;

—St. Anthony Church, July 15-16, with a procession to St. John the Evangelist Church, Indianapolis, on July 16.

For more detailed information, go to tinyurl.com/NEPWestRoute or call the parish in question. †



"Every consecrated host is made to burn itself up with love in a human heart."

—St. John Vianney



At 69, woman journeys deeper into her faith on National Eucharistic Pilgrimage

By John Shaughnessy

As she talked with the grieving woman, Jan Pierson believed this was another moment when God had led her to where he wanted her to be—which is exactly why the 69-year-old Indiana woman has looked past the challenges and has embraced her once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to take part in the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage.



Jan Pierson

Ever since beginning the pilgrimage in the Connecticut community of New Haven on May 18, traveling along the eastern seaboard, crossing the Appalachian Mountains and heading across Ohio toward Indianapolis, Pierson has placed her every mile in God's hands.

"I'm always up for an adventure," says the member of St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Bloomington, a mother of four grown children and 10 grandchildren. "When I found out about the pilgrimage, I thought, 'Why not? Why not do something with Jesus?' I was all for it."

She had the same feeling of being all-in when she was approached by a woman during a eucharistic procession in Connecticut. The woman wanted Pierson's help in taking a video that showed her participating in the procession, a video the woman wanted to share with her children. That moment led to a deeper one.

"I took the video, and then I told her to double-check it, to make sure it was OK," Pierson recalls. "She did, and then she started talking with me. She told me her husband had just passed away a few months ago.

"I just looked at her. I said, 'I'm so sorry. I'm also a widow, but I've been a widow a little longer. This coming July, I'll be a widow for 32 years.' She just looked at me and said, 'Can I just hold onto you?' She just held on to my hand all the way to the end of the procession, to the last church. We walked about 8 miles together. At the end, she said, 'Thank you. Thank you.'"

'Everybody sees something that touches their heart'

That experience is one of Pierson's favorite moments so far from participating in the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Route of the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage, the eastern route that is named in honor of the first American-born saint.

The pilgrims on the eastern route are scheduled to meet up in Indianapolis with pilgrims from the north, south and west in mid-July for the start of the National Eucharistic Congress on July 17-21.

The pilgrimage from the east is led by Father Roger Landry, a priest from the Diocese of Fall River, Mass. He's officially joined by six young people who are called

"perpetual pilgrims." Pierson has followed them from the beginning, calling herself "their shadow."

In a phone conversation along the route, Pierson's voice exudes joy as she talks about the highlights from this adventure of faith.

She'll never forget a holy hour in a Connecticut church, part of a service where a choir sang "so beautifully" that she imagined "it would be like the way angels sounded singing in heaven."

She recalls the feeling of how "Jesus took me through Central Park," part of her four days of walking through New York City.

The joy in her voice hits an even higher level when she recalls the eucharistic processions in Washington and Emmitsburg, Md., the site of the National Shrine of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, where thousands of people walked and prayed together.

"It's just so wonderful to see all the people coming out to be part of the processions, to be there with Jesus, to show our adoration for Jesus.

"You know when you say, 'One, holy, Catholic and apostolic Church?' I am experiencing that whole thing on this pilgrimage. In this core group of pilgrims, there's about 15 people, but every time we go into procession, there's a new group of people—hundreds more people. I'm experiencing that huge Catholic Church."

She's also experiencing the camaraderie of being a part of the core group.

"It's like a family," she says. "You're not going to forget each other. This is something you're doing together, and you just get very close. Everybody sees something that touches their heart, and you tell other pilgrims about it. Things are happening in our lives, in our families that we catch up on when we have time. We ask each other to say prayers for whatever is needed."

Pierson was in great need one day when the recent heat wave that has blistered the Midwest and the East overwhelmed her as she tried to walk one 17-mile stretch of the pilgrimage.

"I couldn't finish the last 3 miles," says Pierson, who has camped and stayed in hotels along the route. "I got a ride from Patty in her van. She said she had to find her husband and Sarah Rose. Sarah Rose is 2, and she wanted to wear her special rain boots and walk with Jesus in the procession. She was walking with her grandfather. It lifted me up to see a little 2-year-old, in her own way, understanding the



Bishop Robert J. Brennan of Brooklyn, N.Y., carries a monstrance while leading a eucharistic procession across the Brooklyn Bridge to Brooklyn from Manhattan on the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage's St. Elizabeth Ann Seton (East) Route on May 26. (OSV News photo/Gregory A. Shemitz, The Tablet)

importance of walking with Jesus. Sometimes, it's the little things."

'It's something you feel in your heart'

In preparing for the trip, Pierson often walked back and forth from her home to St. Charles Borromeo Church for Mass, a round-trip journey of 6 miles. On the pilgrimage, she has walked as many as 18 miles a day. Other days, when the route is dangerous to follow on foot, she and the other pilgrims travel by cars, vans and RVs to the next destination for eucharistic adoration.

Each new destination always takes Pierson back to the roots of her relationship with Christ in eucharistic adoration, which began about 10 years ago.

"I still remember that first day. I felt the presence of being there with Jesus. I couldn't even look up at the cross. I only stayed five minutes. I didn't feel I was worthy of being in the chapel," she recalls. "But I kept going back. I was intrigued by that feeling of just being in the presence of the Lord. Now when I go, it's like, 'Oh my gosh, my hour is up?!' Just the feeling of not wanting to leave. Just feeling peaceful.

"Jesus is my Lord and my king. My strength comes from him. He says turn to him when you need help. Oh my gosh, I turn to him constantly. Dealing with the death of my husband Tony. Raising four kids. And now I'm doing this. I feel his graces everywhere."

The experience has also led her on a journey deeper into her faith.

"You want to have that experience with Jesus. You want that *more*. It's being open to the adventure and letting Jesus lead. It's something you feel in your heart. You talk to God deeper. It's helping somebody you see on the road or someone in the group who is struggling. Or being thankful for the little bit of shade we've had. It's just been beyond what I thought it would be.

"I don't know what God has in store for me when I get back home, but I'm ready. I'm ready and willing to do whatever I need to, whatever he wants.

"I wouldn't be where I am if I didn't have Jesus." †



The faithful depart the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception on June 8, as they follow the Blessed Sacrament in procession through the streets of the Brookland neighborhood of Washington. The procession was held as the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage's east route made a stop in the Archdiocese of Washington on its way to Indianapolis for the National Eucharistic Congress to be held in July. (OSV News photo/Mihoko Owada, Catholic Standard)

"After having received the Lord, since you have the person himself present, strive to close the eyes of the body and open those of the soul and look into your heart."

—St. Teresa of Ávila