



The

Criterion

Serving the Church in Central and Southern Indiana Since 1960



Well done

Archbishop Thompson salutes CYO adult and youth volunteers, pages 10-11.

CriterionOnline.com

September 4, 2026

Vol. LXVI, No. 40



Kimberly Ortiz-Morales, left, a 2023 graduate of Father Michael Shawe Memorial High School in Madison, is one of the three drum majors this year for the marching band of the University of Notre Dame in northern Indiana. She shares a joyful moment from last year with Emma Ellis, who is also a drum major this year. (Submitted photo)

College senior finds harmony as a faith leader, drum major of Notre Dame's band

By John Shaughnessy

She had been waiting anxiously for the news for weeks, ever since she knew she was one of the eight finalists for the three coveted positions.

In her family's kitchen with her parents, her younger sister and her little brother, 21-year-old Kimberly Ortiz-Morales was finally ready to click on the e-mail that would let her know her fate—similar to an e-mail she had received three years earlier.

Back then, Ortiz-Morales was a recent graduate of the Class of 2023 of Father Michael Shawe Memorial High School in Madison. She had just arrived as a student at Saint Mary's College in northern Indiana, across the street from the University of Notre Dame. Part of the marching band at Shawe, she hoped to become a member of Notre Dame's

marching band, but after two days of practice, she wasn't sure she wanted to continue.

She had come from a graduating class of 38 at Shawe, and here she was auditioning for a band where there are usually more than 380 members from around the country and the world.

"It was really scary going into a big band where I really didn't know anyone," she recalls. "I was meeting new people, and I was learning, and I was very overwhelmed. People were very friendly and they were helping me out, but I was scared they weren't going to like me. I felt it wasn't for me. I almost didn't go that Saturday because I was so overwhelmed.

"I called my friends from back home, and they told me to go to my last day of auditions because you never know what's

See DRUM MAJOR, page 8

Never let injustice, evil in the world corrupt your heart, pope tells faithful

CASTEL GANDOLFO (CNS)—

Whatever the injustice or injury, do not revert to hatred or violence, Pope Leo XIV told the faithful, because only love, hope, forgiveness and respect will protect and promote human dignity.



Pope Leo XIV

"We are in such need of life, hope, serenity and peace—within ourselves, in our cities and among people and nations. For this reason, whatever the wound, whatever the offense, let us not allow evil to disfigure our humanity or corrupt our hearts!" he said in his homily at a Mass on Aug. 29, marking the feast of Our Lady of the Lake in the town of Castel Gandolfo.

"Let us not conform to the mindset of this world" and not get discouraged, he said. "Let us continue to love, to give and to forgive, offering ourselves 'as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God,' so that we may preserve and nurture—in ourselves and in others—the infinite dignity of the divine image we bear in our souls."

Pope Leo was the third pope after SS. Paul VI and John Paul II to mark the Aug. 29 feast day in Castel Gandolfo, which overlooks Lake Albano, and take part in the Marian procession from the Church of Maria Santissima del Lago, where the Mass was celebrated, to the volcanic lake.

Surrounded by yellow and white flowers on a small platform, a statue of Our Lady of the Lake was carried through the streets to the lake where more than a dozen boats—including kayaks and jet skis—awaited.

Pope Leo, however, was the first pope to get on the main boat for a ride along the lake, symbolizing the Barque of Peter and highlighting the Gospel call to go out into the deep and hold fast to Christ under Mary's maternal gaze, especially while navigating troubled or uncertain waters.

The boat, adorned with flowers, the

See POPE, page 20

A song of friendship and a song of a father foster memories of special moments in life

(Editor's note: The Criterion has invited you, our readers, to share a song that has led you into a deeper level of faith, humanity or love. Here are some songs—and why they are special—that have been shared so far.)

One in an occasional series

By John Shaughnessy

The songs that strike closest to our hearts often come from our younger years, especially the days of high school and college.

Paul Burns takes a trip back in time whenever he hears a certain song that first had meaning for him in high school.

"The song that has led to a deeper faith for me—that's an easy one—is 'He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother,' popularized by the Hollies," Burns says.

That song was a prominent part of his senior retreat in 1976 when he was a student at St. Xavier High School in

Louisville, Ky., an all-boys school.

"The impact of those three days was very special," Burns recalls. "As at school and on retreat, the demographic mix of the boys ranged from the very wealthy to the poor, from excellent athletes to those who never participated in sports, from the very smart National Honor students to those whose goal was trying to get a score high enough on the ACT that would allow entrance into a college of any kind.



Paul Burns

"So, what I have described is a group of many boys that socially and otherwise did not mix, did not intermingle. But put together for three days of retreat where hearts and souls are poured out was impactful. Stories were shared."

Burns notes that the song title, "'He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother,'" was changed to

See SONGS, page 2



Andrew and Julie Motyka pose for a photo with their children—front row, Mary and Thomas; back row, Lucy—at Easter in 2026. When their children were infants, Andrew hummed the lyrics to “God with Hidden Majesty” to them. (Submitted photo)

SONGS

continued from page 1

“You Ain’t Heavy, You’re My Brother” for the retreat. Played as a theme for his group, it set the tone for a dramatic change that occurred among the young men.

 “Before that retreat, the impact of my classmates was one where maybe you knew their name and really not much more,” he says. “After retreat, high fives in the hallway and lasting friendships, driven by, frankly, the Holy Spirit.”

 Burns says that his high school still holds the retreats, and they are held at Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality in Mt. St. Francis.

 “In the life of Jesus, you can see the playing out of ‘He Ain’t Heavy, He’s My Brother,’ ” says Burns, who lives in New Albany and is a member of St. Louis Bertrand Parish in Louisville.

 “The song title says it all. When I hear that song, those sweet memories of that retreat come back.”

‘I remember humming it to my children’

 For parents, there is always something special about the songs we sang to our children when they were infants.

 In his selection of a song to feature, Andrew Motyka turned to one from that part of his life—a song that also tapped into the faith at the heart of his life and his ministry of music.

“If I had to choose one song that has helped my faith and life in general, it is ‘God with Hidden Majesty,’ probably the most popular translation of the hymn ‘Adoro te devote,’ ” says Motyka, director of music for the archdiocese and also for SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral Parish in Indianapolis.

 The song ends with these lyrics:

 “Let my soul approach you, live within your grace,

 “Let me taste the perfect joys time shall not efface.”

 Motyka notes, “The text of this hymn captures the faith in the presence of Jesus in the Eucharist perfectly, and the tune is one that stays with you. I remember humming it to my children when they were infants.”

To hear Motyka sing the hymn, use the QR code or go to tinyurl.com/MotykaHymn.



Whether it’s a song from popular culture or from a church hymnal, you are invited to share your story of how that song has led you to a deeper level of faith, humanity or love. Send your story and song(s) to [John Shaughnessy at jshaughnessy@archindy.org](mailto:jshaughnessy@archindy.org) or by mail in care of The Criterion, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202. Please include your parish and a daytime phone number where you can be reached. †



Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

Sept. 3–17, 2026

- September 3 – 11 a.m.
Funeral Mass for Father Stephen Jarrell, Christ the King Church, Indianapolis
- September 3-6
Bishops’ Support Group at Saint Meinrad Archabbey, St. Meinrad
- September 8 – 10:30 a.m.
Priest Personnel Board meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis
- September 8 – 5:30 p.m.
Mass for the Season of Creation at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, Indianapolis
- September 9 – 10:30 a.m.
Legal Team meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center
- September 9 – 5 p.m.
Keynote Address at Knights of Columbus Fourth Degree Assembly, Martinsville
- September 10 – 8:15 a.m.
Virtual Judicatories meeting
- September 10 – 10 a.m.
Leadership Team meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center
- September 10 – 5 p.m. CDT
Archbishop’s Annual Dinner at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology, St. Meinrad
- September 13 – 11 a.m.
Mass at St. Rita Church, Indianapolis
- September 15-16
USCCB Administrative Committee, Washington, D.C.
- September 16-17
Catholic Relief Services Board meeting, Baltimore, Maryland



Called to mission: How everyday Catholics can share the Gospel

Criterion staff report

ArchIndy Vox’s latest podcast explores how Catholics can share the Gospel not only in distant mission fields, but also through our everyday witness to our families, fellow parishioners, neighbors and communities—an important theme of the Second Vatican Council’s “Decree on Missionary Activity,” known also by its Latin title, “Ad Gentes.”

 The episode is part of “The Church in Our Time: What Vatican II Means for Everyday Catholics,” a 16-episode series exploring how the teachings of the Second Vatican Council remain as relevant to Catholics today as they were when the council documents were released more than 50 years ago.

 Host Ken Ogorek, executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Evangelizing Catechesis, is joined by Paul Sifuentes, senior director of the archdiocese’s Department of Parish Leadership, and Alexa Sifuentes, Paul’s wife and a parish catechetical leader.

 Together, they discuss how every Catholic is called to be a missionary disciple and the roles of the Holy Spirit, catechesis and accompaniment in helping others encounter Christ.

 Watch ArchIndy Vox episodes on the Archdiocese’s YouTube channel (@IndianaCatholic) or listen on Spotify, Amazon Music, iHeartRadio, Castbox or Apple Podcasts. To receive notifications about new episodes, follow ArchIndy Vox on Spotify at tinyurl.com/ArchIndyVoxSpotify. Tune into Relevant Radio on the fourth Saturday of each month at 1:30 p.m. to listen to episodes, too. †



Corrections

For the Spring 2025-2026 grant period, St. Mark the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis received \$47,000 from the Growth and Expansion Fund for a school masonry project, and St. Mary Praish in Indianapolis received \$20,000 from the Growth and Expansion Fund for supporting the growing Hispanic outreach and for music ministry programs. †



Phone Numbers:

Main office..... 317-236-1570

Advertising..... 317-236-1585

Circulation / Subscriptions ... 317-236-1425

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

Postmaster:

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

Web site : www.CriterionOnline.com

E-mail: criterion@archindy.org

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

 Copyright © 2026 Criterion Press Inc. ISSN 0574-4350.

NEWS FROM YOU!

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

 E-mail us: criterion@archindy.org

Staff:

Editor: Mike Krokos

Assistant Editor: John Shaughnessy

Reporter: Sean Gallagher

Reporter: Natalie Hoefer

Graphic Designer / Editorial Asst.: Nathan Ellenberger

Online Editor: Brandon A. Evans

Executive Assistant: Sara Levy



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

1400 N. Meridian St. Indianapolis, IN 46202

 317-236-1570

criterion@archindy.org

 Periodical postage paid at Indianapolis, IN.

 Copyright © 2026

 Criterion Press Inc.

POSTMASTER:

Send address changes to: Criterion Press Inc.

 1400 N. Meridian St. Indianapolis, IN 46202



09/04/26

Moving?

We’ll be there waiting if you give us two weeks’ notice! Use the form below or at archindy.org/moving.

Name _____

 E-mail _____

 New Address _____

 City _____

 State/Zip _____

 New Parish _____

 Effective Date _____

Note: If you are receiving duplicate copies please send both labels.

The Criterion • 1400 N. Meridian St. • Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367

Father Stephen Jarrell helped implement liturgical reforms in archdiocese

By Sean Gallagher

Father Stephen Jarrell, a retired archdiocesan priest, died on Aug. 21 at Envive of Beech Grove in Beech Grove. He was 79.



Fr. Stephen Jarrell

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Sept. 3 at Christ the King Church in Indianapolis. Archbishop Charles C. Thompson was the principal celebrant of the liturgy.

Msgr. Anthony Volz, pastor of Christ the King Parish, was the homilist.

Burial followed at Dale Cemetery in Connersville.

Ordained in 1973, Father Jarrell was a principal leader in the implementation in the Church in central and southern Indiana of the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council, serving as the director of the archdiocesan Office of Worship from its establishment in 1976 until 1993.

In a 2023 interview with *The Criterion* on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of his priestly ordination, Father Jarrell reflected on the role he played in forming Catholics across the archdiocese to understand and more fully participate in the Church’s revised worship.

“It wasn’t about me or me having something great to give people,” Father Jarrell said. “There was always a sense of collaboration. My approach to pastoring and in teaching was to collaborate with others [in archdiocesan leadership] and also with

folks in the audience.” Retired Father Rick Ginther, who served as archdiocesan director of liturgy after Father Jarrell’s tenure in the Office of Worship ended in 1993, described him as “meticulous” and “disciplined” in his ministry of forming archdiocesan Catholics to more fully participate in the Church’s worship.

“He did workshops for lectors, workshops for sacristans—all of the various ministries,” said Father Ginther. “He was trying to help them all come along at a time when we didn’t have a lot of guidance. It was all new.

“He had a passion for helping people grasp it. He tried to help all of us have a better sense of what we were doing and why we were doing it this way.”

Charlie Gardner collaborated with Father Jarrell for 17 years in this ministry.

“He was very committed and excited to help implement the reforms of the Second Vatican Council,” Gardner said. “It took quite a few years to make that come alive liturgically.

“He was delightful to work with,” said Gardner. “He was such a gentleman, a good person.”

Msgr. Anthony Volz was a teenager when he first met Father Jarrell in 1973 after Father Jarrell was assigned to Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Indianapolis. The two formed a lasting friendship.

Msgr. Volz described him as “a genuine, holy man and a good priest.”

He saw Father Jarrell’s holiness in the attention he gave to other people.

“When you were talking with him, there were really no distractions,” Msgr. Volz said. “He genuinely wanted to hear what you had to say and was also

always willing to give his opinion. He was a very gentle person.”

Health challenges marked the later part of Father Jarrell’s life.

In 2007, he was severely injured in a car accident. During an extended period of recovery, his parishioners at St. Paul the Apostle Parish in Greencastle were dedicated in giving him the care he needed.

“The shepherd of the flock was tended to by the sheep,” Father Jarrell recalled in his 2023 interview. “It was a role reversal. I was laid up for three-and-a-half months.”

Later while serving at Christ the King, he began to lose strength and have balance problems due to neuropathy in his legs.

Then the emergence of Huntington’s disease led him to reside at Envive of Beech Grove. The degenerative nerve disorder is a congenital condition which previously led to the death of Father Jarrell’s father.

Msgr. Volz reflected on how his friend coped with the many health challenges he faced in his later years.

“He had his ups and downs,” Msgr. Volz said. “He struggled. At the same time, he became accepting of it. I think it may have led him to an even deeper life of prayer than he already had.

“He lived in the moment. When he felt good, he really enjoyed his time.”

Stephen Taylor Jarrell was born on May 4, 1947, to Noel and Barbara (Wagner) Jarrell and grew up in Connersville as a member of St. Gabriel Parish.

After graduating from the eighth grade of the faith community’s school, Father Jarrell became an archdiocesan seminarian at Saint Meinrad Seminary

and School of Theology in St. Meinrad, ultimately receiving 12 years of priestly formation there, earning a bachelor’s degree and a master’s of divinity degree.

He later earned a master’s degree in theology (liturgy) at the University of Notre Dame in northern Indiana.

Father Jarrell was ordained a priest on May 20, 1973, at St. Gabriel Church in Connersville by Archbishop George J. Biskup.

His first pastoral assignment was as associate pastor of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, where he served for three years.

In 1976, Father Jarrell was appointed the first director of the archdiocese’s newly created Office of Worship. He led the office until 1993. During that period, Father Jarrell also ministered as a part-time associate pastor of SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral Parish in Indianapolis from 1982-1993.

In 1993, he was appointed the founding pastor of SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Parish in Greenwood.

From 2003-10, Father Jarrell ministered as pastor of St. Paul the Apostle Parish and chaplain at DePauw University, both in Greencastle. During that time, he also served for periods as pastor of Annunciation Parish in Brazil, the temporary administrator of Mary Queen of Peace Parish in Danville and chaplain at the Putnamville Correctional Facility in Putnamville.

Beginning in 2010, Father Jarrell served as pastor of Christ the King. He continued in that ministry until he retired in 2017.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry, 3001 E. 30th St., Indianapolis, IN, 46218. †

Prayer, social justice are inseparable, pope tells St. Vincent de Paul Society

(OSV News)—Pope Leo XIV encouraged members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul to follow the example of its namesake by giving witness to their faith through serving the poor.



Pope Leo XIV

“St. Vincent de Paul demonstrated that prayer and social justice are not merely complementary but, in fact, are inseparable,” the pope said during a

meeting on Aug. 28 with a delegation representing the society’s U.S. branch at the Vatican.

“It is therefore my hope that you will continually turn to your heavenly patron in order to follow his example and seek his intercession,” he said.

Founded in 1883 by Blessed Antoine Frédéric Ozanam, the lay organization is dedicated to serving the poor and the marginalized and was inspired by the example of St. Vincent de Paul, the 17th-century French priest who was declared the patron saint of charitable associations by Pope Leo XIII in 1885.

The society established itself in the United States in 1845 and currently has more than 90,000 Vincentian volunteers

across the country. Welcoming the delegation, Pope Leo expressed his gratitude for their service and his hope that their visit to Rome would “strengthen your faith and deepen your desire to serve the Lord and his Church.

“I thank you in particular for your devoted service to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, and through it, to your brothers and sisters across the United States of America,” the pope said. “Indeed, by freely offering your God-given gifts and talents, you give eloquent witness to your faith in service to the building up of the Kingdom of God.”

Recalling his apostolic exhortation on love for the poor, “*Dilexi Te*” (“I have loved you”), the pope reflected on St. Augustine’s teachings on the “Christocentric nature of care for the poor” and on God’s generosity toward “those who serve them.”

When motivated by love, he noted, caring for others “not only helps those in need, but also opens the heart of the giver to God’s grace.

“Dear friends, I urge you, then, always to give of yourselves,” Pope Leo said. “In this way, the Lord’s grace will steadily purify your hearts and minds, and you will more readily recognize Christ in your neighbor, both in those you serve and in those with whom you work.” †



St. Joan of Arc Church
4217 Central Avenue
Indianapolis, IN 46205

Passenger drop-off on 42nd Street 

www.sjoa.org



FREE ADMISSION!

Saturday, September 12, 2026

12:00NOON – 10:00PM

Mass at 5:30PM

Ticket sales close at 9:30PM

NO PETS, PLEASE

FREE LIVE ENTERTAINMENT!

12:00 Indianapolis Suzuki Academy

12:15PM Transatlantis

2:15PM The Michael Kelsey Band

4:30PM Roughouse

7:00PM Living Proof

ACTIVITIES FOR THE ENTIRE FAMILY!

- Raffle - Something for Everyone!
- Artisans!
- Bake Sale!
- Historic Church Tours at 1:30pm, 3:30pm, & 6:30pm!
- Children’s Food and Games until 7:00PM!

GREAT FRENCH CUISINE!



6107 South East Street
Indianapolis, IN 46227

(317) 787-8224

ORileyBranson.com

A Trusted Partnership in Care

O’Riley Branson is proud to be a preferred partner of Abbey Caskets.

Let us help you honor your loved one with care and craftsmanship you can trust.





Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, *Publisher* Sally Krause, *Associate Publisher*
Mike Krokos, *Editor*

Editorial



Shown is St. Ambrose Church in Seymour.
(Criterion file photo)

A parish is a safe place during the storms of life

The website for St. Ambrose Parish in Seymour, stambroseseymour.org, contains the following message in English and in Spanish:

“In case of tornado warning, the church basement will be open for parishioners who need a safe place.”

“*En caso de alerta de tornado, el sótano de la iglesia estará abierto para los feligreses que necesiten un lugar seguro.*”

Thanks be to God, St. Ambrose is a safe place during times of natural disaster. But it is also a place where parishioners from very different backgrounds can feel welcome, spiritually nourished and safe from the economic, cultural and political storms that threaten them.

Many different Latin American countries (including Mexico, Guatemala, Venezuela and other nations) with a variety of different languages and dialects are represented at St. Ambrose. The parish’s Hispanic Ministry coordinator serves as support for the Hispanic community in any Church matter and also as a bridge to help the pastor with translations.

Events are planned for the entire parish such as the Hispanic Fiesta during September/October to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month and the independence of the Hispanic countries of parishioners. Other events include the celebration of Our Lady of Guadalupe, *Posadas*, Three Kings’ Day, the Feast of Divine Mercy and celebrations of Mother’s and Father’s Day.

One of the ways that St. Ambrose helps people from different backgrounds is by helping them to better understand and speak American English. This process happens naturally when children enroll in schools and when they socialize with other students who are native English speakers. Adults often have more difficulty because of work and family responsibilities and because the older they get, the more difficult it is to understand, read and write new languages.

At St. Ambrose, helping adults learn English is an integral part of the parish’s ministry of hospitality. The first Hispanic families began praying at St. Ambrose in the mid-1990s. Today, there are native Spanish speakers represented on all parish commissions.

St. Ambrose is a parish that is bursting at the seams. On weekends, 1,100–1,200 people attend Masses in a church built for 300. Meeting and gathering spaces are limited, and every square inch is utilized to provide ministry and faith formation to children, teens and adults.

Father Daniel Staublin, the parish’s pastor, is excited about this growth in the parish community.

“The bilingual spirit in our parish is growing,” he says. “We welcome the opportunity to help our Spanish-speaking parishioners learn English, and we encourage those who are native English speakers to learn about the different cultures and languages of their fellow parishioners.”

Father Staublin says that, for him, what is most significant is the way that the different cultures represented in his parish have added to the sense of reverence within the entire community. The strong Latino presence has helped everyone appreciate more fully the Church’s traditional devotions—for example, praying the rosary, spending time before the Blessed Sacrament and participating in novena prayers.

Father Staublin says that many people have told him that the blending of these diverse communities in prayer at St. Ambrose has enhanced the whole parish’s experience of worship and its profound sense of reverence.

In addition to helping parishioners with language skills and providing them with the spiritual benefits of belonging to a vibrant faith community, St. Ambrose is responding to the increasing need for help with life’s necessities.

According to Father Staublin, “This past summer we had a ‘Christmas in July’ event at St. Ambrose. The need is increasing here for many of our immigrant brothers and sisters. Many are losing their jobs and some of the men—the major breadwinners—are being arrested and being detained and/or deported.

“At the last minute, we decided to have a collection of food, toiletries, clothes, etc. and have them available in our school gym. Instead of saying it was for those in need—we want to respect their pride—we labeled it a ‘Christmas in July’ party. The response—both in donated items and in participants—was unbelievable!”

St. Ambrose is one of many vibrant parishes in central and southern Indiana that provide a safe haven for parishioners. Whether spiritual, emotional or physical, the storms of life can be devastating. Generous gifts of time, talent and treasure are needed to strengthen and sustain the Church’s role as a safe harbor in troubled times.

All of us are invited—and challenged—to do our part.

—Daniel Conway

Be Our Guest/Greg Erlandson

Memento mori: A reminder that this is not our final destination

I wonder if you can tell the age of a person by the number of dead people’s phone numbers he still has saved on his phone? It could be like judging the age of a tree by the rings on its core.

A young person may have only a few. I feel like I must have at least a hundred. Every time I scroll through my phone’s address



book, I am struck by the faces that come to mind of colleagues and friends and family members who have passed.

“Have passed” is an increasingly common euphemism for “have died.” It seems somehow less edgy, less definitive. They’ve “moved on,” but they haven’t moved out of my address book. I can’t delete them. That name and number in my phone is like a grave marker, a tangible remembrance. That little bit of digital data carries immeasurable weight.

As someone who has more years behind me than ahead of me (at least on this Earth), even my phone’s address book is a reminder that I’m getting closer to final exams (another euphemism). My address book is a little bit like the skull that medieval philosophers would keep on their desk as a reminder of what will befall us all.

My high school friend who died too soon. My mentor whom I still wish I could talk with. A neighbor I only really got to know in her final months battling cancer. A priest who was for me the embodiment of God’s mercy. The faces come to mind. I almost always say a quick prayer for them. I figure there is a very good chance all of us will spend some time in purgatory getting ourselves cleaned up before we meet the Lord, so I take comfort in the Church’s encouragement that we pray for the souls in purgatory.

For a long while, I would promise “thoughts and prayers” when someone needed them, but my memory was never as good as my intentions, and it would be easy to forget. Following the example of my uncle, a Trappist monk who spent a large part of his day praying for people, I started keeping a list.

When people on that list died, I would put a little cross by their name, a reminder to keep praying. My prayer list is starting to look like the Hill of Crosses in northern Lithuania, and perhaps serves the same function.

Recently, my prayer list has grown a bit too rapidly. A church musician with whom I once edited a literary magazine in high school. An acquaintance in a serious bicycling accident. A woman looking for a teaching job in a down market.

But especially for my mother-in-law. She’s at the venerable age of 97. A French citizen born in Algeria, her emigration to the United States with her husband was an act of pure faith—in him and in the American dream. She was a great cook, a loving mother, her husband’s helpmate. Her days are quiet now, and she has grown quiet too, as the veil of old age descends about her.

It is too late to talk about the past or the future. It is not too late to embrace her still with love and with prayer.

I laugh at those health statistics that say the chance of death is reduced by such and such a percentage. No, the chance of death remains 100% for all of us. That phone address book, that list, my mother-in-law:

They are all a little *memento mori*, reminders that this is not our final destination. God willing, what is to come will surpass all our expectations.

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

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

Mother Teresa calls us to love God, others even in our doubts

Tomorrow, Saturday, September 5, is the Memorial of St. Teresa of Calcutta. This woman, whom we revere as a modern-day saint, was born Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu on August 26, 1910, in North Macedonia. She entered the Sisters of Loreto and took the religious name “Teresa.”

In 1946, she experienced a “call within a call” and began a radical new life in service of “the poorest of the poor,” initially in India and eventually through the Religious Congregation she founded (the Missionaries of Charity) that serves the poor in many diverse regions of the world.

Mother Teresa was a holy woman who knew both intense sorrow and great joy. She described the source of her joy as an intimate contact with Jesus both in the faces of the destitute and dying people she served, and in the Eucharist, the sacrament of his Body and Blood.

Mother Teresa was a powerful example of Christian compassion expressed through concrete service. She was recognized internationally as a model of Christian charity, and her example inspired many others to move beyond self-centered concerns toward empathy, joyful service, and love for the suffering. Her life reflected in very practical ways

Jesus’ teaching that compassion and care for the needy belong at the heart of Christian discipleship, particularly Jesus’ identification of himself with “the least of his sisters and brothers” in Matthew 25:31–46:18.

Mother Teresa understood the poor as persons possessing profound dignity and as people whom Christians are called to love because they are loved by God. She saw in the faces of the people she served the face of Jesus Christ, and she found immense joy in serving her Lord through the poor and needy. Her example helped many people understand that service to others in need (whether material or spiritual) can transform the person who serves as well as benefit those who receive their assistance.

But Mother Teresa was also a person who experienced anxiety, doubt and spiritual darkness. The Church presents her as an example of perseverance in faith amid spiritual suffering. Her own journals reveal her as enduring a prolonged “dark night of the soul”—a period of profound interior dryness and apparent distance from God—while continuing to serve with trust and fidelity. Near the end of her life, witnesses reported that this darkness lifted and that she appeared

joyful and radiant, rejoicing in what God had accomplished through her, especially in the ministry of the Missionaries of Charity.

How is it that a person of great faith and charity such as Mother Teresa could find herself wrestling with doubt, anxiety and the fear that she has been abandoned by God? Why do we recognize in her suffering the marks of holiness?

Every saint is an icon (image) of Jesus Christ. Every holy woman and man—whether officially declared a saint by the Church (canonization) or living a life of hidden sanctity and goodness—demonstrate one or more facets of the personality of Jesus. No saint mirrors the life of Jesus perfectly, but every saint reflects several aspects of the Divine Light which is Christ.

Mother Teresa certainly reflected our Lord’s love and care for the poor. Her public life and ministry mirrored brilliantly the healing power and the loving kindness of Jesus.

But in her personal life, she also provided us with a heart-wrenching image of those moments, such as the agony in the garden, when Jesus wrestled with doubt and despair. “My God, my God, why have you abandoned

me?” is the prayer from Psalm 22 that Jesus prayed on the Cross. It is a feeling of abandonment also expressed by Mother Teresa during the dark moments recorded in her journals.

Through St. Teresa of Calcutta, we can see Jesus. We can experience something of his healing power, his compassionate care for the sick and dying, his readiness to forgive sins, and to welcome sinners into the joy of his heavenly home.

And, yes, in this deeply spiritual woman we can also gain an insight into how much Jesus suffered—mentally as well as physically. His anguished sense of abandonment was shared by her, and the intense suffering that she witnessed in the dying and destitute people on the streets of Calcutta, in whose faces she saw the face of Jesus, affected her deeply.

We honor St. Teresa of Calcutta because she helps us to understand what it means to take up our crosses and follow Jesus Christ. Pray for us, Mother. Help us to find joy in service to those who are spiritually and materially poor. Teach us to endure our suffering, as you did, confident that the joy of Christ always overcomes our sorrow. †



Cristo, la piedra angular

La Madre Teresa nos llama a amar a Dios y a los demás, incluso en medio de nuestras dudas

Mañana, sábado 5 de septiembre, se celebra el memorial de santa Teresa de Calcuta.

Esta mujer, a quien veneramos como una santa de nuestros tiempos, nació como Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu el 26 de agosto de 1910 en Macedonia del Norte. Ingresó a la Congregación de las Hermanas de Loreto y tomó el nombre religioso de “Teresa.”

En 1946, sintió un “llamado dentro de un llamado” y comenzó una vida radicalmente nueva al servicio de “los más pobres entre los pobres,” inicialmente en la India y, con el tiempo, a través de la congregación religiosa que ella misma fundó (las Misioneras de la Caridad), la cual atendía a los pobres en diversas regiones del mundo.

La Madre Teresa fue una mujer santa que conoció ambos extremos: el dolor intenso y la gran alegría. Describió la fuente de su alegría como un contacto íntimo con Jesús, tanto en los rostros de las personas indigentes y moribundas a quienes servía como en la Eucaristía, el sacramento del Cuerpo y la Sangre de Cristo.

Fue un poderoso ejemplo de compasión cristiana expresada a través del servicio práctico. Recibió reconocimiento internacional como modelo de caridad cristiana, y su ejemplo inspiró a muchas otras personas

a ir más allá de las preocupaciones egocéntricas y volcarse en la empatía, el servicio gozoso y el amor por los que sufren. Su vida reflejaba de manera muy concreta la enseñanza de Jesús de que la compasión y el cuidado de los necesitados constituyen el núcleo del discipulado cristiano, en particular la identificación que Jesús hizo de sí mismo con “los hermanos míos más pequeños” en Mateo 25:40.

La Madre Teresa consideraba a los pobres como personas dotadas de una profunda dignidad y a quienes los cristianos están llamados a amar porque Dios los ama. Ella veía en los rostros de las personas a quienes servía el rostro de Jesucristo, y encontraba una inmensa alegría al servir a su Señor a través de los pobres y los necesitados. Su ejemplo ayudó a muchas personas a comprender que el servicio al prójimo necesitado, ya sea en lo material o en lo espiritual, puede transformar a quien sirve, además de beneficiar a quienes reciben su ayuda.

Pero la Madre Teresa también fue una persona que experimentó ansiedad, dudas y oscuridad espiritual. La Iglesia la presenta como un ejemplo de perseverancia en la fe en medio del sufrimiento espiritual. Sus propios diarios revelan que atravesó una prolongada “noche oscura del alma”—un período de profunda sequía interior y aparente distanciamiento de Dios—mientras

continuaba sirviendo con confianza y fidelidad. Hacia el final de su vida, los testigos relataron que esta oscuridad se disipó y que ella se mostraba alegre y radiante, regocijándose por lo que Dios había logrado a través de ella, especialmente en el ministerio de las Misioneras de la Caridad.

¿Cómo es posible que una persona de gran fe y caridad como la Madre Teresa pudiera batallar contra la duda, la ansiedad y el temor de haber sido abandonada por Dios? ¿Por qué reconocemos en su sufrimiento las marcas de la santidad?

Cada santo es un ícono, la imagen de Jesucristo; cada mujer y cada hombre santo independientemente de que haya sido declarado oficialmente santo por la Iglesia (canonización) o que haya vivido una vida de santidad y bondad ocultas representa una o más facetas de la personalidad de Jesús. Ningún santo refleja a la perfección la vida de Jesús, pero cada uno refleja varios aspectos de la Luz Divina que es Cristo.

La Madre Teresa sin duda reflejó el amor y el cuidado de nuestro Señor hacia los pobres. Su vida pública y su ministerio reflejaron magníficamente el poder sanador y la bondad amorosa de Jesús.

Pero en su vida personal, también nos brindó una imagen desgarradora de aquellos momentos—como la agonía en el huerto—en los que Jesús luchó contra

la duda y la desesperación. “Dios mío, Dios mío, ¿por qué me has abandonado?” es la oración del Salmo 22 que Jesús recitó en la cruz. Es una sensación de abandono que también expresó la Madre Teresa durante los momentos oscuros registrados en sus diarios.

A través de Santa Teresa de Calcuta, podemos ver a Jesús. Podemos experimentar en cierta medida su poder sanador, su cuidado compasivo hacia los enfermos y moribundos, su disposición a perdonar los pecados y a acoger a los pecadores en la alegría de su hogar celestial.

Y sí, en esta mujer profundamente espiritual también podemos comprender cuánto sufrió Jesús, tanto mental como físicamente. Compartió su angustiante sensación de abandono, y el intenso sufrimiento que pudo presenciar en las personas moribundas y desamparadas de las calles de Calcuta—en cuyos rostros veía el rostro de Jesús—la conmovía profundamente.

Honramos a santa Teresa de Calcuta porque ella nos ayuda a comprender lo que significa tomar nuestra cruz y seguir a Jesucristo. Ruega por nosotros, Madre. Ayúdanos a encontrar alegría en el servicio a quienes son pobres espiritual y materialmente. Enséñanos a soportar nuestro sufrimiento, como tú lo hiciste, confiados en que la alegría de Cristo siempre vence nuestras penas. †

Events Calendar

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

Wednesdays

St. John the Evangelist Parish, Corpus Christi Parish Hall, 126 W. Georgia St., Indianapolis. **Catholics in Recovery Support Group**, 7 p.m., meets every Wednesday, Catholic 12-step program serving those with addictions and unhealthy attachments. Information: 317-557-8888, jjdav887@gmail.com.

September 7

St. Anthony of Padua Parish, 4773 E. Morris Church St., Morris. **Labor Day Picnic**, 11 a.m.-6 p.m., fried chicken dinners, kids’ games, raffles live music, free admission. Information: 812-934-6218.

St. Peter Parish, 1207 East Road, Brookville. **Labor Day Picnic**, 10 a.m.-8 p.m., fried chicken dinners, dine in air-conditioned hall, cash and quilt raffles, country store, games, turtle soup, bingo, beer garden, handicapped accessible, free admission. Information: 765-647-5462, brookvilleparishes@gmail.com.

Virtual Discernment Lounge, 7-8 p.m., for Catholic women ages 18-41 discerning a religious vocation; prayer, conversation, reflection, free, sponsored by the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. Information, registration: 361-500-9505,

events.sistersofprovidence.org, jluna@spsmw.org.

September 8

Church of the Immaculate Conception, 1 Providence Pl., Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Taizé Prayer**: Journey Toward Wholeness, 7-8 p.m., prayer, music, reflection time, livestream link available on website, free. Information: Taize.SistersofProvidence.org, 812-535-2952.

Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, 5692 Central Ave., Indianapolis. **Mass for the Season of Creation**, 5:30 p.m., Archbishop Charles C. Thompson presiding, reception and information session to follow in parish gathering space, free. Information: 317-797-4502, coachcoanihm@gmail.com.

September 10

Ritz Charles, 12156 N. Meridian St., Carmel, Ind. (Lafayette Diocese). **Luxury Bingo**, 6 p.m. cocktails and heavy hors d’oeuvres, 6:45 p.m. opening remarks and bingo begins, fundraiser for Women’s Care Center’s two Indianapolis locations, \$150, sponsorships available. Information, registration: tinyurl.com/luxurybingo26, 317-829-6800.

September 11

St. John the Evangelist Parish, Corpus Christi Parish Hall, 126 W. Georgia St., Indianapolis. **Pro-life Film Series**, 6 p.m., Father Jeffrey Dufresne, Alexander Mingus and Bailey Harkins speaking, screening of documentary “Better Off Dead” on assisted suicide, panel discussion and pizza follow, freewill donations accepted. Information: 317-407-6881, stjohnsindy.org/pro-life-film-series.

September 11-12

St. Mary Parish, 212 Washington St., North Vernon. **Community Festival**, Fri. 5-11 p.m., Sat. noon-11 p.m., games, rides, beer garden, live music, free admission. Information: 812-346-3604.

September 12

St. Joan of Arc Parish, 4217 Central Ave., Indianapolis. **French Market**, noon-10 p.m., live music, 50 artisan booths, French food, beer/wine, kids’ area, bake sale, raffle, church tours, Mass at 5:30 p.m., free admission. Information: 317-283-5508, sjoa.org/about-french-market.

SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Parish, 5901 Olive Branch Road, Greenwood. **Living Water Morning of Reflection**,

9 a.m.-noon, optional Mass 8 a.m. followed by confession, small-group discussion on Indiana bishops’ Pastoral Letter “Integral Ecology: A Sacramental Vision,” visit parish-based pilgrimage sites for Jubilee of St. Francis, free, register by Sept. 11, sponsored by archdiocesan Catholic Charities-Social Concerns. Information, registration: tinyurl.com/ssfcreflection26, 463-253-1185, lsheehan@archindy.org.

Saint Meinrad Archabbey, St. Bede Theater, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Arete Orchestra**, 7:30 p.m. CT, performing works by Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven, free admission. Information: saintmeinrad.org/visit-us/cultural-events, 812-357-6611.

September 13

St. Mary Parish, 512

N. Perkins St., Rushville. **Fall Celebration**, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., fried chicken dinners, grand raffle, quilt raffle, kids’ games, vendors, free admission. Information: 765-932-2588.

St. Pius V Parish, 320 Franklin St., Troy. **Fall Festival**, 11 a.m.-5 p.m., cash raffle, quilt raffle, bingo, games, soup by the bowl or gallon (also available for curbside pick-up), dinners available for dine-in or carry-out, free admission. Information: 812-547-7994.

September 18

Liter House, 5301 Winthrop Ave. Indianapolis. **Catholic Business Exchange**, rosary 6:35 a.m., Mass 7 a.m., buffet breakfast and program following, presenter TBD, \$20 members, \$25 non-members. Register by 4 p.m. Sept. 15. Information, registration: cutt.ly/

CBE-Reg. St. Thomas Aquinas Parish, 4625 N. Kenwood Ave, Indianapolis. **Speaker Series: Fireside Chat on Race in the Catholic Church**, 6:15-9 p.m., Honorable Judge Tanya Pratt presenting, free. Information: 317-253-1461, churchinfo@staindy.org.

September 18-19

Prince of Peace Parish, 201 State St., Madison. **School Festival**, 5-11 p.m., carnival rides, kids’ games, food, \$5 admission. Information: 812-273-5835.

St. Louis Parish, 13 E. St. Louis Pl., Batesville. **Festival**, Sat.: 5-11 p.m., live music, pulled pork dinners, raffles, pull tabs; Sun.: 10 a.m.-5 p.m., fried chicken and roast beef dinners, games, beer garden, cash raffle, beat-the-bid, country store, free admission. Information: 812-934-3204. †

Retreats and Programs

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

September 18-20

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **You are Not Alone: Retreat for Survivors of Suicide Loss**, Fri. 6:30-9 p.m., Sat. 8:30 a.m.-8:30 p.m., Sun. 8:30-12:30 p.m., certified therapist Christine Turo-Shields, Father James Farrell, loss survivors panel Lisa Thibault and Shelly and Shea Wynn presenters, \$250, includes program, meals, snacks, private guest room to use during the days of program, overnight stay available for additional \$42 per night. Information, registration: 317-545-7681, ftm.retreatportal.com/events, lcoons@archindy.org.

Mother of the Redeemer Retreat Center, 8220 W. State Road 48, Bloomington. **Living the Litany of Humility**, 6 p.m. Fri.-10 a.m. Sun., Father Jerry Byrd presenting, \$290 for single, \$480 double, \$670 triple, \$860 quadruple, includes four meals and room for

two nights, commuter \$90 includes four meals. Information, registration: 812-825-4642, ext. 1, motheroftheredeemer.com.

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Pilgrims of Hope**, Benedictine Father Adrian Burke presenting, \$350 single, \$550 double. Registration: 812-357-6611, saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

September 22

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Fall Day of Reflection with Fr. Jim**, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., Father James Farrell presenting, includes Mass, confession, breakfast snacks, lunch, register by Sep. 21, \$55. Information, registration: ftm.retreatportal.com/events, 317-545-7681, lcoons@archindy.org.

September 25

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **Quiet Day of**

Renewal, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., \$20 (or \$80 with spiritual direction). Information, registration: oldenburgfranciscancenter.org/quiet-day-of-renewal, 812-933-6437, center@oldenburgfranciscans.org.

September 25-27

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **TOBIT Marriage Preparation Weekend**, 7 p.m. Fri.-11:45 a.m. Sun., \$400 per couple, separate rooms, includes meals and materials. Registration: ftm.retreatportal.com/events, 317-545-7681, lcoons@archindy.org.

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Serving, Receiving, and Giving: From the Church to the World**, Benedictine Father Simon Herrmann and Dr. David Freyer presenting, \$350 single, \$550 double. Registration: 812-357-6611, saintmeinrad.org/retreats. †

Wedding Anniversaries

FOREST AND PATRICIA (BORSKI) ALBERTSON, members of St. Rose of Lima Parish in Franklin, celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary on July 28. The couple was married in St. Mark the Evangelist Church in Indianapolis on July 28, 1956. They have six children: Cathy Cook, Marie Lang, Deb, Patty and Rusty Albertson, and the late Randy Albertson. The couple also has 11 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.



JOHN AND ROZANNE (DAVIS) ROBERTSON, members of St. Simon the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis, will celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary on Sept. 10. The couple was married in St. Philip Neri Church in Indianapolis on Sept. 10, 1966. They have two children: Jennifer Morris and Anne Marie Moyars. The couple also has three grandchildren.



LYSLE AND CAROLE (THUER) SHAW, members of SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Parish in Greenwood, celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on Aug. 12. The couple was married in Christ the King Church in Indianapolis on Aug. 12, 1966. They have three children: Colleen Pluntz, Kathleen Ramsey and Theresa Winter. The couple also has six grandchildren and one great-grandchild.



MARK AND REGINA (SAXON) LEISING, members of St. Mary Parish in Rushville, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Aug. 28. The couple was married in St. Mary Church in Rushville on Aug. 28, 1976. They have two children: Jeanette Bischoff and Catherine Schlarman. The couple also has six grandchildren.



THOMAS AND KAREN (AUTEY) URRUTIA, members of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Aug. 14. The couple was married in St. Jude Church in Indianapolis on Aug. 14, 1976. They have two children: Lindsay Bernard and Andrew Urrutia. The couple also has seven grandchildren.



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

‘Be the Change Gala’ on Sept. 19 will benefit God’s Embrace Coffee Shop in Indy

God’s Embrace Coffee Shop will host the “Be the Change Gala” at the Fatima Event Center, 1040 N. Post Road, in Indianapolis, from 5:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m. on Sept. 19. The evening will include dinner, a silent auction and dancing. Founded by a member of Holy Spirit Parish in Indianapolis, God’s Embrace Coffee Shop empowers adults with cognitive disabilities through meaningful work and community engagement. The

cost is \$60 per person or \$480 for a table of eight. Several levels of supporting sponsorships are also available. Registration is open until the maximum seating capacity of 150 is reached. For more information or to register, go to bit.ly/4uuHBlo or email godsembraceindy@gmail.com. For more information about God’s Embrace Coffee Shop, go to godsembraceindy.org. †

Are you a young person who would like a glimpse of heaven?

By John Shaughnessy

Catherine Deleon has an invitation for any young person who wants a glimpse of heaven.

She extends that invitation based upon her experience of leading 12 young people to World Youth Day in Lisbon, Portugal, in 2023.

“In Lisbon, we were taught catechesis with many amazing English Catholic influencers—Bishop Robert Barron, Jason Evert, Christ Stefanik.

And our pilgrimage group saw Pope Francis more than once. But it wasn’t the famous faces that excited our pilgrims the most,” says Deleon, the director of youth ministry at St. Malachy Parish in Brownsburg.

“Unanimously, amongst the teens and young adults in our St. Malachy group, the most impactful moment of the World Youth Day pilgrimage was the Adoration-based prayer vigil under the starry sky with Pope Francis and Jesus. The music was heavenly, the prayers were heartfelt, and kneeling with 1.5 million fellow pilgrims before Jesus in the largest monstrance they had ever seen took their breath away.

“The silence and reverence in that field packed with millions of faithful filled their souls. It was the closest they had come to heaven on this side of the beatific vision.”

That experience is why Deleon is already excited about World Youth Day in Seoul, South Korea, in the summer of 2027. It’s also why she is also encouraging youths and young adults across the archdiocese to register for the August 1-10 pilgrimage that will be led by the archdiocesan Office of Youth Ministry and the Office of Young Adult and College Campus Ministry.

The pilgrimage will feature music, a youth festival and opportunities to participate in Mass, adoration and the Stations of the Cross with Pope Leo XIV.

The deadline to register for the pilgrimage is Sept. 30 and requires a \$500

deposit for the journey that will cost an estimated \$4,845 per person.

“I have noticed that there is a lot of fear of making such a big, expensive commitment,” Deleon says. “Common fears also include that it is far away, and in a country whose culture is very different from our own. These are the moments when we need to have faith. First, God always provides. When it comes to the financial qualms young people have about the trip, have faith in the generosity of God and others who want you to grow in your relationship with him.”

Rachel Gilman has seen how God uses World Youth Day to make a difference in the faith and the lives of young people.

A path of challenge, growth and joy

“The pilgrimage of both preparing for and experiencing World Youth Day has a way of opening our hearts and minds to God’s presence in our lives in a way that doesn’t ordinarily happen day to day when we are often bogged down by daily tasks, work and appointments,” says Gilman, director of youth ministry for the archdiocese.

“World Youth Day will challenge and stretch you, but it will also provide spaces for you to encounter God in ways you could never imagine.”

Deleon and Gilman don’t sugarcoat the challenges of the pilgrimage. They also see the gifts that often come from the challenges.

“A World Youth Day pilgrimage is spiritually and physically challenging,” Deleon says. “However, God works wonders when we have the courage to step out of our comfort zones. Disconnected from social media and daily routines, the teens and young adults in my group were deeply immersed in a bubble of Catholic celebration with approximately 1.5 million other Catholics their age. The joy and fellowship they found in these encounters expanded their spiritual horizons.

“The physical challenges also informed their spiritual experience, as many of our pilgrims worked to exude joy, peace, patience and generosity in crushing crowds, long waits, scorching weather, food shortages and miles-long hikes. I was impressed by how excited and eager



Members of a group from St. Malachy Parish in Brownsburg grew closer to each other and to Christ during World Youth Day in Lisbon, Portugal, in 2023. The next World Youth Day will be in Seoul, South Korea, in August of 2027. (Submitted photo)

they remained throughout these trials.”

Most of all, she saw how the pilgrimage led young people closer to each other and to Christ.

‘God works in transformational ways’

“Each night, our group of pilgrims opened up and vulnerably shared the impact that day’s prayer, talk or pilgrimage site had on them,” Deleon says. “The pilgrims laughed, cried and prayed together. Their World Youth Day experiences pushed them to dive deeper into their relationship with Jesus, which often stirred up big and complex emotions based on the burdens they brought with them on pilgrimage.

“I find it inspiring to see how many young people hunger for Jesus. They were eager to consume Jesus in the Eucharist. The joy on their faces when they received the sacrament, the devastation on their faces when ministers of the sacrament ran out of the Eucharist, and the relief when new Eucharistic ministers found our area and made sure we received, set my own

heart on fire for the love of the Eucharist.”

While the pilgrimage offers a possible glimpse of heaven, Gilman also believes the World Youth Day experience expands a young person’s perception of his or her place as part of the body of Christ.

“World Youth Day can help us get outside of the small bubbles of our Indiana towns and cities and truly experience the Church at large,” Gilman says. “At no other event in the world can you encounter so many Catholics from so many countries. The sheer magnitude of worshipping amongst over a million Catholic pilgrims is inspirational and a reminder that the Church is truly alive.

“And God works in transformational ways at World Youth Day. He helps young people fall deeper in love with him and the Church in a way I have never seen at any other Catholic event.”

(The pilgrimage is being organized by Verso Ministries. For more information about the pilgrimage and to register for it, go to VersoMinistries.com/archindy-wyd.) †

World Youth Day 2027 in Seoul to be ‘a celebration of hope, archbishop says

ROME (OSV News)—Preparations are in full swing for World Youth Day (WYD) 2027 in Seoul, South Korea, where Pope Leo XIV is expected to join young Catholics from around the world for the second World Youth Day ever held in Asia.

The August 2027 gathering comes more than three decades after the first WYD in Asia, which drew 4 million to 5 million people to Manila with St. John Paul II in 1995, setting a Guinness World Record for largest attendance at a papal event at the time.

With one year remaining before the massive international Catholic youth festival, organizers say planning has intensified. Representatives from the Vatican’s Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life visited South Korea in July to review preparations and meet with bishops from dioceses that will host pilgrims in the diocesan days before the main event.

Archbishop Peter Soon-taik Chung of Seoul said the archdiocese has spent the past three years laying the groundwork for the gathering, whose theme is “Take courage, I have conquered the world” (Jn 16:33).

“The year ahead will be the time to complete our preparations and welcome young people from every part of the world,” Archbishop Chung said in a statement. “We will do everything possible to make WYD Seoul 2027 a celebration of hope and a witness to the hospitality and solidarity of Korea and Seoul.”

Registration opens in October

Before arriving in the South Korean capital, international pilgrims will have the option to take part in the traditional “Days in the Diocese” from July 29 to Aug. 2, staying with local communities in 15 dioceses across the country while experiencing the faith, culture and traditions of the Catholic Church in South Korea.

Registration for World Youth Day attendees is scheduled to open in October. The accommodation options will include a large-scale parish homestay program, designed to give visitors an opportunity to experience Korean family life, parish communities and local hospitality while staying with host families.

While World Youth Day is primarily intended for young people ages 14–30, all who wish to participate are welcome, organizers say.

Advice for prospective WYD pilgrims

Across the world, parishes and dioceses have already started preparing young people to participate in the pilgrimage to South Korea—which despite being the first non-Christian majority country to host

World Youth Day—has a unique Catholic history with the witness of thousands of Christian martyrs who were killed for their faith.

Father Michael Duck Young Kong, a parish priest at St. Mary of the Cross Catholic Parish in Mordialloc, Australia, has been giving talks to the Catholic Youth Australia group and Melbourne’s archdiocesan preparation team on the history and culture of Catholicism in South Korea.

He has also turned to social media to help young people prepare, drawing on his Korean heritage to share language tips and what young pilgrims can look forward to when visiting to one of Asia’s largest cities.

“I think the first impression many young Catholics will have when they arrive in Korea is the sheer energy of Seoul—its pace, scale and intensity,” he told OSV News. “Seoul is a vibrant, modern city, and that can feel overwhelming at first, but I actually see that as part of the gift of pilgrimage. It is an invitation to receive what is unfamiliar with an open heart and a spirit of gratitude.”

Father Kong said he is hopeful that “God will awaken something deep and lasting in the hearts of young people

through World Youth Day in Seoul” through an encounter with “a living Church, a universal faith and holiness,” adding that WYD could become “a moment for every young participant to respond to the vocation to which they have been called.”

A pilgrimage in the footsteps of Korea’s martyrs

The Catholic Church in South Korea has a distinct identity shaped by “the witness of lay believers, by martyrdom and by a long history of perseverance under pressure,” he said.

With no priests at first, the early Church there was led by young lay believers who gathered in secret to study Scripture and live out the Gospel. They strived to continue their life of faith even amid harsh persecutions that spread over 100 years, leading to many martyrs. Pope Francis beatified 124 Korean martyrs during his apostolic journey to Seoul in 2014 and Pope John Paul II canonized 103 martyr saints.

“Pilgrims will feel a strong sense of piety, communal faith, and public witness,” Father Kong said, expressing hope they will leave Seoul “with a stronger faith, and with a greater desire to say ‘yes’ to God in their daily lives.”

World Youth Day theme song gets a pop release

Organizers marked the one-year countdown to World Youth Day 2027 with the release of the event’s official theme song, “*Confidite, Ego Vici Mundum*,” meaning “Take courage! I have overcome the world.” The song, selected from 434 entries, including 294 from outside Korea, was written by Korean composer Francis Jiyeon Kim.

The World Youth Day 2027 anthem was released in both a pop version and a classical version and can be heard online on YouTube. The international version of the hymn has lyrics in six languages.

The official World Youth Day prayer can also be found online in multiple languages. The prayer includes a line asking the Lord to “Kindle the flame of the Korean martyrs’ faith in our hearts, making us into disciples who live out the Gospel of peace, love, and truth.” †



DRUM MAJOR

continued from page 1

going to happen. If it wasn’t for their motivation, I don’t think I would have kept going, but I did.”

She went to the third practice. The next day, she felt she had given a great, final audition playing the piccolo. Then she waited for the e-mail that would come the next morning before the first day of school.

When she opened the e-mail that day in late August of 2023, a surge of joy rushed through her.

“It was just something so big that a small Hispanic girl from Madison made this huge band four hours away from home,” she says three years later, the emotion of that moment still fresh for her.

Right away that day, she called Shirley Kloepfer, one of her mentors and the director of La Casa Amiga, an organization that works with the Hispanic community in Madison. She phoned her parents, Abelina Morales-Galvez and Werclain Ortiz-Gonzalez. And the word soon spread around the Shawe community after she called Phil Kahn, the president of Prince of Peace Schools in Madison.

“They were all very proud of me,” she says. “I was overjoyed.”

Now, it was an early January morning in 2026 as she prepared to open another e-mail, this time in her family’s kitchen in Madison.

This e-mail would inform her whether or not she had been chosen as one of the three drum majors for the Notre Dame marching band—one of its top three student leaders—for the 2026 football season.

I knew it was coming,” recalls Ortiz-Morales, the middle of her parents’ five children. “My parents already knew I was panicked. My little sister was going off to cheer practice, and she’s been a big supporter of mine. She told me, ‘Don’t tell me until I get back.’ She didn’t want me to text her. When she got home, we checked.

“I was shaking and crying.”

She had been selected—only the fourth Saint Mary’s student to become a drum major for the Notre Dame marching band in its 181-year history.

In a way, it is her version of the American dream, as a member of a family that came to America from Mexico for a better life.

“It feels very special,” she says as the season nears. “The past three years I’ve been in this marching band, I’ve made it a huge goal to be friends with everyone. It means so much to me to have my peers love and trust me to have that position of drum major, to be able to lead them during march-outs and game days.”

Ortiz-Morales will make her debut as a drum major when the Notre Dame band plays during the football game between the Irish and the University of Wisconsin on Sept. 6 at Lambeau Field in Green Bay, Wis.

“Kimi has an incredibly magnetic personality that just draws people into her,” notes Sam Sanchez, associate director of the Notre Dame band. “During rehearsals, she always smiles or shares funny stories that make people laugh and relax. Her conducting and marching skills are excellent, but it is her magnetic personality that makes her a strong leader.

“Kimi has shown incredibly strong competence as a drum major. Our band staff is excited and thinks she is going to be amazing this fall.”

Leaving her mark

Beyond leading the band toward the stadium and onto the football field, drum majors have certain responsibilities when the band performs.

“It’s starting the band,” Ortiz-Morales notes. “They’re looking up to you to know when to start. And if they can’t find the beat, they look up to you to get it.

“I just very much enjoy hearing the music my peers make coming at me, me being the beat, me being the reason they’re able to keep it together. I just love the sound coming toward me from the people I have grown close to.”

Her desire to become a drum major reflects a combination of her experiences at Shawe, Saint Mary’s and Notre Dame.

“Shawe is a very close-knit community,” she says. “I knew everyone was there for me. We all knew each other and had gone to school together since we were little. And because it was small, it was easier for teachers to reach out to us students and help us more. They were really supportive in any decision I made.”

One of the places where she left her mark at Shawe was in the marching band. Growing up in a musical



Kimberly Ortiz-Morales, right, shares a tight bond with the other two drum majors for this year’s marching band of the University of Notre Dame—Maria Stalcup, left, and Emma Ellis. Ellis is the head drum major, and Stalcup and Ortiz-Morales are the assistant drum majors. Ortiz-Morales is a 2023 graduate of Father Michael Shawe Memorial High School in Madison and a senior at Saint Mary’s College in northern Indiana. (Submitted photo)

family where many people had talents playing piano and guitar, she chose a different route, playing the flute and joining the marching band in the seventh grade of the junior/senior high school.

“On her first day, she looked like she had been marching for years,” says Bill Gordon, Shawe’s director of bands. “After playing flute for three years, she auditioned and became our drum major and remained in that position until she graduated.”

Gordon adds that she continues to help every summer when the Shawe band has its two-week camp. This summer, she took on three roles, teaching marching fundamentals and helping the drum major and the flute section.

“She is a born leader who is well-liked by everyone she meets,” Gordon says.

She has taken that combination to Saint Mary’s, where she is majoring in elementary education.

“I wanted to go to a small college. I like the Catholic aspect. The small school aspect. The all-girls college,” she says.

Those qualities of Saint Mary’s have been complemented by the opportunities of being part of Notre Dame’s marching band.

“We have a great community up there, especially my section, the piccolo section,” she says. “What I enjoy most is coming out of the tunnel and onto the field at Notre Dame Stadium. Marching onto the field on game day will be forever marked in my memory.

“And just getting to travel with the band is incredible. Two years ago in my sophomore year, in 2024, we traveled to New York, New Orleans, Miami and Atlanta. It’s very fun. I don’t get to travel a lot. When we do as a family, it’s to visit family. So, getting to travel to big cities and getting to experience different cultures in America while also getting to perform in the biggest stadiums is just incredible.”

So is one other important part of her life—her desire to share her faith and her relationship with Christ with others.

I’ve felt surrounded by that love’

While her family and her experiences at Shawe prepared her well to become a leader of Notre Dame’s marching band, that combination has also led her to a leadership role in campus ministry at Saint Mary’s.

“Back home, I would train servers, and I was a server and a eucharistic minister,” says Ortiz-Morales, a member of Prince of Peace Parish in Madison. “I enjoyed my religion classes at Shawe, and I was a retreat leader. When I went to Saint Mary’s, I got very involved in campus ministry, just going to their

events and retreats. At the end of my sophomore year, they sent out an application for leaders.

“I had missed being a leader at church. So, when I saw the opportunity, I sought it out. Saint Mary’s didn’t have a Hispanic minister, so I wrote that that would be lovely to have. I was able to be the Latino minister last year. It was very rewarding to reach out to Hispanics and Latinos at Saint Mary’s.”

That outreach—and her role as a peer minister this year—gives her the opportunity to help people draw closer to Christ, an outcome she continues to pursue in her own life.

“Christ has been a big part of my life, and I’ve been lucky enough to have been introduced to God. Ever since I was little, I’ve felt surrounded by that love,” she says.

“I’ve also experienced people who have not been surrounded by that love or have thought they’ve been betrayed by that love. So, being able to reach out and tell people that they are loved is important to me. Introducing my religion to people has really been amazing. Something that’s really big about campus ministry at Saint Mary’s is radical hospitality. We welcome everyone and tell them to come as they are.”

The people who know Ortiz-Morales well praise the way she tries to create harmony among the different notes of her life.

Marching toward a season of hope

“Kimberly has always been so positive and happy when you see her,” says Kahn, the president of Prince of Peace Schools in Madison. “She is a very motivated young lady. She has a strong faith, and her family is very important to her. All those qualities have helped her reach heights we are all proud of. We always knew Kimberly would go on and do great things, but she started that journey right away.”

The best part of the journey for Ortiz-Morales is sharing it with the people who touch her life and the people she strives to touch.

She thinks back to the friends who encouraged her when she had doubts as a freshman trying out for the Notre Dame marching band.

“I’m so glad they gave me that motivation.” She looks ahead to a senior year of leading her fellow musicians and her fellow students on their shared journey of faith—a journey that begins with some anxiety and an abundance of belief.

“There’s more learning to do,” she says about being a drum major. “I’m scared, but I’ve been told that when you’re scared, it’s because you care about it.

“Something I always aspire to is to see people grow in something I know they’ll learn to love. So just being there for them and helping them every step of the way, it’s just very rewarding.”

As she strikes up the band, Ortiz-Morales marches toward a season of hope, joy and faith. †

‘Kimi has an incredibly magnetic personality that just draws people into her. ...Her conducting and marching skills are excellent, but it is her magnetic personality that makes her a strong leader.’
—Sam Sanchez, associate director of the Notre Dame band

Indiana’s Catholics reflect American spirit of courage and sacrifice

As the United States celebrates its 250th anniversary this year, the country acknowledges this landmark moment by recalling the stories of its founders, its heroes and the everyday people who have graced America with their courage, their sacrifice and their willingness to confront challenges and overcome them.

In that same spirit, *The Criterion* is sharing stories of Catholics from Indiana’s past and present who have displayed those same qualities in leaving their mark on our archdiocese, our state, our country and our world.

As we continue this series, we hope you enjoy these stories and are inspired by the people in them. †



Logo by Emily Mastronicola

Benedictine Father Cyprian Davis was a ‘foundation stone’ for Black Catholics in the U.S.

By Sean Gallagher

When Clarence Davis arrived in the small town of St. Meinrad in southern Indiana in 1949 from his hometown of Washington, D.C., when he was 19, it might have seemed like he was entering a different world. The stark contrast between the two was likely heightened by the fact that Clarence was Black.

But as different as this world might have been, Clarence definitely sought it out. The son of educators, reading books on Catholicism had fascinated him, leading him to be received into the full communion of the Church when he was 15. He was also particularly drawn to monastic life and the priesthood.



Fr. Cyprian Davis

That’s what led him to St. Meinrad 1949. The following year, Clarence entered the novitiate of the then-Saint Meinrad Abbey (it became an archabbey in 1954), the first Black to be received into the monastic community.

When Clarence professed temporary vows in 1951, he was given the religious name Cyprian, the name by which became well known in the decades to come around the world in the Church, in academic circles and in advocacy for Black civil rights.

Ordained a priest in 1956, Father Cyprian later earned a licentiate and doctorate in Church history at the Catholic University of Louvain in Louvain, Belgium.

When Father Cyprian returned from his graduate

studies in Europe in the early 1960s, the Civil Rights Movement was growing in strength. He became involved immediately, attending the rally in his hometown of Washington on Aug. 28, 1963, in which Martin Luther King, Jr., gave his famed “I Have a Dream” speech.

Father Cyprian later took part in 1965 in the civil rights protest marches from Selma, Ala., to Montgomery, Ala.

In the Church in the U.S., he helped the country’s bishops craft two pastoral letters on racism: “Brothers and Sisters to Us,” issued in 1979, and “What We Have Seen and Heard,” issued in 1984.

During all of this activity on the national level, Father Cyprian remained dedicated for decades to helping form men for the priesthood across the country and around the world as a history professor at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology.

And while serving as a professor, Father Cyprian carried out research which resulted in the authoritative *History of Black Catholics* in the U.S., published in 1990.

When Father Cyprian died at the age of 84 in 2015, Father Kenneth Taylor, a Black archdiocesan priest who himself died in 2019 at the age of 67, spoke about the Benedictine priest’s role among Black Catholics in the U.S.

“He is the foundation stone for the development of black Catholic history. Covering that history that a lot of people—Black, white or anybody in the Church—were just not aware of led to the development of all kinds of other disciplines, like theology and liturgy from a black Catholic perspective.

“He had an effect all across the board in the development of the black Catholic community in the last half of the 20th century.” †

Little Sisters of the Poor superior renews vows

In the chapel of the Little Sisters of the Poor’s St. Augustine Home in Indianapolis, Mother Maria Christine Joseph, mother superior of the home, renews her religious vows on Aug. 14 at the end of a Mass of Thanksgiving celebrating her 50 years as a Little Sister of the Poor. At the age of 16, her first job was as a nursing assistant at the Little Sisters of the Poor’s St. Joseph Home for the Elderly in Palatine, Ill. “I was touched by becoming part of the lives of these dear elderly, so many with no family,” Mother Maria Christine recalls. “The Lord used them to speak to my heart.” Reflecting on her 50 years as a religious with the order, “It’s like the verse from John: ‘From his fullness we have received grace upon grace’ [John 1:16]—my vocation has been one grace after another,” she says. “There have been many wonderful occasions—the canonization of St. Jeanne Jugan [founder of the Little Sisters of the Poor] in 2009, all the people I’ve met. There have been surprises, sadness, disappointments and failures. But it all comes down to the absolute joy that drew me in the beginning, and that’s accompanying the elderly and being at the bedside of so many who passed away. Through all of my time as a Little Sister, I see God’s fidelity. From the time I was in the novitiate, I was drawn to Philippians 4:13, ‘I can do all things through him who strengthens me.’ I’ve been able to do what I’ve done because of him.” (Photo by Natalie Hoefer)



Benedictine Father Boniface Hardin worked for racial justice in Indianapolis

By Sean Gallagher

The great-grandson of an enslaved person, Benedictine Father Boniface Hardin grew up in the 1930s experiencing everyday the ongoing effects of slavery. That experience, and knowing his family’s roots in the bondage of slavery later led him to be a noted advocate for racial justice in Indianapolis.



Fr. Boniface Hardin

He shared his story with author Ruth Engs, who included it in volume two of her *Conversations in the Abbey*, a collection of oral history interviews with monks of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad.

Born in 1933 in Louisville, Ky., Father Boniface grew up in New Haven, Ky., in an area that was a Catholic stronghold in the largely Protestant Kentucky where his family had lived for generations.

Father Boniface’s great-grandfather, as an enslaved person, had helped build St. Joseph Proto-Cathedral in Bardstown, Ky., near New Haven, between 1816-23 after Bardstown was chosen as the center of the first diocese in the U.S. established west of the Appalachian Mountains.

A couple of generations later, both of Father Boniface’s parents were trained as teachers. But they and Father Boniface, because of their race, were restricted to sitting in pews in the back of St. Joseph during Mass.

After moving to Louisville during World War II, Father Boniface and his family were members at St. Peter Claver Parish, which in the segregated state was set aside for Black Catholics.

By the time he graduated from the eighth grade, Father Boniface knew he wanted to become a priest and was enrolled at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad. He later discerned a call to religious life as a monk of Saint Meinrad, was received as a novice in 1953 and professed vows in 1954. He was ordained a priest in 1959.

In 1965, Father Boniface, who had long desired to be involved in the Civil Rights Movement, was assigned as a parochial vicar at Holy Angels Parish in Indianapolis where many Black Catholics were members. While serving there for four years, he became a vocal advocate for racial justice in the city, leading protests against plans to route Interstate 65 through Black neighborhoods on Indianapolis’ near northwest side.

Father Boniface drew the attention of Civil Rights Movement leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., when he visited the city. He also met several times with presidential candidate Senator Robert Kennedy, whose speech to a Black crowd in Indianapolis on April 4, 1968, following the assassination of King is credited with keeping Indianapolis peaceful when so many others were consumed with rioting.

While national political and civil rights leaders consulted with Father Boniface, his attention was focused on the Black community in Indianapolis.

Along with St. Joseph Sister Jane Schilling, he co-founded the Martin Center. It later became Martin University in 1977, located on the former St. Francis de Sales Parish in Brightwood, a Black neighborhood on Indianapolis’ east side. A school for Black adults to gain a college education, Martin University closed in 2025.

Father Boniface remained the school’s president until retiring in 2007. He died in 2012 at 78.

At the time of his death, Father Kenneth Taylor, a Black archdiocesan priest who died in 2019, emphasized how Father Boniface kept his racial advocacy rooted in the Gospel.

“He was always looking for ways to help improve society as well as individuals. He put everything he did in the context of the Gospel.” †

Links to podcasts, articles, more on U.S. 250th anniversary

As the United States marks its 250th anniversary, Catholics across the country are invited to turn in prayer to the love and mercy of Jesus Christ through the consecration of our nation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Visit [archindy.org/250th](https://www.archindy.org/250th) to find prayer resources, related ArchIndy Vox episodes and a *Criterion* profile series celebrating Catholics from Indiana whose faith and service have helped shape our state, our Church and our nation. †



CYO recognition highlights volunteer efforts of adults and youths

The archdiocese’s Catholic Youth Organization honored the exceptional efforts of adults and youths during its Volunteer Awards Ceremony at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis on May 12. Here is a list of the award recipients:

2026 St. John Bosco Award recipients
Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish—Joe Cripe
Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ Parish—Jeff Durm and Jay Scheil (posthumously)
St. Jude Parish—Cary Davis
St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Parish—Michael (Dan) Dugan

2026 Msgr. Albert Busald Award
Christ the King Parish—John Harrington and Jim Hunter
Good Shepherd Parish—Steven Baase
Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Beech Grove—Jimmy Stahley
Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish—Steve Bourgeois and Monica Brames
Our Lady of Lourdes Parish—Jeremy Hambrick
St. Barnabas Parish—Dane Mize and Shannon Mize

SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Parish in Greenwood—Rene Childers
St. Jude Parish—Andrea Supe
St. Monica Parish—Ana Clay
St. Pius X Parish—Eric Borgert
St. Thomas Aquinas Parish—Liz Samperio
St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Parish—Nancy Herrman

2026 Bernie Price Spirit of Youth Award recipients
Christ the King Parish—Mia Bultinck
Good Shepherd Parish—Myles Caudill, Diego Fontalvo and Ingrid Reyes-Ruiz
Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Beech Grove—Dorothy Butts, Owen Lewis and Charlie Sparing
St. Barnabas Parish—Maggie Irwin
St. Jude Parish—Hannah Morris
St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Parish—Jordan Grayson

2026 Edward Tinder Official of the Year Award recipients
David Howard and Charley Walker †



Keep the emphasis on seeing the person, the soul, archbishop tells CYO volunteers

By John Shaughnessy

As he shared his homily with the volunteers, their families and friends during the liturgy part of the Catholic Youth Organization volunteer awards ceremony on May 12, Archbishop Charles C. Thompson encouraged everyone to “always keep in mind the soul, the spirit and the character of the person before us.”

To emphasize that point, the archbishop shared a phone call he had with a distraught mother from his days as the pastor of a parish. The mother was upset because of a phone conversation she had with another mom, whom she had considered a good friend.

The first mom wanted to let the second mom know that their sons had a “falling out” with each other. Yet when the first mom shared that news, the second mom told her, “Don’t bother me about that,” adding that she wasn’t about to discipline her son because his athletic skills were the family’s primary hope for its financial future.

“In other words,” the archbishop summed up the second mother’s thinking, “this kid is going to get a scholarship, he’s going to be a great athlete, he’s going to go on to be a pro, and we’re going to be set for life.”

Yet for the first mom and the archbishop in his then-role as pastor, there was the greater concern for the future of the boy from a far more important perspective.

“Where was the soul in this?” the archbishop shared with the volunteers, their families and friends.

Archbishop Thompson connected that

story and that question to the efforts of St. John Bosco, the namesake for the highest honor that the archdiocese’s CYO gives to an outstanding volunteer.

“St. John Bosco is known for reaching out to young people, especially those who are in trouble, in need, especially young boys. Because he saw the soul,” the archbishop noted. “He didn’t see objects. He saw the person, the soul.”

The source of St. John Bosco’s approach to youths was rooted in his Catholic faith, “primarily his devotion to the Eucharist,” the archbishop said.

“The late Pope Benedict XVI used to say that our task as Christians is not to possess truth, but our task as Christians is to allow truth to possess us. And he went on to say that truth is a person. Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. And St. John Bosco wholly embraced that.

“It was the Eucharist, the person of Jesus Christ that nurtured him, sustained him in his outreach to young people, never seeing them as an object but always seeing their soul. “

Archbishop Thompson recognized the CYO’s efforts in various ways “to help build up the character, to help us build up our values and principles and virtues.”

He also noted, “It’s great to win, but sometimes we learn even more in defeat. Our task is not always to win. Our task is always to keep before us a person’s soul. Let us never see each other as an object but always a soul.”

As he blessed the awards later, the archbishop said, “Bless all of those who receive them, that in serving one another



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson poses for a photo with recipients of the Bernie Price Spirit of Youth Award, named in honor of the longtime staff member of the archdiocese’s Catholic Youth Organization. The youths were honored during the CYO’s volunteer awards ceremony on May 12 at SS. Peter & Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. (Photo courtesy of Zoe Hawkins)

we may imitate your son. We ask you again for this in Christ our Lord.”

The archbishop’s focus on serving others was echoed by Jack Schmitz, executive director of the archdiocese’s CYO.

“This organization is all about the people,” said Schmitz, noting that the CYO is in its 72nd year in the archdiocese. “The combined efforts and sacrifices made by thousands of volunteers on a yearly basis is the foundation which provides great experiences for kids, leading them to

become the best version of themselves.

“Countless lives have been impacted through the remarkable volunteerism from this exceptional group of people, and we are so proud to recognize them.”

(The recipients of this year’s St. John Bosco Medal, the highest honor the archdiocese’s Catholic Youth Organization gives to its outstanding volunteers, are featured below on this page and continue on the next page.) †

Knowing the line between heartbreak and hope, a coach strives to bring joy to kids

By John Shaughnessy

In his 23 years in law enforcement, Jeff Durm learned that life can sometimes come down to sudden moments and



Jeff Durm

choices that can end in heartbreak or hope. Seeing so much heartbreak as a member of the Marion County Sheriff’s Department, Durm often tried to balance the scales with an emphasis on hope. Sometimes that approach included helping young people out of trouble and in the right direction. Other times, he was called into intense incidents involving someone with a mental health issue, knowing his calm demeanor could help defuse a potentially volatile situation.

And there was the time when a heartbreaking reality involving a young mother led him to adopt her child—one of the two of his four children that he adopted.

For 23 years and counting, Durm has also brought that approach of hope and difference-making to the way he has coached football and basketball teams at Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ Parish in Indianapolis. It’s an approach that recently led the archdiocese’s Catholic Youth Organization to award Durm the St. John Bosco Medal, the highest honor the organization gives a volunteer.

In nominating him for the award, a fellow parishioner noted, “Jeff holds a special place in our parish. His desire to make our community better is remarkable. While investing in our children and while pushing them to be better, he does it all while instilling the importance of faith in everything he does.”

Those words and the St. John Bosco Medal continue to have an impact on Durm. “It’s pretty emotional, to be honest with you. I’m proud of it,” he says. “I’ve been in Nativity for 35 years. Whatever I can do to help, I will.”

Part of that help flows from Buck Creek Winery, the Indianapolis winery he has owned and run for the past 20 years, after his retirement from the sheriff’s department.

Durm donates sacramental wine to the parish. Still, the football program at the parish is where he has poured out his passion.

“When I started, we didn’t even have a third- and fourth-grade team at Nativity,” he says. “I asked if we could organize it.”

He continued coaching football with that age group for more than 20 years, before stepping aside two years ago.

“I just always loved that age group. The kids are so open-eyed, and they want to learn. They just listen to everything you have to say.

“I really concentrated on them being a team and being part of a whole instead of an individual. It’s just very gratifying to see someone who’s never done it gain confidence, enjoy themselves and be part of a team.”

Still, no one may savor the joy of being connected to a team more than Durm, who still coaches basketball at the parish.

“As a parishioner, what I love most about CYO is not only do you get to know the boys, but you also get to know their families,” he says. “I’ve been at Nativity for 35 years, and you don’t know who a lot of these younger families are. This was a blessing for me because I was able to stay in touch with more people at Nativity, and that’s very rewarding for me.”

So is hearing from former players.

“Adults will come up to me and say, ‘Hey, Coach, you coached me when I was in third and fourth grade.’ Some of these kids are in their 30s now. They change so much from when they were 9 and 10,” he says with a laugh.

He pauses before adding, with a touch of emotion, “One parent told me, ‘My son is playing college football right now, and it all started with you.’ ”

The emotion stays as he shares what the CYO means to him and why it’s important for him to be involved in it.

“CYO is the best—absolutely the best because of the tie-in with Catholicism,” he says. “For me, it’s all part of our faith—the time, the talent and the treasure. It’s part of what we all should do as Catholics. I just feel very blessed to contribute in any way I can.” †

‘He had a way with the kids’: Honor recognizes coach’s lasting influence

By John Shaughnessy

Ali Leffler believes you can learn a lot about a person by the way they coach children and youths. That belief is part of the reason she has always thought so



Jay Scheil

highly of Jay Schiel. “He had a way with the kids,” says Leffler, noting that Scheil coached her daughter, Scout, for a few years in basketball in the archdiocese’s Catholic Youth

Organization. “Some coaches yell or get angry or get upset with the kids. He was respectful and respected. “He coached a lot of teams, and a lot of them made it to the city championship. He definitely let them use their independence and skill to succeed. He’d tell them, ‘Just do it, girls. You don’t need me.’ Even though they did. And he wanted them to have fun.”

His approach to coaching was one of the bittersweet memories that Leffler shared about Scheil, who died on June 19, 2025, at the age of 62. His coaching style was also one of the reasons that Leffler recommended to the athletic committee at Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ Parish in Indianapolis that they needed to nominate Scheil for the St. John Bosco Medal, the highest honor that the archdiocese’s CYO awards an outstanding volunteer.

“There’s no way I could be up at Little Flower as much as I am without my wife and my family supporting me,” Dugan says. You just can’t do it by yourself.”

Love of family is at the heart of all he does, and his embrace of what he considers family extends in many directions.

The impact and the lessons of his childhood continue—for good. †

A prayer in a time of crisis reflects a coach’s emphasis on family and faith

By John Shaughnessy

Years may pass, but some moments are always fresh in parents’ memories, especially those moments when parents desperately turned to God in a time of crisis involving their children.

Cary Davis is sharing one of those moments now, recalling a time 22 years ago when his wife Lisa was rushed to Riley Hospital for Children in Indianapolis. At the time, she was just 28 weeks into the pregnancy of their identical twin sons.

“We thought we were going to lose the boys,” Davis recalls, the emotion still raw. “The next day, they were going to take the babies out. I prayed to God that night, asking God to let the babies come out healthy.”

He takes a deep breath before adding, “And they survived. Jack was 1 pound, 9 ounces, and Cal was 2 pounds, 9 ounces. And now they’re both college athletes when they weren’t even supposed to be breathing.”

Beyond sharing the blessing of how a crisis turned into two gifts, the story reveals the three main elements of Davis’s life: family, faith and sports.

It’s a combination that recently led the Indianapolis Fire Department firefighter to be awarded the highest honor that the archdiocese’s Catholic Youth Organization gives to an outstanding volunteer, the St. John Bosco Medal.

During 30 years at St. Jude Parish in Indianapolis, Davis has coached football and volleyball, served as assistant athletic director and been a member of its athletic board. He has done it all while working to create a foundation of family and faith for teams—efforts he said wouldn’t have been possible without the support of Lisa.

Friendships across the decades lead a coach to create lasting bonds for his players

By John Shaughnessy

The photograph of Joe Cripe with three of his closest friends just after he received the St. John Bosco Medal reveals as much about him as the honor itself.

When Sean Keating, Kevin Davey and Mike Farrell learned that Cripe would receive the highest award that the archdiocese’s Catholic Youth Organization gives an outstanding volunteer, they wanted to be there to honor a

friendship that dates back to the 1970s.

“My best friends to this day are guys that I played CYO sports with or against,” says Cripe about the three friends who showed up for him during the volunteer awards ceremony on May 12 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. “The CYO is such a powerful thing. And I think what makes it powerful is that the Catholic faith is intertwined throughout it.

“When you can come together through faith, through common interests like basketball, and being there for each other as a teammate, that’s powerful stuff. I think that’s held us together. We’ve all been in each other’s weddings. We’ve all been at the funerals of each other’s parents. And all of that is part of that bond we built through CYO sports.”

Cripe passed that emphasis on relationships to his players during the 33 years he coached basketball at Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHM) Parish in Indianapolis. It’s the parish where he grew up, where he played for a coach who taught him to love the game and savor the bonds it creates.

“My coach at IHM was Steve Wolkoff,” Cripe says. “He was a wonderful coach and a lifelong mentor to me. I talk to him every

“When I coached football, sometimes we had a problem with getting attendance at Mass,” he says. “I created a culture—kind of like a Notre Dame thing—where we would go to Mass as a team, wearing our jerseys. After Mass, we ate a light lunch, and then we played our game. It did take up a little more of the day, but it was good because they’re really supposed to be going to Mass anyway. And the priest always loved seeing the kids there. He’d give us a special prayer.”

He continues to foster that approach today.

“I’m always the guy at St. Jude who is trying to initiate the all-sports Masses,” says Davis, who still coaches boys’ volleyball at St. Jude. “I’m trying to bring people back to the Church. I understand we’re not just there for sports. We’re there for our faith, too. We’ll have a fall sports Mass that we encourage all the coaches and players to wear their jerseys to. And the elderly in the parish love to see the kids.”

That focus on faith is rooted in his own family with Lisa and their four children, including Evan and Rachel.

“We go to church as a family, and we enjoy that time,” he says. “I feel it makes us all better.”

Davis has the same impact of making St. Jude Parish better, said a fellow coach who nominated him for the St. John Bosco Medal, noting that Davis is also involved in the parish’s men’s club and helps with the parish festival.

“He is selfless with his time, steadfast in his faith, and a positive influence on everyone around him,” the coach noted. “He embodies the spirit of service, leadership and commitment that the St. John Bosco award represents.”

Davis is honored by the award—and grateful for all the years he’s been able to connect family, faith and sports together.

“CYO has offered me a lot. Actually, our whole faith has. It runs deep. It really does. I’m hoping to grow young men in the faith.” †

A lesson from his childhood leads a coach to do ‘what is right’ for others

By John Shaughnessy

For good and bad, the lessons we learn in childhood often stay with us for a lifetime. And Dan Dugan learned a lot growing up in foster care since he was 2.



Dan Dugan

One of the best lessons he learned came from his aunt, the twin sister of his mother.

Life had dealt Dugan’s mom some crushing realities that she wasn’t able to cope with, heartbreaks that devastated her and prevented her from being the mother she hoped to be. As for his aunt, she was a mother of five, and even though she wasn’t able to take Dugan in full-time, he was able to live with her during some summers.

“She came out of the Depression, no high school education, and she cleaned houses for a living,” Dugan recalls about his aunt. “If she knew another family needed \$30, she’d say, ‘I got 20 bucks.’ Then she’d find the other \$10 and just give it all away. I learned from her that you’re supposed to be doing what is right.”

That lesson has always guided Dugan in his 36 years as a member of St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Parish in Indianapolis, especially in his coaching of the parish’s Catholic Youth Organization teams in football, basketball and wrestling.

“I’m a firm believer that when you see something and

it’s not right, you need to try to make it right in some way or another,” Dugan says. “It doesn’t mean it’s going to be perfect, but when you see something, leave it better than what you found it. And that goes with how you deal with young people. If you’re lucky to be around them—even if they have issues—try to help them be better during the time you have with them.”

That approach and his longtime commitment to children and youths have led the archdiocese’s CYO to recently award Dugan with the St. John Bosco Medal, the highest honor that the organization gives a volunteer.

Considering some of the challenges that Dugan had to wrestle with in his young life, it seems fitting that the sport that is closest to his heart is wrestling.

As he talks about his involvement in the Eastside Crusaders wrestling program—drawing children from the Indianapolis parishes of Holy Spirit, Little Flower and Our Lady of Lourdes—he focuses on the individual demands of the sport and the commitment to improve. One of his favorite stories also reveals his heart for the underdog. It’s about a boy in his first year of wrestling.

“He was getting annihilated every match, and then he wins one in triple overtime in the city tournament. It was the best match of the day. It was good for that young man. See, if you stick with it, you can make it. It’s always good to see at the end of the year that they’ve gotten better.”

The connection to his childhood goes deep.

“I made it through it,” he says. “That’s one of the things that drives me. I’m one of those coaches who says,

‘Little Joey might be a handful, so give him to me.’ I talk to them and say, ‘Hey, this is what I want for you. Will you do that?’ If they say yeah and they don’t, I tell them, ‘I have to hold you accountable because you said you’d do it. What are we going to do to make that happen?’

“I’m not saying you have to succeed but if you go out there and just don’t try, you’re just wasting everybody’s time.”

Dugan makes the most of his time. Besides coaching at Little Flower, he has served on its parish council, helped at its festival, run its Mother’s Day breakfast for more than 20 years, and been a member of its athletic board, including serving as its president.

“Dan is a person who does everything, always being there to help with whatever it takes to make it an enjoyable experience for everyone,” a fellow coach said in nominating him for the St. John Bosco Medal.

Dugan deflects the praise. Instead, he boasts about the difference his wife of 40 years, Marty, has made to the parish. And there’s obvious pride when he talks about how his daughters, Amanda and Bridget, coach in the CYO.

“There’s no way I could be up at Little Flower as much as I am without my wife and my family supporting me,” Dugan says. You just can’t do it by yourself.”

Love of family is at the heart of all he does, and his embrace of what he considers family extends in many directions.

The impact and the lessons of his childhood continue—for good. †

Ministry through relationships mark Father Luerman’s 70 years as a priest

By Sean Gallagher

RICHMOND—If you ever go out for a meal with Father John Luerman, budget extra time for it—a lot of time.

“He remembers everybody and he talks, talks, talks, talks, talks,” said Father James Wilmoth, a friend of Father Luerman for nearly 60 years. “I laugh when he says, ‘I want to talk to this guy.’ A half hour later, he’d be done.”

Dan Sweet is a member of St. Elizabeth of Hungary Parish in Cambridge City, where Father Luerman served as pastor from 1980 until he retired in 2001. They’ve remained close ever since. He knows from experience what it means to go out with Father Luerman.

“You don’t want to go anywhere if you’re in a hurry because he will talk to everybody,” Sweet said.

That’s not simply a personality habit of a priest who’s described as “warm,” “genuine,” “a good guy” and “friendly and supportive.”

It’s at the heart of his 70 years of priestly ministry that he has lived in parishes across central and southern Indiana. Members of many of those faith communities gathered on May 3 to celebrate Father Luerman’s milestone anniversary during a Mass at St. Andrew Church on a campus of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Richmond, his hometown and where he now lives in retirement.

For him, the people he served wherever he was assigned “were my people, my brothers and sisters.”

And that care extended far beyond the Catholics who were members of the parishes in which he ministered.

“I not only knew the people who belonged to [my parish], but also the other people around,” said Father Luerman, 96, in an interview with *The Criterion*. “If you’re only a priest for your parish, you’re not doing your job. I knew them and they knew me.”

Rich in faith, loving the priesthood

Born in 1930 in Richmond to parents who were German immigrants, Father Luerman grew up poor in material things but rich in the things that matter the most.

“My parents were strong in their faith,” he said. “We didn’t have a car and so walked about a mile to go to church. They were poor when they came from Germany and raised six kids. We didn’t worry about money because we didn’t have any money.”

The faith of his parents contributed to a desire for the priesthood while he was a child. So did the ministry of Father Ambrose Schneider, who was assigned to what was then St. Andrew Parish in Richmond.

“He was a young priest who was always involved with the school,” recalled Father Luerman. “He was there for all of our activities. He was the kind of guy that you wanted to be, a kind gentleman.”

Although Father Schneider was “the kind of guy” that Father Luerman actually came to be as a priest in his kindness and availability to the people he served, there was a point in his time at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad when he wasn’t sure about his vocation.

Father Luerman talked it over with his father one summer.

“He said that it was my decision,” he remembered his dad telling him. “He said that he didn’t care what I did, that my mom and him prayed for me and that if I didn’t love it, I should do something else.”

He learned to love it by spending time in the evenings in the summer at St. Andrew doing youth ministry with another young priest assigned there at

the time, Father Anthony Spicuzza.

“He was dedicated to the people,” Father Luerman recalled. “He was just a simple, ordinary guy who loved being a priest.”

Again, much like the priest he would later become. But before spent he evenings at the parish, Father Luerman put in a hard day’s work at manual labor jobs, including one where he had to haul railroad ties up a hill all day long.

“You learned how to deal with people and what real life is all about,” said Father Luerman, who put those life lessons to use later in his priestly life and ministry.

That life began on May 3, 1956, when Archbishop Paul C. Schulte ordained him during a Mass at the Archabbey Church of Our Lady of Einsiedeln in St. Meinrad.

“I’d been anticipating it for 12 years,” the priest recalled. “It was an exciting day. My mom and dad were there. It was only the second time that they had been to Saint Meinrad in all my 12 years in seminary.”

‘You’ve got to be available’

Father Luerman’s experience during the summer while in seminary of long days at work and parish ministry in the evening prepared him for his first assignment as an assistant pastor at the former St. Catherine of Siena Parish and as an instructor and counselor at the former Sacred Heart High School, both in Indianapolis.

“You started at 6:30 in the morning and you quit at 11:00 at night,” he said. “You might get a week’s vacation if you were lucky. But I was used to long hours. It was just part of my life.”

Making connections with people as a priest started on his first day of ministry at St. Catherine, but in the most tragic of circumstances.

Father Luerman was called to a home where a husband and father had taken his own life. Now 70 years later, the moment still stands out in the priest’s mind.

“I can still remember the man’s name, his wife and two kids,” he said. “But that’s what your work was. If you’re going to be a good priest, you’ve got to be available. Period.”

Three years later, in 1959, Father Luerman began ministry as an assistant pastor at St. Monica Parish and an instructor at Cathedral High School, both in Indianapolis.

St. Monica had been founded just three years earlier and, according to Father Luerman, “was still out in the country,” but with new housing developments appearing all the time in the midst of the baby boom.

“You worked hard,” he recalled. “Everyone in the parish was new. You had to get to know everybody. It grew so quickly, you couldn’t imagine it.”

Father Luerman spent nine years at St. Monica before serving for a year at Holy Family Parish in New Albany and at Our Lady of Providence High School in Clarksville. In 1969, he became a pastor for the first time, leading the faithful at St. Michael Parish in Charlestown.

In the 45 years of ministry that Father Luerman carried out before retiring in 2001, he was assigned to faith communities in locations from large cities to small towns. The people he served have likewise been a mixture of those with a large income and those who were poor. None of that mattered to Father Luerman.

“I was happy every place where I was at,” he said. “I loved them all. And I’ve never been impressed with money. It doesn’t make you happy.”

Father Luerman’s happiness in serving the faithful continued for some 20 years after he retired, giving sacramental assistance in parishes across central and southern Indiana until he was 90.

Father Sengole Gnanaraj, the administrator of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Richmond, recalled how Father Luerman filled in for him for four months in 2019, daily caring for all the sacramental needs of a faith community with more than 900 households.

“That was so encouraging and so edifying—even challenging,” Father Gnanaraj said. “He was an active parish priest of a big parish for four months—at 89.”



Father John Luerman, second from left, celebrates a Mass on May 3 at St. Andrew Church on a campus of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Richmond to celebrate the 70th anniversary of his priestly ordination. Concelebrating the Mass is Father Sengole Gnanaraj at left. Assisting as altar servers at the liturgy are Milo Burket, right, and Eoghan Burket. (Submitted photo)

Even as health concerns led him to move in recent years to the Friends Fellowship retirement facility in Richmond, Father Luerman insists that his life there is still defined by the kind of personal relationship ministry that marked his decades of service in parishes.

He said that he serves others at Friends Fellowship “just by being happy.”

“Many people here are not happy to be here,” Father Luerman reflected. “They’ve had to sell their homes or are away from their homes or their kids. In my short time here, I’ve gotten to know everybody. It’s just a continuation of my life as a priest.”

‘He lifts you up to be with Christ’

The close connections that Father Luerman formed wherever he lived and ministered weren’t restricted to a few favored people and families.

“He was always around our family. He was part of the family,” Sweet said. “But he was like that with everybody. There are 1,000 other people who could say the same thing about him. He’s that kind of person, so warm and genuine.”

Sweet also noted how his former pastor brought his priestly ministry to the relationships he built up with people.

“He was there first off to listen,” Sweet said. “Then he would provide counseling—even if you didn’t know that you needed counseling. At the end of the conversation, you’d feel better.

“There’s no doubt that you knew he was a priest, always. He always found a way to connect you to God in whatever you were doing, helping you realize that you’re not alone.”

Father Gnararaj sees the value in the senior priest’s personal approach to priestly life and ministry.

“Evangelization begins with simple friendships,” Father Gnanaraj said. “It begins with the simple trust that he would build with people. It begins with the sharing of space and time. He’s number one on that. It’s so natural for him.”

Father Wilmoth said that his friend shows the same care to him as a brother priest that he’s given to his parishioners over the years.

“He’s supported me in so many ways,” Father Wilmoth said. “He’s such a good guy, friendly and supportive. He always wanted to know what I was doing and how it was going. He was very selfless.”

Sweet sees an image of Christ in Father Luerman’s connection of personal relationships with priestly ministry.

“He lives Christ, follows Christ and brings you along with Christ,” Sweet said. “He lifts you up to be with Christ.”

For his part, Father Luerman has loved his 70 years of life and ministry as a priest and hopes that other men will join him in the vocation.

“Every day, I’ve always prayed, ‘Make me a good, healthy, holy and happy priest,’ ” Father Luerman said. “I’ve enjoyed my years as a priest. Whatever I did, I enjoyed it. I enjoyed helping people.

“It’s been a great life. I would recommend it. I hope young people would consider the priesthood and religious life. We need more young men.”

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



Retired Father John Luerman, right, speaks on May 3 with Tony and Donna Talbert during a celebration of the 70th anniversary of Father Luerman’s priestly ordination. The celebration took place at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Richmond. The faith community’s administrator, Father Sengole Gnanaraj, is at left. (Submitted photo)

Criterion staff honored for excellence in journalism

Criterion staff report

Staff members of *The Criterion* were recently honored for excellence in journalism by three organizations. The recognition included awards from the Catholic Media Association of the United States and Canada (CMA) and the National Federation of Press Women (NFPW).

NFPW at-large and national awards

The recognition for work completed during the 2025 calendar year started in May when staff writer Natalie Hoefer



Natalie Hoefer

garnered four awards from NFPW's at-large contest for states without a local contest: —First place: Specialty Articles, Social Issues—"New program would 'change the whole paradigm' for those released from prison." The article focused on

the archdiocese's new Catholic Charities-Prison Re-entry program to help formerly incarcerated inmates re-enter society. One judge wrote, "This is beautifully written, and this piece has wonderful reporting. I love the topic, and I love that you're bringing light to it and asking for donations. Great job here!" —First place: Special Articles, Religion—"New Albany Deanery's Summer Daze program helps youths live out their faith."

"I'm amazed at the quotes of kids that are so young," a judge wrote. "Fantastic piece, and what a wonderful program!" —First place: Photography, Photography-Writer—"Contributions to coverage of the National Catholic Youth Conference [articles and photos]." "Beautiful story through telling of photographs," judges wrote. "The expressions you captured in your photos truly show the emotions and excitement these children were experiencing. The cover image conveys your vision for this piece beautifully."

—Second place: Feature Story, Print-based Newspaper—"Madison shop leads to blessings paid forward and 'Holy Spirit' moments." Judges wrote, "This is a heartfelt and compelling feature that effectively blends personal narrative with community impact. The story has a strong emotional core, anchored in [Bonnie] Wentworth's journey from personal struggle to purpose-driven business, and it maintains a clear throughline centered on faith, service and transformation."

All three of her at-large first-place entries advanced to the national NFPW competition. In the national competition, Hoefer's honors included: —1st Place – Photography, Photographer-Writer for "Contributions to staff coverage of National Catholic Youth Conference" —Honorable Mention – Specialty Articles, Social Issues for "New program would 'change the whole paradigm' for those released from prison" —Honorable Mention – Specialty Articles, Religion for "New Albany Deanery's Summer Daze program helps youths 'live out the faith.'"

CMA awards

The staff received more recognition on June 19 during the awards program, held in Atlantic City, N.J., of the Catholic Media Association of the United States and Canada. Hoefer was awarded second place in the Best Photograph-National/International Event category for a candid photo of teenagers praying at the National Catholic Youth Conference.

"The image is a striking and dynamic capture," judges wrote, "conveying a vivid sense of sound and emotion while using color and movement to create a powerful and immersive impact." Hoefer also received second place recognition for "Best Reporting of Social Justice Issues—Life and Dignity of the Human Person" for her story "New program would 'change the whole paradigm' for those released from prison." "This entry is one of the best-reported pieces in this category," judges wrote. "It opens with a vivid human portrait before methodically delivering firsthand voices, showing how the program was developed and explaining the specific mechanics with clarity and detail."

Assistant editor John Shaughnessy was awarded second place in the "Best Reporting on a Special-Age Group—Young Adults ages 18-40" category for his story "Scenes from a young filmmaker's life—and the faith and love at the heart of it." The article focused on former longtime member of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish Branden Stanley and his work with Spirit Juice Studios, a Chicago-area company that creates award-winning

films primarily focused on sharing the depth and the beauty of the Catholic faith. Judges wrote, "This is an excellent profile that shows how faith influences this young filmmaker's career and everyday life. The in-depth and detailed interview and storytelling made it stand out."

Shaughnessy also received third place recognition in the Hot Topic-Jubilee Year category for his story " 'The gift of life that we have to honor': Finding a path to hope after a tragic night." The article reflected on a tragic car accident that took the life of David Marshall and led friends Tony and Donna Talbert and others to begin a charitable program to honor David's memory. It also shared how Tony Talbert reached out to forgive the person in prison who caused the accident.

"This article is well-written and truly gives hopes to the reader. Good job," judges wrote. Reporter Sean Gallagher was recognized with an honorable mention award in the "Best Regular Column—Family Life" category for his monthly "Faith and Family" column. Editor Mike Krokos earned an honorable mention honor in "Best Editorial on a National or International Issue—Weekly newspaper" for his editorial, "May

all generations continue building a culture of life." The editorial focused on the more than 1,000 high school and college students who in January participated in the annual Indiana March for Life in downtown Indianapolis.

In recognizing *The Criterion* staff for its dedication in serving the people of central and southern Indiana, Sally Krause, archdiocesan executive director for communications, said the honors are well deserved. "Our team is very committed to the newspaper's evangelizing mission, and it is always affirming when we get recognition for our dedication and hard work," Krause said. †



John Shaughnessy



Sean Gallagher



Mike Krokos

Holy Angels Virtual Bible Study



Holy Angels Parish in Indianapolis has begun a virtual Bible Study Ministry. Pictured are parishioners taking part in the program that has the goals of helping people get to know who God is and his gift of instructions for a fruitful, Christian life—and to learn about his Son and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The group meets every Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. on Zoom. Members reflect on current Mass Scripture readings and use resources like the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* to enhance their learning. Every fourth Wednesday, they pray the rosary to ensure the Blessed Mother is an important part of their study group. All are invited to join each week. Go to zoom.us/join. The meeting ID is 4696712373. The passcode is w1SjTK. (Submitted photo) †

Leaders with Notre Dame ties among consultors named to Vatican dicastery

(OSV News)—Pope Leo XIV has appointed three U.S.-based consultors, all with ties to the University of Notre Dame in northern Indiana, to the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development. They are among a dozen newly named consultors to the Vatican department created by Pope Francis in 2016. The Holy See Press Office on Aug. 18 announced the appointments of the 12, including Father Emmanuel Katongole, a theology professor at the University of Notre Dame; Kathryn Koch, president and CEO of the Los Angeles-based international investment firm TCW; and Clemens Sedmak, director of Notre Dame's Nanovic Institute for European Studies. The dicastery supports the Church's work in the areas of human dignity and human rights, economic justice, care for creation, migration and displacement, as well as peace, conflict and humanitarian crises. Obstacles in all of these areas are to be addressed, according to the Church, in order to nurture human flourishing. The consultors help to bolster the dicastery for five-year terms. They are assigned "from among the faithful who are distinguished by their expertise, proven ability and prudence," according to guidelines set in 2022. Father Katongole, a priest of the Archdiocese of Kampala, Uganda, recently became director of the Ansari Institute for Global Engagement with Religion at Notre Dame. He joined its faculty in January 2013 specializing in politics and violence in sub-Saharan Africa, political theology, global Catholicism and other related areas. Before going to Notre Dame, he was associate professor of theology and world Christianity at Duke University's Divinity School. He received a doctorate in Philosophy from Catholic University of

Louvain in Belgium and was ordained to the priesthood in 1987. In announcing his appointment to the Ansari Institute, Mary Gallagher, the Marilyn Keough Dean of Notre Dame's Keough School of Global Affairs, where Father Katongole teaches theology and peace studies, said he has "a deep commitment to integral human development." Koch has led TCW, also known as Trust Company of the West, since 2023. Prior to joining TCW, she spent 20 years in the asset management division of Goldman Sachs, where her most recent position was chief investment officer. In that role, she managed the company's \$300 billion public equity business and was a member of the asset management division's executive committee. Koch serves on the board of trustees of Notre Dame, her alma mater. She completed a bachelor's degree in English and Economics at the university in 2002, graduating *magna cum laude*. Sedmak is a professor of social ethics at Notre Dame's Keough School of Global Affairs and specializes in Catholic social tradition, poverty, philosophy of religion and other related areas. He also teaches at Notre Dame's Institute for Social Concerns. Sedmak has doctoral degrees in philosophy, theology and social theory, and he taught moral and social theology at King's College in London before going to Notre Dame. He also held multiple positions at University of Salzburg in his native Austria. The Nanovic Institute for European Studies, under Sedmak's direction, has a mission to "strengthen Notre Dame's presence in Europe, deepen the understanding of Europe within the Notre Dame community, and contribute to academic discourse and research on European studies." †

A year after school shooting, Annunciation family moves forward in hope

MINNEAPOLIS (OSV News)—Molly Stommes was working from home on the morning of Aug. 27, 2025, when she heard “very loud noises” coming from just across the street, where Annunciation Catholic Church and School sit.

Two of her four children were inside the church in south Minneapolis for Mass, as was her husband, Matt Stommes, while their two youngest, both in kindergarten, were in the school next door. All four children were excited for the start of the school year, kicked off by the opening Mass celebrated by the pastor of Annunciation, Father Dennis Zehren.

Molly, a nurse practitioner, was in a virtual meeting inside her family’s home. “Probably a few minutes after the shooting, a neighbor yelled in my door that there was a situation outside,” Molly, 39, recalled. “I knew then what my instincts had been telling me, that something was wrong.”

Matt, also 39, was seated at Mass away from the students and teachers in a section for parents. When the shooting started, he heeded the yelled instructions to get down. Then, he crawled over to a nearby steel door of the church to try to prevent the shooter from gaining entrance. Others did the same at different doors.

After the shooting stopped, Matt began helping school leaders rush children to safety. During that process, he learned that all four of his children were unharmed—Charlize, now 13 and entering the eighth grade; Finnegan, 9 and entering third grade; and twins Etta and Esme, 5 and now entering first grade.

Outside near Diamond Lake Road, Molly put her nursing skills to work. She hustled across the street to find out what was happening. What she saw spurred her to immediate action.

“I came across the street to [see] injured children being lined up,” she said. “So, I started assessing them.”

As the minutes passed, Molly and others, including Matt, began “waiting for ambulances,” she said. Molly and Matt sat with a seriously injured student until paramedics placed the student into an

ambulance. Later, she drove the mother of another injured child to Hennepin County Medical Center in Minneapolis.

Molly and Matt talked to other Annunciation families, with some of them coming to their home. It was a natural gathering place, but a surreal one for the couple.

That day also included an encounter with Mollie and Jesse Merkel, who lost their son, Fletcher, in the tragedy. Another student, Harper Moyski, was also killed in the gunfire. Two dozen others, plus three elderly Massgoers, were physically injured.

The Merkel and Stommes families had become friends, with Fletcher—a year ahead of Finnegan—teaching Finnegan how to fish and spending time with him on their combined family vacations at Grand View Lodge on Gull Lake near Brainerd.

As the days passed, the Stommes visited with the Merckels and offered them comfort. That friendship and bond continue.

The memories of Aug. 27, 2025, are vivid and painful for Molly and Matt Stommes, especially as they approached the calendar date of the shooting one year later.

“August is a very heavy month,” said Molly during an Aug. 17 interview with *The Catholic Spirit*, newspaper of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis. “Our children have been so resilient, but this will be quite difficult for some of them. I think just going back to school and the anticipation of that can be exciting for some, but also difficult for others.”

Just as Molly and Matt describe details about what happened the day of the tragedy, they can just as easily list all the ways people around them have offered meaningful and practical support.

More people than they can count brought over food. “We didn’t cook for over two months,” Matt said.

Molly added: “At a time when you’re not sleeping, you have no appetite, it was immensely helpful.”

Another blessing came in the form of a puppy the Stommes family received in



The Stommes family gathers for a photo in the front yard of their home in Minneapolis: front left, Esme, Etta and Finnegan; back left, Molly, Matt (holding Louie) and Charlize. The family lives across the street from Annunciation Church and School. (OSV News photo/Dave Hrbacek, *The Catholic Spirit*)

February. They welcomed Louie into their home after someone who knew the family made arrangements with a dog breeder.

“Obviously, raising a puppy is not the easiest, but he has been a huge joy and very helpful, particularly for Finnegan,” Molly said.

After all the trauma their children went through, it was easy to embrace the idea of having a dog to provide comfort.

“Immediately after the shooting, our kids, particularly the three youngest, would insist on going to the school and church to be with the therapy dogs,” Molly said. “That was a daily occurrence. They wanted to be around dogs constantly.”

Another constant in the Stommes home is the steadfast level of hope fueled by their faith and resilience.

“Our school’s Scripture verse for last year was chosen before this tragedy,” Molly said. “I think for many of us, it kind of helped carry us through—Jeremiah 29:11,” she said.

The last words of that verse were embroidered on T-shirts worn by students, parents and school staff: “a future filled with hope.”

“On the days where I feel the saddest and low, I do have a lot of hope for our future, and I know that God has a plan for all of us,” Molly told *The Catholic Spirit*.

“For me, it’s helpful to reflect on how Jesus tells us that we’re meant for his kingdom,” Matt said. “This world is a gift, but it’s not the end. And I’ve been given so much hope and encouragement from seeing everyone around us within this community and broader take action and spend their time serving others.”

Having seen last year’s theme come to life, they are now ready to embrace the Scripture verse for this school year, which is from Luke 1:78-79 and ends with the line: “guide our feet into the way of peace.”

“I love our Scripture theme for this coming year,” Molly said. “That just reminds us that we are called to prayer and action.” †

Parents affected by Annunciation shooting gather to pray before new school year

EDINA, MINN. (OSV News)—Our Lady of Grace Church was packed during Mass on Aug. 19 ahead of “An Evening with Annunciation Parents: Faith, Hope and Resilience,” an event held eight days before the one-year anniversary of the fatal shooting at nearby Annunciation Catholic School in Minneapolis.

After the parish’s evening liturgy in the church, with Archbishop Bernard A. Hebda of St. Paul and Minneapolis presiding, the gathering in the parish hall featured a panel discussion with three Annunciation parents and a recent graduate of the pre-K-to-grade-eight school.

They recounted their experiences and journeys following the shooting in Annunciation Church during an all-school Mass on Aug. 27, 2025, in which two students

were killed: 10-year-old Harper Moyski and 8-year-old Fletcher Merkel.

The adult panelists were Laura Eiden, a kindergarten teacher at Annunciation, and parents Tara Keegan and Dan Brady.

The Annunciation Light Alliance—a parent-led advocacy group—helped organize the event. Father Kevin Finnegan, Our Lady of Grace’s pastor, helped moderate the discussion and concelebrated the Mass. Father Dennis Zehren, Annunciation’s pastor, also concelebrated.

In his homily, Archbishop Hebda encouraged everyone to trust that God “is treating us as that good shepherd,” a shepherd with a deep heart for his sheep, “who makes sure that there is nothing that we would want for in those green pastures to which he leads us.

“Now, my brothers and sisters, there are times when the pastures don’t seem so green, and certainly for so many families in our archdiocese, it’s been tough to see the greenness of the pasture since last Aug. 27,” Archbishop Hebda said.

“And yet, we also see blessings,” he continued. “We see those hints of God’s goodness, of his generosity and his heart, and we trust that he’s going to continue to lead us into a deeper vision of how it is that he’s generous with us and how it is that he loves us with a shepherd’s heart.”

With Father Finnegan moderating, all four panelists shared their experience of Aug. 27, 2025. Some were in the church during the shooting, and others were on their way after hearing the news. All speakers shared their pain.

Brady said that he finds hope in moments like the event at Our Lady of Grace, with “people continuing to gather to hear these stories and to bear witness to it, and to take action” with “a mind toward doing better.”

As a teacher, Eiden said, “People ask me all the time how we are doing, how are the kids, how are the teachers.”

“The reality is that I can only answer that question for myself,” she said. “Since this journey toward healing is incredibly personal, no one’s story from that day is the same, and no journey is either. What I can see for myself is that my Annunciation community, my children and my students keep me going. They need me, and I need them.”

Annunciation’s students give Eiden hope, she said. “Are they struggling? Yes, they really are. And yet, they are getting up every day after living what they lived through,” she said. “They shine, and they continue to be the reason we’re here and telling these stories.”

Keegan spoke about wrestling with anger and said that “every time I feel that anger, I remind myself that what happened was not part of God’s plan.

“He did not just sit back and allow this to happen. This happened because of evil. And so when I’m feeling that anger, when any of us are feeling anger, it’s up to us to choose what we’re going to do with that anger,” she said.

“The devil, evil, darkness wants nothing more than for us to be angry at God,” she continued. “He wants nothing more than for us to turn our backs on God and to never enter a church again. It’s up to us to take that anger and do good with it. Take what the enemy meant for evil and turn it to do good.”

Gradually, Keegan said, she spent more time in a eucharistic adoration chapel. She prayed a rosary every single day and found comfort in prayer and God’s presence in Mass and the community.

“It’s hard, and it’s different every day,” Brady said. “I think you do it step by step. Sometimes you take steps back. But it’s the reality of what we’re trying to do here.”

“I do think a major part of it is this community,” Keegan added. “Not just Annunciation, but beyond. The community has been such a support to us. Honestly, without it, I don’t know where we would be. I’m grateful every day for Annunciation.”

Father Finnegan said he was grateful for the boldness and honesty with which the guests shared their hearts.

“It’s a powerful reminder that we all carry grief and hurt and pain differently,” Father Finnegan said. “But we can also learn and grow from that as well.” †



Jess Ayala, left, and Laura Eiden light candles during the final part of a gathering at Our Lady of Grace Church in Edina, Minn., on Aug 19. (OSV News photo/Dave Hrbacek, *The Catholic Spirit*)

SIMPLY CATHOLIC

Orestes Brownson was a combative Catholic convert intellect in the 19th century

(Editor’s note: With 2026 being the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States, this story is part of a continuing series of occasional “Simply Catholic” articles about great Catholics who have called America their home.)

By Russell Shaw

(OSV News)—At the very least, Orestes Brownson would have regarded it as odd. At the worst, he might have gotten hopping mad.

By the end of his life, Brownson, who was the most distinguished American Catholic public intellectual of the 19th century, had become a ferocious critic of the embrace of the American culture that most of his fellow Catholics had chosen. Yet by one of history’s quirks, Brownson today is buried in the crypt of Sacred Heart Basilica on the campus at the University of Notre Dame—the flagship university of this embrace of the American culture by Catholics in this country.

How he would have viewed that is suggested by his acid comment that there’s “scarcely a trait in the American character ... that is not more or less hostile to Catholicity.”

It goes without saying that Brownson was a difficult man—“one of the most rugged and forceful of personalities,” historian Theodore Maynard calls him. But together with his fighting spirit he combined a powerful intellect that made him a thinker to be reckoned with. His book *The American Republic*, published in 1865 immediately after the Civil War, continues to be read and discussed even today.

Brownson was born on Sept. 16, 1803, in Stockbridge, Vt. His father died when he was 2, and he was raised by a non-practicing Congregationalist couple. Although he spent little time in school, he read furiously and he grew up self-educating himself on the latest ideas and intellectual trends of the day, especially those that had some bearing on religion.

Brownson first became a Presbyterian, then a Unitarian minister and later a minister of the Congregationalist church. And for a short time he was the minister of his own Boston-based “Church of the Future.”

It was there that he came into contact with Transcendentalism, a post-Christian semi-religious movement that attracted members of the New England intellectual elite like Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Bronson Alcott and Margaret Fuller.

In 1837, he launched a journal named *Brownson’s Quarterly Review* as a platform for his many social, political, economic, literary and religious views. Combined with frequent lecturing, the journal made him a national figure in a few years.

In the early 1840s, Brownson had a profound religious experience that opened his eyes to the reality of God as a benign father. Continuing his religious search, he drew ever closer to Catholicism. He was received into the Church on Oct. 20, 1844.

A few years later, satirizing his well-known changeability in a verse that also spoke of Emerson and Alcott, poet James Russell Lowell said of him: “He shifts quite about, then proceeds to expound/That ‘tis merely the Earth, not himself, that turns round,/And wishes it clearly impressed on your mind/That the weathercock rules and not follows the wind.”

Although that assessment had a measure of truth, Brownson nonetheless was a man of stature in the intellectual world of his time, so much so that when St. John Henry Newman, the eminent British convert and scholar, was preparing to launch a Catholic university in Dublin, the American “weathercock” was the first person he invited to join the faculty.

Brownson was attracted and flattered. But the Irish bishops vetoed the appointment of someone with a transatlantic reputation for holding sometimes controversial views. So, Newman was obliged to suggest that he not visit Ireland just then. Seeing how things stood, Brownson declined the offer.

With the passing of time, he grew increasingly conservative in his religious views and more aligned with Ultramontanist—the school of thought that placed heavy emphasis on the authority of the pope. During and after the First Vatican Council (1869-1870), he strongly supported the dogmas of papal infallibility and papal primacy. Not only that, with Rome and the Italian unification movement locked in a struggle that was to end with the pope’s loss of the Papal States, Brownson wrote in favor of the temporal authority of the papacy, including even the power to depose secular rulers.



Orestes Brownson was a 19th-century minister in a variety of Protestant faith traditions whose spiritual search led him to the Catholic Church and a long career as one of the most prominent, influential and combative Catholic laymen in the United States. (OSV News files)

Not surprisingly, outspoken conservatism like that made the distinguished convert an embarrassment to bishops who preferred a less in-your-face approach. Nor did it help that he made no secret of his distaste for the Irish-Americans who had become a dominant presence in the Church in America.

In a book called *The Convert* describing his own religious experiences, Brownson provocatively described many of these as “nominally Catholic.”

His most famous tussle with a member of the hierarchy involved Archbishop John Hughes, the feisty Irish-American who headed the Archdiocese of New York from 1842-1864. Brownson moved to New York in 1845 at Archbishop Hughes’ invitation, and there revived his journal, now called simply *Brownson’s Review*.

But the combative editor and the no less combative churchman soon fell out over issues of style and substance. As a consequence, the editor took the prudent step of moving himself and his journal to the less stressful atmosphere of Elizabeth, N.J.

Brownson’s long and sometimes contentious friendship with Father Isaac Hecker, the founder of the Paulist Fathers, has been called one of the great stories of American Catholic history, and with good reason. For this is a story that sheds important light on the central issue in the Catholic experience in the United States—the embrace of American culture by Catholics and some prominent Church leaders in the U.S.

The two men had been close since the early 1840s, and Brownson was instrumental in Hecker’s conversion to Catholicism even though the younger man actually preceded him into the Church by a few months. For a long time, Brownson and Hecker shared the conviction that America was ripe for conversion, a theme expounded by Father Hecker in several books and his magazine *Catholic World*, to which his friend was a frequent contributor.

But as time passed, Brownson’s thinking shifted. Like some other observers of the American scene—for example, Henry Adams, historian, author of a justly famous autobiography, and grandson and great-grandson of presidents—Brownson came to believe that American democracy had suffered a sad decline since the glory days of the Revolution and the immediate post-Revolutionary period.

Brownson’s critique also had a distinctively Catholic edge, expressed in his review of a book by Father Hecker in which he repudiated the notion that evangelizing

America would be an easy task. On the contrary, he wrote, the American people as a whole were “imbued with a spirit of independence, an aversion to authority, a pride, an overwhelming conceit, as well as with a prejudice that makes them revolt at the bare mention of the Church.”

By 1870, the split between the two had become irreparable. In a letter written from Rome during the First Vatican Council, Father Hecker spoke of the appreciation he’d found among Europeans for the friendly relations between Catholicism and “our free institutions” in the U.S. Brownson’s reply was scathing.

Earlier, in *The American Republic*, he’d said America was “chosen by God for the realization of a great idea.”

Now, while still supporting the American system as “the legal and only practicable form,” he told Hecker: “I no longer hope anything of it.” As for converting America, he added, “so far are we from converting the country, we cannot hold our own.”

Citing an American spirit of “independence, freedom from all restraint, unbounded license” that he believed was infecting Catholics, Brownson wrote: “The Church has never encountered a social and political order so hostile to her ... the conversion of our republic will be a far greater victory than the conversion of the Roman Empire.”

Their friendship survived the shock, but Brownson soon stopped writing for Hecker’s magazine. He moved to Detroit and lived on until 1876, becoming testier as the years passed. After a rousing theological argument on Good Friday with his son Henry, he took to his bed, received the last sacraments and died on Easter Monday, April 17. He was buried in Detroit, but later his remains were transferred to Notre Dame.

Brownson left neither disciples nor an integrated body of work. He was an intellectual bomb-thrower, changeable and volatile, a volcano of provocative insights who repeatedly and without apology contradicted himself.

But he holds a lasting place in America’s intellectual history and in the history of the Church in this country, where he at last found the truth. “I owe much ... to your father,” Isaac Hecker told his son. Others could say the same.

(Russell Shaw, a longtime journalist and writer, was the author of more than 20 books, including three novels. He died in January 2026.) †

Faith in History/Sean Gallagher

St. John Neumann was the first American bishop to be declared a saint

This month in this series on saints from America to mark the 250th anniversary of its founding, we explore the life of St. John Neumann.



Born on March 28, 1811, in what is now Czechia or the Czech Republic (part of the former Czechoslovakia), Neumann showed himself from a young age to have a great intellect. He was especially adept at learning languages, eventually being fluent in six modern languages in addition to knowing Latin, Greek and Hebrew.

Neumann (pronounced “NOY-man”) felt called by God to put his gifts to the use of the Church. However, after he completed his priestly formation in 1836 in Prague, he learned that his home diocese had no need of additional priests at the time, and he would not be ordained.

At the same time, Neumann felt drawn to serve as a missionary in the United States. Among the bishops in the country he was advised to contact was Bishop Simon Bruté, the first shepherd of the Diocese of Vincennes, Ind., which later became the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

Neumann apparently wrote to Bishop Bruté to see if he would ordain him to serve the Church in Indiana but did

not receive a reply.

In fact, Neumann had not received any letters from bishops in the U.S. when he left La Havre, France, on April 7, 1836. Within days of arriving in New York in early June, Neuman met Bishop John Dubois of the Diocese of New York. The bishop quickly agreed to ordain him after learning of Neumann’s qualifications. By the end of the month, Neumann was a priest and was on his way to Buffalo in western New York.

For the next four years, Father Neumann served in a series of small towns near Buffalo, where many German-speaking Catholic immigrants lived.

The constant travel over that time, often on foot, left Father Neumann physically and mentally exhausted. During a three-month break from ministry in 1840, he recognized his need to live with other priests and discerned a call to life and ministry as a priest within a religious community.

Father Neumann contacted the superior in the U.S. for the Redemptorist order, whom he had met in 1836. He was soon admitted to the congregation.

For about 10 years, Father Neumann served as a Redemptorist in parishes of German-speaking Catholics in Ohio and Baltimore. On Feb. 5, 1852, Pope Pius IX appointed Neumann as bishop of Philadelphia.

Over the next eight years, Bishop Neumann worked tirelessly to serve the faithful of Philadelphia, overseeing the building of 80 churches and 30 parish schools. He fostered devotion to the Eucharist through having 40-hour devotions take place in parishes across the diocese. He promoted Catholic education by establishing the first diocesan system of Catholic schools.

Through all this activity, Bishop Neumann’s personal austerity and humility became well known. Any money he received as a gift, he gave away. The few clothes he had were worn and shabby.

He died at the age of 48 on Jan. 5, 1860, after collapsing on a sidewalk in Philadelphia, likely succumbing to a heart attack or stroke.

Bishop Neumann’s cause for beatification and canonization began in the late 19th century. He was beatified at the Vatican in 1963 during the Second Vatican Council and declared a saint in 1977. His feast is celebrated on Jan. 5.

St. John Neumann was the first bishop from America to be declared a saint. Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen, who is scheduled to be beatified later this month on Sept. 24 in St. Louis, could become the second.

St. John Neumann, pray for us. †

That All May Be One/Fr. Rick Ginther

On a tragic day, people of all faiths mourned and prayed together

September 11, 2001. The director of liturgy was preparing to emcee a funeral for the father of a priest.

Buttoning his shirt, he heard a commotion from the rectory’s common room.



Walking in, he saw on a TV smoke pouring from one tower, as a plane speared the second tower.

He was 8 years old, living in Israel. He arrived home from school, turned on the TV and witnessed the second plane’s impact.

He was a firefighter coming on shift. A fellow firefighter burst into the locker room and said, “A plane just flew into the World Trade Center.” Laughter erupted! Seriously? Yes, his face said, seriously. Everyone rushed to the television—and became gravely saddened as the second plane crashed into the second tower.

A Catholic, a Jew, a Muslim, witnessing a traumatic moment 25 years ago. Each bound to his religious identity, with thoughts and questions.

One preparing to be with mourners.

One alone, with firsthand experience of the violence of the Second Intifada in Israel and the West Bank.

One whose life was bound to respond in life-and-death situations, witnessing the unfolding of a massive loss of life.

Civilians. First responders. Passengers. Terrorists. Two towers, the Pentagon, a field in Pennsylvania.

The priest did not make it to the funeral. He was asked to help plan an interreligious prayer service for that evening at Christ Church Cathedral in Indianapolis. Planning the service were two Jewish rabbis, one Muslim imam and other Christians.

The boy’s older brother came home. He saw what was unfolding. He had often asked, “Will the Americans ever understand the threat and fear of terrorist violence?” “Now they do,” he muttered sadly.

The firefighter immersed himself in his duties. And he prayed. For the dead, especially for the many first responders. He prayed for his fellow Muslims, who were now a target for indiscriminate violence and threats.

The interfaith prayer service was attended by more than 200 people. Those leading the prayer included the rabbis, the imam, an Orthodox priest, an archbishop and the rector of Christ Church.

All present prayed for peace. They mourned together. They were as one.

The boy prayed on his own. Then with family. Then at synagogue on Sabbath.

The firefighter, also an imam, led his mosque in Friday prayer. Many threats had been and were being made toward his mosque and congregation. They prayed for the innocent dead, for peace, for freedom from the fear of undeserved reprisals.

Throughout Indianapolis, Christian, Jewish and Muslim congregations prayed. They were spiritually joined by Sikh, Hindu, Jain, B’hai and other people of faith. All prayed for our nation. And for our world.

They remembered the 2,977 victims who came from more than 90 nations.

The dead were a diverse cross-section of world religions: Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, other faiths and those of no religious affiliation.

They remembered the 415 members of the Fire Department of New York, Port Authority and 71 law enforcement officers who died in the World Trade Center and on the ground in New York City. And the 55 military personnel at the Pentagon.

They remembered those victims whom they knew personally or had a friend or acquaintance who lost someone.

Today, the world’s religions continue to pray for peace, encouraged repeatedly by Pope Leo XIV.

The world’s religions continue to find connections with other people of faith. They honor our common humanity. They honor our connection to the divine.

The world, and our country, still need our prayers—for peace, for respect, for solidarity, for the common good.

And so: Let us pray.

(Father Rick Ginther is director of the archdiocesan Office of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs. He is retired from full-time pastoral ministry, yet active as a priest of the archdiocese.) †

Guest Column/Richard Etienne

On your list, prioritize the needs of others as well as your own needs

I have become painfully aware in recent years how easy it is to be focused more on sundry activities than on those tasks that meet the real needs of people around me.



I am a type A personality and that means lots of lists of to-dos that “need” to be completed.

But not all tasks are as immediate or important as other ones. Nor are many of the tasks on my list going to significantly benefit others around me. Now before you start “hating” on me, let me ask you a few questions.

Do you spend any time looking for clothing, cars, recipes, hairstyles, fashions, hunting equipment, golfing paraphernalia, whether in the “brick and mortar” world or on the internet?

Is it always a reasonable amount of time or do you find yourself going down rabbit holes (or vortexes as I call them) that take much more of your precious time

than you had originally budgeted?

Do you, like myself, make lists of all of the tasks that need to be completed in the day (or over much longer time frames)?

My sister-in-law reminded me recently that there is always going to be “something else” that needs to be done.

Time is finite, and it limits what can be achieved each day. There will always be more tasks than time allows.

My spiritual director often repeated that we are human beings, not human doings.

And in the Gospel of Matthew, it says, “So do not worry and say, ‘What are we to eat?’ or ‘What are we to drink?’ or ‘What are we to wear?’ (Mt 6:31). Our Father knows what we need and will provide in abundance.

So where is all of this going?

Does one of the tasks that you list ever include just sitting quietly and listening for messages from the Holy Spirit? Do you consciously see that some of these tasks that need to be attended to each day are for the benefit of

others as well as for your self-care?

For example, is there someone who needs a call or a text from you today? Is there a person or family who could use a meal because of a recent birth, surgery or death in their home? Is the Holy Spirit urging you to take some other action today that could truly impact another person’s life?

Maybe someone just needs a photo from you with the simple message, “I thought of you when I saw this.”

I need to be reminded regularly that my focus should be on people more frequently than things, and I will only have a strong prayer life if I prioritize my personal and communal prayer time.

When you step back and survey your own lists, how is this balance of personal and other centered tasks reflected in your planning process?

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

Is there someone who needs a call or a text from you today? Is there a person or family who could use a meal because of a recent birth, surgery or death in their home? Is the Holy Spirit urging you to take some other action today that could truly impact another person’s life?

Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, September 6, 2026

- Ezekiel 33:7-9
- Romans 13:8-10
- Matthew 18:15-20

For the first reading for Mass this weekend, the Church gives us a passage from the Book of Ezekiel.



The Hebrew name of this prophet in effect was a prayer, “May God make [him] strong.” It was fitting since, as the prophet himself said and indeed said in complaint, his calling to be a prophet put him at odds with so

many people. He needed strength.

For God’s people, times were hard. The Babylonian Empire, then one of the Middle East’s most powerful states, had destroyed much and had killed many. The Babylonians took back to Babylon many survivors of their invasion of the Jewish homeland.

In Babylon, these exiles and then their descendants languished for four generations.

Ezekiel saw this disaster as the result of the people’s sin and not as a direct punishment from God, hurled down upon the people in a fit of divine revenge.

The prophet was determined in this view. People stray from God. They ignore him. They scorn the commandments. And so they inevitably pay the price. The people themselves bear the blame for their misery.

St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans is the source of the second reading. It continues the pattern for many weekends of the summer, so many of which have presented readings from Romans.

A highly educated, sophisticated and smart Jew, fully versed in the teachings of Judaism, Paul knew the commandments well. While he saw a special vocation in his outreach to gentiles, he knew that God had acted through Hebrew agents in the past. He believed that the commandments were from God, given to the people through Moses.

Paul set the commandments in context. People should obey God because they love all, as God loves all. Love inspires and fulfills the commandments, giving them focus and purpose. His urging echoed the teaching of Jesus.

For its last reading, the Church this weekend offers a passage from the Gospel of St. Matthew. Jesus told the disciples to admonish anyone among them who sins against them.

The Lord gives a progression of steps. First, a Christian should call a wayward brother or sister to task. This step failing, the Christian should seek the aid of others in calling the wayward to change his or her ways. Finally, this step also failing, the disciple should go to the Church.

If the sinner will not reform, the Church should dismiss the person.

The reading reminds us of the teachings of the Church regarding how to read the Gospels. We should remember that the Gospels were not written at the time of Jesus, but years later. By the time Matthew was written, the Church had formed. The number of believers had multiplied. They had different backgrounds and experiences. Disputes had entered their midst.

Being a follower of Jesus is a serious matter. It means being part of a body, not just an individual. Christ is in the assembly of disciples. The Church, representing Christ, has the right to judge a member’s behavior, even a member’s sincerity, deciding which behavior is consistent with genuine discipleship.

Reflection

For weeks, we have heard advice about being good disciples. Being faithful disciples means being fully aware that we are human beings, with limited insight and foresight, easily deceived by temptation and pride. We make excuses for ourselves.

Ezekiel well knew this reality. So did St. Paul.

Humans sin and reap the whirlwind. They get into trouble, straining their relationships, creating hurt and harm.

God does not put each of us into a small, fragile boat, setting us adrift on a dark and turbulent sea without an oar or a compass.

We sail on seas often stormy, it is true, but Jesus is our compass, the oar by which we steer the course and the lighthouse at the edge of the safe shore. †

Daily Readings

Monday, September 7

1 Corinthians 5:1-8
Psalm 5:5-6, 7, 12
Luke 6:6-11

Tuesday, September 8

The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Micah 5:1-4a
or Romans 8:28-30
Psalm 13:6abc
Matthew 1:1-16, 18-23
or Matthew 1:18-23

Wednesday, September 9

St. Peter Claver, priest
1 Corinthians 7:25-31
Psalm 45:11-12, 14-17
Luke 6:20-26

Thursday, September 10

1 Corinthians 8:1b-7, 11-13
Psalm 139:1b-3, 13-14b, 23-24
Luke 6:27-38

Friday, September 11

1 Corinthians 9:16-19, 22b-27
Psalm 84:3-6, 12
Luke 6:39-42

Saturday, September 12

The Most Holy Name of the Blessed Virgin Mary
1 Corinthians 10:14-22
Psalm 116:12-13, 17-18
Luke 6:43-49

Sunday, September 13

Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Sirach 27:30-28:7
Psalm 103:1-4, 9-12
Romans 14:7-9
Matthew 18:21-35

Question Corner/Jenna Marie Cooper

The Church teaches that Freemasonry is ‘incompatible with the Catholic faith’

Could you clarify the Church’s current stance on Freemasonry? Some seem to think that these days



it’s “no different than belonging to Rotary” or any other service club. The local church has parishioners that belong to the local Masonic lodge. (Missouri)

Despite what you might be hearing from your fellow parishioners, it is still the Church’s position that Freemasonry is incompatible with the Catholic faith.

For background, Freemasonry is a men’s fraternal organization that is sometimes said to have roots in the Medieval guild system for actual stone masons, although modern Freemasonry as we know it today developed in the early 18th century.

Contemporary American Freemasonry tends to present itself as an organization dedicated to brotherhood, self-improvement and community service. But Freemasonry is also known to involve secretive initiations and rituals along with a commitment to a “supreme being.”

Historically, Catholics were first explicitly forbidden from involvement with Freemasonry in 1738. In Canon 2335 of the old pre-Vatican II 1917 *Code of Canon Law*, Catholics who joined “masonic sects” were punished with an excommunication that could only be lifted by the Holy See.

In the current 1983 *Code of Canon Law*, which replaced the 1917 Code, Canon 1374 provides a parallel contemporary law: “A person who joins an association which plots against the Church is to be punished with a just penalty; one who promotes or takes office in such an association is to be punished with an interdict.”

While the new canon does not mention Freemasonry by name, in November of 1983—less than a year after the new code was published—Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (the future Pope Benedict XVI), then-prefect of the Church’s highest doctrinal office, the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, issued a clarifying declaration indicating that the new Canon 1374 was indeed meant to apply to Freemasonry.

As he wrote: “[T]he Church’s negative judgment in regard to Masonic association remains unchanged since their principles have always been considered irreconcilable

with the doctrine of the Church and therefore membership in them remains forbidden. The faithful who enroll in Masonic associations are in a state of grave sin and may not receive Holy Communion.”

The Church has reiterated its opposition to Freemasonry even in more recent years. For example, in November 2023, in response to a formal question from a bishop in the Philippines, the Vatican once again clarified that Freemasonry is incompatible with Catholicism.

And in August 2026, two Italian bishops canceled the previously scheduled Catholic funerals of prominent freemasons in their respective dioceses. These bishops noted that they were acting in accord with Canon 1184 of the current *Code of Canon Law*, a canon which forbids Catholic funerals for those notoriously guilty of unrepented public sin. In other words, the Masonic involvement of the two deceased people was judged to have made them “manifest sinners to whom a Church funeral could not be granted without public scandal to the faithful.”

The Church’s opposition to Freemasonry boils down to the spiritual and quasi-religious principles of Freemasonry, which can be described as religious indifferentism, holding that all religions are equal in value and offer equally effective paths to the “supreme being” honored by freemasons. This is different from and opposed to the truths of the faith revealed to us by God through his Church on Earth.

Additionally, the various Masonic rituals imply a certain non-Catholic mysticism (i.e., spirituality with a direct supernatural component). Participating in such things is akin to dabbling in the occult, which violates the first commandment and can open the door to dark forces in our lives.

For Catholic men who might be tempted by Freemasonry, it’s good to keep in mind that there are fully Catholic alternatives available. Most notably, Blessed Father Michael McGivney founded the Knights of Columbus in 1882 as a way to provide Catholic men with a holy and wholesome organization dedicated to brotherhood, service and mutual support.

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

My Journey to God

Getting to the Place of Thank You

By Seana Zoderer

My Love,

Help me to get to the place of thank you.

The beautiful place where I can see you in the delicate pink and soft yellow blooms.

The sweet place where I can hear you in the tiny, innocent chirps in the nearby nest.

The quiet place where I can feel you in the surrendered depths of my soul.

The grateful place where I am filled with peace with hope with love.

My Love,

Help me to get to the place where I breathe in your love place my hands on my heart and exhale - thank you.



Seana Zoderer is a member of St. Roch Parish in Indianapolis. Photo: Flowers bloom in warm hues of pink, orange and yellow in the garden of the poet in July 2024. (Submitted photo by Seana Zoderer)

Pope appoints K of C’s Supreme Knight Patrick Kelly to Vatican dicastery

(OSV News)—Pope Leo XIV on Aug. 25 appointed the Knights of Columbus’ Supreme Knight Patrick Kelly as a member of the Vatican Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life.



Patrick Kelly

Kelly has served as the supreme Knight and CEO of the world’s largest Catholic fraternal service organization since 2021. The Knights of Columbus have 2.1 million members throughout the world. “I am deeply grateful to His Holiness Pope Leo XIV for appointing me as a member of the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life,” Kelly said following the Vatican’s announcement. “Since our founding by Blessed Michael McGivney in 1882, the Knights of Columbus has been dedicated to strengthening Catholic laymen in the faith, to supporting Catholic family life and to building up a culture of life,” he added. “I look forward to supporting this vital work of the Catholic Church.” As a member of the Vatican dicastery, Kelly will contribute to the dicastery’s mission of enhancing the apostolate of the lay faithful, the pastoral care of young people and the mission of the family according to God’s plan. The dicastery is also dedicated to the promotion and protection of life and the dignity of the elderly. About two dozen people, including cardinals, married lay couples and scholars from around the world, currently serve as members of the laity dicastery. Kelly will join fellow American members Helen Alvaré, lecturer at the George Mason University School of Law, and Cardinal Robert W. McElroy of Washington. The role does not require members to move to Rome. Pope Francis established the dicastery in 2016, combining the responsibilities of the Pontifical Council for the Laity

and the Pontifical Council for the Family. Cardinal Kevin J. Farrell, the former bishop of Dallas, has served as the prefect of the dicastery since its founding. The Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life plays a key role in organizing World Youth Day, the next which is scheduled to take place in Seoul, South Korea, in August of 2027. The dicastery also organizes the World Meeting of Families and the annual World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly. Kelly, who lives in Connecticut with his wife and three daughters, has served for 42 years as a Knight of Columbus. He previously served as the first executive director of the St. John Paul II National Shrine in Washington and as a senior adviser to the ambassador-at-large for International Religious Freedom at the U.S. State Department. Before that, he served in the U.S. Navy for 24 years, including as a judge advocate general specializing in international and operational law and as the commanding officer of the international law unit at the U.S. Naval War College. Pope Leo met privately with Kelly and the Knights’ supreme chaplain, Archbishop William E. Lori of Baltimore, last October before the pope held a private audience with members of the Knights of Columbus’ board of directors. Kelly and Archbishop Lori met privately with the U.S.-born pope for the first time on July 4, 2025. In a video message to the Knights of Columbus’ convention earlier in August, Pope Leo commended the organization for uniting Catholic men in prayer and fraternity, while extending “generous service to vulnerable populations.” “The Knights of Columbus have worked together for well over a century to show Christ’s love to the unborn, expectant mothers, persecuted Christians, victims of war and human trafficking, the poor and vulnerable, and those who live on the margins of society,” Pope Leo said in the video released on Aug. 4. †

Birthline donation



Emma Smith, now a fifth-grade student at St. Pius X School in Indianapolis, volunteered at Birthline—an archdiocesan resource center for pregnant mothers, fathers and young families in Indianapolis—last April with other students from the school. Sad to see the “empty shelves” at the ministry, she inquired and was able to get approval from school officials for a “non-school uniform day” at St. Pius School for any students who donated \$2 to Birthline. Emma collected more than \$800, then went shopping to purchase the ministry’s most-needed items. She is pictured in July delivering the carload of gifts. For more information about Birthline, go to archindy.org.birthline. (Submitted photo)

Pope Leo XIV: AI must serve common good, not dominate humanity

(OSV News)—Pope Leo XIV called on Catholic legislators to establish oversight of artificial intelligence (AI) so that technology serves the common good rather than eroding human dignity. “The world does not need an artificial intelligence that diminishes humanity; rather, it needs human intelligence enlightened by wisdom, political authority guided by conscience, and technological innovation directed by charity,” the pope told members of the International Catholic Legislators Network (ICLN) on Aug. 21. “Only then will artificial intelligence become not a rival to humanity, but a servant of the common good,” he said. According to its website, the ICLN, which was founded in 2010, seeks to provide “Christians in public office with faith formation, expert education and a global network of peers and friends” to encourage leadership “that is committed to the dignity of every human being.” The group held its annual meeting on Aug. 20-23 in Rome to discuss the theme, “Human Dignity and Artificial Intelligence: Challenges, Chances and Control.” Reflecting on the meeting’s theme, the pope said its focus on artificial intelligence was an “opportunity to reflect upon one of the defining questions of our age.” “The extraordinary progress of artificial intelligence is opening horizons that previous generations could scarcely have imagined,” he said. “Yet every technological achievement also confronts humanity with a moral question: not merely what can we do, but what ought we to do?”

Citing his encyclical on safeguarding the human person in the age of artificial intelligence, “*Magnifica Humanitas*” (“Magnificent Humanity”), Pope Leo said humanity is facing “a decisive choice.” Humanity, he said, can either “be tempted to construct a new Tower of Babel, where power, efficiency and control obscure the face of the human person; or we can build a civilization in which technology serves the integral development of every person.” The pope told the Catholic legislators that their vocation places them “at the heart of this challenge,” and that the Church’s social teaching can help them discern whether technology helps people “become more fraternal and responsible toward themselves and toward one another.” “Sound legislation should encourage scientific and technological creativity while safeguarding fundamental human rights and freedoms,” he said. “It should protect users from exploitation, preserve personal privacy, ensure transparency in the use of emerging technologies and guarantee that they strengthen democratic institutions.” Independent oversight and legal frameworks, the pope continued, are necessary guardrails for artificial intelligence that help ensure “that no single ideology or interest dictates the values embedded in artificial intelligence systems.” Nevertheless, he added, AI’s rapid development “risks creating new forms of technological dependence, with poorer nations increasingly reliant on wealthier ones.” Pope Leo warned that such developments “reveal a new face of the ancient temptation to domination and mastery without service.”

“We must remain vigilant in this regard, lest innovation become another vehicle for ideological or economic colonialism,” he said. “Sadly, we are presented with a subtle form of domination when algorithms decide who is seen and who remains invisible, when digital platforms shape public discourse without accountability, and when the dignity of workers is subordinated to the optimization of systems.” For this reason, the Catholic Church proposes “the civilization of love” as a response to the “culture of power,” which would govern artificial intelligence through “charity, compassion and responsibility.” The family, the pope said, is at the heart of this response as the first place one learns “trust before calculation, generosity before competition, dialogue before division, and love before power.” Pope Leo encouraged the group of Catholic lawmakers to promote policies that “strengthen marriage and families,” as well as support parents in “their educational mission and enable young people to look to the future with confidence.” “Artificial intelligence must never be allowed to erode this primary cell of society—whether by reducing persons and relationships to data and simulations, by flooding young minds with content that distorts desire, or by economic models that make family life economically precarious,” he said. †



“The extraordinary progress of artificial intelligence is opening horizons that previous generations could scarcely have imagined. ...Yet every technological achievement also confronts humanity with a moral question: not merely what can we do, but what ought we to do?”

—Pope Leo XIV

Classified Directory

For advertising rates call (317) 236-1585.

For Sale
FOR SALE: Our Lady of Peace Cemetery, 9001 Haverstick Road, Indianapolis, IN 46260. Desirable double side-by-side indoor crypt located in the Prince of Peace Mausoleum. Location: Section 9, Level A, Ground Floor. \$15,000.00. Call or text 317-605-9714.

Call
317-236-1585
TO ADVERTISE IN
The Criterion

POPE

continued from page 1

Marian statue and the Vatican flag, slowly made its way in the setting sun and flickering lights to another beach where Pope Leo blessed the small crowd and those whose livelihoods depend on the lake.

When the early disciples were frightened by the terrible storm on the Sea of Galilee, Jesus assured them to “have faith and pray, so that they might find peace again and, together with him, continue sailing toward their desired destination,” the pope had said earlier in his homily at Mass.

Jesus reveals “that only love saves. The love that God showed us by becoming man, dying and rising again for us,” Pope Leo had said.

Those who wish to follow Christ must also respond with love, he said, and “humbly offer ourselves to him and to our brothers and sisters: in the faithful constancy of daily charity as well as in the most extraordinary acts, even to the point of martyrdom at times—as, unfortunately, still happens today to many Christians in various parts of the world.”

“With God’s help, we want to sow the seeds of his infinite charity everywhere in the world, tirelessly and without limit, so that today and always someone may rejoice in reaping their fruits,” the pope said.

Unfortunately, he said, not everyone understands “the beauty, goodness and practicality of this dream of the Creator; in fact, many think it is a utopia.”

The naysayers insist that “turning the other cheek is for losers; giving in the face of rejection is for the naive; forgiving without limits is for the weak,” he said.

“Let us not delude ourselves. Hatred and violence bring nothing good, but only destruction and death, always, even when they are a response to injustices suffered,” Pope Leo said. “Only the way of love is the way of life.”

“Let us, then, draw close this evening to Jesus and Mary, to the Son and the Mother, so that, united, not

only on the lake but on every night throughout the world, we may be a soothing reflection of God’s presence

and an irresistible echo of his love that invites us to love,” he said in his homily. †



Pope Leo XIV looks toward a statue of Our Lady of the Lake as a boat begins to move across Lake Albano during a Marian procession in Castel Gandolfo, Italy, on Aug. 29, the feast of Our Lady of the Lake. (CNS photo/Lola Gomez)

U.S. bishop calls for more international aid for Nepal flood victims

(OSV News)—A U.S. Catholic bishop is calling on the international community to step up aid after devastating torrents of water and mud raged along the Nepal-China border on Aug. 26. As *The Criterion* went to press on Sept. 1, at least 1,050 were reported dead with more than 4,400 still missing.

“As we learn more about the devastating flash floods in Nepal, I offer the prayers and solidarity of the Catholic community in the United States for our brothers and sisters impacted by this disaster,” said Bishop A. Elias Zaidan of the St. Louis-based Maronite Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles in an Aug. 27 statement.

The disaster was triggered by a glacial collapse in Nepal’s Langtang National Park shortly after 8:30 a.m. on Aug. 26, according to the U.S. Geological Survey. Debris from the 5.2 magnitude event flowed more than 60 miles, resulting in “catastrophic impacts downstream” in communities along the Trishuli and Bhote Koshi Rivers, said the agency.

Among the missing are close to 670 individuals from some 32 nations, 65 of whom are from the U.S. Many are part of tour groups and Hindu pilgrimages.

Amid rescue efforts, the region is bracing for a possible secondary flooding due to ongoing rainfall, according to the United Nations’ World Meteorological Organization.

Speaking in his role as chair of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ (USCCB) Committee on International Justice and Peace, Bishop Zaidan said, “I exhort the international community to mobilize greater humanitarian assistance support for vulnerable families and communities in Nepal.”

The bishop also encouraged “long-term efforts to help affected communities rebuild their homes, livelihoods and

critical infrastructure.”

He said that Catholic Relief Services (CRS), the USCCB’s international humanitarian and development agency, is “closely monitoring the emergency.”

CRS—part of Caritas Internationalis, the Catholic Church’s global humanitarian network—is also “coordinating with Caritas Nepal and local partners to assess urgent needs and determine how best to support affected communities,” said Bishop Zaidan.

Caritas emergency aid coordinator Raju Pradhan told German Catholic news outlet KNA that “the extent of the destruction” from the flooding “is almost beyond comprehension.”

Disaster alerts the Nepalese government said it had issued “came too late” for those “near the source of the flood,” said Pradhan. “But further downstream, without these warnings, many more people would likely have lost their lives.”

Still, KNA reported, many did not fully grasp the urgency of those warnings.

Like CRS, Germany’s Freiburg-based Caritas is working with Caritas Nepal to provide assistance, including food, water, blankets and sleeping bags, as well as emergency shelters for kids and teens.

“In just one small town where we’ve been active for some time, 400 homes were destroyed,” said Pradhan, who also expressed concerns over the risk of secondary flooding.



‘May she [Mary] inspire the international community to work together, as one family, to address the urgent needs of the Nepalese people.’

—Bishop A. Elias Zaidan, chair of the USCCB’s Committee on International Justice and Peace

Pradhan stressed to KNA the need for long-term relief efforts in addressing the scope of the disaster—which “will require a lot of money, which we don’t have at the moment.”

CRS has set up an emergency relief fund in response to the flooding, with donations accepted by a number of online giving platforms, as well as phone and mail.

In his statement, Bishop Zaidan expressed his gratitude for “the partnership of the U.S. government in supporting CRS’ essential work in these communities.”

He added, “We are also grateful to hear that the U.S. Department of State is closely monitoring the situation and deploying key personnel to support response efforts.”

Bishop Zaidan invoked Mary’s Immaculate Heart to “provide consolation and shelter to all those affected by this disaster.”

And, he said, “May she inspire the international community to work together, as one family, to address the urgent needs of the Nepalese people.” †



A drone view shows a broken bridge and damaged houses after the flash floods and mudslide, at Devighat, Nuwakot district, Nepal, on Aug. 28. (OSV News photo/Francis Mascarenhas, Reuters)



Police officers carry an elderly survivor to a safer place at Trishuli in Nepal’s Nuwakot district on Aug. 27, following devastating floods. Massive flash floods in a border area of Nepal and China killed at least 1,050 people and left more than 4,400 tourists, workers and others missing after suddenly sweeping through communities and halting travel in some areas on Aug. 26. Experts said a glacial collapse caused the disaster in the warming Himalayan region. (OSV News photo/Navesh Chitrakar, Reuters)