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'Taste and See'

Favorite song evokes thoughts of a beach, a promise and God's love, page 7.

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At Lourdes, a refuge for the ill, pope stands against assisted dying laws

LOURDES, France (CNS)—At a shrine where the sick and disabled are prioritized, Pope Leo XIV said human frailty can



Pope Leo XIV

never diminish a person's dignity, bringing one of the central messages of his visit to France, where the government recently legalized assisted dying.

"Here, no one is turned away due to their frailty," the pope told an estimated

150,000 pilgrims gathered for Mass at the Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes on Sept. 27.

"Your crutches, your wheelchairs and your hidden tears are not obstacles; instead, they are the very place where you are fully respected and welcomed, and where you can experience a transforming encounter with the infinite love of God."

The words reflected a central theme of the pope's Sept. 25-28 apostolic journey to France,

whose motto, "That the world may have life," presented the visit as a call to overcome division and foster what organizers described as signs of "new life in the world."

Pope Leo told those who were suffering that they are "truly at the heart of the Church." In a world that places great value on well-being and progress, he said, the grotto at Lourdes offers a different measure of the value of human life: one in which each person is welcomed and able to flourish in the love of God.

For nearly 170 years, Lourdes has been associated with healing following apparitions of Mary reported by St. Bernadette Soubirous in 1858. The sanctuary today draws up to 3 million pilgrims a year, including large numbers of people who are sick or disabled.

Against that backdrop, Pope Leo repeatedly returned to illness, vulnerability and the inherent worth of human life during his time in Lourdes.

Meeting sick people at the Accueil Notre-Dame, a facility at the sanctuary

See POPE, page 2



Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, a pro-prefect of the Vatican's Dicastery for Evangelization, second from left, stands near a relic of Venerable Fulton J. Sheen as he celebrates the beatification Mass for Archbishop Sheen on Sept. 24 at The Dome at America's Center in St. Louis. Blessed Fulton is remembered as one of the most influential and innovative evangelists in American history. (OSV News photo/Bob Roller)

Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen declared 'Blessed' at beatification Mass in St. Louis

ST. LOUIS (OSV News)—Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen—the 20th-century theologian, evangelizer, Catholic communications pioneer, teacher and preacher—is now Blessed Fulton J. Sheen.

Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, a pro-prefect for the Holy See's Dicastery for Evangelization and papal delegate, pronounced the Church's declaration on Archbishop Sheen's holiness of life and witness to Jesus Christ at a Sept. 24 Mass celebrated in The Dome at America's Center in St. Louis.

To the applause of some 50,000 pilgrims, Cardinal Tagle described Archbishop Sheen as a "son of Illinois, son of the United States of America" and "indeed, son of the world."

Hundreds of clergy, including dozens of bishops and cardinals, had processed into the arena for the Mass as choirs,

accompanied by an orchestra, performed a succession of hymns. The priests' vestments were embroidered with "JMJ," Archbishop Sheen's signature dedication to Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

The location had been selected earlier this year by Archbishop Sheen's home Diocese of Peoria, Ill., to accommodate the number of pilgrims expected to attend the beatification and its related events.

During a press conference a few hours prior to the Mass, Bishop Louis Tylka of Peoria said that almost every U.S. state and several additional nations were represented by pilgrims. A number of the faithful hailed from Italy, Poland and Brazil, he said.

Close to 90 bishops, some 1,000 priests, an estimated

See BEATIFICATION, page 8

Blessed Fulton J. Sheen helped shape the pastoral leadership of Archbishop O'Meara

By Sean Gallagher

On Dec. 13, 1979, Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara stepped into the ambo of St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City to give the homily at the funeral of his longtime friend, Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen.

"A voice is silent in the midst of the Church, and in our land, the like of which will not be heard again in our day," Archbishop O'Meara said at the start of his homily. "The vocation of Fulton Sheen is consummated; he has responded with one final 'Yes' to the call of God, a 'Yes' so final that human frailty and infirmity can never reverse it."

See O'MEARA, page 10

Blessed Fulton J. Sheen, left, poses with Pope Pius XII and then-Msgsr. Edward O'Meara for a photo likely taken in 1957 at the Vatican.

Msgsr. O'Meara later served as archbishop of Indianapolis from 1979 until his death in 1991. (Photo courtesy of the Archives of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis)





Pope Leo XIV leads a candlelight procession on Sept. 27 at the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes in Lourdes, France during his four-day apostolic journey to France. (OSV News photo/Remo Casilli, Reuters)

POPE

continued from page 1

equipped to host pilgrims who are ill or disabled, the pope said the reflection of God can be found in every person. “This truth is the foundation of our dignity as persons,” he said on Sept. 27. Later, during a candlelight procession and prayer at the shrine, Pope Leo said the light of Christ never abandons the faithful, even when their lives are marked by trials. “Those who are sick are privileged witnesses to this transfiguration of our lives through faith and love of God and neighbor,” he said.

France’s assisted dying debate

His words carried particular weight in France, where assisted dying has been the subject of a years-long political debate and where a law establishing a “right to aid in dying” was approved in August. The French National Assembly gave final approval to the legislation on July 15 by a vote of 291-241, with 29 abstentions, after repeated disagreement between the National Assembly and Senate. The Constitutional Council upheld the legislation on Aug. 14. Florian Michel, a historian and theologian at the Sorbonne University in Paris, told Catholic News Service (CNS) that the issue has divided France for roughly two decades. President Emmanuel Macron has been a vocal supporter of assisted suicide, and efforts to pass legislation repeatedly encountered resistance in Parliament.

As the debate progressed, Michel said, arguments advanced by the Catholic Church against assisted dying began to gain traction beyond practicing Catholics and helped pull some centrist lawmakers toward opposition. The French Bishops’ Conference said in July that the consequences of this legislation will be unequally distributed among society. “The poorest are likely to be the first to pay the price: not wanting to be a burden on their children or grandchildren, elderly people in precarious situations may feel pressured to die,” the bishops’ July 15 press release said. The Senate rejected the assisted-dying proposal during the legislative process, and a joint committee of deputies and senators failed to agree on a compromise text. Under the procedure provided for by the French Constitution, the National Assembly ultimately had the final say, adopting the legislation in definitive reading on July 15. France joins several European countries that permit some form of euthanasia or assisted dying, including Belgium, the Netherlands and Spain. Great Britain’s Parliament, however, voted down a proposed assisted dying bill on Sept. 11. A number of U.S. states also permit physician-assisted death under varying levels of legality. Abuse victims and the pope’s visit The reality of clergy sex abuse also hung over Pope Leo’s visit to Lourdes. Ahead of his arrival, there was anticipation over whether the pope would address the now-hidden mosaics by Father

In this month of the Blessed Mother, share your stories of how she has touched your life

As October is a month dedicated to the Blessed Mother, *The Criterion* is inviting you, our readers, to share your thoughts and stories about the special connection you have with the mother of Jesus—how you have relied on her in tough times, how you have felt her presence, how you have come to know her comfort, guidance and love. Please send your thoughts and stories about your special connection to the Blessed Mother to John Shaughnessy by e-mail at jshaughnessy@archindy.org or by mail in care of *The Criterion*, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202. Please include your parish and a daytime phone number where you can be reached. †



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Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

October 2—October 12, 2026

October 2 – 3 p.m. CST Virtual Bishops Advisory Committee meeting with Catholic Prison Ministry Coalition	Cathedral, followed by dinner at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, both in Indianapolis
October 3 – 10:30 a.m. Mass with Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary at Our Lady of the Greenwood Church, Greenwood	October 7 – 7 p.m. Confirmation Mass for the youths of St. Gabriel the Archangel Parish at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, both in Indianapolis
October 4 – 10 a.m. 100th Anniversary Mass for the Founding of the OFM Conventual Franciscan Province at Terre Haute Convention Center, Terre Haute	October 8 – 8:15 a.m. Virtual Judicatories meeting
October 5 – 5:30 p.m. Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House Annual Dinner at Northside Events and Social Club, Indianapolis	October 8 – 10 a.m. Leadership Team meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center
October 6 – 11:30 a.m. United Catholic Appeal Employee Lunch at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis	October 10 – 5:30 p.m. 175th Parish Anniversary Mass at St. Gabriel Church, Connersville
October 6 – 5:30 p.m. Red Mass at SS. Peter and Paul	October 11 – 11 a.m. 75th Parish Anniversary Mass at St. Jude the Apostle Church, Spencer
	October 12 – 5 p.m. Mass and Dinner with Evangelization Summit Planning Team, Indianapolis

Marko Rupnik at Lourdes’ Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary during his visit. Father Rupnik has been accused by multiple women of sexual, psychological and spiritual abuse, and the Jesuit order he once belonged to has said allegations against him were considered highly credible. There is an ongoing trial regarding the accusations within the Vatican’s Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith. On his final day in Lourdes, the pope met with seven victims of abuse by members of the French Church and clergy. In the two-hour meeting, he privately spoke with each victim and listened to each of their stories, a communiqué from the Vatican press office said. In a meeting with the country’s bishops, Pope Leo said they have “taken courageous measures to respond through listening, the search for truth, justice, forgiveness and making amends, and through a firm commitment to a culture of prevention and protection against these crimes.” However, “you must continue along the path you have begun, maintaining the greatest vigilance,” he told the bishops on Sept. 27 at the Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes. And at the same time, he added, “your clergy need to be supported and encouraged.” He also stopped before a commemorative plaque ahead of his meeting with the bishops that detailed the feelings of pain and anger felt by abuse victims. “They will come to understand that an entire institutional culture chose to protect itself instead of protecting them,” the inscription said. During his Sept. 27 Mass, he spoke of the need for conversion and located the source of evil not in God, but in the human heart.

“How can our hearts not be moved by the conflicts that are spreading and destroying so many innocent lives?” he said. “Yet the evil of our time comes from the human heart. God is not responsible for it.” Human dignity the focus of France visit The pope’s emphasis on the dignity of vulnerable people at Lourdes echoed a theme he had introduced from the beginning of his Sept. 25-28 visit to France. During an evening prayer at the Lourdes grotto on Sept. 26, Pope Leo prayed that France’s leaders would be “ready to make sacrifices” and defend fundamental rights. “May they keep France at peace within the family of nations, and may they make her voice heard in promoting the defense of fundamental human rights and peace in the world, rejecting the mentality of war once and for all,” he said. Speaking at UNESCO headquarters in Paris a day earlier, the pope explicitly rejected the idea that human dignity depends on health or ability. “Our dignity is not destroyed by illness or suffering, nor is it dependent upon our abilities. Rather, it calls for loving care at every stage of life,” he told UNESCO staff and leaders on Sept. 25. He also described a human person simply as “someone who is conceived and born,” warning against a society in which a child is regarded not as a gift calling forth care and responsibility but as “a product to be exploited.” And in his address to government officials, civil society leaders and the diplomatic corps at the Élysée Palace on Sept. 25, Pope Leo brought the principle directly into the political sphere, saying fraternity should teach society “to welcome life unconditionally.” †



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Father Daniel Atkins is remembered as ‘a kind, gentle, sweet soul’

By Natalie Hoefer

Father Daniel Atkins, a retired priest of the archdiocese, died on Sept. 25 at the age of 78 after incurring a brain injury from a recent fall.



Fr. Daniel Atkins

Born on April 10, 1948, Father Atkins was 36 when he began his formation for the priesthood at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad in 1984. He was ordained on June 6, 1987.

Father Atkins served in parishes throughout central and southern Indiana, including ministry with high school and college students for 31 of his nearly 40 years as a priest. “His passion was working with young people,” says Father Thomas Clegg, pastor of St. John Paul II Parish in Sellersburg and a friend of Father Atkins for nearly four decades. Working with high school- and college-aged students “was a gift God gave him, and he wanted to use that gift because God gave it to him to use.”

Father Clegg says his friend “was excited” to become chaplain coordinator at Our Lady of Providence High School in Clarksville after retiring in 2018. He served in that role until the time of his death.

Serving at the school “brought him full circle,” says Victor Beeler, president of Our Lady of Providence, where Father Atkins graduated in 1966.

After earning degrees in English and philosophy in 1972 from the former Kansas State College (now Pittsburg State University) in Pittsburg, Kan., he taught theology, English and speech at his alma mater in Clarksville. He also started a retreat for the seniors, a tradition which continues today.

It was during his teaching years that his fellow instructor Father Wilfred “Sonny” Day—now a retired priest of the archdiocese—encouraged the young man to consider the priesthood.

Interacting ‘from a genuine place’

“Over those years, I invited him to go to summer school” at Saint Meinrad, says Father Day, who serves as sacramental minister at St. John the Baptist Parish in Starlight and St. Mary Parish in Navilleton. The young man eventually

accepted the invitation, and “from then on, he was interested in looking at the priesthood,” says Father Day, who became friends with Father Atkins “30-some years ago.”

He describes his friend as “patient and gentle. And welcoming—he was always inviting people to join whatever he was doing. He liked people, and he liked to be around people.”

Father Clegg agrees and says the feeling was mutual.

“He was incredibly funny,” says the priest. “He always had a joke to tell, and he was willing to laugh at himself. He was fun to be around. ... He was also authentic. He didn’t pretend to be something he wasn’t.”

That fun nature and authenticity drew kids to Father Atkins, says Father Clegg. As an example, he recalls a time when his friend substituted for him at a Mass at St. John Paul II Church. Among the congregation were middle-grade students of the parish school.

When Father Clegg saw the students the next day, “They said, ‘We really like Father Dan. We like you too, but we really like Father Dan!’” he recalls with a laugh. “And I thought, ‘I really like Father Dan, too!’”

So did the Our Lady of Providence students, says Beeler.

“When Father Dan was around, they would gather around him and engage with him rather than him seeking them out,” he says. “They could tell his interactions with them were from a genuine place, and I think they really appreciated that.”

Father Atkins was dedicated to his chaplain coordinator role, adds Beeler. He recalls the priest traveling with the school’s basketball team to away games in 2022 “from the time of regionals through the team winning the state championship, [offering] Mass for them in the locker room.”

Father Atkins, a lover of theater, even made a cameo in the school’s musical last spring.

“He literally just walked from one side of the stage to the other,” says Beeler. “But every night during his 20 seconds [on stage], it was a time of hootin’ and hollerin’ with everyone cheering for him.”

Our Lady of Providence is not the only school where Father Atkins ministered. In fact, in his nearly four decades as a priest, there were only eight years when he was not involved in some form of ministry at a high school or university.

A pastoral impact across the archdiocese

Two of those eight years were during his first priestly assignment as associate pastor of St. Jude Parish in Indianapolis from 1987-1989.

Father Atkins next assignment was as chaplain at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis from 1989-1993 while also serving in various capacities at St. Christopher, St. Michael the Archangel and the former St. Catherine of Siena and St. James the Apostle parishes, all in Indianapolis.

He continued as Roncalli’s chaplain part time in 1994, the first of his four years as co-pastor of St. Paul Catholic Center in Bloomington, where he went on to serve as pastor from 1998-2005.

After ministering in Bloomington, Father Atkins lived out the remaining years of his vocation serving in the New Albany Deanery where he was raised.

There was a break in his ministry to students from 2005-2010 when he served as pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Corydon, St. Peter Parish in Harrison County and the former Most Precious Blood Parish in New Middletown.

Father Atkins was next assigned as pastor of Holy Family Parish in New Albany from 2010-2018. In 2011, he started ministering to Catholic students at Indiana University Southeast in New Albany, an effort he led until he retired in 2018.

As with many priests, retirement did not mean the end of ministry for Father Atkins. In addition to his role as chaplain coordinator at Our Lady of Providence, he served for a time as an archdiocesan associate director of vocations.

During his 21 years ministering in the New Albany Deanery, Father Atkins’ impact on students extended beyond the Clarksville high school.

‘A kind, gentle, sweet soul’

“As news spreads of the passing of Fr. Dan Atkins, we remember with gratitude his joy, kindness and encouragement toward the young people of our deanery.”

So reads a Sept. 25 Facebook post by Catalyst Catholic, the office that organizes youth ministry for the New Albany Deanery’s 16 parishes in Clark, Floyd and Harrison counties.

“What a blessing he has been to countless young people, whose lives he touched through his friendship and ministry,” the post continues. “We give thanks to God for the gift of his priestly service and for the many ways he inspired and encouraged others.”

Father Atkins “also had the ability to reach out and touch people of any age,” Father Clegg notes. “He was a humble person who simply wanted to do the right thing in everything. He was faithful to his God, to his Church, to the people he served and to his friends.”

Beeler agrees. “He was always concerned for anyone he engaged with, and it was genuine—and easy to see that it was genuine,” he says. “He met people where they were in the situation they found themselves in and offered whatever general counsel or friendship he could.”

Beeler says he doesn’t recall “ever seeing [Father Atkins] without a smile on his face. He was just a kind, gentle, sweet soul, and it came right through in his ministry.”

Father Atkins’ Mass of Christian Burial, with Father Clegg serving as homilist, was on Sept. 30 at St. Mary of the Knobs Church in Floyd County, followed by his interment in the parish’s cemetery.

He is survived by his siblings Carla Patterson, Jacqueline Vetter and Thomas Atkins, and by his many nieces, nephews, great-nieces and great-nephews. †

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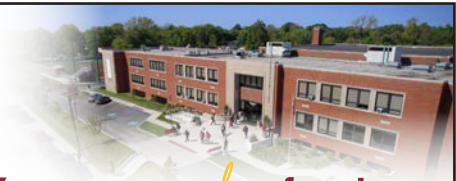
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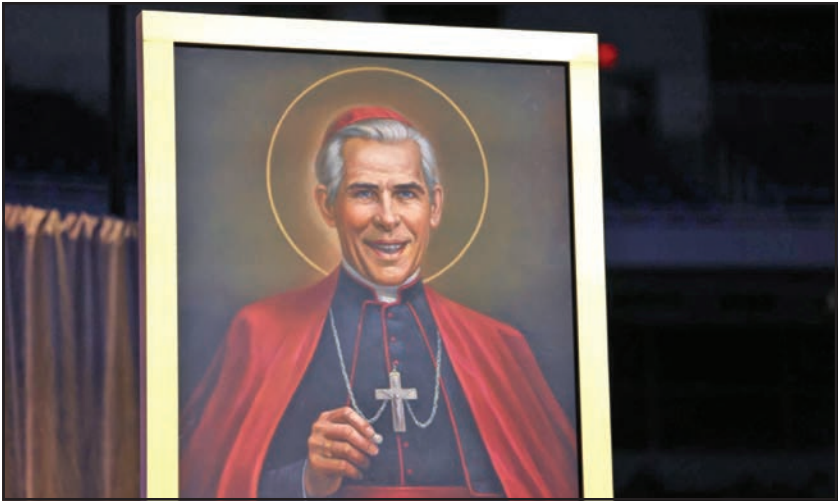


OPINION



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

Editorial



The official portrait of Blessed Fulton J. Sheen is revealed at his beatification Mass on Sept. 24 at The Dome at America’s Center in St. Louis. (OSV News photo/Margaret Murray)

Seeing holiness in the life and ministry of Fulton J. Sheen

Moral principles do not depend on a majority vote. Wrong is wrong, even if everybody is wrong. Right is right, even if nobody is right. (Blessed Fulton J. Sheen)

Forty-seven years ago, on Oct. 3, 1979, during his first papal visit to the United States, Pope St. John Paul II warmly embraced the aging and infirm Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen. “You have written and spoken well of the Lord Jesus,” the pope exclaimed. “You have been a loyal son of the Church.” Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen returned to his Lord two months later on Dec. 9, 1979.

Just eight days ago, on Sept. 24, Pope Leo XIV’s representative, Cardinal Luis Tagle, beatified Archbishop Sheen in a liturgy celebrated at The Dome at America’s Center in St. Louis to accommodate the more than 50,000 pilgrims who gathered for this momentous occasion.

Beatification is the Church’s formal declaration that a deceased Christian may be called “Blessed.” It is an important step toward sainthood (canonization is the next and final step), and it acknowledges that a person lived with notable holiness and is now with God. Beatification does not make a person holy; rather, it is the Church’s authoritative recognition of a holiness that is already present through God’s grace.

Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen was declared “venerable” in 2012, but his beatification, which was originally planned for 2019, was delayed in order to allow for further reviews of his administrative record as the bishop of Rochester, N.Y. Those reviews concluded without issue, clearing the path for his beatification.

The miracle, which was required before his beatification could be celebrated, was approved by Pope Francis in 2019. This miracle involved the unexpected recovery of a stillborn infant who in 2010 survived without a pulse for more than an hour after his parents prayed for Archbishop Sheen’s intercession.

Ordained a priest of the Diocese of Peoria, Ill., in 1919, Fulton Sheen quickly became a renowned theologian, earning the Cardinal Mercier Prize for International Philosophy in 1923. He went on to teach theology and philosophy at The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., and served as a parish priest before he was appointed an auxiliary bishop for the Archdiocese of New York in 1951. He held this position until 1966, when he was appointed Bishop

of Rochester, N.Y. He resigned in 1969 as his 75th birthday approached, and he was named archbishop of the titular see of Newport (a diocese in Wales).

For 20 years, Archbishop Sheen hosted the nighttime radio program “The Catholic Hour” on NBC (1930–1950) before he moved to television and presented “Life Is Worth Living” (1952–1957) and the syndicated “The Fulton Sheen Program” (1961–1968).

In 1952, he won an Emmy Award for Most Outstanding Television Personality, and in the same year he was featured on the April 14 cover of *Time* magazine. When then-Bishop Sheen received his Emmy award, he humorously remarked, “I would like to thank my scriptwriters: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.” Since 2009, his television shows have been re-broadcast on EWTN and other cable TV networks.

According to the late Franciscan Friars of the Renewal Father Andrew Apostoli, who served as vice-postulator for the cause of Blessed Fulton J. Sheen’s canonization from 2001 until his death in 2017, “Archbishop Sheen was a man with a reputation for great holiness. . . . Saints are men and women who imitated Jesus Christ and lived his Gospel message to a heroic degree. Saints get to know the Gospel from the inside, so to speak, rather than merely as outside observers. There is no doubt that many people experience a powerful inspiration as they read and meditate on the great insights Archbishop Sheen had into who the person of Jesus Christ is and how he affects our lives.”

Archbishop Sheen was a philosopher, a humorist, a media personality and a diocesan bishop, but his beatification and his future claim to sainthood do not result from any of these qualities or accomplishments.

The Church invites us to call Fulton J. Sheen “blessed” because he was a holy man of prayer whose public life and ministry offered millions of people here in the United States and throughout the whole world a chance to see Jesus Christ reflected in his words and actions.

Let’s pray that one day soon this holy man of God will be formally recognized as a saint. And let’s seek his intercession for all of us as we strive to carry out in our own ways the evangelizing mission of our Lord Jesus Christ.

—Daniel Conway

Reflection/Sara Levy

Like Blessed Fulton Sheen, let’s place the Lord at the center of our lives

As I reflect on attending the beatification Mass for Blessed Fulton J. Sheen on Sept. 24 at The Dome at America’s Center in St. Louis, my breath is taken away.

The experience was awesome, a true celebration of heaven on Earth. Seeing the universal Church come together from so many places and people of all ages and vocations was a beautiful sight. It was a great gift to be able to witness this day of rejoicing in the Church.

Now, I hope I can continue to embrace that feeling going forward. Here are three themes from the Mass that I hope will stay with me.

Living with joy

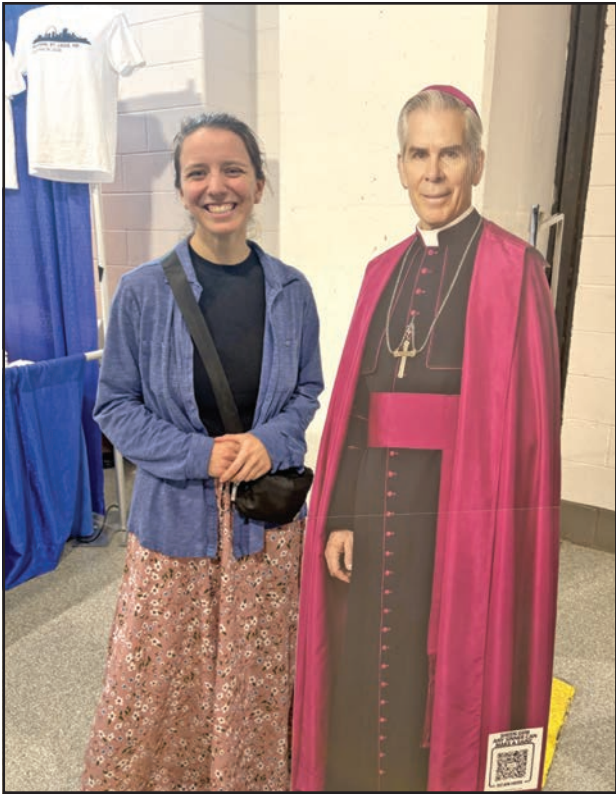
During Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle’s homily during the beatification liturgy, another word he used for “blessed” was “happy.” Happy indeed was the occasion of the beatification, and happy are we who belong to God’s kingdom! When I pair this use of “blessed” and “happy” with the joyful image of Blessed Fulton that was unveiled during the Mass, I am encouraged to look at my own life with a greater attitude of joy.

There is an abundance of life the Lord wants to give us, and such joy is a grace we can ask for, receive and live out today, even amidst the challenges of life.

Our own call to sainthood

The Church, in her beauty and goodness, recognizes the saints to inspire us in our own path to sainthood. The saints serve as role models of how to live as little Christs in the world, and Blessed Fulton is one of our many heavenly friends rooting for us in the great journey to heaven.

While he is not formally recognized yet in the canon of saints, his beatification serves as a reminder that the Lord calls each of us to become saints, to live holy and virtuous lives here on Earth so that



Sara Levy stands with a cutout of Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen before his beatification Mass on Sept. 24 at The Dome at America’s Center in St. Louis. (Submitted photo)

we can one day spend eternity with him in heaven.

The tough questions for all of us

A video was played prior to the beatification Mass that mentioned Blessed Fulton will probably become the patron saint of the Holy Hour. He spent an hour in prayer before our eucharistic Lord every day for more than 60 years, and it was that intimate communion that fueled his ministry and life.

Learning about his devotion to the Holy Hour makes me ask: How am I spending my time each day? Do I place the Lord at the center of my life?

I have returned home with a greater commitment to adoration and spending time before Jesus, who loves us so deeply and personally.

Jesus wants to do great things through us. Will we give him the time and space to transform our hearts to become like his?

(Sara Levy is the executive assistant for the Secretariat for Communications for the archdiocese.) †

Letter to the Editor

Reader: Columnist rightly criticizes antics of parents on the internet

Just a note to thank OSV News columnist Elizabeth Scalia (“It is Good”) for her commentary in the Sept. 18 issue of *The Criterion* on the antics of parents who torment their infants in videos on the internet.

I, too, am appalled at family members who guffaw at sweet babies who are

rudely startled, obviously need a nap, or who repeat vulgar language modeled by so-called “adults.” . . . It is neither cherishing or nurturing.

Stephenie Paquette
 Indianapolis

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

Become like little children, embrace your guardian angel

See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven always look upon the face of my heavenly Father. (Mt 18:10)

The publication date for this column is Friday, October 2, the Memorial of the Holy Guardian Angels. The Church teaches that every one of us has been given a guardian angel to protect, guide and intercede for us on our life’s journey to heaven. Guardian angels are instruments of grace whose purpose is to help each of us respond freely to the love and mercy of God.

In the Gospel reading for today’s Memorial (Mt 18:1-5, 10), Jesus tells his disciples that the greatest in the kingdom of heaven is as humble and innocent as a little child. The Lord also says that those who become like little children enjoy the special favor—and protection—of God’s holy angels.

What are angels? The Church teaches that angels are spiritual beings created by God to participate in his divine life. Unlike human beings, who have bodies as well as souls, angels are non-bodily spiritual creatures who are finite and entirely dependent on God.

Angels are personal beings, not merely impersonal forces or poetic symbols. They possess intelligence and freedom. Some angels freely accepted God’s will and became holy; others rejected God and became fallen angels, commonly called demons. These are malevolent spiritual beings who seek to tempt, deceive, discourage and draw human beings away from God. Jesus’ teaching identifies “the devil and his angels” as destined for judgment, while affirming that Christ has definitively defeated them.

The word angel means “messenger.” It describes their mission: angels serve our triune God and participate in God’s work of creation, redemption and sanctification. God does not need any help, but he chooses to share his work with intelligent creatures—both angelic and human. Angels’ roles can include prayer, guidance, protection, inspiration and, when God wills, extraordinary intervention consistent with his providence. This was the case when the Archangel Gabriel appeared to Mary to announce her role in salvation history (cf. Luke 1:26-38), and the times when an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream to reassure him about Mary’s fidelity to him and to warn him about Herod’s evil intentions.

Catholic teaching understands all God’s creatures (human beings here on Earth, angels, and all the saints in heaven) as united in God’s saving plan. Scripture describes the prayers of the Blessed Virgin Mary and all the saints as being joined with the ministry of angels before the throne of God. This is why we may ask the angels—especially our guardian angel—to pray for and protect us. Such devotion does not replace worship of God. Worship belongs to God alone; saints and angels are honored as God’s servants and friends.

The assistance we receive from our guardian angels should be understood within the framework of God’s larger plan for allowing all his creatures to participate in appropriate ways in the work of salvation.

The Church teaches that the prayers and actions of heavenly beings can aid those of us on Earth, and Sacred Scripture portrays the holy angels as accompanying the prayers of all the saints in heaven. God remains the central source of all grace and the author of our salvation, but we are assisted by the angels and saints in heaven to accept God’s love and goodness.

Guardian angels are instruments of divine providence. The Holy Spirit is

the principal source of sanctifying grace, while angels serve God by assisting us in responding freely to God’s love. God always respects our freedom: angels and saints may influence or assist us, but they cannot compel us to choose good or evil.

This means that a guardian angel’s protection does not guarantee that we will never sin, become ill, make mistakes or die. We remain free to choose between God’s will and our own.

Angels may protect, warn, strengthen or guide us, but they do not take the place of our human freedom. This in itself is a great gift from God. We are not puppets controlled by others, but free women and men who are invited to discern God’s will for us and to freely choose what is good.

Tomorrow’s Memorial of the Holy Guardian Angels should be an occasion for gratitude and rejoicing. God gives us every assistance—including the angels who protect, guide and inspire us—to freely choose to accept his love and forgiveness. Let us thank God for our guardian angels who “*always look upon the face of my heavenly Father*” (Mt 18:10) and let’s welcome their companionship on our journey to our heavenly home. †



Cristo, la piedra angular

Seamos como niños pequeños, recibamos a nuestro ángel de la guarda

Guardaos de menospreciar a uno de estos pequeños, porque yo os digo que sus ángeles, en los cielos, ven continuamente el rostro de mi Padre que está en los cielos. (Mt 18:10)

La fecha de publicación de esta columna es el viernes 2 de octubre, memorial de los Santos Ángeles Custodios. La Iglesia nos enseña que a cada uno se nos ha asignado un ángel de la guarda para protegernos, guiarnos e interceder por nosotros en nuestro camino hacia el cielo. Los ángeles custodios o de la guarda son instrumentos de gracia cuyo propósito es ayudarnos a cada uno de nosotros a responder libremente al amor y la misericordia de Dios.

En la lectura del Evangelio para el memorial de hoy (Mt 18:1-5, 10), Jesús les dice a sus discípulos que el más grande en el reino de los cielos es tan humilde e inocente como un niño pequeño. El Señor también dice que quienes se vuelven como niños pequeños gozan del favor especial—y de la protección—de los santos ángeles de Dios.

¿Qué son los ángeles? La Iglesia nos enseña que los ángeles son seres espirituales creados por Dios para participar en su vida divina. A diferencia de los seres humanos, que tienen tanto cuerpo como alma, los ángeles son criaturas espirituales incorpóreas, finitas y totalmente dependientes de Dios.

Los ángeles son seres personales, no meras fuerzas impersonales ni símbolos poéticos; poseen inteligencia y libertad. Algunos aceptaron libremente la voluntad de Dios y se volvieron santos; otros rechazaron a Dios y se convirtieron en ángeles caídos, comúnmente llamados demonios. Estos son seres espirituales malévolos que buscan tentar, engañar, desanimar y alejar a los seres humanos de Dios. Las enseñanzas de Jesús identifican al “diablo y sus ángeles” como destinados al juicio, al tiempo que afirman que Cristo los ha derrotado de manera definitiva.

La palabra “ángel” significa “mensajero” y esto describe su misión: los ángeles sirven a nuestro Dios trino y participan en la obra de Dios de creación, redención y santificación. Dios no necesita ayuda alguna, pero elige compartir su obra con criaturas inteligentes, tanto angelicales como humanas. Las funciones de los ángeles pueden incluir la oración, la guía, la protección, la inspiración y, cuando Dios lo dispone, una intervención extraordinaria acorde con su providencia. Así ocurrió cuando el arcángel Gabriel se le apareció a María para anunciarle su papel en la historia de la salvación (cf. Lc 1:26-38), y en las ocasiones en que un ángel se le apareció a José en sueños para tranquilizarlo respecto a la fidelidad de María hacia él y para advertirle sobre

las malas intenciones de Herodes.

La doctrina católica entiende que todas las criaturas de Dios (los seres humanos aquí en la Tierra, los ángeles y todos los santos en el cielo) están unidas en el plan salvífico de Dios. Las Escrituras describen las oraciones de la Santísima Virgen María y de todos los santos como unidas al ministerio de los ángeles ante el trono de Dios. Por eso podemos pedirles a los ángeles—especialmente a nuestro ángel de la guarda—que oren por nosotros y nos protejan. Dicha devoción no sustituye la adoración a Dios, la cual le corresponde únicamente a Él; a los santos y a los ángeles se les honra como siervos y amigos de Dios.

La ayuda que recibimos de nuestros ángeles de la guarda debe entenderse dentro del marco del plan más amplio de Dios, que permite que todas sus criaturas participen de manera adecuada en la obra de la salvación.

La Iglesia enseña que las oraciones y las acciones de los seres celestiales pueden ayudar a quienes estamos en la Tierra, y las Sagradas Escrituras presentan a los santos ángeles como acompañantes de las oraciones de todos los santos en el cielo. Dios sigue siendo la fuente primordial de toda gracia y el autor de nuestra salvación, pero contamos con la ayuda de los ángeles y los santos en el cielo para aceptar el amor y la bondad de Dios.

Los ángeles de la guarda son instrumentos de la providencia divina.

El Espíritu Santo es la fuente principal de la gracia santificante, mientras que los ángeles sirven a Dios ayudándonos a responder libremente a su amor. Dios siempre respeta nuestra libertad: los ángeles y los santos pueden influir en nosotros o ayudarnos, pero no pueden obligarnos a elegir ni el bien ni el mal.

Esto significa que la protección de un ángel de la guarda no garantiza que nunca vayamos a pecar, enfermarnos, cometer errores o morir. Seguimos siendo libres de elegir entre la voluntad de Dios y la nuestra.

Los ángeles pueden protegernos, advertirnos, fortalecernos o guiarnos, pero no sustituyen nuestra libertad humana. Esto, en sí mismo, es un gran don de Dios. No somos marionetas controladas por otros, sino mujeres y hombres libres a quienes se nos invita a discernir la voluntad de Dios para con nosotros y a elegir libremente lo que es bueno.

El memorial de los Santos Ángeles Custodios de mañana debería ser un motivo de agradecimiento y alegría. Dios nos brinda toda la ayuda necesaria—incluidos los ángeles que nos protegen, guían e inspiran—para que elijamos libremente aceptar su amor y su perdón. Demos gracias a Dios por nuestros ángeles custodios, quienes “*siempre miran el rostro de mi Padre celestial*” (Mt 18:10), y recibamos con alegría su compañía en nuestro camino hacia nuestro hogar en el Cielo. †

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.

October 6

SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **St. Thomas More Red Mass**, 5:30 p.m., Mass to request the guidance of the Holy Spirit for judges, lawyers and other members of the legal community. Information: 317-236-1498, aporter@archindy.org.

October 7

MCL Cafeteria, 5520 Castleton Corner Lane, Indianapolis. **Solo Seniors**, 5:30-8:30 p.m., Catholic, educational, charitable and social singles—separated, widowed or divorced—ages 50 and older, new members welcome, also call about regular Friday 1 p.m. lunch events. Information: 317-796-8605.

Virtual Discernment Lounge, 7-8 p.m., for Catholic women ages 18-42 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.

October 7-November 18 Virtual Online Life-Giving Wounds Retreat for Adult Children of Divorce, 8:15-10 p.m. Wednesdays, for Catholics ages 18 and older, \$155 ages 18-25, \$245 ages 26 and older, cost includes retreat guide, journal and more. Information, registration: 317-592-4007, Gross@archindy.org.

October 9-10

St. Monica Parish, 6131 N. Michigan Road, Indianapolis. **Being Married and Staying Engaged**, 6:30-9 p.m. Fri., 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m. Sat., presented by Catholic psychologist and speaker Dr. Jim Healy, includes dinner Fri., light breakfast and lunch Sat., \$50 per couple, registration required by Oct. 4. Information: Julia Osburn, 317-809-8482, tinyurl.com/StMonicaMarriageRetreat.

October 10

Holy Angels Parish Center, 2822 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. St., Indianapolis. **Praise and Laughter as Medicine: Prayer, Dinner and Comedy Show**, 5-7 p.m., mental health novena, dinner, Black Catholic trivia, raffle for

tickets to KevOnStage clean come-dy show following at 7:30 p.m. at Butler Arts Center in Indianapolis, sponsored by archdiocesan Black Catholic Ministry. Information, registration: tinyurl.com/PraiseAndLaughter, blackcatholicministry@archindy.org, 317-261-3381.

October 11

Sisters of Providence, 1 Providence Pl., Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **20th Anniversary of Saint Mother Theodore Guérin’s Canonization**, 9:30 a.m.-1 p.m., pilgrimage 9:30 a.m., Mass 11 a.m., picnic at noon, free. Information, registration: events.sistersofprovidence.org, 812-535-2952, msolis-deal@spsmw.org.

Switchyard Park Pavilion, 1601 S. Rogers St., Bloomington. **An Afternoon in the Park**, 1-4 p.m., live music by Justin Case Band, face painting, indoor and outdoor games, food trucks, silent auction, raffle, proceeds benefit St. Vincent de Paul Society conference in Monroe County, free admission. Information: info@bloomingtonsvdp.org, 812-606-7633.

October 13

The Marriott Ballroom, 350 W. Maryland St.,

Indianapolis. **Right to Life of Indianapolis Celebrate Life Dinner**, 6-9:30 p.m., 6 p.m. check-in, 6:45 p.m. dinner and awards, 8 p.m. keynote by Deacon Paul Lunsford (Diocese of Lafayette), \$125 individual, \$1,250 table for 10. Information, registration: tinyurl.com/RTLIDinner2026, 317-582-1526, life@rtlindy.org.

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

October 15-18

Sheraton Birmingham Hotel

2101 Richard Arrington Jr. Boulevard North, Birmingham, Ala. **Fr. Chester P. Smith National Black Catholic Men’s Conference: “The Rock I Stand On,”** 8 a.m. Thurs.-9 a.m. Sun., speakers include Birmingham Bishop Steven J. Raica; Father Vernon Huguley, head of Birmingham Diocese’s Black Catholic Ministry; Father Gerald Holloway, former University of Alabama football chaplain; Ron Jackson, senior director of government relations for Catholic Charities USA; and more; adults \$215, ages 13-17 \$150, lodging separate, hotel parking \$40 per day; no conference registration deadline. Information, registration: bowmanfrancis.org.

October 16

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. Oct. 13. Information, registration: cutt.ly/CBE-Reg.

October 17

Sisters of Providence, 1 Providence Pl., Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Teen Volunteer Opportunity**, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., ages 12-18, visit with elder Sisters, help with activities such as bingo, exercise, baking and attending events, wear comfortable shoes and clothes that allow for mobility, lunch provided, free. Information, registration: teenvolunteer.sistersofprovidence.org, 812-535-2878,

Wedding Anniversaries

STEPHEN AND PAULA (HANLEY) LEE, members of St. Pius X Parish in Indianapolis, celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on Sept. 17. The couple was married in St. Matthew the Apostle Church in Indianapolis on Sept. 17, 1966. They have three children: Paul, Shawn and Stephen Lee. The couple also has 15 grandchildren.



LARRY AND CLARA ANN (KRAUS) ZINSER, members of All Saints Parish in Dearborn County, will celebrate their 55th wedding anniversary on Oct. 2. The couple was married in St. John the Baptist Church in Dover, now a campus of All Saints Parish, on Oct. 2, 1971. They have three children: Angie Whitaker, Eddie and Jonny Zinser. The couple also has three grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.



DOUG AND DIANA (MCQUINLEY) BAUCOM, members of St. Gabriel Parish in Connersville, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Sept. 18. The couple was married in St. Gabriel Church in Connersville on Sept. 18, 1976.



CHARLES AND LESLIE (HAIGHT) LYNCH, members of St. Mary Parish in Lanesville, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Sept. 25. The couple was married in St. Mary Church in Helena, Mont., on Sept. 25, 1976. They have three children: Emily Sandlin, Sarah and Nathan Lynch. The couple also has four grandchildren.



GREGG AND BARBARA (HAMILTON) MATTOX, members of Immaculate Conception Parish in Millhousen, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Sept. 18. The couple was married in Immaculate Conception Church in Millhousen on Sept. 18, 1976. They have four children: Staci Karash, Andy, Clint and Jacob Mattox. The couple also has 10 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.

Archdiocesan bilingual evangelization retreat will be held on Nov. 7 in Indianapolis

A bilingual archdiocesan evangelization retreat will be held at St. Mark the Evangelist Parish, 535 E. Edgewood Ave., Indianapolis, from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. on Nov. 7.

The theme of retreat, offered by the archdiocese’s Office of Evangelization, is “Come Holy Spirit, Renew Our Hearts and Ignite Our Mission.” It will be broken into English and Spanish tracks with three sessions each.

The day includes talks, sharing in small groups, time for meditation and reflection, and an opportunity for participants of both tracks to gather for adoration and a healing service. All are invited to stay for 4:30 p.m. Mass at St. Mark the Evangelist Church.

The retreat provides opportunities for spiritual renewal and growth—of lay leaders, volunteers and those looking for a day of quiet and reflection.

The cost is \$35, which includes lunch. The deadline to register is Oct. 26. Parish leaders can use the contact information below if they wish to assess the cost to their parish.

For more information or to register, go to bit.ly/comeholyspiritretreat or contact Anita Bardo at 317-236-1466 or abardo@archindy.org.

For speakers of Spanish who wish to register but are unable to do so online, contact Alden Budier at 786-400-8454 or abudier@archindy.org. †

Retiro bilingüe de evangelización de la Arquidiócesis a celebrarse en Indianápolis el 7 de noviembre

El 7 de noviembre, de 9 a.m. a 4 p.m., se llevará a cabo un retiro bilingüe de evangelización de la Arquidiócesis en la parroquia de San Marcos Evangelista, ubicada en 535 E. Edgewood Ave., en Indianápolis.

El tema del retiro, organizado por la Oficina de Evangelización de la Arquidiócesis, es “Ven, Espíritu Santo, Renueva Nuestros Corazones y Aviva Nuestra Misión.” Se dividirá en dos grupos, uno en inglés y otro en español, con tres sesiones cada uno.

La jornada incluye charlas, intercambios en grupos pequeños, tiempo para la meditación y la reflexión, así como la oportunidad de que los participantes de ambas sesiones se reúnan para la adoración y un servicio de sanación. Todos están invitados a quedarse para la misa de las 4:30 p.m. en la iglesia de San Marcos Evangelista.

El retiro brinda oportunidades para la renovación y el crecimiento espiritual, tanto para líderes laicos y voluntarios como para quienes buscan un día de tranquilidad y reflexión.

Tiene un costo de \$35 e incluye el almuerzo. La fecha límite para inscribirse es el 26 de octubre. Los líderes parroquiales pueden utilizar la información de contacto que aparece a continuación si desean asignar el costo a su parroquia.

Para obtener más información o inscribirse, visite bit.ly/comeholyspiritretreat o comuníquese con Anita Bardo en el 317-236-1466 o en abardo@archindy.org.

Los hispanohablantes que deseen inscribirse pero no puedan hacerlo en línea pueden comunicarse con Alden Budier al 786-400-8454 o a abudier@archindy.org. †

A favorite song evokes thoughts of a beach in Brazil, a promise and God’s love

(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 is one of the songs—and why it is special—that has been shared so far.)

One in an occasional series

By John Shaughnessy

As Brie Anne Varick talks about her favorite song, she’s once again transported to a beach in Brazil, soon followed by a memorable experience among three million people in Poland.

Thoughts of the song also lead her back to a life-changing promise she made in Indianapolis.

And all three experiences reflect what Varick views as “God moments”—those times when she believes God is speaking to her.

The three experiences are connected to the song, “Taste and See.”

“I’m a singer,” says Varick, who is also director of the archdiocese’s Office of Human Life and Dignity. “It’s just a really pretty song, and vocally it’s fun to sing. And in my devotion to the Eucharist, the lyrics, ‘taste and see the goodness of the Lord,’ really make sense to me. Because God gives us himself physically in the bread, and he wants you to literally taste him in his goodness, that he is goodness.”

Her eyes shine as she adds, “There have also been a few moments when God knew I really liked the song. And so, he used it to speak to me.”

One moment occurred on a beach in Rio de Janeiro in Brazil during World Youth Day in 2013, when young people from around the world joined with Pope Francis during his first international trip.

“It was during the opening Mass,” she recalls. “You’re with hundreds of

thousands of people, and they kind of warn you that you may not get Communion. We were with Father Jonathan Meyer and Father Eric Augenstein. Father Meyer told our group, ‘I’m going to get you Communion.’ He led the way, and everyone was holding hands, and somehow, we got it. It was kind of a miracle.”

An even more powerful moment occurred three years later. In 2016, she was deep in the heart of an estimated 3 million young people in Poland, taking part in a Mass at another World Youth Day with Pope Francis.

“I was prepared again—‘There’s too many people here, we might not get Communion, but that’s OK. I know he’s here, and he will come to me, even spiritually,’ ” she recalls as her voice begins to rise in excitement.

“The song ‘Taste and See’ is playing. And all of a sudden, the Communion minister comes up to our section, and not just right up to our section, but right next to me, standing next to me! All I had to do was stand up to receive Communion. I remember telling Christ, ‘You came to me this time. I didn’t have to fight for you. I didn’t have to seek you out. You came and found me.’ ”

She pauses before adding, “I feel like that was a breakthrough moment in my spiritual journey—of God showing me, ‘I’m going to provide for you. I’m going to take care of you.’ After I received Communion, I felt a great desire to bow down in adoration and touch the ground. It was a very holy moment for me. And it was important to engage all my senses—to touch, to taste, to see and to know that God is good.”

A song of the heart

“Taste and See” is so important to her that she chose it as the Communion song during her wedding Mass to her husband Mike on July 14, 2018, at St. Joan of Arc

Church in Indianapolis.

“When that song played, I was brought again to the awareness that God was with me,” she says.

Varick also views that song as capturing God’s desire to touch our lives physically as well as spiritually.

“I have a love for teaching ‘Theology of the Body’ and how important our physical reality is, that our bodies mean something. God is communicating who he is and who we are through our bodies as well.”

She sees that bond intimately in the way that God offers couples in marriage the gift of creating new life.

“And now I’m on our fourth child,” she says with a smile as she holds her 4-month-old daughter, Melanie, the little sister of Rose, 7, Henry, 5, and Max, 2.

Varick sees the power of the Eucharist to bless our lives too.

“The Eucharist is so important in the Catholic faith, because you may not know God spiritually, and you might have a really dry prayer life, and you might not be able to feel him or know him, but if we physically show up to Mass, he comes to us. We just have to show up, to be there, and we can taste him and know that he is good.

“It’s just beautiful.”

(To hear Brie Anne Varick sing “Taste and See,” use the QR code or go to tinyurl.com/BrieAnneSong)



Brie Anne Varick shares her gift as a singer by performing a song that is close to her heart, “Taste and See.” (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

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. Please send your story and song(s) to John Shaughnessy at jshaughnessy@archindy.org or by mail in care of The Criterion, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202. Please include your parish and a daytime phone number where you can be reached. †



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BEATIFICATION

continued from page 1

1,600 men and women religious, and almost 250 deacons were present, added Bishop Tylka, who wore a pectoral cross that had belonged to Archbishop Sheen. Among the concelebrating prelates was Archbishop Gabriele G. Caccia, apostolic nuncio to the United States, and Indianapolis Archbishop Charles C. Thompson.

The beatification—a papal act affirming that an individual’s presence in heaven is worthy of belief—occurred between the liturgy’s Penitential Rite and the *Gloria*. Bishop Tylka made a formal request for Archbishop Sheen’s beatification to Cardinal Tagle.

A short biography of Archbishop Sheen, who was born in El Paso, Ill., in 1895 and died in New York in 1979, was read by Archbishop Sheen’s great-nephew, Paul Cunningham, after which Cardinal Tagle proclaimed the apostolic letter from Pope Leo XIV declaring the beatification in Latin. Bishop Tylka then read the letter in English, as applause followed both.

With the papal decree’s public proclamation, Archbishop Sheen became formally counted among the Church’s “*beati*,” from the Latin word for “blessed.”

James Fulton Engstrom processed with his parents and siblings to present a major relic of Archbishop Sheen during the liturgy. Born in 2010 without a pulse or respiration due to a knot in his umbilical cord, James came back to life 61 minutes after his birth after his parents and others sought Archbishop Sheen’s intercession. Pope Francis approved it as a miracle in 2019.

Enclosed in a reliquary, the relic is Archbishop Sheen’s mandible, or jawbone, chosen because it represents the archbishop’s tremendous gifts as an orator, teacher and evangelist.

As part of the beatification, a portrait

of a haloed Blessed Fulton Sheen was also unveiled. In the image, he is notably holding a piece of chalk, which he famously used—along with a blackboard—during his Emmy-winning television show, “Life Is Worth Living.”

The image was also simultaneously unveiled in the Diocese of Peoria at its Cathedral of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception.

The first reading for the beatification Mass, Isaiah 52:7-10, was proclaimed in Spanish, with the second reading, 2 Corinthians 4:1-2, 5-7, spoken in Portuguese, while the Gospel taken from Mark 16:15-20 was proclaimed in English. The prayers of the faithful were offered in a variety of other languages, illustrating both the universal character of the Church and the missionary mindset of Blessed Fulton J. Sheen, who served as the U.S. director for the Society for the Propagation of the Faith.

In his homily, Cardinal Tagle praised Archbishop Sheen as a “storyteller of Jesus” and a “missionary who digs deep into the heart of the poor to meet Jesus there.”

The cardinal quoted then-Bishop Sheen’s passionate advocacy for the poor and the Church in poverty-stricken parts of the world in 1964 during the Second Vatican Council: “As only a wounded Christ could convert a doubting Thomas, so only a Church wounded by poverty can convert a doubting world.”

The Filipino prelate commended Archbishop Sheen for making genuine connections with the people he met and to whom he preached and ministered.

“The missionary evangelizer is blessed by the communion with persons and peoples, especially the poor and vulnerable, and this is communion in the name of Jesus Christ,” he said.

Cardinal Tagle shared how Archbishop Sheen told a friend, who asked why he became a priest, that he was called to



Around 50,000 people attended the beatification Mass for Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen on Sept. 24 at The Dome at America's Center in St. Louis. Blessed Fulton is remembered as one of the most influential and innovative evangelists in American history. (OSV News photo/Bob Roller)

share the Gospel and tell the story of Jesus.

“I never tire of telling it; I never tire of improving my telling of it. I love my calling,” said Cardinal Tagle, quoting Archbishop Sheen.

In remarks after Communion, Bishop Tylka urged all attendees to pray for Archbishop Sheen’s canonization, leading them together in a prayer for that intention.

“It is God who has given the Church the extraordinary witness of the man we may now call Blessed Fulton J. Sheen,” he said.

Thanking the many prelates involved in the Mass, including St. Louis Archbishop Mitchell T. Rozanski, whose archdiocese hosted the beatification, and representatives from the Archdiocese of New York, Diocese of Rochester, N.Y., and the Pontifical Mission Societies, Bishop Tylka noted, “Your presence today

is a beautiful reminder that while Peoria is incredibly proud to call Fulton Sheen one of our own, he is a gift to the whole Church.”

Bishop Tylka also expressed his gratitude to Archbishop Sheen’s family, individuals and benefactors involved in preparations and liturgy and the faithful who made the pilgrimage to attend the beatification.

“Fulton Sheen has left us a great legacy,” he said. “He fearlessly proclaimed the Gospel in challenging cultural times. He supported the Church’s missions throughout the world. He won tens of thousands of converts and preached to millions. His time of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament was the source of his insight into the Son of God. He used every gift God gave him for one purpose: to bring people to Christ. And his legacy is now ours.” †

Readers share how Blessed Fulton Sheen touched their lives, deepened their faith

By Sean Gallagher

Catholics from across the archdiocese reached out to *The Criterion* in the weeks leading up to the Sept. 24 beatification of Blessed Fulton J. Sheen to share the impact on their lives and faith of the archbishop, who died in 1979 and was well known for his TV shows in which he explained the faith.

‘He touched my life’

Barbara Hollingsworth knew in her heart that Archbishop Sheen was blessed long before the beatification Mass.



Barbara Hollingsworth

That was because of his entrance into her life in 1943 when she was only 9 months old. At the time, she was living with her family in Alton, Ill., and was suffering from a life-threatening case of pneumonia.

“The doctors told my mother and father that there was really nothing more they could do,” Hollingsworth said.

At that time, then-Msgr. Fulton Sheen was visiting Hollingsworth’s godmother, who was a neighbor

of her family and who was also a relative of then-Msgr. Sheen. The godmother told the priest of Hollingsworth’s illness.

“When he found out, he went to the hospital and blessed me,” Hollingsworth said. “And within three days, the doctors were astounded. I started breathing a little on my own. They couldn’t get over it.

“When he came periodically to visit, he would come over to the house where we lived next door to check on me.”

Hollingsworth’s family later moved to Clinton near Terre Haute, where they became members of Sacred Heart Parish.

Now 84 and experiencing health challenges, Hollingsworth is as convinced as ever of the power of Blessed Fulton’s holiness.

“I’m not able to go over there for the beatification,” she said with great emotion and tears. “But I just know that he touched my life.”

Hollingsworth also sees Archbishop Sheen’s effect on her life in the lifelong love she has had for her Catholic faith.

“My mother always said it was because I was blessed by Fulton Sheen,” she said. “I am so proud and so thrilled

about what’s going to happen to him.”

Hollingsworth was a teenager when Blessed Fulton appeared weekly on TV.

“The world stood still when ‘Life Is Worth Living’ was on,” she said of the attention that she and her family gave to the archbishop’s show. “His presence commanded respect. His presence said something. He spoke to people in a way that mesmerized them.”

She would watch him at the start of each show write the letters “JMJ,” for “Jesus, Mary and Joseph,” on a blackboard on the set of the show.

“That was his life—Jesus, Mary and Joseph,” Hollingsworth said. “What more do we need in life? What more do we need?”

‘He was an instrument of God’

Curtis Guynn was 22 in 1963 when Archbishop Sheen visited Indianapolis to speak at a national convention of the Knights and Ladies of Peter Claver, a fraternal organization of Black Catholics.



Curtis Guynn

He celebrated a Mass on the grounds of St. Rita Parish in Indianapolis that was attended by the approximately 1,000 people from across the country who were in the city for the convention.

Guynn, a lifelong member of St. Rita, had watched Archbishop Sheen on TV in the 1950s like millions did at the time on a weekly basis.

So, having him come to St. Rita was impressive to him.

“For him to be here in person made a big difference,” Guynn said. “He was very happy to be here. He praised what Peter Claver stood for and what the local organization was doing. The Mass was very meaningful.”

Guynn explained the effect that Archbishop Sheen had on his faith through his TV shows.

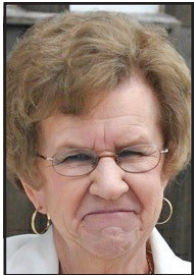
“He strengthened what I had,” Guynn said. “Some of his ideas were very deep. You’d listen to him and then in the end understand what he was saying. He meant so much to me. He made my faith even stronger.”

Seeing Archbishop Sheen celebrating Mass at St. Rita gave Guynn a strong impression of who he was as a man of faith.

“It seemed like holiness was wrapped all around him,” Guynn recalled. “You could see it. He was an instrument of God. That’s how I saw it.”

Memories of a father’s faith

Sharon Cozart was in the third grade at St. Louis School in Batesville in the mid-1950s when her father, Charley Peters, was received into the full communion of the Church.



Sharon Cozart

“I know I was just a child at the time, but I was proud of him when he did this,” Cozart recalled.

It was at this time that Blessed Fulton drew some 30 million people each week to watch his TV show “Life Is Worth Living.” Cozart and her father were regular viewers.

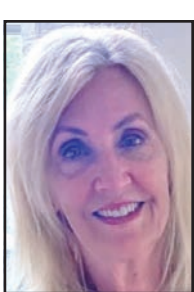
“He absolutely loved to watch Archbishop Sheen,” said Cozart, still a member of St. Louis Parish in Batesville. “I would watch it with him, despite not understanding much of his words. But I listened.

“There are many things in my life I have forgotten, but not my memories of this.”

Cozart confessed that her memory “is not earth-shattering.” Nonetheless, she added that “to me, it will always be close to my heart.”

‘Love made visible’

Nancy Shields was a child in the 1960s when she, her mother and an aunt watched Archbishop Sheen on TV.



Nancy Shields

“Now that his talks are easy to find on YouTube, I often watch the clips of him and have found them just as powerful and comforting,” said Shields, a member of Christ the King Parish in Indianapolis.

She particularly recalled Blessed Fulton’s reflections on St. Peter’s shock when Christ had told him and the Apostles that he would be crucified and Christ’s reply to him, “Get behind me, Satan” (Mt 16:23).

“His response shows that the cross was not a defeat, but the heart of his mission,” Shields said. “Jesus could not be seen as the Son of God just through his loving of others and his miracles. Through Archbishop Sheen’s explanation, I came to see Christ’s suffering not only as sacrifice, but as love made visible.

“I want to go deeper in my faith and better understand Christ’s sacrifice for us, and Fulton Sheen’s talks have helped me do that.” †

Archbishop, priests reflect on the powerful witness of Archbishop Sheen

By Sean Gallagher

Priests young and old who serve the Church in central and southern Indiana all point to Blessed Fulton J. Sheen as a role model and inspiration, not only for themselves, but for all the faithful. Some of these priests, as well as Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, spoke with *The Criterion* about the role played in their lives by the archbishop who died in 1979 and was declared blessed during a Sept. 24 beatification Mass at The Dome at America’s Center in St. Louis, the last step before his canonization.

‘A brilliant microcosm of the Church in the United States’

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson was a concelebrant at the beatification Mass, wearing a pectoral cross that had been given to Blessed Fulton in 1951 by Pope Pius XII on the occasion of his ordination as a bishop. It came into the possession of the archdiocese through Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara, a longtime friend of Blessed Fulton and the executor of his will. Archbishop O’Meara led the Church in central and southern Indiana from 1979-91. The pectoral cross that Archbishop Thompson wore at the liturgy is now preserved in the archdiocese’s archives. “It was very humbling and an honor,” Archbishop Thompson said of the beatification Mass. “It was inspiring. I thought about Archbishop O’Meara’s connection with Fulton Sheen.” Archbishop Thompson praised Blessed Fulton’s ability to “touch hearts and inspire people, and not just Catholics,” noting that “he used those gifts to the fullest to make a difference in the lives of others with the Gospel.”

The archbishop spoke about how he was impressed by “the energy and enthusiasm” on display at the Mass and called the 50,000 people who took part in it “people proud of their faith, people loving their faith, people celebrating their faith.” “You had everybody there: bishops, priests, deacons, cardinals, religious men and women, families,” he said. “It was a brilliant microcosm of the Church in the United States. It was a great day to celebrate as a Church in the United States and beyond.”

‘One soul makes this much difference’

Father Jonathan Meyer was only 3 when Blessed Fulton died. He did not grow up watching him on weekly TV like so many of his parents’ and grandparents’ generations did. The priest first began to learn about him, and learn from him, when he became an archdiocesan seminarian in the late 1990s. It was then that Father Meyer sought to adopt Blessed Fulton’s decades-long

practice of praying before the Blessed Sacrament for an hour every day, a devotion traditionally called a Holy Hour. He described in simple terms his motivation for following in Archbishop Sheen’s footsteps in this practice: “I wanted to be a saint. There was no other desire in my heart.” Archbishop Sheen’s fidelity to a daily Holy Hour contributed to the holiness for which he is now recognized by the Church. It was his holiness that drew thousands on Sept. 24 to St. Louis for Archbishop Sheen’s beatification. Father Meyer went to the liturgy with 48 members of the four parishes he serves in Dearborn County. “As I processed into The Dome, I just began crying,” said Father Meyer. “To see so many people who were there gave me so much hope. “One man had this much of an impact, and in reality so much more. One priest did this. One child of God did this. One soul makes this much of a difference. It was powerful.”

Memories to last a lifetime

Retired Msgr. Joseph Schaedel has memories of watching Archbishop Sheen on TV when he was a child in the 1950s. “To be honest, I don’t remember much of what he said,” Msgr. Schaedel said. “But, as a youngster, I was fascinated with his flowing cape and the invisible ‘angel’ who would erase his chalkboard when he moved to the other side of the room.” Being ordained a priest in 1982 by Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara, a close friend of Blessed Fulton, “intensified” Msgr. Schaedel’s “appreciation and knowledge” of Archbishop Sheen. Like Father Meyer, Msgr. Schaedel has sought to make a Holy Hour a daily part of his priestly life and ministry. He was a concelebrant at the beatification Mass, describing it as “one of the most memorable—if not the most memorable” liturgies of his life.

The beatification liturgy helped Msgr. Schaedel realize that Blessed Fulton was declared blessed not because of his great ministry as an evangelist or as a promoter of missionary work around the world. “Sheen was beatified because he was holy: a man of prayer and unwavering devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, our Lady, the priesthood and the Church,” Msgr. Schaedel said. “The beauty and reverence during the liturgy brought this home for me. It renewed in me [the desire] to strive to be holy no matter what ministry I may be involved in. Devotion to Jesus Christ is all that



Msgr. Joseph Schaedel



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson (center) poses on Sept. 24 with Father Jonathan Meyer and members of the four parishes Father Meyer serves in Dearborn County before the beatification Mass for Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen at The Dome at America’s Center in St. Louis. (Submitted photo)

counts.” Retired Father James Bonke said Blessed Fulton’s TV show was “must-see TV” when he grew up in the 1950s. But it was his experience as a young priest in the 1970s of hearing him speak during a preaching workshop that forever cemented the prelate’s effect on his priestly life and ministry. Blessed Fulton spoke to the priests at the workshop in the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. “I remember him ascending the pulpit in the basilica and speaking in his deep stentorian voice, dressed in bishop robes and with his piercing eyes,” recalled Father Bonke. “He was impressive. “But at some point in his presentation, he stretched out his arms and pointed to the back of the church and beyond. He said, ‘If you can’t find God out there, you won’t find him in here.’ It was a powerful message and has remained with me all these years.”

Archbishop Sheen made an impact on the life of retired Father Carlton Beaver at a younger age and at a crucial time in his life. He was a fourth-grade student in 1956 at the former St. Bernadette School in Indianapolis when he and his family were preparing to be received into the full communion of the Church. Both the instruction in the faith that he and his family received and watching Archbishop Sheen on TV “began the foundation of our faith,” Father Beaver said, adding that “his way with words” and his “commanding presence” were a spur to his practice of the faith as a child. “Every week, no matter what, my whole family stopped whatever we were doing and gathered in front of the TV to watch him,” he recalled. “It wasn’t an expectation or a command performance. We looked forward to his show. I think we were just drawn to him.”

Retired Msgr. Mark Svarczkopf didn’t just watch Archbishop Sheen on TV. The weekly shows were part of the lesson plan of the members of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, who taught him at the former St. Andrew the Apostle School in Indianapolis. “They would assign us to watch ‘Life Is Worth Living,’” Msgr. Svarczkopf recalled. “Then you had to turn in a report—and the report had to have some depth into it. They wanted to know what the real teaching of the Church was that he shared.” The retired priest reflected on the impression that Archbishop Sheen made on young men of his generation as they discerned God’s call in their life.

“There was a holiness in him that we were all seeking,” Msgr. Svarczkopf said. “It was not just Hollywood. There was a real holiness about him and a desire to learn about God.”

A Mass that made a ‘lasting impression’

Dominican Father Patrick Hyde, pastor of St. Paul Catholic Center in Bloomington, was born in 1985, six years after Archbishop Sheen died. He only began to delve deeply into his writings when he joined the Dominicans. Father Patrick described the role that Blessed Fulton’s 1963 book on the priesthood, *The Priest Is Not His Own*, had on his vocational discernment.



Fr. Patrick Hyde, O.P.

“I found his approach to the priest as being a [sacrificial] victim at as well as a priest enlightening,” he said. “It really helped me deepen my understanding of my own vocation. Though a lot of work and prayer preceded my reading of that book, I attribute my decision ultimately to pursue the Dominican priesthood to that book.” So, it was a blessing for Father Patrick to take part in the beatification Mass of a man who played such an important role in his priestly life and ministry. “One of the beautiful parts of our Catholic faith is the intercession and veneration of the saints,” he said. “To be able to participate in a liturgy where someone is declared blessed ... was an incredible blessing.”

At St. Paul, Father Patrick ministers to a growing number of Indiana University students who are embracing the Catholic faith. He accompanied a large number of them to the beatification Mass. “To attend Mass with 50,000 people ... was a tremendous gift for the students who were able to attend,” he said. “In fact, one of the members of our group is in OCIA [the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults], and this was only the fifth or sixth Mass he ever attended. Needless to say, it made quite a lasting impression.”

The liturgy made an impression on Father Patrick, too, as he was “deeply moved” when a jawbone of Blessed Fulton held in a reliquary was brought in a procession to the sanctuary at the Mass after he was declared blessed. “As I have thought about that, it has made me realize how tangible the saints now are to me as an American priest,” Father Patrick said. “To be a saint is to not be someone from a different era and culture, but to do the will of God in the circumstances I face in an increasingly complex and technologically advanced world.” †



Father Eric Augenstein leads members of the Knights of Columbus at the start of the Sept. 24 beatification Mass of Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen at The Dome at America’s Center in St. Louis. The archdiocesan priest served as a master of ceremonies at the beatification liturgy. (OSV News photo/Bob Roller)

O'MEARA

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The voice of Archbishop Sheen may no longer have been heard after his death on Dec. 9, 1979, but, in many ways, it echoed in the years to come in the pastoral leadership of his friend.

Archbishop O’Meara was appointed to lead the Church in central and southern Indiana on Nov. 27, 1979, less than two weeks before Archbishop Sheen’s death.

Their close connection was on display during the Sept. 24 Mass in St. Louis during which Archbishop Sheen was declared blessed. Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, who was a concelebrant at the liturgy, wore a pectoral cross that had been given to Blessed Fulton by Pope Pius XII in 1951 on the occasion of his ordination as a bishop.

It came to be in the possession of the archdiocese because of the friendship between Blessed Fulton and Archbishop O’Meara and is now preserved in the archdiocese’s archives.

“I was wearing a relic, something that was very close to now Blessed Fulton Sheen,” Archbishop Thompson said in an interview with *The Criterion*. “And it also shows the connection to the archdiocese through Archbishop O’Meara. It was very powerful to wear that.”

A friendship based in mutual love of the Eucharist

As a young priest of the archdiocese, now-retired Msgr. Mark Svarczkopf spent much time socially with Archbishop O’Meara. He shared in an interview with *The Criterion* his thoughts on how Blessed Fulton helped shape the pastoral leadership of Archbishop O’Meara.

It all started through the young Father O’Meara’s love of the Eucharist, and for knowing where a light switch was, said Msgr. Svarczkopf.

Archbishop Sheen was the national director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith and was in St. Louis in the early 1950s for a meeting of the society.

Early one morning, he was trying to pray the Liturgy of the Hours from his Breviary during a Holy Hour he was making in the darkened crypt of the Cathedral Basilica of St. Louis.

He sensed that there was another priest there and asked him if he knew how to turn the lights on, which he did.

That priest was Father Edward O’Meara.

“So, he turned on the light switch, and they were able to pray the Breviary together. And Fulton Sheen says, ‘This kid’s a genius. I want him working for me,’ ” Msgr. Svarczkopf recalled with a laugh before becoming more serious.

“That was his entree into his working with Sheen. But out of all the priests there [in St. Louis for the meeting], apparently there were only these two praying a Holy Hour.

That tells you something. Making a Holy Hour before the Blessed Sacrament was important [to both of them].”

Archbishop O’Meara served as the assistant national director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith from 1956-60. He succeeded Archbishop Sheen as the national director in 1966.

During their collaboration in the society, Archbishop O’Meara traveled with Blessed Fulton across the country and around the world in the society’s support of the Church’s missionary work.

Msgr. Svarczkopf said that it would have been easy for Blessed Fulton simply to have a local priest assist him in his visits, “but he always took O’Meara.”

“There are so many pictures of Fulton Sheen in Africa wearing some sort of native garb, and O’Meara’s right there with him,” Msgr. Svarczkopf said.

‘Never forget anybody’s name’

Many of these trips involved Archbishop Sheen visiting with donors who supported the work of the society. This, Msgr. Svarczkopf said, helped Archbishop O’Meara learn the importance of a personal connection in fostering stewardship.

“There was a lot about the strength of the personality of the person who’s asking and the person who’s giving, rather than it just coming in the mail,” Msgr. Svarczkopf said.

Archbishop O’Meara put that learning to use when he was appointed in 1979 to lead the Church in central and southern Indiana. As during his work for the society, he made frequent visits to parishes across the archdiocese.

An early initiative that he began was the archdiocese’s first annual giving program, which was then called the Archbishop’s Annual Appeal.

“We didn’t have that before O’Meara,” Msgr. Svarczkopf said. “And that came from Sheen. It was based on the personality of the archbishop. Everybody liked O’Meara. So, they wanted to help him out. He knew you, and he had been to your parish.”

The personal connection that Archbishop O’Meara made with Catholics across the archdiocese was aided by another principle he saw Blessed Fulton apply—to “never forget anybody’s name,” said Msgr. Svarczkopf, adding that Blessed Fulton taught Archbishop O’Meara methods to remember the names of the people he met.

“If you know anything about these great Churchmen, the ones that are really great remember who you are,” Msgr. Svarczkopf said. “There is a skill in doing it. And it means that it’s important enough for you to learn that skill.”

Handing on ‘a manly rosary’

Archbishop O’Meara was not only the homilist at Blessed Fulton’s funeral, he was also the executor of his will. Because of that, some of his personal possessions

came into the possession of the archdiocese.

That included the pectoral cross that Archbishop Thompson wore at the beatification Mass. Archbishop O’Meara also had a rosary that belonged to his friend. He gave it to Msgr. Svarczkopf while on his deathbed.

The retired priest described it as “a manly rosary.”

“The rosary must have weighed about 3 pounds with a big heavy chain and big black beads,” Msgr. Svarczkopf recalled. “Sheen thought it was a manly thing to pray the rosary. He was faithful to praying the rosary.”

Msgr. Svarczkopf gave the rosary to a seminary friend of his, Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan, now the retired archbishop of New York, when he was appointed an auxiliary bishop of St. Louis in 2001. Archbishop O’Meara had ordained Cardinal Dolan a priest in 1976 when the archbishop was then himself a St. Louis auxiliary bishop.

Eight years later, when Cardinal Dolan was being installed as the archbishop of New York, he stood outside of St. Patrick’s Cathedral as hundreds of priests walked by him in the liturgy’s opening procession, often greeting priests that he knew, including Msgr. Svarczkopf.

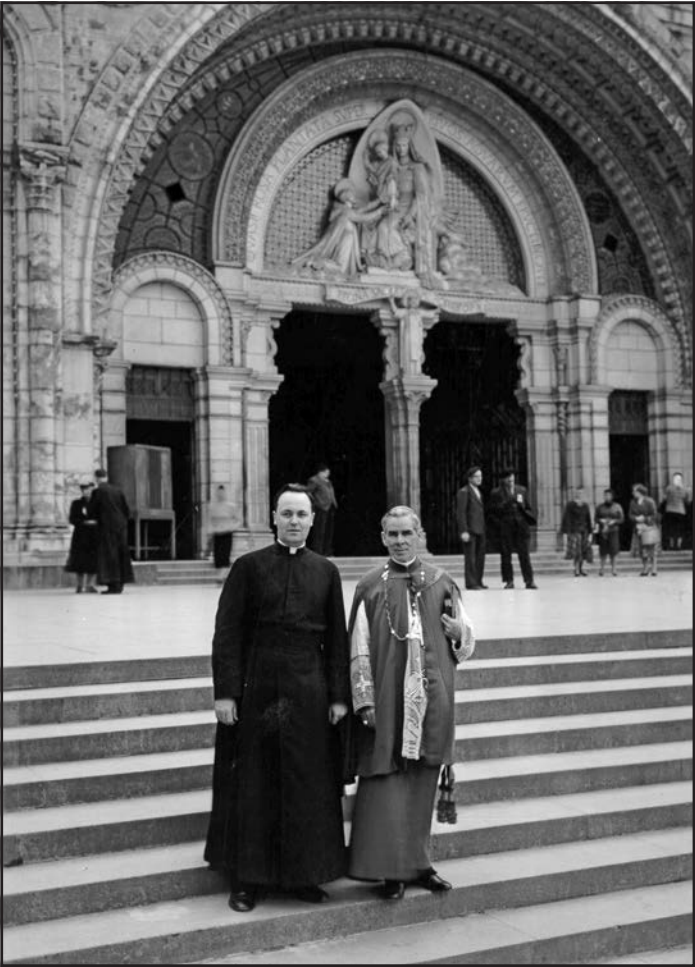
“He saw me and said, ‘Hi, Mark. I prayed Bishop Sheen’s rosary this morning,’ ” Msgr. Svarczkopf recalled. “So, I imagine Dolan is still using Fulton Sheen’s rosary.”

Sharing our faith ‘with the wider world’

It is a task of archdiocesan archivist Julie Motyka to preserve items that have come into the possession of the archdiocese, including relics like the pectoral cross of Blessed Fulton.

“It is amazing to care for items that belonged to saints or blessed, as we do have other relics in the archdiocesan archives,” she said. “However, what I find to be the most meaningful aspect of caring for a relic is that it reminds us that the saints were human. Saints had documents and possessions the same as the rest of us.”

Motyka also sees in the letters kept in the archives the way in which Blessed Fulton



Then-Father Edward O’Meara, left, and Blessed Fulton J. Sheen pose in front of the Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary in Lourdes, France, during a 1957 trip to the southern French pilgrimage site. (Photo courtesy of the Archives of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis)

influenced Archbishop O’Meara’s approach to leading the Church.

“You can see this in the way that Archbishop O’Meara was very much a people person,” she said. “Archbishop Sheen was a television personality who loved to teach and speak, and that reflected onto Archbishop O’Meara’s leadership style.”

After he was appointed to lead the Church in central and southern Indiana, Archbishop O’Meara continued to have a concern for the Church around the world as he had in his ministry in the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. He served from 1987-91 as chairman of Catholic Relief Services, the international aid organization of the Church in the U.S.

“Archbishop O’Meara desired, like Archbishop Sheen had, to serve the global Church,” Motyka said. “Now Archbishop Thompson serves as a member of the board of Catholic Relief Services, carrying on that tradition.

“Here in the archdiocese, I think we should feel inspired by the legacy of an archbishop who taught us that we have a responsibility to share our faith with the wider world.”

(To learn more about the friendship between Blessed Fulton J. Sheen and Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara, visit archindy.org/sheen-omeara.) †

Pope shares childhood memories of Blessed Fulton J. Sheen on flight to Paris

ABOARD PAPAL PLANE (OSV News)—On the papal flight to Paris on Sept. 25, Pope Leo XIV recalled spending time with his family as a child watching Blessed Fulton J. Sheen share the truths of the faith on television. Archbishop Sheen had been declared blessed the day before in St. Louis.

“We watched him as a family,” the pope said in response to a question from OSV News. “It was a way of ... spending some time together as a family with the truths, with the teachings that he shared in such an enthusiastic, lively way.

“The message that he had was something that really came home to people and I think helped us as a family,” he added.

The 71-year-old pope also joked, “I’m that old.”

Pope Leo acknowledged that he would have liked to attend the beatification of Blessed Fulton, whom he noted was also, like him, originally from Illinois.

“I received messages during the beatification ceremony yesterday saying, ‘Why weren’t you here?’ That would’ve been so great,” he said of the beatification of Archbishop Sheen, which took place in St. Louis on Sept. 24 with an estimated 50,000 people in attendance.

Pope Leo has previously spoken about watching Blessed Fulton’s television program as a child, and has praised him for bringing the Gospel to millions of Americans through his radio and television broadcasts.

“Archbishop Sheen was a light of faith, hope and love that shone through the radio and television media for decades,” Pope Leo said during an audience with members of the Pontifical Mission Societies on June 1.

“I myself am a witness of his evangelization when I was growing up,” the pope added. “His broadcasts touched millions with the hope of the Gospel and his initiatives and efforts resulted in enormous spiritual and material aid to the Churches in areas of first evangelization.”

The American pope was elected last year on Archbishop Sheen’s birthday.

Born in El Paso, Ill., on May 8, 1895, Blessed Fulton was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Peoria on Sept. 20, 1919. He went on to become one of the most recognized Catholic voices in American history, rising to national prominence during the 1930s and 1940s as host of “The Catholic Hour” on NBC radio.

Beginning in 1952, then-Bishop Sheen reached tens of millions of viewers each Tuesday evening through his television program “Life Is Worth Living.” Armed

with little more than his intellect, charisma, a cape and a chalkboard, he won an Emmy Award for best television personality after his first season and later, in December 1953, he famously thanked his writers: “Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.”

Throughout his 60 years of ordained ministry, Archbishop Sheen sought to conform himself more closely to Christ by observing a daily eucharistic Holy Hour, what he called “the hour that makes my day.”

He also was intensely devoted to the Mother of God. For 16 years, Archbishop Sheen served as the national director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, one of the four Pontifical Mission Societies, during which he sought to instill a missionary spirituality and identity in Catholics in the U.S. and help raise funds to spread the faith and build the Church across the globe.

Archbishop Sheen died on Dec. 9, 1979, in New York City, in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, after nearly two years of declining health following open-heart surgery.

“May the example and intercession of this holy bishop, known for his evangelizing work through the media, inspire many others likewise to find new ways of spreading the Gospel message with joyful enthusiasm,” Pope Leo said in his greeting to English-speaking pilgrims at the end of his Sept. 23 general audience. †



Pope Leo XIV

SIMPLY CATHOLIC

Beatifications emphasize devotion to a person declared to be in heaven

By Michael R. Heinlein

(OSV News)—Beatifications are a tremendous milestone in the process of canonization. Thousands of Catholics from across the U.S. got to witness that happen when they took part in the Mass for Blessed Fulton J. Sheen on Sept. 24 at The Dome at America’s Center in St. Louis.

The Latin word “*beatus*,” a title bestowed on the individual in question at a beatification, means “blessed” or “happy.” This word also lends its name to the Eight Beatitudes, which lay at the heart of Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount, described by St. Augustine as “the perfect charter for the Christian life,” or roadmap to holiness.

A beatification is a papal act that declares it is worthy of belief that those who are beatified enjoy the beatific vision. In short, they are in heaven because they were killed “*in odium fidei*” (“in hatred of the faith”) as a martyr, lived a life of heroic virtue or offered their life selflessly to preserve the life of others.

What is meant by “beatification”?

Beatification is the penultimate stage in the Church’s process by which it seeks to determine if a person is truly in heaven. The final step of that process is canonization. In it, the pope solemnly and irrevocably proclaims that a person is truly in heaven.

A beatification comes only after a long juridical and investigative process in which a person’s life, reputation and writings are meticulously investigated.

While this process ends with canonization, two major hurdles must be cleared for beatification. After all phases of the investigation are completed, the individual is declared “venerable.” In making this declaration, the pope recognizes that the heroic virtue by which the person lived is worthy of the Church’s imitation and that the person is thus worthy of veneration.

Except in the case of martyrs, beatification comes only after a miracle attributed to a person’s intercession has occurred, been reported and rigorously investigated. A miracle is also ordinarily required for canonization also, even for martyrs, but this necessity has occasionally been waived by the pope.

Canonization causes begin with a local emphasis. Devotion to and veneration of the individual begins first with those who knew the person individually or by his or her reputation. The fame for holiness and intercessory powers (or martyrdom) gradually spreads first regionally, then universally.

For this reason, beatifications have most historically been celebrated locally, by a papal representative. For a period after the Second Vatican Council, they often were celebrated at the Vatican by the pope or at least locally by the pope when he visited the place.

Canonizations are typically celebrated in Rome and always by the pope himself.

A brief history of beatification

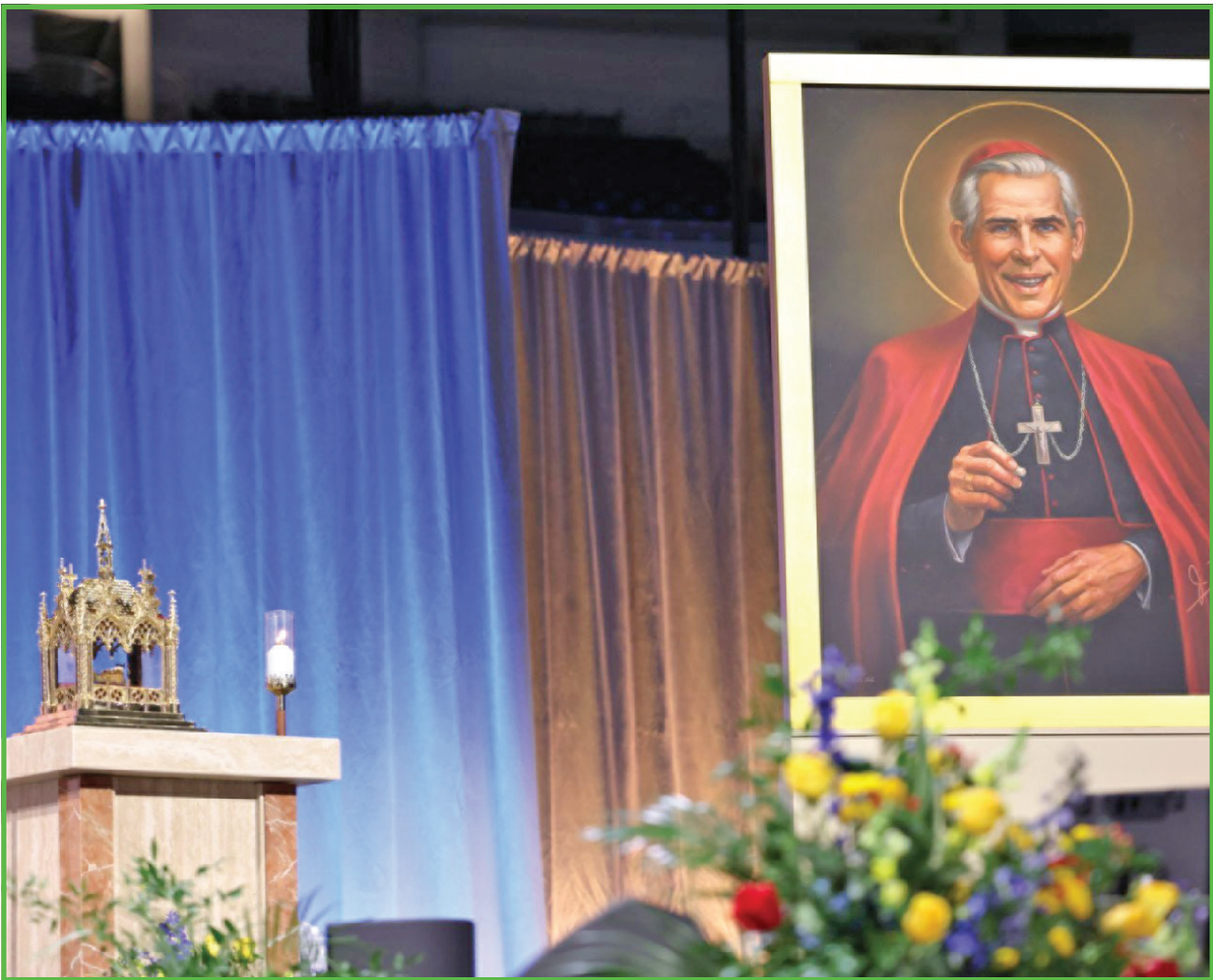
Before the 11th century, local dioceses moderated the recognition and veneration of holy men and women. Diocesan bishops, individually or collaboratively, typically investigated and approved a devotion to a particular deceased person.

(The traditional term for this in Latin is “*cultus*” or “cult” in English. Please note, however, that the word “cult” in this context has none of the negative connotations that the word has gained in more recent times.)

As the medieval papacy expanded its authority, canonizations became reserved to the pope, something formalized in 1234 under Pope Gregory IX. Subsequently, the Holy See permitted limited local veneration of certain people not yet canonized. When Benedict XIV refined canonization procedures in the 18th century, many already venerated locally were recognized as blessed.

In 1971, with the beatification for Maximilian Kolbe, St. Paul VI became the first pope to preside personally at a beatification. He presided similarly on several subsequent occasions. Pope John Paul II regularly presided at beatifications, often in a local setting during a pastoral journey, and the practice continued throughout his papacy.

This post-conciliar innovation unconsciously blurred the lines of beatification and canonization. In 2005, Pope Benedict XVI desired to return to the



A major relic of Blessed Fulton J. Sheen is displayed next to his official portrait at his beatification Mass on Sept. 24 at The Dome at America’s Center in St. Louis. (OSV News photo/Margaret Murray)

Church’s more traditional approach of delegating a representative to preside over the beatification on the pope’s behalf. A twofold consideration was at play: to more clearly delineate between beatifications and canonizations, and also more clearly involve the local dioceses.

The pope reserved the option to preside over a beatification, as it is always an act of the pope.

Beatification vs. canonization

While the pope unequivocally proclaims an individual is in heaven with a canonization, a beatification is more specifically aimed at officially permitting public devotion to an individual whose virtues to a heroic degree, or martyrdom, have been formally approved.

A blessed may be venerated publicly and celebrated liturgically only if the law permits. While canonized saints may be invoked in the public and official prayers of the Church throughout the world, keeping with the theme of locality in beatification, those who are beatified enjoy this on a more restricted or local basis.

The beatified are afforded public devotion in the diocese or religious order in which their canonization cause was promoted. This would include permitting celebration of a liturgical memorial (commonly referred to as a “feast day”) at Mass and in the Liturgy of the Hours, displaying the blessed’s image in a church or naming churches in his or her honor.

Other congregations or dioceses can request the same for the beatified in their jurisdictions, which is especially appropriate for those who have some ties to the blessed (a former residence, location of burial or even the entire nation for those enjoying broad devotion, and the like). The requests for veneration and liturgical commemoration of the blessed in these additional locales must receive approval from the Holy See.

After beatification, use of a halo is also permitted in artistic depictions. If first-class relics are available of the blessed, they may be distributed for public veneration by the faithful.

Although there are currently three blesseds on the United States’ liturgical calendar, the bishops in the U.S. have in recent decades decided to rarely pursue the inclusion of beatified Americans on the calendar until they have reached canonization.

Where is a beatification held?

The celebration of a beatification occurs in a

special rite, most typically situated in the context of a Mass, although it is permitted to occur in some circumstances in a celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours.

It is to be celebrated in the diocese where the cause has been promoted, although it is permitted to hold the beatification in a place more suitable in the same ecclesiastical province or region.

This latter option was true for the Sept. 24 beatification of Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen, whose cause has been promoted by the Diocese of Peoria. It did not have an indoor facility large enough to hold the large number of people who desired to take part in the beatification Mass. Therefore, it was held in St. Louis (about a two-hour drive from Peoria) which has an indoor arena large enough to accommodate the thousands who ended up coming to show their devotion to Archbishop Sheen.

In rare cases, there is also the option that the Holy See might decide to hold the beatification at the Vatican.

What happens at a beatification?

When celebrated within Mass, the beatification rite takes place between the Penitential Rite and the Gloria.

First, a formal request for beatification is made to the papal representative by the local bishop of the diocese where the cause was promoted. This is followed by a public reading of a short biography of the person to be beatified, with special emphasis on his or her virtues.

A formal decree of beatification is read, in the form of an apostolic letter from the pope. This is typically read in its official Latin and followed by another reading in the vernacular. By this public proclamation of the decree, the person is formally counted among the blessed.

Following this, an image of the newly beatified is revealed, usually with a halo for the first time. A first-class relic, if available, or another relic is then presented to the papal delegate, usually venerated with incense and adorned with candles and flowers.

After the *Gloria*, the collect prayer proper to the newly beatified’s liturgical devotion is prayed for the first time. The Mass then proceeds as usual.

(Michael R. Heinlein is author of *Glorifying Christ: The Life of Cardinal Francis E. George, O.M.I. and a promised member of the Association of Pauline Cooperators.*) †

Twenty Something/Christina Capecchi

One more page: the power of the read-aloud at any time of the day

It’s a blustery Monday morning in September, and the wind is whipping the first patches of red in the maple outside Mary’s window. Inside, Mary is in bed, wrapped in a fleece blanket and a story—chapter seven of “Whistler,” Ann Patchett’s latest book, read by the daughter beside her bed.



“It’s a moody day,” says Mary, 90, glancing at the clouds and smiling serenely. “She’s got a lovely voice to listen to.”

It’s a warm Saturday night in August, and four kids are tucked into lofted bunk beds in a cabin

overlooking the Mississippi River. They’ve been swimming all day, and now it’s story time, read by flashlight: Roald Dahl’s “The Twits.”

Even the sleepest swimmers snicker at the description of Mr. Twit foraging through his food-filled beard: “By sticking out his tongue and curling it sideways to explore the hairy jungle around his mouth, he was always able to find a tasty morsel here and there to nibble on.”

At 90 or 9, at the end of a day or the end of a life, there’s something about being read to that settles us in.

The clock requires coaxing and corralling. Cleats, cars, commitments. Sometimes there isn’t enough breathing room. So, I’m embracing the ritual of read-aloud every evening—a long exhale, a sweet surrender of the day. What’s done is done, what’s not done can wait.

I turn off the lights, grab the flashlight and open the book, and invariably, miraculously, time slows down. Stresses vanish. Together, we enter into the story. We’re crossing the prairie by covered wagon. Skating down a frozen canal. Training a pet falcon. Outwitting the Doomsday Gang. Mixing a marvelous medicine.

We resume where we left off the night before. Bookmark found, pages spread. “Where were we?” There is tenderness in that question. The story continues because we returned to it. Comfort in the continuity.

The read-aloud, meanwhile, is inefficient in all the best ways. We’re not simply transferring information. We’re saying: You are worth sitting beside. You are worth slowing down for. I’ll give this story my voice because I want to share it with you. Let’s take our time.

And its significance goes even deeper. Read-alouds feel like a defense of the human person and a protest against artificial intelligence.

It’s getting harder to find originality. The Wall Street Journal’s Opinion section now permits outside contributors to use AI as long as the ideas belong to the contributor. Anything for more clicks, more scrolling, optimization.

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slowing down for. I’ll give this story my voice because I want to share it with you. Let’s take our time.

In his new encyclical “Magnifica Humanitas: On Safeguarding the Human Person in the Time of Artificial Intelligence,” Pope Leo XIV warns that AI must never eclipse what makes us human, and he cites “reading stories to a child” (#114) as an example of how we learn to care for one another.

Such acts, he writes, “train us to recognize others as persons worthy of attention” (#114).

There it is, that premise of Catholic social teaching: the dignity of each person. It must always come first.

We must remember how to make meaning. We must look for evidence of humanity, signs of life. Fingerprints. Handwritten notes. The mid-sentence sneeze in a read-aloud. Crooked lines that lead straight to the heart.

Three of the four swimmers are now asleep in their bunk beds. They have entered more fully into the story.

Only the oldest hears Roald Dahl observe that no matter how “wonky” your nose, good thoughts “shine out of your face like sunbeams.”

And Mary, tucked in her hospice bed, is now looking out at the rain, reflecting on all the stories she’s heard. Her favorite, she says, is Allen Levi’s bestseller “Theo of Golden.”

“It’s about the journey,” Mary says. “We all have a journey.”

A peacefulness washes over her. Her red rosary is in hand.

“I just love people,” says Mary, echoing the spirit of Theo, who treats each person he encounters as “worthy of attention.” Her story is wrapped up in a greater story, and she’ll wait, contentedly, for the next page.

(Christina Capecchi is a freelance writer from Grey Cloud Island, Minn.) †

That All May Be One/Fr. Rick Ginther

Like Pope Leo, let’s be mindful, show wisdom in the words we speak

Actions speak louder than words. So goes the adage. Words are powerful. They are often the impetus to action. We are awash in words in our digital age. Printed. Posted. Spoken. Recorded. Hyperbolic. Superlative. Inflected. Inflicted.



In his encyclical letter “Magnifica Humanitas: On Safeguarding the Human Person in the Time of Artificial Intelligence,” Pope Leo XIV shared the following words: “The first contribution we can make toward a more humane civilization is to be mindful of our words” (#214).

Since his election, the pope has repeated this sentiment. In fact, very soon after his election, he stated: “Let us disarm words and we will help to disarm the world.”

“Words have enormous power, something we experience in our daily interactions; for example, spoken words can change our mood for better or for worse” (#214).

His encyclical continues: “Peace begins with each one of us: in the way we look at others, listen to others and speak about others.

“In this sense, the way we communicate is of fundamental importance: we must say ‘no’ to the war of words and images, we must reject the paradigm of war” (#214).

He adds, “We must all, therefore, examine our conscience regarding the words we use, the prejudices we have and the explicit or implicit aggression that lies within them” (#214).

Archbishop Christophe Z. El Kassis, the new permanent observer of the Holy See to the United Nations, employed Pope Leo’s words in his first official address.

He spoke to the Global Conference on Promoting Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue and Tolerance in Countering Hate Speech on Sept. 17 in New York.

He noted the Holy See’s position that each and every individual is made in the

image and likeness of God, an inalienable dignity that cannot be lessened by any expression or ideology of hatred.

“Any hate speech—directed at either individuals or communities because of their religion, race, nationality or any other characteristic—goes against the commandment to love one’s neighbor.

“Moreover, it poisons public discourse, inflames division, and too often prepares the ground for violence and persecution,” Archbishop El Kassis noted.

While “freedom of expression is a fundamental right that must be protected,” this freedom has incumbent responsibilities.

“Words or speech that intentionally provoke violence or hatred cannot claim the protection of liberty; rather it erodes the very conditions in which genuine freedom can flourish,” the archbishop said.

Reiterating the pope’s message concerning peace, Archbishop El Kassis urged: “We must disarm communication of all prejudice and resentment, fanaticism and even hatred; let us free it from aggression.

“We do not need loud, forceful communication, but rather communication that is capable of listening and of gathering the voices of the weak who have no voice. …”

He added, “Disarmed and disarming communication allows us to share a different view of the world and to act in a manner consistent with our human dignity.”

Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Speak unto others as you would have them speak unto you.

Wisdom of the ages, of all religions. Wisdom is so crucially needed in our time.

Let us live this wisdom through our words. Let us, like Archbishop El Kassis, spread the compelling message of Pope Leo XIV.

(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

Who are you? Reflecting on our role as adopted children of God

If you were asked to describe yourself, how would you respond?

Would you first share something about your employment, your education or your family status?



“I am the father of ..., I am married to ..., I am from a family of so many children ..., I have the following degrees ..., I received the (insert a prestigious award here) once.

Or would you immediately think of your place in the family of God? St. Paul’s Letter to the Ephesians reads, “In love, he destined us for adoption to himself through Jesus Christ ...” (Eph 1:5).

There is a tight rope that we, as Christians, walk. Yes, we are broken and sinful. But, thanks to the risen Lord, we are also wonderfully made in God’s image and have become his adopted children!

God delights in us, and we are told that we are his beloved. I can’t think of a better piece of information to put into an “elevator speech” when introducing oneself. Who knows, it might be the entrance to a meaningful conversation about faith!

As baptized members of the mystical body of Christ, we are all called to be “priests, prophets and kings” according to the very words of the rite of baptism. We have been anointed with the oil of salvation, which empowers us to do wonderful things! And if any member of his body is missing, the rest of the body suffers from

that absence from the group.

In St. Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians, we read, “If [one] part suffers, all the parts suffer with it; ... [So] now you are Christ’s body, and individually parts of it” (1 Cor 12:26-27).

Therefore, yes, our physical bodies are actual temples of God. We carry within us the Holy Spirit which directs and guides us if we listen for direction. What could be more important in our role as adopted children of God?

So, how will you describe yourself the next time that someone asks: “Please, tell me about yourself”?

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

As baptized members of the mystical body of Christ, we are all called to be “priests, prophets and kings” according to the very words of the rite of baptism. We have been anointed with the oil of salvation, which empowers us to do wonderful things!

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

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, October 4, 2026

- Isaiah 5:1-7
- Philippians 4:6-9
- Matthew 21:33-43

The first section of the Book of Isaiah is the source of the first reading for Mass this weekend. In this reading, the prophet speaks directly to the people for God in the first person.



He employs an image with which his contemporaries would have been familiar, the image of the vineyard. Vineyards filled the land. The prophet described

the land of God’s people as a vineyard. The people do not own the vineyard. It belongs to God. Lavish in generosity and care, God fills the vineyard with the choicest vines and tends it.

The author of this section of Isaiah was disappointed with his people. He saw them moving along a path toward destruction.

The people were polluting God’s vineyard. They became wild grapes, sour and bitter, unworthy of being in the beautiful vineyard. They were disloyal to God by being disobeying his law and lax and sullen in their religious observance. Especially troubling the prophet were the leaders of the chosen people who flirted with neighboring pagan states, allowing the paganism of these neighbors to influence them.

St. Paul’s Epistle to the Philippians provides the second reading this weekend.

Philippi was an important military post in the Roman Empire, located in modern Greece. It was a thoroughly pagan community, probably with a scattering of Christians. Pagans looked upon Christians with disdain, at best. They often saw them as a threat to society because of the Christians’ worship of Christ as the Son of God, calling him “kyrios” (“Lord”), a title that Romans would have only applied to the emperor, and because of their devotion to the Gospel values of love, sacrifice and life with God.

Before very long, this disdain for Christians in the empire erupted into outright persecution.

Understandably, Paul sought to encourage and reassure the Christians in Philippi, admonishing them always to be faithful to God, holy. He exhorted them to

never fear opposition or persecution. St. Matthew’s Gospel is the source of the third reading.

As has been the case in past weeks, the selection for this weekend is a parable told in the context of a discussion between Jesus and priests and Jewish elders. Jesus in the parable refers to a landowner of a vineyard, who of course is God.

Remember the first reading? Vineyards often were used in the Old Testament to describe the nation of Israel.

The landowner, or God, planted a vineyard that belonged to him. The people working in the vineyard merely were tenants. God protected this vineyard by surrounding it with a hedge. He then went on a journey, leaving the tenants with the vineyard.

In due course, the landowner sent servants to collect the yield, but the tenants turned against God. Usurping ownership of the vineyard, the tenants killed the servants. God sent more servants and they were killed in turn. Finally, the Son of God was sent, also to be killed. In response, God drove the tenants from the vineyard.

Reflection

The Church has called us to discipleship during these weeks. It restates this call in these readings.

Ultimately, today’s lesson is not about doom and destruction, although Isaiah and Matthew feature unhappiness and death, and Paul wrote under the dark cloud of religious persecution. The message is nonetheless about salvation and hope.

By disobeying or ignoring God, we bring chaos upon ourselves, as did the tenants in in the Gospel story. We remove ourselves from God’s vineyard by our voluntary sinfulness.

Bad consequences are not final, though. With the help of God’s grace, we may choose to return to be with him. By cooperating with that grace, the righteous show themselves to be worthy to be in God’s vineyard. Sinners are unworthy, but those loyal to God are in the vineyard, as laborers, as disciples.

God accepts us back if we truly repent. He forgives us completely, and we return to the vineyard, there to find life forever. †

Daily Readings

Monday, October 5
St. Faustina Kowalska, virgin
Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos, priest
Galatians 1:6-12
Psalms 111:1b-2, 7-9, 10c
Luke 10:25-37

Tuesday, October 6
St. Bruno, priest
Blessed Marie Rose Durocher, virgin
Galatians 1:13-24
Psalms 139:1b-3, 13-15
Luke 10:38-42

Wednesday, October 7
Our Lady of the Rosary
Galatians 2:1-2, 7-14
Psalms 117:1bc, 2
Luke 11:1-4

Thursday, October 8
Galatians 3:1-5
(Response) *Luke 1:69-75*
Luke 11:5-13

Friday, October 9
St. Denis, bishop, and companions, martyrs
St. John Leonardi, priest
Galatians 3:7-14
Psalms 111:1b-6
Luke 11:15-26

Saturday, October 10
Galatians 3:22-29
Psalms 105:2-7
Luke 11:27-28

Sunday, October 11
Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Isaiah 25:6-10a
Psalms 23:1-6
Philippians 4:12-14, 19-20
Matthew 22:1-14
or *Matthew 22:1-10*

Question Corner/Jenna Marie Cooper

In some contexts, predestination is a valid concept in Catholic theology

Could you please tell me what exactly predestination is? Also, is this a dogma of the Catholic Church or is it heresy?

The term “predestination” can mean a few different things, depending on the specific context. In some of these contexts, predestination



is a heresy (i.e., a teaching or idea that directly contradicts the Catholic faith). But there are times when the word “predestination” can be used in accord with Catholic doctrine.

In very broad generic terms,

“predestination” refers to the concept that some things are intended or planned by God before they happen. This should resonate intuitively with most people who believe in God, since God—as the supreme being and uncreated Creator who orders all things—exists prior to and outside of time.

Because God has a unique vantage point into the events of history, and knowing that he orders all things and sets them in motion, it’s not unreasonable to suppose that God would know things before they happen.

Likewise, people of faith often speak of God’s providential plan for humanity in general and for each individual person. So, it makes sense to conclude that God would intend for certain things to happen ahead of time as part of his ongoing care and concern for his creatures.

The concept of predestination can veer into heresy, however, when it undermines the Catholic teaching that human beings have free will, or when it implies God might actively will harm to befall some people, in contrast to God permitting some human suffering for the sake of the greater good of the person concerned.

For example, during the Protestant Reformation era in the 1500s, John Calvin promoted a heretical teaching on predestination.

While modern Protestant theologians in the Calvinist tradition might explain this with varying degrees of differing nuances, essentially a Calvinist concept of predestination is centered on the idea of the “elect,” Christians apart from others

whom God has already decided to save before the creation of the world.

Certain strains of Calvinist thought on predestination would also posit that, conversely, God created some human souls whom he always knew or intended would not be saved but would rather be condemned to hell.

This is in clear contrast with the Catholic understanding of how salvation works. In a Catholic view, although we do not earn our salvation by our own good works and efforts—because it is Christ who won salvation for us by his passion and death on the cross—it is up to us whether we choose to accept this gift of grace.

While God knows the future and thus knows what choice each one of us will wind up making, we nevertheless have complete and real freedom to make such a choice. On the other side of this same coin, we can also lose our salvation by freely choosing to turn away from God through sinful actions.

We can see this Catholic usage of the term “predestination” in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: “To God, all moments of time are present in their immediacy. When therefore he establishes his eternal plan of ‘predestination,’ he includes in it each person’s free response to his grace” (#600).

Another interesting and very beautiful Catholic use of “predestination” is in reference to Our Lady. In this sense, it refers to God always knowing he would ask Mary to be the mother of his Son Jesus, which is why he saved her from original sin from even the very first moment of her existence. This is why we give Mary the title of “the Immaculate Conception.”

As we likewise read in the catechism quoting the Second Vatican Council’s “Dogmatic Constitution on the Church,” known also by its Latin title, “*Lumen Gentium*”: “The Father of mercies willed that the Incarnation should be preceded by assent on the part of the predestined mother, so that just as a woman had a share in the coming of death, so also should a woman contribute to the coming of life” (#488).

(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.) †

‘While God knows the future and thus knows what choice each one of us will wind up making, we nevertheless have complete and real freedom to make such a choice’

My Journey to God

As I Rock

By Nancy Armstrong

As I sit on the porch
with my morning coffee,
say my prayers to start the day,

Geese fly over in formation,
birds in the trees
waking and singing,

Neighbors moving
here and there,
off to school and work,

Planes overhead,
trains passing by,
the world rushing around—

Yet no one sees me,
unaware as I sit
and pray.

But I am never alone!



(Nancy Armstrong is a member of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Parish in Aurora. Photo: Geese fly in a golden sky early on a November 2020 morning in Hengistbury Head, Bournemouth, in England.) (Photo by Nick Fewings on Unsplash.com)

Biking for Babies

Most of the 27 participants—a record number—in the Indiana Knights of Columbus’ Sept. 11-13 Biking for Babies event pose in front of a pro-life billboard in Greenfield on Sept. 12. This was the 13th year for the event, which raises funds to provide ultrasound machines for Indiana pregnancy resource centers. Through checks and online donations, the ride raised \$52,000—the most for the annual event—making it possible for the Knights to purchase three ultrasound machines from the proceeds. Most of the 27 bikers rode various legs of the route, while 10 biked across the entire state from west to east. The weekend included a midpoint rally and prayer service at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Indianapolis and a dinner at St. Michael Parish in Greenfield provided by the Fortville Knights of Columbus. Donations are still being accepted online at tinyurl.com/INKofCBike2026 or by check made out to IN KofC State Council Charity Fund Inc. and mailed to Paul Zielinski, 4974 Roxbury Ct., Pittsboro, IN 46167. (Submitted photo)



Rest in peace

Please submit in writing to our office by 10 a.m. Thursday before the week of publication; be sure to state date of death. Obituaries of archdiocesan priests serving our archdiocese are listed elsewhere in *The Criterion*. Order priests and religious sisters and brothers are included here, unless they are natives of the archdiocese or have other connections to it; those are separate obituaries on this page.

BROWN, Wanda L., 86, St. Mark, Perry County, Sept. 13. Mother of Kim Kamman, Tracie Schraner, Keith, Kent and Kevin Burns, and Scott Brown. Sister of Martha Schank and Tom Hagedorn. Grandmother of 13. Great-grandmother of 14

DEFFNER, Dale J., 93, St. Michael, Brookville, Sept. 4. Father of Dee Dee Erhart, Cathy Feller, Debbie Krause, Karen Kuntz, Mike and Steve Deffner. Brother of Patricia Naayers. Grandfather of 19. Great-grandfather of 48. Great-great-grandfather of one.

DUFFY, Charles P., 94, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany, Sept. 4. Husband of Maxe Duffy. Father of Elizabeth Duffy-Dries, Chip and Mark Duffy. Grandfather of six. Great-grandfather of one.

GRAVES, Dennis A., 72, St. Paul, Tell City, Sept. 15. Husband of Brenda Graves. Brother of Susan Brinksneider, Janice Hackbarth, Mary Zuelly, Donald and Rick Graves.

HAHN, Leo J., 95, Immaculate Heart of Mary, Indianapolis, Sept. 6. Husband of Mary Ellen Hahn. Father of Kathy Keiner, Edward and Mark Miller, Kevin and Richard Hahn. Brother of Loretta Williams. Grandfather of eight. Great-grandfather of five.

KING, Robert L., 78, St. Mary, Greensburg, Sept. 20. Husband of Willa King. Father of Becky King. Brother of Dr. Rodney King. Grandfather of three.

MCGLOSHEN, Larry, 89, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany, Sept. 17. Husband of Jean McGloshen. Father of Leann Brown and Ross McGloshen. Grandfather of three. Great-grandfather of five.

MELLE, Ann E., 93, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Richmond, Sept. 19. Sister of Donald and John Kahle. Aunt of several.

MOORE, Gerald, 73, St. Joseph, Shelbyville, Sept. 12. Husband of Angela Moore. Father of Jennifer Allen, Christina Smock, Nathan Trenum, Melinda Moore-Parkhurst and Melissa Moore. Brother of Donna, David and Sam Moore. Grandfather of 11.

PAGE, Thomas, 82, St. John the Apostle, Bloomington, Sept. 17. Husband of Shirley Page. Father of Tina Williams

and Jeffrey Page. Grandfather of seven. Great-grandfather of 11.

POWELL, Deborah (Dorgay), 76, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany, Aug. 30. Wife of William Powell. Sister of Susan Mullins, Paula Rotenberry, Daniel and Joseph Dorgay.

PROTHERO, Alice A., 69, St. Joseph University Parish, Terre Haute, Sept. 3. Wife of Jeffrey Prothero. Mother of Jessica Rusnak, Joshua, Kevin and Steven Prothero. Grandmother of eight.

ROSEMAN, Stephen M., 78, Christ the King, Indianapolis, Sept. 10. Husband of Lee Roseman. Father of Sean and Stephen Roseman. Grandfather of four.

SUTHERLAND, Catherine L., 90, St. Mary, New Albany, Sept. 7. Mother of Norma Bobbitt and Connie Ward. Sister of Martha Gesenhues. Grandmother of one.

VANDERCOOK, Deborah K. (Kollman), 68, St. John the Apostle, Bloomington, Aug. 29. Mother of Christopher Vandercook. Daughter of Patricia Kollman.

VOGEL, Mary J., 86, St. Joseph, Jennings County, Sept. 21. Mother of Debra Carroll, Karen Koop and David Vogel. Grandmother of 10. Great-grandmother of 10.

WEILER, Nicholas C., 43, St. Peter, Franklin County, Sept. 5. Husband of Jessica Weiler. Father of Allison, Macie and Garrett Weiler. Son of Allen and Robin Weiler. Brother of Josie Bonilla, Valarie Hoff, Tonya Hudepohl, Jacob and Michael Weiler. Grandson of Shirley Craig.

WHEELER, Gloria M. (Strasburger), 88, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis, Aug. 22. Wife of Walt Wheeler. Mother of Mary Ellen, Seamus and Sean Wheeler. Grandmother of five. †

Notre Dame professor John Cavadini selected as 2026 Ratzinger Prize recipient

ROME (OSV News)—The Vatican announced on Sept. 22 that University of Notre Dame professor John C. Cavadini has been selected as the recipient of the 2026 Ratzinger Prize.

Cavadini specializes in patristic theology with a particular focus on the theology of St. Augustine and also served as the director of the McGrath Institute for Church Life from 2000 to 2026.

Pope Leo XIV will present him with the award in the Vatican’s Apostolic Palace on Dec. 19. The pope personally approved Cavadini’s selection as the recipient of the award by the Scientific Committee of the Joseph Ratzinger-Benedict XVI Vatican Foundation.

“I have tried to pursue my vocation as a theologian following the pattern of third-century theologian Origen of Alexandria who repeatedly declared that, as a theologian, he wanted to be a *vir ecclesiasticus*, a man of the Church,” Cavadini said in a statement released following the announcement.

“At Notre Dame, I have been able to live out my vocation as a man of the Church and, at the same time, as a man of academia. I am particularly grateful for this award because it recognizes these two aspects of my vocation as a theologian.” The Ratzinger Prize has been described as the “Nobel Prize of Theology.” It was established by Pope Benedict XVI, known as Joseph Ratzinger before he was elected pope, in 2011.

This year, the Ratzinger Foundation has planned a series of initiatives across several continents ahead of the upcoming centenary of Pope Benedict’s birth on April 16, 2027. The events include a symposium at St. Mary’s University of Minnesota on Nov. 2-4 and “The New Ressourcement” conference organized by Word on Fire from Nov. 4-6.

The Ratzinger Prize is annually awarded to scholars who have distinguished themselves through outstanding achievements in publication and scientific research. Past recipients have come from 18 different countries and from the fields of dogmatic and fundamental theology, sacred Scripture, patrology, philosophy,

law and sociology, or in the arts, music, architecture and sculpture.

“Professor Cavadini is highly regarded for the rigor of his theological publications, his commitment and zeal in university teaching, his academic expertise, his pastoral passion and his lifelong service to the Church,” Father Roberto Regoli, president of the Ratzinger Foundation, said.

In Indiana, Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend called Cavadini an “outstanding theologian who exemplifies the ecclesial vocation of the theologian.”

“His scholarship, teaching, and faithful service have enriched the life of the Church at Notre Dame, in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, and beyond,” Bishop Rhoades said in a Sept. 23 statement. “I am personally grateful not only for John’s excellent theological work, but also for his example of fidelity and love for the Lord and his Church.”

Cavadini has taught at Notre Dame as a faculty member since 1990 with a focus in patristic and early medieval theology, the theology of Augustine, and the history of biblical and patristic exegesis. He is the author and editor of several books, including *Visioning Augustine* (2019), *Explorations in the Theology of Benedict XVI* (2012), and *Roots: Catholic Youth Evangelization in a Post-Pandemic World* (2022).

Pope Benedict appointed Cavadini to a five-year term on the International Theological Commission in 2009 and also named the professor to the Order of the Knights of St. Gregory the Great. Cavadini has also served as a consultant to the USCCB Committee on Doctrine since 2006.

The professor expressed gratitude to all his students, past and present, and to his colleagues at the University of Notre Dame, founded in honor of the Virgin Mary in 1842.

“I hope this award redounds, with gratitude, to the credit of Our Lady, the patroness of our university, under whose protection we have flourished for the last 183 years, and may it be so for the next 183 years,” Cavadini said. †

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victimassistance@archindy.org



‘At Notre Dame, I have been able to live out my vocation as a man of the Church and, at the same time, as a man of academia. I am particularly grateful for this award because it recognizes these two aspects of my vocation as a theologian.’

—John C. Cavadini, recipient of the 2026 Ratzinger Prize

IPI celebrates achievement of 28 graduates with Mass at the cathedral

Criterion staff report

The Church in central and southern Indiana gained 28 Hispanic lay leaders from 10 parishes in May when the 2026 graduates of the Intercultural Pastoral Institute (IPI), a two-year formation program of the archdiocesan Office of Intercultural Ministry, each received a certificate in pastoral leadership immediately following a Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis on May 21.

The IPI was established in 2011. Through a variety of trainings, workshops and formative experiences, it has contributed to the local Church by developing and forming lay leaders and promoting the active participation of men and women Hispanic Catholics in different ministries and apostolates.

More than 200 guests joined Archbishop Charles C. Thompson at the Mass and the celebratory dinner across the street from the cathedral in the Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center in Indianapolis.

The IPI program takes place on the campus of St. Andrew the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis. Since the summer of 2025, renovations have made space available for a cafeteria, bookstore and lobby “to provide students with a better place to gather and learn,” said Felix Navarrete, director of the archdiocesan Office of Intercultural Ministry, who oversees the IPI.

“The program of studies also has been reviewed and modified,” he said. The goal of the improvements is “to help students deepen their knowledge and to consolidate a formative experience faithfully rooted in Catholic tradition with a pastoral vision that enables future leaders to better accompany their communities, [and] understanding the great importance of what it means to carry their sacramental character into the life of the Church.”

This year, “after prayerful discernment and attending the signs of the times,” Navarrete added, the IPI launched a new virtual learning experience with a series



After a Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis on May 21, members of the archdiocesan Intercultural Pastoral Institute’s (IPI) Class of 2026 pose with the certificates they received for completing the two-year pastoral leadership course. Posing with them are IPI administrator Katherine Guerra, second row, fourth from left, archdiocesan Department of Pastoral Ministries director Deacon Thomas Hosty, Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, archdiocesan Office of Intercultural Ministries director Felix Navarrete and Ken Ogorek, executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Evangelizing Catechesis. (Submitted photo)

on Pope St. John Paul II’s teachings on the “Theology of the Body,” with about 30 participants registering.

“This [virtual opportunity] has created a big impact among our communities, especially for those who, because of the distance, cannot attend classes at St. Andrew in person,” he said. “This is only one of many initiatives that we as a staff are currently discerning for the good of our communities.”

The challenging, two-year program might have ended for the IPI Class of 2026 graduates, but their journey as lay leaders is just beginning as they “commit to live and share the good news with those around them—the migrant, the

vulnerable, the one who seeks for the truth,” said Navarrete, reflecting on the graduation.

“They are prepared to make valuable contributions to the Church of the 21st century, a Church that is a mother, nurturing, teaching and correcting with charity and patience her children so that we may find our way to the source of all good: Jesus Christ.”

Navarrete is grateful for “all those who show their belief in the mission of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis through the United Catholic Appeal, and for the support that the Office of Intercultural Ministry receives from Archbishop Thompson. Through such support, the

institute continues to expand so that all who desire leadership formation can benefit from it.”

He added, “As we embark on this process—which also serves as a way to implement the new archdiocesan pastoral plan—we ask for the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the intercession of our Blessed Mother, to whom we entrust the mission of the institute. May she, the Star of the New Evangelization, bring this program closer to her Son.”

(For more information on the Intercultural Pastoral Institute, contact Felix Navarrete at fnavarrete@archindy.org or 317-236-7312.) †

IPI celebra los logros de 28 graduados con una misa en la catedral



El arzobispo Charles C. Thompson felicita a Paholla Navarrete, de la parroquia de Nuestra Señora del Santísimo Rosario en Indianápolis, antes de entregarle un certificado que acredita su graduación del Instituto de Pastoral Intercultural de la arquidiócesis—un programa de dos años de duración—durante una ceremonia celebrada tras la misa en la Catedral de los Santos Pedro y Pablo de Indianápolis, el 21 de mayo. (Foto enviada)

Reportaje del personal de The Criterion

En mayo de este año, la Iglesia del centro y sur de Indiana incorporó a 28 líderes laicos hispanos de 10 parroquias cuando los graduados de la promoción 2026 del Instituto Pastoral Intercultural (IPI)—un programa de formación de dos años de la Oficina de Ministerio Intercultural de la Arquidiócesis—recibieron sus certificados de Liderazgo Pastoral inmediatamente después de una misa celebrada en la Catedral de San Pedro y San Pablo, en Indianápolis.

El IPI, fundado en 2011, imparte diversos cursos de capacitación, talleres y experiencias formativas que contribuyen a la Iglesia local mediante el desarrollo y la formación de líderes laicos y promueve además la participación activa de hombres y mujeres católicos hispanos en diferentes ministerios y apostolados.

Más de 200 invitados se unieron al arzobispo Charles C. Thompson en la misa y en la cena de celebración, que se llevó a cabo frente a la catedral, en el Centro Católico Arzobispo Edward T. O’Meara.

El programa del IPI se realiza en el campus de la parroquia San Andrés Apóstol en Indianápolis y desde el verano de 2025, se han agregado una cafetería, una librería y un vestíbulo “para brindar a los estudiantes un mejor lugar para reunirse y aprender,” afirmó Félix Navarrete, director de la Oficina de Ministerio Intercultural de la Arquidiócesis, quien supervisa el IPI. “El programa de estudios también se ha revisado y modificado,” señaló. El objetivo de estas mejoras es “ayudar a los estudiantes a profundizar sus conocimientos y a consolidar una experiencia formativa fielmente arraigada en la tradición católica, con una visión pastoral que permita a los futuros líderes acompañar mejor a sus comunidades, [y] comprender la gran importancia de lo que significa llevar su carácter sacramental a la vida de la Iglesia.”

Navarrete añadió que este año, “tras un discernimiento en oración y atendiendo a los signos de los tiempos,” el IPI lanzó una nueva experiencia de aprendizaje virtual con una serie sobre las enseñanzas del papa San Juan Pablo II acerca de la “Teología

del Cuerpo,” en la que se inscribieron cerca de 30 participantes.

“Esta [oportunidad virtual] ha tenido un gran impacto en nuestras comunidades, especialmente entre quienes, debido a la distancia, no pueden asistir presencialmente a las clases en San Andrés,” aseguró. “Esta es solo una de las muchas iniciativas que, como equipo, estamos discerniendo actualmente para el bien de nuestras comunidades.”

Si bien los graduados de la promoción 2026 del IPI han concluido el exigente programa de dos años de duración, su camino como líderes laicos apenas comienza, ya que “se comprometen a vivir y compartir la buena nueva con quienes los rodean: el migrante, el vulnerable y todo el que busque la verdad,” puntualizó Navarrete al reflexionar sobre la graduación. “Están preparados para realizar valiosas contribuciones a la Iglesia del siglo XXI, una Iglesia que es madre, que nutre, enseña y corrige con caridad y paciencia a sus hijos para que podamos encontrar nuestro camino hacia la fuente de todo bien: Jesucristo.”

Navarrete se muestra agradecido con “todos aquellos que demuestran su fe en la misión de la Arquidiócesis de Indianápolis a través de la campaña de Convocatoria de Católicos Unidos, y por el apoyo que la Oficina de Ministerio Intercultural recibe del arzobispo Thompson. Gracias a ese apoyo, el Instituto continúa expandiéndose para que quienes deseen recibir formación en liderazgo puedan beneficiarse de ella.”

Agregó: “Al emprender este proceso—que también sirve como forma de implementar el nuevo plan pastoral arquidiocesano—pedimos la guía del Espíritu Santo y la intercesión de nuestra Santísima Madre, a quien confiamos la misión del Instituto. Que ella, la Estrella de la Nueva Evangelización, lleve este programa más cerca de su Hijo.”

(Para obtener más información sobre el Instituto Pastoral Intercultural, comuníquese con Félix Navarrete en fnavarrete@archindy.org o llame al 317-236-7312.) †

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