The Criterion
Serving the Church in Central and Southern Indiana Since 1960



God and Garth Brooks

Is the country singer right about 'Unanswered Prayers'? See page 8.

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Following their wedding on August 16, 2025, in Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Indianapolis, Megan and Wes Short spent part of their honeymoon at the Vatican, taking part in a general audience with Pope Leo XIV in which he blessed recently married couples. As Megan wore her wedding dress and Wes his tuxedo, the couple presented the pope with a shirt from the JP Flag Football League in Indianapolis, a T-shirt that featured a quote from the pope during the Jubilee of Sport in 2025. (Submitted photo)

Faith and football lead to love and family for a young couple

(First in an occasional series about young adults who embrace their Catholic faith.)

By John Shaughnessy

While football can divide some couples, the love of the sport helped lead Megan and Wes Short to get married—and also to an encounter with Pope Leo XIV.

The couple first met in 2021 when they both played in the JP Flag Football League in Indianapolis, a league named after St. John Paul II that was created with the goal of connecting young adults and helping them grow in friendship and faith.

Three years after Wes and Megan began dating in 2022, they married in Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Indianapolis on August 16, 2025. The following day, as the coordinators of the football league, they set up for the games and played in their own, leading to an unfortunate twist.

"Megan tore her ACL that weekend," Wes recalls. "She was a trooper and still went on our honeymoon with the injury and got around Europe each day."

The honeymoon led to their encounter with Pope Leo during a general audience at the Vatican in which he blessed recently married couples.

With Megan in her wedding dress and Wes in his tuxedo, they showed the pope their football league T-shirt that featured a quote from his homily on the Jubilee of Sports earlier that year: "No one is born a champion, no one is born a saint. It is daily training in love that brings us closer to final victory and enables us to contribute to the building of a new world."

See FOOTBALL, *page 16*

Pope Leo XIV admitted to hospital in Rome for afternoon lung surgery

ROME (OSV News)—Pope Leo XIV was admitted on Oct. 13 to Rome's Gemelli Hospital, where the Vatican has confirmed that he will undergo surgery to remove a lung nodule in the afternoon.

As *The Criterion* went to press later in the day on Oct. 13, there was no update on the pope's condition. For updated information on the Holy Father's health, visit archindy.org.

Dr. Stefano Margaritora, the hospital's chief thoracic surgeon, was scheduled to be the lead surgeon for the pope's operation assisted by a medical team, according to the Holy See Press Office.

The pope arrived at the hospital by car at about 1 p.m. Rome time on Oct. 13, greeting hospital staff and waving to the hordes of journalists and well-wishers gathered outside the polyclinic hospital as he walked inside.

See POPE, *page 2*



Pope Leo XIV arrives at Rome's Gemelli Hospital on Oct. 13 ahead of his surgery that afternoon to remove a lung nodule. (OSV News photo/Simone Risoluti, Vatican Media)



Pope Leo XIV is seen after the *Angelus* prayer in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican on Sept. 13. After the *Angelus* on Oct. 11, he announced that he would undergo surgery to remove a lung nodule. (OSV News photo/ Matteo Pernaselci, Vatican Media)

POPE

continued from page 1

Pope Leo is expected to remain for one week of recovery in the Gemelli Hospital, located atop Monte Mario, the highest hill in Rome. The Vatican has canceled all of the pope's scheduled audiences through Oct. 20.

The pope is being treated at the same hospital where Pope Francis and Pope St. John Paul II were treated throughout their pontificates, including John Paul II's hospitalization after being shot in an assassination attempt in 1981. While the hospital has a special suite on the 10th floor reserved for papal medical emergencies, Pope Leo will be staying in a nearby room as the papal hospital room is currently undergoing renovations.

Medical experts told OSV News that lung nodules, or abnormal growths on the lungs, are far from unusual—and, for the most part, not life-threatening.

"Lung nodules are very common, and 90% of the time, they are benign," said Dr. Stacey Su, chief of thoracic surgery at Fox Chase Cancer Center in Philadelphia and associate professor of surgical oncology at Temple University's Lewis Katz School of Medicine.

But, she said, "the potential impact of lung cancers is so grave that any lung nodule deserves serious attention."

"Most of the time these are asymptomatic," Dr. Nirmal Veeramachaneni, professor of cardiothoracic surgery at St. Louis University School of Medicine (SSM) and medical director for lung cancer screening at SSM Health, said. "They're often found incidentally."

At the age of 71, Pope Leo is considered to be generally in good health. He noted in the first interview of his pontificate that he had only been hospitalized once in his life when he caught typhoid fever after recently arriving as an Augustinian missionary in Peru in 1985.

"It's the only time in my life I've been hospitalized," Pope Leo is quoted as saying in the book, *Pope Leo XIV* by Elise Ann Allen, calling it "a very significant" moment in his life that helped him more sharply focus on his new ministry.

Pope Leo's surgery is taking place less than one month before he is scheduled to depart for Latin America for what would be the longest international trip of his pontificate on Nov. 6-17, with stops in Uruguay, Argentina and Peru. The Vatican has not announced any changes to the trip.

Pope Leo first revealed to the world that he would undergo surgery at the end of his *Angelus* address in St. Peter's Square on Oct. 11. Speaking from the window of the Apostolic Palace, the pope announced that doctors had discovered a nodule in his lung during a medical examination, adding that the growth was detected "at a very early stage" and was "well-contained."

"The doctors believe intervention is advisable, so, following their advice, I have decided to undergo surgery to have it removed," Pope Leo said.

A prayer vigil for the pope's healing, led by Cardinal Baldassare Reina, papal vicar of Rome and archpriest of the Basilica of St. John Lateran, was scheduled to take place in the hospital chapel at 6 p.m. Rome time. †

Public Schedule of *Archbishop Charles C. Thompson*

October 17—October 23, 2026

October 17 – 1 p.m.
Confirmation Mass for the youths of St. Mary Parish, New Albany, and St. Anthony of Padua Parish, Clarksville, at St. Mary Church, New Albany

October 18 – 10 a.m.
175th Parish Anniversary Mass at St. Anthony of Padua Church, Clarksville

October 18 – 1:30 p.m.
Confirmation Mass for the youths of St. Mary-of-the-Knobs Parish, Floyds Knobs; St. John the Baptist Parish, Starlight; St. Mary Parish, Navilleton, and Holy Family Parish, New Albany, at St. Mary-of-the-Knobs Church, Floyds Knobs

October 18 – 5:30 p.m.
Confirmation Mass for the youths of St. Augustine and Most Sacred Heart of Jesus parishes, Jeffersonville; St. John Paul II Parish, Sellersburg; Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, New Albany; St. Michael Parish, Bradford; St. Bernard Parish, Frenchtown; St. Joseph Parish, Corydon, and St. Mary Parish, Lanesville, at St. John Paul II Church, Sellersburg

October 20 – 10:30 a.m.
Priest Personnel Board meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

October 20 – 5:30 p.m.
Mass and Dinner for the National Eucharistic Congress at St. John the Evangelist Parish, Indianapolis

October 21 – 10 a.m.
Catholic Center Connection at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center

October 21 – 2:30 p.m.
Department Gathering at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center

October 21 – 7 p.m.
Confirmation Mass for the youths for Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish, Greenwood, at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis

October 22 – 9 a.m.
Visit at Scecina Memorial High School, Indianapolis

October 23 – 6 p.m.
Marian University Annual Gala at Marian University, Indianapolis

Correction

Clarification is noted for Respect Life Sunday Mass article in Oct. 9 issue

In its Oct. 9 print issue, *The Criterion* inadvertently left out of the article about the archdiocesan Respect Life Sunday Mass a portion focusing on the homily shared by Father C. Ryan McCarthy during the Oct. 4 liturgy at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis.

The section is reprinted below.

To read the entire Respect Life Sunday story, go to tinyurl.com/RespectLifeMassAward or scan the QR code at the bottom of this article.

Seek 'unmediated experience' of others

Father McCarthy began his homily by addressing the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' theme for Respect Life Sunday this year: "Mary, the Mother of Life."

"What does it mean that Mary is the mother of life?" Father McCarthy asked.

For one, he said, she is "the mother of God, the mother of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who is … the way, the truth, and the life, quite literally … [since she is] the source of the Incarnation.

"And from the Incarnation we receive the sacraments. … So, Mary allows us to celebrate the goodness of life in coming in direct contact with God in the Holy Eucharist."

Respect for life involves relationship, said Father McCarthy, and relationship involves "a commitment to the other and a willingness to be in their presence."

Praying for others is essential, he noted. But praying "with them" and having "an interpersonal relationship with them," when possible, shows a particular respect for life.

"For us, as Christians, it's important that we reach out as best we can to other human persons and have personal relationships with them," Father McCarthy said. "So, talk to people, respect their life, see their person—their actual person."

He encouraged the congregation to "make the effort to go to someone and be with them personally. … Support the poor and those who are in need, and do this as personally as you can."

The same holds true for visiting the elderly in nursing homes that "oftentimes become storage facilities for those who are inconvenient to our lives."

Participation in prison ministry is another way to be physically present to those "who are lonely and who are isolated and feel particularly unloved," Father McCarthy said. And if such ministry is not an option, he suggested researching organized "pen-pal" programs.

"We respect life by loving others in a very personal way," he concluded.

"And so, I'd encourage you to look at your life and figure out how you can do just that. How you can do what our Lord Jesus Christ did, which is … to remove the obstacles to an incarnational, unmediated experience of the other so that they could know and love God and experience God in this life and be with him in the next." †

Share how Mary has touched your life

As October is a month dedicated to the Blessed Mother, *The Criterion* is inviting readers to share their thoughts and stories about the special connection they have with her—how they have relied on her in tough times, how they have felt her presence, how they 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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Judges, legal professionals, law students gather for Red Mass

By Sean Gallagher

The St. Thomas More Society of Central Indiana, a professional organization for Catholic legal professionals in the area, celebrated its annual Red Mass on Oct. 6 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis.

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson was the principal celebrant of the liturgy, which was attended by judges who serve at the federal, state and local levels across central Indiana, as well as other legal professionals and law students.

The annual liturgy is a continuation of a tradition dating to the Middle Ages when judges and attorneys would seek at the start of a court's term, which traditionally begins in the autumn, the assistance of the Holy Spirit in their work. It is the reason that vestments worn at such liturgies are red in color and why this gathering of legal professionals is called a Red Mass.

In his homily during the Mass, Archbishop Thompson noted that all people have "an innate sense of right and wrong" in their conscience.

"Consciences, of course, must be informed and grow in greater understanding of good and evil," he went on to say. "Ultimately, as Catholics, this means we must always strive to be and remain Christ-centered, not driven by ego, personalities, ideologies or any other agenda, but to be centered on him."

The Gospel reading at the Mass (Lk 10:38-42) recounted the story of Jesus in the home of Martha and Mary in which Martha asks him to have Mary help her with the work of hospitality instead of sitting and listening to him. In reply, Jesus tells Martha that "Mary has chosen the better part, and it will not be taken from her" (Lk 10:42).

Archbishop Thompson reflected that the reading calls for a balance between contemplation and action in every person and noted this is especially true for people who work in the judicial system.

With judges wearing their courtroom robes sitting before him, Archbishop Thompson said that "it is essential that we are able to listen and allow ourselves to be both informed and formed by something greater than ourselves.

"That something greater involved in the law is not just the Constitution, legal codes and law books, but the primary laws of God made especially known to us through Jesus Christ."

The archbishop ended his homily by inviting all the legal professionals and law students attending the Red Mass to consider that rooting their work in Christ to help them carry out earthly justice and also contribute to the "salvation of souls."

"It is only through a Christ-centered conscience, rooted in a proper balance of contemplation and action—Mary and Martha—that we are able to be guardians of civility, dispensers of justice, bearers of law and order and ambassadors of truth in charity," Archbishop Thompson said. "We rely upon the divine grace of Jesus Christ, the Word of God made flesh, made perpetually available to us in the sacraments, particularly in this holy Eucharist that we celebrate, to remain faithful to both law and conscience.

"May all we say and do be for the glory of God and the salvation of souls."

At the dinner that followed at the Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, Toby McClamroch, a member of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Indianapolis and an Indianapolis-based partner in Dentons, a multinational law firm, received the St. Thomas More Society's Man for All Seasons Award.



Wearing their courtroom robes, judges who serve in central Indiana at the federal, state and local levels take part on Oct. 6 in the annual Red Mass of the St. Thomas More Society of Central Indiana celebrated at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. (Photos by Sean Gallagher)



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson elevates a chalice on Oct. 6 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis during the annual Red Mass of the St. Thomas More Society of Central Indiana. Concelebrating the Mass are, from left, Father Rick Ginther and Father James Brockmeier.



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson and Judge David Certo pose on Oct. 6 with Toby McClamroch, right, an Indianapolis-based partner in Dentons, a multinational law firm, who was the recipient of this year's Man for All Seasons Award of the St. Thomas More Society of Central Indiana. The president of the society, Judge Certo is a judge of the Marion County Probate Court and a member of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis. McClamroch is a member of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Indianapolis.

The award takes its name from a description of St. Thomas More, a 16th-century English statesman and martyr, given to him by Robert Whittington, an English grammarian who was a contemporary of More. *A Man for All Seasons* is also the title of a 1960 play by Robert Bolt and a 1966 Academy Award-winning movie.

In addition to his work advising businesses in government-related matters and representing many counties, cities and towns in his work as an attorney, McClamroch also leads the board of directors of Marian University in Indianapolis.

John Mundell, president and founder of the Indianapolis-based Mundell and Associates, an environmental consulting firm, was the keynote speaker at the dinner.

A member of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Indianapolis, Mundell spoke about his efforts in promoting the Church's teachings on respect for creation as expressed in Pope Francis' 2015 encyclical letter, "*Laudato Si*': On Care for Our Common Home." He did this notably while serving from 2022-25 as the director of the Vatican's Laudato Si' Action Platform. †

World Mission Sunday has 'borne fruit in my own life,' pope says

(OSV News)—The aim of World Mission Sunday—Oct. 18—established 100 years ago by Pope Pius XI, has "borne fruit in my own life," said Pope Leo XIV.



Pope Leo XIV

The pope reflected on the annual observance in a video message posted by Vatican News on its YouTube channel on Oct. 7. A transcript of the message was also published on the Vatican's website.

In January, Pope Leo XIV announced he had chosen the theme "One in Christ, united in mission" for this year's celebration, with his message for the day encouraging "the whole Church to continue its missionary journey with joy and zeal in the Holy Spirit."

Established by Pope Pius XI in 1926 and universally observed by 1927, World Mission Sunday is a dedicated day of "prayer and missionary promotion throughout the Catholic world," according to its founding decree.

Held on the next-to-last Sunday of October, the observance also includes a collection that serves as the primary financial support for the Pontifical Mission Societies, a worldwide network operating at the service of the pope and consisting of four organizations, three of which were designated as pontifical by Pope Pius XI in 1922.

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith supports the evangelization efforts of the local Church; the Missionary Childhood Association educates children about their part in the Church's missionary outreach; and the Society of St. Peter the Apostle trains the next generation of missionary clergy and consecrated religious.

The Pontifical Missionary Union, designated as pontifical in 1956 by Pope Pius XII, focuses on forming clergy, religious and pastoral leaders more deeply in their role as evangelizers.

In his video message, Pope Leo said, "Looking back on my youth, I can see how the prayers offered to the Lord of the harvest mysteriously helped prepare my heart to hear Jesus' call to follow him as an Augustinian missionary."

The future pope served for years in Peru, a country particularly blessed by missionary priests.

In his video message, Pope Leo said, "the prayers and contributions of the faithful encouraged and sustained my missionary work in Peru, as well as that of countless others throughout the world."

The pope said this year's theme "invites us to reflect on the fundamental task of nurturing the Church's unity in following Christ, particularly in our commitment and responsibility to spread the Gospel message of salvation to all people."

Baptism makes each of the faithful "a member of the Body of Christ" with "a unique role in contributing to Jesus' saving work."

"Our Lord calls us to cooperate as one family, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to bring everyone everywhere into a communion of faith in Christ," Pope Leo said. †

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OPINION

The Criterion

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Editorial



Mark Casper, former director of St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities in New Albany, left, and new agency director Christopher Haulter share smiles in a recent photo. (Submitted photo courtesy of St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities)

Leadership transitions safeguard the Catholic Church's mission

Recent stories in *The Criterion* have announced some significant leadership transitions. Here are some highlights:

After 25 years of dramatic growth and change under the leadership of Daniel J. Elsener, in July of 2027 Marian University in Indianapolis will install a new president, Dr. Kenith Britt.

According to Toby McClamroch, chairman of the Marian University Board of Trustees, "Twenty-five years ago, Marian was fighting for its future. Today, Marian is building the future. Dan Elsener's extraordinary leadership helped make that transformation possible, and the board has tremendous confidence that Ken Britt is the right leader to carry that momentum forward."

In July, Justin Reyes assumed the position of chancellor of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, succeeding Christopher Walsh. In this leadership role, Reyes, who has served in several Catholic dioceses (most recently in Joliet, Ill.), will be responsible for assisting Archbishop Charles C. Thompson and his senior leadership team in the implementation of the recently approved archdiocesan pastoral plan.

Reyes will also work closely with the archdiocese's pastoral leadership and with the leaders of the secretariats of Evangelizing Catechesis, Catholic Charities and Catholic schools. As chancellor, he will also oversee the canonical and archival records of the archdiocese.

In early July, five Sisters of Providence were elected to leadership roles and installed on Sept. 5 in their congregation's motherhouse on the grounds of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods in western Indiana. The new leadership team includes Providence Sisters Jeanne Hagelskamp, Noreen Wu, Tracey Horan, Anne Therese Falkenstein, and Lisa Stallings.

A native of Indianapolis, Sister Jeanne was elected as general superior, the 19th woman to lead the Sisters of Providence since the community was founded by St. Mother Theodore Guérin, Indiana's first canonized saint, in 1840.

On Aug. 19, Christopher Haulter made the transition from an upper management position in business to become the new agency director of St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities (SECC) in New Albany. He succeeds Mark Casper, who served as the director at SECC for more than 18 years.

"Being a child of a single mom who was working two, three jobs at a time to put food on the table and keep the lights on in the house," Haulter said, "I certainly understand the struggle faced by some of our young women and children who seek help from SECC. That's why the agency's mission was a big draw for me."

What do these leadership transitions have in common? They all reflect the Lord's teaching about the relationship between leadership and service.

Servant leadership demands putting the genuine good and development of others ahead of personal status, control or self-glorification. The leader still exercises authority, makes difficult decisions and pursues clear goals—but he or she does so as a form of responsibility and service rather than as a form of domination.

In a Christian context, Jesus is the supreme model of servant leadership. His humility did not make him weak or passive: He could be firm, defending the vulnerable, confronting wrongdoing and negotiating forcefully. Yet he treated people not as inferiors but as persons of unique dignity, beloved by God and capable of being raised to their full potential.

The main quality that the president of Marian University, the chancellor of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, the general superior of the Sisters of Providence and the agency director of St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities share is a sense of mission that transcends the secular world of higher education, religion and social service. By accepting their important new roles in these organizations, these men and women who are identified as servant leaders acknowledge their dependence on the grace of God and their reliance on the women and men who have gone before them.

Marian University is firmly rooted in the charisms of the Sisters of St. Francis of Oldenburg. The Archdiocese of Indianapolis has been built on the pastoral foundations of dedicated bishops, priests, religious women and men, and faithful lay people throughout central and southern Indiana. The Sisters of Providence constantly renew their distinguished history as missionaries, educators, pastoral leaders and women of prayer. And St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities prides itself on demonstrating in real, practical terms the Church's commitment to the dignity of all human life.

Let's celebrate the women and men who serve the Church as servant leaders. May their humility, their passion, their courage and their confidence in God's grace allow them to build up the people of God, here in central and southern Indiana.

—Daniel Conway

Be Our Guest/*Leonard J. DeLorenzo*

A school for the Lord's service

The *Rule of St. Benedict* opens with a single word: listen.

"Listen carefully, my son, to the master's instructions, and attend to them with the ear of your heart." It is a strange way to begin a rule for a community, and exactly right, because St. Benedict understood that a community is always forming the people in it, whether anyone intends it or not.



A school is the same. It forms students by its schedule, its habits and its unspoken assumptions about what matters, and most of that formation happens by drift. The task is to make it happen on purpose.

That task is more urgent than it was five years ago, because now the work itself can be handed off to artificial intelligence (AI). A machine will read the book, draft the essay and solve the problem, and the offer looks like help. But when the labor of learning is offloaded, the student is still being formed, only now toward the habit of not laboring.

St. Benedict names the problem a few lines into his *Rule*: "The labor of obedience will bring you back to him from whom you had drifted through the sloth of disobedience." Drift through sloth; return through labor. He could have been describing a school in 2026.

St. Benedict's answer was a place, and he called it a school. "Therefore, we intend to establish a school for the Lord's service," he writes, and his model is plain enough to borrow: a written rule held in common, a stable community rooted in one place, a daily rhythm of prayer and work and persons rather than output as the product.

He promises "nothing harsh, nothing burdensome," while admitting that the way "is bound to be narrow at the outset."

This year, one school has set out to follow that model. Trinity Academy South Bend, a classical Christian school, received a DELTA Rapid Response Grant from Notre Dame's Institute for Ethics and the Common Good, supported by the Lilly Endowment.

Prompted by how quickly AI is outpacing institutions, the program asked grantees to try something concrete and document it for others. Under the direction of head of school John Lee, Trinity took up two efforts after Benedict's model: Clarify the school's ends, and invest in the people who make its culture.

This work did not start from scratch. One of the school's foundational documents, "A Culture of Learning," was written to defend the conditions of learning against distraction. It insists that "education unfolds among actual people in an actual place," that learning "is not simply the transfer of information but the formation of persons," and that the school's low-technology commitment is "not a retreat from the modern world, but a principled commitment to the conditions under which real learning takes place." Those claims held before automation. They hold harder now.

The first effort was to write the ends down. A team of teachers spent a weekend together, the first day talking through what each discipline is for, the second drafting. The result is three short papers: one on the humanities, one on mathematics and the sciences and one on the fine arts.

Together they explain why every student studies calculus, physics, programming and four years of Latin while also singing in a choir, acting in plays and making art, and why high school students spend two hours a day in a seminar called Humane Letters. The papers resist reducing learning to measurable outputs. They say what kind of person the curriculum is forming.

The second effort was a retreat, in the old sense of the word: a stepping back for the sake of returning. In August, the whole faculty and staff spent two days off campus in prayer, study and conversation. All had read Benedict's *Rule* over the summer, along with a chapter of retired Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams' *The Way of St. Benedict*.

Each educator began writing a personal rule for his or her own vocation, on the premise that teachers cannot form students in virtues they do not themselves possess. Four themes carried the conversation. "Stability" is the discipline of abiding with these people in this place. "Humility" is honesty about oneself, and "obedience" begins, as the *Rule* does, with listening. "Currency," a word Williams borrows from Donald Nicholl, names the fact that a community gets back whatever it puts into circulation, grievance or goodness.

Several weeks into the school year, the head of school asked a teacher to take on a demanding new job: leading the school through its report for an upcoming accreditation review. The teacher prayed before he answered. When he came back, he said yes, and he said why. He had been thinking about the humility and obedience he had studied with his colleagues that summer, and he would take the work on as a mission. Listen first, then act, just as the prologue of the *Rule* asks.

What Benedict reveals is that an intentional culture needs clear ends and formed culture-makers. The *Rule* points where a school should. "The Lord waits for us daily to translate into action, as we should, his holy teachings," Benedict writes, and "as we progress in this way of life and in faith, we shall run on the path of God's commandments, our hearts overflowing with the inexpressible delight of love." That is what a school is for, and the machines have only made it plainer.

(Leonard J. DeLorenzo is a professor of the practice in the McGrath Institute for Church Life and concurrent professor in the department of theology at the University of Notre Dame. His most recent book is The Rule of the Sacred Heart: Finding Rest in a Restless World. *You can find his writing at* leonardjdelorenzo.com.*)* †

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).

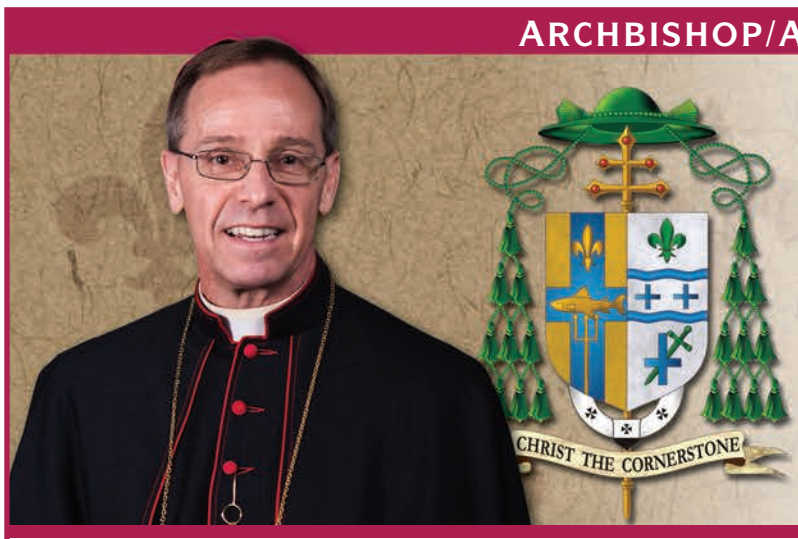
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The editors reserve the right to select the letters that will be published and to edit letters from readers as necessary based on space limitations, pastoral sensitivity and content (including spelling and grammar). In order to encourage opinions from 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.

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Christ the Cornerstone

God's law of love should come first in our life

The Gospel reading for the Twenty-Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Mt 22:15-21) contains the familiar saying of Jesus: "*Repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God*" (Mt 22:21).

As St. Matthew tells us, the Pharisees wanted to entrap Jesus, so after flattering him with superficial praise, they asked him, "Is it lawful to pay the census tax to Caesar or not?" (Mt 22:17) If Jesus answered "yes," he could appear to approve Roman domination; if he answered "no," he would be accused of promoting rebellion against the ruling power.

Knowing their malice, the Gospel says that Jesus challenged them, "Why are you testing me, you hypocrites? Show me the coin that pays the census tax" (Mt 22:18-19). Then they handed him the Roman coin. He said to them, "Whose image is this and whose inscription?" (Mt 22:20) They replied, "Caesar's" (Mt 22:21). At that, Jesus answered their trick question with an enigmatic response: "Then repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God" (Mt 22:21).

Jesus's answer to the Pharisees' disingenuous question avoided their trap, but it did a lot more than simply settle a tax question. The Lord's saying described a fundamental distinction between civil authority and divine authority. It also reminded them (and us) of the first and greatest commandment:

"*You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments*" (Mt 22:37-40).

The coin bearing Caesar's image represents the sphere of civil administration. Jesus' saying acknowledges that citizens have an obligation to the political community, including taxes, obedience to just laws, participation in public life, and cooperation in activities that promote peace and justice for all.

In Catholic social teaching, the legitimate role of the state is recognized. The Church teaches that political authority exists to protect persons, uphold justice and promote the common good, including such social goods as roads, water, police protection, defense, education and dignified work. Citizens should not treat government, law, or civic responsibility as opposed to religion. At the same time, as St. Thomas More said when he was about to be executed for his refusal to disobey God's law, "I die the king's good servant, but God's first." God comes first—always and everywhere.

Jesus refuses to be manipulated by his enemies. His Gospel message is profound, effecting all aspects of human life. But it is not a political manifesto. Every effort to categorize Jesus as either a social reformer or a religious fanatic misses the point of his life and his teaching. Jesus is the Incarnate Word of God. His sayings, his parables, his miracles and his healing power have only one purpose: to help us repent and return to God *with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind*.

God comes first. Always and everywhere. Yes, we must obey legitimate authority by paying our taxes, observing just laws and doing everything possible to promote the common good of all.

But in the final analysis, we are called to subordinate all these good things to God's law. There is only one commandment that demands our absolute obedience, and it is the Law of Love.

Yes, we must repay to Caesar what belongs to him, but this obligation never supersedes the duty that we have to love God absolutely and to love our sisters and brothers with the same self-sacrificing love that God gives to us. There is only one law that is above all other obligations no matter how important. That law commands us to give to God what belongs to God alone—a holy and unselfish love that expresses itself in worship, self-sacrifice and genuine service.

Jesus does not ask his disciples (all of us) to do things that he refuses to do. He does not ask us to defy legitimate authority or to disobey just laws that govern civil society. He doesn't want us to fall into the same trap that was set for him by the Pharisees. That's why he tells us to repay to Caesar what belongs to him. But it's also true that Jesus calls us to be faithful, obedient servants of our Father in heaven. God's Law of Love is the commandment that supersedes every other law.

We should give to Caesar's successors in civil authority what is rightfully theirs, the Lord tells us. But let's be sure to give God, first and foremost, the adoration, wholehearted obedience and unselfish love that belongs to God alone. †

Cristo, la piedra angular

La ley del amor de Dios debe ser lo primero en nuestra vida

La lectura del Evangelio del vigésimo noveno domingo del tiempo ordinario (Mt 22:15-21) contiene uno de los dichos más conocidos de Jesús: "Lo del César devolvédselo al César, y lo de Dios, a Dios" (Mt 22:21).

Tal y como nos cuenta san Mateo, los fariseos querían tenderle una trampa a Jesús, así que, tras halagarlo con elogios superficiales, le preguntaron: "¿Es lícito pagar tributo al César o no?" (Mt 22:17). Si Jesús respondía que sí, podría dar la impresión de que aprobaba el dominio romano; si respondía que no, se le acusaría de fomentar la rebelión contra el poder dominante.

Consciente de su malicia, el Evangelio cuenta que Jesús les dijo: "Hipócritas, ¿por qué me tentáis? Mostradme la moneda del tributo" (Mt 22:18-19). Entonces le entregaron la moneda romana. Les preguntó entonces: "¿De quién son esta imagen y la inscripción?" (Mt 22:20). Ellos respondieron: "Del César" (Mt 22:21). Ante esto, Jesús respondió a su pregunta capciosa con una respuesta enigmática: "Pues lo del César devolvédselo al César, y lo de Dios, a Dios" (Mt 22:21).

La respuesta de Jesús a la pregunta capciosa de los fariseos evitó su trampa, pero hizo mucho más que simplemente resolver una cuestión tributaria. Las palabras del Señor describían una distinción fundamental entre la autoridad civil y la autoridad divina. También les recordó (y nos recuerda a nosotros) el primer y mayor mandamiento:

"*Amarás al Señor, tu Dios, con todo tu corazón, con toda tu alma y con toda tu mente. Éste es el mayor y el primer mandamiento. El segundo es semejante a éste: Amarás a tu prójimo como a ti mismo. De estos dos mandamientos penden toda la Ley y los Profetas*" (Mt 22:37-40).

La moneda con la efigie del César representa el ámbito de la administración civil. Las palabras de Jesús reconocen que los ciudadanos tienen obligaciones para con la comunidad política, entre ellas el pago de impuestos, la obediencia a las leyes justas, la participación en la vida pública y la cooperación en actividades que promuevan la paz y la justicia para todos.

En la doctrina social católica se reconoce el papel legítimo del Estado. La Iglesia enseña que la autoridad política existe para proteger a las personas, defender la justicia y promover el bien común, incluyendo bienes sociales tales como las carreteras, el agua, la protección policial, la defensa, la educación y el trabajo digno. Los ciudadanos no deben considerar al gobierno, la ley o la responsabilidad cívica como algo opuesto a la religión. Al mismo tiempo, como dijo santo Tomás Moro cuando estaba a punto de ser ejecutado por negarse a desobedecer la ley de Dios: «Muero como buen servidor del rey, pero primero de Dios». Dios es lo primero: siempre y en todas partes.

Jesús se niega a ser manipulado por sus enemigos. Su mensaje evangélico es profundo y abarca todos los aspectos de la vida humana, pero no es un manifiesto político. Todo intento de clasificar a Jesús como un reformador social o un fanático religioso pasa por alto el sentido de su vida y de su enseñanza. Jesús es el Verbo de Dios encarnado. Sus palabras, sus parábolas, sus milagros y su poder sanador tienen un solo propósito: ayudarnos a arrepentirnos y a volver a Dios *con todo nuestro corazón, con toda nuestra alma y con toda nuestra mente*.

Dios es lo primero. Siempre y en todas partes. Sí, debemos obedecer a la autoridad legítima mediante el pago de nuestros impuestos, el cumplimiento de las leyes justas y el esfuerzo por hacer todo lo posible por promover el bien común de todos.

Pero, en última instancia, estamos llamados a subordinar todas estas cosas buenas a la ley de Dios. Solo hay un mandamiento que exige nuestra obediencia absoluta, y es la Ley del Amor.

Sí, debemos dar al César lo que es del César, pero esta obligación nunca se antepone al deber que tenemos de amar a Dios de manera absoluta y de amar a nuestras hermanas y hermanos con el mismo amor abnegado que Dios nos brinda. Solo hay una ley que está por encima de todas las demás obligaciones, por muy importantes que sean. Esa ley nos ordena dar a Dios lo que le pertenece solo a Él: un amor santo y desinteresado que se expresa en la adoración, la abnegación y el servicio genuino.

Jesús no les pide a sus discípulos (a todos nosotros) que hagan cosas que Él se niega a hacer. No nos pide que desafiemos a la autoridad legítima ni que desobedezcamos las leyes justas que rigen la sociedad civil. No quiere que caigamos en la misma trampa que le tendieron los fariseos. Por eso nos dice que devolvamos al César lo que le pertenece. Pero también es cierto que Jesús nos llama a ser siervos fieles y obedientes de nuestro Padre que está en los cielos. La Ley del Amor de Dios es el mandamiento que prevalece sobre cualquier otra ley.

El Señor nos dice que debemos dar a los sucesores del César en la autoridad civil lo que legítimamente les pertenece. Pero asegurémonos de dar a Dios, ante todo, la adoración, la obediencia sincera y el amor desinteresado que solo le pertenecen a Él. †

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 19

Virtual Sister Thea Bowman Black Catholic Women's Prayer Group, 7 p.m., meets online monthly on third Monday, sponsored by archdiocesan Black Catholic Ministry, all women welcome. Meeting: tinyurl.com/SrTheaPrayerGrp. Information: iowhosomaddox@archindy.org, 317-261-3381.

October 20

St. Mary Church, 1331 E. Hunter Robbins Way, Greensburg. **Mass for Miscarried Babies**, 5:30 p.m., all are welcome, those wishing to have baby's name read aloud during the Mass must register name by Oct. 16. Information, registration: 812-212-3463, covenantresources.org/mass, contactus@covenantresources.org.

October 22

Church of the Immaculate Conception, 1 Providence Pl., Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Foundation Day Mass**, 11 a.m., Mass to honor the day St. Mother Theodore Guerin and her five companions arrived at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. Information: 812-535-2952, provctr@spsmw.org.

October 23

Our Lady of Perpetual Help School, 1752 Scheller Lane, New Albany. **Fish Fry Fundraiser**, 4-7 p.m., fried fish, shrimp, hush puppies, coleslaw, mac and cheese, green beans, baked beans, fries, benefiting youth ministry and athletics, $14 fish dinner, $15 shrimp/fish combo dinner, cash or check, no credit cards. Information: 812-944-1184.

October 23-25

Sisters of Providence, 1 Providence Pl., Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Discernment Retreat**, 4 p.m. Fri.-2 p.m. Sun., for Catholic women ages 18-42 discerning a religious vocation. Information, registration: events.sistersofprovidence.org, 361-500-9505, jluna@spsmw.org.

October 24

St. Bartholomew Parish, 1306 27th St., Columbus. **Polidor 5K Run/Walk**, 8:30-11 a.m., check-in 7-8 a.m., supporting adult literacy Alfa Program in Limonade, Haiti, $25 ages 15 and older, $10 ages 14 and younger. Information, registration: tinyurl.com/PolidorRace2026, 812-350-5250, saleeb9287@att.net.

October 25

Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ Church, 7225 Southeastern Ave., Indianapolis. **Nativity Concert Series: Autumn Concert**, 7 p.m., brass quintet, music spanning hundreds of years and multiple styles, free. Information: 317-357-1200, cseitz@nativityindy.org.

St. Peter the Apostle Church, 5431 Johnsontown Road, Louisville, Ky. **Choral Festival Concert**, 3:30 p.m., featuring local parish choirs, reception following, handicap accessible, free. Information: 502-937-5920, lmeyer@saintpeterapostle.org.

October 26

GraceHouse Church, 6822 US 31 S, Whiteland. **Right to Life of Johnson and Morgan Counties Banquet**, 6:30 p.m., author/illustrator Sarah Janisse Brown presenting, registration required, $35. Information, registration: 317-697-2441, righttolifejmc@gmail.com.

October 27

St. Mary Parish, 325 N. New Jersey St., Indianapolis. **Deepening Communion in a Polarized World**, Glenmary Home Missionary Father Aaron Wessman presenting, 5:15-9 p.m., talk in English 5:45 p.m., bilingual Mass 7 p.m., talk in Spanish 8 p.m., free. Information: 317-637-3983, parishoffice@saintmarysindy.org.

October 31

Sisters of St. Benedict Our Lady of Grace Monastery, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **New Monastery Open House and Organ Concert**, 1-4 p.m., tours and light refreshments, organ concert 2-3 p.m. in chapel, free. Information: 317-435-1130, susanreuber03@yahoo.com.

November 3

St. Joan of Arc Church, 4217 Central Ave., Indianapolis. **Mass of Remembrance**, 5:30 p.m., memorial Mass for the loss of children of any age, special blessing at end of Mass, all are welcome. Information: 812-537-3992.

November 4

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.

November 6

Saint Meinrad Archabbey, St. Bede Theater, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Organ Concert by Dr. Ryan Kennedy**, 7:30 p.m. CT, performing liturgical music by Bach and Florentz, free. Information: saintmeinrad.org/visit-us/cultural-events, 812-357-6611.

Our Lady of the Greenwood Church, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. **Requiem Mass for Infants Who Died Before Baptism**, 6 p.m., all are welcome. Information: 317-888-2861.

November 7

St. Mark the Evangelist Parish, 535 E. Edgewood Ave., Indianapolis. **Evangelization Retreat: Come Holy Spirit, Renew Our Hearts and Ignite Our Mission**, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., English and Spanish tracks, talks, small groups, meditation and reflection, adoration, healing service, optional 4:30 p.m. Mass, lunch included, hosted by archdiocesan Office of Evangelization, $35, register by Oct. 26. Information, registration: bit.ly/comeholyspiritretreat, 317-236-1466, abardo@archindy.org. †

Enjoy Christmas shopping, concerts and events at parishes, sites in central and southern Indiana

It's the time of year when parishes and Catholic sites throughout the archdiocese offer Christmas events, bazaars, craft fairs and concerts with opportunities for gift-shopping, food and fun. Below are the events reported to *The Criterion*:

Nov. 6-7

St. Agnes Parish, 1008 McLary Road, Nashville. **Christmas Bazaar**, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Fri., 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Sat., handcrafted Christmas decorations and gifts, handmade wreaths, home-baked goods, paper and wood crafts, decorated tabletop Christmas trees, silent auction with themed gift baskets and handmade quilt, proceeds benefit St. Vincent de Paul of Brown County, Habitat for Humanity and Mother's Cupboard, free admission and parking. Information: tinyurl.com/StAgnesBazaar2026, 317-697-6613, nancy.lonsinger@gmail.com.

Nov. 7

St. Malachy School, 7410 N. County Road 100 E., Brownsburg. **Christmas Market**, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., craft fair, new vendors and experiences from past years, free admission. Information: altarsociety@stmalachy.org, 317-852-3195.

St. John the Apostle Parish, 4607 W. State Road 46, Bloomington. **Holiday Craft Show**, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., handmade crafts from more than 35 artisans, door prizes, bake sale, lunch available, free admission. Information: nothingfancyceramics@gmail.com, 812-821-1152.

St. Martin of Tours Parish, Sexton Hall, 1720 E. Harrison St., Martinsville. **Christmas Holiday Bazaar**, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., variety of items for sale at vendor booths, St. Martin's Attic and Crafts, Christmas cookies and caramels by the pound at St. Martin's Cookie Shoppe, raffle for cash prizes, quilt door prize, hourly door prizes, food and drinks available for purchase, carry-out available, free admission. Information: 765-342-6379, ext. 2, parishoffice@stmtours.org.

Nov. 14

St. Mary School, 1331 E. Hunter Robbins Way, Greensburg. **Holiday Shopping Expo**, 8 a.m.-2 p.m., more than 60 vendors featuring arts, crafts, treats, jewelry, toys, religious and beauty items, free admission. Information: 812-663-2804, holidayexpo@stmarysgreensburg.com.

Knights of Columbus Council #3228 Fatima Event Center, 1040 N. Post Road, Indianapolis. **God's Embrace Coffee Christmas Bazaar**, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., unique handmade crafts, local artisans and vendors, holiday decorations, and ornaments, baked goods and sweet treats, warm drinks and cider, free admission, vendor tables $20-35 depending on size and location. Information: godsembraceindy@gmail.com. Vendor registration: tinyurl.com/ChristmasBazaarVendors.

Nov. 27, 2026-Jan. 3, 2027

St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross Parish, 23345 Gavin Lane, Bright. **Bright Lights Christmas Light Display**, Fridays and Saturdays 6-10 p.m., Sundays 6-9 p.m., drive-thru Christmas light display, life-size Nativity scene, free but donations accepted.

Special hours of operation:
—Dec. 8: 6-9 p.m.
—Dec. 21-23: 6-9 p.m.
—Dec. 24: 6 p.m.-midnight
—Dec. 25-26: 6-10 p.m.
—Dec. 31-Jan. 1: 6-10 p.m.

Information: 513-788-1596, brightlightsdcc@gmail.com.

Dec. 6

Union County 4-H Fairgrounds, 411 E. Union St., Liberty. **The Bethlehem Experience**, 5-8 p.m., re-creation of Bethlehem from time of Christ including shop-fronts, live animals, people dressed to the period, gift shop to purchase items seen in "shops," refreshments, tours depart every 20 minutes, free parking at fairground and adjacent Union County High School, sponsored by St. Bridget of Ireland Parish in Liberty, free admission but donations accepted. Information: Jane Joliff, 765-969-4388, janejoliff@hotmail.com.

St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross Parish, 23345 Gavin Lane, Bright. **Pictures with St. Nicholas**, 6-8 p.m., treats available, free but donations accepted. Information: 513-788-1596, brightlightsdcc@gmail.com.

Dec. 12

Sisters of Providence, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Christmas Fun at the Woods**, 1:30-4:30 p.m., crafts, storytelling, face painting, bake sale, free. Information: spsmw.org/event/christmas-fun-at-the-woods-2026, 812-535-2952, provctr@spsmw.org.

Dec. 20

Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ Church, 7225 Southeastern Ave., Indianapolis. **Cello and Harp Christmas Concert by "Encore,"** 3 p.m., free. Information: 317-357-1200, nativityindy.org/events/christmas-concert-1.

Dec. 27

St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross Church, 23345 Gavin Lane, Bright. **Christmas Concert**, 6-9 p.m., featuring Cincinnati Symphony Ensemble, free but donations accepted. Information: 513-788-1596, brightlightsdcc@gmail.com. †

Wedding Anniversaries

Robert and Sally (Joyce) Hyde, members of St. Rose of Lima Parish in Franklin, celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary on Sept. 23.

The couple was married in Sacred Heart Church in Evansville, Ind. (Diocese of Evansville), on Sept. 23, 1961.

They have five children: Cindy Karasewski, Jenny Martin, Becky Zehr, David and Scott Hyde.

The couple also has 11 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.



Joseph and Mary Grace (Meiets) Leon, members of St. John Paul II Parish in Sellersburg, will celebrate their 55th wedding anniversary on Oct. 16.

The couple was married in Holy Innocents Church in Pittsburgh, Pa., on Oct. 16, 1971.

They have three children: Elizabeth Weber, Dr. Joseph and retired Chief Master Sgt. Michael Leon.

The couple also has seven grandchildren and one great-grandchild.



James and Lisa (Jacobs) Pulskamp, members of St. Mary Parish in Greensburg, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on Oct. 16.

The couple was married in Immaculate Conception Church in Milhousen on Oct. 16, 1976.

They have two children: Ashley Gauck and Alex Pulskamp.

The couple also has four 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.

***In illo uno unum* (In the One Christ we are one)**



One in Christ/*Daniel Conway*

Music helps open our hearts to God and others

Cantare amantis est, that is, singing belongs to those who love. (St. Augustine, Sermon 336, 1)

During his general audiences in August, Pope Leo XIV offered reflections on the Second Vatican Council's teaching on music in the Church's liturgy.

In his Aug. 19 general audience, the Holy Father said that while all forms of true art (including sculpture, painting, movement and drama) can contribute to divine worship when expressed appropriately, sacred music is pre-eminent:

"The musical tradition of the universal Church is a treasure of inestimable value, greater even than that of any other art," the pope said. "The main reason for this pre-eminence is that, as sacred song united to the words, it forms a necessary or integral part of the solemn liturgy."

When united to the words of sacred Scripture and the Church's prayer, sacred song forms a "necessary or integral" dimension of the worship experience. It assists the worshipers in offering "right praise" (the literal meaning of the word orthodox), and, as Pope Leo said, "it adds delight to prayer, fosters unity of minds, or confers greater solemnity upon the sacred rites."

Music is not incidental to worship. It is not something "added on" as a kind of embellishment. Sacred songs are integral, a necessary element whenever we gather to give thanks and praise to God, even when a particular liturgy has no singing or musical accompaniment.

The truth behind this apparent contradiction lies in the teaching of St. Augustine: "*Cantare amantis est*." "Singing is an expression of love," and whenever true love is expressed in the form of liturgical prayer, music is present.

For example, a spoken "Alleluia" or "Holy, Holy, Holy" is an implied song. And whenever the Lord's Prayer is offered in the context of the Sacred Liturgy, whether it is recited or sung, it is being proclaimed solemnly in the company of all the angels and saints in heaven who join in this sacred moment.

Sacred music "helps us open our hearts to God's action in grace and allow ourselves to be moulded by it," Pope Leo said. "To sing and play music during the liturgy is to pray, attuning one's heart to that of our sisters and brothers and to God, through active participation in the mystery being celebrated. In particular, music expresses the affective dimension of prayer."

Singing also fosters communion. It contributes to the unity of hearts, overcoming differences between people and bringing everyone together in praise of God through the symphony of voices. Thus, it becomes an epiphany of the Church, a tangible manifestation of the communion that belongs to her very nature.

The important role that music plays as a necessary, integral dimension of sacred worship, places serious obligations on pastors, Church musicians and all who are responsible for planning and executing the Church's liturgy.

"At every level, [music performed at liturgy] must respond to what is most appropriate for the liturgical moment, beyond fashions or composers' particular sensitivities," Pope Leo said. "Its form, especially in its melodic aspect, must be at once noble and simple, of high musical quality and easily performable, particularly when it is intended to be sung by the whole assembly."

How many of the hymns that are sung in churches on an ordinary Sunday would fit this description? How seriously do we take the responsibility to assure that musical selections during liturgies "respond to what is most appropriate for the liturgical moment?"

In his Aug. 19 general audience, Pope Leo noted that "*Sacrosanctum Concilium*," Vatican II's document on the liturgy, places great stress on the active participation of members of the congregation. The Church's liturgy is not a spectator sport. It invites—in fact, requires—the full engagement of all.

" 'The people should be encouraged to take part by means of acclamations, responses, psalmody, antiphons, and songs,' and 'reverent silence' should be fostered," he said, quoting from the document (#30). "['*Sacrosanctum Concilium*'] urges each person, minister or member of the faithful, to perform 'all of, but only, those parts which pertain to his office by the nature of the rite and the principles of liturgy' in a harmonious balance between different ministries, various interventions and moments of silence" (#28).

Compositions "noble and simple, of high musical quality and easily performable" by a fully engaged congregation" is the challenge that the Church extends to her pastors, liturgical musicians and all of us. Let's make our sacred music a true expression of our love for God and his people.

(Daniel Conway is a member of The Criterion*'s editorial committee.)* †

Uno en Cristo/*Daniel Conway*

La música nos ayuda a abrir nuestro corazón a Dios y a los demás

"*Cantare amantis est*," *es decir, cantar es propio de quien ama.* (San Agustín, Sermón 336, 1)

Durante sus audiencias generales de agosto, el papa León XIV ofreció algunas reflexiones sobre la doctrina del Concilio Vaticano II con respecto a la música en la liturgia de la Iglesia.

En su audiencia general del 19 de agosto, el Santo Padre afirmó que, si bien todas las formas de arte auténtico (incluidas la escultura, la pintura, la danza y el teatro) pueden contribuir al culto divino cuando se expresan de manera adecuada, la música sacra ocupa un lugar preeminente:

"La tradición musical de la Iglesia universal constituye un tesoro de valor inestimable, que sobresale entre las demás expresiones artísticas," dijo el papa, "principalmente porque el canto sagrado, unido a las palabras, constituye una parte necesaria o integral de la Liturgia solemne."

Cuando se une a las palabras de la Sagrada Escritura y a la oración de la Iglesia, el canto sagrado constituye una dimensión "necesaria o integral" de la experiencia de culto. Ayuda a los fieles a ofrecer la "alabanza correcta" (el significado literal de la palabra "ortodoxo") y, como dijo el papa León, "ya sea expresando con mayor delicadeza la oración o fomentando la unanimidad, ya sea enriqueciendo la mayor solemnidad los ritos sagrados."

La música no es algo secundario en el culto. No es algo que se haya "añadido" a modo de adorno. Los cantos sagrados son un elemento integral y necesario cada vez que nos reunimos para dar gracias y alabar a Dios, incluso cuando una liturgia en particular no cuenta con cantos ni acompañamiento musical.

La verdad que se esconde tras esta aparente contradicción reside en la enseñanza de san Agustín: *Cantare amantis est*. "Cantar es propio de quien ama," y siempre que el amor verdadero se expresa en forma de oración litúrgica, la música está presente.

Por ejemplo, un "Aleluya" o un "Santo, Santo, Santo" pronunciado en voz alta es una canción implícita. Y cada vez que se reza el Padrenuestro en el marco de la Sagrada Liturgia, ya sea recitado o cantado, se proclama solemnemente en presencia de todos los ángeles y santos del cielo, que se unen a este momento sagrado.

La música sacra nos "ayuda en abrir el corazón a la acción de Dios en la gracia y en dejarse moldear por ella," asegura el papa León. "Cantar, en la liturgia, significa rezar, ya que las voces y los corazones de los hermanos y hermanas sintonizan entre ellos y con Dios, en la participación activa del misterio celebrado. Además, la música expresa la dimensión afectiva de la oración."

El canto también fomenta la comunión. Contribuye a la unidad de los corazones, superando las diferencias entre las personas y uniendo a todos en la alabanza a Dios a través de la sinfonía de las voces. De este modo, se convierte en una epifanía de la Iglesia, una manifestación tangible de la comunión que forma parte de su propia naturaleza.

El importante papel que desempeña la música como dimensión necesaria e integral del culto sagrado impone serias obligaciones a los pastores, a los músicos de la Iglesia y a todos los responsables de planificar y llevar a cabo la liturgia de la Iglesia.

"Más allá de las modas o de las sensibilidades particulares de los autores, [la música interpretada en la liturgia] debe responder en todos los niveles a lo que resulta más adecuado para el momento de la celebración," aseguró el Santo Padre. "Además, la forma, especialmente en su aspecto melódico, debe ser a la vez noble y sencilla, de alta calidad musical y fácil de ejecutar, sobre todo cuando está destinada a ser cantada por toda la asamblea."

¿Cuántos de los himnos que se cantan en las iglesias un domingo dado encajarían en esta descripción? ¿Hasta qué punto nos tomamos en serio la responsabilidad de garantizar que las selecciones musicales durante las liturgias sean lo "más adecuado para el momento de la celebración"?

En su audiencia general del 19 de agosto, el papa León señala que el *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, el documento del Concilio Vaticano II sobre la liturgia, hace especial hincapié en la participación activa de los fieles. La liturgia de la Iglesia no es un espectáculo para deleite de un público. Requiere—de hecho, exige—la plena participación de todos.

" 'Se debe animar a los fieles a participar mediante aclamaciones, respuestas, salmodia, antífonas y cantos,' y se debe fomentar el 'silencio reverente,' afirmó, citando el documento (#30). "[La '*Sacrosanctum Concilium*'] exhorta a cada persona—ya sea ministro o fiel—a desempeñar 'todas y solo aquellas partes que le corresponden por la naturaleza del rito y los principios litúrgicos' manteniendo un equilibrio armonioso entre los diversos ministerios, las distintas intervenciones y los momentos de silencio" (#28).

Composiciones "nobles y sencillas, de gran calidad musical y fáciles de interpretar por una asamblea plenamente participativa": este es el desafío que la Iglesia plantea a sus pastores, a los músicos litúrgicos y a todos nosotros. Hagamos de nuestra música sacra una verdadera expresión de nuestro amor por Dios y por su pueblo.

(Daniel Conway es integrante del comité editorial de The Criterion.*)* †

Is Garth Brooks right about God and unanswered prayers?

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

One in an occasional series

By John Shaughnessy

You may remember a time in your life when you made a long-distance drive late at night by yourself. To stay awake or pass the boredom, you desperately scanned the radio for a song to help keep you going, and just then you heard a set of lyrics that made you stop and listen.

Ken Ogorek lived that experience about 35 years ago as he was driving from Pittsburgh to Indianapolis. And there was something about that song by country singer Garth Brooks that has stayed with him ever since.

"I was in the middle of nowhere, where you're not going to get a lot of AM reception, so I'm just turning through the channels, and I just happened on this station in the middle of this song," recalls Ogorek, the executive director of the Secretariat for Evangelizing Catechesis for the archdiocese. "I didn't even hear the whole song, but the refrain really stuck in my head."

The song is "Unanswered Prayers," and it captures the story of a man who goes to a hometown football game with his wife, a game where he meets his "old high school flame"—the one he prayed to God in high school to be his "for all times." As he meets her again after all these years, he's glad that God didn't grant him that long-ago wish.

The heart of the song notes:

"*Sometimes I thank God for unanswered prayers*

"*Remember when you're talking to the man upstairs*

"*That just because he doesn't answer doesn't mean he doesn't care*

"*Some of God's greatest gifts are unanswered prayers.*"

While that refrain has stayed with Ogorek through the years, he also believes it doesn't capture the true essence of how God responds to our prayers.

"As I look back on the years that have passed since then, I understand the point he was trying to make," Ogorek says. "It's a nice story, and I don't want to argue with Garth Brooks—although that might be fun, especially if it was in a low place.

"But what I've come to realize—and I think this is solid Catholic doctrine—is that, first of all, God always hears our prayers. And there's no such thing as an unanswered prayer because God always answers our prayers. It's just that he has a few key ways of answering them.

"Sometimes his answer is, 'yes.' Sometimes his answer is, 'no.' Sometimes his answer is, 'not yet.' And sometimes his answer is, 'I have a better idea.' "

Ogorek believes that since "there's no such thing as an unanswered prayer," that creates "a very helpful posture toward our relationship with God."

"We *should* pray," he says. "We *should* ask God for things. He likes that. He wants us to ask for things. And we should be confident that he hears and will answer our prayers. But we also have to be open to what his answer is going to be. And no matter what his answer is, it's always a good answer, too, because it helps move us along the path that he wants us to follow."

Even if Brooks has a different view, Ogorek appreciates the song.

"Some songs have an impact on your life. The thoughts they provoke make them meaningful. That's what I would say about this song," Ogorek says. "It gave me food for subsequent thought and prayer. It was like a seed. As we're talking now, I'm realizing that at that point in my life—I'm sure I was in my 20s or early 30s at the most—I was thinking about the future, and I was asking good questions and expressing my hopes in prayer to God."

While God wants us to share our hopes for our lives with him, Ogorek says, God also has hopes for our lives.



U.S. country star Garth Brooks sings at the closing ceremony of the World Meeting on Human Fraternity in the atrium of St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican on May 11, 2024. (CNS photo/Pablo Esparza)

"God has a plan for our life and whether we ask him what the plan is or not, he's constantly trying to share his thoughts and feelings and dreams and goals for us in the ways that he does—sacred Scripture, the teaching of the Church. I could give you a laundry list.

"One way of putting it is, God tries to answer our prayers before we even pray them. Because he knows us better than we know ourselves. He knows what's going to make for a peaceful life on Earth and eternal life in heaven, so he's constantly trying to make his will known to us."

That understanding changed the way Ogorek approached God and his life.

"I didn't stop setting goals for myself or wanting things consciously. I learned that as I thought about my future, I should probably invite God to weigh in on what that might look like."

In our prayers, Ogorek says it's also important to remember the prayer that Christ gave us, the Our Father, and the key phrase at the heart of it—"thy will be done."

"The more we really learn to make that prayer request authentic and sincere, we realize it's OK to ask God for certain things, and he wants us too, but it's always in that context of 'thy will be done,' " Ogorek says.

"And we can be confident that he hears our prayers, he answers our prayers, and whatever his answer is, it's always a good answer because he's making his will known to us and allowing us to be a part of manifesting it."

A tribute to God's gift of creation

Nick Schmutte isn't afraid to admit that one song often makes him joyful to the point of tears.

"I have a master's degree in biology, and I am fascinated by the complexity, diversity, functionality and beauty of all forms of life," says Schmutte, a member of Mary, Queen of Peace Parish in Danville. "When I hear the hymn, 'How Great Thou Art,' it reminds me of the beauty of creation and frequently brings tears of joy to my eyes.

"When I see photos taken from the Webb telescope of galaxies a trillion light years away, the beauty and complexity of the universe, of all creation, fill me with awe."

(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.) †*



'Some songs have an impact on your life. The thoughts they provoke make them meaningful. That's what I would say about this song. It gave me food for subsequent thought and prayer. It was like a seed.'

—Ken Ogorek, executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Evangelizing Catechesis

Archbishop Broglio denounces 'public spectacle' of Hasan execution

WASHINGTON (OSV News) — Just hours after his audience with Pope Leo XIV, Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio of the U.S. Archdiocese for the Military Services issued a strong and lengthy statement on Oct. 12 against the planned livestreamed execution by firing squad of Fort Hood shooter Nidal Malik Hasan, calling it a "public spectacle of barbarically killing our adversaries."

In his statement, Archbishop Broglio, former president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and head of the military archdiocese since 2008, called upon "all men and women of good will to ask that this decision be reconsidered," and encouraged any Catholics involved to disassociate with the proceedings.

"As I would in the case of a procured abortion, I oblige any Catholics assigned to the firing squad to request to be excused from this action contrary to the teaching of the Church," Archbishop Broglio said.



Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio of the U.S. Archdiocese for the Military Services, delivers the homily during a Mass at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington on Sept. 11. (OSV News photo/Mihoko Owada)

As a U.S. military base, Fort Hood is under the pastoral jurisdiction of the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA.

President Donald Trump recently approved the execution by firing squad of Hasan, a former U.S. Army psychiatrist convicted of killing 13 people and injuring 32 others in a mass shooting at Fort Hood, Texas, in 2009.

Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth said on Oct. 8 in an interview with the pro-Trump TV outlet Real America's Voice News that the execution would take place at Fort Hood on Dec. 3, and that it would be made public.

"We'll make sure that people are able to watch it, that it's public," said Hegseth, who uses the moniker "secretary of war" since Trump signed an executive order last year adding the "Department of War" as a secondary, ceremonial title for the Department of Defense.

In his statement, Archbishop Broglio—who emphasized that he "had the sad duty of presiding and preaching at the funeral of Michael Grant Cahill, the only civilian killed in that attack"—renewed his "heartfelt sympathy" to relatives of the Fort Hood attack victims. He said Hasan's attack "disregarded the dignity of the human person." But on the cusp of this public execution, he said, "the dignity of the human person is again at stake."

Archbishop Broglio also posed significant questions that appeared to read as an examination of conscience:

"Do we really want to imitate the terrorists of this world and make a public spectacle of barbarically killing our adversaries?

"The crime committed by Nidal Malik Hasan was heinous, but does exposing the public to his execution serve any purpose?

"Has the potential moral injury, which the members of the firing squad might experience, been considered?

"Will the exposure of a live-stream to the young and impressionable during the 250th anniversary year of our independence be able to be repaired? The U.S. military generally enjoys a good reputation in the world. Is there really a value to throwing them in the same boat with terrorists by broadcasting the image of the execution of a man in a wheel chair to the whole world?

"Does this decision reflect the dignity of the human person?"

Archbishop Broglio called it his "duty" to "express my disapproval of what is proposed regarding the execution of the terrorist Hasan in the archdiocese entrusted to my spiritual care to be done by those for whose salvation I have been constituted as the Archbishop for the Military Services, USA."

If carried out, Hasan's execution would mark the first time U.S. officials livestreamed an execution to the public. Some legal analysts noted that appeals and other legal processes could delay Hasan's execution beyond Dec. 3.

The last public execution in the U.S. took place in Missouri in 1937, according to the Death Penalty Information Center. †

Hispanic young adults gather with Archbishop Thompson

By Jose Quintana
Special to *The Criterion*



Hispanic young adults pose with Archbishop Charles C. Thompson in front of his home in Indianapolis after a dinner on Sept. 1 coordinated by the archdiocesan *Pastoral Juvenil Hispana* ministry. (Submitted photo)

On Sept. 1, the residence of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson became a place of conversation, fellowship and hope as Hispanic young adult leaders from across the archdiocese gathered for dinner with their shepherd.

The dinner was hosted through the *Pastoral Juvenil Hispana*, a ministry of the archdiocesan Office of Hispanic Ministry dedicated to accompanying Hispanic young adults through faith formation, leadership development, community-building and service. The ministry is composed of a board of young adult leaders who help organize events and create opportunities of encounter for the broader Hispanic young adult community.

The evening was more than simply a meal. It was an opportunity for young adults from different parishes and communities to sit at the same table, share their experiences and speak openly about the future of the local Catholic Church.

Two questions emerged as central to the conversation: What can the Church offer the community? And what can young adults offer the Church?

Those questions took on particular significance, given the circumstances surrounding the gathering.

Just days before and after the dinner, Indiana experienced a significant increase in immigration enforcement activity. According to a Sept. 16 press release from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), 426 people were arrested across Indiana between Aug. 30 and Sept. 3 as part of Operation Safe Community-Indiana, a five-day enforcement operation conducted with state and local law enforcement agencies. Much of the operation was concentrated in the Indianapolis metropolitan area.

For many Hispanic families, the increased enforcement brought fear and uncertainty into their everyday lives. The dinner therefore offered something especially meaningful: a space where young Hispanic Catholics could gather with one another and with the archbishop not simply as parishioners, but as leaders, sons and daughters, students, professionals and members of the wider Church community.

The gathering also came shortly before Archbishop Thompson issued on Sept. 4 a temporary dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation for Catholics who had reasonable grounds to fear immigration detention, separation from their families or intimidation because of increased immigration enforcement. The dispensation remained in effect through Sept. 30.

In a statement accompanying the decree, Archbishop Thompson acknowledged the difficult circumstances facing immigrant communities.

"While recognizing the need for law enforcement to protect and defend, it is gravely concerning to witness families being torn apart," the archbishop wrote. "The family, the fabric of stability in our society, must be cherished and defended."

He also emphasized the inherent dignity of every person and called for people to be treated with dignity, compassion and respect.

Against that backdrop, the dinner on Sept. 1 offered a meaningful space for connection, which was particularly important as the Church in the United States becomes increasingly Hispanic.

In an article published in the June 3, 2024, issue of *America* magazine, professor Hosffman Ospino of Boston College noted that nearly 45% of U.S. Catholics—and more than half of Catholics younger than 30—identify as Hispanic. He described second- and third-generation young Hispanics as the fastest-growing sector of the Catholic community. Ospino argues that the Church must increasingly accompany, form and empower young Hispanic Catholics to become leaders within the Church and society.

The implications are significant for dioceses like Indianapolis.

Ospino writes that Hispanic Catholic leaders have the opportunity to bring their gifts and energy to "build, transform and even redefine existing Catholic ministerial structures," drawing from their own cultural and spiritual traditions.

That vision was represented around the dinner table at Archbishop Thompson's residence.

For Liz Ponce, a student at Indiana University Indianapolis and a member of St. Mary Parish in Indianapolis, the gathering was an opportunity to experience that sense of community firsthand.

"This was my first time attending a dinner like this, and it was such a wonderful experience," Ponce said. "It felt so nice to have genuine conversations with everyone and meet people from different [parishes] who all came together to connect."

For Ponce, one of the most meaningful parts of the evening was hearing the stories of other young Catholics.

"I really enjoyed hearing everyone's stories and getting to know people outside of my own church community," she said. "I think creating spaces like this is one of the best ways to bring people together, build relationships and strengthen our faith community."

The dinner also reflected a broader question facing the Church: How does it accompany a young generation that increasingly represents its future?

In his column, Ospino argues that Hispanic ministry must increasingly move beyond a model focused primarily on ritual and social assistance toward one that also empowers Hispanic Catholics to form strong families, become engaged citizens and assume leadership in the Church and society.

The September dinner was a small but meaningful expression of what the Church can offer its Hispanic young adults: a place to gather, be heard and belong. Amid a difficult moment for many Hispanic families across Indiana, the evening offered a hopeful reminder that the Church's response begins with accompaniment, which involves creating spaces for conversation, strengthening community and inviting young people not only to participate in the Church, but to help shape its future.

(Jose Quintana is an intern for the archdiocesan Office of Hispanic Ministry. For more information on Pastoral Juvenil Hispana, *contact archdiocesan Hispanic Ministry coordinator Alden Budier Hebbert at* abudier@archindy.org *or 317-236-7312.)* †

Jóvenes adultos hispanos se reúnen con el arzobispo Thompson

Por José Quintana
Especial para *The Criterion*

El 1 de septiembre, la residencia del arzobispo Charles C. Thompson se convirtió en un lugar de conversación, compañerismo y esperanza, al reunirse jóvenes adultos hispanos líderes de toda la arquidiócesis para cenar con su pastor.

La cena fue organizada por la Pastoral Juvenil Hispana, un ministerio de la Oficina del Ministerio Hispano de la Arquidiócesis dedicado a acompañar a los jóvenes adultos hispanos mediante la formación en la fe, el desarrollo del liderazgo, el fortalecimiento de la comunidad y el servicio. La Pastoral está compuesta por una junta de jóvenes adultos líderes que ayudan a organizar eventos y a crear oportunidades de encuentro para la comunidad hispana de jóvenes adultos en general.

La velada fue más que una simple cena; fue una oportunidad para que jóvenes adultos de diferentes parroquias y comunidades se sentaran a la misma mesa, compartieran sus experiencias y hablaran abiertamente sobre el futuro de la Iglesia católica local.

Dos preguntas surgieron como temas centrales de la conversación: ¿Qué puede ofrecer la Iglesia a la comunidad? Y ¿qué pueden ofrecer los jóvenes adultos a la Iglesia?

Esas preguntas cobraron un significado especial, dadas las circunstancias que rodearon el encuentro.

Apenas unos días antes y después de la cena, Indiana experimentó un aumento significativo en las actividades de control migratorio. Según un comunicado de prensa del 16 de septiembre emitido por el Servicio de Inmigración y Control de Aduanas de EE. UU. (ICE), 426 personas fueron detenidas en todo el estado de Indiana entre el 30 de agosto y el 3 de septiembre como parte de la "Operación Comunidad Segura-Indiana," una operación de cinco días llevada a cabo en colaboración con las fuerzas de seguridad estatales y locales. Gran parte de la operación se concentró en el área metropolitana de Indianápolis.

Para muchas familias hispanas, el aumento de las medidas de control trajo consigo miedo e incertidumbre a su vida cotidiana. Por lo tanto, la cena ofreció algo especialmente significativo: un espacio donde los jóvenes católicos hispanos pudieran reunirse entre sí y con el arzobispo, no solo como feligreses, sino como líderes, hijos e hijas, estudiantes, profesionales y miembros de la comunidad eclesial en general.

El encuentro también tuvo lugar poco antes de que el arzobispo Thompson emitiera, el 4 de septiembre, una dispensa temporal de la obligación de asistir a misa los domingos y días de precepto para los católicos que tuvieran motivos razonables para temer la detención migratoria, la separación de sus familias o la intimidación debido al aumento de las medidas de control migratorio. La dispensa permaneció vigente hasta el 30 de septiembre.

En una declaración que acompañaba al decreto, el arzobispo Thompson reconoció las difíciles circunstancias que enfrentan las comunidades de inmigrantes.

"Si bien se reconoce la necesidad de que las autoridades protejan y defiendan, resulta sumamente preocupante ser testigo de cómo se desgarran las familias," escribió el arzobispo. "La familia, el pilar de la estabilidad en nuestra sociedad, debe ser valorada y defendida."

Asimismo, hizo hincapié en la dignidad inherente a cada persona y pidió que se tratara a todos con dignidad, compasión y respeto.

Ver ARZOBISPO, *page 15*

Hospitality is a defining trait of Edinburgh parish as it marks 175 years

By Sean Gallagher



Members of Holy Trinity Parish in Edinburgh take part on Aug. 23 in a eucharistic procession following a Mass to celebrate the 175th anniversary of the founding of the Seymour Deanery faith community. (Submitted photo)

The presence of the Church in Edinburgh goes back to the earliest days of its history in Indiana.

Mass first started to be celebrated there in 1837 while the Servant of God Bishop Simon Bruté was still serving as the first shepherd of the Diocese of Vincennes, which had been established just three years earlier. The Diocese of Vincennes later became the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

Holy Trinity Parish was founded in Edinburgh 14 years later in 1851. The Seymour Deanery faith community is thus celebrating the 175th anniversary of its founding this year. One celebration took place on Aug. 23 with a festive Mass and eucharistic procession. Another will occur on Nov. 7 when Archbishop Charles C. Thompson will be the principal celebrant of a Mass.

In the early days of Holy Trinity Parish, the priests who ministered in Edinburgh did not live there. They were based either in nearby Franklin or Columbus, or came by horseback all the way from Shelbyville, St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Shelby County or Rushville.

Although the mode of transportation has changed, priests who lead Holy Trinity today still travel to minister there from some other place. In fact, the parish had a resident pastor for only five years of its history, from 1868-73.

Because of that, the members of Holy Trinity have a long history of taking the initiative in caring for their parish.

Father Christopher Wadleton has experienced this since he began his leadership of the parish in 2025. Although he has served as pastor of St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus since 2019, he doesn't see leading Holy Trinity as an added burden to his ministry.

"They take ownership of their own faith," Father Wadleton said of Holy Trinity's parishioners. "The members do everything in the parish. The amount of work for a pastor is fairly minimal, except helping to steer the ship. But they have a good handle on where they want the ship to go already."

Father Paul Shikany, a retired archdiocesan priest who led Holy Trinity Parish from 1983-84 and 1987-2005, had a similar experience, noting that there was "good, strong leadership" among the parishioners in his time there.

Showing hospitality to people from around the world

It was during the time of Father Shikany's ministry at Holy Trinity that a particular aspect of the life of the parish came to the fore: showing hospitality to a regular flow of visitors and newcomers, especially at nearby Camp Atterbury, a U.S. military installation operated by the Indiana National Guard.

Holy Trinity had long been the summer spiritual home of people spending time in cabins on nearby lakes. But after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, the activity at Camp Atterbury, which was founded in 1941, increased greatly. Thousands of soldiers flowed in and out of the camp for training and preparation for overseas deployment.

Father Shikany recalled how he got a call on Easter Sunday in 2004 in which he learned that a "small group" of soldiers would come to Holy Trinity for Mass that day.

The small group ended up being two full busloads of soldiers, who, along with the parishioners gathered for the great feast, far exceeded the 125-person capacity of Holy Trinity Church.

Still, the parishioners welcomed the visitors, setting up a place in their parish hall for Mass to be celebrated for overflow congregation.

"I ended up doing two Masses at the same time," recalled Father Shikany. "We didn't have cameras [for livestreaming] in those days. So, I did the Liturgy of the Word in one room and then the Liturgy of the Word in the church. Then we switched back and forth."

Twenty-five years since the attacks of 9/11, thousands of soldiers from many countries yearly come and go from Camp Atterbury between February and September, according to Holy Trinity parishioner Lynne Schaub, who is also a volunteer at the camp for the United States Organization, which provides support for U.S. military personnel and their families, as well as international soldiers training at U.S. military installations.

She said that some 40,000 soldiers have spent time at Camp Atterbury so far this year. While chaplains sometimes accompany these military personnel, Holy Trinity regularly has groups of soldiers come for Mass on Sundays.

Holy Trinity parishioners helped Camp Atterbury visitors of a different kind when some 7,500 refugees from Afghanistan were housed there for about nine months starting in September 2021.

"The parish kicked in and volunteered and donated beautifully," said Father Wadleton of the parishioners' efforts to aid the refugees.

Schaub described her faith community's hospitality to those spending time at Camp Atterbury as "the nut in the shell" and is glad that she and her fellow Catholics in Edinburgh are "able to serve not only our own parishioners, but those who are just passing through."



Father Paul Shikany, now a retired archdiocesan priest, celebrates an Easter Sunday Mass on April 11, 2004, at Holy Trinity Parish in Edinburgh for a large group of soldiers who came to the Seymour Deanery faith community from Camp Atterbury, a nearby military installation. (Submitted photo)

A 'spirit of helping one another'

Around the same time that activity at the camp started ramping up after 9/11, Hispanic Catholics began to become part of the faith community at Holy Trinity. Unlike the visitors to Camp Atterbury, they weren't just passing through but were seeking to put down roots in Edinburgh.

Barb Pierse, who had become a member of Holy Trinity just a few years before, was in a good position as a retired Spanish teacher to help the fledgling Hispanic community, both at the parish and in the broader community.

In the fall of 2001, she started an after-school English class for Hispanic children and youths at Holy Trinity.

"We'd have something to eat, then we would have a class and they would stay for Mass," Pierse recalled. "After Mass, we had another meal."

As Pierse's help became known in the Hispanic community, more people reached out to her for help.

"People would come and knock on our door and introduce themselves," she said. "One father said, 'I want my children to meet their new grandmother.' "

As she came to know more of the growing Hispanic community in Edinburgh, "I always invited them to come to Mass," Pierse said.

Amalia Cisneros has also experienced the hospitality of Holy Trinity. She and her husband Deacon Jorge Sanchez Leanos became part of the faith community in 2019 when her husband was in the archdiocesan deacon formation program and was assigned to minister there.

She said that the parish's hospitality "made a big difference."

"We were able to build relationships, participate in parish life, and gradually become part of the Holy Trinity family," Cisneros added. "That first welcome was very important because it gave us a sense that we belonged there. Holy Trinity quickly became a place where we felt connected and at home."

Just as her husband became involved in ministry at Holy Trinity through the deacon formation program, so did Cisneros, becoming the parish's coordinator of religious education in 2022 and serving as a pastoral associate starting in December 2025. This perspective as one involved in helping to lead ministry at Holy Trinity has given her a deepened appreciation of the faith community and its history.

"I have seen so many people willing to step forward when something needs to be done," Cisneros said. "That spirit of helping one another is one of the things that makes Holy Trinity a family to me.

"When I think about the 175th anniversary, I don't just think about 175 years of history. I think about all the people who have made Holy Trinity what it is today, and I feel grateful that my family and I are now part of that history."

Father Wadleton is glad to be Holy Trinity's pastor at a time when it is celebrating such an important anniversary.

"There's great excitement," he said. "The parish is very different than it was 25 years ago when we celebrated the 150th anniversary. But everybody is equally excited. No one is longing nostalgically for the past. This is who are right now and we're proud of who we are and excited to celebrate it." †

SIMPLYCATHOLIC

St. Thérèse's love of Christ is why she is a patroness of missions

By Michael R. Heinlein



The famed French saint, St. Thérèse of Lisieux, affectionately known by devotees as "the Little Flower," is pictured in the Carmelite monastery in Lisieux, France, in an undated photograph. Two years after St. Thérèse became the first saint he canonized, and one year after he established World Mission Sunday, Pope Pius XI in 1927 formally declared her the patroness of the missions, although she never left the monastery's cloister. (OSV News/Carmel de Lisieux)

(OSV News)—There is an apparent contradiction, at first glance, between the fact that St. Thérèse of Lisieux lived her entire life as a Carmelite nun inside the enclosure of her community's monastery and yet is patroness of missionary activity.

An answer to this comes in her spiritual autobiography, *Story of a Soul*, in which St. Thérèse noted that charity was the "key" to her vocation. "I understood … that the Church has a heart, and a heart on fire with love," she wrote.

It was this heart ablaze that she desired to share with the world.

"Like the prophets and [Church] doctors, I would be a light unto souls, I would travel to every land to preach thy name, O my Beloved, and raise on heathen soil the glorious standard of thy cross," she wrote. "One mission alone would not satisfy my longings. I would spread the Gospel to the ends of the Earth, even to the most distant isles. I would be a missionary, not for a few years only, but, were it possible, from the beginning of the world till the consummation of time."

Blessed Fulton J. Sheen, longtime promoter of the missions as national director for the Society of the Propagation of the Faith, summarized this desire in his book *Archbishop Fulton Sheen's St. Thérèse: A Treasured Love Story*, saying: "This woman was in love, and she wanted her Beloved known all over the world. That's why she loved the missions! … Love makes one a missionary. When we cease to love, we cease to be a missionary."

With the approach of the 100th anniversary of the Church's World Mission Sunday on Oct. 18, it is worth getting to know better this patroness of the missions.

Before becoming a Discalced Carmelite nun as a teenager, Marie Françoise-Thérèse Martin was simply Thérèse—the youngest daughter of two future saints. Her family was the context in which St. Thérèse of Lisieux began to discover what she later called her "little way" of holiness for which she became so well known.

From an early age, Thérèse learned to accept everything that happened in her life as a gift of God's grace and providence and to rely solely on God's will to find her peace. St. Thérèse teaches us that holiness is found in doing little things consistently and with great love.

Thérèse was born the ninth child of SS. Louis and Zélie Martin on Jan. 2, 1873, in Alençon, France. Louis would lose his wife to breast cancer four years later, and his brother-in-law helped arrange for the widower's family to move north to Lisieux.

During her childhood, Thérèse was considered weak and unusual. At the age of 9, she became so sick that it appeared the end was near. Her father even requested Masses to be celebrated for her at Our Lady of Victories Church in Paris. Her family kept vigil at her bedside.

As three sisters were leading prayers of intercession to the Blessed Mother in front of the family's statue of her, Thérèse experienced a miracle: The statue began to smile at her. She was healed.

Thérèse and her four older sisters (her other four siblings did not survive infancy), discovered God's call to the religious life. And Thérèse was quite insistent upon doing God's will as soon as possible, despite the many difficulties she encountered on that path.

Refused entry to the Carmelite monastery in Lisieux because of her young age, Thérèse seemingly could not contain the zeal with which her soul desired total union with Christ. She even used a meeting with Pope Leo XIII during a pilgrimage to Rome as an opportunity to seek his assistance. The pope replied, "Well, my child, do what the superiors decide. … You will enter if it is God's will." The local bishop later gave his consent for her to enter the monastery in Lisieux when she was 15.

Life in the Carmelite monastery was taxing for Thérèse. Living with the other nuns was not always easy. She was maligned and mistreated. But it was there that Thérèse came to know her "little way" more closely.

Entering the monastery with a desire for spiritual greatness, her attitude slowly changed, writing in her diary: "I applied myself especially to practice little virtues, not having the facility to perform great ones."

In *Story of a Soul*, published in 1898 about a year after she died, Thérèse explained the "little way" in words she addressed to Christ: "But how shall I show my love, since love proves itself by deeds? … The only way I have of proving my love is to strew flowers before you—that is to say, I will let no tiny sacrifice pass, no look, no word. I wish to profit by the smallest actions, and to do them for Love."

Among the names she's best known by today is "the Little Flower."

Finding blood in her handkerchief, she experienced joy, and awaited death as the final act in her complete union with Christ. Dying from tuberculosis, she taught of suffering's purpose: "I have reached a point where I can no longer suffer, because all suffering is become so sweet."

Thérèse experienced intense physical suffering and offered it all to the Lord, in union with the love he showed to his disciples and all of us all the way to the end in his death on the cross.

Her final words as she breathed her last were, "My God, I love you!" She died on Sept. 30, 1897. She was 24.

The simplicity and practical approach to the spiritual life of St. Thérèse of Lisieux soon made her one of the most popular saints in the Church, a popularity that continues today. And the universality of her message reached a pinnacle in 1997 when Pope St. John Paul II declared her a doctor of the Church.

Two years after St. Thérèse became the first saint he canonized—and one year after he established World Mission Sunday—Pope Pius XI in 1927 formally declared "the Little Flower" the patroness of the missions. Her feast day is on Oct. 1.

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



Men carry relics of St. Thérèse of Lisieux on Oct. 6, 2023, in St. Paul, Minn., during an annual candlelit rosary procession honoring her that started at the Minnesota Capitol and went to the Cathedral of St. Paul. (OSV News photo/Dave Hrbacek, *The Catholic Spirit*)

Perspectives

Joy and Hope for Today and Tomorrow/*Ken Ogorek*

'Are you my enemy or my opponent?' Loving all is our call in discipleship

What would you do if you encountered an immortal being? A creature who would never not exist? One who will live forever?



Would you be impressed? Awestruck?

Would you treat this immortal being with great respect? Reverence?

The immortal next door

Some folks are surprised to be reminded that every time you're in the presence of another person, you're face to face with an immortal being. Not eternal, as only God is eternal.

But once a person is loved into being by our all-loving God, she or he will live forever. Although earthly life will end, that end is the beginning of eternal life. Every person you meet is an immortal being.

Awestruck

We should be in awe of each person we meet. God made that person and loves that person. This person has an unearned human dignity. She or he deserves my love and respect—no matter what!

You don't have to like everyone. And you certainly don't have to admire every decision and action that a person makes or takes.

But when we start thinking we can decide who deserves our love and respect and who is unworthy of it, we're out of our lane. Above our pay grade.

'The least among us …'

Our archdiocesan pastoral plan—"Go Forth in Joy and Hope as Missionary Disciples"—challenges us with these words: "We want our administrative and pastoral services to reflect 'best practices' for achieving unity and for developing the parish and archdiocesan resources required to serve the needs of others, especially the least among us."

One of the plan's goals is to "unite the faith community of central and southern Indiana in organized efforts to grow the resources required to strengthen parishes and the archdiocese serving the least among us."

We can think of the least among us as the poor, the vulnerable, the disabled and so forth—as well we should—striving to be of assistance to them both spiritually and temporally. But what about folks we put into the mental category of least? Those who disagree with us. Those who don't vote for our candidates. Those who comment negatively on our social media posts.

Vilify, demonize, dehumanize

We form an entire category of "leasts" by mistaking opponents for enemies, and enemies for people we don't have to love and respect.

Rather than serving two of the most basic needs of all people—love and acceptance—we convince ourselves, subconsciously at least, that we're surrounded by a blend of good people and bad people, nice people and evil people, people who think like I do and folks who have the audacity to view money, sex, politics or religion from a perspective not identical to mine.

Again, accepting people doesn't mean condoning their every thought, word and deed.

But just as we accept gifts of various sorts, our faith compels us to acknowledge that each person is a beautiful gift from our loving God, an immortal being worthy of our unconditional love and deep respect.

From least to greatest, from liberal to conservative, from Democrat to Republican, let us interact with each person, in every arena of human encounter, with the joy and hope proper to true disciples of Jesus Christ.

May it be so, with the help of his mercy.

(Ken Ogorek is executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Evangelizing Catechesis. His monthly column explores how the Gospel takes root within our everyday lives and communities, especially through the lens of our archdiocesan pastoral plan, "Go Forth in Joy and Hope as Missionary Disciples." E-mail him at kogorek@archindy.org.) †

Feeling It/*Effie Caldarola*

Catechism's teaching on death penalty reminds us of the dignity of every person

During Nebraska's long struggle to end the death penalty, a weekly protest was held outside the governor's mansion.

Norma was an elderly woman who had long opposed the death penalty. As she grew frail, she still went faithfully, rain or shine, to the corner where protestors gathered. No longer able to stand up for long periods, Norma protested from a chair.



When interviewed by local news, Norma humorously made a comment I'll never forget: "I sit down for what I stand up for."

October is pro-life month, and for Catholics, it's time to stand up.

Polls show that a small majority of Americans, and even Catholics, support taking life in this way. We are one of only a handful of countries who engage in this barbaric practice. We join places like China and Iran, while European countries (with the exception of Russia and Belarus) and most democracies have long abolished execution.

I had already written this column when I awoke on Oct. 1 to the news that the execution of Christa Pike had been severely botched.

Pike, who had been abused sexually and physically from the age of 2, and had been convicted of a murder she committed when she was only 18, was sent to the hospital after surviving two doses of a lethal injection drug in Tennessee. As I write this, we know little of her condition.

Isn't it time to stop this brutal practice?

The truth is, we know today society can be kept safe from violent criminals without killing them.

Twenty-three states do not have a death penalty. Some other states rarely use it. The U.S. carried out 47 executions in 2025, and 19 of them were in Florida.

America's death penalty is often a racist system. One example: Today, although about half of all U.S. homicide victims are black, three-quarters of death sentences involve white victims.

According to the Death Penalty Information Center, since 1973, at least 203 people who were sentenced to death have been exonerated. This begs the question: How many innocent people have we put to death?

All recent popes have spoken out against the death penalty. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches that "the death penalty is inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person" (#2267).

One hopeful sign is that polls show younger Americans are increasingly opposing execution. Fewer juries are recommending death. The tide is turning.

As Catholics, we care about all life, from the unborn child to those struggling from famine and war. But why, you ask, should I care about a person convicted of a heinous crime?

For me, the short answer is that God cares. Jesus told us to forgive not just seven times, but 77 times. Jesus held up the prodigal's father as an image of God. This does not mean we don't imprison criminals and that we don't support the families who have been impacted by horrific crimes. But killing to prove killing is wrong makes no sense.

Consider the recent execution of Jeffrey Lee in Alabama. Lee, a Black man, spent 25 years on death row, even though the jury that convicted him recommended life imprisonment without parole. A law in effect at that time gave the judge the ability to impose his own sentence.

Questions hung over the trial. The prosecutor used all his 21 peremptory strikes to eliminate Black jurors. The court-appointed defense counsel had never worked a capital case and did little to prepare.

Meanwhile, what of Mr. Lee? Over the years, he became a Christian, a Kairos ministry leader, an assistant chaplain and a mentor to fellow inmates.

Isn't this what we want from a prison system: not to be a place of vengeance but of restorative justice? If we as Catholics don't hold open the possibility of transformation, what good is our faith?

The Catholic Mobilizing Network works to educate on justice issues and will send alerts about upcoming executions so that we can take action.

Sometimes, when I sit writing yet another plea for a commutation of death, I think of Norma. I'm sitting here, Norma, I'm sitting here standing up for what I believe in.

(Effie Caldarola is a wife, mom and grandmother who received her master's degree in pastoral studies from Seattle University.) †

Amid the Fray/*Greg Erlandson*

Pedaling for vocations: a time to reflect on the many who have planted seeds of faith

I went on an unusual prayer retreat recently. I wore a helmet and cleats. It also involved two wheels and a strong headwind amid the rolling hills of southern Maryland.



It was billed as the 11th Annual Ride for Vocations, sponsored by the Office of Priest Vocations for the Archdiocese of Washington. But in many ways, it was a pilgrimage into our country's Catholic past while praying for its future.

The whirring of the wheels on the pavement provided the soundtrack, occasionally interrupted by the crow of a rooster and the whinnying of horses. While cars and pickup trucks and an occasional horse-drawn wagon were on the roads with me for much of the journey, it was an opportunity to savor the region's panorama of forests and farms, but also the Catholic history of southern Maryland.

The ride wasn't a competition. It didn't rank riders or award prizes for sterling efforts. It did offer a variety of routes—21 miles, 50 miles, 70 miles or a century (100 miles), all following ribbons of pavement through a lush countryside barely touched by autumn.

An estimated 125 riders took part: men, women and children. Some bicyclists rode in small groups, but many of us found our own steady pace in the rhythms of the road, all the while praying for an increase in vocations.

The joy of bicycling is its rhythm, which is conducive to contemplation. It's hard work, but at a certain point, the bicycle does begin to feel like an extension of the body. Grunting up hills and swooshing down them may sound like an unusual venue for a retreat, but it worked for me.

Organizers describe the ride as a pilgrimage, and it's a fitting description. After all, southern Maryland is where Catholicism first came to the original colonies. Sailing from England on two boats, the Ark and the Dove, the first Catholics set ashore on March 25, 1634. At least for a while, Maryland was a rare safe haven for Catholics in the Protestant-dominated English colonies.

Our vocations ride began with Mass. Under forbidding skies, with a Nor'easter offshore stirring up the wind and occasional rain, we set out on our chosen distances. Spaced every 10-15 miles apart were rest stops located at historic Catholic churches.

Fueling long bike rides requires salty snacks, energy bars, fruit and drinks. All were provided in abundance by supportive parishioners. Each parish also provided an opportunity to say a quick prayer or a decade of the rosary before getting back on the road.

My first stop was Immaculate Conception Parish in Mechanicsville, Md., which was celebrating its 150th anniversary. Next came St. John Francis Regis Parish in Hollywood, Md., which celebrated more than 300 years.

And tucked away down a country road, surrounded by soybean fields and forests, was St. Mary's Parish in Charlotte Hall, Md. Founded 352 years ago by two Franciscan priests, it is still serving the area's rural population. Its proud claim to fame is that it is "the third-oldest, continuously-opened parish in the colonial United States."

Catholics have been talking about the vocations' shortage for a long time. What I saw in southern Maryland that weekend was lots of ordinary Catholics taking responsibility for doing something. It may have been pedaling and praying. It may have been supporting and hosting.

But how appropriate that it was in this region.

Here is where those first Catholics resisted persecution. Here is where generations of farmers and townspeople scraped together the resources to build and maintain beautiful outposts of faith. Here is where those of us who have benefited from their witness long ago came together one weekend to pray and sacrifice that priests would be provided for the Catholics who follow us.

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

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

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, October 18, 2026

- *Isaiah 45:1, 4-6*
- *1 Thessalonians 1:1-5b*
- *Matthew 22:15-21*

The second part of the Book of Isaiah provides the first reading for Mass this weekend. The context was a very bad time for God's people. The two Hebrew kingdoms no longer existed, both having been victims of a military onslaught from strong neighboring empires.



Invasions swept away the structures of the two Hebrew kingdoms. Their dynasties were eradicated. They lost their independence. Many people died. Survivors were at the mercy of the invaders.

Victorious invaders over the southern kingdom of Judah took many of the survivors to Babylon, the capital of the Babylonian empire. There the Hebrews were kept. They weren't not exactly hostages, but their lives were miserable.

Times eventually changed, however. The Babylonians were conquered by their neighbor, the powerful Persian empire.

Cyrus, the Persian king, had no interest in holding the exiles from the former Hebrew kingdom and allowed them to return home. For them, it was a day of unequalled joy.

A most novel turn of phrase was the prophet's depiction of King Cyrus as an instrument of God. It was a novelty since Cyrus was a pagan. He was not in any sense a son of Abraham. He had no knowledge of, or regard for, the One God of Israel. His ancestors had never followed Moses across the Sinai Peninsula in the Exodus.

Yet, God used Cyrus to accomplish his divine will. God was ultimately responsible for the survival and return to peace and security of the children of Abraham.

The second reading is from St. Paul's First Epistle to the Thessalonians. Thessalonica was a northern Greek port city on the Aegean Sea, one of the few New Testament cities still an important center, the modern Greek city of Saloniki.

Paul reassured, encouraged and strengthened the Christians in Thessalonica, who were trying to exist amid a hostile pagan culture. He also forcefully asserted his own credentials, insisting that he was a most devout believer in the message of the Lord Jesus, and indeed an Apostle, specially chosen by Christ. His authority came from the Lord.

St. Matthew's Gospel provides the last reading. It is one of the best-known passages in the New Testament.

The reading does not teach that two reservoirs of authority exist on Earth, equal but distinct, removed from each other, one the state, the other God.

Detractors thought that they could trick Jesus. If the Lord spoke against paying taxes, Roman law would be violated, and the Romans were unforgiving. If Jesus approved paying taxes, then he would appear to validate the hated Roman conquest and occupation.

Jesus avoided both traps, bluntly stating that God's law is supreme. The emperor's image on the coin was important. So, give it back to him. It only is metal, an earthly invention.

Reflection

As elections approach, politics is in the air. Sadly, this magnificent lesson from Matthew's Gospel, putting God first, often is distorted in interpretations of the separation of Church and state in the American constitutional context.

The Bill of Rights responded to the widespread practice of the late 18th century of the state preferring, supporting and even mandating one denomination over another—Anglicanism in England, Orthodoxy in Russia, Lutheranism in Scandinavia, Catholicism in France and Spain.

Constitutionally, in America, individual personal conviction was made supreme in the Bill of Rights and remains so, expressly including religious convictions. Essentially, this approach glorifies the individual person, a keystone of Catholic morality.

Government legitimately functions, but every citizen can and should bring religious convictions into judgments about government practices.

Christians who oppose immoral laws or applaud the moral ones are fully within their constitutional rights by studying issues carefully, by viewing current questions, such as immigration, public programs and policies, through the eyes of the Gospel, by respecting others and by attempting to shape the ordering of society according to Christian values. †

Daily Readings

Monday, October 19
St. John de Brebeuf, St. Isaac Jogues, priests, and companions, martyrs
Ephesians 2:1-10
Psalm 100:1b-5
Luke 12:13-21

Tuesday, October 20
St. Paul of the Cross, priest
Ephesians 2:12-22
Psalm 85:9ab, 10-14
Luke 12:35-38

Wednesday, October 21
Ephesians 3:2-12
(Response) *Isaiah 12:2-3, 4c-6*
Luke 12:39-48

Thursday, October 22
St. John Paul II, pope
Ephesians 3:14-21
Psalm 33:1-2, 4-5, 11-12, 18-19
Luke 12:49-53

Friday, October 23
St. John of Capistrano, priest
Ephesians 4:1-6
Psalm 24:1-4b, 5-6
Luke 12:54-59

Saturday, October 24
St. Anthony Mary Claret, bishop
Ephesians 4:7-16
Psalm 122:1-5
Luke 13:1-9

Sunday, October 25
Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Exodus 22:20-26
Psalm 18:2-4, 47-51
1 Thessalonians 1:5c-10
Matthew 22:34-40

Question Corner/*Jenna Marie Cooper*

Prudence should guide a Catholic's choice to attend at Protestant service

Q A nondenominational church near my house offers praise and worship nights with music. I've been interested in attending, not because I want to convert, but because I like that style of music and any opportunity to join in prayer with others. Would it be wrong for a Catholic to attend this event? (Washington)



A I think this is primarily a pastoral question rather than a theological or canonical one. That is, there is nothing official in the Church's teaching that would forbid you from attending a non-Catholic Christian praise and worship night. But whether this is a good idea would depend on the specifics of the particular circumstances.

In general, the Catholic Church is interested in promoting the unity of all Christians, and part of this is recognizing what all Christians have in common. This is why non-Catholic Christians who wish to become Catholic are not said to be "converting" to Catholicism, but are rather "being received into the full communion" of the Church.

And non-Catholic Christians who have already been baptized with water and a formula invoking the Trinity are not "re-baptized" upon being received into the Church, because the Catholic Church recognizes the validity of such a baptism.

In a similar vein, there is nothing to prohibit a Catholic from praying together with non-Catholic Christians in terms that are mutually acceptable to both sides. For example, there certainly wouldn't be a problem with a Catholic and a Protestant saying the "Our Father" or a grace before meals together. It also wouldn't be an issue for a Catholic to, for example, attend the religious wedding service of two non-Catholics at a Protestant church.

There are some limits to prayer in common, however. Essentially, Catholics cannot pray in any way that would deny a truth of the Catholic faith.

For instance, a Catholic should not participate in what Protestants would call a communion service, since non-Catholic teachings on the meaning of holy Communion are different from our Catholic understanding of the Eucharist. A Catholic receiving what a Protestant congregation regards as communion in one of their services would be a tacit denial of our doctrine of the Real Presence.

With respect to your specific question, it doesn't seem like you approaching the praise and worship night as a sort of devotional concert experience would be a problem.

You might need to be more cautious if the praise and worship night was more along the lines of a Sunday service or other occasion where the congregation's leadership was intending to teach the Christian faith according to its own understanding.

Even here, this might not present much of a concern for you if you are a mature adult who is well formed in your own Catholic faith. But, as a matter of honest personal discernment, if for whatever reason you feel that you are not as well-catechized as you ought to be, you might not want to put yourself in a situation where you are going to become confused about what the Catholic Church teaches or what we all must believe as Catholics.

Likewise, I would be hesitant to let a minor child or teenage Catholic attend a non-Catholic praise and worship night by themselves, as they are still growing in their Catholic faith and are therefore much more impressionable.

(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.*)* †

'There is nothing official in the Church's teaching that would forbid you from attending a non-Catholic Christian praise and worship night. But whether this is a good idea would depend on the specifics of the particular circumstances.'

My Journey to God

Beautiful Madonna

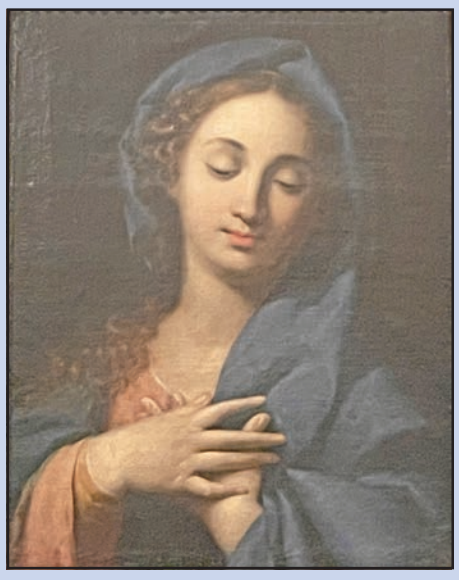
By Susan E. Israel, Ph.D.

Wrap me in your beauty
Swaddle me in
Divine Love.

Wrap me in humility
To bow my head
and carry me.

Wrap your arms
around me and
move your heart
to mine.

Wrap me in suffering
to help me grow in
Eternal Hope.



(Susan Israel, Ph.D., is a member of St. Luke the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis. Photo: This photo captures the 18th-century painting "Madonna," which hangs in the Vatican Museum. It was created by an unknown artist in the style of Sebastino Conca, 1680-1764.) *(Submitted photo by Susan Israel, Ph.D.)*

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.

AEMMER, Richard A., 83, St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd County, Sept. 21. Husband of Kathleen Aemmer. Father of Tracy Diers, Teresa Sidebottom and Todd Aemmer. Grandfather of 12. Great-grandfather of four.

ALSTATT, Riley E., 22, St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower), Indianapolis, Sept. 10. Husband of Anna Alstatt. Son of Mark Alstatt and Christa Thompson. Brother of Tatum Allstatt. Grandson of David and Charlotte Allstatt and Alberta Thompson.

BANET, Michael A., 78, St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd County, Sept. 18. Husband of Wilma Kost. Father of Monica Bottorff, Christopher, Jeffrey and Kevin Banet. Brother of Joan Endris, Theresa Getrost, Paul, Ralph and Father Stephen Banet. Grandfather of 10.

FISCHER, Jerry W., 84, St. Paul, Tell City, Sept. 26. Husband of Kate Fischer. Father of Sophia Ettenshohn and Patrick Fischer. Brother of Betty Hagedorn, Sharon Little, Teresa Lutgring, Donna McNulty, Janet Veeck and Richard Fischer. Grandfather of six. Great-grandfather of five.

HARTMAN, Donald, 87, St. Nicholas, Ripley County, Sept. 18. Father of Amy Jackson, Andrew, Scott and Timothy Hartman. Brother of Janice Dieselberg, Carol Harsh, Sylvia Meeks, Shirley Schuman and Linda Zimmerman. Grandfather of 12. Great-grandfather of 10.

JACOBI, Sandra L., 77, St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd County, Sept. 18. Wife of Michael Jacobi. Mother of Elizabeth Hundley, Christopher and Kyle Jacobi. Sister of Cathy Phillips and Phyllis Starkey. Grandmother of six.

JONES, JoAnn, 90, St. Luke the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Sept. 27. Wife of Roy Jones. Stepmother of Donna Fenison, Michael and Roy Jones, Jr. Sister of John Beringer.

MOLL, Cita F., 81, Holy Family, Oldenburg, Oct. 1. Wife of Joseph Moll. Mother of Ana-Liza Lloyd. Sister of Aurora Cristimo, Rosemarie Ferrer and Ricardo Famanila. Grandmother of two.

PRATT, Mary, 62, St. Mary, Greensburg, Oct. 2. Wife of John Pratt. Mother of Clare Leeds and Caroline Pratt. Sister of Kristen Glennon, Kathy Molony, Betsy Popple and Joan Ruskin.

RAIMONDI, Josephine A., 68, St. Mark the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Sept. 10. Sister of Anthony, Joe, Mark and Mike Raimondi. Aunt and great-aunt of several.

REDELMAN, Mark R., 71, St. Mary, Greensburg, Sept. 30. Father of Crystal Moore, Tammy Shreve, Lisa, Christopher and Nick Redelman. Brother of Gerri White. Grandfather of 12. Great-grandfather of three.

REINHART, Jr., John J., 79, St. Ambrose, Seymour, Sept. 29. Husband of Patricia Western. Father of Heather Reedy and Chris O'Brien. Brother of Robert Reinhart. Grandfather of three.

ROSS, Philomena, 99, Our Lady of the Greenwood, Greenwood, Aug. 25. Mother of Carolyn Mann, Casey, Christopher, Conner and Fred Ross. Sister of Thomas Beck. Grandmother of eight. Great-grandmother of seven.

SCHAFER, Clifford H., 86, St. John Paul II, Sellersburg, Sept. 20. Brother of Kathleen Lentz. Uncle of several.

SIMON, Dolores M., 92, St. John the Baptist, Osgood, Sept. 11. Mother of Marilyn Linville, Cheryl Meyer, Marcia Moore, Chris, David, Gary and Greg Simon. Grandmother of 18. Great-grandmother of 33. Great-great-grandmother of two.

SNIADECKI, Joseph E., 80, Christ the King, Indianapolis, Sept. 24. Husband of Eileen Sniadecki. Father of Mark, Matthew and Michael Sniadecki. Grandfather of seven.

SPETH, David L., 80, St. Mark the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Sept. 22. Husband of Mary Ann Speth. Father of Erin Koester and David Speth. Brother of Angie Eagan and Edie Speth. Grandfather of nine. Great-grandfather of one.

STRASBURGER, F. Marilyn, 91, St. Mary, Greensburg, Sept. 29. Mother of Laurie Ruble and Diane Strasburger. Sister of Anne Lewis and Howard Schertzinger. Grandmother of four. Great-grandmother of one.

THOMASSON, Ronald B., 85, St. Paul, Tell City, Sept. 26. Husband of Mary Thomasson. Father of Debbie Baker, Tammy Duncan, Shawn Goffinet, Maurice Poehlein and Stacy Thomasson. Brother of Freddie Thomasson. Grandfather of eight. Great-grandfather of three.

WATTS, Helen P., 84, St. Luke the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Sept. 28. Wife of William Watts, Jr. Mother of Maria Bryce, Aimee Englert, Rebecca Page, Kelly Tyler and Lisa Watts. Sister of Debra Parcell, Annette Wurtz, Blaine III, Robert and Zachary Taylor. Grandmother of 14. Great-grandmother of 11.

ZELLERS, Patsy, 89, St. Paul, Tell City, Sept. 28. Mother of Danny, Keith, Mark and Michael Zellers. Sister of Ronnie Birchler. Grandmother of 11. Great-grandmother of 17. †

REPORT SEXUAL MISCONDUCT NOW

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

1 **Ethics Point**
Confidential, Online Reporting
www.archdioceseofindianapolis.ethicspoint.com or 888-393-6810

2 Victim Assistance Coordinator, Archdiocese of Indianapolis
P.O. Box 1410, Indianapolis, IN 46206-1410

317-236-1548 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1548
victimassistance@archindy.org

Honoring the dead



Catholics participate in a candlelit prayer service on Oct. 7 at St. Mathias Mulumba Parish in Mikindani, Kenya. They honored 17 Catholics from the Archdiocese of Mombasa who were killed in a road accident while traveling to the Subukia National Marian Shrine in Nakuru for Kenya's National Prayer Day. (OSV News photo/courtesy Lwanga Communications/Archdiocese of Mombasa)

Mike Ditka: A life of football, fire and faith

(OSV News)—When Mike Ditka died on Oct. 9, the Hall of Fame football player and fiery coach was immediately remembered for his toughness, intensity and for leading the Chicago Bears to their only Super Bowl championship in 1986.



Mike Ditka

Yet beyond football, where he was known as "Iron Mike" and "Da Coach," the 86-year-old Ditka was also remembered for another defining force in his life—his Catholic faith.

"I am so grateful for the Roman Catholic faith with which I was raised," Ditka said in a 2018 interview with OnePeterFive. "My dad didn't go to church, but my mom was a terrific Catholic—a fervent convert to the faith—and always saw that we went to Mass and Catholic school."

For Ditka, reportedly a member of the Knights of Columbus, the Catholic faith was not an incidental part of his upbringing. It was a gift from his mother, rooted in the sacraments and the discipline of Catholic education.

Growing up in Aliquippa, Pa., he attended St. Titus grade school, staffed by the Sisters of St. Joseph. He served as an altar boy throughout grade school and occasionally served Mass while attending the University of Pittsburgh.

He remembered the religious sisters who taught him as demanding but formative.

"I wouldn't trade that for anything," he said.

That gratitude remained evident decades later. Ditka spoke candidly about the importance of the sacraments, particularly confession and holy Communion, and lamented what he saw as a decline in religious commitment.

"That's just why confession matters," he said. "You gotta own up to what you do."

His words carried the same bluntness that made him famous in football.

"Well, if you take God out of your daily life, that's scary," he said in the interview.

Ditka's legacy of sports and faith

Ditka's toughness was no act confined to the coaching box. Drafted by the Bears in 1961, he helped Chicago win the National Football League championship in 1963. He later played for the Philadelphia Eagles and Dallas Cowboys, earning five Pro Bowl selections and becoming the first tight end inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame, in 1988. He helped Dallas win Super Bowl VI as a player and later won another Super Bowl as an assistant coach with the Cowboys.

His greatest public triumph came after he returned to Chicago as head coach in 1982. The 1985 Bears went 15-1 in the regular season before overwhelming the New England Patriots, 46-10, in Super Bowl XX in January 1986. The victory secured the franchise's only Super Bowl title and made Ditka one of the defining figures in Chicago sports history. He was twice named NFL Coach of the Year during his tenure with the Bears.

The football world remembered a fierce competitor and a leader whose demanding style matched the physicality of the game. But Ditka's public reflections on faith revealed a different dimension of his character: a man unembarrassed to credit his mother, his Catholic schooling and the sacraments for shaping his life.

"It's beautiful what she gave me, in the faith," Ditka said in his OnePeterFive interview. "I believe every bit that the Church teaches. Confession matters. Communion matters." †

Franciscan Sister Teresa Trick ministered in the archdiocese and Ohio as an educator for 39 years

Franciscan Sister Teresa Trick (formerly Sister Bertha Rose), a member of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis in Oldenburg, died on Sept. 27 at Margaret Mary Health Hospital in Batesville. She was 98.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Oct. 8 at the Motherhouse Chapel in Oldenburg. Burial followed at the sisters' cemetery.

Sister Teresa was born on July 4, 1928, in Dayton, Ohio. She joined the Sisters of St. Francis on April 8, 1946, and professed final vows on Aug. 12, 1952. Sister Teresa earned a bachelor's degree in education at Marian University in Indianapolis.

She served as an educator for 39 years in Indiana and Ohio.

In the archdiocese, Sister Teresa served at St. Michael the Archangel School (now St. Michael-St. Gabriel Archangels School) in Indianapolis from 1952-59, St. Michael School in Brookville from 1964-65, the former Central Catholic School in New Albany from 1971-73, Holy Family School (now part of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School) in Richmond from 1979-81 and St. Christopher School in Indianapolis from 1981-87.

She later worked at a public library and did volunteer work at a parish and food pantry in Cincinnati before moving back to the motherhouse in 2001, where she assisted in various ways.

Sister Teresa is survived by a brother, William Trick.

Memorial gifts may be sent to the Sisters of St. Francis, P.O. Box 100, Oldenburg, IN 47036-0100. †

Pope pens foreword in YOUCAT book on love and marriage

ROME (OSV News)—Pope Leo XIV offers his advice to young people on finding authentic true love and commitment in marriage in a new book foreword published on Oct. 6.

"Your heart longs for love. A love that is deep, self-sacrificing and enduring. This longing is no accident. It is a sign that you are made for love," Pope Leo wrote in the foreword to a fresh edition of *YOUCAT: Love Forever*, a new catechetical resource on love and relationships.

The pope's words on love and marriage were published by Vatican News on the eve of the start of a weeklong meeting at the Vatican of the presidents of the world's Catholic bishops' conferences and the heads of the 21 Eastern Catholic Churches. The Oct. 7-14 gathering, convened by Pope Leo, focused on marriage and family and marks the 10th anniversary of Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation "*Amoris Laetitia*," or "The Joy of Love."

In his foreword, Pope Leo described authentic love as more than an intense feeling or romantic attraction.

Love can "strike the heart like an arrow—intensely and swiftly," he wrote, but true love is "deep commitment to the other, a decision, a journey and a covenant for life."

The pope said that lasting relationships are built on mutual trust and the willingness to embrace the "forever" that is "the beating heart of every vocation to family life and religious consecration.'

"Love asks first: 'How can I love as Christ loved?' (cf. Jn 15:12) and puts the question 'What do I get out of it?' last," Pope Leo wrote.

"When a man and a woman give themselves wholly to one another in love, then God comes alive in their midst," the pope underscored.

The book, *YOUCAT: Love Forever*, is part of the YOUCAT series, a catechetical initiative designed to present Catholic teaching in a question-and-answer format accessible to young people. The book's first edition, published in May, included a foreword by the late Pope Francis. The new edition of the book includes Pope Francis' words in an epilogue.

Love Forever was developed through an international network of young Catholics, marriage mentors, priests and theologians. Young people from more than 30 countries contributed testimonies to the book, which has official Church approval.

The book, published by Ignatius Press in English, is aimed at young adults, engaged couples preparing for marriage, newly married couples, pastoral workers, mentors and catechists.

"God calls you, dear young people, to this great love. Do not be afraid of its depth! For the love to which you are called is strong enough to overcome difficulties, and great enough to sustain you throughout your whole life," Pope Leo wrote in the new foreword.

"May you, like Mary, the Mother of beautiful love, respond with trust and courage to the most beautiful of all vocations: the vocation to love," he said. †



Pope Leo XIV blesses a newlywed couple at the end of his general audience on Aug. 6, 2025, in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican. Pope Leo shared advice with young people on authentic true love and marriage in a new book foreword to the YOUCAT book on love and relationships, published on Oct. 6. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

Vatican to publish Pope Francis' private diary for release in November



Pope Francis

VATICAN CITY (Vatican News)—The Vatican Publishing House will publish *The Private Diary of Pope Francis*, a book by Cardinal Víctor Manuel Fernández, prefect of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, presenting and commenting on the late pope's notes kept between 1992 and 2024.

The Vatican announced on Oct. 5 that the book will be released simultaneously worldwide in five languages and distributed in 94 countries on Nov. 24. The Italian edition will be published by the Vatican Publishing House; the Spanish, English and Portuguese editions by the respective branches of Penguin Random House; and the French edition by Éditions Albin Michel.

Pope Francis' notes span more than three decades, including his years as a bishop in Argentina and his 12-year pontificate.

"We are very honored to publish this text by Cardinal Víctor Manuel Fernández, which presents Pope Francis' diary to the public," Andrea Tornielli, editorial director of the Dicastery for Communication, said.

"Through this book, which we believe readers around the world will appreciate, we will be able to gain an even deeper understanding of the Argentine pope's inner life."

The Vatican Publishing House presented the book to international publishers at the Frankfurt Book Fair, which took place on Oct. 7-11. †

ARZOBISPO

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En ese contexto, la cena del 1 de septiembre ofreció un espacio significativo para el encuentro, lo cual fue particularmente importante dado que la Iglesia católica en Estados Unidos es cada vez más hispana.

En un artículo publicado en la edición del 3 de junio de 2024 de la revista *America*, el profesor Hosffman Ospino, del Boston College, señaló que casi el 45% de los católicos estadounidenses—y más de la mitad de los católicos menores de 30 años—se identifican como hispanos. Describió a los jóvenes hispanos de segunda y tercera generación como el sector de más rápido crecimiento dentro de la comunidad católica. Ospino sostiene que la Iglesia debe acompañar, formar y empoderar cada vez más a los jóvenes católicos hispanos para que se conviertan en líderes dentro de la Iglesia y la sociedad.

Las repercusiones son importantes para diócesis como la de Indianápolis.

Ospino escribe que los líderes católicos hispanos tienen la oportunidad de aportar sus dones y energía para "construir, transformar e incluso redefinir las estructuras ministeriales católicas existentes," basándose en sus propias tradiciones culturales y espirituales.

Esa visión quedó reflejada en la mesa de la residencia del arzobispo Thompson.

Para Liz Ponce, estudiante de la Universidad de Indiana en Indianápolis y miembro de la parroquia Santa María en Indianápolis, el encuentro fue una oportunidad para experimentar de primera mano ese sentido de comunidad.

"Era la primera vez que asistía a una cena como esta, y fue una experiencia maravillosa," aseguró Ponce. "Me sentí muy bien al poder tener conversaciones sinceras con todos y conocer a personas de diferentes [parroquias] que se reunieron para conocerse."

Para Ponce, uno de los momentos más significativos de la noche fue escuchar las historias de otros jóvenes católicos.

"Me gustó mucho escuchar las historias de todos y conocer a personas fuera de mi propia comunidad parroquial," afirmó. "Pienso que crear espacios como este es una de las mejores formas de unir a las personas, forjar relaciones y fortalecer nuestra comunidad de fe."

La cena también puso de manifiesto una cuestión más amplia que se le plantea a la Iglesia católica: ¿Cómo acompaña la Iglesia a una generación joven que representa cada vez más su futuro?

En su columna, Ospino sostiene que el ministerio hispano debe ir más allá de un modelo centrado principalmente en el ritual y la asistencia social, para avanzar hacia uno que también empodere a los católicos hispanos a formar familias sólidas, convertirse en ciudadanos comprometidos y asumir el liderazgo en la Iglesia y la sociedad.

La cena de septiembre fue una expresión pequeña pero significativa de lo que la Iglesia puede ofrecer a sus jóvenes adultos hispanos: un lugar para reunirse, ser escuchados y sentirse parte de algo. En medio de un momento difícil para muchas familias hispanas en todo Indiana, la velada ofreció un recordatorio esperanzador de que la respuesta de la Iglesia comienza con el acompañamiento, lo cual implica crear espacios para el diálogo, fortalecer la comunidad e invitar a los jóvenes no solo a participar en la Iglesia, sino a ayudar a forjar su futuro.

(José Quintana es pasante de la Oficina del Ministerio Hispano de la Arquidiócesis. Para conocer más sobre la Pastoral Juvenil Hispana, comuníquese con el coordinador del Ministerio Hispano de la Arquidiócesis, Alden Budier Hebbert, en abudier@archindy.org *o al 317-236-7312.)* †

Classified Directory

Employment

Coordinator of Disabilities Ministry

Office of Catechesis, Archdiocese of Indianapolis

The Coordinator of Disabilities Ministry for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis creates awareness and pathways of inclusion for persons with disabilities in parish life, (especially faith formation), coordinates community events for Special Religious Education and Discipleship (SPREAD) groups, and participates in the work of the Department of Parish Leadership in supporting and forming pastors and their leaders to make disciples at their parishes.

This position requires a vision for evangelization and catechesis for persons with disabilities, excellent communication skills, and strong organizational skills. Applicants must be professed and practicing Catholics with experience in inclusive education and/or faith formation, possess the ability to work collaboratively with volunteers, and have the ability to reliably travel to off-site locations on a regular basis. Preferred applicants possess a bachelor's degree or coursework in special education and theology, experience with parish ministries, and/or knowledge of American Sign Language.

For a full job description, or to apply in confidence with a resume, cover letter, and references, email Mrs. Ute Eble, Director of Catechesis, at ueble@archindy.org.

For advertising rates call **(317) 236-1585.**

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FOOTBALL

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"It was a pretty brief interaction with Pope Leo but still very memorable," Wes says. "He was intrigued by the shirt and asked where we were from, and he commented on how many American couples had made the trip to see him in Rome.

"It was pretty surreal to shake his hand and extremely special because earlier in the week we did the Scavi tour of St. Peter's catacombs where we saw the bones of St. Peter. To think that the man we met was in a direct lineage to the original pope, and that he grew up and lived in Chicago for a good portion of his life connected us to our faith in a very material way. It is definitely something we will remember for the rest of our lives."

The couple's love also soon led to building a new family. They learned in January of 2026 that Megan was pregnant with their first child.

"We welcomed Madeline Sophie Short on September 6," Megan notes about their daughter's recent birth. "Madeline is named after St. Madeleine Sophie, who founded the Society of the Sacred Heart. St. Madeleine also has a statue in St. Peter's Basilica, which we both consider a special place for our faith and a place we both hope to travel back to for Mass someday."

Theirs is a story that features the love they have for each other, the love of their faith, the love that has led them to start a family, and the love of a sport.

The Criterion invited the Shorts, who are both 30, to share their thoughts on each of those loves. Here are the perspectives they shared.

Q. Talk about how your faith guides you as a couple.

Wes: "Faith created a strong base to build our relationship on, and it is something that has brought us together from the start of our dating journey. We would go to Mass as a couple and our faith community was a great support to our relationship growing to what it is today."

Q. How did the JP Flag Football League get started, and how do you hope it helps connect young adult Catholics to each other?

Megan: "Moses Tinio started the league in 2021 and modeled it after Kansas City's 'City on a Hill Catholic' sports league. When Moses moved back to Kansas in 2024, he asked us to take over the league. We hope the league creates a unique place for young adults to meet and grow in fellowship with each other.

"It is great to see the league grow and change throughout the few years that we have been running it. It has been great to see some of the players start families and see the league mature with families bringing their young children. There are also close to 25 new players in the league this year, and it has been a joy to offer a fun place for new members of the community to build relationships."

Q. Besides the football part of the league, is there a faith element to it as well?

Megan: "Teams gather in prayer before and after every game, and our weekly e-mails promote parish events and volunteer opportunities. In the future, we hope to host a league Mass. We also host a yearly cookout to provide another opportunity to share in the faith community."

Q. How has your involvement in the young adult Catholic community made a difference in your life, your faith and your relationships?

Megan: "The young adult Catholic community really opened my world in 2021 after moving to Indianapolis just before COVID. It was very challenging as a new college grad in 2019, moving to a new city and only really knowing people from work. When I saw the flag football league registration in the bulletin at St. Joan of Arc Church, I didn't realize it would open the door to so many friendships and faith opportunities here in Indy."



After winning the 2025 championship of the JP Flag Football League in Indianapolis, team members David Welch, left, Lia Clark, Travis Hoaglan, Steven Rogers, Wes Short, Tyler Bushman, Sienna Bushman and Megan Short savor the feeling. (Submitted photo)



Megan and Wes Short share a family photo with their daughter Madeline, who was born on Sept. 6. (Submitted photo)

Wes: "It has also given us such a great way to volunteer in our community and to become more outspoken about our faith. Neither of us are especially extroverted, but this league has pulled that out of us and helped us to meet so many great people in the community we wouldn't have otherwise."

Q. How would you describe your relationship with Christ, and how has that had an impact on you?

Wes: "Our relationship with Christ has deepened coming out of college as we have both learned more about our faith, partly through the Indy Catholic community. We have both developed a deep reverence and awe when it comes to the Eucharist and the eucharist miracles that were spotlighted by St. Carlo Acutis.

"It is what we share most with our friends who are not Catholic, and what we turn to the most when going through a tough time or rough patch in our faith. To know that Christ is present in the Eucharist each day and is continually offering his Sacred Heart to us is special and something that strengthens our relationship with Christ."

Q. What is your hope for your daughter, Madeline, from a faith standpoint?

Wes: "We hope that we can raise her to have a strong understanding of her faith and to know that she is not only deeply loved by us but by God as well. We hope that she will embrace her faith through the example we set for her as we live our faith as an example."

Q. What would you tell other young adults about how your Catholic faith makes a difference in your life?

Wes: "I would say that our Catholic faith is a great guide for our lives both in the Catholic community and in all aspects of our life. We both work professionally and strive to carry our faith with us into those settings as well.

"Our Catholic faith provides guideposts on how to treat others, what to pursue in our life, and what is really important in our lives. It also provides us comfort in hard times and gives us something to fall back on when life gets tough." †

(For anyone interested in participating in the JP Flag Football League next year, send an e-mail to youngadults@sjoa.org and ask to be added to the flag football email list.) †

New online courses help Catholics aid people with mental health struggles

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—A U.S.-based Catholic association dedicated to mental health ministry released two new online courses to help lay Catholics understand the signs of mental health struggles and how to better accompany those seeking help.

Sometimes a loved one or acquaintance seems "irritable, emotional or just absent from things they used to love. But you're not sure what's wrong. Most of us don't. We weren't trained to recognize mental illness," a trailer for the free video courses said.

"We want to help. But we're afraid of saying the wrong thing, making it worse," it said, especially by offering the usual platitudes: "Time heals all wounds"; "God has a plan"; and "God never gives us more than we can handle."

Different members of the International Association of Catholic Mental Health Ministers (CMHM) presented the trailer for the courses at Vatican News headquarters on Oct. 10, World Mental Health Day. The news conference was part of its international meeting being held in Rome and at the Vatican, dedicated to "A Healing Presence: The Church's Call to Mental Health Ministry."

Videos aim for mental health literacy

The new one-hour-plus video course on "mental health literacy" aims to help people recognize some of the signs and symptoms of the most common forms of mental illness, such as depression, bipolar disorder, addiction and trauma.

The two-hour course on "psychological first aid," said Deacon Ed Shoener, founder and president of the CMHM global association, is "much like physical first aid, where you can approach someone who may be in trouble or hurting, patch them up, so to speak, help them along, accompany them, and then direct them to professional care."

The courses are not meant to train people how to diagnose problems or to provide clinical treatment or advanced spiritual care, the video said. What they do is merge faith resources with the skills to recognize, speak about and support people showing signs of a mental health struggle or crisis so that everyday Catholics can learn how to be part of a mental health ministry team for their parish—not how to be a licensed therapist or counselor.

The video lessons include scenes shot at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish in Chicago with professional local actors recreating scenarios of what to do and not to do.

The National Institute of Mental Health estimated that more than 1 in 5 adults in the United States was living with a mental illness in 2022. Women, young people between 18 and 25 years old, and people of two or more races or ethnicities were just some segments of the population showing the highest reported incidence of a mental illness according to gender, age or ethnicity.

That means, in a parish of just 500 people, there could be well over 100 parishioners who might be struggling, the video said, encouraging Catholics to "look, listen and link" someone to the right resources.

Resources available for parishes to put pope's intention into action

Andrea Sarubbi, director of outreach for the association, encouraged parishes, dioceses, media outlets and broadcasters to e-mail info@catholicmhm.org for more information and to look at its online learning center at learn.catholicmhm.org to create or strengthen a parish mental health ministry team, so that mental health ministry can be an integral part of every Catholic parish and community worldwide.

The new videos are at catholicmhm.org/act-videos.

Pope Leo XIV's prayer intention for October is dedicated to praying specifically for mental health ministries.

He asked that the Church be a "safe space where everyone has a place—a community that accompanies and never excludes, that listens without judging and draws near without fear," and he prayed that God give strength and compassion to all those who provide care. †