



The

Criterion

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Creation Care

Ministry members find hope at environmental conference in Italy, page 11A.

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Father Dustin Boehm and students at St. Gabriel School in Connersville kneel during eucharistic adoration on Oct. 7 in St. Gabriel Church. (Photo by Mary King)

Priest leans on prayer to maintain ‘delicate balance’ in leading three parishes

By Julie Young

Special to *The Criterion*

Father Dustin Boehm says sometimes the best view of his parish is the one he has in the rearview mirror when he takes his day off.

See our annual Vocations Awareness Supplement, pages 1B-12B.

“It’s not because I can’t wait to get away, but because I love them so much. I know I have to take that time

so that I can come back and give more of myself,” he said.

It’s the kind of statement that every parent can relate to, especially those who have to juggle the schedules of multiple children. And it’s that kind of relatability that makes Father Boehm a beloved leader of the parishes that he serves.

Since 2014, Father Boehm has divided his time between St. Gabriel the Archangel Parish in Connersville and St. Bridget of Ireland parish in Liberty, both in southeastern Indiana. In 2023, the rhythm of his life was rocked when he

See BOEHM, page 6B

Catholics must build a more humble Church, seeking truth together, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The supreme rule in the Catholic Church is love, which compels all of the faithful to serve, not to judge, exclude or dominate others, Pope Leo XIV said.

“No one should impose his or her own ideas; we must all listen to one another.

No one is excluded; we are all called to participate,” he said in his homily during a Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica on Oct. 26.

“No one possesses the whole truth; we must all humbly seek it and seek it together,” he continued.

The Mass marked the closing of the Oct. 24-26 Jubilee of Synodal Teams and Participatory Bodies. About 2,000 members of synodal teams and bodies such as presbyteral councils, pastoral councils and finance councils at the diocesan, eparchial, national and regional levels were registered for the Jubilee events.

The Jubilee included workshops and other gatherings to further strengthen the

See related reflection, page 4A.

implementation phase of the final document of the 2021-2024 Synod of Bishops on synodality.

“We must dream of and build a more humble Church,” Pope Leo said in his homily.

It must be a Church that does not stand “triumphant and inflated with pride, but bends down to wash the feet of humanity,” he said.

It must be a Church that does not judge, he said, “but becomes a welcoming place for all; a Church that does not close

See POPE, page 10A

Nov. 8-9 is intention weekend for UCA, which aids seminarians, retired priests, Catholic Charities

By Natalie Hoefer

The weekend of Nov. 8-9 is the archdiocesan annual United Catholic Appeal (UCA) intention weekend in parishes across central and southern Indiana.

The goal for this year’s appeal is \$6.3 million. The money will benefit ministries and organizations throughout the archdiocese that meet needs no single parish or deanery can independently address, such as seminarian and diaconate formation, care for retired priests, Catholic Charities, the support of college campus ministry to keep young adults engaged in the faith, homeless shelters and more.

The theme of this year’s appeal is “Go Forth.” Archbishop Charles C. Thompson posted the following message online regarding the importance of the appeal.

Go Forth

“At the heart of our faith is the Eucharist—a call to be transformed and then to transform the world around us. Each time we celebrate Mass, we are sent forth to carry Christ’s love into our families, our communities and beyond—to Go Forth.

“The United Catholic Appeal is one of the most powerful ways we live that mission together. It supports the spiritual and pastoral work that shapes our parishes, cares for the poor and vulnerable, educates our young people and forms tomorrow’s priests.

“This is our Church. This is our call.

“As you prayerfully consider your gift, know that it is not just a donation—it is a response. A response to the Gospel, to the needs of our neighbors and to the invitation to walk together in faith.

“Thank you for your generous heart and faithful witness. May we continue to go forth, renewed in the Eucharist and united in Christ.”

See UCA, page 12A

Pope: Changing world, technology calls for new commitment to Catholic schools

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Catholic education, which has changed through the centuries, must continue to evolve to help young people face the challenges not only



Pope Leo XIV

of technology but of confusion about the meaning and purpose of life, Pope Leo XIV said.

“I call upon all educational institutions to inaugurate a new season that speaks to the hearts of the younger generations, reuniting knowledge and meaning, competence and responsibility, faith and life,” he wrote in an apostolic letter.

Titled “*Disegnare Nuove Mappe Di Speranza*” (“Drawing New Maps of Hope”), the letter was issued only in Italian on Oct. 28. It marked the 60th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council’s “Declaration on Catholic Education.”

In the letter, Pope Leo formally declared St. John Henry Newman “patron of the Church’s educational mission alongside St. Thomas Aquinas.”

The pope was scheduled to formally proclaim Newman a “doctor of the Church” on Nov. 1 in recognition of his contribution to “the renewal of theology and to the understanding of the development of Christian doctrine.” He was born in London on Feb. 21, 1801, was ordained an Anglican priest, became Catholic in 1845, was ordained a Catholic priest in 1847, was made a cardinal in 1879 by Pope Leo XIII and died in 1890.

Even in the face of the digital revolution and the advent of artificial intelligence, Pope Leo said, Catholic schools and universities show “a surprising resilience.”

When they are “guided by the word of Christ, they do not retreat but press forward; they do not raise walls but build bridges. They respond creatively, opening new possibilities for the transmission of knowledge and meaning,” he wrote.

Pope Leo asked Catholic educators and educational institutions to focus on “three priorities”:

—“The first regards the interior life: Young people seek depth; they need spaces of silence, discernment and dialogue with their consciences and with God.”

—“The second concerns a humane digital culture: We must educate in the wise use of technology and AI, placing the person before the algorithm, and harmonizing technical, emotional,

social, spiritual and ecological forms of intelligence.”

—“The third concerns peace—unarmed and disarming: Let us educate in nonviolent language, reconciliation and bridge-building rather than wall-building; may ‘Blessed are the peacemakers’ (Mt 5:9) become both the method and the content of learning.”

At the same time, the pope said, it is obvious that Catholic schools cannot ignore technology or avoid it, but they must be discerning about digital platforms, data protection and fair access for all students.

“In any case,” he said, “no algorithm can replace what makes education truly human: poetry, irony, love, art, imagination, the joy of discovery” and even learning from mistakes “as an opportunity for growth.”

In the letter, the pope briefly traced the history of Catholic education from the “desert fathers” teaching with parables, to the monastic study and preservation of classic texts and scholasticism’s highly structured and interdisciplinary curriculum.

But he also noted the huge array of Catholic saints throughout the ages who insisted that learning to read and write and add and subtract were matters of human dignity, and so dedicated their lives and their religious orders to educating women and girls, the poor, migrants and refugees and others on the margins of society.

“Wherever access to education remains a privilege,” Pope Leo wrote, “the Church must push open doors and invent new pathways because to ‘lose the poor’ is to lose the very meaning of the school.”

“To educate is an act of hope,” he said.

Catholic schools and universities, the pope wrote, must be “places where questions are not silenced and doubt is not banned but accompanied. The ‘heart speaks to heart,’ ” he said, quoting Newman’s motto as a cardinal.

Parents, as the Second Vatican Council affirmed, are the first and primary educators of their children, the pope said, but “Christian education is a choral work: no one educates alone.”

Those who teach in a Catholic institution, he said, “are called to a responsibility that goes beyond the employment contract: their witness is worth as much as their lesson.”

And while the human person is at the center of all educational initiatives, the goal is to help that person learn to see beyond him- or herself and “discover the meaning of life, inalienable dignity and responsibility toward others,” he wrote. †



Public Schedule of

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

November 1–14, 2025

November 1 – 2 p.m.

Wedding in Louisville, Ky.

November 2 – 2 p.m.

Confirmation Mass for the youths of St. Bridget Parish, Liberty; St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, Richmond; St. Gabriel Parish, Connersville; and St. Mary Parish, Rushville; at St. Gabriel Church

November 4 – 10:30 a.m.

Priest Personnel Board meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

November 5 – 11 a.m.

College of Deans meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center

November 6 – 10 a.m.

Leadership Team meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center

November 6 – 12:30 p.m.

Women’s Care Center Board meeting and lunch at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center

November 7-13

U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Plenary Assembly meeting in Baltimore, Md.

November 14 – 6 p.m.

Marian University Annual Gala at JW Marriott, Indianapolis

Archbishop Thompson, Bishop Rhoades among the candidates for USCCB’s next president, vice president

WASHINGTON (OSV News)—When the U.S. bishops gather for their fall plenary assembly on Nov. 10-13 in Baltimore, they will elect the next president and



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

vice president for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

The president and vice president are elected from a slate of 10 candidates who have been nominated by their fellow bishops, the USCCB said in a news release.

The candidates (in alphabetical order) are:

- Bishop Robert E. Barron of Winona-Rochester, Minn.
- Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City.
- Bishop Daniel E. Flores of Brownsville, Texas.
- Archbishop Richard G. Henning of Boston.
- Bishop David J. Malloy of Rockford, Ill.
- Archbishop Nelson J. Pérez of

Philadelphia.

- Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Ind.
- Archbishop Alexander K. Sample of Portland, Ore.
- Archbishop Charles C. Thompson of Indianapolis.
- Archbishop Edward J. Weisenburger of Detroit.

The president and vice president are elected to three-year terms, which begin at the conclusion of the plenary assembly.

The USCCB bylaws provide that the first election is of the president by simple majority vote of members present and voting. Following his election, the vice president is elected from the remaining nine candidates.

In either election, if a candidate does not receive more than half of the votes cast on the first ballot, a second vote is taken. If a third round of voting is necessary, that ballot is a run-off between the two bishops who received the most votes on the second ballot.

The current USCCB president and vice president, Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio of the U.S. Archdiocese for the Military Services and Archbishop William E. Lori of Baltimore, will complete their terms at the assembly. †

New podcast features Archbishop

Thompson’s reflections on pilgrimage

The Oct. 24 issue of *The Criterion* featured an article about Archbishop Charles C. Thompson’s recent pilgrimage to Rome, including his private audience with Pope Leo XIV.

His reflections about the experience are available on the Arch Indy Vox podcast. To listen, go to: tinyurl.com/Rome-Pilgrimage. †

Correction

An article in the Oct. 3 issue of *The Criterion* incorrectly noted that a Mass celebrating the 100th anniversary of the founding of St. Thérèse of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Parish in Indianapolis took place on Sept. 6. The Mass was actually celebrated on Sept. 13. †



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UCA gifts ‘make a difference beyond what you can imagine,’ archbishop says

By Natalie Hoefer

Sometimes, a blessing comes along that changes the course of a person’s future, allowing them to become the full person God intended them to be.

Perhaps that blessing empowers a single mother raising two boys—including one with autism—to find independent housing and a good job.

Perhaps it enables a man with a call to the priesthood or diaconate to pursue that vocation without the stress of paying for the costly formation.

In the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, each of these cases is a reality. And each case involves a common blessing: every donor to the archdiocese’s annual United Catholic Appeal (UCA).

“All the ministries supported by the appeal make it possible for us to address the needs and concerns of the life and dignity of so many throughout the Church in central and southern Indiana,” said Archbishop Charles C. Thompson during a dinner event at the Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center in Indianapolis on Oct. 16.

Across the street at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, he was the principal celebrant during a liturgy prior to the dinner.

‘It is how we go forth with the mission’

Archbishop Thompson began his homily noting the theme of this year’s United Catholic Appeal: Go Forth.

“We go forth not on our own merit. That’s what Paul is saying to the Romans in the first reading” from Romans 3:21-30, he said. “We go forth with what God does through us and in us, taking Christ to others and leading others to Christ ... rooted in the Eucharist.”

Archbishop Thompson shared about an opportunity he had to meet and speak privately with Pope Leo XIV at the Vatican during a U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops-sponsored pilgrimage the archbishop led to Rome on Sept. 23-Oct. 2 for the Jubilee for Catechists.

During the meeting, the pope asked

the archbishop to tell him about the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

“I got to share with him about the faith here, and the vibrancy in central and southern Indiana, and the different things we do in our ministries and services ...,” Archbishop Thompson said.

He noted that such works are only possible because of funds raised through the United Catholic Appeal.

“[It] is the source that enables us to carry out the ministries and the services and the witness of our faith throughout central and southern Indiana,” he explained. “It is how we carry out the good news of Jesus Christ. It is how we go forth with the mission.”

The Church is “missionary by nature,” Archbishop Thompson said. He noted further that the Church “doesn’t have a mission so much as the mission has a Church, the mission of Jesus. We are the Church, and we have a co-responsibility to carry out that mission.”

Part of that mission is to care for those who struggle to meet their needs, the archbishop said.

“There are so many needs,” he added. “And our ministries are tending to those needs of bringing about healing, reconciliation, bringing about housing, and caring for people in so many different ways.”

By supporting the UCA, “Each one of you makes a difference beyond what you can imagine,” he said.

“Like Paul says to the Romans, each of us have been given the grace to make a difference. Go forth.”

‘Not just about raising funds’

After the dinner, Jolinda Moore spoke to the gathering about the importance of the UCA to the functioning of the Church in central and southern Indiana.

“We gather tonight to celebrate something much bigger than any one of us—our shared mission as one Church and our call to ‘go forth’ in joy to embody that mission,” said Moore, executive director of the archdiocesan



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson elevates the Eucharist during a Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis prior to a United Catholic Appeal dinner event on Oct. 16. Concelebrating with him are Father Eric Augenstien, left, Father James Brockmeier (obscured) and Father Patrick Beidelman, right. Kneeling are Deacon Robert Beyke (obscured), left, and Deacon Michael Slinger. (Photo by Natalie Hoefer)

Office of Stewardship and Development.

She said the UCA is “not just about raising funds.

“It’s about living our faith. It’s about empowering the ministries of the archdiocese to reach out to those in need, to lift up families, strengthen parishes, and ensure that our Catholic schools continue to form young minds and hearts in the faith.”

UCA funds support those and other ministries that no parish or deanery alone could sustain.

“Your generosity allows us to provide for our most vulnerable through Catholic Charities, support vocations and ... sustains the Church’s work in ways that touch lives of people that you may never meet, but who feel the impact of your generosity every day,” said Moore.

After Moore, Archbishop Thompson addressed those gathered. He, too, emphasized the many ways the archdiocesan ministries funded by the UCA impact people throughout central

and southern Indiana, regardless of their faith.

“No matter what you contribute financially, your support for the United Catholic Appeal and the ministries that serve so many throughout the archdiocese is greatly appreciated,” he said, adding that “every dollar raised ... goes directly to the ministries.”

He noted that these ministries have touched “thousands of lives, ... and many more will continue to be served thanks to your generosity.”

‘Exemplary of God’s promise’

The event was special in a unique way for Helen Disney. She received a personal blessing from Archbishop Thompson when he learned it was her 80th birthday.

More important to her, though, is the hope she finds in what the UCA allows the archdiocese to accomplish.

“The funds are going to these people who really need it, whether they’re

See DINNER, page 12A



Pope’s prayer intentions for November

- **For the prevention of suicide**—Let us pray that those who are struggling with suicidal thoughts might find the support, care and love they need in their community, and be open to the beauty of life.

See Pope Leo’s monthly intentions at archindy.org/popesintentions.

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OPINION



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, *Publisher*
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Editorial



Cathy Schubring portrays martyred St. Maria Goretti during an Oct. 13, 2021, dress rehearsal for the annual “Back from the Dead” program in St. Joseph’s Cemetery at the National Shrine of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Emmitsburg, Md. The program is an alternative to Halloween and takes place each year in October. (CNS photo/courtesy The National Shrine of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton)

All Hallows’ Eve and the call to holiness

All Christians in any state or walk of life are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of charity. All are called to holiness. (Catechism of the Catholic Church, #2013).

The publication date for this issue of The Criterion is Oct. 31, All Hallows’ Eve (Halloween), the day before All Saints Day. Traditionally, this is the time when we imagine that all manner of ghosts, goblins and evil spirits have been let loose upon the Earth to frighten little children and unsettle the faint of heart.

Of course, we Christians dismiss these fanciful ghosts and goblins as creatures of our collective imaginations whose primary purpose is to sell candy, promote bad movies and distribute Halloween paraphernalia. We acknowledge that evil spirits do exist, but we believe that they are much more subtle than the creatures portrayed in popular media.

For example, we know that the devil does not have horns or a forked tail. Instead, we believe that he presents himself to us in much more attractive ways precisely to persuade us that he’s no threat to us or to the people and things we love. True evil rarely presents itself as horrifying. It is much more likely to try to persuade us that it is beautiful.

The Solemnity of All Saints, which we will celebrate tomorrow, Nov. 1, reminds us that everyone of us is called to be holy and to achieve our full potential as women and men created in the image and likeness of God. All Hallows’ Eve, on the other hand, delights in our imperfections, our unholiness, and our often gleeful participation in evil—the absence or privation of what is good.

Saints are not celebrities who delight in popularity and prestige. They are often the unseen heroes of daily life whose holiness takes many different forms—all of them humble and selfless. They are lights of hope because they point us to Jesus Christ, the true light, the sun that has risen above all the shadows of history.

The late Pope Francis liked to refer to “next door saints” (often our grandmothers, co-workers or neighbors). He urged us to imitate their piety, simplicity and commitment to serving others.

On Halloween, we enjoy wearing

masks and costumes, hiding behind the often outrageous characters who people our imaginations. Holiness, on the other hand, is transparent and accountable. It shines brightly like the rising sun illuminating the truth and radiating light and life to all.

The Second Vatican Council emphasized “the universal call to holiness” and urged every baptized person to accept his or her call to become a saint. According to the “Dogmatic Constitution on the Church” (“Lumen Gentium”):

Therefore in the Church, everyone whether belonging to the hierarchy, or being cared for by it, is called to holiness, according to the saying of the Apostle: “For this is the will of God, your sanctification” (1 Thes. 4:3; cf. Eph. 1:4). However, this holiness of the Church is unceasingly manifested, and must be manifested, in the fruits of grace which the Spirit produces in the faithful; it is expressed in many ways in individuals, who in their walk of life, tend toward the perfection of charity, thus causing the edification of others; in a very special way this (holiness) appears in the practice of the counsels, customarily called “evangelical.” This practice of the counsels, under the impulsion of the Holy Spirit, undertaken by many Christians, either privately or in a Church-approved condition or state of life, gives and must give in the world an outstanding witness and example of this same holiness. (#39)

The “evangelical counsels” of poverty, chastity and obedience are signs of holiness. They outwardly represent the interior disposition to live as witnesses to our Lord Jesus Christ. The communion of saints, which includes all the holy people living and deceased whose lives reflect the light of Christ, is available to everyone. Admission into the communion of saints is guaranteed by our baptism, but we cannot qualify as saintly women and men unless, by the grace of Christ, we live exemplary lives of holiness as missionary disciples.

On this All Hallows’ Eve, let’s enjoy the parties, costumes and mischief, but let’s not forget that we have a higher calling. We are invited to join with all the holy people who have gone before us—and all those who live alongside us—as we strive to become “next door saints” who live the Gospel fully.

—Daniel Conway

Reflection/Ken Ogorek

Synodality: A gift to the Church, world

Pope Leo XIV was recently gifted with a purebred Arabian horse. Recently, I was blessed with an opportunity to hear, directly from our Holy Father, a few of his thoughts on the topic of synodality.

As coordinator of the archdiocesan Synod implementation Team, I participated in a gathering of my counterparts from throughout the world during the Oct. 24-26 Jubilee of Synodal Teams and Participatory Bodies at the Vatican. The meetings occurred in the context of a Jubilee Year event in Rome.

‘We’re on a mission from God’
Among the thoughts that Pope Leo shared is that synodality is about having a strong sense of mission, acknowledging that Christ has commissioned each baptized person to be his missionary, witnessing to him to the ends of the Earth.

As an example, the Holy Father commended participants from Asia for giving us hope that even in cultures where faith in Jesus is nowhere near a majority reality, disciples of our Lord are evangelizing effectively by God’s grace.

Synodality’s focus on mission affirms our archdiocesan pastoral planning process, whose theme is “Go Forth in Joy and Hope as Missionary Disciples.” While I wasn’t able to interact with Pope Leo personally, I sense that he’d be pleased with this focus of ours as an archdiocese.

‘I’m an individual!’
Pope Leo made an important distinction between individualism and individuality. The latter is a blessing from God who creates us as unique persons.

Individualism, though, is a plague that isolates us from relationships and community. It harms us while depriving God’s people of our talents and charisms; these charisms could further the common good by his grace, rather than being squandered in our silos of solitude.

Synodality is an antidote to harmful individualism in that it compels us to be present to our neighbor—all of them! None of us “does Church” alone. We walk with each other, listening authentically, living the reality that we all have at least some responsibility for the body of Christ, for its health, vibrancy and dynamism.

Encountering the living Jesus Christ
Pope Leo’s emphasis on communion rather than individualism reminds me of an exhortation by Pope St. John Paul II. He wrote to the Church in America (including South America where Pope Leo served for many years) “On the Encounter with the Living Jesus Christ: The Way to Conversion, Communion and Solidarity.”

Conversion from sin, communion with Jesus and solidarity with our neighbors—all of them—in some ways are the essence of synodality. All of God’s people deserve to be heard, and solidarity manifests itself in authentic listening as well as consultative decision-making by those to whom Jesus gives governance authority in his Church: our bishops (successors to the Apostles) and priests who serve as our pastors.

Don’t be a screamin’ demon
Finally, Pope Leo mentioned the demon of discord. While debate about how to apply the teaching of Christ in various situations can be healthy, dissent from the basic doctrinal and moral teaching of his Church works against communion, mission-effectiveness and synodality.

There’s an old saying about never looking a gift horse in the mouth.

The gift of encouraging synodality, given to us by Pope Francis and affirmed by Pope Leo, when properly understood and practiced, is a gift to the Church and to our world—a gift that will keep on giving by God’s grace and mercy.

(Ken Ogorek is executive director within the archdiocesan Secretariat for Evangelizing Catechesis. He can be reached at kogorek@archindy.org.) †



Pope Leo XIV, with Cardinal Mario Grech, secretary-general of the Synod of Bishops, listens to and answers questions from participants in the Jubilee of Synodal Teams and Participatory Bodies in the Vatican audience hall on Oct. 24. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

ARCHBISHOP/ARZOBISPO CHARLES C. THOMPSON



Christ the Cornerstone

The saints show us how to live and give us hope

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven. (Mt 5:12)

Tomorrow, we celebrate the Solemnity of All Saints. This is the day when all the holy women and men (alive and deceased) who have given their lives to discover and do God’s will are given the thanks and praise that is their due.

The saints that we venerate tomorrow would be the first to tell us that God alone is worthy of our praise and that, at best, theirs is a reflective glory. It’s true—the light that shines in them is the light of Christ. Even the sinless Virgin Mary, whom we honor as the first and most glorious of all the saints, is just a mirror image of the beauty and majesty of her Divine Son, Jesus Christ.

Saints are icons of the living God. By imitating Jesus in their daily lives—never perfectly but with increasing success made possible by the power of the Holy Spirit—these very diverse men and women show us by their example, and by their teaching, how to respond to the universal call to holiness that is extended

to every baptized follower of Jesus. We can become holy (saints) by living the eight beatitudes given to us by Christ and proudly proclaimed in the Gospel reading for tomorrow’s Solemnity (Mt 5:1-12a). Jesus said to his disciples (all of us):
Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven. (Mt 5:3-12)
This is the way to become a saint.

If we do these things consistently, with humility and generosity, our reward will be great in heaven. Jesus says so, and he is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. But of course, each of the eight Beatitudes goes against the grain. Each one challenges us to surrender our egos, our pride, our self-pity, our thirst for vengeance, and our intense desire to fight back when we are insulted or treated badly. We like the idea of peace, but we don’t want to have to surrender in order to win. We know there’s more to life than wealth, fame and good fortune, but we also resist the practical consequences of poverty, prejudice and suffering (mental, physical or emotional). Jesus knows that it’s hard for us to live as he did. We are weak and sinful people. The heroic virtues do not come easily to us. That’s why the Church urges us to look at all the saints—those who are well known and those who are hidden (the “next door saints”). None of them except Mary was without sin, and some of them committed grave sins before they finally saw the light of Christ and surrendered their lives to him.

There is a popular saying that “Every saint has a past, and every sinner has a future.” The truth of this saying is what gives us hope. We, too, can cast off selfishness and sin, and begin to live as missionary disciples of Jesus Christ. We are pilgrims of hope, which means that we know we have not yet arrived. We are on the way, and as another popular saying puts it, “We claim spiritual progress, not spiritual perfection.” Tomorrow’s second reading from the first letter of St. John (1 Jn 3:1-3) affirms this truth. We have not yet arrived, but we have hope in our Lord Jesus Christ who shows us the way:
Beloved, we are God’s children now; what we shall be has not yet been revealed. We do know that when it is revealed we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope based on him makes himself pure, as he is pure. (1 Jn 3:2-3)
Let us give thanks and praise to God for all the men, women and children who reflect the light of Christ in our world’s darkness. May his light shine in us as we walk together in the footsteps of so many others in the Communion of Saints. †



Cristo, la piedra angular

Los santos: modelos de vida y esperanza

¡Alégrense y estén contentos, porque en el cielo tienen una gran recompensa! (Mt 5:12)

Mañana celebramos la solemnidad de Todos los Santos, el día en que todas las mujeres y hombres santos (vivos y difuntos) que han dado su vida para descubrir y cumplir la voluntad de Dios reciben el agradecimiento y la alabanza que les corresponden.

Los santos que veneramos mañana serían los primeros en decirnos que solo Dios es digno de nuestra alabanza y que, en el mejor de los casos, ellos tan solo reflejan su gloria, y es cierto: la luz que brilla en ellos es la luz de Cristo. Incluso la Virgen María sin pecado, a quien honramos como la primera y más gloriosa de todos los santos, es tan solo un espejo de la belleza y majestad de su Divino Hijo, Jesucristo.

Los santos son representaciones del Dios vivo: al imitar a Jesús en su vida cotidiana—nunca de manera perfecta, pero cada vez con mayor acierto gracias al poder del Espíritu Santo—estos hombres y mujeres tan diversos nos muestran con su ejemplo y sus enseñanzas cómo responder al llamado universal a la santidad que se extiende a todos los bautizados seguidores de Jesús.

Podemos llegar a ser santos

viviendo las ocho bienaventuranzas que nos dio Cristo y que proclama con orgullo la lectura del Evangelio de la solemnidad de mañana (Mt 5:1-12). Jesús les dijo a sus discípulos (a todos nosotros):
Bienaventurados los pobres de espíritu, porque de ellos es el reino de los cielos. Bienaventurados los que lloran, porque ellos serán consolados. Bienaventurados los mansos, porque ellos poseerán en herencia la tierra. Bienaventurados los que tienen hambre y sed de justicia, porque ellos serán saciados. Bienaventurados los misericordiosos, porque ellos alcanzarán misericordia. Bienaventurados los limpios de corazón, porque ellos verán a Dios. Bienaventurados los que buscan la paz, porque ellos serán llamados hijos de Dios. Bienaventurados los perseguidos por causa de la justicia, porque de ellos es el Reino de los cielos. Bienaventurados serán cuando los injurien, los persigan y digan con mentira toda clase de mal contra ustedes por mi causa. ¡Alégrense y estén contentos, porque en el cielo tienen una gran recompensa! (Mt 5:3-12)
Así se llega a ser santo. Si hacemos estas cosas con constancia, humildad y generosidad, nuestra

recompensa será grande en el cielo. Jesús lo dijo y él es el camino, la verdad y la vida. Pero, por supuesto, cada una de las ocho bienaventuranzas va en contra de la corriente. Cada una nos reta a renunciar a nuestro ego, nuestro orgullo, nuestra autocompasión, nuestra sed de venganza y nuestro intenso deseo de contraatacar cuando nos insultan o nos tratan mal. Nos gusta la idea de la paz, pero no queremos tener que rendirnos para ganar. Sabemos que la vida es algo más que riqueza, fama y buena fortuna, pero también nos resistimos a las consecuencias prácticas de la pobreza, los prejuicios y el sufrimiento (mental, físico o emocional). Jesús sabe que es difícil para nosotros vivir como él lo hizo; somos personas débiles y pecadoras, por lo que las virtudes heroicas no nos resultan fáciles. Por eso la Iglesia nos exhorta a mirar a todos los santos: los conocidos y los ocultos (los “santos de a pie”). Ninguno de ellos, excepto María, estaba libre de pecado, y algunos cometieron pecados graves antes de ver finalmente la luz de Cristo y entregarle sus vidas. Como dice el dicho “todo santo tiene un pasado y todo pecador tiene

un futuro.” La verdad de este dicho es lo que nos da esperanza. También nosotros podemos despojarnos del egoísmo y del pecado, y empezar a vivir como discípulos misioneros de Jesucristo. Somos peregrinos de la esperanza, lo que significa que sabemos que aún no hemos llegado a nuestro destino; estamos en camino, y como dice la frase: «Nos atribuimos el progreso espiritual, no la perfección». La segunda lectura de mañana de la primera carta de San Juan (1 Jn 3:1-3) afirma esta verdad. Aún no hemos llegado, pero tenemos esperanza en nuestro Señor Jesucristo, que nos muestra el camino:
Queridos míos, desde ahora somos hijos de Dios, y lo que seremos no se ha manifestado todavía. Sabemos que cuando se manifieste, seremos semejantes a él, porque lo veremos tal cual es. El que tiene esta esperanza en él, se purifica, así como él es puro. (1 Jn 3:2-3).
Demos gracias y alabemos a Dios por todos los hombres, mujeres y niños que reflejan la luz de Cristo en las tinieblas de nuestro mundo. Que su luz brille en nosotros mientras caminamos juntos siguiendo los pasos de tantos otros en la Comunión de Todos los Santos. †

Events Calendar

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

November 3

Holy Angels Parish, 2822 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. St., Indianapolis. **Celebration of feast day of St. Martin de Porres**, 6 p.m., Mass honoring the saint of African-Hispanic background, dinner to follow liturgy, sponsored by archdiocesan Black Catholic Ministry, all are welcome. Information: 317-261-3381, iowhosomaddox@archindy.org.

Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Church, 520 Stevens St., Indianapolis. **Durufié Requiem Mass**, 7 p.m., choral and orchestral presentation of composer Maurice Durufié’s “*Requiem*” performed during traditional Latin Mass, free. Information: 317-636-4478, info@holynosaryindy.org.

November 5

Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. **A Requiem for Infants**, 6 p.m. Mass offered for infants lost through miscarriage, stillbirth, abortion or early childhood loss, special music written for Mass, confession available 5 p.m., resources available after Mass [for parents grieving loss of child of any age and for post-abortive healing for men and women. Information: tday@olgreenwood.org.

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—age 50 and older, new members welcome, also call about regular Friday night dinner events. Information: 317-796-8605.

November 6

Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School, 3360 West 30th St., Indianapolis. **Open House**, 6-8 p.m., free. Information: 317-924-4333, cardinalritter.org.

Roncalli High School, 3300 Prague Road, Indianapolis. **Open House**, 6-8 p.m., enter through door 15, free. Information: 317-787-8277, aross@roncalli.org.

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

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

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

November 7-8

St. Agnes Parish, 1008 McLary Road, Nashville. **Christmas and Craft Bazaar**, Fri. 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m.-3 p.m., crafts, Christmas décor and gifts, silent auction of gift baskets and trees, home baked goods, quilt raffle, free admission. Information: 812-988-2778, StAgnesNashville@gmail.com, StAgnesCatholicNashville.org.

November 8

Huber Winery, Plantation Hall, 19816 Huber Road, Borden. **St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities Reverse Raffle**, 5:30 p.m., buffet dinner, reverse raffle, premium prize raffles, games, 50/50, pull tabs, bourbon raffle and more, free admission. Reverse raffle chances, more information: creid@stecharities.org, 812-924-4003. Premium prize raffle chances: tinyurl.com/SECCGiftRaffle. Bourbon raffle chances: tinyurl.com/SECCBourbonRaffle.

St. Gabriel the Archangel Parish parking lot,

6000 W. 34th St., Indianapolis. **St. Vincent de Paul Stuff-A-Truck**, 9-11 a.m., accepting clothing, household goods and linens (all in closed bags), furniture, bicycles, bicycle helmets and locks, backpacks. cutt.ly/ItemsNeeded. Information: bsisk@svdpindy.org.

St. Mary Parish, 415 E. 8th St., New Albany. **25-Year Time Capsule Reveal**, 1-3 p.m., opening of time capsule buried by former St. Mary School students 25 years ago, free. Information: 812-944-8283, ldavis@holyfamilynewalbany.org

Holy Cross and St. Joseph Cemetery, 2446 S. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **Indulgence Walk**, 1 p.m., prayerful one-mile walk, historical information, obtain plenary indulgence for poor souls (with completion of other conditions), sponsored by Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish in Indianapolis. Meet at Pleasant Run Pkwy. Gate, free. Information: 317-636-4478, info@holynosaryindy.org.

November 11

Church of the Immaculate Conception, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods.

Taizé Prayer at the Woods, 7-8 p.m., silent and spoken prayers, simple music, silence, virtual option available. Information: Taize.SistersofProvidence.org, 812-535-2952.

November 12

Lumen Christi Catholic School, 580 Stevens St., Indianapolis. **Fall Open House**, 12:30-2:30 p.m., visit school during session, pre-K through high school, free. Information: 317-632-3174, erosko@lumenchristischool.org.

St. Thomas Aquinas Parish, 4625 N. Kenwood Ave., Indianapolis. **Growing Together as a Listening Church**, 6:30-8:30 p.m., facilitated by Ken Ogorek, executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Evangelizing Catechesis, sponsored by the archdiocese, registration required, free. Information, registration: tinyurl.com/growingtogether-11-25.

St. Alphonsus Liguori Parish, 1870 W. Oak St., Zionsville, Ind. (Lafayette Diocese). **Networking Happy Hour with Young Catholic Professionals**, 7-9 p.m., for Catholics ages 21-39, free, registration requested but not required. Information, registration:

tinyurl.com/ycphappyhour11-12, 937-409-3288, info@ycpindianapolis.org.

November 14

Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish, 520 Stevens St., Indianapolis. **Debate on the Liceity of Embryonic Adoption**, 6:30 p.m. (doors open 6 p.m.), debate between archdiocesan moral theologian and ethicist Father Ryan McCarthy and senior ethicist at the National Catholic Bioethics Center Father Tad Pacholczyk, free. Information: Pro-Life@Holyrosaryindy.org, 317-636-4478.

November 15

New Albany Knights of Columbus Hall, 809 E. Main St., New Albany. New Albany **Knights of Columbus Annual Christmas Craft Bazaar**, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., handmade crafts, treats and more, free admission. Information: 812-944-0891.

Knights of Columbus Council #3228 Fatima Event Center, 1040 N. Post Road, Indianapolis. **God’s Embrace Coffee Christmas Bazaar**, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., food, drinks, Santa available all day, Toys for Tots collection, free admission, vendor tables \$25 for 6-foot table. Information, vendor registration: 317-402-1930, c-simon@att.net. †

Retreats and Programs

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

November 14-16

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **The Infancy Narrative According to the Gospel of Luke**, Benedictine Father Eugene Hensell presenting, \$350 single, \$550 double. Registration: 812-357-6611, saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

Mother of the Redeemer Retreat Center, 8220 W. State Road 48, Bloomington. **More Christ-Centered Counsel for Everyday Difficulties**, 5 p.m. Fri.-10 a.m. Sun., Franciscan Friars of the Immaculate Father Terrance Chartier facilitating, \$241 for single, \$302.90 double, \$369.08 triple, \$433.12 quadruple, includes four meals and room for two nights, commuters \$50.70 includes lunch and dinner on Sat. Information, registration: 812-825-4642, ext. 1, motheroftheredeemer.com.

November 15

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **With Grateful Hearts**, 9:30-11:30 a.m., Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality interim director Judy Ribar presenting, \$30. Information, registration: 812-933-6437, oldenburgfranciscancenter.org.

November 16

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **Coffee Talks: Graced Moments on the Edge**, 10:45 a.m.-noon, theologian John V. Kirby presenting, freewill donation. Information,

registration: 812-933-6437, oldenburgfranciscancenter.org.

November 19

Providence Spirituality & Conference Center, Foley Room, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Dementia Education Series: A Positive Approach to Care**, 1-3 p.m., sixth of six stand-alone sessions, respite care available for five families, limited space, registration encouraged, online option available. Information, registration: 812-238-1561, spsmw.org/events, ecollins@spsmw.org.

November 22

Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 Saint Anthony Dr., Mount St. Francis. **With Grateful Hearts: Finding God’s Presence in Scripture, Silence, and Thanksgiving**, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Mount Saint Francis interim director Judy Ribar presenting, includes lunch, \$60, register by Nov. 18. Information, registration: 812-923-8817, mountsaintfrancis.org/with-grateful-hearts.

December 6

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Jesse Tree Advent Day of Reflection**, 9 a.m.-6 p.m., led by Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House staff, \$40 includes lunch, register by 9 a.m. Dec. 5. Registration: fm.retreatportal.com/events, 317-545-7681, lcoons@archindy.org.

December 9, 10, 11

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St.,

Indianapolis. **Advent Days of Silence**, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., \$45 per day, includes room, continental breakfast, lunch and use of common areas and grounds, overnight stays available for additional \$32 per night, dinner additional \$11 per meal. Registration: fm.retreatportal.com/events, 317-545-7681, lcoons@archindy.org.

December 12

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

December 12-14

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Being A Eucharistic People: The Embodied Presence of Christ**, Benedictine Father Adrian Burke presenting, \$350 single, \$550 double. Registration: 812-357-6611, saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

December 13

Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 Saint Anthony Dr., Mount St. Francis. **Advent Retreat: A Journey of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love**, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Mount Saint Francis associate director Regina Proctor presenting, includes coffee, pastries and lunch, \$60. Information, registration: 812-923-8817, mountsaintfrancis.org/advent-retreat. †

Wedding Anniversaries

LEONARD AND MARTY (RUDOLF) WERNER, members of Holy Family Parish in Oldenburg, will celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary on Nov. 6.

The couple was married in St. Louis Church in Batesville on Nov. 6, 1965.

They have five children: Diane Jones, Donna, Daniel, Daron and Daryl Werner.

The couple also has 10 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.



DEACON MICHAEL AND JANE (MATTINGLY) BOGGS, members of Prince of Peace Parish in Madison, will celebrate their 55th wedding anniversary on Nov. 14.

The couple was married in St. Basil Church in Shively, Ky., on Nov. 14, 1970.

They have five children: Joy and Shelby Boggs, Celeste Livengood, Lindsey Spraggins and Tina Turcie.

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



JAMES AND RITA (BARNHORST) GLAUB, members of St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Morris, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Oct. 11.

The couple was married in Holy Family Church in Oldenburg on Oct. 11, 1975.

They have three children: Trisha Fisk, Brenda Peters and Gregory Glaub.

The couple also has 10 grandchildren.



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



Pope Leo XIV elevates a monstrance containing the Blessed Sacrament for Benediction at the end of a prayer vigil and recitation of the rosary for peace in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican on Oct. 11. (CNS photo/Lola Gomez)

In hope, God sows seeds of vocations to the priesthood, diaconate and religious life

As the Church in the U.S. celebrates National Vocation Awareness Week during this Jubilee Year of Hope, we turn our attention once again to the mystery of God's call to priesthood, consecrated life and diaconate.



Fr. Michael Keucher

This year's Vocations Awareness Supplement highlights the stories of men and women from our archdiocese who have responded with generosity to that call. Behind every face is hope for our Church in central and southern Indiana. Behind every story is the same grace at work—the word of God planted in the heart, nurtured by prayer and sacrament and brought to life in community and hope.

In his first general audience earlier this year, Pope Leo XIV reflected on the parable of the sower (cf. Mt 13:1-17), offering an image that beautifully illuminates the call to vocation. Our Holy Father noted that Jesus scatters the seed of his word freely—on the path, on the rocks, among the thorns and on fertile soil. “God is confident and hopes that sooner or later the seed will blossom. This is hope, founded on the rock of God's generosity and mercy.”

That vision of God as the patient sower is at the heart of every vocation. How often, as archdiocesan vocations director, I find folks whose hearts are not yet prepared to realize their vocation, yet the Lord never tires of calling! He continues to cast his word into his sons and daughters, trusting that it will take root when and where hearts are ready to receive it. Even when the soil seems unpromising, God is patient and he hopes; he knows that his word carries life within it.

You can never fully explain a vocation, especially a priestly or religious vocation; something happens inside you. That “something” is the coming to life of the seed of vocation in the human heart. The sower continues to sow, and his seed is alive. Some of those called to the priesthood or religious life recognize God's voice early, while others discover it later in life, often through struggle or surprise. Some find fertile soil in the prayer of their parishes; others wrestle through dry seasons of doubt or resistance. Yet God's word—once planted—will not stop growing. “The word of God makes fruitful and provokes every reality,” Pope Leo reminds us.

This is the essence of a vocation: it is not a human project, but a divine initiative. God calls, God sustains and God brings the harvest. Our task is simply to listen and to offer a generous, loving *fiat*. For that, we look to Our Lady as our model. Surrendering to the Divine Sower is the key.

For those discerning a call to priesthood, diaconate or religious life, this is a message of great encouragement. The Holy Father urges us not to lose heart, even when we feel unworthy or unsure: “If we realize we are not a fruitful soil, let us not be discouraged, but let us ask him to work on us more to make us become a better terrain.” God himself prepares the ground; he does not demand perfection, only openness.

During this Jubilee of Hope, we are reminded that the future of the Church depends not on human planning but on divine fidelity. The Lord continues to sow the seeds of priestly, diaconal and religious vocations across the world—and here, in our own archdiocese. Each man or woman who responds “yes” to God's call becomes a living sign of that hope. You will read about some of them here in this supplement.

May this week renew in all of us the desire to pray for and support those discerning a vocation to the priesthood, diaconate or consecrated life. May our parishes, families and hearts be rich soil where those seeds can grow. And may we never tire of trusting that the Lord of the harvest is still at work—sowing, nurturing and bringing to life new witnesses and agents of his mercy and love.

(Father Michael Keucher is director of vocations for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, dean of the Batesville Deanery and pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Shelbyville and St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Shelby County. Contact him at mkeucher@archindy.org.) †



Seeing happy, holy priests and seminarians encourages men discerning vocations, page 2B.



Navilleton woman finds joy in religious vocation of ‘spiritual motherhood,’ page 3B.



Monk finds his Benedictine vocation through prayer, community and art, page 8B.



Happy, holy priests and seminarians encourage men discerning vocations

By Jennifer Lindberg

Special to *The Criterion*

Leading by example is the number-one way current seminarians say is most helpful in assisting men discerning the priesthood, along with being a joyful witness and living a life of prayer.

“It’s difficult for a young man to visualize himself as a priest,” said Father Liam Hosty, parochial vicar for St. Ann Parish in Indianapolis and St. Thomas More Parish in Mooresville. “I think that the joyful witness that seminarians offer is that they can help a discerner to mentally bridge that gap.”

Father Hosty, who was ordained in June, holds quite a distinction. His father is Deacon Thomas Hosty, and they are the first father and son in the history of the archdiocese in ordained ministry.

“While it might be difficult for a young man to see where God will take him 50 years from now, the witness of a seminarian can help a man see where God might be taking him as soon as next year,” Father Hosty said.

Seminarian Max Ecoff, who is in his first year of formation at Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary in Indianapolis, said other seminarians helped him with his vocation.

“Seeing some of my friends being open about the vocation and becoming seminarians was extremely helpful in my own discernment,” said Ecoff, a member of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish in Indianapolis.

He said it was also helpful that he was never over-encouraged to be a priest.

“Simply support them and pray for their vocation,” Ecoff said. “What helped me was seeing priests and seminarians who were joyful and excited about their vocation.”

Dominic Pavey, in his second year of formation at Bishop Bruté, echoed this sentiment.

“Young men will see the beauty of the priesthood if they see their pastors filled with joy as they dedicate their lives to saving souls,” said Pavey, also a Holy Rosary parishioner.

Pavey also said his strong parish youth group in his high school years helped him because it was more than “just games and snacks.” It also had adoration, spiritual reading discussion and talks from different priests about vocation and discernment.

“Those times of prayer and discussion and listening were all extremely helpful in my discernment,” he said.

All of the seminarians interviewed said attendance at Bishop Bruté Days—the archdiocese’s annual summer vocations camp for boys in junior high and high school held at Bishop Bruté Seminary—helped make seminary life less mysterious and more realistic as a choice in life.

Seminarian Randy Schnieder said the camp helped in his discernment.

“I was profoundly impacted by the seminarians’ joy and life of prayer,” said Schneider, who received formation at Bishop Bruté Seminary before attending Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad, where he is in his second year of formation.

“But most of all, I found that Bruté Days made seminary a ‘real’ choice for me—one that I could see myself pursuing,” said Schneider, a member of All Saints Parish in Dearborn County. “Seeing just normal guys doing something extraordinary allowed me to see myself doing the same thing.”



Seminarians Dominic Pavey, left, and Max Ecoff chat on Oct. 21 at Bishop Simon Bruté Seminary in Indianapolis where they are respectively in their second and first years of priestly formation. Both members of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish in Indianapolis, they noted that seeing happy and holy priests and seminarians helped them in their discernment of a possible vocation to the priesthood. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

These sentiments reflect a 2025 national survey of how men discern the priesthood conducted by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., in collaboration with the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. It found that at least 89% of men ordained to the priesthood said they were encouraged by someone in their life—most frequently by a parish priest (60%), friend (52%) or parishioner (42%).

The biggest question a seminarian is always asked is: “How do you know you want to be a priest?”

Lucas LaRosa, in his second year of formation at Saint Meinrad, said he always gives the same answer: “I only know God wants me to be in seminary right now. What happens from here is in God’s hands.”

Answering such questions is important, La Rosa

said, because many men think they need to be 100% sure before entering seminary.

“They may be worried once they make the decision to try seminary, they’re stuck with that decision,” said LaRosa, a member of St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis.

Yet, seminary doesn’t force a vocation onto someone. It is a process to see what God wants for you, La Rosa explained.

Pavey said if a man even thinks he may have a vocation, he should actively discern the possibility that God is calling him to the priesthood.

“The reality is that unless God gives a man a direct sign, he will never absolutely be certain of having a vocation to the priesthood until the bishop lays his hands on him and he is ordained,” Pavey said.

There’s also another important distinction for seminarians and priests to explain to men thinking about seminary, Father Hosty said.

He noted that many well-intentioned people encourage men to go to college

first, work a few years and then go to seminary.

“My question is this: What other profession do we give that same piece of advice to? If a young man told you he wants to be a medical doctor, would we say, ‘Are you sure? Maybe you should study engineering first, work a few years as an engineer. Then, if you feel like you still want to be a doctor, you can go to medical school?’

“And yet we do exactly that with the sublime gift of the priesthood. It is almost as if we are giving God the leftovers.”

While Father Hosty understands everyone’s discernment journey is different, he said he is glad he became a seminarian immediately after high school and received formation at Bishop Bruté.

“My time at Bruté were some of the best years of my life, and I have absolutely no regrets,” Father Hosty said.

“If you feel like Jesus might be calling you to share in his priesthood, I promise you that question is going to bother you until you talk to a priest about it,” Father Hosty added.

Those interviewed who are in priestly formation also noted it’s important for seminarians to witness by their prayer life and involvement at local parishes.

LaRosa said he still tries to serve at Mass as a witness to vocations or give

tours at Saint Meinrad where people can ask him questions.

Schneider said Bruté Days was an “incredible witness of seminary life to me as a high schooler” because it helped him realize at it that seminary was a real choice. Seeing other seminarians work, pray and relate to others allowed him to see himself doing the same thing.

The men also encouraged talking openly about obstacles to the priesthood by acknowledging there are real questions, such as sacrificing your entire life for others, sacrificing marriage, accepting celibacy, doubting one’s abilities as a singer or preacher, and other things a priest is asked to do in his life and ministry.

“It is true we will always be insufficient in our abilities ... but that is why we need the Lord to provide the necessary grace to take up our cross and fulfill our mission,” Pavey said.

LaRosa said many men question if they have the right personality to be a priest.

“God isn’t looking for a specific ‘cookie-cutter’ type of priest,” LaRosa said. “He’s looking for all kinds of people to help build his kingdom. ... A young man should never write himself off because of what he thinks God is looking for.”

Father Hosty said showing men that

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Vocations Awareness Supplement highlights the priesthood, diaconate and consecrated life

This issue of *The Criterion* features our annual supplement that highlights vocations in the Church to the priesthood, diaconate and consecrated life.

It is ordinarily published in advance of or during the U.S. bishops’ annual Vocations Awareness Week, which this year is on Nov. 3-9.

From the beginning, the Church has recognized that marriage is also a vocation, a pathway to holiness, to

which God calls people. *The Criterion* publishes a marriage supplement annually in February.

In addition, the Archdiocese of Indianapolis has three offices which promote vocations. For information on the Office of Marriage and Family Life, visit archindy.org/marriageandfamily. For information on the diaconate, go to archindy.org/deacon. For information on the priesthood and consecrated life, visit archindy.org/vocations.†



Navilleton woman finds joy in religious vocation of ‘spiritual motherhood’

By Natalie Hoefer

Growing up in Navilleton, Catholicism was a life rhythm for Emily Naville, the third of Bob and Jenni Naville’s four children.

“All of our family lived on the same road, and at the end of the road was St. Mary Church,” she recalled. “We went to Mass every Sunday, I went to Catholic grade school. Our parents taught us to pray, and we said prayers before bedtime. It was a great way to grow up!”

But religious sisters were not part of her world.

“Maybe some mission sisters spoke at Mass a few times,” she says. “But I never really talked with a sister until my freshman year” at Ball State University in Muncie, Ind., in the fall of 2015.

The religious woman was a novice with the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration, based in Mishawaka, Ind., in the Fort Wayne-South Bend Diocese. And the conversation changed the college student’s life.

With the name Sister Mary Amata, the Navilleton native professed perpetual vows of poverty, chastity and obedience with the order on Aug. 2.

With contagious joy, she shares her vocation and formation journeys, her advice for both women discerning a vocation and girls with no exposure to religious sisters, and about the two words that set her heart on fire: spiritual motherhood.

‘Something awakened in me’

With the foundation in faith set in childhood by her parents, Sister Mary Amata began to embrace the faith on her own in middle school through what was then called New Albany Deanery Catholic Youth Ministries (NADCYM), now known as Catalyst Catholic.

“I was in a youth group. I went on [NADCYM] Faith in Action mission trips. I went on retreats and started serving in leadership in high school,” she says. “Faith was very much a part of my everyday life both in action and being formed in prayer.”

Sister Mary Amata entered Ball State in the fall of 2015 to study music education.

“I wanted to become a choir teacher like my older sister,” she says. “I couldn’t imagine life without music and singing.”

She also got involved with the Catholic Newman Center on campus—where she met people “on fire for the faith” and made an impactful discovery.

“It wasn’t until college that I realized I could have a personal relationship with Christ,” says Sister Mary Amata. “I was surprised by people who knew Jesus in that personal way.”

Through eucharistic adoration and making a Marian consecration, she “fell in love with Jesus.”

To give students the opportunity to explore vocations, the Newman Center hosted events with different religious orders.

So it was that Sister Mary Amata sat down next to a novice with the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration at a spaghetti dinner late in the fall of her freshman year.

“It was the first time I had a real conversation with a sister,” she says. “I thought sisters were older or really strict. But here was a sister who was young and joyful.

“In talking with her, I realized she had real challenges and hardships. But she still had that joy because of her love of Jesus and his love for her, a joy that endured through any circumstance. I was so struck by that.

“I couldn’t have said it at the time, but something awakened in me that said, ‘I want that, too.’ ”

‘It lit my heart on fire’

That December, the sisters held a discernment retreat at their motherhouse in Mishawaka. Sister Mary Amata participated—with no thoughts of discernment.

“I went because my friend was going and I just thought it sounded like fun, hanging out with the sisters,” she admits.

The first thing she noticed was having “a sense of feeling at home, an ability to be myself.”

As the retreat progressed, Sister Mary Amata “was struck by how the sisters loved one another. They had different personalities and ages and experiences, but there was genuine love there.”

But the most impactful part of the retreat for her was a one-on-one meeting with a sister.

“I asked her about the role of religious sisters in the Church,” says Sister Mary Amata. “I said, ‘Priests are shepherds, but sisters just pray and serve—anyone can do that.’

“And she said, ‘Spiritual motherhood. As brides of Christ, we’re called to love the Church and the world with a maternal heart and to nurture the life of Christ in every person that we meet.’

“I remember what she said word for word. It lit my heart on fire.”

The next semester and through her sophomore year, Sister Mary Amata explored other religious orders and talked with vocation directors. And she continued to “grow in my relationship with Jesus, spending time with him in adoration, and falling more in love with him.”

Sister Mary Amata began to notice “a restlessness” in her sophomore year.

“I was doing things I enjoyed, I had friends, I was doing service, I loved my major,” she recalls. “But I had this sense of desiring more.”

In January of 2017, she attended a SEEK conference sponsored by the Fellowship of Catholic University Students. The event is the college equivalent of the National Catholic Youth Conference.

Among her group was a young woman who strongly desired to go to confession. But she hesitated, telling Sister Mary Amata through tears that she felt “so dirty and unloved.”

While the woman went to confession, “I sat in the noisy hall and prayed,” says the religious sister. “I never felt more fulfilled. The Lord was showing me in a small moment of spiritual motherhood that, ‘This is how I made you to love.’ ”

She could no longer deny her draw to the Franciscan Sisters in Mishawaka.

“I began to think, ‘What if I didn’t finish college?’ And the Lord showed me how he led me to trust him in life. So, when this big question came, I knew he would be with me.”

Sister Mary Amata told her parents her plans to leave college and pursue a vocation with the the order.

“That was a surprise,” Bob admits. “We had it in our heads that she would finish college. That’s what makes most sense in the world.”

He recalls her response: “If God is calling me now, how can I say ‘wait?’ ”

“She had such confidence,” says Jenni. “That’s when we realized it’s not our timing, but God’s.”

Sister Mary Amata entered the order as a postulant in September of 2017.

‘The sisters know how to have fun’

The order was founded “that love may be loved,” lived out by “ceaseless adoration, sisterly love and Franciscan joy,” explains Sister Mary Amata. “Since our founding in 1863, there has been at least one sister in adoration every minute.”

The sisters take “the love and grace we receive in adoration” to those they serve in the order’s two apostolates—health care and education.

Each sister’s day involves a flow, with times for adoration, prayer, Mass, apostolate service and personal time.

There is even daily time for recreation—a time the Navilles witnessed while Sister Mary Amata was in formation.

“They’re riding bikes, playing Wiffle ball, basketball,” Bob says of the sisters, amused at the memory. “I don’t know how they do it in their habits!”

“The sisters know how to have fun—they’re just so much fun!” Jenni adds with a laugh.

After her postulancy and novitiate, Sister Mary Amata professed temporary vows of poverty, obedience and chastity in August 2020.

Up to that point, the sisters are called by their baptismal name. Prior to their temporary vows, each postulant “prays about what name the Lord might want to give us,” she explains.

“When I prayed about it, I was struck with the thought of us as beloved daughters of God. There is nothing we did to earn that, and we’re called to help others realize God’s love for them.” “*Amata*” is Latin for beloved.

“And Mary was so important to my discernment, especially through my Marian consecration,” she adds. “I prayed about her understanding of her own belovedness, how rooted she was in God’s love for her, and that’s how she was able to give her *fiat*. I thought, ‘I want that, to be so rooted in God’s love for me that I’d do anything for him.’ ”

The postulants submit a list of three names. Then, “with the help of the Holy Spirit,” their names are chosen for them.

Sister Mary Amata received the first name on her list.

After her temporary vows, she was sent to Franciscan University of Steubenville in Steubenville, Ohio, to earn bachelor’s degrees in business management and theology.

Bob says he and Jenni could see Sister Mary Amata “growing comfortable in her own skin” throughout her eight years of formation. (The order has since added an additional year.)

“The Church is very wise in requiring a certain amount of formation,” says Sister Mary Amata. “There’s a lot of growth and purification that happens.

“There are times that are really challenging, where it’s hard to remember why you are doing this,” she admits. “But [those times] allow us to be free to love the Lord and our sisters and the spiritual children that he’s given us.”

‘It’s such a joy to live this life’

Sister Mary Amata professed her perpetual vows on Aug. 2.

“I professed to live this life until death,” she says. “And in making that profession, I know the Lord has given me the grace to be faithful to those vows.”

Her parents have no doubt about their daughter’s vocation.

“She was never a sad person,” says Bob. “But when she made her final vows, she went from really happy to off-the-charts happy.”

Jenni agrees.

“She radiates joy,” she says. “We hear it from other people, we see it in pictures.”



Sister Mary Amata Naville radiates joy after professing final vows as a member of the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration on Aug. 2 in the chapel at the order's motherhouse in Mishawaka, Ind., in the Fort Wayne-South Bend Diocese. (Photo courtesy of Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration)

Sister Mary Amata now serves as her community’s assistant vocations director at the motherhouse in Mishawaka.

“Now I help put on discernment retreats for young women just like the one I went on,” she says in a joyful voice.

Along those lines, Sister Mary Amata offers this advice to women discerning a religious vocation.

“First and foremost, your vocation is the way God has called you both to receive his love and give yourself in love,” she says. “In discernment, it’s not about solving a problem. It’s about falling in love with the Lord and following where he’s leading.”

She reminds discerning women that God “might have a different timeline than yours,” and that taking a step “doesn’t mean your committing for life. ... You have nothing to lose when seeking the Lord and his will—and everything to gain.”

Sister Mara Amata also has advice for girls like her, growing up with no exposure to religious sisters: “Seek them out.”

She offers several ideas: visit a local convent; set up a call to talk with a sister about religious life; read about saints who were religious sisters; watch videos about religious life; ask your parish or youth minister to invite sisters to come give a talk.

“The Church is missing spiritual mothers,” she stresses. “We need more sisters to witness so there can be more vocations.”

As for Sister Mary Amata, she is still in awe of her own vocation.

“To be a bride of Christ is a gift I’ll never fully comprehend,” she says.

“Even though Jesus isn’t present as man here on Earth and is often hidden or quiet, the way he loves us as his brides is so real and intimate. It’s just such a joy to be so close to him and have my whole life centered on him.”

She also finds “joy in living with my other sisters. They teach me. It’s a school of love, even when we may disagree.

“It’s such a joy to live this life.”

(For more information on the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration, go to ssfpa.org.) †



Want to bring hope to the world, your life? Follow this Benedictine path

By John Shaughnessy

Benedictine Sister Anne Louise Frederick will never forget the time when she helped celebrate the birthday of Benedictine Sister Betty Jean Coveney.

On such a special day when a person usually receives presents, Sister Betty shared a gift from her heart with someone else.

“This spirit of celebration led both of us to a desire to take time to visit one of our sisters who was in a rehab facility a little distance from our monastery,” recalls Sister Anne Louise, formation director of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove.

“The time visiting with this sister was so beautiful as we laughed, prayed and sang. And I felt so grateful to share community with a sister who felt joy in taking this time on her birthday to visit another sister in need. It always stands out to me as a grace-filled experience.”

That story captures one of the six main ways—care for the sick and elderly—that the sisters show how Benedictine life is a sign of hope in the world today.

“Hope is a virtue that flows from God’s grace. It is not dependent on life’s circumstances,” Sister Anne Louise says. “The greatness of our hope shines forth in adverse situations where our faith in God’s goodness and God’s faithfulness gives us strength to endure. We minister hope when we recognize the dignity of each human being and trust that God can transform any suffering and use it for his purposes. Love will have the final word.”

Here are the five other ways that the Benedictine sisters strive to use their gifts to bless others and draw closer to God. They encourage people to reap the joys and benefits that come from embracing these goals in daily life, believing they can help bring hope to a divided world.

Seek the common good

“Benedict instructs in his *Rule* that we should seek not first our own good, but the good of the other. That is quite countercultural,” Sister Anne Louise says. “It involves sacrifice and an awareness to see beyond our needs and desires to the needs of others.

“Love is truly desiring the good of the other. Benedict trusts that in seeking the common good, we will find meaning in life and find the deep peace that comes from abiding in God.”

Sister Anne Louise has witnessed countless times how that approach and that belief have touched and transformed the sisters who live in community at Our Lady of Grace Monastery.

“There are so many ways to live this out in community. We give input to decisions that impact all, and support decisions that are made by leadership on behalf of all. Community life lived well is such a powerful witness to our world of the richness that is ours—if we strive for the communion we were created for.

“We offer hope as we live out our faith in a God who is for us, always desiring what is best for us.”

Make prayer an emphasis

Benedictine Sister Carol Falkner describes prayer as “the bedrock for the Benedictine vocation.” Individually and communally, the sisters make prayer for others and the world their focus.

“We celebrate our communal prayer three times each day,” says Sister Carol, subprioress (second in leadership) of the monastery. “Benedict refers to our daily prayer as the work of God. It strengthens us as a community. At these times, we ask God to sanctify our work, to bring peace to our world and to grant us the grace to share in spreading God’s word through our words and actions.

“I believe this constancy in prayer brings hope to a world in grave need of

healing. People appreciate being remembered in prayer. And anyone is welcome to join us for our communal prayer.”

That emphasis on prayer brings the sisters to a deeper connection with God.

“As a monastic, I promise to be faithful to prayer,” Sister Carol says. “In turn, I experience God’s faithfulness to me. As I stay open to God’s grace, I find myself with the desire to serve my sisters, guests and those who turn to us so they and their loved ones might also be held in prayer.”

The focus on prayer also helps her draw closer to the people she guides as a spiritual director.

“Prayer enables me to be attentive to the other person, to listen to that person, as Benedict says, with ‘the ear of my heart,’ ” Sister Carol says. “When I prayerfully tend to the other person, she or he is able to discern God’s will and act on it. One is filled with hope when one is assured of God’s love and care.”

Offer hospitality

Sister Carol says that she and her fellow sisters strive to embrace St. Benedict’s guidance “to treat each guest as Christ” and to care for the things we use “as vessels of the altar.”

“I find many opportunities to extend hospitality to those who visit our monastery,” Sister Carol says. “So many people in our world need a listening ear and someone to tend to them. Our guests are invited to pray with us, to join us for meals and to find periods of peace and quiet.

“Finding a place of welcome brings hope to a person and reminds that person of his or her importance. Experiencing this love enables a person to go out and extend love to others. As this love ripples out, hope is restored.”

That care for others involves another important approach—caring for the Earth.

“We care for others in caring for the Earth,” Sister Carol notes. “When we abuse the Earth, we bring darkness and hopelessness. When we consciously care for the Earth, we bring light and spread hope that the Earth will continue to sustain us.”

Seek peace

As Benedictine Sister Heather Jean Foltz searched for a sense of peace in her life, she found it in the Benedictine monastery.

“Peace is more than an environment or a feeling,” says Sister Heather, the vocations director for Our Lady of Grace Monastery. “The pursuit of peace in the Benedictine tradition goes beyond simply avoiding conflict. It involves actively working toward a just and harmonious world, both within oneself and in one’s relationships with others.”

The path to peace isn’t easy, she says. Instead, it requires effort, diligence and commitment.

“There is a healthy tension between pursuing a way of life that one believes will lead us to God, and our own



Benedictine Sisters Anne Louise Frederick, left, Carol Falkner and Heather Jean Foltz pose in Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove. In their years of life as members of the monastic community there, they have experienced how the Benedictine vocation is a source of hope for themselves, their fellow sisters and the broader community.

(Submitted photo)

responsibility for doing the work that brings about peace,” Sister Heather says. “The peace we seek is not something that comes from outside us. It starts within us.”

And when conflicts arise, the *Rule* of Benedict advises making peace “before the sun goes down.”

“My daily actions help to establish peace,” Sister Heather stresses. “It requires me to refrain from gossip, angry words, holding grudges, trying to control things that are outside of my control, letting others work on themselves without my help or input, and doing the work within me that drives me to act in ways that do not lay a foundation for peace.

“I can’t do any of these actions alone. The grace to live in peace comes from God. It is when I open myself up to do the things God is asking of me that I experience true peace. When God’s will and my will act together, I experience peace, even if the situation is difficult or challenging. This aspect of our Benedictine charism is a hope we share with a world that is so divided.”

Move from ‘I’ to ‘we’

In her 15 years of living at Our Lady of Grace Monastery, Sister Heather has come to embrace two essential aspects of

community life—stability of place and stability of heart.

“Stability of place is our physical presence to our community and to the greater Beech Grove community,” she says. “Stability of heart is about our love for our communities’ traditions, norms and to the individuals that God has called to this place.

“Through our vow of stability, our community calls me to surrender my own will and do what together we discern is best. Life moves from ‘I’ to ‘we.’ ”

In embracing that move, the roots of community grow stronger, leading toward a deeper relationship with God, too.

“On the good days and the hard days, we are called to stay at table with one another,” Sister Heather says. “We journey with others throughout the joys and the struggles of life. We celebrate new memberships, jubilees and professions that add joy to our life. Living inter-generationally together, we also witness the final surrender of each sister as they are called home to God.

“We remain on this journey together in all things. This draws each of us closer to God.”

(To learn more about Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove, visit www.benedictine.com.) †



New Sisters of Providence delve deeper into faith during novitiate year

By Jason Moon

Special to *The Criterion*

ST. MARY-OF-THE-WOODS— During a ceremony on Aug. 24 at the motherhouse of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Ann Duong and Maité Rodriguez-Mora entered the novitiate and were welcomed into the religious community at St. Mary-of-the-Woods in western Indiana.

Both are now taking part in the religious community's yearlong Canonical Novitiate Program and have received the title of "Sister."

"I felt at peace as I entered the next phase of becoming a Sister of Providence," Sister Ann said. "In addition, I pray to Mary to protect my vocation and help me remain faithful to my call."

"The Canonical Novitiate is a once-in-a-lifetime gift when, in our formation, we will have time to learn the community and Church history, participate through the formation process in the Intercommunity Novitiate Program at Catholic Theological Union [in Chicago] and have more dedicated time to study Scripture, instruction, conferences, spiritual accompaniment and personal prayer," Sister Maité added.

During the ceremony, Providence Sister Dawn Tomaszewski, the religious community's general superior, offered a reflection prior to both sisters requesting entrance into the novitiate.

"This is the 'we' moment," Sister Dawn told the novices. "You are now part of who we are. Welcome to that adventure."

Both Sister Ann and Sister Maité entered the congregation as postulants on Sept. 14, 2024, while knocking on the entrance door of the motherhouse. They were welcomed by Sister Dawn and other members of the Sisters of Providence.

Sister Ann, 44, is a native of Vietnam. She was previously a member of the

Sisters of Mary, Queen in St. Louis for 21 years before entering the Sisters of Providence. She served for 16 years while in that community as a pre-school teacher.

Sister Maité, 49, is a native of Puerto Rico. Prior to entering the Sisters of Providence, she worked for Conception Abbey, a Benedictine monastery in Conception, Mo.

According to the Sisters of Providence's constitutions, the purpose of the Canonical Novitiate Program is to "foster the internalization of Gospel values."

During the yearlong program, both sisters will have extended time for prayer and have spiritual direction monthly. They will also give service to the religious community and regularly receive instruction in religious life, Scripture, theology and the history and traditions of the Sisters of Providence.

They will be under the guidance of the community's novice director Sister Norene Wu.



Providence Sister Judith Birgin, left, embraces Providence Sister Maité Rodriguez-Mora on Aug. 24 in the Church of the Immaculate Conception on the grounds of their community's motherhouse after Sister Maité was received as a novice in the community that day. (Submitted photo)

"They will take classes relating to the community history of the Sisters of Providence, Old Testament, New Testament, music, art and spirituality and other important components of

novitiate formation," Sister Norene said. "Additionally, they will join the novices of other communities for weekly classes on different and very important topics for holistic formation through the Intercommunity Novitiate program in Chicago.

"We will join 27 novices and 15 novice directors from eight other communities for the classes."

Sister Norene said they will travel weekly to Chicago for the classes.

"The weekly gatherings for the novices are a good way to build relationships and

hopefully form a strong network serving God's people," Sister Norene said. "And as director of novices, my role is to be the novices' guide, coach, instructor and supervisor.

"I also try to be a 'midwife' for their holistic formation on the journey of becoming forever members of the Sisters of Providence."

During the coming year, both Sister Ann and Sister Maité will begin studying vows for the congregation.

"The goal of the year is to grow in our identity as a Sister of Providence and intimacy with our Creator God," Sister Maité said.

"This novitiate is a stage for me to go deep into the charism, history and legacy of the Sisters of Providence," Sister Ann added. "Furthermore, it is a year to pray and study to know more about God."

(Jason Moon is communications director for the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. Women who are interested in religious life are invited to the Sisters of Providence's Come and See weekend retreats. Learn more at ComeandSee.SistersofProvidence.org or contact Vocations Director Providence Sister Joni Luna at 361-500-9505 or jluna@spsmw.org if you think you are being called.) †



Providence Sister Ann Duong, right, a novice of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, poses with Providence Sister Cynthia Lynge, left, Sister Judith Birgin and Sister Nancy Bartosavich on Aug. 24 in the Church of the Immaculate Conception on the grounds of their community's motherhouse. Sister Ann was received as a novice that day in a liturgy in the church. (Submitted photo)

SEMINARIANS

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priests are happy is important. Parents, he noted, sometimes think their sons may be lonely in the priesthood or even unhappy with such a sacrificial life.

"When someone loves something, they desire to share that with others," he said. "Priests are able to experience an intimacy with their friend that is beyond words. Who are we to stand in the way of that happiness of our sons?"

In the end, the seminarians and Father Hosty said praying for vocations and for the men discerning is important.

Father Hosty offered a prayer for vocations in the archdiocese that everyone can say each day:

Almighty Father, you have created us for some

definite purpose. Grant us the grace to know the path you have planned for us in this life and to respond with a generous 'Yes.' Make our archdiocese, parishes, homes and hearts fruitful ground for your gift of vocations. May our young people respond to your call with courage and zeal. Stir among our men a desire and the strength to be good and holy priests. Bless us with the consecrated religious, and those called to a chaste single life, permanent deacons and faithful husbands and wives, who are a sign of Christ's love for his Church. We commend our prayer for vocations to you, Father, with the intercession of Mary our Mother, in the Holy Spirit, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Jennifer Lindberg is a member of St. Mary Parish in North Vernon. For more information about a vocation to the priesthood in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, visit HearGodsCall.com.) †



Transitional Deacon Liam Hosty walks in a procession on June 7 going into SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral for the Mass during which he was ordained a priest. He now serves as parochial vicar for St. Ann Parish in Indianapolis and St. Thomas More Parish in Mooresville. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)



BOEHM

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was named pastor of St. Mary Parish in Rushville as well.

“That was a difficult transition and one of the toughest years of my life,” he said. “I had to learn to rely on others to get things done and make peace with the fact that I can’t be everywhere at once.”

A ‘delicate balance’

As a self-described control freak, Father Boehm says he spends approximately 25 hours each week organizing his calendar to make sure he is where he needs to be.

On a recent Tuesday, he spent the morning with the students at St. Gabriel School praying the rosary and blessing their new statue of Mary before heading over to Rushville to discuss funeral arrangements with a grieving family.

He stopped by St. Mary School at dismissal to check in with the kids, attended an assortment of meetings, caught up with correspondence and celebrated evening Mass before going home at the end of the day.

Thursdays are his “shift days” when he relocates to his other office and consults the Post-it notes he left for himself the last time he was there. He said it is a delicate balance with each parish having their own subtle nuances that he has to remember through the following Wednesday until it’s time to shift again.

“One thing that keeps me sane in all of this is the Lord’s commitment to me and my commitment to the Lord in prayer,” Father Boehm said.

The other bright points are the school children who offer a welcome reprieve during a long day as well as the parish and school staff who manage the day-to-day operations and get everything done. There are also the dedicated parishioners who readily step up whenever their assistance is required.

Sherry Owen at St. Mary is one such parishioner. She loves the way that Father Boehm encourages the congregation to get involved in existing ministries or to create a new one if they see a need. After conducting a parish survey to connect volunteers with various ministries, she found that there were a handful of ladies who liked to cook, but there was no outlet for their skillset.

“Without missing a beat, Father Dustin said, ‘Let’s start a Hospitality Committee,’ and today, we have 12 ladies who bring

meals to the OCIA [Order of Christian Initiation of Adults] breakfasts. They do the youth ministry gatherings, meet-and-greet events, as well as welcome and going away receptions,” she said. “He let us run with it, and it’s really been a great addition to the parish.”

‘He is one of us’

If any of Father Boehm’s parishioners feel neglected, you’d never know it. In fact, they feel that he is not only an engaged presence in their parishes, but available whenever they need him.

St. Bridget parishioner Amanda Hertel said Father Boehm is like a member of her family, and she appreciates the way he includes stories of his own faults, failures and struggles in his homilies. Not only does it help her relate to the readings during Mass, but it also shows that he is no better or worse than anyone else and that he understands what they may be going through.

“He really does a good job of making us feel like he is one of us,” she said. “Caring for three parishes can’t be easy on him, but he handles it all really well. You never see him without a smile on his face, and he is never too busy to greet you. He always takes the time to make you feel that you matter even when he has so many other people to take care of.”

St. Gabriel parishioner Matthew Biehl, a homeschooled high school sophomore, says Father Boehm has been a mentor to him as he discerns a possible vocation to the priesthood. It’s not only what he shares in their personal conversations, but also by being a good example of who a priest is.

Matthew says Father Boehm really expresses what it means for a priest to



Father Dustin Boehm preaches during a Mass at St. Gabriel Church in Connersville. The liturgy took place during a lock-in event for the parish’s youth group. Father Boehm is pastor of St. Bridget of Ireland Parish in Liberty, St. Gabriel Parish in Connersville and St. Mary Parish in Rushville. (Submitted photo)

give his life to the Church and, more specifically, to his parish.

“I learned from him that being a priest really means giving everything that you have to your parish, and through that giving of yourself, you will find a joy that you can’t find anywhere else.”

‘Just him and me’

Father Boehm agrees that the more he gives in his vocation, the more he gets in return. But he said it’s also important to take the time for self-care and to nurture the relationship at the center of it all—his relationship with God.

Like spouses who fail to connect due to the hustle and bustle of their daily lives, priests also have to work on their relationship with the one who called them to their vocation. And during the National

Eucharistic Congress held in Indianapolis in July 2024, Father Boehm rededicated himself to personal prayer and carving out some one-on-one time with God.

“That had been such a tough year, and I suddenly realized that I can’t do this without prayer,” he said. “My vocation does not happen without a relationship with God. It’s easy to lose sight of that when there are 25 things to do and only 24 hours in a day. So, I have reserved my early morning hours for just him and me, and I trust that he will give me the time to get everything else accomplished.”

(Julie Young is a member of St. Michael Parish in Greenfield. To learn more about a vocation to the priesthood in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, visit HearGodsCall.com.) †



Father Dustin Boehm speaks with students of St. Gabriel School in Connersville on May 8 while they watch coverage of the conclave that elected Cardinal Robert F. Prevost as Pope Leo XIV. (Submitted photo)

Video discusses new statue of Mary on grounds of St. Gabriel School

The Oct. 24 issue of *The Criterion* featured photos of Oct. 7 events at St. Gabriel School in Connersville, including the blessing of a new statue of Mary on the school campus.

Scan the QR code or visit tinyurl.com/St-Gabriel-Mary-Statue to listen to St. Gabriel pastor Father Dustin Boehm and school principal Michelle Struewing discuss how the project came to fruition. †



Indy woman seeks to quench her ‘thirst for the living God’ in religious life

By Mary Dando
Special to *The Criterion*

“The idea of being a bride of Christ, the prayer life and the life of service were so powerfully beautiful to me.” These were some of the thoughts of Mercy Sister Maria Guadalupe Figueroa on her journey of discernment to religious life.

Toward the end of college, while finishing her degree in biology and taking prerequisites for an accelerated nursing program in Indianapolis, she began to experience “a restlessness in my heart.” She sensed that if she stayed in Indianapolis, surrounded by family and her faith community, she would never take the next steps to visit religious communities and seriously discern her vocation.

Instead of going on to nursing school, she made “the act of faith” and took a different course. She went to Washington, D.C., to serve the poor as a missionary.

It was there she met members of the Religious Sisters of Mercy of Alma, Mich., and knew that she could live out her vocation to love among these sisters.

Sister Maria Guadalupe, 32, professed her final vows on Aug. 16. Her favorite Scripture passage is inscribed inside the ring she received at the Mass of Final Profession: “A thirst for the living God,” (Ps 42:3).

During her eight years of formation in the Religious Sisters of Mercy leading up to her final profession of vows, Sister Maria Guadalupe completed her nursing degree and is currently taking care of some of the elderly sisters in her religious community’s infirmary.

She is the youngest of five girls and grew up in the inner city of Indianapolis. Her parents, Francisco and Rosalba, moved from Zacatecas, Mexico, to the U.S. in the 1970’s in search of a better life.

“As a little girl, Gabriela was always the first to be ready for Mass. And she encouraged us all to be early for Mass,” remembered her father Francisco, referring to his daughter by her baptismal name. When she entered the Sisters of Mercy, she took on her religious name of Maria Guadalupe.

“At the time, I thought it was like everybody else,” he said. “She was always helping the poor and the homeless.”

Sister Maria Guadalupe grew up as a parishioner of St. Anthony Parish in Indianapolis, where her parents are still members. As a young adult, she often took part in the young adult community



Mercy Sister Maria Guadalupe Figueroa receives with joy the congratulations of a fellow member of the Religious Sisters of Mercy of Alma, Mich., during an Aug. 16 Mass at the Cathedral of Mary of the Assumption in Saginaw, Mich., in which Sister Maria Guadalupe professed final vows as a member of the Sisters of Mercy. She grew up as a member of St. Anthony Parish in Indianapolis. (Submitted photo)

at St. John the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis.

When he and his wife dropped her off at the convent in Michigan, Francisco was very sad. “She is my youngest, and I asked God, ‘Why are you taking her away from me?’ But now I am so glad,” he said.

When her parents were crossing the southern border, Rosalba was pregnant with Gabriela, and she prayed to the Blessed Virgin, as a mother, to bring them to safety. “Maybe that was a special blessing she received,” Francisco said.

It was in college that Sister Maria Guadalupe began to discern her vocation through taking steps to grow in her Catholic faith. “As a freshman I was invited to a Catholic Bible study. I had never attended a Bible study so I thought it would be a good idea.

“Through that invitation, I met a community of young people who loved their faith and were serious about their call to holiness. That sparked an interest and desire to reprioritize my values in making my relationship with the Lord the most important thing in my life.”

Anne Marie Brummer remembers the student, who went by “Gaby,” as full of joy. Brummer was a missionary with the Fellowship of Catholic University Students at the former Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis. She helped Catholic students by teaching them how to pray, make the sacraments a part of their life of faith and how to lead Bible study groups.

“Like many others, Gaby was just trying to figure out her life,” recalled Brummer. “She wasn’t particularly religious, but as she got more involved, she was all in in her Catholic faith. She

had such a good heart and gave herself up in the service of others.”

At college, Sister Maria Guadalupe began to think about the possibility of religious life. “As I grew in my relationship with the Lord, I felt that my response to his love needed to be a response of totality. Whenever I read about the lives of the saints who gave everything to the Lord, their example of total self-sacrifice and boundless love just made sense to me.

“I was still in college and didn’t feel the Lord was calling me right then, but I knew religious life was a possibility in the future. I trusted that if I continued being faithful, he would direct my steps.”

When she met some of the members of the Religious Sisters of Mercy in Washington, she felt that she knew them already and she looked them up when she returned home.

“I liked their habit,” she said. She recalled when she was in an airport, a stranger, seeing her in her habit, came up to her and asked for her prayers. “They see the light of Christ in us,” she said.

She visited the sisters in Washington at their convent there. Months later, she made the journey with her parents to enter the community as a postulant.

“The meaning of postulant is to question,” she said. “When you arrive, it’s like getting to know a new family. You grow in the family through the charism of mercy. I was warmly welcomed and knew I was home.

“At first, it’s challenging. But in moments of trial, you realize how much God loves us. You come to understand you have the freedom to choose what Christ chooses. Our Lord is our cornerstone, and through prayer you reflect on yourself and come to know him and accept his invitation to follow him unreservedly.

“I have a deep desire to know God’s love,” she continued, “a desire to serve, faithfully living my vocation, knowing there is spiritual fruitfulness of new life in Christ found through the gift of self.”

(Mary Dando is a member of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis. To learn about the Religious Sisters of Alma, Mich., visit www.almamercy.org.) †

2025-2026 Seminarians & Religious in Formation Prayer Card

Please pray for the following individuals and intentions on the corresponding day of the month.

1. Pope Leo XIV

2. Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

3. Deacon Samuel Hansen

4. Deacon Timothy Khuishing

5. Deacon Khaing Thu

6. Kristofer Garlitch

7. Lancy Tony

8. Casey Deal

9. Randy Schneider

10. Seth Hickey

11. Robert McKay

12. Hayden Merkel

13. Lucas LaRosa / Sr. Emily Tekolste, SP

14. Luke Roesener / Sr. Jessica Vitente, SP

15. Todd Seiler / Sr. Leslie Dao, SP

16. John Fritch / Sr. Stephanie Marie Rivas, SP

17. Antonio Harbert / Sr. Ann Duong

18. Abraham Hudepohl / Sr. Maité Rodriguez-Mora

19. Nathan Huynh / Sr. Christine Sheehan

20. Josh Russell / Sr. Mary Paul Callahan, FSGM

21. Jack Fraley / Sr. Maria Gemma Barnett, SOLT

22. Dominic Pavey / Sr. Mary Francis Noll

23. Ethan Kawaguchi / Kristin Foresman

24. Dean Cheever / Emma Schuler

25. Max Ecoff / Br. Jude Angel Romero-Olivas, OSB

26. Simon Kempf / Br. Ambrose Brahm, OSB

27. Paul Weckenbrock / Br. George Meredith, OSB

28. Douglas Allison, OSB / Keegan Porter, OSB

29. Br. Benjamin Sasin, CSC / Ben Jansen, SJ

30. Taylor Fulkerson, SJ / Br. Thomas Goble

31. For Vocations to the Priesthood and Consecrated Life

PRAY FOR VOCATIONS



2025-2026

For information on the Seminarians and Religious in Formation from the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, visit www.HearGodsCall.com

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Monk finds his Benedictine vocation through prayer, community and art

By Sean Gallagher

ST. MEINRAD—Benedictine Brother Jean Fish was a teenager growing up in southern California in 2007 when his father Michael Fish woke him up early to drive him to Prince of Peace Abbey near San Diego so his son could experience and take part in the monks' Vigils and Lauds, two parts of the Liturgy of the Hours prayed at the start of the day.

His father had previously been on retreat at the monastery as a deacon candidate for the Diocese of San Diego and wanted his son to experience the quiet early morning prayer of the monastic community. He was ordained a deacon in 2010.

"The liturgy starts and immediately I kind of get this feeling of, 'Where's this been my whole life?'" recalled Brother Jean. "It was something special and my first experience of something like this spiritually. The second thought was, 'I wish I could do this all the time.'"

That desire turned into reality seven years later in 2014 when he entered Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad. He became a novice there the following year, professed temporary vows in 2016 and solemn vows in 2019.

'There was an immediate sense that this was home'

The groundwork for his openness to his Benedictine vocation was prepared in part during the two-year program he took part in as a teenager at his parish to be formed for the sacrament of confirmation. His parents were also helpful in supporting him in his discernment.



Deacon Michael Fish and his son, Benedictine Brother Jean Fish, pose on Sept. 25 in the Archabbey Church of Our Lady of Einsiedeln in St. Meinrad. Deacon Fish serves at St. Meinrad Parish in St. Meinrad and St. Boniface Parish in Fulda. Brother Jean is a member of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in Saint Meinrad. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

After being confirmed, Brother Jean was active in his parish's youth group and helped to lead it. This led to thoughts of a possible priestly or religious vocation.

"I knew that I wanted to dedicate my life to the Church in some way, possibly," Brother Jean remembered.

In an interview with *The Criterion*, the father and son recalled the moment when Brother Jean told his parents his thoughts.

"It was after dinner," said Brother Jean.

"We were sitting at the table and he says to us, 'I want to be a priest.' He was in tears," said Deacon Fish.

"I remember that," added Brother Jean, looking at his father.

His parents were supportive of his discernment but asked him to earn an undergraduate degree first, which Brother Jean did at Sonoma State University in Rohnert Park, Calif.

"If it was an authentic calling, it would still be there," said Deacon Fish. "And I said I would do everything I could in my power to help him achieve that."

"The openness of him supporting me in any way was completely the truth," Brother Jean said, recalling that his father helped him "not be afraid of who I am."

Brother Jean also saw things he desired in his own life when his father discerned his own calling as a permanent deacon when Brother Jean was a teenager. He also witnessed it in his father's participation in the San Diego Diocese's deacon formation program.

"Being a young adult, the main thing that you're seeking is purpose—purpose in the relationships that you have with other people," Brother Jean said, "but also kind of the trajectory of my life and what am I aiming toward."

He also appreciated the "sense of joy" and "sense of purpose" he saw in his father in his life and ministry as a deacon.

"The sense of joy had an energizing quality that came with that vocation," Brother Jean said. "It was very attractive to me as a young person trying to figure out where was I going."

He ended up going to lots of places, physically and virtually, in his discernment of a possible religious vocation, taking trips to monasteries in California. But viewing a video on Saint Meinrad Archabbey's website attracted him more than anything had prior. He noted that he was "impressed by how genuine everyone was in that video."



Benedictine Brother Jean Fish works on Oct. 10 on a piece of woven art on the grounds of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad. (Photo courtesy of Saint Meinrad Archabbey)

Brother Jean first visited Saint Meinrad in May 2014.

"There was an immediate sense that this was home," Brother Jean recalled.

'We were on our journey together'

After his first visit, Brother Jean soon started the application process to join the monastery. He moved in five months later in October.

And in the home he had discovered in May, he soon found a family. There were other men around his age in formation in the monastery. Although they did not know each other before coming to the monastery, they supported each other well in the months and years to come.

"We were on our journey together," Brother Jean said. "On Wednesday nights, we'd either just sit around and talk about how things were going or we would play board games. We were also hanging out on Saturday nights and Sunday nights. We really got along."

They also prayed together with the rest of the monastic community several times a day in the Archabbey Church of Our Lady of Einsiedeln in the kind of prayer that had been such a draw to Brother Jean as a teenager.

He described the Liturgy of the Hours that the monks pray together at different

points of the day, from morning to night, as "opportunities to breathe."

"It's a place of rest and peace," he said. "Despite everything else that is going on, it's a place that we come to together that has a sense of peace and rest. It really is kind of this refuge that we kind of return to."

Bring peace to daily life through art

In addition to the community life and prayer leading him closer to God in his Benedictine vocation, Brother Jean has also found art as a pathway to holiness.

In college, he took an interest in creating geometric patterns as a hobby.

"I forced myself to draw straight lines freehand," Brother Jean said. "That meant that I had to control my breathing. The process of creating these patterns was greatly meditative. It brought a profound sense of peace when dealing with the business of full-time studies."

After professing solemn vows, he studied art at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, earning a bachelor's degree in fine arts, focusing in particular on sculpture. At Saint Meinrad, he creates woven basket sculptures and teaches others the craft.

"Art was one of the ways that I navigated my own monastic identity,"

See MONK on next page

Long journey of faith leads deacon from atheism to service in the Church

By Sean Gallagher

ST. MEINRAD—A quarter of a century ago, Deacon Michael Fish couldn't have imagined himself believing in God, let alone serving the Church as a deacon.

In the spring of 2000, he set out on a journey of faith, vocation and ministry that led him and his wife Joy from their home in southern California to southern Indiana.

Along the way, Deacon Fish turned away from a life devoid of God to embrace a life wholly shaped by trust in him. He later discerned that God was calling him to serve the Church as a permanent deacon, being ordained in the Diocese of San Diego in 2010—a decade after his journey of faith had begun.

The path that led him and Joy to southern Indiana was shaped by another journey of faith—that of their son, Benedictine Brother Jean Fish when he discerned his vocation as a monk of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad. (See article above.)

They moved to St. Meinrad in 2023, and Deacon Fish

has been serving in St. Boniface Parish in Fulda and St. Meinrad Parish in St. Meinrad for the past 18 months.

'I was blown away with who this Jesus was and what he said'

Deacon Fish grew up in southern California in a Jewish family. After taking part in his *bar mitzvah* when he was 13, he told his parents that he was no longer going to practice his Jewish faith, a decision which they accepted.

"For most of my adult life, I was, I would say, an atheist," said Deacon Fish, 67, in an interview with *The Criterion*. "I had no God in my life, no faith at all."

He and his wife Joy, born and raised a Catholic, married in 1980 in a civil ceremony. "I refused to get married in a church," he said.

Deacon Fish and Joy have two sons—Scott, born in 1987, and Benedictine Brother Jean, born in 1990.

While Deacon Fish continued to reject any form of faith in God for himself, he allowed Joy to raise their

sons as Catholics. In fact, he wanted the faith to be a part of their lives.

"I wanted my children to have what I lacked," he said.

But when Scott was 13—the same age at which Deacon Fish had rejected his own Jewish faith—he announced to his father one Sunday morning that he was no longer going to Mass.

"I don't know where this came from, but I looked at him and I said, 'Well, I'm going to go. And if I go, you go,'" Deacon Fish recalled of his response to Scott's announcement 25 years ago. "That's how important it was to me that he have faith in his life and have God in his life."

So, for the first time in his 20 years of being married to Joy, Deacon Fish attended Mass and continued to do so to provide a good example for Scott.

After about a month, Deacon Fish's attending Mass with his family started to have an effect on him.

"I left the church and I just felt wonderful," he said. "I felt incredible, actually."

See DEACON on next page



MONK

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Brother Jean said. “It created a space where I could be introspective. But it was also a way to share something with others as a sign of love and gratitude.

“Because art had been a great source of peace for me, there was that desire to share that peace with others. So, I began to see art as being something that could be a ministry, too. Similar to what initially impressed me about Benedictine liturgy, art was profoundly personal, but also communal.”

He shares his art not only with his fellow monks. It’s also available to the many visitors who come to Saint Meinrad.

“A common comment from guests is that Saint Meinrad’s quiet atmosphere and prayer can be a place to find peace and recharge,” Brother Jean said. “Art is something that guests can take back with them to continue that experience. One of the joys of teaching art has been showing others that peace can be accessible during their daily lives.”

Brother Jean seeks out that peace in his own daily life as a monk, including in his artistic work. For him, it’s a process

that takes a while to come to fruition and requires patience.

“When making art, there is a phase of imperfection, where the zeal of starting has passed and the beauty of a finished artwork seems distant,” he said. “There is the need to trust the process.”

The process, whether in creating a work of art, or cooperating with God’s grace in his ongoing creation of himself as a work of art of God in his life, requires faith and hope.

“The artist has a vision of the artwork in completion, but there has to be the faith and hope that such a vision is truly attainable,” Brother Jean said. “When speaking of beautiful art, its creation becomes a sign of both gratitude and love.

“If the goal of monastic life is to provide opportunities of conversion so as to prepare us for heaven, then artwork can draw our attention to that goal. To live a life of faith, hope and love is the way of Christ. Art provides an opportunity to ask how those values are being lived.”

(To learn more about a vocation as a Benedictine monk of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad, visit www.saintmeinrad.org.) †



This is a completed work of woven art created by Benedictine Brother Jean Fish, a member of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad. (Photo courtesy of Saint Meinrad Archabbey)

DEACON

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Deacon Fish had begun to believe in God. Yet he kept the beginnings of his belief to himself, not speaking of it even to Joy because he wasn’t sure if it would last.

But he soon ordered a Bible and had it delivered to the law firm where he worked as an attorney.

“It was a version where the words of Jesus were in red,” Deacon Fish explained. “And so I went right to the New Testament, which I’d never even heard of before, or read. I shut my door, and I spent the next eight hours reading everything in red. That’s all I did from Matthew to John, everything that Jesus said.”

The effect this had on him was clear.

“You could have picked me up off the floor,” Deacon Fish said. “I was blown away with who this Jesus was and what he said.”

He wasn’t the only person blown away by the entrance of God into his life.

“I was blown away,” said Joy, recalling when her husband told her that he had contacted her parish about taking part in what was then known as the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA). “He had been so adamant about having no religion before. Then, it was just like, boom, God hit him all of a sudden on his head.”



Joy Fish

‘I don’t know why you did this to me’

After first coming to believe in God, Deacon Fish dove in headfirst, learning as much as he could about the Catholic faith as quickly as he could.

Joy attended the RCIA sessions with him. It was an occasion for her to reinvigorate her own faith—and her relationship with her husband at

the same time.

“He had all these questions, and he was doing all this reading,” she said. “I thought that I had to catch up. He knew more than I did. It was kind of a renewal for us in our marriage. We had something that was exciting to talk about.”

On April 22, 2000, Deacon Fish was received into the Church through the sacraments of initiation in a social hall at St. Gabriel Parish in Poway, Calif. The parish had not built its own church yet, so he was baptized in what he recalled as “a Walmart wading pool.”

“But, for me, it could have been the Jordan River,” Deacon Fish said. “I would have crawled on my knees to the parish to be baptized, if that’s what it took.”

Deacon Fish and Joy had their marriage convalidated in the Church soon after he was received into the Church.

He enjoyed RCIA so much in preparation for his own reception into the Church that he again took part in its sessions the next year at his parish. Then he started teaching in it and leading the parish RCIA program.

“Then a year later, I’m sitting in the back of the church and [my pastor] comes up to me and he says, ‘I want you to be a deacon,’ ” Deacon Fish remembered. “I had no idea what he was talking about.”

But, just like when he first explored the faith, he began learning about the diaconate. He also soon learned from



Deacon Michael Fish preaches a homily on Sept. 28 at a Mass at St. Boniface Church in Fulda. (Submitted Photo)

the San Diego Diocese’s deacon office that he was too new in the faith to begin its deacon formation program.

“A couple of years later, the pastor came up to me and he says, ‘OK. It’s time. Call again,’ ” Deacon Fish said.

This time, in 2005, he was accepted into the diocese’s deacon formation program and was ordained five years later.

Joy accompanied Deacon Fish through all of his deacon formation classes. The experience strengthened their marriage just as her attending RCIA sessions had years earlier.

“We’d get out of class at 9 [o’clock] at night, we’d drive home, and we would talk all the way,” she said. “And then when we’d get home, we’d talk for hours about what we had learned. He had questions, and I had questions.”

As he approached his ordination, Deacon Fish experienced awe in the face of the journey that God had taken him on, but also determined to follow God’s call in his life.

“I said to the Lord, I said, ‘I don’t know why you did this to me. But ... I’m ready,’ ” Deacon Fish recalled. “That’s how I always viewed it. This was the journey that I was supposed to be on.”

‘You are what you do’

That journey was affected by his life leading up to the start of it. And a large part of Deacon Fish’s life has been practicing law. He sees his work as an attorney as having had a good influence on his life and ministry as a deacon—especially in teaching and preaching.

“The art of lawyering is to take difficult concepts, either in the facts of the case or the law, and simplify them so that non-lawyers [jurors] or judges not familiar with that aspect of the law can readily grasp the relevant principles,” he said. “In much the same way, the art of teaching and preaching is to take difficult concepts, such as the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and simplify them so that they are meaningful to the people.”

And after having had such a powerful experience of baptism in his own life, Deacon Fish values preparing people for that sacrament and celebrating it. He keeps a list of the nearly 400 people he’s baptized, most of them infants, since he was ordained.

“I can’t tell you how sacraments work, but I can tell you they do change a person, because I experienced that as an adult,” he said. “How does this water with this prayer and this intention—how does that work? I have no idea, but I can tell you it does, because I’ve experienced that. I really was a different person after I was baptized. I could feel that.”

And he knows that he became a different person after he was ordained a deacon in 2010.

“You’re drawn to it because you are what you do,” Deacon Fish said. “You are what you think. And the more you visit the sick or participate in liturgy or whatever you do as a deacon, that becomes more who you are.”

(For more information on a vocation to the diaconate in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, go to archindy.org/deacon.) †



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2025-2026 Seminarists

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vocations@archindy.org



VOCATIONAL SYNTHESIS STAGE



Deacon Samuel Hansen '26
Saint Meinrad Seminary
St. Roch, Indianapolis



Deacon Timothy Khuishing '26
Saint Meinrad Seminary
St. Mark the Evangelist,
Indianapolis



Deacon Khaing Thu '26
Saint Meinrad Seminary
St. Mark the Evangelist,
Indianapolis



Kristofer Garlitch '27
Saint Meinrad Seminary
St. Mary, North Vernon



Lance Tony '27
Saint Meinrad Seminary
St. Simon the Apostle, Indianapolis
*Co-sponsored with the Diocese of
Palayamkottai



Casey Deal '28
Saint Meinrad Seminary
St. Charles Borromeo,
Bloomington

CONFIGURATION STAGE



Randy Schneider '28
Saint Meinrad Seminary
All Saints, Dearborn County



Seth Hickey '29
Saint Meinrad Seminary
Mary Queen of Peace, Danville



Robert McKay '29
Saint Meinrad Seminary
St. Ann, Indianapolis



Hayden Merkel '29
Saint Meinrad Seminary
St. Mary, Aurora



Lucas LaRosa '30
Saint Meinrad Seminary
St. Barnabas, Indianapolis



Luke Roesener '30
Saint Meinrad Seminary
Holy Family, Oldenburg

DISCIPLESHIP STAGE



Todd Seiler '30
Saint Meinrad Seminary
St. Mary, Aurora



John Fritch '31
Saint Meinrad Seminary
St. Martin of Tours,
Martinsville



Antonio Harbert '31
Bishop Simon Bruté Seminary
St. Joseph, Shelbyville



Abraham Hudepohl '31
Bishop Simon Bruté Seminary
St. Nicholas, Sunman



Nathan Huynh '31
Bishop Simon Bruté Seminary
Our Lady of Perpetual Help,
New Albany



Josh Russell '31
Bishop Simon Bruté Seminary
Holy Family, New Albany



Jack Fraley '32
Bishop Simon Bruté Seminary
St. Gabriel, Connersville



Dominic Pavey '32
Bishop Simon Bruté Seminary
Holy Rosary, Indianapolis

PROPAEDEUTIC STAGE



Ethan Kawaguchi '32
Saint Meinrad Seminary
St. Louis, Batesville



Dean Cheever '33
Bishop Simon Bruté Seminary
St. Therese of the Infant Jesus
(Little Flower), Indianapolis



Max Ecoff '33
Bishop Simon Bruté Seminary
Holy Rosary, Indianapolis



Simon Kempf '33
Bishop Simon Bruté Seminary
Holy Rosary, Indianapolis



Paul Weckenbrock '33
Bishop Simon Bruté Seminary
All Saints, Dearborn County

Pope Leo XIV
Elected May 8, 2025





RELIGIOUS IN FORMATION
2025-2026

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Sr. Emily Tekolste, SP
Sisters of Providence,
St.-Mary-of-the-Woods
St. Anthony, Indianapolis
Temporary professed



Sr. Jessica Vitente, SP
Sisters of Providence,
St.-Mary-of-the-Woods
Temporary professed



Pope Leo XIV
Elected May 8, 2025



Sr. Leslie Dao, SP
Sisters of Providence,
St.-Mary-of-the-Woods
Temporary professed



**Sr. Stephanie
Marie Rivas, SP**
Sisters of Providence,
St.-Mary-of-the-Woods
Novice



Sr. Ann Duong
Sisters of Providence,
St.-Mary-of-the-Woods
Novice



Sr. Maité Rodriguez-Mora
Sisters of Providence,
St.-Mary-of-the-Woods
Novice



Sr. Christine Sheehan
Sisters of St. Francis of
Perpetual Adoration
Holy Rosary, Indianapolis
Postulant



**Sr. Mary Paul
Callahan, FSGM**
Sisters of St. Francis of the
Martyr St. George
St. Joseph University Parish,
Terre Haute
Temporary professed



**Sr. Maria Gemma
Barnett, SOLT**
Society of Our Lady of the
Most Holy Trinity
St. Charles Borromeo,
Bloomington
Temporary professed



Sr. Mary Francis Noll
Nashville Dominican
Sisters of St. Cecilia
Our Lady of Perpetual Help,
New Albany
Novice



Kristin Foresman
Mercedarian Sisters of the
Blessed Sacrament
St. Mark, Indianapolis
Postulant



Emma Schuler
Dominican Sisters of Mary,
Mother of the Eucharist
St. Paul Catholic Church
Bloomington, Indiana
Postulant



**Br. Jude Angel
Romero-Olivas, OSB**
Saint Meinrad Archabbey
St. Meinrad, IN
Temporary professed



Br. Ambrose Brahm, OSB
Saint Meinrad Archabbey
St. Meinrad, IN
Temporary professed



Br. George Meredith, OSB
Saint Meinrad Archabbey
St. Meinrad, IN
Temporary professed



Douglas Allison, OSB
Saint Meinrad Archabbey
St. Meinrad, IN
Novice



Keegan Porter, OSB
Saint Meinrad Archabbey
St. Meinrad, IN
Novice



Br. Benjamin Sasin, CSC
Congregation of Holy Cross,
United States Province of
Priests and Brothers
St. John the Evangelist,
Indianapolis
Temporary professed



Ben Jansen, SJ
Society of Jesus-
Midwest Jesuits
SS. Francis and Clare,
Greenwood
Philosophy studies



Taylor Fulkerson, SJ
Society of Jesus-
Midwest Jesuits
St. Mary, Lanesville
Theology



Br. Thomas Goble
Dominicans of the Province of
St. Albert the Great.
St. Bartholomew, Columbus
Temporary professed



Three transitional deacons ordained for the archdiocese on Oct. 25

Criterion staff report

Three archdiocesan seminarians were ordained as transitional deacons on Oct. 25 at the Archabbey Church of Our Lady of Einsiedeln in St. Meinrad.

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson ordained Deacon Samuel Hansen, a member of St. Roch Parish in Indianapolis, and Deacon Timothy Khuishing and Deacon

Khaing Thu, both members of St. Mark the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis.

The transitional deacons are expected to be ordained as priests for the archdiocese next June.

After their priestly formation at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad concludes in December, the three deacons will minister in archdiocesan parishes in the months

leading up to their priestly ordination.

(For more photos from the ordination, visit www.CriterionOnline.com or the archdiocesan social media accounts on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn or X. For more information about a vocation to the priesthood in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, visit www.HearGodsCall.com.) †



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, second from right, poses with three archdiocesan seminarians he ordained as transitional deacons on Oct. 25 at the Archabbey Church of Our Lady of Einsiedeln. The deacons are, from left, Deacon Timothy Khuishing, Deacon Samuel Hansen and Deacon Khaing Thu.

(Photos courtesy of Saint Meinrad Archabbey)



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson ritually lays hands on the head of archdiocesan seminarian Samuel Hansen during the Oct. 25 Mass in which Hansen was ordained a transitional deacon.



Transitional Deacon Khaing Thu gives Communion to his father, Victor Kolo, during the Oct. 25 Mass in which Thu was ordained a transitional deacon.

Right, transitional Deacon Timothy Khuishing ritually receives a Book of the Gospels from Archbishop Charles C. Thompson during the Oct. 25 Mass in which Khuishing was ordained a transitional deacon. Assisting at the liturgy is seminarian Lance Tony, center. He is co-sponsored by the archdiocese and the Diocese of Palayamkottai, India.



SIMPLY CATHOLIC

Origins of All Saints’ Day and All Souls’ Day go back far in Church history

By D.D. Emmons

(OSV News)—It might seem unusual that our Church’s liturgical calendar schedules two major celebrations on back-to-back days. But that is precisely the situation with the solemnity of All Saints and the Commemoration of the Faithful Departed (All Souls’ Day).

All Saints Day, celebrated on Nov. 1, is a solemnity that is a holy day of obligation in many countries. In the United States, the obligation to attend Mass on All Saints Day is abrogated if the feast falls on a Saturday or Monday. All Souls’ Day takes place on Nov. 2.

During these early November celebrations, those of us among the faithful still living (the “Church militant”) unite our hearts with and in a special way remember the faithful departed, whether they be in heaven (the “Church triumphant”) or in purgatory (the “Church suffering”).

All Saints’ Day

All Saints’ Day, which began most likely as All Martyrs’ Day, can be traced to the earliest Christians. By the third century, the followers of Christ were annually honoring their brothers and sisters who had given their lives as martyrs while witnessing to and defending Jesus Christ. Typically, on the anniversary of a martyr’s death, those living would gather to remember and offer prayers at the tomb or place where the deceased had died.

Tombs were sometimes decorated and altars built over the tomb. According to Church historian Henry Chadwick, “From the third century, the anniversary of a martyr’s death, called his ‘birthday,’ was commemorated at his grave by a celebration.” The belief among the first Christians, which continues today, is that believers who died defending Christ were borne by angels to heaven and are face-to-face with the living God, in the presence of the beatific vision.

In those first centuries, especially during the savage reign of the Roman Emperor Diocletian (who ruled from 284-305), there were more and more Christians who died at the hands of the Romans rather than deny Christ, rather than worship false gods or the personage of the emperor.

Additionally, others who had publicly confessed their Christian faith and survived the Romans were also honored. They became known as confessors. Thus, the number of martyrs and confessors became greater than the opportunities to give each one an anniversary celebration, and the need for a common feast day was recognized.

By the fifth century, there is evidence of locations, such as in Antioch, where the fledgling Church had set aside the first Sunday following Pentecost to honor collectively these holy and courageous people.

In 609, during the reign of Pope Boniface IV, the Eastern Emperor Phocas gave a temple in Rome to the Holy See. The temple, still standing today and still known



Students dressed as their favorite saints recite the Lord’s Prayer during an All Saints’ Day Mass at SS. Philip and James Church in St. James, N.Y. The celebration of All Saints’ Day began some 1,200 years ago. (CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)

as the Pantheon, was originally built in the first century. Destroyed by fire and rebuilt between 118 and 128, it was a public place to worship and honor all the Roman gods and goddesses—a spectacular monument to pagan Rome.

Pope Boniface accepted this temple, removed all the pagan embellishments, all the statues of false gods and, according to legend, relocated and buried the remains of hundreds of Christian martyrs beneath the Pantheon.

The pope then dedicated the Pantheon as a Christian church to the Blessed Mother and all the Holy Martyrs. This took place on May 13, and that became the annual date of the feast of All Martyrs for the next 125 years.

On Nov. 1, 735, Pope Gregory III dedicated an altar in St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican to house the relics of the Apostles, martyrs, saints and confessors. Thereafter, Nov. 1 became, at least for the Diocese of Rome, the feast of All Saints, and the May 13 feast was suppressed.

The Church in other places began to celebrate the feast on the same day as in Rome and soon a vigil of All Saints was added. Eventually, Pope Gregory IV (who served as pope from 827-844) assigned Nov. 1 as the date of the feast of All Saints throughout the Latin Church and

proclaimed it a holy day of obligation.

In the 15th century, octave days were added by Pope Sixtus IV and the octaves of All Saints were part of the Church calendar until suppressed in 1954. In sum, there is ample historical evidence that Christians have annually, on some date or another, acknowledged the collective lives of all martyrs and saints for more than 1,200 years.

Today, All Saints’ Day is a solemnity on which the universal Church honors the martyrs, the saints and the confessors, known and unknown, who have all gained the reward of heaven.

All Souls’ Day

Offering prayers for those who have died is ancient in origin. In the Old Testament’s Second Book of Maccabees, written around 100 B.C., Judas Maccabeus orders his army to pray and offer sacrifices on behalf of their fallen comrades. Tombs found in the Roman catacombs are inscribed with prayer requests for the deceased.

The second-century writer Tertullian wrote in an essay, “Monogamy,” about a woman praying for her deceased spouse: “Indeed she prays for his soul and asks that he may, while waiting, find rest; and that he may share in the first resurrection. And each year, on the anniversary of his death, she offers the sacrifice.”

The Commemoration of the Faithful Departed, or All Souls’ Day, emerged on the Church’s liturgical calendar long after All Saints’ Day. Sometime between 998 and 1030, St. Odilo, the abbot at the Benedictine monastery in Cluny, France, encouraged all the monks there to pray for the souls of those who had died who were still awaiting the joys of heaven.

He instituted this commemoration on the day after All Saints’ Day. Because of Cluny’s significant influence on the Church across Europe at the time, soon other religious orders and dioceses began to annually remember all who had died on the same date.

Remembering and praying for the faithful departed is tied directly to our belief in purgatory. On All Souls’ Day, the universal Church prays for all those in purgatory, people who were much like us who struggle with temptation to sin and the ongoing effects of sin in our lives.

On that day, and during the entire month of November, we remember our departed brothers and sisters as we go to cemeteries where they are buried, attain indulgences for them, give alms, do good work, and arrange for Masses to be celebrated in remembrance of them.

We also light candles, and in some parishes the faithful display pictures of their deceased loved ones in the church. Church bells are sometimes rung to remind people to pray for the poor souls in purgatory. Priests are authorized to celebrate three Masses on this holy day.



A child places a candle at the gravesite of a loved one on All Souls’ Day on Nov. 2, 2024, at Wari Cemetery in Dhaka, Bangladesh. All Souls’ Day emerged in the Church’s liturgical calendar about 1,000 years ago at the former Benedictine monastery at Cluny in France. (OSV News photo/Stephan Uttom Rozario)

(D.D. Emmons writes from Pennsylvania.) †

Faith and Family/Sean Gallagher

Family life shows forth many paths to holiness and sainthood

As a student and lover of Church history going back to my grade school days, All Saints’ Day has always been a favorite feast of mine. It’s a day to celebrate the entire history of the Church with all the richness of the stories of its holy men and women and the variety of times, places and cultures in which they lived and shared the Gospel.

The saints can seem so different on the surface. There’s St. Paul, an Apostle and missionary who lived in the first-century eastern Mediterranean region. He seems a world away from St. Thérèse of Lisieux, a cloistered nun in 19th-century France.

Then there’s St. Charles Lwanga, a young adult martyred in Uganda in 1886 who lived a life so different from St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, born in New York City in 1774, a wife, mother, Catholic convert, educator and later a founder of a community of women religious.

Yes, these saints are different in many ways. But there are many threads that tie them together. Ultimately, their lives were all marked by their common love for Christ and his Church.



That common love binds the saints in all times and places into one family of faith who find a home in this life in the Church, and who are destined to enjoy a joyous and eternal reunion at the wedding feast of the Lamb in heaven.

What is true of the Church as a family of faith in general is also true in individual families, the building blocks of the Church.

I’ve gained a greater appreciation for how this mystery of the Church is embodied in families as my own family has changed through the years.

When my five sons were all young, their differences weren’t as marked. They all had the same basic physical and emotional needs of toddlers and young children. They all played pretty much with the same toys and enjoyed reading the same children’s books.

They naturally began to develop their own unique personalities as they entered their teenage and young adult years.

Michael, at 23 and my oldest son, enjoys computer programming and gives lessons in it online to young people. Raphael, 20, works as an apartment complex maintenance technician and has developed great skills in cooking and baking. Victor, 18, is investigating various career possibilities, including working in a skilled trade

and enjoys playing chess and following his favorite basketball and football teams, an interest his older brothers don’t have.

All of my sons are also on different points in their own personal journeys of faith. My wife Cindy and I pray for each of them daily, asking God to draw them ever closer to him and his Church. It’s wondrous to see holiness come to life in them in ways unique to each of them. The challenges they sometimes face in their faith can lead Cindy and me to redouble our prayers for them.

As they grow into adulthood, we sometimes see that the most important thing that we can do at this point is to help them become saints through prayer and fasting. Just as the saints became holy by choosing daily to cooperate with God’s grace, so our sons will have to do the same to become saints.

It’s not the only thing we can do, though. God also calls all parents to witness to the faith to their children in the way they daily seek to become saints themselves with the help of his grace.

The back and forth flow of that grace between parents and children help them all and the Church as a whole, along our path to holiness in this life and for eternity in heaven. †

Guest column/Sister Maureen Fitzgerald, A.S.C.J.

Awake to others: Experiencing the mutual nature of Christian charity

There are times when we find ourselves more engaged in reaching out to others: the Lenten season; the summer, when we may have a bit more time; or the moments when we have a full closet or pantry and can spare some things to take to a local charity.



In my own life, service starts with being acutely aware of God’s presence. What would God have me respond to in this present moment? If God is my companion, then my ears and eyes are open to what is before me. I have a responsibility as a Christian to share what I have, to be a joyful witness, to listen to the heart meanderings of another. As I become better at hearing

and seeing in the now—and as I respond—I find that I become blessed by those who share in the abundance I have been given.

“Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour” (Mt 25:13). This may be seen as a call to prepare for the end times, but it may also be a call to respond with companionship to the one who is before me.

Being aware of the needs of others and responding to them is a responsibility I have as a Christian.

I sometimes shudder at the implication the word “service” conjures up. Although not always intentional, it seems that the giver has the advantage, the upper hand, the answers, and the receiver, therefore, must be grateful for what the giver has provided.

Christian service is a mutual experience. I found this truth while being graced with the opportunity to build simple homes in Reynosa, Mexico. We came with our tools, our hope of helping those who live with nothing, and our desire to do good. What we left with was quite different.

Working with students, their parents and those who lived in this underserved part of the world, we began to understand that service is only a vehicle to building community. It was a mutual sharing. What we really built was friendship, a bond that flowed freely between giver and receiver.

As Christians, our service must be a response to God’s Spirit stirring within us. We must be alert to how it reveals itself by living in the presence of God and by truly seeing the other who is before us.

No one possessed more than another. If I had food to share, there was someone who delighted in the gift, and that delight allowed me to revel in a joy shared. We gathered in prayer on the last day of our building to thank God for the opportunity to meet one another and for the grace to share our common humanity.

We have a responsibility to respond to the need before us. When we do respond, what is returned is a reply to some need of our own. This morning before Mass began, a man whose wife suffers from dementia and is living apart from him asked if I would pray for him because “his heart was broken” from this separation. As I assured him of my prayer, I found myself experiencing my own heartbreak for him—and for the separations and heartbreak I have experienced in my own life. We were united in that moment; we shared a mutual giving and receiving.

As Christians, our service must be a response to God’s Spirit stirring within us. We must be alert to how it reveals itself by living in the presence of God and by truly seeing the other who is before us.

In Scripture, we are called to “keep awake” (Mt 24:42). Perhaps that’s the mantra of Christian service as well.

(Sister Maureen Fitzgerald is an Apostle of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. She has served in Catholic schools as a teacher and administrator. She is currently ministering in Waterford, Ireland.) †

Guest column/Rose Sweet

All saints have their God-given temperament types, whatever the era

The saints are alive! And, like us, they have human temperaments. Some were fierce and outgoing, others quiet and contemplative.



We’re called to be saints, too, and our temperaments are innate, hard-wired traits that God has gifted us. The Church has relied on the study of the classic four temperaments (sanguine, choleric, melancholy and phlegmatic) as an aid to spiritual growth for centuries.

We may be natural introverts or extroverts or even a bit of both. We may quickly trust in others or be naturally suspicious. Perhaps you move cautiously through life, while your inspiringly saintly best friend dashes headlong into things.

Regardless, it is upon these natures that we are built, by God’s grace, into men and women of virtue.

As a certified life and relationship coach, I help my clients discern their own temperament sets as a means of self-understanding and personal or career discernment. As a Catholic, I also use the saints to showcase canonized men and women who have exemplified the spiritual gifts arising from each trait, allowing God to thus bring their personalities to perfection.

Just for fun, as we approach All Saints Day, let’s consider where a few saints might fall within the four types of temperaments:

St. Philip Neri lived in Rome during a time when there were grave abuses within the Church and humanism and skepticism were replacing Christian ideals and thinking. From infancy Philip had both a docile (phlegmatic) and

spirited, playful (sanguine) disposition.

Before becoming a priest, he evangelized as a layman on street corners, making friends and engaging in personal conversations. Amusing and charming, Philip would arrange group talks or excursions, sometimes with music, wine-drinking contests or a fun picnic included.

His goal was to establish warm, personal bonds with others as he brought them back to the Church. He’s called the “laughing saint” who never took himself too seriously (sanguine). One of his biographers said he was so adaptable he could be all things to all people—a characteristic phlegmatic strength.

From dear Philip, we learn that we can be holy and even pious and still be able to take ourselves and others lightly, and have fun.

Recently canonized St. Pier Giorgio Frassati was a cigar-smoking mountaineer who could also recite entire passages of Dante with relative ease.

He had boundless energy (the extroverted choleric), attended the theater, visited museums, helped establish a newspaper and declared, “Charity is not enough; we need social reform,” even while studying engineering—all melancholy strengths.

Clearly, he was a take-action choleric with a beautiful “bleeding heart,” typical of the melancholy. Once he arrived home, his teeth chattering from the cold. When his father asked why he was not wearing the beautiful overcoat given to him, Pier Giorgio admitted that he’d given it away to a homeless man who was shivering.

From this highly active, gregarious and socially oriented new saint, we have this encouragement: “If you have God as the center of all your action, then you will reach your goal.”

St. Catherine of Siena was a mystic, activist and author who had a major influence on Italian literature, politics and the Catholic Church, and she is a doctor of the Church.

As an introvert, she preferred a withdrawn life, yet when duty called, she traveled throughout Italy preaching, writing, and persistently advocating for the reform of both clergy and faithful.

When Pope Gregory XI abandoned Rome during political turmoil, Catherine went to tell him to get back where he belonged! He listened, ultimately naming her an ambassador; in that role, she negotiated for peace between the republics and principalities.

Later, the Great Schism of the West led Catherine to write to princes and cardinals instructing obedience to the new Pope Urban VI. Confident, capable, and courageous phlegmatics often excel at holding their ground, keeping their calm, and are often better natural ambassadors than fiery, outspoken extroverts.

It takes conviction and courage to stand up and speak out, especially to those in authority. “If you are what you should be, you will set the world on fire,” Catherine wrote to one correspondent. As a classic phlegmatic and melancholy, she would know!

The saints are clear-eyed Christians who knew who they were and offered the fullness of themselves to God, in all their strengths and weaknesses. As November approaches, may we follow their examples!

(Rose Sweet is the author of My Type of Holiness: Striving for Sainthood with the Temperament God Gave Me, OSV, 2025.)†

Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed (All Souls' Day)/
Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, November 2, 2025

- Wisdom 3:1-9
- Romans 6:3-9
- John 6:37-40

Nearly 1,000 years ago, the great Benedictine abbey of Cluny in France, situated roughly two-thirds of the way from Paris to Geneva, initiated a feast of commemorating all the departed souls. At the time, Cluny was a major center of learning, piety, and caring for the needy and missionary outreach, wielding much influence on the Church across Europe.

Eventually, Cluny's feast of All Souls became an important date on the universal Catholic liturgical calendar.

This weekend, instead of celebrating the Thirty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time, the Church observes the Feast of All Souls, because the Church has a lesson to teach.

The first reading is from the Book of Wisdom. The purpose of this book is expressed in its name. It sees religious faith and devotion as the highest of human reasoning. Belief in and obedience to God are wholly logical.

The reading is reassuring. It states that God will never forsake the righteous. He will purify them as fire purifies gold. (Fire removes flaws from gold.)

For the next reading, the Church presents a passage from St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans. For two millennia, Christians have regarded Romans to be one of the genuine masterpieces of revelation.

Paul consoles us in sharing that, while we have sinned, God still loves us. Indeed, the Son of God died for sinners that they might have eternal life.

St. John's Gospel supplies the last reading. In this reading, Jesus declares that no one who earnestly seeks God will be scorned. Each person is priceless. In God's love, the plan is that no one shall be lost.

Reflection

Whenever the Church replaces the liturgy of a Sunday in the normal sequence of Ordinary Time with a feast, it intends to teach an important lesson.

The Church's message this weekend is

simple. Only the just may enter heaven, as the Scriptures teach. (See 2 Mac 12:38ff.; Mt 12:32; 1 Cor 3:12-15; 1 Pt 3:19.)

Everyone has sinned. While forgiven, believers suffer the ill effects of their sins, while not bringing upon eternal death.

The ancient Christian belief and consolation is that committing sin does not necessarily condemn anyone to everlasting doom. The Lord forgave sins and bestowed this same authority on the Apostles and their successors. (See Jn 20:23.)

Purgatory is the Church's theological explanation of how sinners overcome sin's ill effects. Ultimately, it is about us as humans, and about God's great love for us, even if we have sinned.

All Souls Day, first and foremost, calls Christians to be frank and honest with themselves. They are sinners. None is perfect. Accepting this fact is fundamental to Christianity, to any person's choice to follow Christ.

Secondly, it proclaims the love and mercy of God, perfectly expressed in the ministry and the sacrificial death of the Lord. God lovingly forgives.

The Church earnestly insists that God loves us. At the same time, just as the ancient prophets and Christian mystics through the centuries have proclaimed, sin undoubtedly injures humans.

Even if we beg to be forgiven and have been forgiven, we continue to bear the effects of the injuries of sin. As sinners, we are wounded. Our selfishness has been increased. Our vision further blurred. We are confused and uncertain. We sin again.

Purgatory is the opportunity to be purified, for the wounds made by sin to be healed. It is a state of longing.

All people are united in their being children of God. Anyone can be received into union with God by his grace if they so choose. On All Souls Day, we pray that God mercifully will hurry the process of purification so that the souls in purgatory, our brothers and sisters in Christ, will soon fully live with God—healed, perfected and cleansed.

Sin wounds us, often badly, but God forgives and heals us. He loves us. Purgatory restores us. †

Daily Readings

Monday, November 3
St. Martin de Porres, religious
Romans 11:29-36
Psalms 69:30-31, 33-34, 36
Luke 14:12-14

Tuesday, November 4
St. Charles Borromeo, bishop
Romans 12:5-16b
Psalms 131:1b-3
Luke 14:15-24

Wednesday, November 5
Romans 13:8-10
Psalms 112:1b-2, 4-5, 9
Luke 14:25-33

Thursday, November 6
Romans 14:7-12
Psalms 27:1bcde, 4, 13-14
Luke 15:1-10

Friday, November 7
Romans 15:14-21
Psalms 98:1-4
Luke 16:1-8

Saturday, November 8
Romans 16:3-9, 16, 22-27
Psalms 145:2-5, 10-11
Luke 16:9-15

Sunday, November 9
The Dedication of the Lateran Basilica
Ezra 47:1-2, 8-9, 12
Psalms 46:2-3, 5-6, 8-9
1 Corinthians 3:9c-11, 16-17
John 2:13-22

Question Corner/Jenna Marie Cooper

Prayers for faithful departed are always helpful for those still in purgatory

At Mass, we typically pray for the souls of those in purgatory, often mentioning names of persons long since



passed, sometimes 10 or even 20 years ago. Is there any way to know how long a person could be in purgatory? Could a deceased person still be in purgatory 20 years later? (Indiana)

Generally, there is no clear way to know whether or not someone is still in purgatory.

There is one major exception, of course. That is, the Church's process for canonizing saints is essentially a long discernment of whether or not the person in question is actually in heaven. If it is determined that the individual is now in heaven, it logically follows that he or she would no longer be in purgatory—if he or she was ever even there in the first place.

The Church's canonization process involves multiple stages, beginning with a careful review of the proposed saint's life, works and writings, to ensure that he or she was faithful to the Church's teachings

and lived a life of "heroic virtue."

Following this, if the person was not a martyr, the Church looks for two miracles attributed to the proposed saint's intercession as signs that this person truly is in heaven. Any reported miracle is then carefully scrutinized by a team of experts to confirm that it is indeed a miracle, i.e. that it cannot be attributed to any natural cause. After the first verified miracle, the person is beatified and given the title

"Blessed"; after a second miracle, he or she is canonized and declared a saint.

The whole process can take decades and requires a great deal of dedication and resources, which is why the canonization process is generally only applied in cases where officially declaring a deceased member of the faithful a saint will have some special benefit for the Church in general.

Obviously, the canonization process is not something you would invoke out of mere curiosity as to whether a person is still in purgatory.

Still, it's good to keep in mind that in our Catholic theology, all people now in heaven—whether they are known or unknown, famous or obscure—are truly saints. This is one reason why we celebrate the solemnity of All Saints on Nov. 1 every year, even though individual canonized saints often already have their own feast days on the calendar. On All Saints' Day, we commemorate all the members of the faithful who are actually in heaven, although most of these saints are known only to God.

With respect to the other part of your question, it is entirely possible that a person may still be in purgatory 20 years after his or her death, or even longer.

Reading your question, I was reminded of the apparitions of Our Lady of Fatima, where one of the visionaries reported that our Lady told her that a recently deceased teenager from their village would be in purgatory until the end of the world!

But purgatory, like heaven and hell, is a state that exists outside of our earthly experience of time. So, even if there was an easy way to determine whether or not someone is currently in purgatory, we couldn't really gauge that soul's spiritual progress there in terms of months, days or years.

I can understand why you might want to know whether someone is still in purgatory, especially when it comes to departed loved ones. Yet in our practical life of faith, we can still carry on peacefully even with this ambiguity.

For one thing, prayers for the dead are never wasted. If we pray for the repose of the soul for someone already in heaven who is thus no longer in need of prayer, we can be confident that those graces will be given to a soul in purgatory that does need it. Since there is really nothing to lose by praying for the dead, we can still fruitfully pray for the faithful departed, even if many years have passed since their death.

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

My Journey to God

You. Are. Never. Alone.

By Gayle Schrank

Who do you put your hope in
Do you know what you believe
We must identify whose we are
In order to not be deceived
This benefit of life we are given
Is goodness that sets us free
The universal generosity of love
Does not come from you or me
What we say and do is our choice
Be grateful and give God praise
Our path will be made straight
We have assurance of better days
That yearning to love and be loved
Is divine goodness wanting a home
We are children of God
Look within: You. Are. Never. Alone.

(Gayle Schrank is a member of St. Mary Parish in Navilleton. Photo: A statue of Christ is seen in St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church in Phoenix on Oct. 5.) (OSV News photo/Bob Roller)



Pope: A synodal Church evangelizes better, works together for justice

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The pursuit of synodality should strengthen the Catholic Church’s mission of proclaiming the Gospel and help all Catholics learn to collaborate to make the world a better place, Pope Leo XIV said.

“As Pope Francis reminded us on numerous occasions,” the pope said, the purpose of synodality “is to help the Church fulfill its primary role in the world, which is to be missionary, to announce the Gospel, to give witness to the person of Jesus Christ in every part of the world, to the ends of the Earth.”

That witness includes speaking up for justice, caring for the planet and promoting peace, Pope Leo said during a meeting late on Oct. 24 with participants in the Jubilee of Synodal Teams and Participatory Bodies.

“The Church has a voice, and we need to be courageous in raising our voice to change the world, to make it a better place,” he told the pilgrims, who included about 150 representatives from the United States with 15 U.S. bishops.

During the evening meeting the pope listened to seven regional reports on the implementation of the 2021-2024 Synod of Bishops on synodality and answered a question from each regional representative. Pope Leo took notes during the presentations, and his responses appeared to be unscripted.

Two questions drew strong applause from participants, a reaction Pope Leo noted in his responses. The first applauded question was about changing the minds of “bishops and priests who are concerned that synodality may diminish their authority as pastors”; and the second was whether the pope believed “equality between men and women in the Church can become a lived reality in the future.”

Canadian Bishop Alain Faubert of Valleyfield, Quebec, gave the North American report, which ended with the question about getting all bishops and priests onboard.

Pope Leo said there is a need “to invite the priests, particularly, even more so than the bishops, I think, to somehow open their hearts and take part in these processes. Oftentimes, the resistances come out of fear and the lack of knowledge.”



Many of the U.S. bishops and pilgrims attending the Jubilee of Synodal Teams and Participatory Bodies pose for a group photo on Oct. 25 in the Paul VI Audience Hall at the Vatican. (CNS photo/Lola Gomez)

The synodal process of listening to one another without immediately judging or defending one’s position has practical applications, he said.

Apparently referring to the breakdown of U.S.-Canada talks about trade and tariffs, the pope noted that the two countries “are experiencing even great difficulties. Two countries that were once considered the closest allies, at times, become separated from one another, and it’s another proof, another expression, of why synodality—listening and dialogue—are so important, and how they have concrete applications in our daily lives.”

People committed to synodality in the Church need to be patient, though, he said. “We have to understand that we do not all run at the same speed, and sometimes we have to be patient with one another, rather than a few people running ahead and leaving a lot behind, which could cause even a break in an ecclesial experience.”

Presenting the European report, Klara Antonia Csiszar, a professor of theology in Linz, Austria, told Pope Leo that “the question of women remains an important issue throughout Europe. In many local Churches in the West, impatience for greater female participation is an open reality, while elsewhere, debates on the diaconate or on women’s leadership encounter resistance, skepticism or fear.”

Responding, the pope began by telling the delegates that sometime in the 1970s he remembers asking his mother if she wanted to be equal to men. “And she said, ‘No, because we are already better.’ And she was not joking.”

“Leaving aside the most difficult themes that are being studied by study groups,” particularly the question of ordaining women to the diaconate, Pope Leo said he believed the lack of equality for women in the Church is due mainly to “cultural obstacles.”

“I mean women could play a key role

in the Church, but there are priests and bishops who hesitate,” he said. “There are cultures in the church where women still suffer because of inequality. In some cultures, women are considered as second-class citizens and, in reality, do not enjoy the same rights as men.”

A challenge for the Church, Pope Leo said, is to “understand how we can promote respect for the rights of everyone, men and women. How can we promote a culture in which these things become not only possible, but they become a reality, a culture in which there is co-participation of all the members of society, each according to their vocation, so everyone can play a role, can have a role of responsibility in the Church.”

The Church, he said, must find ways “to transform cultures according to the values of the Gospel. Unfortunately, often the way which we live out our faith is influenced more by our culture than by Gospel values.” †

POPE

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in on itself, but remains attentive to God so that it can similarly listen to everyone.”

By “clothing ourselves with the sentiments of Christ, we expand the ecclesial space so that it becomes collegial and welcoming,” he said. This will “enable us to live with confidence and a new spirit amid the tensions that run through the life of the Church.

“We must allow the Spirit to transform” the current tensions in the Church “between unity and diversity, tradition and novelty, authority and participation,” he said.

Online Lay Ministry Formation

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

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

“It is not a question of resolving them by reducing one to the other, but of allowing them to be purified by the Spirit, so that they may be harmonized and oriented toward a common discernment,” he said.

“Being a synodal Church means recognizing that truth is not possessed, but sought together, allowing ourselves to be guided by a restless heart in love with love,” he said.

Synodal teams and participatory bodies, he said, should “express what occurs within the Church, where relationships do not respond to the logic of power but to that of love.”

Rather than follow a “worldly” logic, the Christian community focuses on “the spiritual life, which reveals to us that we are all children of God, brothers and sisters, called to serve one another,” he said.

“The supreme rule in the Church is love. No one is called to dominate; all are called to serve,” he said.

He said Jesus showed how he belongs “to those who are humble” and condemns the self-righteous in the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector, which was the day’s Gospel reading (Lk 18:9-14).

The Pharisee and the tax collector both enter the temple area to pray, the pope said, but they are divided mostly because of the attitude of the Pharisee, who is “obsessed with his own ego and, in this way, ends up focused on himself without having a relationship with either God or others.

“This can also happen in the Christian community,” the Holy Father continued. “It happens when the ego prevails over the collective, causing an individualism that prevents authentic and fraternal relationships.

“It also occurs when the claim to be better than others ... creates division and turns the community into a judgmental and exclusionary place; and when one leverages one’s role to exert power, rather than to serve,” the pope said.

The tax collector, on the other hand, recognized his sinfulness, prayed for God’s mercy and “went home justified,” that is, forgiven and renewed by his encounter with God, according to the reading.

Everyone in the Church must show the same humility,

he said, recognizing that “we are all in need of God and of one another, which leads us to practice reciprocal love, listen to each other and enjoy walking together.”

This is the nature and praxis of the synodal teams and participatory bodies, he said, calling them “an image of this Church that lives in communion.

“Let us commit ourselves to building a Church that is entirely synodal, ministerial and attracted to Christ and therefore committed to serving the world,” he said.

Pope Leo cited the words of the late Italian Bishop Antonio Bello, who prayed for Mary’s intercession to help the Church “overcome internal divisions. Intervene when the demon of discord creeps into their midst. Extinguish the fires of factionalism. Reconcile mutual disputes. Defuse their rivalries. Stop them when they decide to go their own way, neglecting convergence on common projects.”

The Catholic Church, he said, “is the visible sign of the union between God and humanity, where God intends to bring us all together into one family of brothers and sisters and make us his people: a people made up of beloved children, all united in the one embrace of his love.”

Later in the day, before praying the *Angelus* at noon with those gathered in St. Peter’s Square, Pope Leo continued his reflection on the day’s Gospel reading, saying, “it is not by flaunting our merits that we are saved, nor by hiding our mistakes, but by presenting ourselves honestly, just as we are, before God, ourselves and others, asking for forgiveness and entrusting ourselves to the Lord’s grace.”

Just as a person who is ill does not try to hide—out of shame or pride—their wounds from a doctor, the Christian also should not try to hide their pain if they are to be healed, he said.

“Let us not be afraid to acknowledge our mistakes, lay them bare, take responsibility for them and entrust them to God’s mercy,” he said. “That way, his kingdom—which belongs not to the proud but to the humble and is built through prayer and action, by practicing honesty, forgiveness and gratitude—can grow in us and around us.” †

Creation Care Ministry members find hope at environmental conference

Criterion staff report

Sarah Mundell Spencer and Julie Reyes, members of the archdiocesan Creation Care Ministry, walked away hopeful and motivated after attending the Raising Hope for Climate Justice Conference held in Castel Gandolfo, Italy, on Oct. 1-3.

The event celebrated the 10th anniversary of Pope Francis’ encyclical on the environment, “*Laudato Si’*: On Care for Our Common Home.”

Reyes, a member of St. Matthew the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis, says she was “inspired by the many projects of conference participants and motivated to do my part locally to be part of the solutions for those in countries that are struggling.

“So many of these projects included collaborations with people outside of their immediate circles, whether it be other religions, government officials or secular groups. It was inspiring to see how much we can accomplish if we work together.”

Spencer agreed, saying she heard at the conference about “communities in the Pacific that are going under water and have to leave their home islands because the sea level is rising.”

The member of St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Parish in Indianapolis contrasted such stories of concern with other stories of hope, like “the Church in Ireland, that together has committed to rewilding 30% of their property so there are more native plants to feed the insects and animals and more habitat for them to live in.”

The conference included an in-person address by Pope Leo XIV. Reyes was touched by his call to a “return to the heart” of growth in relationship with God, others and nature.

Spencer found meaning in Pope Leo’s comment that

at the end of each person’s life, “God will ask us if we have cultivated and cared for the world he created for the benefit of all and for future generations, and if we have taken care of our brothers and sisters. What will be our answer?”

The conference ended with participants writing a pledge of commitment to action. All pledges will be brought to the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Brazil on Nov. 10-21 to express the concern and dedication of faith communities to caring for the environment.

All are welcome to submit a pledge of commitment to action at raisinghope.earth/action. †



Sarah Mundell Spencer, left, and Julie Reyes, members of the archdiocesan Creation Care Ministry, touch a piece of a glacier from Greenland during the Raising Hope for Climate Justice Conference held in Castel Gandolfo, Italy, on Oct. 1-3. (Submitted photo)

How are doctors of the Church chosen? Here’s a look at the process

(OSV News)—With Pope Leo XIV set to proclaim St. John Henry Newman as a doctor of the Church on Nov. 1, let’s consider what criterion is used to make this decision, whether a layperson could be named a doctor and what sort of writings Church doctors must have produced to be given this title.

First of all, the word “doctor” in this sense does not refer to the person who treats your flu. Nor to someone who fixes the ailments of the Catholic Church. The word comes from the Latin verb “*docere*,” meaning “to teach,” and so a “doctor” in Latin is a teacher.

This meaning is preserved in the academic world, where the highest degree awarded is a doctorate.

In order for someone to receive the title doctor of the Church, there are three requirements.

The first is that the person must be eminent in doctrine, and naturally their writings must be faithful to Church teaching.

If, like Newman, they had been a non-Catholic for a time and had written something that was not orthodox, those writings would be ignored in favor of their writings as a Catholic.

Similarly, ecclesiastical writers who embraced certain heresies of their day, like Origen and Tertullian, cannot be doctors of the Church, even though their other writings are frequently quoted.

While a doctor’s writings must be eminent, of importance for the Church, it is not required that they be numerous.

For example, while St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas left copious writings, others like St. Catherine of Siena and St. Thérèse of Lisieux wrote comparatively little.

The second requirement is that the doctors themselves must have a high degree of holiness and be canonized saints.

Thus, an eminent theologian such as Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger—Pope Benedict XVI—could not be named a doctor of the Church, unless he were first canonized.

And third, it must be the pope himself who names someone a doctor of the Church. The first pope to do so was Pope Boniface VIII, who in 1298 proclaimed as doctors the four great Western Fathers of the Church, SS. Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome and Gregory the Great.

Corresponding to these were four great Eastern Fathers of the same period, SS. John Chrysostom, Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazianzus and Athanasius.

Although they had been considered as doctors early on, it was Pope St. Pius V who recognized them as such in 1568. Pius also declared his fellow Dominican St. Thomas Aquinas a doctor, and Pope Sixtus V added St. Bonaventure in 1588.

The number of doctors remained at 10 until the 18th century, when the number gradually increased up to our own time.

At present, counting St. John Henry Newman, there are 38 doctors of the Church. Four of these are women: SS. Teresa of Avila, Catherine of Siena, Thérèse of Lisieux and Hildegard of Bingen.

As regards whether a layperson can be named a doctor of the Church, St. Catherine of Siena was a laywoman, a member of what would later become the Third Order of St. Dominic.

The most recent saints to be declared doctors were St. Thérèse of Lisieux by St. John Paul II in 1997, SS. John of Avila and Hildegard of Bingen by Pope Benedict XVI in 2012, SS. Gregory of Narek and Irenaeus of Lyon by Pope Francis in 2015 and 2022 respectively, and St. John Henry Newman by Pope Leo XIV in 2025, on the feast of All Saints.

In recent times, a number of recommendations have been recommended for being named doctors of the Church.

An obvious one is St. John Paul II. In October 2019, the Polish bishops’ conference formally petitioned Pope Francis to consider making him a doctor of the Church in recognition of his contributions to theology, philosophy and Catholic literature, as well as the numerous formal documents of his papacy.

Another one is St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, a Discalced Carmelite, who was born Edith Stein (1891-1942).

She had studied philosophy under the phenomenologist Edmund Husserl and wrote several books on philosophy, striving to combine phenomenology with the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas. She was murdered in the gas chamber at the concentration camp Auschwitz II-Birkenau on Aug. 9, 1942. She came from a German Jewish family and converted to Catholicism in 1922.

In April 2024 during a private audience, the superior general of the Discalced Carmelites, Father Miguel Márquez Calle, made a formal request to Pope Francis to declare her a doctor of the Church. †

Classified Directory

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SS. Thomas Aquinas, John Henry Newman, Thérèse of Lisieux and Augustine of Hippo are pictured in a combination photo. Pope Leo XIV will proclaim St. John Henry Newman a doctor of the Church on Nov. 1. (OSV News files/Nancy Wiechec, Crosiers, Carmel de Lisieux)

DINNER
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seminarians, retired priests, children to be educated, immigrants,” said the member of Mary, Queen of Peace Parish in Danville.

“And from what I read in *The Criterion*, there is a lot of personal interaction with those people—it’s not just handing out money. That’s very, very important.”



Jolinda Moore

Deacon Michael Slinger is proof of such hands-on assistance. Ordained in 2012 after four years of UCA-funded diaconate formation, he serves at Catholic Charities’ Holy Family Shelter in Indianapolis as one of his diaconal ministries of charity.

Many of the shelter’s temporary residents “are able to just completely turn their lives around because they got a little support to get them through the hard spots—some training, some tools to work with when they go out,” said the member of Holy Spirit Parish in Indianapolis. “I see the ones that go out and make good of their lives after that, and that gives me a lot of hope.”

Supporting Catholic Charities is one of the reasons Maxx Hagan of St. Luke the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis said he contributes to the UCA.

“It’s these funds that enable our people to really make a difference in our community,” he said.

Hagan noted he also appreciates the support UCA funds provide for Catholic education and for the formation of future priests.

Several seminarians from Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary in Indianapolis were present for the event.

The UCA is “exemplary of God’s promise to the Church that he will never let it go astray,” said first-year seminarian Paul Weckenbrock, a member of All Saints Parish in Dearborn County. “To have that revelation through the United Catholic Appeal is very encouraging.”

His classmate, Max Ecoff of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish in Indianapolis, agreed, and expressed gratitude for the UCA making it possible for him to pursue a call to the priesthood, a vocation he said has been “in the back of my head all my life.”

Ecoff said he’s drawn by “the idea of being able to



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson addresses those gathered for a United Catholic Appeal dinner event in the Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center in Indianapolis on Oct. 16. (Photo by Natalie Hoefer)

bring people closer to God, bring them to heaven. It’s a huge responsibility and Catholics depend on priests daily. “I just really want to help people get to heaven.”

(For more information on the United Catholic Appeal, go to unitedcatholicappeal.org or call the Office of Stewardship and Development at 317-236-1415.) †

UCA
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The \$6.3 million will be distributed to archdiocesan ministries throughout central and southern Indiana, broken down into three categories: teaching, shepherding and serving.

The \$4.3 million designated for teaching ministries includes:

- Seminarian formation, tuition assistance and care;
- Catholic school leader catechetical formation and support resources;
- Catechetical leader and catechist formation and training;

- Diaconate formation;
 - Care for active and retired priests.
- The \$1.3 million designated for shepherding ministries includes:
- Forming and walking beside young adults seeking the faith;
 - Upholding the sacredness of marriage and family life and supporting and strengthening families;
 - Celebrating and affirming cultural diversity in the local Church;
 - Offering guidance and support for youth ministers;
 - Promoting the dignity of life;
 - Welcoming and including people with disabilities.
- The \$700,000 designated for serving ministries will go

entirely toward the archdiocese’s five Catholic Charities agencies in Bloomington, Indianapolis, New Albany, Tell City and Terre Haute.

In advance of intention weekend, Catholics in central and southern Indiana are asked to consider, through prayer and with gratitude for God’s blessings, how they are called to contribute to the 2026 United Catholic Appeal—knowing that 100% of every dollar donated makes a difference in the lives of all those touched by archdiocesan ministries throughout central and southern Indiana.

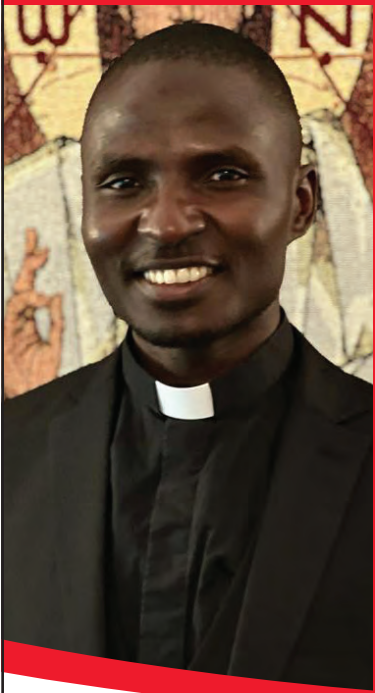
(For more information on the United Catholic Appeal, go to unitedcatholicappeal.org or call the Office of Stewardship and Development at 317-236-1415.) †

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