



The

# Criterion

Serving the Church in Central and Southern Indiana Since 1960



## Rekindling a tradition

Pope Leo XIV returns to Holy Thursday practice of washing feet of priests, page 7.

CriterionOnline.com

April 10, 2026

Vol. LXVI, No. 26

## Watershed moment

# Indiana bishops share pastoral letter on ‘integral ecology’

By Victoria Arthur

Representing all corners of a state abundant with intricate waterways and varied landscapes, the five bishops of Indiana have released a new pastoral letter highlighting the profound connection between the natural world and human life.

In their new document, “Integral Ecology: A Sacramental Vision,” these five bishops of the Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC) also call for a renewed sense of responsibility for protecting God’s creation.

“The concept of integral ecology helps us see more clearly how human life and the natural world are deeply interconnected,” said Indianapolis Archbishop Charles C. Thompson. “Here in Indiana, we delight in the beauty of creation from our Great Lake and winding rivers to forests, prairies, wetlands and farmland. As people at home in this land and pilgrims journeying toward our true home in heaven, we are called to receive creation as a gift and to care for it with gratitude and hope.”

Written during the 2025 Jubilee Year of Hope, the letter—which was released on Holy Thursday, April 2—is addressed to “brothers and sisters in Christ and all people of good will in the state of Indiana.” It is signed by Archbishop Thompson and the other four bishops of Indiana: Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Bishop Robert J. McClory of the Diocese of Gary, Bishop Timothy L. Doherty of the Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana and Bishop Joseph M. Siegel of the Diocese of Evansville.

“Integral Ecology: A Sacramental Vision” reflects on the social and ecological challenges of the current age and the link between caring for the Earth and caring for

humanity, particularly the most vulnerable. It also builds upon the bishops’ previous teaching on stewardship of creation, including their pastoral letters “Care for the Earth,” issued during the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, and “Poverty at the Crossroads,” released in 2015.

“This is a groundbreaking new statement from the bishops of Indiana,” said Alexander Mingus, executive director of the Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC), the statewide coordinating body for the five Roman Catholic dioceses in Indiana. “It is an invitation to a deeper, faith-filled understanding of humanity’s relationship with creation—one that recognizes the world as a gift from God and calls for responsible stewardship rooted in the sacramental life of the Church. We hope that it has a profound and lasting impact throughout our beautiful state and beyond.”

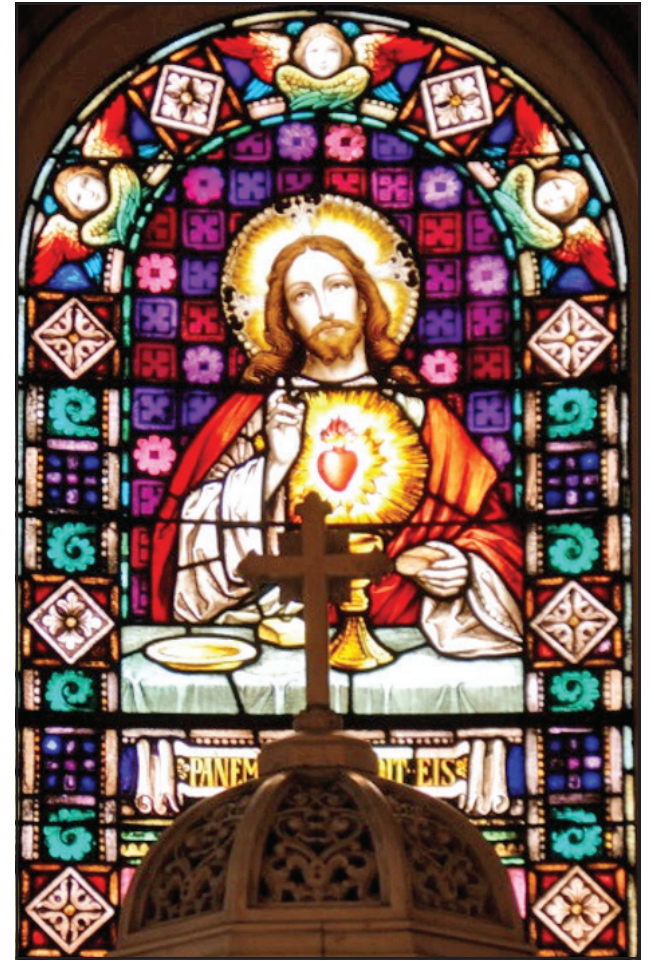
In publishing and disseminating the new letter, the ICC has partnered with Our Sunday Visitor (OSV), the Huntington, Ind.-based company that is one of the largest Catholic publishers in the world. The print version of the full document, along with a one-page summary, will be made available through OSV to parishes, schools and other audiences.

A digital version of the pastoral letter, in addition to related resources, is also available through the ICC website at [indianacc.org/ecology](http://indianacc.org/ecology).

Archbishop Shelton J. Fabre of the Archdiocese of Louisville, Ky., who serves as chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ (USCCB) Committee

See **ECOLOG**, page 8

At right: A window inside the Blessed Sacrament Chapel of SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. (Submitted photo)



# Archdiocesan Catholics called ‘to holiness and mission’ at chrism Mass

By Sean Gallagher

Benedictine Sister Kathleen Yeadon called Tuesday of Holy Week in the archdiocese “probably my favorite day of the year.”

This year, that day fell on March 31. It was special for her because on that day she took part in the archdiocese’s annual chrism Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis.

Sister Kathleen gathered with laity, religious men and women, deacons, priests and Archbishop Charles C. Thompson to witness some 140 priests serving in the archdiocese renew their

ordination promises. The archbishop also blessed oils used in the dedication of churches and altars and the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, holy orders and the anointing of the sick.

“I’ve been coming for years,” she said. “It’s the gathering of the archdiocese to receive this gift [of the oils] and to bless our priests and support them, and to support each other.”

Representatives of many of the 125 parishes across central and southern Indiana received blessed oils that they then took back to their faith communities to be used as soon as the Easter Vigil on April 4, in which many being received

into the Church would be baptized and all would be confirmed.

### ‘No spectators among us’

Through these sacraments, Archbishop Thompson said in his homily, each member of the faithful is called to take part actively in carrying out the Church’s mission of evangelization.

“There are to be no spectators among us,” he said. “Each baptized member, in accordance with that which is proper to his or her status, vocation or way of life, is called to a life of holiness and mission. Not just for a few, but for all.”

Taking the Gospel out into the world is

a challenge today, Archbishop Thompson noted, saying that the faithful are called to build up “a culture of hope for a deeply wounded humanity hopelessly overwhelmed by a deeply polarized world.”

As difficult as this mission might be today, Archbishop Thompson exhorted his listeners to take it up, even if they felt they weren’t up to the task.

“None of us—clergy, religious or laity—should wait until being perfect to embrace the call to holiness and mission,” he said. “We’re not called so much to be perfect as to be faithful.”

See **CHRISM MASS**, page 9



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson blesses the oil of the sick on March 31 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis during the archdiocese’s annual chrism Mass. Assisting him at right is seminarian John Fritch, a member of St. Martin of Tours Parish in Martinsville. Standing at left is transitional Deacon Timothy Khuishing, who ministers at St. Mark the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)



Pope Leo XIV delivers his "urbi et orbi" ("to the city and the world") message from the main balcony of St. Peter's Basilica on Easter on April 5. (OSV News photo/Vatican Media, handout via Reuters)

# 'The power with which Christ rose is entirely nonviolent,' pope says in Easter peace message

VATICAN CITY (OSV News)—Speaking from the loggia of St. Peter's Basilica on Easter, Pope Leo XIV delivered a passionate appeal for peace, declaring that the power of the risen Christ is "entirely nonviolent" and calling on world leaders to lay down their weapons and choose dialogue over domination.

The address came moments after the pope offered Easter Mass in St. Peter's Square with more than 50,000 people present and preceded his solemn blessing, "urbi et orbi," meaning "to the city and to the world," in which the pope offers a plenary indulgence to Catholics around the world who receive the blessing with the proper dispositions.

"In the light of Easter, let us allow ourselves to be amazed by Christ! Let us allow our hearts to be transformed by his immense love for us! Let those who have weapons lay them down! Let those who have the power to unleash wars choose peace! Not a peace imposed by force, but through dialogue! Not with the desire to dominate others, but to encounter them!" Pope Leo said on April 5.

The pope repeated the word peace 13 times in his address, underlining that the peace the risen Christ offers "is not merely the silence of weapons, but the peace that touches and transforms the heart of each one of us."

"Let us allow ourselves to be transformed by the peace of Christ! Let us make heard the cry for peace that springs from our hearts!"

In a surprise announcement, Pope Leo revealed he will host a prayer vigil for peace in St. Peter's Basilica on Saturday, April 11.

At the heart of his message was a meditation on the nature of Christ's power in the resurrection, which he contrasted with the violence that marks the modern world.

"The power with which Christ rose is entirely nonviolent," Pope Leo said.

That strength, the pope added, "is God himself, for he is love who creates and generates, love who is faithful to the end and love who forgives and redeems."

"On this day of celebration, let us abandon every desire for conflict, domination and power, and implore the Lord to grant his peace to a world ravaged

by wars and marked by a hatred and indifference that make us feel powerless in the face of evil. To the Lord we entrust all hearts that suffer and await the true peace that only he can give," he said.

The pope warned against the "globalization of indifference," a phrase he credited to his predecessor Pope Francis, who gave his final "urbi et orbi" blessing from the same loggia on Easter Sunday one year ago the day before he died. Pope Leo invoked the words from Pope Francis' Easter blessing last year, in which the late pope lamented "what a great thirst for death, for killing, we witness each day in the many conflicts raging in different parts of the world."

"We are growing accustomed to violence, resigning ourselves to it, and becoming indifferent," Pope Leo said. "Indifferent to the deaths of thousands of people. Indifferent to the repercussions of hatred and division that conflicts sow."

"We cannot continue to be indifferent! And we cannot resign ourselves to evil!" he added.

Quoting a sermon by St. Augustine, Pope Leo said, "If you fear death, love the Resurrection!"

Easter, the pope said, "is the victory of life over death, of light over darkness, of love over hatred."

"It is a victory that came at a very high price," he added. "Christ, the Son of the living God [cf. Mt 16:16], had to die—and die on a cross—after suffering an unjust condemnation, being mocked and tortured, and shedding all his blood. As the true immolated Lamb, he took upon himself the sin of the world [cf. Jn 1:29; 1 Pet 1:18–19] and thus freed us all—and with us, all creation—from the dominion of evil."

"Evil is not the last word, because it has been defeated by the Risen One," he said.

After giving the "urbi et orbi" blessing in Latin, Pope Leo offered Easter greetings in 10 different languages, including Chinese and Arabic, with loud cheers as he spoke in English and Spanish.

"May you bring the joy of Jesus, who is risen and present in our midst, to all you meet," he said in English. The pope then joined the joyful crowd in St. Peter's Square in the popemobile. †



## Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

April 11–19, 2026

<p><b>April 11 – 11 a.m.</b> Confirmation Mass for the youths of St. Mary Parish, Greensburg; St. Joseph Parish, Shelbyville; St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Shelby County; Holy Family Parish, Oldenburg; St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Decatur County; and Immaculate Conception Parish, Millhousen, at St. Mary Church</p> <p><b>April 12 – 2 p.m.</b> Confirmation Mass for the youths of St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Bedford; Our Lady of the Springs Parish, French Lick; St. Agnes Parish, Nashville; Our Lord Jesus Christ the King Parish, Paoli; St. Jude the Apostle Parish, Spencer; and St. Charles Borromeo Parish, St. John the Apostle Parish and St. Paul Catholic Center, Bloomington, at St. John the Apostle Church</p> <p><b>April 12 – 5:30 p.m.</b> Mass and dinner at St. Paul Catholic Center, Bloomington</p> <p><b>April 14 – 10:30 a.m.</b> Priest Personnel Board meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis</p>	<p><b>April 14 – 7 p.m.</b> Confirmation Mass for the youths of St. Simon the Apostle Parish, Indianapolis, at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis</p> <p><b>April 15 – 10 a.m.</b> Department Heads meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center</p> <p><b>April 15 – 6 p.m.</b> Mass on the Grass at Taylor Courtyard, Indiana University, Indianapolis</p> <p><b>April 16 – 9 a.m.</b> Mass for the students of St. Luke the Evangelist School at St. Luke the Evangelist Church, Indianapolis</p> <p><b>April 16 – noon</b> Lunch gathering with archdiocesan priests, Indianapolis</p> <p><b>April 16 – 5:30 p.m.</b> St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities Gala at Galt House Hotel, Louisville</p> <p><b>April 18 – 3:30 p.m.</b> Wedding at Sacred Heart Motherhouse Chapel, Louisville</p> <p><b>April 19 – 11:30 a.m.</b> Confirmation Mass for the youths of St. Susanna Parish, Plainfield, at St. Susanna Church</p>
--	--

## As Mother's Day nears, share your favorite 'Mom' story and the advice you would give a first-time mom


In anticipation of Mother's Day, *The Criterion* is inviting our readers to share their thoughts, tributes and stories about motherhood from two perspectives.

First, if you are a mother, what's one piece of advice you would give to a woman who is expecting her first child? AND/OR, what's the best advice someone has ever given you about being a mom?

Second, share your thoughts, tributes and stories about how your mother's influence has shaped you, your faith and your life. AND/OR, share how you have

strived to shape your children's faith and lives. While serious and sentimental tributes are welcomed, so are touches of humor, as most of us have experienced our mom's influence in, let's say, *interesting* ways.

Please send your submissions to John Shaughnessy by e-mail at [jshaughnessy@archindy.org](mailto:jshaughnessy@archindy.org) or by mail in care of *The Criterion*, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202. Please include your parish and a daytime phone number where you can be reached. †



### Pope Leo's prayer intention for April

- **For priests in crisis**—Let us pray for priests going through moments of crisis in their vocation, that they may find the accompaniment they need and that communities may support them with understanding and prayer.

See Pope Leo's monthly intentions at [archindy.org/popesintentions](http://archindy.org/popesintentions).



**NEWS FROM YOU!**

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

E-mail us: [criterion@archindy.org](mailto:criterion@archindy.org)

---

**Phone Numbers:**  
Main office..... 317-236-1570  
Advertising..... 317-236-1585  
Circulation / Subscriptions ... 317-236-1425

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

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

**Web site:** [www.CriterionOnline.com](http://www.CriterionOnline.com)

**E-mail:** [criterion@archindy.org](mailto:criterion@archindy.org)

---

**Staff:**  
Editor: Mike Krokos  
Assistant Editor: John Shaughnessy  
Reporter: Sean Gallagher  
Reporter: Natalie Hoefler  
Graphic Designer / Online Editor: Brandon A. Evans  
Executive Assistant: Ann Lewis



---

Published weekly except the last week of December, the first week of January and every other week from June to August (*summer schedule*). Mailing address: 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367. Periodical postage paid at Indianapolis, IN.  
Copyright © 2025 Criterion Press Inc. ISSN 0574-4350.

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

1400 N. Meridian St.  
Indianapolis, IN 46202  
317-236-1570  
[criterion@archindy.org](mailto:criterion@archindy.org)

Periodical postage paid at Indianapolis, IN.  
Copyright © 2025  
Criterion Press Inc.

**POSTMASTER:**  
Send address changes to:  
Criterion Press Inc.  
1400 N. Meridian St.  
Indianapolis, IN 46202



04/10/26

### Moving?

*We'll be there waiting if you give us two weeks' notice! Use the form below or at [archindy.org/moving](http://archindy.org/moving).*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

New Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

New Parish \_\_\_\_\_

Effective Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

# In climbing to the Iron Cross, a couple draws closer to God

(Editor's note: A record 499,239 pilgrims from all over the world walked the Camino pilgrimage in northern Spain in 2024. The Criterion has invited people from the archdiocese who have made all or part of that pilgrimage to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in Spain to share how that experience has influenced their life and their faith.)

11th—and last—in a series

By John Shaughnessy

As she prepared to visit one of the most sacred sites she has ever experienced, Karen Schoenfelder had her own vision of what that moment would be—a vision that included beautiful weather for climbing to the place of the Iron Cross.

Instead, the early morning, mile-high climb to Mount Irago—the highest point on the French *Camino*—began with light rain and a temperature of 41 degrees.

“Naturally, I prayed right away that it wouldn’t pour down rain on us, as the climb was going to be difficult enough. Approximately 10 minutes into the climb, the misty rain turned to sleet,” says Karen, who also recalls herself muttering at that moment, “Gee, thanks God! Love your sense of humor!”

By the time she and her husband Dan reached the top of the mount and stood before the *Cruz de Ferro*—Iron Cross—the sleet had turned to snow. But Karen was no longer focused on the weather. Instead, the couple from Holy Family Parish in New Albany looked in awe at the cross, the 11th-century monument where people have come for centuries for a special purpose.

“Here, pilgrims bring small stones with them from home to leave at the Iron Cross, representing a burden, sin or fear they wish to leave behind,” Karen says. “We took our time to do just that. It was a very special and emotional moment as we placed our stones on the pile of thousands of stones left by previous pilgrims and said prayers beneath the tall Iron Cross.

“While at the top of the mountain with no traffic and very few pilgrims, we stopped to listen to the silent snow falling and to take in the peace and the beauty that surrounded us. A truly amazing moment. I believe God whispered to me, ‘Karen I had this day planned especially for you, and I am delighted that you appreciate it.’”

As the couple headed down the mountain, the snow turned to rain while Karen’s thoughts kept turning to God.

“I never would have dreamed that being so cold and wet would turn out to be one of the most special and favorite days on the *Camino*,” she says. “While I prayed for what I thought I wanted, God gave me something so much better.”

## ‘We get to touch God’

Dan had his own revelation about drawing closer to God as he stepped

into a small church during the couple’s *Camino* journey.

“The quiet time on the *Camino* helped me see things about our Catholic faith that I had either taken for granted or had missed completely,” he says. “An example of this occurred while hiking across Spain. I stopped at a small church to pray and encountered the incredible architecture of the 16th-century church of St. Mary of the Assumption in Navarrete, Spain, population 2,914. Such a little town with such a jewel.

“My younger self definitely enjoyed seeing beautiful churches, but always questioned why so much money was spent on the beautiful architecture instead of helping the poor.”

At 64, Dan has a different perspective, one he considers from the architect’s point of view.

“The architect understood that the Mass was the closest thing that we have to heaven on Earth,” Dan notes. “The architect knew that when we enter a church, we come into the real presence of Jesus.

“The architect knew that during the Eucharist, we get to touch God. Knowing all that, the architect would have to include paintings and statues of saints, angels, the queen of heaven, the crucified and risen Lord with marble, real and gilded gold paint.”

All those details, Dan believes, are the architect’s way of giving people a sense of the beauty of heaven.

It’s just one of the ways that Dan’s experiences as a pilgrim have deepened his faith.

“Our *Camino* experiences have led us to seek out spending time in God’s creation wherever we go on vacation or pilgrimage,” he says. “Whether it is following the path of St. Paul in Corinth, Greece, climbing Apparition Hill in Medjugorje or touring centuries-old churches across France, every experience brings us closer to God.”

## ‘I pray that I would be as gracious to a stranger’

Walking the *Camino* has also made the couple focus more on the goodness of humanity and the bonds we share with people from different backgrounds.

Dan experienced that reality in a moment of need.

“We were constantly impressed by the helpfulness and generosity of the locals along the way,” Dan says. “After several long hikes during unseasonably hot weather, I developed a heat rash that could not be addressed by over-the-counter meds, and so we contacted a taxi driver to take me to the emergency room.

“Knowing that the people in the ER would likely not speak English, he came into the lobby and helped me get checked in. Hours later, he then picked me up and took me to a pharmacy. He went into the pharmacy and picked up my prescription



Dan and Karen Schoenfelder of Holy Family Parish in New Albany celebrate a moment during their journey along the *Camino*. (Submitted photo)

and would not let me reimburse him for it.

“Since the doctors did not want me walking the next day, he picked me up the following morning and took me to our next destination while Karen hiked. He called me several days later to make sure that I had recovered. I pray that I would be as gracious to a stranger who needed my help.”

Karen saw the same connection with their fellow pilgrims who started as strangers.

“I was surprised at the camaraderie I felt with the other pilgrims,” she says. “We found our ‘*Camino* family’ in the places we stayed, and we met them time and again as we walked. We were thousands of miles from home, and yet we knew faces and names as we entered a new town or went to a restaurant for dinner.”

She shares the story of a pilgrim they saw several times in churches and cafes during their journey.

“We recognized each other and would share a smile and a wave, but we didn’t speak the same language,” she recalls. “While in the plaza where the pilgrims finish the *Camino* and take photos, he ran up to us and hugged us and was talking excitedly in an unknown language, but we knew exactly what he was saying. It went something like this: ‘We made it! Can you believe it?! Thank you for being a part of my amazing *Camino*! Until we meet again!’

“We have made many friends from

places around the world and still keep in touch with many of them.”

## ‘One of the greatest blessings’

Sharing these experiences has also brought the couple, who have been married for 42 years, even closer together.

“Dan and I feel blessed that we share a love of our faith, as well as our love for travel and for hiking,” Karen says. “When you combine those three, the *Camino* is a natural pilgrimage to take. There’s no better way to see a country than to walk through small villages and cities, cross rivers and mountains, smell eucalyptus trees and cattle farms. Beauty is everywhere in God’s creation.

“While the *Camino* was a shared experience, we each experienced our own *Camino*. We would always start the day walking together, but gradually we would get into our own pace of walking and end up walking separately for a while. That gave us time for personal prayer and time to meet different pilgrims. We would always share meals together and end the day together.”

Some of their most powerful moments came in sharing daily Mass together.

“We were amazed to find Mass in most of the small towns,” Karen says. “Going to Mass so often was truly one of the greatest blessings for us. It’s hard to put into words just how meaningful it felt and how deeply it strengthened our bond as a couple.

“It’s an experience I will treasure for the rest of my life.” †



6107 South East Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46227  
**(317) 787-8224**  
ORileyBranson.com

**A Trusted Partnership in Care**

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

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





**MARIAN UNIVERSITY**  
Preparatory School  
POWERED BY K12

**NOW ENROLLING STUDENTS FOR 2026-2027 SCHOOL YEAR**

- FAITH-FOCUSED ONLINE EDUCATION ROOTED IN CATHOLIC VALUES
- SMALL, LIVE CLASSES FOR GRADES K-12
- A STRONG SCHOOL COMMUNITY WHERE STUDENTS CONNECT AND GROW
- EARN COLLEGE CREDIT WITH DUAL ENROLLMENT

Scan the QR code to Learn More & Enroll Today!!

[muprep.k12.com](http://muprep.k12.com)



**DON'T GO BROKE IN A NURSING HOME®**

**Elder Advisers®**

*“Protecting Assets and Providing Peace of Mind”*

**(812) 949-3223**






**elderadvisers.com**



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

Sally Krause, *Associate Publisher*

## Editorial

# St. John Paul II's final letter to priests is worth revisiting

The March 31 chrisem Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, as reported on page 1 of this week's issue of *The Criterion*, is a liturgy celebrated each year in which Archbishop Charles C. Thompson blesses oils used in the dedication of churches and altars and the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, holy orders and the anointing of the sick across central and southern Indiana.

But the Mass is also noteworthy because priests serving in the archdiocese renew their ordination promises during the liturgy.

It is a powerful witness of faith when priests together, as a band of brothers dedicated to serving Christ and the people of God, annually repeat their commitment to live out their vocation in ordained ministry.

It should also serve as a reminder that our priests, who like so many of us face real challenges, need our prayers and are strengthened by them. Our Sunday Visitor (OSV) News recently shared a story reflecting on St. John Paul II's last Holy Thursday letter to priests in 2005, a tradition he began when he was elected universal shepherd and kept throughout his pontificate.

The OSV News article focused on eight points from St. John Paul II's letter, and 21 years later, we believe they still speak to the heart of a holy priest.

### —Eucharist as a formula of life

"I will take as my inspiration the words of eucharistic consecration, which we say every day in *persona Christi* in order to make present on our altars the sacrifice made once and for all on Calvary," Pope John Paul II wrote. "These words provide us with illuminating insights for priestly spirituality: if the whole Church draws life from the Eucharist, all the more then must the life of a priest be 'shaped' by the Eucharist. So for us, the words of institution must be more than a formula of consecration: they must be a 'formula of life'" (#1).

### —Gratitude

"In the Eucharist, Jesus thanks the Father with us and for us," the pope wrote. "How could this thanksgiving of Jesus fail to shape the life of a priest? He knows that he must cultivate a constant sense of gratitude for the many gifts he has received in the course of his life: in particular, for the gift of faith, which it is his task to proclaim, and for the gift of the priesthood, which consecrates him totally to the service of the kingdom of God. We have our crosses to bear—and we are certainly not the only ones!—but the gifts we have received are so great that we cannot fail to sing from the depths of our hearts our own magnificat" (#2).

### —Priesthood as a gift to others

"If he is able to offer himself as a gift," he wrote, "placing himself at the disposal of the community and at the service of anyone in need, his life takes on its true meaning" (#3).

### —A life of obedience

"Obeying out of love, sacrificing even a certain legitimate freedom when the authoritative discernment of the bishop so requires," Pope John Paul II wrote, "the priest lives out in his own flesh that 'take and eat' with which Christ, in the Last Supper, gave himself to the Church" (#3).

### —Holiness

"Holiness, in fact, is the full expression of salvation. Only if our lives manifest the fact that we are saved do we become credible heralds of salvation" (#4).

"It is our relationship to the Eucharist that most clearly challenges us to lead a 'sacred' life," he wrote. "This must shine forth from our whole way of being, but above all from the way we celebrate. Let us sit at the school of the saints!" (#6).

### —Spirituality of remembrance

"The Eucharist does not simply commemorate a fact; it commemorates him! Through his daily repetition in *persona Christi* of the words of the 'memorial,' the priest is invited to develop a 'spirituality of remembrance,'" he wrote. "At a time when rapid social and cultural changes are weakening the sense of tradition and leading the younger generation especially to risk losing touch with their roots, the priest is called to be, within the community entrusted to him, the man who faithfully remembers the entire mystery of Christ: prefigured in the Old Testament, fulfilled in the New [Testament], and understood ever more deeply under the guidance of the Spirit ... ." (#5).

### —Eucharistic adoration

"To place ourselves before Jesus in the Eucharist, to take advantage of our 'moments of solitude' and to fill them with this Presence," Pope John Paul II wrote, "is to enliven our consecration by our personal relationship with Christ, from whom our life derives its joy and its meaning" (#6).

### —Totus Tuus

"Who more than Mary can help us taste the greatness of the eucharistic mystery? She more than anyone can teach us how to celebrate the sacred mysteries with due fervor and to commune with her Son, hidden in the Eucharist," he wrote. "I pray to her, then, for all of you, and I entrust to her especially the elderly, the sick, and those in difficulty" (#8).

Let us pray for our priests as they strive to live out our late Holy Father's words of love.

—Mike Krokos

## Be Our Guest/Richard Corona

# 'Quiere papa? Would you like potatoes?' Teens offer hope and dignity to people in need

A few months ago, I was blessed to accompany my eighth-grade family formation-confirmation students and some of their parents, as well as a few of my high school students going through the Order of Christian Initiation for Children, to the St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry on 30th Street in Indianapolis for a morning of service.



We started by meeting at the food pantry at 7:30 a.m. When I learned that we were originally scheduled to work until 12:30 p.m., I raised a concern about travel time to and from the pantry and the need for breakfast and lunch for our young people. Our wonderful coordinator of religious education at St. Jude Parish in Indianapolis, Allison Heller, agreed to shorten our service to end at 11:30 a.m.

As students arrived, as you might expect, our eighth graders were a little sleepy and quiet—in fact, some of us adults were as well.

We started by having some Chick-Fil-A breakfast biscuits together in the pantry's breakroom. Afterward, we were split up to work at different stations.

Some were assigned to bundle items, some were assigned to help bag items, others were assigned to help clients load food items into their cars, while I and others were assigned to distribute specific items from totes as clients filed past with shopping carts.

I was paired with Emerson, one of my eighth-grade students. I was assigned a tote of onion bags to distribute, and Emerson was to my left working a tote first of bags of potatoes, and then of sweet potatoes.

As I started to engage the clients who filed past me, greeting them in Spanish or English, it occurred to me to provide Emerson some tips.

I turned to him and encouraged him to smile and tell clients who passed him, "Good morning," then to ask them if they would like some potatoes. More than half of the clients we served were Spanish speaking.

I taught Emerson how to say, "*Buenos dias*" ("Good morning") and "*Quiere papa*" ("Would you like potatoes?") Later, it became "*Quiere camote*?" ("Would you like sweet potatoes?")

I shared with him that he had to gauge whether clients might be Spanish-speaking and to switch between English and Spanish.

At first, Emerson's pronunciation was not perfect. As I greeted and welcomed clients, I chatted and engaged them by asking where they were from—in English or in Spanish—as well as addressing the little children sitting in the shopping carts. I knew I was setting an example for Emerson.

I could hear Emerson's Spanish pronunciation sharpen, and he was quickly able to switch between speaking English and Spanish. I could see the joy of the clients when he would say to them, "*Buenos dias. Quiere papa?*" They would respond to him in Spanish as though he was family with genuine appreciation.

At one point, Emerson saw that some of the potatoes in a few of the bags had molded, and I could see a degree of anger come over him and his reluctance to give those bags to any family. He would push them to the far side of the tote.

There was an older, retired worker there moving the potatoes to our side so that we would not have to reach too far. It was funny to watch an eighth-grader pushing bags back to him, pointing out the moldy potatoes. In so doing, and unbeknownst to him, Emerson was serving as the poster child for the protection of the dignity of the poor and vulnerable, a core Catholic social teaching.

After three hours of non-stop greeting the clients and handing products out (all while standing), both our voices were starting to break. One of the pantry's supervisors came over and asked if we needed a break.

I turned to Emerson and asked him if we needed a break and his response was, "No, we're good." So, we continued for another hour.

That day, I had an encounter with God the Holy Spirit as Emerson allowed himself to be the hands and feet of Jesus—to convey the love of Christ to others.

When we allow the Holy Spirit into our hearts, we can work miracles. That day, this eighth-grader touched the lives of people from all over the world—our sisters and brothers from Mexico, Haiti, Honduras, El Salvador, Venezuela and many other places, including some from here in Indianapolis. Many of the clients are marginalized, and many come to the United States to escape persecution in their home countries, and they come with nothing but hope in the goodness in others.

That day, Emerson and the rest of our group helped to feed more than 1,300 clients. Emerson was the face of Jesus. He was for many the first semblance of welcome into this country of ours.

To hear it in their own native Spanish from an American youth had deeper meaning, and it provided hope.

I was reminded that we serve others not because of what they can offer us, and regardless of where they are from, what their native language might be, their style of life, their views on certain issues or whether or not they are Catholic or Christian.

We serve because we are Catholic. To think that I worried that these eighth-graders might not have the strength to endure five hours of service. I was humbled by a certain student filled with the Holy Spirit.

As Pope Leo XIV told the youths of the United States in November during the National Catholic Youth Conference in Indianapolis: you are not the future Church but the Church of the present. The Church needs you.

As adults we encourage, and we may even serve as role models. But we too must trust in God and step aside and marvel in the miracles our youths can make happen.

(Richard Corona is a member of St. Jude Parish in Indianapolis.) †

## Letters Policy

Letters from readers are welcome and every effort will be made to include letters from as many people and representing as many viewpoints as possible. The editors reserve the right to edit letters from readers as necessary based on space limitations,

pastoral sensitivity and content (including spelling and grammar).

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

ARCHBISHOP/ARZOBISPO CHARLES C. THOMPSON



# Christ the Cornerstone

## Experience the joy of God's love and forgiveness

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his great mercy gave us a new birth to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. (1 Pt 1:3)*

This Sunday, we celebrate the Feast of Divine Mercy, a feast day added to the liturgical calendar by St. John Paul II to celebrate the overwhelming mercy of Jesus Christ. The celebration of Christ's resurrection continues with this feast, which recognizes that God's love and mercy endure forever and overcome any sin that separates us from him.

In the 1930s, Jesus appeared to St. Faustina Kowalska, a Polish nun, and directed her to promote his divine mercy worldwide. St. John Paul II canonized St. Faustina on May 1, 2000. Five days later, the Vatican decreed that the Second Sunday of Easter would henceforth be known as Divine Mercy Sunday.

We who are missionary disciples of Jesus Christ acknowledge that we are a sinful people and that our imperfections hurt us and others in ways that can be very damaging.

As sinners, we often hurt the people

who are closest to us—our parents, spouses, children, friends, neighbors and co-workers. We make promises that we don't keep. We take advantage of others' generosity, and we abuse their trust. We break the Ten Commandments frequently, and then we wonder why we feel isolated, unhappy and afraid.

Then, when we've sunk as low as any human being can possibly go and we're desperate, we cry out for help: "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am not worthy to be called your son or daughter." How does our heavenly Father respond? By rejoicing! By celebrating the fact that we were lost and are now found; we were dead and have now been returned to life (cf. Lk 15:11-32)! This is the prodigal love of God, the endless mercy and forgiveness that are available to us through the power of Jesus' passion, death and resurrection.

We do not need to be stuck in our sins. The cross of Christ has redeemed us. Our sins have been forgiven, and we have been set free. Let us rejoice. As baptized Christians, we are not perfect, but we are forgiven.

The power to forgive sins was given

to the disciples by the Risen Lord. As we hear in the Gospel for Divine Mercy Sunday (Jn 20:19-31):

*On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained." (Jn 20:19-23)*

Our God is a forgiving God who is slow to anger and rich in mercy. This is one of the primary reasons why we rejoice during the Easter season. Our recent experience of Lent and the Paschal Triduum have focused our attention on the power and immensity of God's love for us. We are keenly aware of the lengths to which our loving God is willing to go to redeem us from our selfishness and sin.

There is no greater joy than the

joy that flows from the experience of forgiving love. (The Hebrew word for "forgiving love" is *hesed*, which means the boundless loving mercy of God.)

This is what the father feels in the Parable of the Prodigal Son when his long-lost son returns. It is surely what the son who was lost feels when his father greets him with such overwhelming love and mercy. And it is what the older son is invited, and challenged, to feel if he can overcome his anger and resentment and learn to share his father's joy.

During this Easter season, we too are invited, and challenged, to experience the joy of God's love and forgiveness.

Yes, we are sinners—imperfect people who hurt ourselves and others. Yes, we too often waste the gifts that God has given us, and we can be resentful and angry when we should be profoundly grateful for all that God has given us.

We are not perfect, but we are forgiven. Let's thank God for His boundless mercy. Let's rejoice and be glad this Easter season because the Lord is risen and our sins have been forgiven. †



# Cristo, la piedra angular

## Sintamos la alegría del amor de Dios y de su perdón

*Bendito sea el Dios y Padre de nuestro Señor Jesucristo, quien, por su gran misericordia y mediante la Resurrección de Jesucristo de entre los muertos, nos ha reengendrado a una esperanza viva. (1 Pt 1:3).*

Este domingo celebramos la fiesta de la Divina Misericordia, añadida al calendario litúrgico por san Juan Pablo II para exaltar la inmensa misericordia de Jesucristo. La celebración de la resurrección de Cristo continúa con esta fiesta, que reconoce que el amor y la misericordia de Dios perduran para siempre y superan cualquier pecado que nos separe de él.

En la década de 1930, Jesús se apareció a santa Faustina Kowalska, religiosa polaca, y le encomendó promover su divina misericordia en todo el mundo. San Juan Pablo II canonizó a santa Faustina el 1 de mayo de 2000. Cinco días después, el Vaticano decretó que el segundo domingo de Pascua se llamaría en adelante Domingo de la Divina Misericordia.

Nosotros, como discípulos misioneros de Jesucristo, reconocemos que somos pecadores y que nuestras imperfecciones nos hacen daño a nosotros mismos y a los demás de formas que pueden resultar muy perjudiciales.

En nuestra condición de pecadores, a menudo lastimamos a quienes están más cerca de nosotros: nuestros padres, cónyuges, hijos, amigos, vecinos y compañeros de trabajo. Hacemos promesas que luego no cumplimos; nos aprovechamos de la generosidad de los demás y abusamos de su confianza. Con frecuencia transgredimos los Diez Mandamientos y luego nos preguntamos por qué nos sentimos aislados, infelices y temerosos.

Entonces, tras haber tocado fondo y sentirnos desesperados, imploramos ayuda: "Padre, he pecado contra el cielo y ante ti. Ya no merezco ser llamado hijo tuyo." ¿Y cómo nos responde nuestro Padre celestial? ¡Alegrándose! Celebrando el hecho de que estábamos perdidos y hemos sido hallados; que estábamos muertos y hemos regresado a la vida (Lc 15:11-32). Este es el amor pródigo de Dios, la misericordia y el perdón infinitos que recibimos a través del poder de la pasión, muerte y resurrección de Jesús.

No tenemos que quedarnos atrapados en nuestros pecados; la cruz de Cristo nos ha redimido. Nuestros pecados han sido perdonados y ahora somos libres. Alegrémonos. No somos perfectos, pero como cristianos bautizados, hemos sido perdonados.

El Señor Resucitado les otorgó a los discípulos el poder de perdonar los

pecados, tal como escuchamos en el relato del Evangelio del Domingo de la Divina Misericordia (Jn 20:19-31):

*Al atardecer de aquel día, el primero de la semana, los discípulos tenían cerradas las puertas del lugar donde se encontraban, pues tenían miedo a los judíos. Entonces se presentó Jesús en medio de ellos y les dijo: «La paz con vosotros.» Dicho esto, les mostró las manos y el costado. Los discípulos se alegraron de ver al Señor. Jesús les dijo otra vez: "La paz con vosotros. Como el Padre me envió, también yo os envío." Dicho esto, soplo y les dijo: "Recibid el Espíritu Santo. A quienes perdonéis los pecados, les quedan perdonados; a quienes se los retengáis, les quedan retenidos." (Jn 20:19-23).*

El nuestro es un Dios que perdona, que tarda en enojarse y es rico en misericordia. Este es uno de los principales motivos por el cual nos alegramos durante la temporada de la Pascua. Nuestra experiencia reciente durante la Cuaresma y el triduo pascual ha enfocado nuestra atención en el poder y la inmensidad del amor de Dios por nosotros. Estamos muy conscientes de lo que nuestro Dios misericordioso está dispuesto a hacer para redimirnos de nuestro propio egoísmo y del pecado.

No existe una alegría más grande que aquella que emana de sentir un

amor misericordioso. (En hebreo existe una palabra para designar el "amor misericordioso": *hesed*, que alude a la misericordia infinita y amorosa de Dios.)

Esto es lo que siente el padre en la Parábola del hijo pródigo cuando su hijo, perdido por tanto tiempo, regresa a casa. Ciertamente es lo que siente el hijo que se había perdido cuando su padre lo recibe con semejante amor y misericordia. Y es precisamente lo que se le invita y se le desafía a sentir al hijo mayor, para que pueda superar su ira y su resentimiento y aprender a compartir la alegría de su padre.

Durante esta época de Pascua se nos invita y se nos desafía a vivir y sentir el amor y el perdón de Dios.

Sí, somos pecadores, personas imperfectas que nos lastimamos a nosotros mismos y a los demás; sí, muy a menudo derrochamos los dones que Dios nos ha dado y nos sentimos resentidos y enojados cuando deberíamos estar profundamente agradecidos por todo lo que Dios nos ha dado.

No somos perfectos, pero nos han perdonado. Agradezcamos a Dios por su infinita misericordia. Alegrémonos y regocijémonos en este tiempo de Pascua porque el Señor ha resucitado y nuestros pecados han sido perdonados. †

# Events Calendar

For a list of events for the next four weeks as reported to The Criterion, log on to [www.archindy.org/events](http://www.archindy.org/events).

## Every Wednesday:

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

## April 14

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, livestream link: [Taize.SistersofProvidence.org](http://Taize.SistersofProvidence.org), 812-535-2952.

## April 16

The Galt House, 140 N. 4th St, Louisville, Ky. **St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities of New Albany "Giving Hope-Changing Lives" Annual Gala Fundraiser**, 5:30 p.m. doors open, dinner 7 p.m., client testimonials, live auction. Information, RSVP: 812-949-7305, [info@steharities.org](mailto:info@steharities.org).

## April 17

Liter House, 5301 Winthrop Ave. Indianapolis. **Catholic Business Exchange**, rosary 6:35 a.m., Mass 7 a.m., buffet breakfast and program following, presenter TBD, \$20 members, \$25 non-members. Register by 4 p.m. April 14. Information, registration: [cutt.ly/CBE-Reg](http://cutt.ly/CBE-Reg).

## April 18

Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. **Called to Community Women's Breakfast**, 7:30-11 a.m., sponsored by Confraternity of Christian Mothers, Mass at 7:30 a.m. followed by hot catered breakfast and full espresso bar, speaker and craft activity, \$15. Information, registration: 317-752-5172.

Sisters of Providence grounds, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Earth Day Festival**, 11 a.m.-3 p.m., nature shows, craft activities, face-painting, hayrides, nature trail hikes, alpaca yoga spinning, weaving and felting demonstrations, alpaca visits, food vendors, live entertainment, free

admission but donations accepted. Information: 812-535-2946, [Events.SistersofProvidence.org](http://Events.SistersofProvidence.org), [lrobinette@spsmw.org](mailto:lrobinette@spsmw.org).

St. Joan of Arc Parish, 4217 Central Ave., Indianapolis. **Holy Flirtation: Speed Dating Event**, 1:30-5:10 p.m., includes catered dinner with wine, 12 six-minute speed dates, time for mingling, all invited to 5:30 p.m. Mass, \$35 plus \$1.92 online processing fee. Information, registration: [tinyurl.com/HolyFlirtation3](http://tinyurl.com/HolyFlirtation3).

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, 1752 Scheller Lane, New Albany. **Spring Prayer Breakfast**, 9-11 a.m., Deacon John Jacobi presenting "Purgatory: Purified in God's Love," free, register by April 13. Information, registration: 812-945-1647, [jfey@olphna.org](mailto:jfey@olphna.org).

## April 19

Crane Bay Event Center, 551 W. Merrill St., Indianapolis. **Light in the City Gala**, 4-9 p.m., dinner and silent auction event benefitting Lumen Christi Catholic School, includes cocktail hour, dessert dash, raffle, speaker, award presentation, \$125.

Information: 317-632-3174, [cdillon@lumenchristischool.org](mailto:cdillon@lumenchristischool.org).

## April 20

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

## April 23

St. Alphonsus Liguori Parish Hall, 1870 W. Oak St., Zionsville, Ind. (Diocese of Lafayette). **Boone County Right to Life Banquet**, 6:30 p.m., dinner, speaker will address issues and ethics of IVF and embryo adoption, \$40, free tickets for student groups available, register online or mail check by April 10. Information, registration: [boonecountyrighttolife.org](http://boonecountyrighttolife.org), [postmaster@boonecountyrighttolife.org](mailto:postmaster@boonecountyrighttolife.org). Mail checks to: PO Box 264, Lebanon, IN 46052.

## April 25

Holy Spirit Parish, 7243 E. 10th St., Indianapolis.

**Evangelization 101 Workshop: Elevate your Spiritual Discipleship Journey**, 9 a.m.-3p.m., writer, speaker, evangelist Meg Hunter-Kilmer presenting, \$30 fee either paid by attendee or assessed to parish, includes lunch and materials, registration deadline April 20. Information, registration: [tinyurl.com/Evang101-2026](http://tinyurl.com/Evang101-2026), 317-236-1466, [abardo@archindy.org](mailto:abardo@archindy.org).

## April 26

SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **Disabilities Awareness Mass**, 10 a.m., Archbishop Charles C. Thompson celebrant, reception to follow at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., free. Information: 317-749-0871, [ueble@archindy.org](mailto:ueble@archindy.org).

## May 1-2

White Violet Center, Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, 1 Sisters of Providence, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Spring Plant Sale**, Fri. 11 a.m.-5 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m.-3 p.m., organically grown vegetables, flowers and herbs. Information: [Events.SistersofProvidence.org](http://Events.SistersofProvidence.org), 812-535-2946, [lrobinette@spsmw.org](mailto:lrobinette@spsmw.org).

## May 6

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

## May 7

St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Activity Center, 210 Fifth St., Aurora. **Mary's FIAT (Faith in Action Together)**, 4:30 p.m. wine and fellowship, dinner and speaker to follow, Little Workers of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary Sister Deidre Byrne presenting, for women ages 13 and older, free, register by April 15. Information, registration: [tinyurl.com/FIAT5726](http://tinyurl.com/FIAT5726), 812-537-3992.

## May 7-9

St. Ann Parish, 6350 S. Mooresville Road, Indianapolis. **Church Festival**, Thurs. 5-10 p.m., Fri. 5-11 p.m., Sat. noon-11 p.m., rides, food, activities, casino, beer garden, free admission. Information: 317-821-2909, [admin@stannindy.org](mailto:admin@stannindy.org).

## Retreats and Programs

For a complete list of retreats as reported to The Criterion, log on to [www.archindy.org/retreats](http://www.archindy.org/retreats).

## April 20-24

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Priest Retreat: Faith Stories from the Gospel of Matthew**, Benedictine Father Eugene Hensell presenting, \$625. Registration: 812-357-6611, [saintmeinrad.org/retreats](http://saintmeinrad.org/retreats).

## May 1-3

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Women Carrying the Light of Christ: Past and Present**, women's retreat, Dr. Kimberly Baker presenting, \$350 single, \$550 double. Registration: 812-357-6611, [saintmeinrad.org/retreats](http://saintmeinrad.org/retreats).

## May 12

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Day of Silence**, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., \$55, includes room, lunch, Mass and use of common areas and

grounds, overnight stay available for additional \$42, dinner additional \$14.40. Registration: [ftm.retreatportal.com/events](http://ftm.retreatportal.com/events), 317-545-7681, [lcoons@archindy.org](mailto:lcoons@archindy.org).

## May 13

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Our Lady of Fatima Feast Day Evening of Reflection**, 5-8 p.m., spiritual director at the Milwaukee Archdiocesan Seminary and Fatima expert Jesuit Father James Kubick presenting, freewill donations accepted. Registration: 317-545-7681, [ftm.retreatportal.com/events](http://ftm.retreatportal.com/events), [lcoons@archindy.org](mailto:lcoons@archindy.org).

## May 15-17

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Being "Eucharistic" People**, Benedictine Father Adrian Burke presenting, \$350 single, \$550 double. Registration:

812-357-6611, [saintmeinrad.org/retreats](http://saintmeinrad.org/retreats).

## May 16

Mother of the Redeemer Retreat Center, 8220 W. State Road 48, Bloomington. **The Broken Mary Project**, 9 a.m.-5:15 p.m., former radio broadcaster Kevin Matthew presenting, \$65, includes lunch. Information, registration: 812-825-4642, ext. 1, [motheroftheredeemer.com](http://motheroftheredeemer.com).

## May 22-24

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Healing Loneliness**, Benedictine Brother Zachary Wilberding presenting, \$350 single, \$550 double. Registration: 812-357-6611, [saintmeinrad.org/retreats](http://saintmeinrad.org/retreats).

## May 27

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr.,

St. Meinrad. **Heart on Fire**, Jane Feliz Rush presenting, \$75 single, \$150 double. Registration: 812-357-6611, [saintmeinrad.org/retreats](http://saintmeinrad.org/retreats).

## June 5-7

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

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Spirituality of Liturgical Architecture**, Benedictine Father Lorenzo Penalosa presenting,

\$350 single, \$550 double. Registration: 812-357-6611, [saintmeinrad.org/retreats](http://saintmeinrad.org/retreats).

## June 7-10, 11, 12, or 13

Mount St. Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Road, Mt. St. Francis. **Quilters Retreat**, three nights \$500, four nights \$600, five nights \$700, six nights \$800, commuters \$75 per day, \$100 non-refundable deposit required to hold spot, pay in one or two installments. Information, registration: [mountsaintfrancis.org/quilters-retreat-1](http://mountsaintfrancis.org/quilters-retreat-1), 812-923-8817.

## June 19-21

Mother of the Redeemer Retreat Center, 8220 W. State Road 48, Bloomington. **Archbishop**

**Fulton Sheen Retreat**, teacher and tour guide at the Diocese of Peoria's Sheen Museum Katie Bogner presenting, \$290 for single, \$480 double, \$670 triple, \$860 quadruple, includes four meals and room for two nights, commuter \$90 includes lunches. Information, registration: 812-825-4642, ext. 1, [motheroftheredeemer.com](http://motheroftheredeemer.com).

## July 10-12

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Doubting Thomas: Keeping Faith in a Secular Age**, Benedictine Father Thomas Gricoski presenting, \$350 single, \$550 double. Registration: 812-357-6611, [saintmeinrad.org/retreats](http://saintmeinrad.org/retreats). †

## Talk on race in the Church to take place in Indianapolis on April 24

A talk titled "Race in the Catholic Church" will be offered at St. Thomas Aquinas Church, 4625 N. Kenwood Ave., in Indianapolis, from 6:30-9 p.m. on April 24.

University of Notre Dame political science professor Darren Davis will offer insight and spark thoughtful dialogue on the topic. Davis is co-author of a forthcoming Cambridge University Press book, *Perseverance in the Parish? Religious Attitudes from a Black Catholic Perspective*.

Based on a national survey of Black Catholics, this book explores the perceptions of racism and racial experiences in the Catholic Church.

Davis' other book, *Negative Liberty:*

*Public Opinion and the Terrorist Attacks on America*, examines the role of threat perceptions on the tradeoffs between civil liberties and security, political tolerance, and ideas of citizenship

The evening will begin with wine and appetizers in the church narthex at 6:30 p.m., followed by the talk at 7 p.m. in the church sanctuary.

The talk is free, but registration is encouraged. Registration is available online at [tinyurl.com/StThomasDavisTalk26](http://tinyurl.com/StThomasDavisTalk26).

For more information, contact St. Thomas Parish at 317-253-1461 or send an e-mail to [churchinfo@staindy.org](mailto:churchinfo@staindy.org). †

## Wedding Anniversaries

**CHARLES AND PAULINE (BORDENKECKHER) GRAF**, members of St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Parish in Indianapolis, will celebrate their 55th wedding anniversary on April 17.

The couple was married in the former Holy Cross Church in Indianapolis on April 17, 1971.

They have two children: Andrea and Nicholas Graf.



**JIM AND AIMA (SABBAH) SUFAN**, members of St. Jude Parish in Indianapolis, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on April 10.

The couple was married in Holy Name of Jesus Church in Beech Grove on April 10, 1976.

They have three children: Melissa Eckhart, John and Justin Sufan.

The couple also has four grandchildren.



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

# Easter: Pope Leo proclaims Resurrection conquers ‘the power of death’

VATICAN CITY (OSV News)—Pope Leo XIV offered Easter Mass in St. Peter’s Square on Sunday proclaiming that with Christ’s resurrection “death has been conquered forever” and “no longer has power over us.”

“Today all of creation is resplendent with new light, a song of praise rises from the Earth, and our hearts rejoice: Christ is risen from the dead, and with him, we too rise to new life,” the pope said on April 5.

Pope Leo declared that Easter “embraces the mystery of our lives and the destiny of history, reaching us even in the depths of death, where we feel threatened and sometimes overwhelmed. It opens us up to a hope that never fails, to a light that never fades, to a fullness of joy that nothing can take away.”

Tens of thousands gathered under the bright Roman sun in a flower-adorned St. Peter’s Square for the first Easter Mass of Pope Leo XIV’s pontificate. The square was transformed for the occasion by thousands of blooms in vivid colors on the stairs leading up to the Renaissance basilica.

The Mass opened with the choir’s joyful proclamation: “O sons and daughters of the King, whom heavenly hosts in glory sing, today the grave has lost its sting. Alleluia!”

In his homily, Pope Leo declared that the resurrection of Christ has conquered the power of death, which he said “constantly threatens us” both from within, our feelings, doubts, disappointments, fears, and from outside, where war, injustice, selfishness and violence are prevalent.

From within, he said, that power manifests in sin, loneliness, doubt and exhaustion. “The weight of our sins prevents us from ‘spreading our wings’ and taking flight, or when the disappointments or loneliness we experience drain our hope,” he said.

“When we have to come to terms with



Pope Leo XIV presides over Easter Mass in St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican on April 5. (CNS photo/Lola Gomez)

our weakness, with the sufferings and the daily grind of life, we can feel as if we have ended up in a tunnel with no end in sight.”

But the pope also turned his gaze outward, describing a world marked by suffering and injustice.

“We see it present in injustices, in partisan selfishness, in the oppression of the poor, in the lack of attention given to the most vulnerable,” he said. “We see it in violence, in the wounds of the world, in the cry of pain that rises from every corner because of the abuses that crush the weakest among us, because of the idolatry of profit that plunders the Earth’s

resources, because of the violence of war that kills and destroys.”

Yet Easter, Pope Leo insisted, refuses to allow despair to have the final word. The feast “invites us to lift our gaze and open our hearts,” he said, and announces that the power of death is not the final destiny of our lives. We are all directed, once and for all, on the path to fulfillment, because in Christ we also have risen.”

During the Mass, the Gospel reading was proclaimed in both Latin and Greek, and the prayers of the faithful were offered in Arabic, Chinese, Spanish, Vietnamese and Portuguese. Pope Leo offered the consecration in Latin.

The pope called on Christians to carry that message into the wider world, like St. Mary Magdalene, who ran to announce the risen Christ to the disciples.

“Brothers and sisters, Easter gives us this hope, as we remember that in the risen Christ a new creation is possible every day,” Pope Leo said.

“We need this song of hope today. It is ourselves, risen with Christ, who must bring him into the streets of the world. Let us then run like Mary Magdalene, announcing him to everyone, living out the joy of the resurrection, so that wherever the specter of death still lingers, the light of life may shine,” he said. †

## Pope: Jesus shows how to give life and freedom, not dominate and destroy

ROME (CNS)—God doesn’t exist to grant victories or to be useful by providing wealth or power, Pope Leo XIV said in his homily during Mass of the Lord’s Supper on Holy Thursday in the Basilica of St. John Lateran.

Through Jesus, God serves humanity by offering himself in a way that transforms human hearts so that they may then be inspired to love others unconditionally, in turn, he said during the April 2 liturgy.

“Jesus purifies not only our image of God—from the idolatry and blasphemy that have distorted it—but also our image of humanity,” he said. “For we tend to consider ourselves powerful when we dominate, victorious when we destroy our equals, great when we are feared.”

However, he said, “Christ offers us the example of self-giving, service and love” so that humankind can learn how to love according to what true love is.

In fact, he said, learning to act like Jesus “is the work of a lifetime.”

The Lord loves not because those he reaches out to are good or pure, Pope Leo said, but simply because “he loves us first.”

“His love is not a reward for our acceptance of his mercy; instead, he loves us, and therefore cleanses us, thereby enabling us to respond to his love,” he said. “He does not ask us to repay him, but to share his gift among ourselves.”

“In him, God has given us an example—not of how to dominate, but of how to liberate; not of how to destroy life, but of how to give it,” Pope Leo said.

“As humanity is brought to its knees by so many acts of brutality, let us, too, kneel down as brothers and sisters alongside the oppressed,” he said. “In this way, we seek to follow the Lord’s example.”

The pope’s words came during a Mass that commemorates Jesus’ institution of the Eucharist and the priesthood, and includes the traditional foot-washing ritual, which reflects the call to imitate Christ by serving one another.

Pope Leo returned to an earlier practice of washing the feet of 12 priests from the Diocese of Rome in the Basilica of St. John Lateran, which is the cathedral of the Diocese of Rome. The pope poured water from a pitcher onto the foot of each priest, wiped each foot dry with a towel and then gently kissed each foot.

Pope Francis had departed from the older practice after his election in 2013 by celebrating the Mass in one of Rome’s “peripheries,” such as prisons or nursing homes, and by washing the feet of men, women and their infants, Muslims or people of no faith, as a sign of his dedication to serve everyone unconditionally.

Pope Francis’ predecessors had always chosen either 12 priests, laymen or boys from the diocese for the ritual held either in the Basilicas of St. John Lateran or of St. Peter.

By choosing 12 priests, 11 of whom he ordained last

year, Pope Leo highlighted the Mass’ commemoration of the institution of the Eucharist and of holy orders.

“The intrinsic bond between these two sacraments reveals the perfect self-gift of Jesus, the high priest and living, eternal Eucharist,” he said in his homily.

“Beloved brothers in the priesthood, we are called to serve the people of God with our whole lives,” he said.

Jesus’ disciples were astonished by their master’s gesture and, like Peter, “we too must ‘learn repeatedly that God’s greatness is different from our idea of greatness ... because we systematically desire a God of success and not of the Passion,’” he said, quoting Pope Benedict XVI.

“We are always tempted to seek a God who ‘serves’ us, who grants us victory, who proves useful like wealth or power. Yet we fail to perceive that God does indeed serve us through the gratuitous and humble gesture of washing feet,” he said. “This is the true omnipotence of God.”

Earlier in the day, Pope Leo urged Catholics to reject comfort, power and domination and instead embrace a mission rooted in self-giving love, even when it requires risk, vulnerability and suffering.

During a chrisem Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica, he called on the faithful in his homily to overcome fear and a sense of powerlessness in responding to the world’s crises.

“In this dark hour of history, it has pleased God to send us to spread the fragrance of Christ where the stench of death reigns,” he said. “Let us renew our ‘yes’ to this mission that calls for unity and brings peace.”

While grounding his remarks in the teaching of his predecessors, saints and clergy, the pope in this homily placed particular emphasis on the Church’s mission through his own eyes as a missionary.

The first step of accepting the Christian mission, he said, is to risk leaving behind what is familiar and certain, in order to venture into something new.

“Every mission begins with that kind of self-emptying in which everything is reborn,” he said.

It is through this self-emptying that Christians encounter the love of Christ, the pope said.

At the heart of his first chrisem Mass homily as pope, he reflected on the nature of Christian love, saying it is rooted not in power, but in self-giving.

“Jesus’ journey reveals to us that the willingness to lose oneself, to empty oneself, is not an end in itself, but a condition for encounter and intimacy,” Pope Leo said. “Love is true only when it is unguarded.”



Pope Leo XIV kisses the foot of a priest during the Mass of the Lord’s Supper at the Basilica of St. John Lateran in Rome on April 2. The foot-washing ritual reflects the call to imitate Christ by serving one another. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

# ECOLOGY

continued from page 1

on Domestic Justice and Human Development, recognized the work of the Indiana bishops on this pastoral letter. The committee's mandate to "advance the social mission of the Church" includes education on issues covered in the letter.

"I commend the Indiana bishops for this authentic reflection on God's creation and the people of Indiana, especially the poor and vulnerable," Archbishop Fabre said. "In this season of hope and renewal, the call to action and inspiring examples of resilience bring good news for all to hear."

Bishop Rhoades of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend said that he and his brother bishops drew on the Church's long history of teaching about the "sacramental vision of creation" in developing the letter.

"I highly recommend the reading and study of this pastoral letter from the bishops of Indiana, a reflection of the Church's teaching on integral ecology applied to the environmental conditions in our state," said Bishop Rhoades, who serves as secretary of the USCCB. "The ecological crisis has human, ethical and spiritual dimensions since God is the Creator and has entrusted us with the care of his good creation, requiring, as the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches, 'a religious respect for the integrity of creation' (#2415).

"Our Catholic sacramental vision of creation views nature as a manifestation of God's presence and as intimately connected to the protection of human life and dignity," continued Bishop Rhoades. "I hope that the faithful will find this pastoral letter not only informative, but also helpful in promoting and living out the 'ecological conversion' called for by Popes John Paul II, Benedict XVI, Francis and Leo XIV."

The genesis of the pastoral letter was a conversation a decade ago between Bishop Rhoades and Holy Cross Father Terrence (Terry) Ehrman, a professor at the University of Notre Dame whose



"Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden" by Johann Wenzel Peter, which hangs in the Vatican Museum, shows creation in harmony. (Submitted photo)

primary academic interest is the study of the relationship between theology and science. Their discussion occurred not long after Pope Francis issued his influential encyclical "*Laudato Si'*: On Care for Our Common Home," which had drawn the world's attention to environmental issues.

Father Ehrman had already done extensive research on watersheds—areas of land where all precipitation drains into a common body of water, such as a river, lake or ocean. He told Bishop Rhoades about a pastoral letter that 12 Catholic bishops from the American Pacific Northwest and British Columbia

had written in 2001 about the Columbia River Watershed in that area, drawing attention to the pollution that was plaguing it and calling for regional cooperation to refresh and protect it.

During that conversation on the Notre Dame campus, Father Ehrman made a suggestion that would have ripple effects. He told Bishop Rhoades he would one day like to see the bishops of the Great Lakes collaborate on a similar letter

concerning the Great Lakes Watershed, whose five interconnected lakes comprise the largest freshwater system on Earth.

Bishop Rhoades was intrigued and brought the idea to his fellow Indiana bishops. While that larger multi-state effort has yet to occur, plans began to take shape for a pastoral letter based on the ecology of the Hoosier state, including Lake Michigan, the one Great Lake that borders it.

Father Ehrman became the bishops' primary advisor and collaborator on the letter, the content of which closely reflects the "Theology and Ecology" course he has taught at Notre Dame since 2012.

"Indiana is an amazing place," said the self-proclaimed adopted Hoosier who is a native of Baltimore. "It's the smallest of the continental states that are west of the Appalachian Mountains, but it's a top-10 agricultural producer and has so many beautiful natural features, from the Indiana Dunes to the north on Lake Michigan to the Ohio River to the south."

The study and symbolism of water figures prominently in Father Ehrman's classes, in sacred Scripture—and in the bishops' Integral Ecology pastoral letter.

"Water gives life and renews and refreshes," the letter reads, citing the waters of baptism that bring the faithful to new life in Jesus Christ and calling on all citizens to protect this critical resource that God has entrusted to them.

"Sadly, our state of Indiana, with its 63,000 miles of streams and rivers and inland lakes and reservoirs, has some of the most polluted water in the country," the bishops state in their letter.

The letter also points to the loss of biodiversity that has resulted from the state's dramatic loss of wetlands over the last century or more. While wetlands once covered nearly 25% of the state of Indiana, less than 1% now remains.

In his classes at Notre Dame, Father Ehrman tries to instill in his students that everything is connected. When wetlands disappear, so do a multitude of plants and animals—ultimately affecting humans too.

"There is an ecological citizenship that we belong to," he said. "We don't just live at a street address. We're part of an ecosystem that has other organisms in it, and there's water flowing, and it's an element of a larger, complex system. In the same way, we're members of a parish, which is part of a diocese, which is part of the Catholic Church as a whole."

This convergence of the physical world and the spiritual realm is reflected in the images that illustrate the "Integral Ecology" pastoral letter.

Father Ehrman supplied nearly all the photographs to accompany the letter, from images of Indiana's natural resources to artwork representing all five of the state's cathedrals. A stained-glass window from Lafayette's Cathedral of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, for example, depicts a scene from the biblical story of Noah's Ark.

"One of the most powerful aspects of the pastoral letter is the imagery from churches and sacred art," Mingus said. "These visuals help to reinvigorate our ability to contemplate God in the natural world, in its beauty and order which reflect the characteristics of the creator."

The story of creation itself is the subject of the cover art for the pastoral letter. "Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden," an early 19th-century painting by Czech artist Johann Wenzel Peter, was the image selected to set the tone for the bishops' message.

The painting represents the harmony that God intended for this world from the beginning.

"This powerful image depicts the Garden of Eden in which, before the Fall, we find right relationship between God, ourselves and creation," Mingus said. "Restoring right relationship is the essence of this pastoral letter."

Ultimately, the hope of the bishops and everyone involved with the pastoral letter is a renewed sense of wonder and responsibility for the natural world at a time when technology consumes so much of people's time and focus.

"One of the best ways we can encounter God is through creation," Father Ehrman said. "But we'd rather be on our cell phones, our laptops and our video games. How can we get back to seeing with this sacramental vision?"

"Every day, every moment becomes an opportunity to encounter God—not just at church on Sunday," he continued. "Everything around us, everything that's created is an opportunity to think about God and to praise God. And that must lead to an ecological conversion and then an ecological responsibility to care for that creation."

(Victoria Arthur, a member of St. Matthew the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis, is a correspondent for The Criterion.) †



A window inside the Cathedral of St. Mary in Lafayette, Ind., depicts Noah's Ark. (Submitted photo)



Clouds hover on the horizon in this photo of the lakeshore at Indiana Dunes National Park. (Photo by National Park Service, M. Woodbridge Williams)

# CHRISM MASS

continued from page 1

If we wait for perfection, we'll be waiting forever.

"Rather, we present ourselves to the Lord as we are and serve others from both our gifts and our own woundedness. In fact, some of the most effective or fruitful ministry is carried out within the context of experiencing the cross in our own lives as we serve the needs of others."

Among those listening to the archbishop call forth archdiocesan Catholics to mission was Violet Falcone, 15, a freshman at Seton Catholic High School in Richmond. The chrism oil that Archbishop Thompson blessed during the Mass will be placed on her forehead when she receives the sacrament of confirmation in November.

Having taken part in the National Catholic Youth Conference in Indianapolis last year, worshipping with Catholics from across the archdiocese at the chrism Mass and looking forward to being confirmed, Violet sounded ready to do her part to share the Gospel.

"I'm excited to grow in my faith and be in the Church more," she said.

Knowing that priests, religious and lay Catholics from across central and southern Indiana were in attendance with her at the chrism Mass helped her know that she wasn't alone in the mission that lay before her.

"It shows the unity of the Church, bringing everyone together," Violet said of the congregation at the Mass. "It shows how big the Catholic community is and how you have a lot of support from everyone."

## 'Continuing the work'

Prior to the Mass, that support was shared between retired Father William Ernst, 87, a priest of nearly 62 years, and transitional Deacon Samuel Hansen, 26, who will be ordained an archdiocesan priest on June 6.



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson elevates a chalice on March 31 in SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral during the archdiocese's annual chrism Mass.



Transitional Deacon Khaing Thu, left, gives blessed oils to Tanya Pongracz, a member of St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis, on March 31 in SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis during the archdiocese's annual chrism Mass.



Father Kyle Rodden, left, Father Vincent Onunkwo, Father Patrick Nwokeogu and Holy Cross Father Geoffrey Mooney extend hands in prayer on March 31 in SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis while concelebrating the archdiocese's annual chrism Mass. Some 140 priests who serve in central and southern Indiana renewed their ordination promises during the Holy Week liturgy. (Photos by Sean Gallagher)

It may be a little surprising that Father Ernst, with so much ministry under his belt, said that young priests and those about to become priests like Deacon Hansen are role models for him.

"I admire their dedication, and I see them as role models," said Father Ernst, who lives in retirement in New Albany. "They have new enthusiasm and new ideas. They're continuing the work."

For his part, Deacon Hansen sees deep meaning in knowing that he and priests like Father Ernst, who are old enough to be his grandfather or even his great-grandfather, are "all doing God's work."

"It's both an honor and gives me a little bit of pressure," said Deacon Hansen, who serves at St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis. "It shows me that I'll be inheriting the work of Jesus Christ as a priest. But there are also big shoes to fill in the legacy that these men carry."

Father Liam Hosty was in the position of Deacon Hansen at last year's chrism Mass, seeing the chrism oil blessed that would anoint his hands in a couple of months.



Maria and Jose Alejo of St. Anthony Parish in Indianapolis kneel in prayer on March 31 in SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis during the archdiocese's annual chrism Mass.

and transform those who make up the Church, both local and universal."

The transformation that has happened in central and southern Indiana through the gift of God's grace given in the sacraments has started to become noticed far beyond the archdiocese's boundaries, Archbishop Thompson noted.

Because of the national Catholic events that have happened here or are scheduled to take place here in the future, the archbishop said that the Church in central and southern Indiana "has been referred to by many as a current center of Catholicism for the United States."

"That's the fruit of the great work and ministry in that pursuit of holiness and mission to which so many have given great witness," Archbishop Thompson went on to say.

This "pursuit of holiness and mission" seems to be bearing fruit in many archdiocesan parishes that are seeing a rise in the number of adults being received into the Church, a phenomenon that is happening in dioceses across the country, according to numerous reports.

Leroy Martin, who said it was "humbling" for him to receive blessed oils at the chrism Mass for St. Joseph Parish in Shelbyville, said those oils would be used to anoint 23 adults who were set to be received into the Church at his Batesville Deanery faith community's celebration of the Easter Vigil.

"We're probably going to be there until midnight or later," Martin said. "It means our Church is growing. That's the main thing, to go out and bring people in."

It's that work of evangelization, which happens in the ordinary daily life of faith of Catholics across central and southern Indiana, that Archbishop Thompson called the congregation to do in his chrism Mass homily.

"Each one here, anointed by the Spirit, is called to go forth and make a difference in faithful witness to missionary discipleship in Jesus Christ," he said. "We need only keep in mind that we are mere instruments, vessels, through which the Lord Jesus Christ is transforming the world in bringing about the kingdom of God, where so many are caught up in the violence, in the wars and in the injustice of our day."

This year, he renewed his ordination promises for the first time, doing it with brother priests of all ages and from all over the world serving in the archdiocese.

"There's a strong sense of fraternity and belonging," said Father Hosty. "It's kind of surreal to renew those promises with my brother priests today."

Since last July, Father Hosty has served as parochial vicar at St. Ann Parish in Indianapolis and St. Thomas More Parish in Mooresville. He says his life and ministry as a priest so far have been "a huge life of grace."

"It's been an incredible gift," he said. "It's really out of this world to hear confessions, say Mass, to anoint people on their deathbed. And I know that it's not my priesthood. I'm sharing in the priesthood of Jesus Christ."

## 'A current center of Catholicism'

In his homily, Archbishop Thompson said that the oils he would soon bless "serve as a source of divine grace to strengthen

(To view more photos from the chrism Mass, go to [CriterionOnline.com](http://CriterionOnline.com). To watch a video of the Mass, go to [cutt.ly/2026chrismMass](http://cutt.ly/2026chrismMass).) †

# Uniando Generaciones: An evening of love, community and connection

By Jose Quintana

Special to *The Criterion*

It was about building community and allowing generations to come together and learn about each other.

On Feb. 20, the archdiocese's Hispanic Young Adult Ministry, known as *Pastoral Juvenil Hispana* (PJH), hosted a special Valentine's celebration titled *Uniando Generaciones* ("Uniting Generations").

The event brought together Latino seniors and young adults for an evening filled with music, food, games and meaningful connection.

The vision behind *Uniando Generaciones*, organizers said, was simple yet powerful: to create a space where young adults and seniors could come together, share their stories, and remind one another that they belong to a vibrant and caring community.

Many elderly individuals, especially within Hispanic communities, face isolation and loneliness. This event sought to interrupt that isolation by fostering relationships rooted in dignity, joy and mutual respect.

The event was a collaboration of PJH with the organization *Mejorando Juntos Indiana* ("Better Together Indiana"), whose mission is to enhance the well-being of Latino seniors by fostering community, sparking vitality and improving health. Its work emphasizes social connection, mental wellness and intergenerational engagement.

The group's commitment to affirming the dignity and belonging of Latino seniors was reflected in every aspect of the event. The partnership between PJH and *Mejorando Juntos Indiana* highlighted a shared vision: strengthening the community by building bridges between generations.

The event took place at the Indiana Donor Network, whose generosity in providing the space allowed seniors and volunteers to gather in a welcoming environment.

From the moment guests arrived, they were greeted with smiles and a festive Valentine's atmosphere. PJH volunteers welcomed seniors, assisted them throughout the evening and sat alongside them during activities. For many young adults, it was an opportunity to learn from the experiences of their elders. For seniors, it was an opportunity to be seen, valued and accompanied.

The evening included dinner, desserts and live jazz music, which brought energy and joy to participants. Many parts of the evening were donated, reflecting the generosity of individuals and businesses to serve the community.

The night also included Bingo, and the seniors cheered for one another and celebrated each win together. A raffle added to the celebration, with prizes given to honor the seniors present. Organizers said these simple, yet meaningful activities created moments of joy and helped strengthen bonds.

"Beyond the activities, the true heart of *Uniando Generaciones* was the relationships that were formed," said Firany Briceño, president and co-foundress of *Mejorando Juntos Indiana*. "The event reflected the importance of presence, simply taking the time to listen, accompany and share life together.



Music was enjoyed by both Latino seniors and young adults during a Valentine's celebration titled *Uniando Generaciones* ("Uniting Generations") held in Indianapolis on Feb. 20. (Submitted photo)

"Social connection is essential to emotional and mental well-being, and gatherings like this remind seniors that they are not alone. At the same time, young adults were given the opportunity to grow in compassion, leadership and service."

*Uniando Generaciones* was more than a Valentine's event: it was a celebration of community, dignity and love in action, noted Briceño.

"It reflected PJH's mission to accompany young adults in their faith and empower them to serve others, while also supporting the important work of *Mejorando Juntos Indiana* in

uplifting Latino seniors," she said.

Members of PJH were happy to see that as the evening came to a close, guests left with smiles, gratitude and a renewed sense of belonging. While the event lasted only a few hours, they hope its impact will continue through the relationships formed and the reminder that when generations come together, the entire community is strengthened.

(Jose Quintana is an intern in the archdiocesan Office of Hispanic Ministry and a junior at Marian University, both in Indianapolis.) †

## Uniando Generaciones: Una noche de amor, comunidad y conexión

Por Jose Quintana

Especial para *The Criterion*

Construimos un sentido de comunidad y permitimos que generaciones se reunieran para conocerse y aprender unas de otras.

El 20 de febrero, el Ministerio Hispano de Jóvenes Adultos de la arquidiócesis, conocido como *Pastoral Juvenil Hispana* (PJH), organizó una celebración especial de San Valentín titulada *Uniando Generaciones*.

El evento reunió a adultos mayores latinos y a jóvenes adultos en una velada

llena de música, comida, juegos y conexiones significativas.

La visión detrás de *Uniando Generaciones*, según los organizadores, era simple pero poderosa: crear un espacio donde jóvenes adultos y personas mayores pudieran reunirse, compartir sus historias y recordarse mutuamente que forman parte de una comunidad vibrante y solidaria.

Muchas personas mayores, especialmente dentro de las comunidades hispanas, enfrentan el aislamiento y la soledad. Este evento buscó interrumpir

ese aislamiento fomentando relaciones basadas en la dignidad, la alegría y el respeto mutuo.

El evento fue una colaboración entre PJH y la organización *Mejorando Juntos Indiana* (MJI), cuya misión es mejorar el bienestar de los adultos mayores latinos fomentando la comunidad, promoviendo la vitalidad y mejorando la salud. Su trabajo enfatiza la conexión social, el bienestar mental y el compromiso intergeneracional.

El compromiso del grupo con afirmar la dignidad y el sentido de pertenencia de los adultos mayores latinos se reflejó en cada aspecto del evento. La alianza entre PJH y *Mejorando Juntos Indiana* destacó una visión compartida: fortalecer la comunidad construyendo puentes entre generaciones.

El evento se llevó a cabo en Indiana Donor Network, cuya generosidad al proporcionar el espacio permitió que los adultos mayores y voluntarios se reunieran en un ambiente acogedor.

Desde el momento en que los invitados llegaron, fueron recibidos con sonrisas y un ambiente festivo de San Valentín. Los voluntarios de PJH dieron la bienvenida a los adultos mayores, los asistieron durante toda la noche y se sentaron con ellos durante las actividades. Para muchos jóvenes adultos, fue una oportunidad de aprender de las experiencias de sus mayores. Para los adultos mayores, fue una oportunidad de ser vistos, valorados y acompañados.

La velada incluyó cena, postres y música en vivo de jazz, lo que aportó energía y alegría a los participantes. Muchas partes del evento fueron donadas, reflejando la generosidad de personas y negocios que quisieron servir a la comunidad.

La noche también incluyó bingo, y los adultos mayores se animaban entre sí y celebraban cada victoria juntos. Una

rifa añadió aún más alegría, con premios entregados para honrar a los adultos mayores presentes. Los organizadores señalaron que estas actividades, aunque sencillas, crearon momentos de alegría y ayudaron a fortalecer los lazos.

"Más allá de las actividades, el verdadero corazón de *Uniando Generaciones* fueron las relaciones que se formaron," dijo Firany Briceño, presidente y cofundadora de *Mejorando Juntos Indiana*. "El evento reflejó la importancia de la presencia, de simplemente tomarse el tiempo para escuchar, acompañar y compartir la vida juntos.

"La conexión social es esencial para el bienestar emocional y mental, y eventos como este recuerdan a los adultos mayores que no están solos. Al mismo tiempo, los jóvenes adultos tuvieron la oportunidad de crecer en compasión, liderazgo y servicio."

*Uniando Generaciones* fue más que un evento de San Valentín: fue una celebración de comunidad, dignidad y amor en acción, señaló Briceño.

"Reflejó la misión de PJH de acompañar a los jóvenes adultos en su fe y capacitarlos para servir a los demás, al mismo tiempo que apoya el importante trabajo de *Mejorando Juntos Indiana* en elevar a los adultos mayores latinos," dijo.

Los miembros de PJH se alegraron al ver que, al finalizar la noche, los invitados se fueron con sonrisas, gratitud y un renovado sentido de pertenencia. Aunque el evento duró solo unas horas, esperan que su impacto continúe a través de las relaciones formadas y el recordatorio de que, cuando las generaciones se unen, toda la comunidad se fortalece.

(Jose Quintana es interno en la Oficina de Ministerio Hispano de la arquidiócesis y estudiante de tercer año en Marian University, ambos en Indianapolis.) †



Personas mayores y jóvenes disfrutaron de *Uniando Generaciones* el 20 de febrero en Indianápolis. La visión del evento, según los organizadores, era simple pero poderosa: crear un espacio donde jóvenes adultos y personas mayores pudieran reunirse, compartir sus historias y recordarse mutuamente que forman parte de una comunidad vibrante y solidaria. (Foto enviada)

# SIMPLY CATHOLIC

## Founding of Boys Town rooted in Father Flanagan's 'deep love of Jesus'

By Dcn. Omar F.A. Gutierrez

(OSV News)—In the early 1940s, a young boy sought out Father Edward Flanagan as he toured the East Coast with an entourage of boys from the “town of little men” he had founded in Omaha, Neb. The boy, who had suffered a great deal in his brief life, had arranged to ask if he could come to live in Boys Town.

After the initial meeting, he was allowed to join Father Flanagan and his boys at a fancy state dinner given in their honor. The lad had never eaten at such a table, however. There were more plates, bowls, glasses and utensils than he knew what to do with. When the salad was served, he sat there perplexed and self-conscious, not daring to move lest his ignorance show, and he be made fun of.

Across the long table, though, the boy's concern caught the attention of Father Flanagan, who met the boy's eyes with his own. Father Flanagan slowly and deliberately picked up the salad fork and indicated without a word that the boy should do the same. The bright child felt a wave of relief come over him, and he followed the priest's lead.

Many years later, when that boy related this story, he said he felt seen and cared for in a way he hadn't been in a long time, for Father Flanagan saw his pain and loved him from the other end of what seemed like another world altogether.

*Heart of a Servant: The Father Flanagan Story*, a documentary film released in the fall of 2024, tells, in many ways for the first time, the fuller story of the life of this remarkable Irish-American priest whose cause for canonization is underway and who was declared venerable recently by Pope Leo XIV.

The film provides not just the outline of Father Flanagan's life and the incredible impact he had throughout the world, then and now. More importantly, it explains the spiritual foundation of his heroic work for the poor, a work he pursued throughout his life.

Edward Joseph Flanagan was born on July 13, 1886. The midwife did not give the newborn much of a chance. In the family's stone hovel outside a small town in County Roscommon, Ireland, the sickly baby's grandfather grabbed him, tucked him between his chest and his coat, and rocked him before the fire that night. The baby boy would survive that first trial.

He would survive a convulsion a few weeks later that turned him purple. He would survive many more battles with his health and other challenges in the coming years as he pursued the Christian life, shaped by his parents and by their lived Catholic culture.

He came to the United States in 1904 at the age of 18—not to find fortune but, at the suggestion of his family, which had already started to move here, to be formed for the priesthood in America rather than in Ireland.

In 1906, he began his formation at St. Joseph's Seminary in Dunwoodie in Yonkers, N.Y., for the Archdiocese of New York. Soon thereafter, he became sick. Edward's health was never excellent, but the acuteness of this illness was due to the young seminarian's insistence on caring for the forgotten who languished alone in the tuberculosis wards of Hell's Kitchen neighborhood in New York City.

Other seminarians were involved as well, but Edward felt a distinct calling to be close to them, to serve those who couldn't interact with the outside world and those who wished to communicate with loved ones.

He visited as often as he could, telling the bedridden the news and volunteering to write letters to family back in Ireland or other places. But the difficult New York winter, along with his regular exposure to the sick and his constant studies, left him drained. Weakened by coughing attacks, he was forced to try to finish his courses while bedridden himself like those whom he had been serving.

The sickly young man was eventually released from his studies and then from the Archdiocese of New York in order to join his older brother, Father Patrick Aloysius Flanagan, who was a priest of the then-Diocese of Omaha, Neb. After several other fits and starts at priestly formation, Edward was finally ordained a priest in 1912.

Father Flanagan's servant heart was called upon right away. The Easter Day tornado that devastated Omaha in 1913, and the various droughts that made farmhands into what he called “floating families” as they searched for work and the transient workmen who traveled through Omaha over the next couple years, put the young priest in contact with many suffering people.

By 1915, Father Flanagan was assigned to the Workingman's Hotel, a place he had helped erect with

the St. Vincent de Paul Society of Omaha for the temporary housing of transient men coming in and out of the city in search of seasonal labor. He was not content just to house these men or run a flophouse.

Rather, he endeavored to provide them with the skills, connections and hope to be able to end their transient lifestyles. However, listening to their sad stories, he came to realize that their wounds began at a very young age.

One evening in 1917, a boy in ragged clothes begged to be allowed to stay at the hotel for a night. “Just give me a corner,” the boy with flushed cheeks said. “I'll be satisfied.” It was cold outside, so Father found a bed for him, isolated from the men, and fed him. That night, he knelt down and prayed, thinking of his own upbringing in Ireland and of his loving parents. God, he said, “opened [his] eyes” to the great need of other young boys and to what would be his great calling.

Shortly after this, Father Flanagan went to the juvenile courthouse and found several young boys, ages 12 to 15, before a judge. He convinced the judge to release the boys into his own care, and so started what would eventually become Boys Town. Father Flanagan would continue this work through much personal and public tribulation until his death in 1948 while on mission to spread his “Gospel of love” to postwar Germany. The cause for his canonization was opened in the Archdiocese of Omaha in 2012.

In Father Flanagan's time, American society was much taken with the theory of eugenics, which insisted that what made people behave badly, what made them poor, what kept the “lower classes” low, was a genetic makeup that made them “unfit.”

There was, then, nothing to do for street boys or non-whites, but commend them to their fate. And though there were orphanages for the very young and homes for adolescent girls, the fate of adolescent boys from impoverished and dysfunctional backgrounds was almost inevitably homelessness, crime and a penal system that put 14-year-old boys in prison and sent some of them only slightly older to the electric chair.

In the midst of this culture, Father Flanagan proved to be a man of both wisdom and the Holy Spirit. He spoke out against the many injustices of racial segregation. He decried the use of the death penalty. He openly criticized the government for interning Japanese Americans during World War II.

But he was never satisfied with merely speaking out. His prophetic witness was to demonstrate through Boys Town the power of an essentially Christian culture, one built on the principle that every child is at heart good, made by his Creator with a capacity for goodness that would not be beaten into him by adults with batons. Rather, each boy's inherent goodness would be modeled for him by his peers, boys just like them.

Father Peter Dunn, a young priest of the Archdiocese of Omaha who was assigned in 1944 to work with Father Flanagan at Boys Town, was amazed by his care for so many—but more than that, he was amazed at his life of prayer.

No matter how early Father Dunn got up in the morning, he could never beat Father Flanagan to the chapel. Father Dunn found him there every day, on his knees, praying before sunrise.

Father Flanagan's Mass was also early in the morning, and he had a rotation of Catholic boys serve the Mass for him. After Mass, each of the servers would receive a blessing from Father Flanagan before he was released for his day's chores and studies.

One day, one server had chosen not to receive



Father Edward Flanagan is surrounded by young men in his office at Boys Town in Omaha, Neb., in this 1942 photo. Pope Leo XIV declared Father Flanagan venerable in recognition of his heroic virtue on March 23. (OSV News photo/courtesy Boys Town)

Communion. So, when it came time for his blessing, Father Flanagan blessed him, put his hand on the lad's shoulder, and said, “Dear, don't you know that you have everything you need here to become a saint?” Here, Father Flanagan revealed his true mission.

Boys Town was never primarily an effort to overthrow systems, though that is exactly what ended up happening to child care systems both in the United States and abroad. No, the work at Boys Town was an outgrowth of Father Flanagan's deep love of Jesus, of his life of prayer, of his identity as a man ordered to Christ and ordered more specifically to the servant ministries of Jesus, which include the proclamation of the Gospel to the poor and the defense and care of the vulnerable.

Through it all, Father Flanagan's deepest hope was that his boys would, with the help of God's grace, strive to become saints, the true standard of all human fulfillment. So, whether it was a patient in a tuberculosis ward, a boy suffering from awkwardness at a table of abundance or that boy who came to him looking for a corner out of the cold, Father Flanagan's heart was always moved to love, to comfort, to inspire the other to hope because his heart was ordered to Jesus.

When Father Flanagan died, tributes of praise poured in from religious and civic leaders across the country. The editor of the Protestant *Christian Herald* newspaper, Daniel Poling, wrote that Father Flanagan “loved and served beyond the barricades of faith and race. ... He loved freedom with a passion, and he wanted every group, every minority, every person to be free—free to conquer an evil inheritance, free to develop a worthy character, free to be a man in God's image.”

This was possible because Father Flanagan took his faith seriously, the faith that teaches we are all made in the image and likeness of God and that we are made to worship him and can never be fully ourselves until we do. “Pray,” Father Flanagan taught his boys, “for prayers work miracles.”

In who he was and what he did, Father Flanagan is an icon of Christ the Servant. Where Father Flanagan saw pain, he rushed in and embraced the child of God who suffered. When he saw injustice, he spoke out eloquently and forcefully called others to greater charity in Christ.

But before any of that, he prayed. He identified himself with Christ Jesus and his love. Father Flanagan was, in the end, a priest who took the conforming of himself to Christ through his ordination so seriously that he allowed the Lord to use him in that role of service to the world. And the world is better for it.

(Deacon Omar F.A. Gutierrez is a deacon of the Archdiocese of Omaha and was the notary for its tribunal which oversaw the archdiocesan phase of Father Edward Flanagan's cause for canonization.) †

## Faith in History/Sean Gallagher

## St. Kateri Tekakwitha is the first Native American declared a saint by the Church

The “Faith in History” column is taking a break from exploring the lives and teachings of the doctors of the Church to put a spotlight on the seven women and three men from America who have been declared saints.



This temporary change in focus is motivated by our country being in the midst of the celebration of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

The order in which we’ll learn about our American saints is by their date of birth. That means the saint for this column is St. Kateri Tekakwitha,

which is fitting given that she was a Native American, a part of the people living here when Europeans first arrived.

St. Kateri was born in 1656 in what is now Auriesville in upstate New York, the daughter of a Mohawk chief and an Algonquin woman who had been baptized as a Catholic and later captured in a Mohawk raid.

When Kateri was 4, her parents and her only sibling,

a younger brother, died of smallpox. Kateri survived the disease but was left with impaired eyesight and facial scars. She then lived with an uncle and aunt.

When Kateri was 10, she met three members of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) and was impressed by them. When she began to live according to their teachings, her family opposed her budding Christian lifestyle.

When Kateri was a teenager, her family tried to arrange a marriage for her. Kateri resisted, telling one of the Jesuit priests, “I can have no spouse but Jesus.”

At 18, she was convinced enough in her faith that she began preparations for baptism, which took place on April 18, 1676, Easter Sunday. It was then that she took the baptismal name of Kateri, the Mohawk form of Catherine, since she had chosen St. Catherine of Siena as her patron.

Opposition to her from her family and others in her village increased after this. Kateri fled six months after her baptism, traveling 200 miles to a settlement of baptized Native Americans in Ontario.

Her health was always fragile since contracting smallpox as a child, and Kateri lived only two more

years. During that time, though, she made a firm choice on March 25, 1679, the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord, to dedicate herself to Christ alone. She told a Jesuit priest at the time, “For a long time, my decision on what I will do has been made. I have consecrated myself entirely to Jesus, son of Mary. I have chosen him for husband, and he alone will take me for wife.”

Because of this dedication of herself to Christ, Kateri has become known as the “Lily of the Mohawks.” Although she was not able to formally become a consecrated virgin in the Church, the U.S. Association of Consecrated Virgins has nonetheless taken on Kateri as their patron saint. She is also understandably revered among Native American Catholics across the country and beyond.

Kateri’s cause for beatification and canonization began in 1939, with Pope Pius XII declaring her venerable in 1943. St. John Paul II beatified her on June 22, 1980, and Pope Benedict XVI declared her a saint on Oct. 21, 2012.

Her feast is celebrated in the Church on July 14. St. Kateri Tekakwitha, Lily of the Mohawks, pray for us. †

## Our Works of Charity/David Bethuram

## Connection formed between moms shows adoption is a loving option

Jillian knows that there have been stories like hers—women who have stood where she stood. She was 19 years old when she found out she was pregnant.

She remembered she was scheduled to take her first college freshman final that



morning, but instead she took a very different kind of test. When the result appeared, her knees hit the floor. She went numb as tears rolled down her cheeks—tears of fear, shock and uncertainty. When she finally gathered the strength to tell her parents, they were stunned.

It took time for Jillian to adjust to how drastically her life was about to change. She felt like a child herself—how could she possibly be having a baby? She said she

lost her faith for a while. Depression set in, and she stopped eating the way she should. Night after night, she cried herself to sleep. Then one night, lying awake in the dark, she began to pray. She hadn’t prayed in months. That night, she slept more soundly than she had in a long time.

Jillian and her family prayed over an option that felt unclear and overwhelming, yet strangely right: adoption. She ultimately decided to work with an adoption agency. That decision led her to one of our Catholic Charities agencies, where she was connected with our adoption and pregnancy services.

When Jillian chose to place her son, she said the last thing she did was “give up.” She chose adoption in the middle of her pregnancy because she knew he needed a mom and a dad. He needed a strong Catholic home. He needed more than she felt she could give him at that time. She was terrified, knowing this choice meant living without her son. It meant putting his needs before her own.

Jillian knew that if she didn’t make this decision, her life would be different—not necessarily terrible, just different. She may never have met her wonderful husband. She may not have the faith she has today. She may never have been able to share her story as a birth mother. She wouldn’t know the two incredible people she now calls her son’s parents. And she wouldn’t get to spoil her son in the

special way only a birth mother can—her favorite part of all.

The day she placed her son into the arms of his parents was the day she became a birth mom. It was also the day his parents became a mommy and daddy. Jillian says she now shares the title of “mother” with another woman, connected by a bond no one else can fully understand. She believes that placing her son meant stepping into the presence of true love—turning an unplanned situation into a gift for everyone involved.

Jillian says placing her son never meant he was unloved or unwanted. She prayed long before he was born. She believes God turned a mess into a message. Before his parents left with him, Jillian and her son’s mother shared an embrace that is almost impossible to describe—a moment between two women who became mothers in very different ways, joined together by a very big love and one tiny little boy.

Jillian says they will forever be linked in a unique and unforgettable way. She loves her son’s mother for the way she loves him, and his mother loves Jillian for the irreplaceable gift she gave their family.

To this day, when Jillian hugs her son’s mother, she feels it is a hug built on love, trust and motherhood—a silent way of thanking each other and praising God for what he has done.

“One of the things we deeply appreciated about Catholic Charities’ adoption services was the counseling. Not only did we receive counseling that allowed us to talk through our history and our parenting philosophies, but it also gave the social worker a chance to truly know us,” the adoptive parents said. “Jillian’s birth mother also received counseling, which meant so much to us. We were grateful she had a safe space to process her situation, and we respected Catholic Charities’ respect for her. It reassured us that her decision to make an adoption plan was truly her own—not something anyone pushed onto her.”

(David Bethuram is executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Catholic Charities. You can contact him at [dbethuram@archindy.org](mailto:dbethuram@archindy.org).) †

*Before his parents left with him, Jillian and her son’s mother shared an embrace that is almost impossible to describe—a moment between two women who became mothers in very different ways, joined together by a very big love and one tiny little boy.*

## Amid the Fray/Greg Erlandson

## School is in session on the opposite ends of our country to educate laity

St. John Henry Newman, writing in the 19th century, wanted a Catholic laity “who know their religion ... who know what they hold and what they do not.” Whatever challenges Newman faced in the 19th century, one could argue that the challenge of educating adult Catholics in the faith is that much more significant in the 21st century.

For too many adults, their religious education stopped after they received the sacrament of confirmation, usually around junior high. That leaves many of us in a complex and challenging world with a child’s education in the faith. We try to glean what we can from homilies. If we have the initiative to learn more, we wander into the jungle of YouTube videos and podcasts, trying to steer between the fringe influencers selling their own gospels and the professional skeptics challenging belief itself.

Where do we go to get an adult education in the faith?

Two long-running Catholic gatherings on opposite sides of the country have come up with unique and successful ways to answer that question.

The first is an extraordinary Lenten “university” offered annually in the northern reaches of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. Founded 25 years ago by Father Dave Heney, The University Series is a vast

web of courses ranging from “Bible Study: Connecting Scripture to Life Today” to “Faith and Science: Friends or Foes?” In 2026, it offered 88 presentations on 15 different parish campuses on marriage, morality, current events, faith in music and more.

Father Heney’s genius was to focus on accessibility and practicality while at the same time betting that “people will make a big commitment for a short time.”

His bet has paid off. An estimated 15,000 Catholics and their friends attend one or more sessions each Lent. The program is cleverly designed to encourage connections. Someone who pays \$10 to enroll in a class can bring a friend for free. The program is described as “friend-raising, not fund-raising.” The nominal cost makes sure the student has a little skin in the game and is more likely to show up.

On the other side of the country is a quite different model called the New York Encounter. Sponsored by Communion and Liberation, a Catholic lay movement started in Italy in 1954 and now spread around the world, it is usually held on the weekend of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. holiday in New York City. It is free for everyone. No tickets, no reservations, just wide-open access to a panoply of speakers and topics. This year’s topic was “Where ‘Everything is Waiting for You,’” an extended reflection on belonging.

The New York Encounter relies on 400 volunteers to keep things on schedule and accessible. It features not

just panels on various topics, but musical presentations and Mass (this year celebrated by New York’s emeritus archbishop Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan). The auditoriums and exhibit halls are teeming with people of all ages, but an inspiring number are college students.

February’s speakers included the Bishop of Kharkiv, Ukraine, who described the horror of Russia’s aggression in stark terms: “We are in the middle of a tempest of suffering and pain.” Other speakers addressed Catholic teaching regarding just war, the crisis of globalization, the Church and artificial intelligence and what some are calling a new religious revival in the West.

Exhibits included a tribute to the Algerian martyrs and to the Catholic founder of Bank of America.

The New York Encounter is not so much a university as a smorgasbord of fascinating people and topics. It is meant to provoke and explore, to lead to further conversations and further reading.

Two different models of educating the faithful and the interested. Two different signs of hope that Cardinal Newman’s educated laity are being formed today.

For more information, visit [theuniversityseries.org](http://theuniversityseries.org) and [newyorkencounter.org](http://newyorkencounter.org).

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

Divine Mercy Sunday/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

# The Sunday Readings

Sunday, April 12, 2026

- Acts 2:42-47
- 1 Peter 1:3-9
- John 20:19-31

With deep faith and faith-filled excitement, the Church continues the celebration of Easter it began a week and a day ago, the Lord's resurrection and final victory over death and sin.

As is the case in almost every Mass of this season, the first reading this weekend comes from the Acts of the Apostles. Acts originally was seen to be a continuation of St. Luke's Gospel, and these books should still be considered as being in sequence.

Together they tell an uninterrupted story of salvation in Jesus, from Mary's conception to a time years after Christ's ascension.

This continuing story is a lesson. The redemption of humanity from the effects of its sin did not end when the Lord returned to the glory of heaven. It has not ceased. It brought the mercy of God to the first Christians, mentioned in Acts, and has continued to do this to every generation thereafter, including our own.

The first Christians, most of whom likely knew Jesus, reverently followed the Apostles. Together, they truly were the Church, eagerly caring for those in need, praying, especially in "breaking the bread," a term referring to the Eucharist (Acts 2:42).

Most importantly, Jesus continued to live and act through the Apostles and in the Church. The sick were cured. The deaf heard. The blind saw. No one was beyond the Apostles' concern.

For its second reading this weekend, the Church offers us a passage from the First Epistle of St. Peter.

Inspiring in this reading is the early Church's obvious and intense love for and faith in the Lord. It was a faith that hardly went unchallenged. The culture in which Christianity was born and grew in almost every respect either rejected the ideals of the Gospel or held them in outright contempt.

St. John's Gospel provides the last reading. It is the story of the reluctance

of the Apostle St. Thomas to accept that Jesus indeed had risen from the dead. Then, as all recall, Jesus dramatically appears on the scene. He invites Thomas to believe. In awe and the uttermost faith, Thomas declares that Jesus not only is teacher and Redeemer, but indeed that he is God.

The Lord then confers upon the Apostles that most divine of powers, the power to forgive sin.

## Reflection

This weekend is Divine Mercy Sunday, a breathtakingly refreshing thought. We are all sinners, but all is not lost. God's love endures. It is expressed in his divine mercy, in granting us forgiveness.

Jews and the people in Israel always remember the millions who died in Adolf Hitler's savage persecution of Jews. As years pass, some people have started to forget that horrific time. We cannot forget. Atrocities remind us of how terrible is a life lived without the Gospel. Acts reminds us that Christ lives in the Church and the Gospel it proclaims. The gift of the Gospel is God's greatest gift of mercy to individuals, societies and humanity.

The Apostles and the bishops today who are their successors in the Church still bring us this mercy, faithfully and truly connecting us with God and the hope of being forgiven. They do this just as the Apostles brought it to the first Christians as recorded in Acts.

God sent his divine mercy to us in the Lord Jesus. Christ's humanity, life, death and triumph over death provided our access to divine mercy.

Goodness is not imposed upon us. No one drags us into heaven. The choice to accept these gifts or to reject them belongs to us individually.

The Church always gathers around the Apostles. We become part of the Church with the help of God's grace by modeling in our hearts the faith of the first Christians, including Thomas.

Through this faith, the basis of our life in the Church with the successors of the Apostles, we experience the divine mercy of God. †

## Daily Readings

**Monday, April 13**  
St. Martin I, pope and martyr  
Acts 4:23-31  
Psalm 2:1-9  
John 3:1-8

**Tuesday, April 14**  
Acts 4:32-37  
Psalm 93:1-2, 5  
John 3:7b-15

**Wednesday, April 15**  
Acts 5:17-26  
Psalm 34:2-9  
John 3:16-21

**Thursday, April 16**  
Acts 5:27-33  
Psalm 34:2, 9, 17-20  
John 3:31-36

**Friday, April 17**  
Acts 5:34-42  
Psalm 27:1, 4, 13-14  
John 6:1-15

**Saturday, April 18**  
Acts 6:1-7  
Psalm 33:1-2, 4-5, 18-19  
John 6:16-21

**Sunday, April 19**  
Third Sunday of Easter  
Acts 2:14, 22-33  
Psalm 16:1-2, 5, 7-11  
1 Peter 1:17-21  
Luke 24:13-35

Question Corner/Jenna Marie Cooper

## Christ's redeeming mission extends to the just who had died before his coming

**Q**In the Apostles Creed, we say that Jesus "descended into hell" after he died on the cross. But why would Jesus go to hell if he was sinless?



**A**The short answer is that Jesus was not sent to hell as a consequence for his own sinfulness, but in order to free us from ours.

As you correctly point out, as the incarnate son of God Jesus was totally, completely without sin. As we read in the New Testament Letter to the Hebrews, "we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has similarly been tested in every way, yet without sin" (Heb 4:15). And the First Letter of St. Peter describes Jesus as "a spotless, unblemished lamb" (1 Pt 1:19).

On the other hand, with the singular exception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who through a special action of God's grace was sinless from the first moment of her immaculate conception, the rest of humanity suffers from the consequences of original sin.

The first sin of Adam and Eve created a rupture between God and humanity, a rupture which carried over to all their descendants, the entire human race. And on top of this, every person throughout

history has had to contend with their actual sins, those which they have personally and freely committed.

Jesus' saving mission was not only to grant forgiveness of our personal sins, but more foundationally to restore the possibility of human beings' friendship with God that had been lost in the fall of Adam and Eve.

The fact that human beings suffer bodily death at all is understood to have been a consequence of original sin (for example, see Rom 5:12-14). And also because of original sin, the men and women who died prior to the coming of Christ—no matter how holy or virtuous they may have been—were not capable of entering into the full blessedness of heaven.

And so the pre-Christian "hell" of the Old Testament is different from the "hell" that exists after the coming of Christ. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* notes that: "Scripture calls the abode of the dead, to which the dead Christ went down, 'hell' ... because those who are there are deprived of the vision of God. Such is the case for all the dead, whether evil or righteous, while they await the Redeemer" (#633).

However, as we know from Jesus' parable of the rich man and the beggar Lazarus in chapter 16 of St. Luke's Gospel—where after their deaths the rich man is in torment because of his lack of charity, while Lazarus is held by Abraham—there apparently was a distinction between the virtuous dead and the dead who had separated themselves from God by their sins. As the catechism goes on to tell us, "Jesus did not descend into hell to deliver the damned, nor to destroy the hell of damnation, but to free the just who had gone before him" (#633).

After his death on the cross, Jesus descended into the "hell" that was simply the netherworld in order to free the dead who had sought to love and honor God despite the original sin that bound them, in order that Jesus might bring them into the fullness of life. This is why most traditional art which depicts the events of Holy Saturday show Christ descending into hell as a triumphant victor, rather than as a suffering victim as he was on Good Friday.

The catechism describes this beautifully: "The descent into hell brings the Gospel message of salvation to complete fulfillment. This is the last phase of Jesus' messianic mission, a phase which is condensed in time but vast in its real significance: the spread of Christ's redemptive work to all men of all times and all places, for all who are saved have been made sharers in the redemption" (#634).

(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](mailto:CatholicQA@osv.com).) †

## My Journey to God

# Sacred Destiny

By Susan Israel, Ph.D.

Here I stand; a guilty witness  
of sacred beauty  
a gift to see.

Here you hold the royal victim  
who carries my sin  
away from me.

Here He lived out  
God's destiny where  
I can choose salvation  
to set me free.

Here is Mary for one last time  
holding the Redeemer  
dripping in compassionate tears  
of agony sharing in  
Divine Charity.

(Susan Israel, Ph.D., is a member of St. Luke the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis. The poem was inspired by seeing Michelangelo's Pietà in St. Peter's Basilica during a trip she made to Rome and the Vatican in January. She took this photo of the famous sculpture.)



# Rest in peace

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

**BENNETT, Betty**, 86, St. Michael, Bradford, Feb. 28. Mother of Pamela Martin and Mark Bennett. Grandmother of three. Great-grandmother of eight.

**BLOOM, David W.**, 72, Our Lady of the Greenwood, Greenwood, March 25. Husband of Christina Bloom. Father of Jessica and Jason Tyler. Brother of Marybeth, John, Ken and Phillip Bloom.

**CAMPBELL, Henry R.**, 75, St. John Paul II, Sellersburg, March 21. Husband of Mary Campbell. Father of Melissa Peveler. Brother of Theresa Wolford and Paul Campbell.

Grandfather of two. Great-grandfather of one.

**DEAN, Vivian**, 86, St. Joseph, Corydon, March 19. Wife of Terry Dean. Mother of Kelly McCormick, Nelson, Ronald and Steven Stepro. Sister of Wanda Chinn, Charlotte Lone, Buddy and Kenneth Troncin. Grandmother of 11. Great-grandmother of 22.

**DI BORTOLO, Iole E. L.**, 95, St. Pius X, Indianapolis, March 3. Wife of Olinto Di Bortolo. Mother of Mary Ann Cohen, Linda Swanson and Frank Di Bortolo. Grandmother of two. Great-grandmother of two.

**FRANK, Darlene K.**, 84, St. Gabriel, Connersville, March 26. Wife of Andrew Frank. Mother of Deborah Napier and Steven Frank. Sister of Nancy Cloyd, Donna Gansert and Eileene Wiley. Grandmother of three.

**GOFF, Juliette**, 68, St. Simon the Apostle, Indianapolis, Jan. 28. Wife of Bob Goff.

**HAUGER, Roger**, 93, St. Michael, Bradford, March 6. Father of Bridgett Davenport, Mariah Eknes, Jennifer Stern, J. Andrew and Roger Hauger, Jr. Grandfather of 10. Great-grandfather of 13. Great-great-grandfather of three.

**JOERGER, Phyllis A. (Craven)**, 81, All Saints, Dearborn County, March 27. Mother of Jennifer Hunger and Allan Thompson. Sister of Melissa McMannon. Grandmother of five. Great-grandmother of seven.

**MARKIEWICZ, Jackie**, 92, St. Christopher, Indianapolis, March 29. Mother of Norine Chastain and Gene Markiewicz. Grandmother of seven. Great-grandmother of two. Great-great-grandmother of two.

**NEVITT, Robert**, 86, St. Mary, Lanesville, March 19. Husband of Patricia

Nevitt. Father of Debbie Robertson, Bob, Jr., and Michael Nevitt. Grandfather of six. Great-grandfather of 10.

**SCHIFF, Jack K.**, 81, St. Mary, Greensburg, March 29. Father of Rachel Arnold, Cheri Simpson, Erich Miller and Shawn Schiff. Brother of Frieda Baldwin and Donald Schiff. Grandfather of seven. Great-grandfather of 12.

**SEUFERT, Tom**, 77, St. Mary, Rushville, March 23. Husband of Laura Seufert. Father of Cathy Seufert. Brother of Cletus Seufert. †

## Artemis II mission pilot preaches Christ's command to love on lunar flyby

(OSV News)—As the astronauts of NASA's first crewed lunar flyby in half a century reached their closest approach to the moon, the team's pilot reminded the Earth of Jesus Christ's command to love both God and neighbor.

"As we get close to the nearest point to the moon and farthest point from Earth, as we continue to unlock the mysteries of the cosmos, I would like to remind you of one of the most important mysteries there on Earth, and that's love," said astronaut Victor Glover, pilot of the Artemis II mission, speaking to ground control on April 6 from aboard NASA's Orion spacecraft Integrity.

"Christ said, in response to what was the greatest command, that it was to love God with all you are," said Glover. "And he also, being a great teacher, said the second is equal to it. And that is to love your neighbor as yourself."

Glover—a Christian who has spoken publicly about his faith, citing Psalm 30 during his previous mission to the International Space Station—shared that message minutes before the Integrity faced an anticipated 40-minute communication lapse with ground control, as the spacecraft passed behind the moon, with radio and laser signals consequently blocked.

The craft launched on April 1 from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida for a 10-day journey that took the crew around the moon, spanning 695,081 miles from launch to splashdown off the coast of San Diego.

Artemis II traveled a record-breaking maximum distance of 252,760 miles from the Earth, or more than 4,100 miles further than the 1970 Apollo 13 mission.

Joining Glover in space are commander Reid Wiseman and two mission specialists—Christina Koch and Canadian astronaut Jeremy Hansen, who is the first from that nation to undertake a lunar mission.

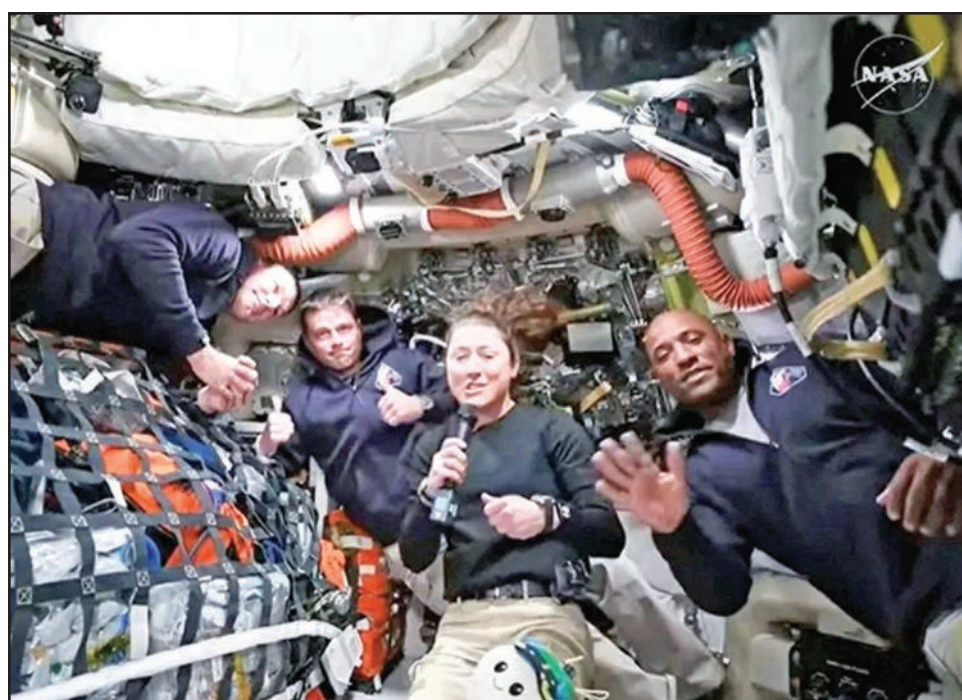
Artemis II's priorities focus on preparing for deep space exploration by humans and laying the groundwork for what NASA calls "a sustained presence on the Moon."

With the flight taking place amid widespread geopolitical conflicts and tensions—from Ukraine to a widening war in the Middle East—Glover's most recent words echoed earlier comments on how the lunar mission is also reaffirming human dignity, as well as the need for both unity and gratitude amid entrenched strife.

Glover, speaking from the spacecraft earlier on April 5 to CBS News, said that "as we go into Easter Sunday, thinking about all the cultures all around the world, whether you celebrate it or not, whether you believe in God or not, this is an opportunity for us to remember where we are, who we are, and that we are the same thing, and that we've got to get through this together."

"When I read the Bible and I look at all of the amazing things that were done for us who were created—you have this amazing place, this spaceship," he said. "You guys are talking to us because we're in a spaceship really far from Earth, but you're on a spaceship called Earth that was created to give us a place to live in the universe."

He added, "Maybe the distance we are from you makes you think what we're doing is special, but we're the same



NASA Artemis II crew members Jeremy Hansen, left, Reid Wiseman, Christina Koch and Victor Glover answer questions from reporters on April 2 during the first downlink event of their mission. (OSV News photo/NASA TV Handout via Reuters)

distance from you. And I'm trying to tell you—just trust me—you are special."

Glover—the first Black astronaut to travel around the moon—pointed to "all of this emptiness" and "whole bunch of nothing" that "we call the universe," describing Earth as "this oasis, this beautiful place" where "we get to exist together."

Speaking to BBC News ahead of the mission, Glover said, "When we're behind the moon, out of contact with everybody, let's take that as an opportunity. Let's pray, hope, send your good thoughts and

feelings that we get back in contact with the crew."

Moments before the April 6 period of loss of signal—which ended as scheduled, with the crew safely emerging on a homeward bound trajectory—Glover said, "As we prepare to go out of radio communication, we're still able to feel your true love from Earth. And to all of you down there on Earth and around Earth, we love you from the moon."

"Houston copies," replied ground control. "We'll see you on the other side." †

## Archbishop Broglio: War in Iran is likely not justified under Catholic teaching

WASHINGTON (OSV News)—Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio of the U.S. Archdiocese for the Military Services questioned the legitimacy of America's war

in Iran, arguing that the war is likely not justified under Catholic teaching on legitimate defense by military means, sometimes called just war theory.

In an interview with "Face the Nation" taped on April 2 and aired on Easter, Archbishop Broglio, said that under the just war theory, he was concerned the U.S. military action in Iran was "compensating for a threat" before the threat "is actually realized."

"I would line myself up with Pope Leo [XIV], who has been urging for negotiation," he said. "I realize also that you could say, well, with whom are you going to negotiate? And that, that is ... a problem. But in the meantime, lives are being lost, both there and also among our, our troops. So it's ... a concern."

Pope Leo XIV told journalists in March 31 comments at Castel Gandolfo that he hoped President Donald J. Trump was "looking for an off-ramp" to the conflict.

Pope Leo has been a vocal critic of war in the Middle East and beyond. His comments followed his first Palm Sunday homily as pope, in which he proclaimed that Jesus, the King of Peace, embraces all suffering in human history and cries out from the cross against war.

God, Pope Leo said during that homily, "does not listen to the prayers of those who wage war, but rejects them, saying: 'Even though you make many prayers, I will not listen: your hands are full of blood' [Is 1:15]."

Trump said in an April 1 address to the nation, "We are going to finish the job. And we're going to finish it very fast."

During that speech, Trump argued the combat operations against Iran on Feb. 28 that killed Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and other key Iranian political and military officials were carried out in response to concern about grave threats, pointing to "the specter of nuclear blackmail."



Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio

In response to a question about Catholics in the military who may be concerned about participating in a war the Church's leadership has described as unjust, Archbishop Broglio called it a "a very good question," noting that the ability of some service members to object may be very limited, creating a significant moral dilemma. He advised that such individuals "would probably have to speak to ... to his chaplain, to his chain of command."

"My counsel would be to do as little harm as you can ... and to try and preserve innocent lives," Archbishop Broglio said.

The show's host, CBS News' Ed O'Keefe, asked the archbishop about rhetoric on the conflict from Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth such as when he "invokes Jesus repeatedly when talking about the war with Iran." Hegseth uses the moniker "secretary of war" since Trump signed an executive order last September, adding the "Department of War" as a secondary, ceremonial title for the Department of Defense.

Archbishop Broglio said Hegseth's remark was "a little bit problematic in the sense that the Lord Jesus certainly brought ... a message of peace and also, I think war is always a last resort." †

### 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:

- Earn certificate in Lay Ministry
- Complete 12 courses online with ND STEP program
- CDU offers classes on Catechism of the Catholic Church
- 20% discount for all employees, volunteers, and parishioners

For more information, please log on to [www.archindy.org/layministry](http://www.archindy.org/layministry)



### REPORT SEXUAL MISCONDUCT NOW

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

- 1 Ethics Point**  
Confidential, Online Reporting  
[www.archdioceseofindianapolis.ethicspoint.com](http://www.archdioceseofindianapolis.ethicspoint.com) or 888-393-6810
- 2 Victim Assistance Coordinator**, Archdiocese of Indianapolis  
P.O. Box 1410, Indianapolis, IN 46206-1410  
**317-236-1548 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1548**  
[victimassistance@archindy.org](mailto:victimassistance@archindy.org)

# From the Archives



## In This Photo

Sisters of St. Benedict from Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove appear in this undated photo. The monastery in Beech Grove was established after sisters from the first women's Benedictine monastery in Indiana voted in 1953 to establish a permanent presence in Beech Grove.

## Trivia Question

What town was the location of the first monastery of Benedictine sisters in Indiana?

Let us know your answer at [archindy.org/ArchivesTrivia](http://archindy.org/ArchivesTrivia)

## Previous Answer

The question in our March 13 issue was: Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara served as chairman of which national Catholic organization from 1987-91? The answer is: Catholic Relief Services.

## HOLY THURSDAY

continued from page 7

He said true peace is not found in remaining comfortable, but in embracing the risk and detachment that mission requires. Calling it a "fundamental secret of mission," the pope said "everything is restored and multiplied if it is first let go, without fear," a process repeated "in every new beginning, in every new sending forth."

God calls upon the faithful to take risks, so "no place becomes a prison, no identity a hiding place," he said. Every mission requires reconciliation with the past, with the "gifts and limitations of the upbringing we have received," the pope said.

Once the faithful are able to detach from what is familiar and comfortable, Pope Leo said they must then "encounter" the other through selfless service and the sharing of life. This detachment, he said, creates the

conditions for authentic encounter rather than control.

He emphasized that it is a priority that "neither in the pastoral sphere nor in the social and political spheres can good come from abuse of power."

He pointed to the example of missionaries, a role he held as an Augustinian in Peru, whose work must be rooted in service, dialogue and respect.

Rather than seeking to "reconquer" increasingly secular societies, the pope said Catholics must approach as guests, not to impose, but to listen and accompany.

The Church's mission, the pope said, is guided by the Holy Spirit, and the faithful must not try to control it but instead follow its lead, entering each culture with humility and "respecting the mystery that every person and every community carries within them."

In his third point, the pope explained that this mission is not a "heroic adventure" reserved only for a few, but rather the "living witness of a Body

with many members," and every mission includes rejection and suffering.

He recalled that the people of Nazareth were filled with rage when they heard Jesus' words and drove him out of the town. Every Christian must "pass through" a trial just as Jesus did, the pope said.

"The cross is part of the mission: the sending becomes more bitter and

frightening, but also more freeing and transformative," he said.

A successful mission is not about the results, but rather about the disciple's faithfulness and hope in God. Jesus embarked on a journey "in a world torn apart by the powers that ravage it," Pope Leo said.

"Within it arises a new people, not of victims, but of witnesses," he said. †

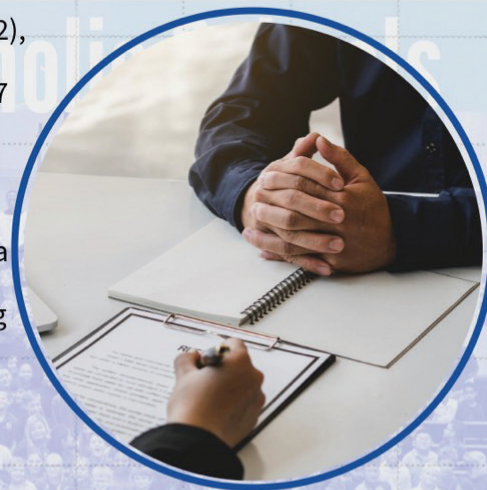
### Employment

**Seton Catholic High School**  
Richmond, IN



## Principal Job Opening

Seton Catholic High School of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton parish, Richmond, Indiana (grade 7 to 12), seeks a practicing Catholic to serve as Principal for the 2026-27 school year. The successful candidate will understand and embrace the school's Catholic mission of making students disciples of Jesus, demonstrate a solid background in curriculum and instruction, and bring strong leadership skills together with a passion for supporting students and teachers in the pursuit of academic excellence.



**APPLY NOW**

- Academic Excellence
- Virtue development
- Leadership for tomorrow

faith and friendship with Christ

## Classified Directory

For advertising rates call (317) 236-1585.

### Employment

## Director of Human Resources Archdiocese of Indianapolis

The Archdiocese seeks a senior HR leader to oversee strategy and operations for more than 5,000 employees across parishes, schools, and ministries. The role manages all major HR functions—benefits, compensation, compliance, recruitment, employee relations, and training—and directs the Archdiocese's safe-environment programs.

Applicants must be active Catholics with a bachelor's degree (master's degree preferred), HR certification, and at least 15 years of HR leadership experience.

Send a cover letter, résumé, and three references to Chris Walsh at [cwalsh@archindy.org](mailto:cwalsh@archindy.org) by April 7, 2026.

# Cathedral's boys' basketball team wins state championship

By John Shaughnessy

The Bible study in the locker room before the state championship game had ended. Now, head coach Jason Delaney turned to the players on the boys' basketball team of Cathedral High School in Indianapolis, wanting to share one last set of instructions before they ran onto the court at Gainbridge Fieldhouse in Indianapolis, the home of the Indiana Pacers.

Trying to calm their nerves about playing in the biggest game of their season inside a National Basketball Association arena, Delaney reassured them that this moment "is something we've done 30 times together this season, not counting all the practices and summer games."

"It was just about faith and believing and seeing things all the way through—and that we deserve to be here," Delaney recalls telling his players. "It's about having strength and finishing the job."

Two hours later on March 28, the Cathedral players had finished the job and raised the Indiana Class 3A boys' state championship trophy after beating the team from New Haven High School by a score of 71-61.

Amid all the smiles, hugs and shouts of joy that he shared with his players in the post-game celebration, Delaney also savored just how special this entire season has been.

"They just came together and believed in each other. That was the difference—the chemistry," Delaney says. "This wasn't our most talented team we've had here, but it's the most cohesive group we've had here."

"They were willing to sacrifice for each other and love each other more than they loved their own personal gain. And so now, they get the rewards of it. They get the blessing of earning this place in history and earning the state championship medals and rings and the banner on the wall at school. They'll always have that place in Cathedral history and Indiana basketball history."

In a way, this championship season was a journey of redemption for Cathedral. After losing in last year's sectional, the program embraced a motto of "365 days," working to erase that heartbreaking feeling by keeping a commitment to try to get better every day.

"It started a year ago, 365 days, on March 8, 2025," Delaney says. "We thought last year's team was the team that would win it. We were number one in the state at the end of the season. In the fourth quarter of that game, we kind of fell apart, losing to a team that went to the state championship. We had to sit with that for 365 days. We had to go back to work, gain confidence again."

"And we graduated a ton. It wasn't like we returned the same team. We graduated about 75% of our scoring



Many parts of the community of Cathedral High School in Indianapolis came together on March 28 to celebrate its boys' basketball team winning Indiana's Class 3A state championship by a score of 71-61 over the team from New Haven High School. (Photo courtesy of Oh Snap Indy)

and about 68% of our rebounding. Then our point guard left in the summer. A lot of guys had to step up. They had to battle adversity, and they bonded together. It was a very tight-knit group."

Delaney is also proud of the players for the way they handle themselves off the court. "The team earned an Academic-All State award," their head coach says. "When I got here 10 years ago, our basketball GPA [grade-point average on a scale of a 4.0] was a 2.3. We got it raised to 3.8. We've got guys winning academic awards now."

"I think of how much they loved each other and how much joy they had together off the court, how their faith was so strong. We had Julien Smith, a senior, taking kids to youth ministry. He would drive them all around the city so they could hear God's word. To see how some of them grew in their faith walk was remarkable."

Besides Smith, Delaney praises the leadership of the two other seniors on the team, R'Mani Wells and Keaton Aldridge.

"They all led beautifully in their own way," Delaney says. "R'Mani was just a positive force all the time. Even

if things weren't always going his way, he encouraged others, brought energy and could make you smile. Julien is a 4.1 student, academic all-state and a peer mentor—a leader in every aspect of that word."

"And Keaton really took the young guys under his wing and led them. He put this team on his back countless times."

All those ingredients led to a special moment on March 30 at the school when the players, coaches and managers made what Cathedral calls "the champions' walk" into the gym, where the team was celebrated by the school community.

"It felt really good, watching the kids have so much fun with it," says Delaney, who has now coached four state champions in his 22 years as a head coach.

"You talk to them about what the feeling is going to be like after you've won a state championship. It's the bond of the team that lasts a lifetime. They've accomplished it. So, you get to see them enjoy all their hard work. I just think of the kind of kids they are, and our managers and our coaches. It was a blessing for me to be a part of it." †

# At Colosseum, pope carries a cross, leading thousands in Good Friday prayer

ROME (OSV News)—Inside an ancient arena of the Roman Empire that crucified Christ, Pope Leo XIV carried a cross through the darkness of night on Good Friday at Rome's Colosseum, leading about 30,000 in prayer for the sufferings of the modern world.

Torch flames flickered against nearly 2,000-year-old stone walls as crowds packed the streets around the Colosseum on April 3, praying alongside the pope through the traditional *Via Crucis* on the first Good Friday of his pontificate.

The 70-year-old pope carried a cross through all 14 stations of the Way of the Cross, holding it directly in front of his face for nearly two hours as he prayed for victims of war, the defense of human dignity, the despairing and the lonely.

It was the first time a pope had carried a cross for every station in more than three decades. According to Vatican archival research communicated by Holy See Press Office Director Matteo Bruni on April 3, St. John Paul II was the last pope to do so, carrying a cross from 1980 to 1994.

The meditations for this year's celebration were written by Franciscan Father Francesco Patton, who formerly served as *custos* of the Holy Land and drew on his experience walking the historical Way of the Cross through the narrow streets of Jerusalem's Old City, describing it in both Jesus' time and today as "a chaotic, distracting and noisy environment, surrounded by people who share our faith in him, but also by those who deride or insult him."

In this way, he said, the *Via Crucis* parallels how every Christian is called to incarnate faith, hope and charity in the real world "where the believer faces ongoing challenges and must constantly strive to imitate Jesus."

Each station included a Scripture reading, a quotation from St. Francis of Assisi, a meditation by Father Francesco and a short, introspective litany prayer, after which the crowd prayed an Our Father in Latin and verses of the traditional "*Stabat Mater*" hymn.

The inclusion of quotations by St. Francis fits with the Catholic Church's special Jubilee Year marking the 800th anniversary of the saint's death. St. Francis' reflection on redemptive suffering was among those cited: "Let all of us, brothers, consider the Good Shepherd who bore the suffering of the cross to save his sheep." Many of the quotations were drawn from St. Francis' "Admonitions," the spiritual writings he left for his brother friars before his death in 1226.

The meditation for the first station, "Jesus is condemned to death," called leaders of every kind to account, with Father Francesco writing that every person in authority will answer to God in the Last Judgment for how they exercise power, including "the power to judge; the power to start or end a war; the power to instill violence or peace; the power to fuel the desire for revenge or for reconciliation; the power to use the economy to oppress people or to liberate them from misery."

The 10th station, "Jesus is stripped of his garments," drew a sharp connection between Christ's humiliation and contemporary violations of human dignity. The meditations cited authoritarian

regimes that force prisoners to remain half-naked in bare cells, torturers who tear away not only clothing but skin and flesh, sexual abusers who reduce victims to objects, and an entertainment industry that "exploits nudity for the sake of profit."

The meditation concluded with a call to conversion: "Remind us, Lord, that each time we fail to recognize the dignity of others, our own dignity is diminished."

The 11th station, "Jesus is nailed to the cross," offered a meditation on the nature of true power in the eyes of God. "You show that true power is not that of those who use force and violence to impose themselves, but that of those who are capable of taking upon themselves the evil of humanity—ours, mine—and destroying it with the power of love that is manifest in forgiveness," it said. "You are King and you reign from the cross: you do not resort to the supposed power of armies, but to the apparent powerlessness of love."

The litany prayers that followed each meditation gave voice to a wide range of human suffering. At the eighth station, "Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem," the crowd prayed to "weep over the devastation of war" and "for massacres and genocides." At the ninth station, the congregation asked to be made instruments of Christ "to lift up the most frail" and "to lift up those we judge as having 'brought it upon themselves.'"

Throughout the evening, prayers were offered for political prisoners, for people searching for the ultimate meaning of life, for those suffering from addiction, for children whose childhoods have been stolen, for victims of trafficking, for the poor stripped of their dignity, for migrants and refugees, for the lonely, for mothers who have lost children and for those who die alone. †



Pope Leo XIV leads the Way of the Cross at the Colosseum in Rome on April 3. (OSV News photo/Vincenzo Livieri, Reuters)