

# The Criterion

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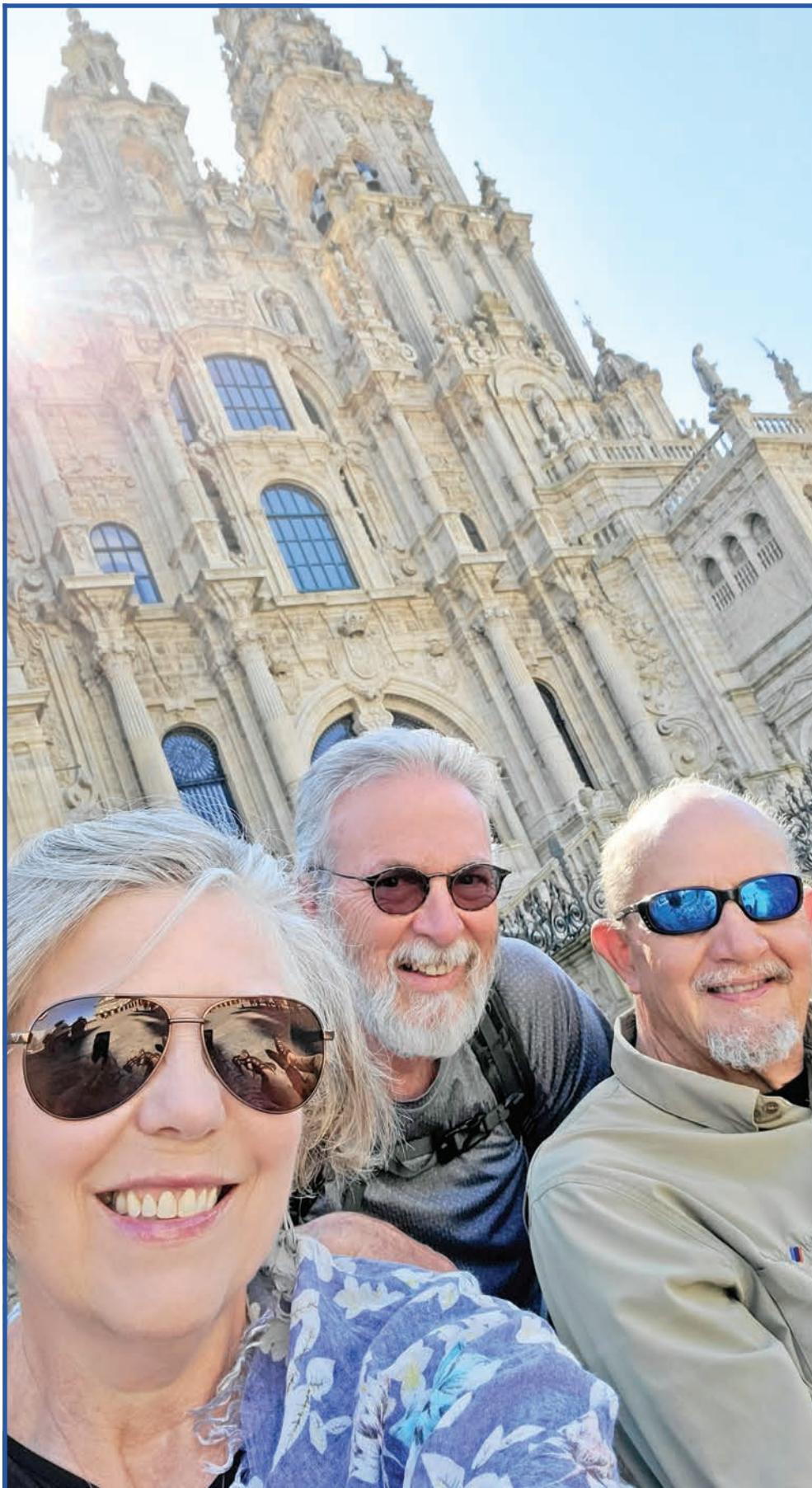
## Our Works of Charity

Amid winter's grip, stay warm—and help others in need to do the same, page 12.

CriterionOnline.com

January 16, 2026

Vol. LXVI, No. 14



## A small guitar and unexpected friendships create a lasting harmony on the *Camino*

*(Editor's note: A record 499,239 pilgrims from all over the world walked the Camino pilgrimage route 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.)*

Seventh in an occasional series

By John Shaughnessy

When Lisa Gray recalls her most memorable moments from walking the *Camino* this past spring, she quickly focuses on the scenes involving two travelers, one Ukrainian and the other Russian.

"We witnessed them talking and sharing, even touring the Burgos cathedral together," says Gray, a member of Prince of Peace Parish in Madison. "The last time I saw them together, they were hugging each other when their paths parted. Peace between two strangers whose countries are at war."

That magical scene leads her to recall more moments of harmony,

**See CAMINO**, page 8

**Lisa Gray, left, Tony Schroeder and John Gray, members of Prince of Peace Parish in Madison, flash smiles in front of the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in Spain after completing their 500-mile journey on the *Camino* last spring.**

*(Submitted photo)*

## Firing squad as new execution method draws serious concerns

By Victoria Arthur

The Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC) is speaking out against legislation that aims to introduce death by firing squad as a new method of capital punishment in the state.

With the 2026 legislative session now underway at the Indiana Statehouse, the

ICC acted quickly to oppose Senate Bill 11, stating that the additional execution method

it proposes "only underscores the brutality and savagery" of the death penalty itself.

"When we commit violence against another man, we not only hurt him, but the image of God in him, which affects the humanity in us all," said Roarke LaCoursiere, associate director of the ICC, during a Jan. 6 hearing on the bill. "For this reason, killing someone, especially by firearm, should be resorted to in only the most necessary, life-threatening situations."

After reiterating the Catholic Church's opposition to the death penalty in any form, LaCoursiere told lawmakers that the provisions of Senate Bill 11 raise unique

concerns because of the trauma they would inflict not only on the person facing execution, but also on the individuals tasked with carrying them out.

The bill, authored by Sen. Mike Young (R-Indianapolis), proposes a

five-member firing squad that would be composed of Indiana Department of Correction officers. Four of the officers would fire weapons using live ammunition, while one would fire a weapon containing a blank round, thus ensuring that no one would know who dealt the fatal shot.

**See ICC**, page 2

## The National Eucharistic Pilgrimage is back in 2026—with a patriotic twist

**(OSV News)**—The National Eucharistic Pilgrimage is back for 2026 with a special route that will travel the East Coast from St. Augustine, Fla., to Portland, Maine, ending in Philadelphia, organizers announced on Jan. 8.

The pilgrimage—the third of its kind—will begin in May on Memorial Day weekend and end on July 5. This year's pilgrimage celebrates America's 250th anniversary with the theme "One Nation Under God," and its route incorporates key sites in the history of the country and its Catholics.

Organizers described the pilgrimage as "a nationwide call to

**See PILGRIMAGE**, page 9

**Father Gary Mueller, pastor at St. Vincent DePaul Parish in Los Angeles, with Los Angeles Auxiliary Bishop Matthew G. Elshoff close behind, carries a monstrance holding the Blessed Sacrament during day two of the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage's appearance in L.A. on June 21, 2025. (OSV News photo/Katie Trejo, courtesy Archdiocese of Los Angeles)**





continued from page 1

"Even in instances where fatal force is used to save lives, people struggle with the long-lasting trauma that accompanies taking someone's life," LaCoursiere said during the hearing in the Senate Committee on Corrections and Criminal Law. "It goes against our God-given nature to do so. But under this bill, we would be asking five people to pull the trigger not for the purpose of saving life, but for the purpose of ending it."

Currently, Indiana law allows only lethal injection as a means of carrying out the death penalty. In presenting Senate Bill 11, Young argued that the high cost of the drugs involved along with their limited shelf life are complicating factors driving the need for an additional execution method.

Senate Bill 11 would authorize the death penalty to be carried out by firing squad if execution by lethal injection could not occur due to unavailability of the required drug—or if the condemned person requests it instead of lethal injection.

But one opponent of Senate Bill 11 described the proposed legislation as "a solution in search of a problem." Zach Stock, a representative of the Indiana Public Defender Council, told lawmakers that with only five people currently on death row in Indiana, obtaining the drugs to administer lethal injection should not be an issue.

"We don't need large quantities of drugs now, and we're unlikely to need them in the future," Stock said.

He also addressed a major point

of controversy in the proposed bill—that it is a response to the federal government's desire to offer an additional execution method at Indiana's federal death row site in Terre Haute. The U.S. Penitentiary in Terre Haute currently houses three inmates awaiting federal execution.

"Indiana doesn't need to permanently alter its execution laws to accommodate a federal request that may change with the next administration," said Stock, who serves as legislative counsel for the Indiana Public Defender Council.

Additionally, Stock emphasized that never in its history has Indiana authorized execution by firing squad. He noted that Indiana's methods for carrying out the death penalty have evolved from hanging to electrocution to now lethal injection.

"This reflects a sustained judgment since the [state] Constitution was ratified in 1851 that methods of execution should become less violent—not more so," he said.

Currently, only five states allow a firing squad as a legal execution method: Idaho, Utah, Oklahoma, Mississippi and South Carolina.

Another opponent of Senate Bill 11 told lawmakers of an example in South Carolina highlighting that there is no failsafe means of execution—firing squad included.

Robert Dunham, executive director of the national Death Penalty Information Center, described how a team of firing squad sharpshooters "largely missed the target of the heart" in what he termed their "botched" attempt at executing an inmate.

He also described Indiana's execution process as "shrouded in secrecy," which he says makes it impossible to have



## Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

**January 20–27, 2026**

**January 24 – TBA**

Baptism at St. Augustine Church, Lebanon, Ky.

**January 25 – 5:30 p.m.**

Mass and dinner at St. Paul Catholic Center, Bloomington

**January 27 – 1 p.m.**

Council of Priests meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center

**January 27 – 5:15 p.m.**

Mass and dinner with Secretariat for Evangelizing Catechesis at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, Indianapolis

a fully informed discussion about the process.

"The state shouldn't be giving the Department of Correction more unchecked latitude in carrying out executions," said Dunham, who also serves as a professor at Temple University's Beasley School of Law in Philadelphia.

In keeping with the Catholic Church's long-standing teaching on the sanctity of human life from conception to natural death, the ICC is calling on the Catholic faithful in Indiana to oppose Senate Bill 11 and contact their lawmakers to express their concerns. The ICC has issued an action alert on the bill via its website, [indianacc.org](http://indianacc.org).

"Legalizing a firing squad method of execution would be a step in the wrong direction in Indiana's efforts to build a culture of life," LaCoursiere told lawmakers at the Jan. 6 hearing, which involved testimony only.

She and Alexander Mingus, executive director of the ICC, were working on proposed language to add conscience protection to the bill for those who wished to be exempt from the execution process on religious or moral grounds. The Senate committee was expected to vote on the proposed legislation during the week of Jan. 12.

A similar measure—House Bill 1119—proposes the addition of firing squad along with another execution method, death by nitrogen gas. At press time, that legislation had not been brought up for a hearing.

Anticipating that capital punishment would once again be at the forefront of issues before the Indiana General Assembly this year, the ICC hosted a panel discussion in Evansville last September, bringing together numerous people who have personally been affected by the death penalty.

The event was held less than two weeks before Indiana executed its third

death-row inmate since the state resumed capital punishment in December 2024 following a 15-year hiatus.

In their first ICC podcast of 2026, Mingus and LaCoursiere discussed Senate Bill 11 as well as other anticipated legislation on issues including immigration, education and family policies and protecting children online.

This is a short, non-budget year session of the Indiana General

Assembly—made even shorter by the legislature's efforts in December to redraw congressional maps in the state of Indiana, which ultimately stalled.

"We expect to be done in late February, with a hyper-focus on a few key issues making their way through the Statehouse," Mingus said.

As it has throughout its nearly 60-year history, the ICC will serve as the official public policy voice for the Catholic Church in Indiana at the General Assembly and beyond.

"In everything we do, we will always advocate for the dignity of human life and the protection of the common good," Mingus said. "And we ask all of the Catholic faithful throughout Indiana to join us in this mission."

To follow priority legislation of the ICC, visit [www.indianacc.org](http://www.indianacc.org). This website includes access to ICAN, the Indiana Catholic Action Network, which offers the Church's position on key issues. Those who sign up for ICAN receive alerts on legislation moving forward and ways to contact their elected legislators.

(Victoria Arthur, a member of St. Therese of the Infant Jesus [Little Flower] Parish in Indianapolis, is a correspondent for The Criterion.) †

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# Pope: Church leaders must listen to abuse victims, those who suffer

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Every level of Church leadership must strengthen and improve its ability to listen to everyone, especially to victims of sexual abuse and those who suffer, Pope Leo XIV said.

The problem of sexual abuse in the Catholic Church “is truly a wound in the life of the Church in many places,” and “we cannot close our eyes or our hearts” to the crisis and its victims, he said at the conclusion of an extraordinary meeting with the world’s cardinals at the Vatican.

“I encourage you to share this with your bishops: often the pain of the victims has been made worse by the fact that they were not welcomed and listened to,” he said on Jan. 8. The Vatican published the remarks on Jan. 10.

“The abuse itself causes a deep wound that may last a lifetime, but often the scandal in the Church is because the door was closed and the victims were not welcomed and accompanied by authentic pastors,” he said.

The pope continued, “listening is profoundly important” in this and all areas. “Formation in listening, formation in a spirituality of listening” is needed in seminaries, “but also for bishops” and all levels of Church leadership, including laypeople working for the Church.

The pope’s remarks came at the conclusion of an extraordinary consistory on Jan. 7-8.

The overarching aim of their encounter was to grow in communion and discern together “what the Lord is asking of us for the good of his people.”

After convening the international group of cardinals in Rome, the pope decided to make the gathering an annual event, however, with an additional meeting later this year.

It marked an approach that vastly expanded on what Pope Francis established after his election in 2013. Wishing for a more decentralized and listening Church, the late pope created a nine-member Council of Cardinals to help and advise him on several critical matters facing the Church, particularly the reform of the Roman Curia, by meeting at least quarterly in Rome.

Pope Leo decided he would be inviting all the world’s cardinals to Rome every year for a few days, Matteo Bruni, director of the Vatican press office, told reporters at a news conference after the consistory ended on Jan. 8.

College members will meet with

the pope again for at least three days sometime in June, possibly around the feast of SS. Peter and Paul, on June 29, and then the gathering will be held over three to four days once a year.

The College of Cardinals is made up of 245 cardinals from all over the world. About 170 of them made it to Rome after the pope’s invitation that they come together again for the first time since the conclave that elected him on May 8, 2025.

Cardinal Timothy Radcliffe, a Dominican theologian, offered a reflection on Jan. 7 to help the cardinals understand their role not just as advisers to the pope, but as much-needed companions along life’s way.

He recalled St. Mark’s account of Jesus making his disciples go out ahead of him by boat, which encountered a “great storm.”

Jesus does not want Peter or any of the disciples to go into the storm alone, he said. “This is our first obedience, to be in the barque of Peter, with his successor, as he faces the storms of our times.”

Some of the storms shaking the Church, he said, include “sexual abuse and ideological division. The Lord commands us to sail out into these storms and face them truthfully, not timidly waiting on the beach. If we do so in this consistory, we shall see him coming to us. If we hide on the beach, we shall not encounter him.”

However, Cardinal Radcliffe said, “If the boat of Peter is filled with disciples who quarrel, we shall be of no use to the Holy Father. If we are at peace with each other in love, even when we disagree, God will indeed be present even when he seems to be absent.”

Pope Leo emphasized the essential element of love in his opening remarks to the cardinals in the Vatican’s Synod Hall on Jan. 7.

“To the extent that we love one another as Christ has loved us, we belong to him, we are his community, and he can continue to draw others to himself through us. In fact, only love is credible; only love is trustworthy,” he said.

“Therefore, in order to be a truly missionary Church, one that is capable of witnessing to the attractive power of Christ’s love, we must first of all put into practice his commandment … ‘Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another’” (Jn 13:34), the pope said. Jesus underlined that it will be by a Christian’s love that the world will know “that you are my disciples” (Jn 13:35).

The “collegial journey” that they have begun with their first consistory, he said, would be an opportunity to reflect

together on two themes of their choice out of the following four themes: the mission of the Church in today’s world, especially as presented in Pope Francis’ 2013 apostolic exhortation “*Evangelii Gaudium*”; the synod and synodality as an instrument and a style of cooperation; the service of the Holy See, especially to the local Churches; and the liturgy, the source and summit of the Christian life. The cardinals voted with “a large majority” to discuss the first two themes—mission and synodality, Bruni told reporters.

Following a synodal structure, the cardinals were broken into 21 groups, but nine of those groups, made up of cardinals under 80 years old, who were not residents in Rome, were asked to submit reports based on their small group discussions, which followed the Synod on Synodality’s “conversation in the Spirit” method.

“I am here to listen,” Pope Leo told the cardinals before they began their two days of reflection and dialogue.

“We must not arrive at a text, but continue a conversation that will help me in serving the mission of the entire Church,” he said. Specifically, he wanted the groups to look at the next one or two years and consider what “priorities could guide the action of the Holy Father and of the Curia regarding each theme?”

The pope further encouraged the cardinals the next day in his homily during an early morning Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica.

Their task, he said, was to discern what “the Lord is asking of us for the good of his people,” not “to promote personal or group ‘agendas.’”

Through prayer, silence, listening and



Pope Leo XIV celebrates Mass on Jan. 8 in St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican with cardinals gathered for his first extraordinary consistory. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

sharing, he said, “we become a voice for all those whom the Lord has entrusted to our pastoral care in many different parts of the world.”

Speaking to reporters after the consistory, Cardinal Luis José Rueda Aparicio, archbishop of Bogotá, Colombia, said the experience “strengthened us” individually and as a group as they got to know each other better.

The pope underlined how important hope was in the life and mission of the Church, he said. When Christ is at the center of one’s life, proclaiming his word “fills us and the world with hope.”

Cardinal Stephen Brislin, archbishop of Johannesburg, South Africa, told reporters the vast differences between cardinals—with their different perspectives and needs—proved to be “very enriching” and interesting, and not a source of contention.

Cardinal Pablo Virgilio David, bishop of Kalookan, Philippines, told reporters the synodal format and style of the consistory “was familiar” to those who had taken part in the synodal assemblies in Rome in 2023 and 2024.

When asked if it seemed the pope was going to use their sessions to inform or contribute to any kind of papal document, Cardinal David said, “I don’t know,” but the pope was “taking notes very seriously so he must be up to something.” †

## Marriage ANNOUNCEMENTS

Be a part of our Spring Marriage Edition

Feb. 13 issue of *The Criterion*

Couples who are planning to be married between Feb. 13 and July 16 in a marriage that is recognized as a valid sacramental or valid natural marriage, or couples who were wed between July 11, 2025, and Jan. 25, 2026, in such a recognized marriage and did not have their engagement announcement in *The Criterion* are invited to submit the information for the upcoming Feb. 13 Spring Marriage Edition. Announcements can be submitted by mail using the form at [www.archindy.org/engagements](http://www.archindy.org/engagements).

### E-mailed photos

Photos should be saved in jpg format and be at least 500 kb. Color photos are preferred. We recommend sending a photo where the couple’s faces are close to each other. Please send the photo as an attachment to the e-mail: [alewis@archindy.org](mailto:alewis@archindy.org). Subject line: Spring Marriage (Last name). Photos may also be texted to 317-236-1585 with the couple’s names.

If it is not possible to e-mail a photo, a photo can be mailed with the names of the couple to *The Criterion*, 14000 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis 46202. Please no photocopies or laser prints. To have the photo returned, please include a self-addressed stamped envelope.

### Deadline

All announcements and photos must be received by 5 p.m. on Jan. 27.

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## Editorial



Pope Leo XIV greets visitors in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican as they gather to pray the *Angelus* on Jan. 11. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

## In Ordinary Time, we are called to make this year extraordinary in our faith, our love

We ended the Christmas season with the feast of the Baptism of the Lord on Jan. 11. Now the Church calendar has returned us to Ordinary Time, the days currently between the end of the Christmas season and the beginning of Lent.

But the Church reminds us that Ordinary Time also includes the days between the end of the Easter season and the beginning of Advent.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website shares: "The Sundays and weeks of Ordinary Time ... take us through the life of Christ. This is the time of conversion. This is living the life of Christ."

It adds: "Ordinary Time is a time for growth and maturation, a time in which the mystery of Christ is called to penetrate ever more deeply into history until all things are finally caught up in Christ. The goal, toward which all of history is directed, is represented by the final Sunday in Ordinary Time, the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe," which will be celebrated on Nov. 22 this year.

While the bishops' explanation helps us better understand this season of the Church year, it is up to each of us to make the most of it.

In referencing Ordinary Time in his *Angelus* address on Jan. 11, Pope Leo XIV said, "This liturgical season will invite us to follow the Lord together, to listen to his word and to imitate his gestures of love toward others. In doing so, we confirm and renew our baptism, the sacrament that makes us Christians, freeing us from sin and transforming us into children of God through the power of his Spirit of life."

We're two weeks into the new year, and many are in the midst of tackling their new year's resolutions. We hear of diets, cutting back on social media, spending more time with loved ones and many other worthwhile goals. But is "transformation" truly part of the plan?

Each new year is a new beginning, a time to re-examine our lives, a chance to try again. What is Jesus inviting us to do in 2026? As we try to reorient our lives toward God, why not make every effort to make not only Ordinary Time but the

next 12 months extraordinary?

Faith is a bridge between mystery and love, and while love must be at the heart of our relationships with family, friends and our all-loving Creator, it must also be front and center in our prayers for so many in need around the world.

Every human is made in the image and likeness of God, and we would do well to remember that gift. We are all adopted sons and daughter of our Creator, seeking to be led by his grace.

The hungry, the homeless, the prisoner, the unborn, the stranger—our faith reminds us that love of God and love of neighbor are tenets we are called to follow, ones that are essential to our lived experience as people of faith.

When it comes to peace—which is desperately needed around the globe—our faith reminds us that there can be no peace without God. Our attempts to achieve it (such as in Ukraine, Yemen, Sudan and Myanmar) are doomed to fail unless all are open to the grace of God.

In recent history, it is hard to find a time when there was no war in the world, and our recent pontiffs have all implored us to pray for a peace that still seems so impossible to achieve.

In his recent message for the World Day of Peace, Pope Leo wrote, "When peace is not a reality that is lived, cultivated and protected, then aggression spreads into domestic and public life."

He added, "Peace exists; it wants to dwell within us. The task is not to create it, but to welcome it, and to allow it to disarm us."

We are taught all things are possible with God. And so, we pray that through the fruit of our prayers, some day in our lifetime, please Lord, we may indeed see a global peace.

May we also remember this prayer attributed to St. John Paul II: "Mary, Queen of Peace, save us all, who have so much trust in you, from wars, hatred and oppression. Make us all learn to live in peace and educate ourselves for peace, do what is demanded by justice and respect the rights of every person, so that peace may be firmly established. Amen."

—Mike Krokos

## Be Our Guest/Greg Erlandson

# The grandparents shortage: Are they becoming an endangered species?

There's been a lot written about falling birth rates in the United States. Less covered has been the simultaneous decline in grandparenthood.

Grandparents, to hear friends tell it, are an endangered species. Virtually every child-bearing demographic group except women over 40 is having fewer, if any, children.

And let's be honest:

Potential grandparents with children over 40 are likely to be rapidly aging out of the "fun grandparent" demographic and into the "granny flat" demographic.

Our birth rate, according to the latest government statistics, is now 1.6—below replacement level and sinking to where countries like Italy used to be. Italy's birth rate has now fallen further to 1.18, which makes *nonno* and *nonna* even more endangered than grandpa and grandma.

Wannabe grandparents are addressing this issue in a variety of ways. Frequently asking their children when they are planning to reproduce is probably one of the least effective stratagems. Putting a brave face on the child's decision to "parent" a couple of labradoodles doesn't get you anywhere either, even if you slap a bumper sticker on your car boasting that "my grandchild has four paws."

Politicians want to throw money at the issue, of course. After all, prospective grandparents vote. Governments for the past 100 years have tried to bribe would-be parents into having children. It doesn't really work—whether in China or France or South Korea—because such a life-changing experience as parenthood is not so easily incentivized by a couple thousand dollars and a tax break. The disincentives are significant: Most cited are cost of living issues like expense of day care and education, but everything from school shootings to the state of the world can be cited as well.

Prospective grandparents understand this, of course. But the desire to "live to see your children's children," as Psalm 128 puts it, is wired deep inside the

Letters from readers are published in *The Criterion* as part of the newspaper's commitment to "the responsible exchange of freely-held and expressed opinion among the People of God" (*Communio et Progressio*, 116).

Letters from readers are welcome and every effort will be made to include letters from as many people and representing as many viewpoints as possible. Letters should be informed, relevant, well-expressed and temperate in tone. They must reflect a basic sense of courtesy and respect.

The editors reserve the right to select the letters that will be published and to edit letters from readers as necessary

human heart. We want to see the children we worked so hard to parent in turn bring the next generation into being. It's a sign of hope and resilience that surpasses the headlines and the crises and the never-ending worries we have for our planet and our species.

I am fortunate that I have one child who is now a parent. Non-grandparent friends listen to my stories with a touch of envy. We aren't sure when our kids will be having kids, they say wistfully.

I'm honest with them about the work of grandparenting. There are good reasons why childrearing should be left to the young. Child care is exhausting! It takes us two or three days to recover from a weekend of book-reading and diaper changing and meal negotiating.

At the same time, grandparenting is a little bit of a time-travel experience, for we are reminded of what is generally a blur—what we did and how hard we worked when we were younger parents.

Recently, in the middle of the night, a crying 1-year-old woke up both my son and me. I stayed in the dark room as my son rocked the baby and fed him a bottle. It evoked so many nights when I did that for him. I felt a great surge of parental affection for my son. The love I had shown him long before he could remember, he was now passing on to his son as he gently rocked him back to sleep. It's a circle of life I'm blessed to be a part of.

Parenting isn't easy, but it's the most rewarding work there is. There's probably never a perfect time to decide to have children, but in general, we rise to the occasion and become better people for it.

As for the perfect time to be a grandparent, I think that is now. For would-be grandparents still waiting for the privilege, perhaps offer a prayer to St. Anne and St. Joachim, who tradition teaches us were the grandparents of Jesus. I'll bet they could tell stories.

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

## Letters Policy

Letters from readers are published based on space limitations, pastoral sensitivity and content (including spelling and grammar). In order to encourage opinions from a variety of readers, frequent writers will ordinarily be limited to one letter every three months. Concise letters (usually less than 300 words) are more likely to be printed.

Letters must be signed, but, for serious reasons, names may be withheld.

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

ARCHBISHOP/ARZOBISPO CHARLES C. THOMPSON



# Christ the Cornerstone

## Like John the Baptist, we are called to give witness to Christ

*It is too little, the Lord says, for you to be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and restore the survivors of Israel; I will make you a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the Earth.* (Is 49:3-6)

Last weekend, St. Matthew's Gospel (Mt 3:13-17) showed us that the Triune God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) was actively involved in launching the salvific work of Jesus as a teacher, healer and comforter.

Together, by their participation in Jesus' baptism, the three Divine Persons of the Holy Trinity proclaimed the prophetic message that the kingdom of God is at hand and that Jesus alone is the Savior of the world.

This weekend, as we observe the Second Sunday in Ordinary Time, St. John the Baptist is once again a predominant figure in the Gospel story (Jn 1:29-34), but his role is different.

Whereas last weekend John was the reluctant—almost unwilling—instrument of Jesus' ritual cleansing, in the incident described by St. John the Evangelist, he is a powerful witness to Jesus as the "Lamb of God

who takes away the sin of the world" (Jn 1:29).

John the Baptist reveals the depth of his humility in both Gospel stories. He is reluctant to baptize Jesus because he knows that Jesus is no sinner

What's more, this saintly man—a local celebrity whom people from all strata of Jewish society travel miles to see—knows in his heart of hearts that he is unworthy:

*A man is coming after me who ranks ahead of me because he existed before me. I did not know him, but the reason why I came baptizing with water was that he might be made known to Israel.* (Jn 1:30-31)

In another place, John acknowledges that he is not worthy to even loosen Jesus' sandals (Jn 1:27). He is keenly aware that the differences between them are enormous, and for this reason he does not hesitate to proclaim Jesus as the long-awaited Savior, the Lamb of God who would redeem his people, Israel.

The first reading for the Second Sunday in Ordinary Time (Is 49:3, 5-6) expands on John's vision. Yes, Jesus is the One promised "to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and restore the

survivors of Israel" (Is 49:6), but his mission extends beyond the Jewish people. "I will make you a light to the nations," says the Lord through the prophet Isaiah, "that my salvation may reach to the ends of the Earth" (Is 49:6).

John the Baptist fulfills his role as a wise and holy man in the tradition of the great Old Testament prophets by pointing to Jesus as the Lamb of God. But John readily acknowledges that he received this prophetic insight not on his own but as a revelation of the Holy Spirit:

*I did not know him, but the reason why I came baptizing with water was that he might be made known to Israel. John testified further, saying, "I saw the Spirit come down like a dove from heaven and remain upon him. I did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'On whomever you see the Spirit come down and remain, he is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' Now I have seen and testified that he is the Son of God"* (Jn 1:31-34).

John's ability to testify to Jesus as the Son of God comes as a result of

the Holy Spirit's gift to him. By his own power, John could not have known who Jesus was. Once again, the Holy Trinity is at work here enlightening and empowering St. John the Baptist to make known to the world that Jesus Christ is Lord.

St. Paul tells the Church in Corinth (and all of us who have been baptized) that we, too, have been selected by the Triune God to make known to the world the saving power of the Lamb of God. We "who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be holy, with all those everywhere who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours" (1 Cor 1:2) are to be Spirit-filled evangelizers who give witness, as John the Baptist did, to the One who takes away the sin of the world.

As we continue our new year of grace, let's keep in mind our baptismal responsibility to do what John the Baptist did. Let's point to Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

And let's encounter him in Word, Sacrament (especially the Holy Eucharist), and in service to all our sisters and brothers in Christ. †



# Cristo, la piedra angular

## Como Juan el Bautista, estamos llamados a dar testimonio de Cristo

*No es gran cosa que seas mi siervo, ni que restores a las tribus de Jacob, ni que hagas volver a los de Israel, a quienes he preservado. Yo te pongo ahora como luz para las naciones, a fin de que lleves mi salvación hasta los confines de la tierra* (Is 49:3-6).

El pasado fin de semana, el Evangelio de San Mateo (Mt 3:13-17) nos mostró que el Dios Trino (Padre, Hijo y Espíritu Santo) participó activamente en el lanzamiento de la obra salvadora de Jesús como maestro, sanador y fuente de consuelo.

Mediante su participación en el bautismo de Jesús, las tres Personas Divinas de la Santísima Trinidad proclamaron el mensaje profético de que el reino de Dios está cerca y que solo Jesús es el Salvador del mundo.

Este fin de semana, al celebrar el segundo domingo del Tiempo Ordinario, san Juan el Bautista vuelve a ser una figura predominante en el relato evangélico (Jn 1: 29-34), pero su papel es diferente.

Mientras que el fin de semana pasado Juan fue, a regañadientes—casi involuntariamente—el instrumento de la purificación ritual de Jesús, en el incidente descrito por san Juan Evangelista, es un poderoso

testimonio de Jesús como "cordero de Dios que quita el pecado del mundo" (Jn 1:29).

Juan el Bautista revela la profundidad de su humildad en ambos relatos del Evangelio. Por un lado, se resiste a bautizar a Jesús porque sabe que Jesús no es pecador.

Es más, este hombre santo, una celebridad local a la que acudían personas de todos los estratos de la sociedad judía tras recorrer muchos kilómetros, sabía en lo más profundo de su corazón que no era digno:

*Después de mí viene un hombre que es superior a mí, porque existía antes que yo. Yo ni siquiera lo conocía, pero para que él se revelara al pueblo de Israel, vine bautizando con agua.* (Jn 1:30-31)

En otra sección, Juan reconoce que no es digno ni siquiera de desatar las sandalias de Jesús (Jn 1:27). Es muy consciente de que las diferencias entre ellos son enormes, y por eso no duda en proclamar a Jesús como el Salvador largamente esperado, el Cordero de Dios que redimiría a su pueblo, Israel.

La primera lectura del segundo domingo del tiempo ordinario (Is 49:3, 5-6) amplía la visión de Juan. Sí, Jesús es aquel que prometió "restaurar las

tribus de Jacob y a los sobrevivientes de Israel" (Is 49:6), pero su misión se extiende más allá del pueblo judío. "Te pongo ahora como luz para las naciones, a fin de que lleves mi salvación hasta los confines de la tierra" (Is 49:6).

Juan el Bautista cumple su papel de hombre sabio y santo en la tradición de los grandes profetas del Antiguo Testamento al señalar a Jesús como el Cordero de Dios, pero también reconoce que no recibió esta visión profética por su cuenta, sino como revelación del Espíritu Santo:

*Yo ni siquiera lo conocía, pero para que él se revelara al pueblo de Israel, vine bautizando con agua. Juan declaró: "Vi al Espíritu descender del cielo como una paloma y permanecer sobre él. Yo mismo no lo conocía, pero el que me envió a bautizar con agua me dijo: 'Aquel sobre quien veas que el Espíritu descende y permanece es el que bautiza con el Espíritu Santo.' Yo lo he visto y por eso testifico que este es el Hijo de Dios"* (Jn 1:31-34).

La capacidad de Juan para dar testimonio de Jesús como Hijo de Dios es el resultado del don del Espíritu Santo. Por sus propios medios, Juan no podría haber sabido

quién era Jesús. Una vez más, la Santísima Trinidad actúa aquí iluminando y dando poder a san Juan el Bautista para dar a conocer al mundo que Jesucristo es el Señor.

San Pablo dice a la Iglesia de Corinto (y a todos los que hemos sido bautizados) que también nosotros hemos sido elegidos por el Dios Trino para dar a conocer al mundo el poder salvador del Cordero de Dios. Nosotros, que hemos "sido santificados en Cristo Jesús y llamados a ser su santo pueblo, junto con todos los que en todas partes invocan el nombre de nuestro Señor Jesucristo, Señor de ellos y de nosotros" (1 Co 1:2), hemos de ser evangelizadores llenos del Espíritu que dan testimonio, como Juan el Bautista, de aquel que quita el pecado del mundo.

A medida que continuamos con nuestro nuevo año de gracia, tengamos presente nuestra responsabilidad baptismal de hacer lo que hizo Juan el Bautista. Señalemos al Cordero de Dios que quita el pecado del mundo y encontrémoslo en la Palabra, en los Sacramentos (especialmente en la Sagrada Eucaristía) y en el servicio a todos nuestros hermanos y hermanas en Cristo. †

# 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).

## January 22

Indiana Convention Center, Hall J, 100 S. Capitol Ave., Indianapolis. **Mass for Life with Indiana bishops**, 11:30 a.m., all are welcome, sponsored by archdiocesan Office of Human Life and Dignity. Information: 317-236-1543, [bvarick@archindy.org](mailto:bvarick@archindy.org).

**Indiana March for Life, Indianapolis**: 1:45-2:30 p.m., march from Georgia and Illinois streets to Indiana Statehouse, 200 W. Washington St.; post-rally at south Statehouse steps, 2:30-3 p.m.; all are welcome, sponsored by Right to Life of Indianapolis. Information: 317-582-1526, [info@rtli.org](mailto:info@rtli.org).

## January 24

**Virtual African and Afro-Caribbean Catholic Community Gathering**, 11 a.m. via Microsoft Teams, build community across parishes and cultures, discuss 2026 African Mass Celebration, learn about services offered by archdiocesan Refugee and Immigrant Services. Registration form/survey: [tinyurl.com/](http://tinyurl.com/)

**January 24, February 7**  
Sisters of Providence, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Teen Volunteering Opportunity**, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., ages 12-18, visit with elder sisters and help them with activities such as Bingo, exercise, baking and more. Information, registration: [teenvolunteer.sistersofprovidence.org](http://teenvolunteer.sistersofprovidence.org), [jluna@spsmw.org](mailto:jluna@spsmw.org), 361-500-9505.

[FormForVirtualMeetAndGreet](http://FormForVirtualMeetAndGreet). Link to online meeting: [tinyurl.com/AccessVirtualMeetAndGreet](http://tinyurl.com/AccessVirtualMeetAndGreet). Questions: [blackcatholicministry@archindy.org](mailto:blackcatholicministry@archindy.org).

**Speaker Panel**, 7 p.m., lower level of parish office, featuring two formerly fostered and adopted speakers who now advocate for Indiana fostered youths, free. Information: 317-283-5508.

**January 24, February 7**  
Sisters of Providence, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Teen Volunteering Opportunity**, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., ages 12-18, visit with elder sisters and help them with activities such as Bingo, exercise, baking and more. Information, registration: [teenvolunteer.sistersofprovidence.org](http://teenvolunteer.sistersofprovidence.org), [jluna@spsmw.org](mailto:jluna@spsmw.org), 361-500-9505.

Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, Assembly Hall, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **Poverty in Our Community: Complexities, Challenges, Hope**, 5:30-8 p.m.; 5:30-6:30 p.m. visit with members of organizations that directly aid those in need; 6:30 p.m. panel discussion with representatives from Catholic Charities Terre Haute, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul's Changing Lives Forever Program, St. Mary's Early Childhood Center, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the archdiocese's Catholic Charities Senior Services and Holy Family Shelter; registration preferred, walk-ins welcome, refreshments provided, free. Information, registration: [tinyurl.com/povertypanel2026](http://tinyurl.com/povertypanel2026), [lsheehan@archindy.org](mailto:lsheehan@archindy.org), 317-542-2492.

St. Nicholas School, 6459 E. St. Nicholas Dr., Sunman. **Open House**, 5:30-7 p.m., free. Information: 812-623-2348, [schooloffice@stnicholas-sunman.org](mailto:schooloffice@stnicholas-sunman.org).

St. Joan of Arc Parish, 4217 Central Ave., Indianapolis. **Adoption and Foster Care**

## February 7

Maryland Community Church, 4700 S. Hwy. 46 Terre Haute. **Catholic Charities Terre Haute Annual Soup Bowl Benefit**, 3-5 p.m., one seating, guests select their own hand-crafted bowl and sample soups from local chefs, limited seating, \$31.20 (includes \$1.20 processing fee). Registration: [tinyurl.com/2026SoupBenefit](http://tinyurl.com/2026SoupBenefit).

Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 Saint Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis. **Pre-Canter Retreat**, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m., includes materials, continental breakfast, lunch, \$125 per couple, register by Jan. 29. Information, registration: [catalystcatholic.org/precana](http://catalystcatholic.org/precana), [michelle@catalystcatholic.org](mailto:michelle@catalystcatholic.org), 812-923-8355, ext. 201.

## February 12

St. Mary Parish, 1331 E. Hunter Robbins Way, Greensburg. **Miracles of the Eucharist Exhibit**, 6-8:30 p.m., created by St. Carlo Acutis, presentation by International Marian Catechist coordinator and national coordinator for the Real Presence

Association Patrick Brueggen, freewill donations accepted. Information: 812-663-8427, ext. 204, [anavarra@stmarysgreensburg.com](mailto:anavarra@stmarysgreensburg.com).

## February 15, 16

St. Mary Parish, 1331 E. Hunter Robbins Way, Greensburg. **Miracles of the Eucharist Exhibit**, 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m., exhibition on the Eucharistic Miracles of the World created by St. Carlo Acutis, freewill offerings accepted. Information: 812-663-8427, ext. 204, [anavarra@stmarysgreensburg.com](mailto:anavarra@stmarysgreensburg.com).

## February 28

Pike Performing Arts Center, 6701 Zionsville Road, Indianapolis. **Holy Fire Youth Retreat**, 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m., for students in grades 6-8, \$74.50 with lunch or \$64.50 without lunch, register by Feb. 8, sponsored by archdiocesan Office of Youth Ministry. Information, registration: [archindym.com/holy-fire](http://archindym.com/holy-fire), 317-456-7076, [rgilman@archindy.org](mailto:rgilman@archindy.org).

## March 13-15

Our Lady of the Holy Spirit Center, 5440 Moeller Ave., Norwood, Ohio. **Worldwide Marriage Encounter**, \$75 non-refundable fee. Registration: [www.wwme.org](http://www.wwme.org). Information: Andy and Melanie Reinersman, 859-653-8464.

## March 14-15

Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **Pre-Canter Retreat**, 8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. each day, includes materials, light breakfast, box lunch and snacks, \$200 per couple, register by March 4. Information, registration: [ccorona@archindy.org](mailto:ccorona@archindy.org), 317-800-9306, [tinyurl.com/ccprecana3-26](http://tinyurl.com/ccprecana3-26).

## April 24-26

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Worldwide Marriage Encounter in Spanish**, \$75 non-refundable application fee. Registration: [www.wwme.org](http://www.wwme.org). Information: Ken and Ann Butt, 317-863-5680. †

## 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).

## February 13-15

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Seasons of Us: Renewing Marriage Through Every Stage of Life**, married couples retreat, Josh and Angie Greulich presenting, \$550 double. Registration: 812-357-6611, [saintmeinrad.org/retreats](http://saintmeinrad.org/retreats).

## February 18

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Ash Wednesday and The Contemplative Life**, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. CT, Jane Feliz Rush presenting, includes lunch, \$75. Registration: 812-357-6611, [saintmeinrad.org/retreats](http://saintmeinrad.org/retreats).

## February 19, March 18

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).

**February 20, March 27, April 17**  
Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **A Day of Quiet Renewal**, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., \$20, \$80 with spiritual direction. Information, registration: 812-933-6437, [oldenburgfranciscancenter.org](http://oldenburgfranciscancenter.org).

**February 20-22**  
Mother of the Redeemer Retreat Center, 8220

W. State Road 48, Bloomington. **Strong Marriage, Strong Parenting**, 6 p.m. Fri.-10 a.m. Sun., EWTN personality and clinical psychologist Dr. Ray Guarendi presenting, \$290 for single, \$480 double, \$670 triple, \$860 quadruple, commuter \$90, includes four meals and room for two nights, commuters \$50.70 includes lunch and dinner on Sat. Information, registration: 812-825-4642, ext. 1, [motheroftheredeemer.com](mailto:motheroftheredeemer.com).

**February 21**  
Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **Modern Day Saints**, 9:30-11:30 a.m., artist Gracie Morbitzer presenting, \$30. Information, registration: 812-933-6437, [oldenburgfranciscancenter.org](http://oldenburgfranciscancenter.org).

## February 24-26

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

## February 24, March 3, 10, 17

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Blessed Are You**, 10 a.m.-11 a.m. CT, four-week workshop, Benedictine Father Kolbe Wolniakowski presenting, includes all four sessions, \$75. Registration: 812-357-6611, [saintmeinrad.org/retreats](http://saintmeinrad.org/retreats).

## March 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).

## March 27-29

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

## Generating hope



Representatives from several organizations pose in front of a new emergency backup generator at the Catholic Charities Terre Haute (CCTH) Foodbank on Dec. 11, 2025. The generator, made possible by local community partners and donors, ensures uninterrupted food distribution and safeguards more than 500,000 pounds of refrigerated and frozen food during power outages and emergency situations. Posing in the photo are CCTH agency director John Etling, left, Kroger Foundation representative Eric Halvorson, United Way of the Wabash Valley executive director Dorothy Chambers, Wabash Valley Community Foundation president and CEO Beth Telvin, CCTH assistant agency director Jennifer Tames, archdiocesan Secretariat for Catholic Charities executive director David Bethuram and CCTH Foodbank program director Levi Adams. (Submitted photo)

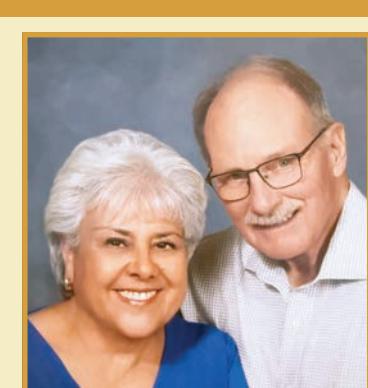
## Wedding Anniversaries

**JIM AND MARY JO (DELCALZO) BABB**, members of St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on Jan. 17.

The couple was married in St. Thomas More Church in Brooklyn, Ohio, on Jan. 17, 1976.

They have three children: Angela, Gina and Garrett Babb.

The couple also has three grandchildren.



**THOMAS AND CHARLENE (MCKINNEY) WHITFIELD**, members of St. Susanna Parish in Plainfield, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Jan. 10.

The couple was married in St. William Church in London, Ky., on Jan. 10, 1976.

They have three children: Erin Bangel, Bridget Thorne and Sarah Whitfield.

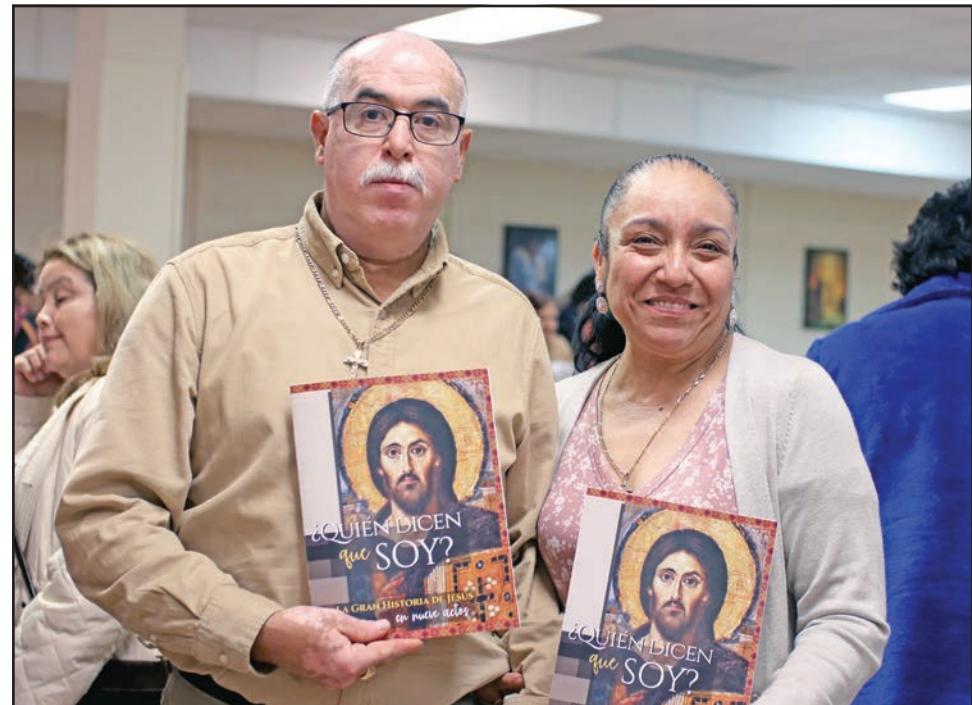
The couple also has seven grandchildren.



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



Paula Williams, left, and her sister Lillian Jackson, both members of Holy Angels Parish in Indianapolis, were among those who attended the archdiocese's first bilingual evangelization retreat at St. Mark the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis on Nov. 8, 2025. (Submitted photo)



Roberto and Esther Rodriguez, members of Holy Spirit Parish in Indianapolis, attended the Nov. 8, 2025, bilingual evangelization retreat at St. Mark the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis. (Submitted photo)

## Leaders say first-ever bilingual evangelization retreat is a huge success

**Criterion staff report**

When Anita Bardo and Felix Navarrete discussed the possibility of offering the first-ever archdiocesan-sponsored evangelization retreat in both English and Spanish, they never imagined the overwhelming success it would have.

As the registration deadline approached, Bardo, the coordinator of evangelization and discipleship for the archdiocese, and Navarrete, the archdiocesan

coordinator of Hispanic ministry, realized far more people signed up than initially expected.

As participants entered through the doors of St. Mark the Evangelist Church in Indianapolis on Nov. 8, 2025, the atmosphere was already set for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Both leaders agreed that the Spirit was powerfully present from the first spark of

the idea to create an event that embraced the cultural diversity of the archdiocese.

For Bardo, the event wasn't just for one group, but an opportunity to reach the entire Church. It became a special time for all attendees, and she thanked each person for their "yes" to being a part of the experience.

"It can be difficult to disconnect from our busy lives, but taking this time to relax and reflect on our spiritual journey was important," she noted.

The day unfolded in two parallel sessions, with presenters in English and Spanish guiding participants through meditation, group discussion and prayer.

The theme, the "Great Story of Jesus," allowed everyone to reflect on the fundamental theological question, "Who do people say I am?" and helped participants understand how to build a closer relationship with Jesus.

"For me, the most important takeaway of this event was seeing our diverse community united, worshiping Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament during our holy hour," Navarrete said. "It was a very

moving experience to be able to guide that moment with music and prayer, and to see everyone as one big family that makes up the one body of Christ."

Both leaders emphasized the importance of unity among members of the Church and the efforts the archdiocese is making to reach people on the margins through various programs and events. Bardo and Navarrete see this first joint evangelization retreat as a model for future collaboration among the different archdiocesan ministries.

The two assumed their archdiocesan roles at the same time and have supported each other in their ministries since meeting in November 2022.

"Anita has been a great support to the archdiocesan Hispanic ministry's family camp for the past two years," said Navarrete. "She has done an

incredible job leading youth sessions and collaborating on events with our Hispanic young adult program. She has a natural gift for working with young people, and I am grateful for her friendship, so when she shared this opportunity with me, I didn't hesitate. I said, 'Let's do it!'

The evangelization retreat was "a wonderful opportunity to connect with ourselves, with others and with our faith," said Bardo. "There was time for everyone to find peace and clarity during the retreat, to grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ. Everyone's presence made a difference, and I am grateful for all the effort invested in making this retreat meaningful."

Bardo hopes the future will bring continuity in creating a path of spiritual growth and renewal for the retreat's participants. She plans to reflect on the feedback received and provide a space for meditation on mind, body and spirit. She also believes that the collaboration with the archdiocesan Office of Hispanic Ministry will continue as they deem appropriate. †



**Anita Bardo**



**Felix Navarrete**

## Líderes afirman que el primer retiro de evangelización bilingüe fue un gran éxito

**Informe del personal de Criterion**

Cuando Anita Bardo y Felix Navarrete hablaron sobre la posibilidad de ofrecer el primer retiro de evangelización patrocinado por la arquidiócesis, tanto en inglés como en español, nunca imaginaron el éxito rotundo que tendría.

A medida que se acercaba la fecha límite de inscripción, Bardo, coordinadora de evangelización y discipulado de la arquidiócesis, y Navarrete, coordinador del ministerio hispano de la arquidiócesis, se dieron cuenta de que se habían inscrito muchas más personas de las esperadas.

Cuando los participantes entraron por las puertas de la Iglesia San Marcos Evangelista en Indianápolis el 8 de noviembre, 2025, el ambiente ya estaba preparado para una efusión del Espíritu Santo. Ambos líderes coincidieron en que el Espíritu estuvo poderosamente presente desde el primer momento en que surgió la idea de crear un evento que abrazara la diversidad cultural de la arquidiócesis.

Para Bardo, el evento no era solo

para un grupo, sino una oportunidad para llegar a toda la Iglesia. Se convirtió en un momento especial para todos los asistentes, y agradeció a cada persona por su "sí" a ser parte de la experiencia.

"Puede ser difícil desconectarse de nuestras vidas ajetreadas, pero tomarse este tiempo para relajarse y reflexionar sobre nuestro camino espiritual fue importante," señaló.

El día se desarrolló en dos sesiones paralelas, con oradores en inglés y español que guiaron a los participantes a través de la meditación, la discusión en grupo y la oración.

El tema, la "Gran Historia de Jesús," permitió a todos reflexionar sobre la pregunta teológica fundamental: "¿Quién dice la gente que soy yo?", y ayudó a los participantes a comprender cómo construir una relación más cercana con Jesús.

"Para mí, lo más importante de este evento fue ver a nuestra diversa comunidad unida, adorando a Jesús en el Santísimo Sacramento durante nuestra hora santa," dijo Navarrete. "Fue una

experiencia muy conmovedora poder guiar ese momento con música y oración, y ver a todos como una gran familia que conforma el único cuerpo de Cristo."

Ambos líderes enfatizaron la importancia de la unidad entre los miembros de la Iglesia y los esfuerzos que la arquidiócesis está realizando para llegar a las personas de las periferias a través de diversos programas y eventos.

Bardo y Navarrete ven este primer retiro de evangelización conjunto como un modelo para la colaboración futura entre los diferentes ministerios de la arquidiócesis. Ambos asumieron sus roles arquidiocesanos al mismo tiempo y se han apoyado mutuamente en sus ministerios desde que se conocieron en noviembre de 2022.

"Anita ha sido un gran apoyo para el campamento familiar del ministerio hispano de la arquidiócesis durante los últimos dos años," dijo Navarrete. "Ha hecho un trabajo increíble dirigiendo sesiones para jóvenes y colaborando en eventos con nuestro programa para

jóvenes adultos hispanos. Tiene un don natural para trabajar con los jóvenes, y estoy agradecido por su amistad, así que cuando me compartió esta oportunidad, no lo dudé. Le dije: '¡Vamos a hacerlo!' "

El retiro de evangelización fue "una maravillosa oportunidad para conectar con nosotros mismos, con los demás y con nuestra fe," dijo Bardo. "Hubo tiempo para que todos encontraran paz y claridad durante el retiro, para crecer en su relación con Jesucristo. La presencia de cada persona marcó la diferencia, y estoy agradecida por todo el esfuerzo invertido para que este retiro fuera significativo."

Bardo espera que el futuro traiga continuidad en la creación de un camino de crecimiento y renovación espiritual para los participantes del retiro. Planea reflexionar sobre los comentarios recibidos y proporcionar un espacio para la meditación sobre la mente, el cuerpo y el espíritu. También cree que la colaboración con la Oficina del Ministerio Hispano de la arquidiócesis continuará según lo consideren apropiado. †

## Wyoming Supreme Court strikes down abortion laws, including pill ban

(OSV News)—The Wyoming Supreme Court on Jan. 6 found that two state laws restricting abortion—including the first state law to specifically ban chemical or medication abortions—violated the state's constitution and could not be enforced.

The decision keeps abortion legal in the state after its lone abortion

clinic challenged those laws.

Wyoming enacted a near-total abortion ban in March 2023 and saw a pre-existing ban that took effect after the U.S. Supreme Court's *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* ruling in 2022, which overturned *Roe v. Wade*.

However, a 2012 amendment Wyoming adopted in its state constitution

in protest of then-President Barack Obama's signature health law, the Affordable Care Act, stated that adults have a right to make their own health care decisions. Lower courts have previously found that language ran afoul of the abortion restrictions, an interpretation the state's highest court also reached.

The Catholic Church teaches that all

human life is sacred from conception to natural death, and therefore opposes abortion. After the *Dobbs* decision, Church officials both reiterated the Church's concern for both mother and child and called to strengthen support for those living in poverty or other causes that can push women toward having an abortion. †

# CAMINO

continued from page 1

especially the ones related to some impromptu musical sessions during the 500-mile journey from France to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in Spain.

"I walked the *Camino* with my husband John and our friend and neighbor, Tony Schroeder," Gray says. "John carried a small travel guitar attached to his backpack, and each evening he and Tony shared music wherever we were. It was beautiful to watch community form around them, people sharing their love of music and meeting new friends. Numerous times, people commented that they'd had a tough day, and the evening's music renewed their spirit.

"Pilgrims recognized them along the route or saw the guitar and asked if they were the *Guitar Guys* from Indiana they had heard about."

One musical session connected Gray with a woman named Denise, whom Gray came to regard as "my *Camino* Archangel."

"She had been reminded of her great love for music, and several days later, decided to purchase a small guitar," Gray begins the story. "To make room for the guitar, she needed to ship her other belongings ahead. This required her to backtrack to a postal office in a larger town.

"Since we had last seen Denise, I had been suffering from intense heel pain that had traveled up my leg and numbed the top half of my foot, making every step excruciating. One afternoon, I sat on a bench to rest and wait while my husband ran an errand. Denise, who is trained in massage and acupuncture, saw me and treated me right then and there, in the hot sun in the middle of this paved plaza, without hesitation.

"As she placed the acupuncture needles into my foot, I felt a huge release and instant relief. Before leaving to find the postal office, Denise massaged and taped my foot and leg, and she showed me how to massage them to prevent the pain from returning."

Gray marvels at all those connections, seeing God amid them.

"We would not have known each other except for John and Tony sharing their music that sparked her desire for her own guitar that caused her to backtrack to ship

her belongings from the town where she found me sitting in pain questioning if I would be able to finish my *Camino*," Gray says.

"As we experienced many times, there are no coincidences along The Way. God returned music to her heart and sent her skills and healing spirit to me. I met many '*Camino* angels' as we walked; however, I lovingly call Denise my *Camino* Archangel."

### A favorite song, a gift of friendship

During their evening musical sessions, John and Tony took turns playing the small guitar while leading their

fellow travelers in song, including the one that always had everyone joining in and belting it out—"Take Me Home, Country Roads," the John Denver classic.

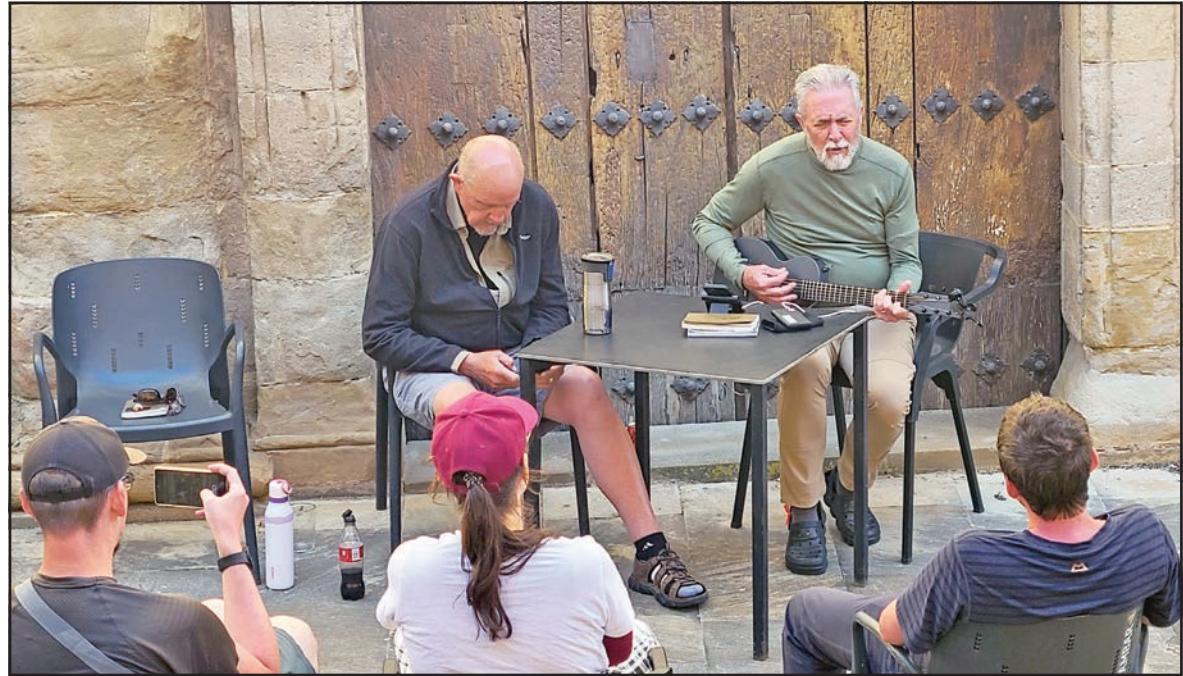
"They had a set list, but they were flexible in changing it when they felt drawn to a different song or if they had requests," Gray notes. "While walking, people would talk about their favorite artist or song, and if that person was in the audience that evening, they'd play it for them. It really was such a community builder."

"One night in the *albergue* [hostel] dining room, we were helping clean up after the music and someone had artistically written on the paper tablecloth 'Music is Spiritual,' and that is how it felt each evening."

That musical connection led to another memorable friendship, with a traveler named R.J.

"We kept turning up at the same *albergues*, and through our time together we shared many deep conversations. We laughed, we cried, we all enjoyed music together," Gray says. "A California native now living in Barcelona, Spain, R.J. shared his childhood memories of spending summers with his cousins in northern Indiana."

"As our friendship grew, he learned we planned to spend some days in Barcelona before our return to Indiana. Our conversations asking for advice on where



After a long day of walking on the *Camino*, Tony Schroeder, right, and John Gray took turns playing a small guitar and leading their fellow travelers in song during impromptu musical sessions. (Submitted photo)

to stay in this large Spanish city turned into an invitation to stay at his apartment in the heart of all we had hoped to see there."

Finishing their 500-mile pilgrimage on the *Camino* came first for the Grays and Schroeder, and they did—14 days after Denise had made it possible for Lisa to continue the journey with her healing touch.

"I was able to walk hand-in-hand with John and Tony into Santiago, as the bagpipe tune drew us closer and closer to the cathedral," Gray recalls. "When I turned around and took in the sight of the Cathedral de Santiago's spires reaching to heaven, I thanked God for all those who had made my journey one of the most incredible blessings of my life, including Denise."

### 'All are loved, accepted and supported'

In the days that followed, the three members of Prince of Peace Parish traveled to Barcelona, taking R.J. up on the offer of his home and hospitality.

Wanting to share their gratitude, they thought about a thank-you gift and agreed on one that left them and R.J. smiling.

"We gifted our new brother the guitar that John and Tony had played on our 500-mile-plus trek across Spain, signed by the *Guitar Guys* and their roadie—me," Gray says.

Months after completing the pilgrimage, Gray becomes thoughtful

as she tries to capture the gift and the essence of the experience.

"The *Camino* isn't as much about the physical walking of the miles as it is about the people you meet," she says. "People walk for different reasons—spiritual, walking through grief, seeking peace, to work through major life decisions, or the physical challenge."

"For every pilgrim, there is a specific reason, and that reason might fluctuate daily. All are loved, accepted and supported just by being on that journey, no matter their nationality, ethnicity, financial status or other potential differences. Those who wish to know others more deeply also respect the boundaries of those who have chosen or need to maintain their solitude."

For the people who do get to know each other deeply, the bond is remarkable and blessed, she says.

"Friendships made on the *Camino* are not random. Those people whom God intends to be together continue to encounter each other. We had so many instances of this divine significant placement. That list of names is long, and we are still in contact with many of them. We are planning a reunion in May in California, this eclectic group from around the world."

She shares one more thought about the pilgrimage.

"No one on *Camino* or in life ever walks alone." †

## Venezuelan Nobel laureate asks pope for help in freeing political prisoners

(OSV News)—Venezuelan opposition leader and Nobel laureate María Corina Machado asked for Pope Leo XIV's help in securing the release of political prisoners in the country following the capture of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro.

The Vatican announced the meeting on Jan. 12, which took place in the library of the Vatican Apostolic Palace, but gave no details.

However, in a statement published on X by the Venezuelan political opposition coalition, *Comando con Venezuela*, Machado said she sought the pope's help in seeking the release of more than 1,000 political prisoners "and for an immediate transition to democracy."

"Today, I had the blessing and honor of being able

to share with His Holiness and express our gratitude for his monitoring of events in our country," Machado said. "I also conveyed to him the strength of the Venezuelan people, who remain firm and in prayer for Venezuela's freedom, and I asked him to intercede for all Venezuelans who remain kidnapped and missing."

According to the statement, the opposition leader reiterated to the pope that the will of the Venezuelan people was seen in their electing Edmundo González, whose victory in the 2024 election was overturned by the Venezuelan election authority, which was loyal to Maduro.

"Machado highlighted the spiritual struggle Venezuelans have faced for years and said that finally, with the accompaniment of the Church and unprecedented pressure from the U.S. government, the 'defeat of evil' in the country is drawing near," the statement read.

*Comando con Venezuela* said that Machado also met Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, after her meeting with the pope.

The pope's meeting with the opposition leader comes just over a week after Maduro and his wife Cilia Flores were captured on Jan. 3 in a U.S. military operation ordered by President Donald J. Trump.

Maduro and his wife were transported to New York, where they are currently facing narco-terrorism conspiracy charges.

After Maduro's capture, Pope Leo expressed concerns over the United States' increasing military presence in the Caribbean, and called for "the common good of the peoples" to be placed above "partisan interests."

"In this regard, I renew my appeal to respect the will of the Venezuelan people, and to safeguard the human and civil rights of all, ensuring a future of stability and

concord," the pope said on Jan. 9 during a meeting with members of the diplomatic corps accredited to the Vatican.

At a Jan. 8 briefing at the Vatican press office, Colombian Cardinal Luis José Rueda Aparicio of Bogota told journalists the situation in Venezuela was on the mind of the cardinals attending the extraordinary consistory on Jan. 7-8.

"We carry it in our hearts; we suffer through it; it pains us all," he said.

Cardinal Rueda said the pope had also shown great concern for Venezuela and has made "a consistent effort to invite parties toward the paths of dialogue and consensus. He is calling for peace; he is calling to truly build peace."

"He wants nations to come together with respect for human rights, sovereignty and the self-determination of their own people to find answers to the problems currently being experienced," the cardinal added.

While some believed Machado, a former member of Venezuela's national assembly, would receive U.S. support to govern the ailing country after Maduro's capture, Trump said she lacked support in Venezuela and instead backed Delcy Rodriguez, Maduro's vice president, as acting president.

According to Reuters, the White House criticized the Nobel Committee's choice of Machado over Trump.

Machado, who dedicated the award to Trump and the people of Venezuela, offered to give her award to Trump in gratitude for Maduro's capture. However, in a rare statement, the Norwegian Nobel Institute announced that the Nobel Prize could not be shared or transferred to another person, Reuters reported.

In an interview with Fox News, Trump said he would be meeting with Machado in the coming days, according to Reuters. †



Pope Leo XIV meets María Corina Machado, Venezuelan opposition leader and 2025 Nobel Peace Prize laureate, during a private audience at the Vatican on Jan. 12. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

**NATIONAL Eucharistic Pilgrimage**

**ONE NATION UNDER GOD**

**St. Frances Xavier Cabrini Route**

**May 24 – July 5, 2026**

Presenting Sponsor: **relevant<sup>+</sup> radio**

## PILGRIMAGE

continued from page 1

renewal, unity and mission rooted in the Eucharist."

In a Jan. 8 media release announcing the route, organizers noted that 2026 marked the 75th anniversary of the lobbying campaign, led by the Knights of Columbus, to add the phrase "One nation under God" to the nation's Pledge of Allegiance.

"One Nation Under God is not a borrowed slogan; rather, it is an invitation to realign our lives, our communities, and our country under the sovereignty of Jesus Christ," said Jason Shanks, president of the National Eucharistic Congress, in the media release.

The National Eucharistic Congress nonprofit organizes the pilgrimage, which first took place as four routes in 2024 ahead of the 10th National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis as part of the National Eucharistic Revival, and which returned last summer with a route from Indianapolis to Los Angeles.

"Our hope is that Catholics will come together on this significant anniversary to give thanks for our country and to pray for our future," said Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens of Crookston, Minn., who serves as chairman of the National Eucharistic Congress, in the statement. "We want all Catholics to be inspired with missionary zeal to

bring revival through the light and love of Jesus Christ."

The pilgrimage has been placed under the patronage of St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, an Italian-American immigrant and the first U.S. citizen to be canonized a saint. It will also take place in solidarity with the U.S. bishops' call to consecrate the United States to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Like previous National Eucharistic Pilgrimages, the route will be traveled by "perpetual pilgrims," eight young adults selected among a group of applicants (plus a "media missionary") who will attend Mass, eucharistic adoration, other devotions and community-building events along the way.

The pilgrimage will launch on Memorial Day weekend with Mass at Our Lady of La Leche Shrine in St. Augustine, the site of the first Mass celebrated on American soil in 1565. It will also include commemorations of the Georgia Martyrs, five Franciscan missionaries who were killed for their faith in 1597, whose path for beatification Pope Francis cleared in January 2025; the celebration of the feast of Corpus Christi in the Archdiocese of Washington and the Diocese of Arlington, Va.; and stops in the Archdiocese of Baltimore, the nation's first Catholic diocese.

The pilgrimage will pass through most of the original 13 colonies, with stops in 18 dioceses and archdioceses: St. Augustine; Savannah, Ga.; Charleston, S.C.; Charlotte, N.C.; Richmond, Va.; Arlington, Va.; Washington;

Baltimore; Wilmington, Del.; Camden, N.J.; Paterson, N.J.; Springfield, Mass.; Manchester, N.H.; Portland, Maine; Boston; Fall River, Mass.; Providence, R.I.; and Philadelphia.

The pilgrims will also make a private, mid-point retreat at the St. Frances Cabrini Shrine in New York City.

The pilgrimage will end in Philadelphia with events planned on July 4-5, Independence Day weekend, to commemorate the adoption of the Declaration of Independence in the Pennsylvania State House, now the city's Independence Hall, on July 4, 1776. That weekend will include special outreach for Catholic youths and all-day eucharistic adoration on July 4. The pilgrimage's closing Mass will take place on July 5 at the Cathedral Basilica of SS. Peter and Paul, followed by a eucharistic procession to the National Shrine of St. John Neumann.

Organizers said in the media release that "the pilgrimage seeks to extend the fruits of the three-year National Eucharistic Revival that began in 2022 and culminated in the 2024 National Eucharistic Pilgrimage and subsequent Congress in Indianapolis. The fruits of the 2025 Drexel Pilgrimage carry forward into the 2026 Cabrini Route."

The pilgrimage also will connect with a national prayer campaign and digital lecture series "that highlights themes and topics of America through a Catholic lens and framework," organizers said. †

## Baptism provides light in darkness, gateway to heaven, Pope Leo says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Baptizing one's children is as essential as providing them with food and clothing, Pope Leo XIV told parents.

Just as they received life from

you, their parents, now they receive the meaning to live it: faith," he said, referring to the 20 infants about to receive the sacrament of baptism in the Sistine Chapel on Jan. 11, the feast of the

Baptism of the Lord.

"When we know that something is essential, we immediately seek it for those we love," he said in his brief homily.

"Who among us, in fact, would leave newborns without clothes or food, waiting for them to choose how to dress, and what to eat when they grow up?

"If food and clothing are necessary for life, faith is more than necessary, because with God, life finds salvation," he said in Italian.

Pope Leo led the baptismal prayers and poured the water over the heads of the infants of Vatican employees. He assisted some parents by cupping his hand under an infant's head to provide support, and he tenderly offered his hand to babies whose arms flailed for something to grasp. He also gently wiped away some rivulets running down a few heads.

All of the gestures during the rite "are beautiful testimonies" of God's limitless love, he said. "The water of the font is the washing in the Spirit, which purifies us from all sin; the white garment is the new

robe that God the Father gives us for the eternal feast of his kingdom; the candle lit from the paschal candle is the light of the risen Christ, which illuminates our path.

"May baptism, which unites us in the one family of the Church, sanctify all your families at all times, giving strength and constancy to the affection that unites you," he said.

Afterward, Pope Leo again spoke about the importance and meaning of baptism before he led the recitation of the *Angelus* prayer with visitors gathered in St. Peter's Square.

By baptizing the newborns, he said, they "have become our new brothers and sisters in the faith. How beautiful it is to celebrate the love of God—who calls us by name and frees us from evil—as one family!"

Baptism "accompanies us forever," he said. "In moments of darkness, baptism is light; in life's conflicts, it is reconciliation; at the hour of death, it is the gateway to heaven." †



Pope Leo XIV baptizes one of 20 children in the Sistine Chapel at the Vatican on Jan. 11, the feast of the Baptism of the Lord. (OSV News photo/Simone Risoluti, Vatican Media)

# Hoosier hysteria!

The kindergarten class at SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi School in Greenwood geared up for the Peach Bowl on Jan. 9 with IU cookies provided by a parent. The teacher of the class is Robin Langston. Not pictured is co-teacher Lynsey Merritt. The Indiana University Hoosiers defeated the University of Oregon Ducks 56-22 in that semifinal game of the College Football Playoff in Atlanta. They will play the University of Miami on Jan. 19 in the College Football Championship at Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens, Fla. (Submitted photo)



## President Trump meets with U.S. bishops' president at the White House

WASHINGTON (OSV News)—President Donald J. Trump met with Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), on Jan. 12, a spokesperson for the USCCB confirmed.

The private meeting, which was listed on the official White House schedule for Trump, was closed to the press. The White House did not specify the topic of the meeting.

In a statement provided to OSV News, a USCCB spokesperson said, "Archbishop Coakley had the opportunity for introductory meetings with President Trump, Vice President [JD] Vance, and other administration officials, in which they discussed areas of mutual concern, as well as areas for further dialogue."

"Archbishop Coakley is grateful for the engagement and looks forward to ongoing discussions," the statement said.

Although it was not immediately clear what the topic of the meeting was, it comes as the U.S. bishops have alternately praised and criticized some Trump administration policies, objecting to some of his actions on topics—including immigration and the death penalty—but commending others, such as those on gender policy.

Archbishop Coakley was elected president of the USCCB in November at

the bishops' fall plenary assembly. At the same meeting, the bishops also approved a "special pastoral message" on Nov. 12—their first since 2013 when they objected to the Obama administration's contraceptive mandate—voicing "our concern here for immigrants." The bishops' special message opposed "the indiscriminate mass deportation of people," and also prayed "for an end to dehumanizing rhetoric and violence, whether directed at immigrants or at law enforcement."

The statement, which did not name Trump, came as a growing number of bishops have acknowledged that some of the Trump administration's immigration policies risk presenting the Church with both practical challenges in administering pastoral support and charitable endeavors, as well as religious liberty challenges.

The week before Trump's meeting with Archbishop Coakley, the U.S. president told House Republicans to be "flexible" on the Hyde Amendment, which prohibits public funding of elective abortions, in negotiations on health care subsidies. It has been attached to federal spending bills every year since 1976. That policy has long been supported by the U.S. bishops, who defended it after Trump's comments.

Since then, some media outlets are reporting White House officials have attempted to clarify the president's comments.

Trump signed an executive order titled "Reinforcing the Hyde Amendment"

in his fourth day in office last January, which ends "the forced use of federal taxpayer dollars to fund or promote elective abortion."

Private meetings between a sitting president of the USCCB and the president of the United States are not without precedent, but do not always happen.

The previous president of the USCCB, Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio of the U.S. Archdiocese for the Military Services, told OSV News in November, "I was never able to meet with the president

of the United States. Neither with President [Joe] Biden nor with President Trump."

Trump had a brief meeting in 2017 that included Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, who was president of the conference at the time.

USCCB presidents, including then-Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Ky., and Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York, had several meetings between the two of them with then-President Barack Obama over the course of his presidency. †

## Christmas tradition assists the homeless



For several years, Steve Hastings has organized a Christmas dinner for people in need served at St. Philip Neri School in Indianapolis. More than 150 people volunteer to cook, set up and serve the guests. Buses bring people from homeless shelters, and those not able to attend can request a meal to be delivered. Coats and other gifts are given to each person, and children receive a Christmas gift. This year, 279 people were served dinner, and 29 more received a meal delivered to their home. Organizers said everyone enjoyed their time together. Pictured, from left, Anna Hastings, Chris Montgomery as Santa Claus and Steve Hastings. (Submitted photo by Elaine Alhand)

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# SIMPLY CATHOLIC

## Worshipping at entire Mass offers a complete encounter with Christ

By D.D. Emmons

(OSV News)—Have you ever noticed people leaving Mass before it's over? For new converts, seeing people receive Communion and then walk right out of the church can be a great surprise.

They've been told repeatedly that the Mass and, specifically, receiving the Eucharist, is the center of Catholic life, the supreme act of adoration. They've been taught that attending Sunday Mass is a grave obligation. How then can a Catholic deliberately miss any part of it?

These new Catholics might wonder if the person was sick or that there was an emergency. But no, after a while, they realize that the situation is not uncommon. It's much like habitually arriving late for Mass. It may be discourteous, impolite and irreverent, but it is not uncommon.

One parishioner was heard to say that her family attended the 11:15 a.m. Mass. There was no 11:15 a.m. Mass. It starts at 11 a.m. She laughingly explained that her family always arrived 15 minutes late—every Sunday. Are these folks also always 15 minutes late for a doctor or dental appointment or to the school bus stop?

In the course of events, it can seem odd that we don't organize our lives in such a way that we can attend Mass in its entirety. It isn't as if we are spectators at a stage play or baseball game and decide to show up at the bottom of the second inning or arbitrarily leave before the performance is over. At the play or the game, neither the actors nor the players leave before the curtain goes down or the last out is made.

Similarly, they are on hand when the curtain goes up or the first pitch is thrown. During the Mass, we are the players. We are the participants.

If we are invited into the presence of a president, queen or pope, wouldn't we arrive before the dignitary and stay until the function is complete? It's protocol, respect and good manners. Doesn't God, who created us, who gave his life for us, deserve the same respect?

Consider if Jesus asked us to attend the Last Supper. Would we come late or leave before the meal was over?

The Mass begins with the sign of the cross, which has an entrance procession and hymn preceding it. The liturgy ends with the dismissal. Everything in between is the Mass.

There was a time in Church history when people rationalized that their Mass obligation was satisfied if they attended the offertory, the consecration and holy Communion. Any such thinking was eliminated with the Second Vatican Council. "Sacrosanctum Concilium," the council's "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy," reads: "The two parts, which in a certain sense, go to



Pope Leo XIV celebrates Mass on the feast of the Epiphany on Jan. 6 in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican. Worshipping at Mass is a special opportunity for the faithful to have an encounter with the risen Christ. (OSV News photo/Yara Nardi, Reuters)

make up the Mass, namely, the liturgy of the word and the eucharistic liturgy, are so closely connected with each other that they form but one single act of worship. Accordingly, this sacred Synod strongly urges pastors of souls that, when instructing the faithful, they insistently teach them to take their part in the entire Mass, especially on Sundays and feasts of obligation" (#56).

The *Code of Canon Law* likewise states that "on Sundays and other holy days of obligation the faithful are obligated to assist at Mass" (#1247). And the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* repeats the exact words of canon law

regarding our Mass obligation (see #2180). The first precept of the Catholic Church also tells us that we are obligated to attend Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation.

There is no ambiguity here. None of these documents even hint or remotely infer that we can arrive late or leave early or that it's somehow OK to miss part of the Mass. In the words of Yogi Berra, "It ain't over till it's over."

Ignoring the mentioned documents and laws of the Church, there are other reasons for arriving on time and remaining until Mass ends. Those moments before Mass when we walk into the church, a place dedicated solely for the worship of God, we open our hearts to him, asking him to prepare us for the holy celebration of the Eucharist to come.

Likewise, the time after we receive holy Communion is a special period of reflection. We have just received the body and blood of Christ. If we simply walk out immediately, we miss out on this time of closeness to our Lord and his faithful worshipping with us.

By showing up late or leaving early, we not only trivialize the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. We also miss the full richness of the Mass. It is also impolite to the celebrant, the servers, the ministers—all those who help make the celebration of the Mass possible.

St. John Paul II, in a May 31, 1998, apostolic letter titled "Dies Domini" ("The Day of the Lord") wrote: "Like the first witness of the resurrection, Christians who gather each Sunday to experience and proclaim the presence of the risen Lord are called to evangelize and bear witness in their daily lives. Given this, the Prayer after Communion and the Concluding Rite—the Final Blessing and the Dismissal—need to be better valued and appreciated, so that all who have shared in the Eucharist may come to a deeper sense of the responsibility which is entrusted to them."

"Once the assembly disperses, Christ's disciples return to their everyday surroundings with the commitment to make their whole life a gift, a spiritual sacrifice pleasing to God [cf. Rom 12:1]. They feel indebted to their brothers and sisters because of what they have received in celebration, not unlike the disciples on the Emmaus Road who, once they had recognized the risen Christ 'in the breaking of the bread' [cf. Lk 24:30-32], felt the need to return immediately to share with their brothers and sisters the joy of meeting the Lord [cf. Lk 24: 33-35]" (#45).

We know we will meet the risen Christ in the holy sacrifice of the Mass. How can we miss any part?

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



Worshippers fill SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis on April 15, 2025, for the annual archdiocesan chrism Mass. Taking part in the Mass from start to finish offers worshippers a more complete encounter with Christ. (File photo by Sean Gallagher)

## Faith in History/Sean Gallagher

## St. Athanasius defended Christ's divinity, wrote a biography of St. Anthony of Egypt

Eleven doctors of the Church were active in ministry in the fourth century, nearly 30% of the 38 people given that special title.



The fourth century was a critical time in Church history. Christianity became tolerated in the Roman Empire in a permanent way with the rise of the emperor Constantine and his Edict of Milan in 313.

The peace in the Church that came with the end of its persecution allowed many great theologians to build on the legacy of the Apostles and early Church leaders in the second and third centuries.

The fourth century was also a time of division in the Church, with much rancorous debate happening on teachings on Christ and the Trinity.

St. Athanasius, born in 298 in Alexandria, Egypt, played a crucial role in the first of these debates. As a young deacon, he was an assistant of Bishop Alexander of Alexandria at the Council of Nicaea in 325, the 1,700th anniversary of which the Church celebrated last year.

This council was the occasion for the Church to

define the dogma that Jesus Christ is of the same nature (or "consubstantial" in the words of the Creed we profess at Mass) as God the Father. This definition came in response to the teaching of Arius, a priest of Alexandria, who argued that Christ was created by God and was neither of the same nature as him nor co-eternal with him.

While the bishops at Nicaea rejected Arius' teaching, the council did not immediately end divisions in the Church. Tensions between followers of Arius—known as Arians—and those who accepted the teachings of the Church continued in various ways for around two centuries.

Succeeding Alexander as bishop of Alexandria in 328, Athanasius was a staunch defender of the teachings of Nicaea until his death in 373. Because the imperial government favored the Arians at different times, Athanasius ended up being exiled from his local Church several times.

In addition to writing profoundly on the divinity of Christ, Athanasius is also known for his biography of St. Anthony of Egypt, considered a primary founder of Christian monasticism.

This biography was, in a sense, a bestseller in the

ancient world, with many manuscripts of it being found across the empire. St. Augustine of Hippo, in his spiritual autobiography *Confessions*, noted the biography's great influence on him as a young adult and on other young men like him, leading them to dedicate themselves to a life of prayer and self-sacrifice.

St. Athanasius' writing *On the Incarnation* is good for us to reflect on with the season of Christmas recently completed in which we celebrate God taking on human flesh in the babe of Bethlehem.

"The Word of God, incorporeal, incorruptible and immaterial, entered our world. ... Out of his loving-kindness for us he came to us, and we see this in the way he revealed himself openly to us. ... Within the Virgin he built himself a temple, that is, a body. He made it his own instrument in which to dwell and to reveal himself."

St. Athanasius was named a doctor of the Church in 1568. The Church celebrates his feast on May 2. Within the boundaries of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, there is a parish in Indianapolis dedicated to St. Athanasius, although it is an Eastern Catholic faith community that is part of the Byzantine Eparchy of Parma, Ohio.

St. Athanasius, pray for us! †

## Our Works of Charity/David Bethuram

## Amid winter's grip, stay warm—and help others in need to do the same

I'm from central Indiana, so I don't pretend to be an expert on cold weather like those of you from Alaska, North Dakota, Minnesota. But I do know this: Indiana

Growing up, and later as a young adult, I witnessed dangerous ice storms, the blizzard of 1978, and those bitter stretches when temperatures dipped to nine degrees Fahrenheit with wind chills that felt like 10 below.

January is historically our coldest month, with average overnight temperatures around 20 degrees Fahrenheit, and according to the Farmer's Almanac, the teeth-chattering cold arrives in mid-February this year.

When I was young, my mother would say at least once a week during the winter how grateful our family was to have heating. At the time, her comment felt more curious than profound.

My mother's words still echo in my mind every time I step outside on a particularly frigid day. For people living in poverty without adequate shelter or heating, cold weather isn't just uncomfortable—it can be devastating.

When our homes get cold, most of us simply turn up the thermostat. Maybe we grumble about the bill, maybe we don't think twice. We add an extra blanket to the kids' beds, make sure they have warm socks, or throw on a jacket. But for those living in poverty, "getting warm" can look very different.

For people experiencing homelessness, sleeping outside in freezing temperatures is life-threatening. Heated shelters across the country struggle to provide enough beds. Some communities have opened warming centers to help people survive bitterly cold nights.

St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Bedford, for example, partnered with other

churches and civic organizations to open a men's warming center several years ago after a homeless man died during a severe cold spell. Across the archdiocese, Catholic Charities agencies work with community leaders to support and provide emergency shelter during dangerously low temperatures.

Older adults also face extreme hardship in winter. Many become isolated when icy conditions make it unsafe to leave their homes. For seniors without family support or the means to afford care services, this isolation can be life-threatening. They are also more susceptible to hypothermia, which can be deadly if not treated quickly, according to the National Institutes of Health.

Families living below the poverty line—especially those with children—face their own challenges, often struggling to keep up with rising heating costs. Too many are forced to live in inadequately heated homes, risking illness and other serious consequences.

Cold weather creates a kind of environmental classism. For low-income households, energy costs are rising faster than overall incomes. The combination of high heating bills and the health risks of cold weather can be dangerous—and in some cases, deadly. These pressures can trigger a downward economic spiral: inadequate heating leads to health problems, which lead to higher medical costs, which further strain the ability to afford proper shelter, and the cycle continues.

As we prepare for the colder months ahead, I invite you to pause and appreciate the luxury of a warm home. And I encourage you to consider how you might support those who don't have that same security. Please support the emergency programs of Catholic Charities in your area. I know I am.

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

*When our homes get cold, most of us simply turn up the thermostat. Maybe we grumble about the bill, maybe we don't think twice. We add an extra blanket to the kids' beds, make sure they have warm socks, or throw on a jacket. But for those living in poverty, "getting warm" can look very different.*

## Feeling It/Effie Caldarola

## This year, offer your day and your life to God, the God of second chances

The day after Christmas dawned gray and bleak. The forecast was snow, sleet, ice.

Opened presents begged to be sorted and put away.

There were clothes to try on, returns to make. Leftovers filled the fridge, a reminder that dinner would be mostly warm-overs. A Christmas cookie tempted for breakfast, as well as a fancy hot cocoa mix that had been gifted the day before.

Christmas cards filled the mailbox. Sometimes the best ones come late, the ones that contain personal letters someone wrote just for you.

There was so much to say "yes" to. So many blessings.

But I let holiday buyer's remorse creep in. Every year, I promise myself I will be less the frenzied consumer and more the thoughtful, focused buyer, but this year was far from perfect. I regretted the too-muchness, the holiday excess, the bag of wrapping paper which couldn't be recycled, the way I had left my own wishes vague and therefore received stuff I didn't need or couldn't use.

Listening to the morning news, I found myself disturbed with talk of how spending this season affected

the economy, not how the birth of a Savior affected the state of our weary nation and world.

No, I did not wake up in a merry mood the day after Christmas. A sore knee still ached. I indulged in that anti-climactic feeling that was not unusual on the day after a Big Day. I struggled between enjoying the laziness granted by the day after, and the day after's emotional letdown. The bah-humbug bug had bitten me overnight.

And the fact that Christmas Day is followed, liturgically, by the feast of St. Stephen, stoned to death for his belief in Christ, seemed some kind of endorsement of my dour mood. Remember Debbie Downer on "Saturday Night Live?" I was Debbie in Grinch mode.

It was that morning, as I sat before God in distracted prayer, handing him my mood, that I thought about the approaching new year, and I felt the presence of the God of second chances.

This God of ours, tapping on my shoulder, always stands waiting. The God of second chances is always ready to move forward. Not that we aren't supposed to acknowledge our failings. But we can't linger in the past, spending time beating ourselves up as God makes plans for us.

So I handed him my wish-I-could-have-done-betters and moved on.

And I remembered the quote attributed to the German mystic Meister Eckhart, "If the only prayer you ever say in your entire life is thank you, it will be enough." This life we've been given, this "wild and precious life," as the poet Mary Oliver called it, is our enormous gift. And everything, from family to fancy hot cocoa, is gift.

So I said thank you for a whole long list of things, and offered my day to God, the God of second chances, the God who led St. Stephen to Christ and to redemption.

I reminded myself that for the new year, I will not make ironclad resolutions which pave the way for failure in 2026. I will journal some simple suggestions of hope and promise, things on which to focus, like thankfulness or my morning attitude.

There are many things in the new year I can't control. But I have power over my own attitude.

When I see those words in my journal, I'll ask how I'm doing, and thank God for my progress, and then I will begin again, at that place where the God of second chances waits for me in the new year, and for all of us, as we move forward.

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



Second Sunday in Ordinary Time/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

# The Sunday Readings

Sunday, January 18, 2026

- Isaiah 49:3, 5-6
- 1 Corinthians 1:1-3
- John 1:29-34

The Book of Isaiah furnishes the first reading for Mass this weekend. Relief and joy uplifted the atmosphere. Hopes centered upon a bright future. God's people were entering a new day. The humiliation, uncertainty and anguish of being conquered by Babylonia and living for generations of exile in Babylon were over. They were

returning to their homeland hopefully to live lives of prosperity and security.

Lest anyone think that this fortunate turn of events was the mere outcome of changing politics or luck, the prophet eloquently insisted that the plight of the people was improving because of God's direct and merciful intervention in human affairs. God brought their relief. He promised to protect and sustain the people, despite the misfortunes that might befall them. God was faithful.

In turn, the Hebrews, God's people, had been faithful during their years of trial. They were human instruments on Earth of the divine will. They never succumbed to the paganism of Babylon.

For its second reading, the Church this weekend selects a passage from St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians. Today, the Apostle Paul ranks among the greatest Christian figures of all time, and certainly he stands as a most extraordinary figure in the development of Christianity in the crucial time of the first century.

Attaining this distinction was not without personal cost for Paul. He had to contend with converts to Christianity who were not always loyal to the Gospel. The culture in which they lived not only surrendered without a whimper to human instincts, but also elevated these instincts literally to the level of the divine, delighting in lust, gluttony and drunkenness.

The Christian converts in Corinth, then one of the major cities of the Mediterranean world, literally were awash in this culture.

## My Journey to God

### The Eucharist: More Than A Touch of Jesus

By Maria Harr

She touched the fringe of His shawl  
He made her well  
Her faith saved her

Longing to touch Him that closely  
Praying for even one moment like that  
Jesus, save me

Desiring Him to sit by my side  
So I can feel Jesus more nearly  
Something only to imagine

Why Lord, can I not get as close as she  
who touched your garment  
and was set free?

He then whispers in a still small voice  
You have been touching me fully  
More than the woman who I healed

And the Evil One sure is leaping for joy  
Knowing his weapons abound ever more  
Where panic, mistrust and anxiety spread  
Among people who watch every newscast with dread  
Forgetting Who holds every day that's ahead.

Though all through the ages the Evil One's tried  
To sever mankind from our infinite Source  
Through clamorous discord and murderous lies,  
Enticing illusion, seductive disguise,  
He never can claim completely his prize.

For, even though now, the churches be closed,  
And our world has become a bewildering place,  
We still are the children, beloved, adored  
Of the One Who will fight for us, of His Own  
accord;  
In life or in death, we belong to the Lord.

In Him we still gather, our spirits with His  
As we wait and remember His promise to us;  
The One from Whose love we came into being,  
Whose Presence is ever; Whose wisdom all-seeing  
From this and all terrors, our ultimate freeing.

(Maria Harr is a member of Christ the King Parish in Indianapolis.)

## Daily Readings

Monday, January 19

*1 Samuel 15:16-23  
Psalm 50:8-9, 16b-17, 21, 23  
Mark 2:18-22*

Tuesday, January 20

St. Fabian, pope and martyr  
St. Sebastian, martyr  
*1 Samuel 16:1-13  
Psalm 89:20-22, 27-28  
Mark 2:23-28*

Wednesday, January 21

St. Agnes, virgin and martyr  
*1 Samuel 17:32-33, 37, 40-51  
Psalm 144:1b-2, 9-10  
Mark 3:1-6*

Thursday, January 22

*1 Samuel 18:6-9; 19:1-7  
Psalm 56:2-3, 9-13  
Mark 3:7-12*

Friday, January 23

St. Vincent, deacon and martyr  
St. Marianne Cope, virgin  
*1 Samuel 24:3-21  
Psalm 57:2-4, 6, 11  
Mark 3:13-19*

Saturday, January 24

St. Francis de Sales, bishop and doctor of the Church  
*2 Samuel 1:1-4, 11-12, 19, 23-27  
Psalm 80:2-3, 5-7  
Mark 3:20-21*

Sunday, January 25

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time  
*Isaiah 8:23-9:3  
Psalm 27:1, 4, 13-14  
1 Corinthians 1:10-13, 17  
Matthew 4:12-23  
or Matthew 4:12-17*

Question Corner/Jenna Marie Cooper

## Church teaching on Mary's perpetual virginity rooted in Scripture and tradition

Q Why is Mary's perpetual virginity so important to us Catholics? I've had discussions with my Protestant friends about this, and while they believe Mary was a virgin when Jesus was born, they don't understand why we're so "hung up on" the idea that Mary remained a virgin for the rest of her life. (Florida)

A I think the first and most foundational reason why our belief in Mary's perpetual virginity is so important to us is because we believe this is simply the truth.

We see hints of Mary's commitment to a life of virginity within the text of the Gospel itself. For instance, in the first chapter of St. Luke's Gospel, when the angel Gabriel announces to Mary that she will be the mother of the Savior, Mary responds by asking: "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man" (Lk 1:34)?

Since Mary was already betrothed to Joseph, she would have had no reason

to ask this question if she had intended on having normal marital relations at some point. That is, the thought that she would one day bear a son would not have surprised her if she was expecting her married life to unfold in the usual way—but this news would be quite shocking if she had committed herself to a special lifelong dedication to God in virginity.

Similarly, toward the end of St. John's Gospel, as Jesus is dying on the cross, he entrusts his now presumably widowed mother to the care of the beloved disciple, St. John (Jn 19:26-27). Had Mary

borne other children besides Jesus, as would have been expected in a normal marriage, there would have been no practical need for Jesus to do this. And although in some places the Gospels references the "brothers" of Jesus, early commenters such as St. Jerome have pointed out that a better translation of this word might be something like "kinsmen," since it could refer either to siblings born of the same parents or to cousins.

But beyond the Gospel accounts, Mary's perpetual virginity is something that has been continuously affirmed through our sacred tradition. And knowledge of the faith via tradition is something that sacred Scripture itself endorses (2 Thes 2:15).

One reflection of this tradition is a writing from the second century known as the "The Protoevangelium of James," which recounts stories of Mary's early life and her special consecration to God as a young child. This work can be a bit fanciful in some places, which is part of why it didn't "make the cut" in terms of becoming part of the New Testament and included in the canon of Scripture. Still, given its ancient source material and lasting effects on popular Christian piety in the Church's early centuries, we can nevertheless appreciate this writing as a reflection of venerable oral traditions.

In terms of why Catholics are so, as your friends put it, "hung up" on the truth of Mary's virginity, I don't think there is any one quick and clearly defined answer to that question. But my own thought is that we treasure the doctrine of Mary's perpetual virginity because of the wider theology this relates to and points toward.

As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* tells us: "Mary is a virgin because her virginity is the sign of her faith 'unadulterated by any doubt,' and of her undivided gift of herself to God's will" (#506). And: "At once virgin and mother, Mary is the symbol and the most perfect realization of the Church: 'the Church indeed ... herself is a virgin, who keeps in its entirety and purity the faith she pledged to her spouse'" (#507).

That is, the fruitful virginity of Our Lady—and Christians consecrated virginity in general—points to the radical primacy of God. Virginity is also a living anticipation of the life of the world to come, where God will be our total and perfect fulfillment.

(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).) †



Please submit in writing to our office by 10 a.m.

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

**BAUMAN, Russell W.**, 85, St. Pius X, Indianapolis, Dec. 16. Husband of Janice Bauman. Father of Lori Smith, Christopher, James, Rodney and Russell Bauman. Brother of Libby Corona. Grandfather of 11. Great-grandfather of 11.

**BEEVERS, Brittany L.**, 16, St. John Paul II, Sellersburg, Dec. 13. Daughter of Devon and Lucy Beevers. Sister of Brianna Beevers. Granddaughter of Marchetta Beevers.

**BELL, Thomas J.**, infant, St. Jude, Indianapolis, Dec. 15. Son of Joe and Taylor Bell. Brother of Rosemarie, Brady and Charlie Bell.

**BEVAN, Linda (Nonte)**, 75, St. Mark the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Oct. 7. Wife of Steve Bevan. Mother of Seth Thomas. Daughter of Mildred Nonte. Sister of MaryEllen Linne, Patty Smith, Steve and Ted Nonte. Grandmother of one.

**BLACKWELL, Sarah (Helmbock)**, 82, St. Pius X, Indianapolis, Dec. 6. Wife of Jeffrey Blackwell. Mother of Anne Johnson, Sarah Page and Scott Blackwell. Sister of Mary Savidge, Becky, George, Pete and Tom Helmbock. Grandmother of 10.

**BRANDENBURG, Anna E.**, 91, St. Bartholomew, Columbus, Dec. 10. Mother of Rita Campbell, Denise Morris and Alice Warren. Grandmother of two. Great-grandmother of one.

**BROWN, Rhonda J. (Richardson)**, 71, St. John Paul II, Sellersburg, Dec. 13. Mother of Melissa Leezer, Donnie Brown and Jon and Kenneth Carpenter, Jr. Sister of Richard Pepler, Casey, Labon, Jr., and Marcus Richardson. Grandmother of nine.

**CORBETT, Kristy J.**, 59, St. Luke the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Dec. 1. Daughter of Judy Corbett. Sister of Kasey Corbett. Aunt of several.

**DIAZ GOMEZ, Rogelio Rafael**, 38, St. Paul the Apostle, Greencastle, Dec. 8. Husband of Lizbeth Figueroa Avila. Father of Camila, Gerardo, Rodolfo, Rodrigo and Sebastian Diaz-Figueroa. Son of Anita Gomez. Brother of Tanina Martinez-Gomez, Ana Karen, Cristina and Luis Hector Diaz-Gomez.

**GANDER, Joseph C.**, 84, St. Louis, Batesville, Nov. 11. Husband of Rosemary Gander. Father of Bill Gander. Brother of Helen Gardner and Mary Jane Kuntz. Uncle of several.

**HAYDEN, James L.**, 87, St. Michael, Bradford, Dec. 9. Father of Greg Hayden. Brother of Delbert Hayden. Grandfather of six. Great-grandfather of one.

**HOSTETLER, Michael J.**, 78, St. John Paul II, Sellersburg, Nov. 30. Husband of Brenda Hostetler. Father of Monica Purk and Eric Hostetler. Grandfather of four.

**HYDE, Candace B.**, 53, St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd County, Dec. 14. Wife of Sean Hyde. Mother of Ian and J.C. Hyde.

**JOHNSON, Charles**, 92, All Saints, Guilford, Dec. 19. Husband of Thelma Johnson. Father of Ralph, Raymond, Rick, Roger and Roy Johnson. Brother of Sonia Kaffenberger. Grandfather of four.

**KORESEL, Ruby**, 90, St. Paul, Tell City, Dec. 14. Mother of Tim Koresel. Sister of Curt and Richard Seib. Grandmother of three. Great-grandmother of five.

**KRUER, Roy**, 90, St. Michael, Bradford, Dec. 3. Husband of Kathleen Kruer. Father of Karen Harbeson and

## Faith and football



Indiana Hoosiers quarterback Fernando Mendoza, a Catholic and the 2025 Heisman Trophy winner, reacts on Jan. 9 after the 2026 Peach Bowl and semifinal game of the College Football Playoff at Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta. The Hoosiers defeated the University of Oregon Ducks 56-22. Mendoza, who attends Mass at St. Paul Catholic Center in Bloomington, has spoken publicly of the importance of his faith. Indiana will play the University of Miami on Jan. 19 in the College Football Championship at Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens, Fla. (OSV News photo/Dale Zanine-Image via Reuters)

Brian Kruer. Brother of Jerry Kruer. Grandfather of five. Great-grandfather of seven.

**LAMPING, Mildred M.**, 88, St. Louis, Batesville, Dec. 20. Mother of Sharon Doll, Barb Flodder and Brian Lamping. Sister of Velma Knecht. Grandmother of eight. Great-grandmother of 11.

**LEAHY, John E.**, 75, Immaculate Heart of Mary, Indianapolis, Dec. 15. Father of Joseph Leahy. Brother of Ann Court, Katherine Hoefle, Margaret Pike, Gerald, James and Thomas Leahy.

**LOWREY, Richard**, 79, St. Mark the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Dec. 8.

**MEUNIER, Judith L.**, 88, St. Paul, Tell City, Dec. 20. Mother of Melanie Adkins, Arthur and Matthew Meunier. Grandmother of nine. Great-grandmother of 21.

**MOREY, Patricia L.**, 73, Our Lady of the Greenwood, Greenwood, Nov. 25. Sister of Mary Crider, Bob and Steve Morey. Stepsister of Debra Beatty, Markita Daulton, Chris, Jim and Tony Lawrence. Aunt of several.

**NORRIS, Donald J.**, 94, Christ the King, Indianapolis, Dec. 2. Uncle of several.

**PICTOR, George A.**, 84, St. Maurice, Napoleon, Oct. 24. Husband of Jane Pictor. Father of Mark Pictor.

**ROELL, Bradley J.**, 38, St. Louis, Batesville, Oct. 22. Son of Dennis and Beverly Roell. Grandson of Joseph Greiwe. Nephew of several.

**RONNEBAUM, Virginia M.**, 90, St. Louis, Batesville, Oct. 19. Mother of Rita Fritsch, Linda Ostendorf,

Mary Jo Werner, Patty, Dan and Scott Ronnebaum. Sister of Laverne and Harry Reidenbach. Grandmother of seven. Great-grandmother of 12.

**RYAN, Laurie A.**, 68, St. Jude, Indianapolis, Dec. 9. Wife of Martin Ryan. Mother of Amy O'Brien and Matthew Ryan. Grandmother of three.

**SCHERER, Robert**, 85, St. Pius X, Indianapolis, Dec. 6. Husband of Donna Scherer. Father of Tracy Barkley and Danielle Wills. Grandfather of three.

**SCHROEDER, Cynthia**, 72, St. Gabriel, Connersville, Dec. 16. Wife of Richard Schroeder. Mother of Laura Marszalek. Sister of Amy Christie, Melinda Gates and Lynnette Richardson. Grandmother of two.

**STACEY, Tony R.**, 65, St. Mary, Greensburg, Dec. 13. Husband of Jean Stacy. Father of Nora Bruns and Trevor Stacy. Son of

**STAPP, Betty Jean**, 83, St. Jude, Indianapolis, Dec. 9. Mother of Lisa Hostetter, Tamara Shropshire, Teresa, Donald and Eddie Stapp. Sister of Terrie Campbell. Grandmother of 18. Great-grandmother of 32.

**STEINSBERGER, Margaret**, 89, St. Christopher, Indianapolis, Dec. 11. Mother of Amy Brown, Karen Emmerson and Rick Steinsberger. Sister of Clara Downs and Marilyn Osborne. Grandmother of four. Great-grandmother of five.

**TAYLOR, Zach**, 32, St. Mark, Perry County, Dec. 4. Husband of Jennifer Taylor. Son of Laura and John Taylor.

**WAGNER, Dorothy**, 86, St. Mary, Rushville, Dec. 15. Mother of Gregory and Stephen Wagner. Sister of Mary Schneider, Eileen Settles and Catherine Thompson.

Wanda Stacy. Brother of Brad Stacy. Grandfather of two.

Grandmother of three. Great-grandmother of four.

**WERNING, Cindy P.**, 67, St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower), Indianapolis, Dec. 15. Wife of Edward Wernsing. Mother of Sabrina Cox, Jennifer Dusang, Jason Herald, Andy and David Wernsing. Grandmother of seven.

**WHITE, Rena M.**, 87, Our Lady of the Greenwood, Greenwood, Dec. 13. Wife of Adrian White, Sr. Mother of Adrian, Jr., and Anthony White. Grandmother of two. Great-grandmother of one.

**ZIEGLER, Shirley**, 85, St. Michael, Bradford, Nov. 21. Mother of Kimberly Basham, Patricia Ebersold, Brenda Kern, Kathi Richardson, Edmund and Matthew Ziegler. Sister of Darlene Ackerman, Joyce Young and Michael Mattingly. Grandmother of 15. Great-grandmother of 17. Great-great-grandmother of one. †

## Providence Sister Dorothy Gartland served in Catholic schools for 24 years

Providence Sister Dorothy Gartland (previously Sister Margaret Eugene), a member of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods in St. Mary-of-the-Woods, died on Dec. 25 at Providence Health Care on the campus of her religious community's motherhouse. She was 96.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Jan. 13 at the Church of the Immaculate Conception at the motherhouse in St. Mary-of-the-Woods. Burial followed at the sisters' cemetery.

Sister Dorothy was born on Oct. 19, 1929, in St. Joseph, Mo. She entered the Sisters of Providence on Feb. 2, 1948, and professed final vows on Aug. 15, 1955.

Sister Dorothy earned a bachelor's degree in education at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College and a master's degree in elementary education at Indiana University in Bloomington.

During her 78 years as a member of the Sisters of Providence, Sister Dorothy ministered as an educator in Catholic schools for 24 years in Illinois, Indiana and Washington, D.C. Later, she served in youth ministry, adult education and justice ministry in Chicago.

Sister Dorothy returned to the motherhouse in 2018 and dedicated herself entirely to prayer in 2024.

In the archdiocese, she served at St. Malachy School in Brownsburg from 1957-59.

She is survived by a sister, Mary Ann Kunkel of Dayton, Ohio, and three brothers: Eugene Gartland of Chicago; John Gartland of San Francisco; and William Gartland of West Hills, Calif.

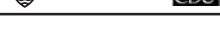
Memorial gifts may be sent to the Sisters of Providence, 1 Sisters of Providence Road, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN 47876. †

## 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)

# Pope Leo calls on Catholics to rediscover Vatican II teachings

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The teachings of the Second Vatican Council are still “the guiding star” the Catholic Church is meant to follow, Pope Leo XIV said.

Re-reading all of its teachings “is a valuable opportunity to rediscover the beauty and the importance of this ecclesial event,” he said on Jan. 7, and because its work remains “a guiding principle for us today.”

“We have yet to achieve ecclesial reform more fully in a ministerial sense and, in the face of today’s challenges, we are called to continue to be vigilant interpreters of the signs of the times, joyful proclaimers of the Gospel, courageous witnesses of justice and peace,” he said.

Speaking to visitors gathered in the Paul VI Audience Hall for his weekly general audience, the pope said that with the conclusion of the Holy Year on Jan. 6, he was beginning a new series of talks dedicated to the Second Vatican Council.

The council, which convened for four sessions from 1962 to 1965, produced 16 documents, addressing everything from liturgy to Scripture, missionary activity to ecumenism and interfaith relationships, and the functions of clergy and laity to religious freedom.

“Vatican Council II rediscovered the face of God as the Father who, in Christ, calls us to be his children,” he said in his talk.

The council looked at the Catholic Church “as a mystery of communion and sacrament of unity between God and his people; it initiated important liturgical reform, placing at its center the mystery of salvation and the active and conscious participation of the entire people of God,” he said.

“At the same time, it helped us to open up to the world and to embrace the changes and challenges of the modern age in dialogue and co-responsibility, as a Church that wishes to open her arms to humanity, to echo the hopes and anxieties of peoples, and to collaborate in building a more just and fraternal society,” he said.

For the past six decades, the popes have repeatedly underlined the importance of Vatican II, its teachings and its fuller implementation.

However, since the council was held so long ago, that means that “the generation of bishops, theologians and believers of Vatican II is no longer with us,” said the pope, who was 10 years old when the



Pope Leo XIV greets people at the conclusion of his weekly general audience in the Paul VI Audience Hall at the Vatican on Jan. 7. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

council ended in December of 1965.

“It will be important to get to know it again closely, and to do so not through ‘hearsay’ or interpretations that have been given, but by rereading its documents and

reflecting on their content” directly, he said.

“Indeed, it is the magisterium that still constitutes the guiding star of the Church’s journey today,” he said. †

## Employment

### Principal

#### Our Lady of the Greenwood Elementary School

Our Lady of the Greenwood Elementary School, a Blue Ribbon Award winner, is seeking faith-driven, academically oriented candidates for Principal to start the 2026-27 academic year. This 71-year-old school of 320 students is located in south suburban Indianapolis. OLG has one of the most ethnically diverse Pre-K through 8th grade student populations in the archdiocese.

Candidate must be a practicing Catholic in good standing. Bachelor’s and master’s degrees required, ideally in Education or related field. Valid Indiana administrator’s license (or the ability to get) is required. A minimum of five (5) years of teaching experience is required. A minimum of three (3) years of administrative experience at the Principal or Assistant Principal level is strongly preferred. Demonstrated leadership and interpersonal skills are essential. Bi-lingual is preferred.

Compensation is competitive with experience. Applications will be accepted through 1/16/2026. Resumes and supporting documents should be directed to:

Anne Krieger ([akrieger@archindy.org](mailto:akrieger@archindy.org))  
Office Manager, Administrative and Teacher Personnel  
Office of Catholic Schools  
317-236-1444

### Executive Director – Mother Theodore Catholic Academies (MTCA)

The Mother Theodore Catholic Academies (MTCA) is seeking a dynamic and visionary Catholic leader to serve as Executive Director. MTCA is a consortium of (3) Indianapolis center-city schools: Central Catholic, Holy Angels, and St. Philip Neri Catholic Schools. MTCA lives the mission of the Catholic Church by teaching, serving, and forming students. The MTCA Executive Director serves within the Office of Catholic Schools as a leader in the areas of Catholic Identity, Leadership and Governance, Operational Vitality, and Academic Excellence.

Applicants must be practicing Catholics with a deep commitment to serving in urban Catholic schools, believe in the importance of Catholic education as a tool for fostering human dignity, and the holistic development of students. A master’s degree in education, leadership, or a related field is required, with at least (5) years of leadership experience, preferably in urban Catholic education. Candidates should have experience in development and/or marketing.

Applications are due by January 30, 2026, or until filled. Candidates are expected to be available for the position by July 1, 2026, or earlier. Please e-mail cover letter, resume, and list of references, in confidence, to:

Dr. Brian Disney  
Superintendent of Catholic Schools  
Archdiocese of Indianapolis  
Email: [bdisney@archindy.org](mailto:bdisney@archindy.org) / 317-592-4051

## Classified Directory

### Construction

Brothers Construction  
Masonry • Fencing  
Chimneys cleaned \$99  
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Since 1976  
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### Employment

#### Archdiocese of Indianapolis

#### Payroll Specialist: Downtown Indianapolis

This full-time, hourly position will join The Central Payroll Team with payroll processing.

##### Duties and Responsibilities:

- Processing of bi-weekly payrolls
- Assist business locations and employees with payroll related questions.
- Monitor general payroll inbox with responses, training, and troubleshooting.
- Assist accounting staff with billing and general ledger questions.
- Clerical tasks related to garnishments and employee verifications.

##### Education and Experience needed:

- High school diploma or equivalent is required.
- Two to Three years payroll experience
- Experience with processing payrolls using Paylocity software is a plus.
- High attention to detail and accuracy with data entry
- High level of discretion and confidentiality

For consideration, please send resume to [tsteele@archindy.org](mailto:tsteele@archindy.org)

#### Archdiocese of Indianapolis

#### Maintenance Technician

This full-time, hourly, position is responsible for the maintenance of several buildings.

Duties include:

- Completing repairs, preventative maintenance and maintenance tasks on buildings and grounds.
- Responding, in a timely manner, to internal equipment repair needs.
- A verifiable background in building maintenance.
- A working knowledge of all building systems and components.
- The ability to evaluate and repair existing equipment.
- The ability to work with contractors, subcontractors, and suppliers.
- An ability to work with the Archdiocesan staff.
- Basic computer skills.
- Good organizational and communication skills.

If you are interested in this position, please send your resume to: [bburkert@archindy.org](mailto:bburkert@archindy.org)

# Legacy Gala

## Life, Education, and Real Presence

Friday, February 6, 2026 | 5:30 pm  
JW Marriott Indianapolis



### CELEBRATE WITH FELLOW PARISHIONERS!

This is an event you will not want to miss!

This year, we are honored to recognize Patricia Etling of Terre Haute, IN, as our 2026 Legacy Gala honoree. Co-founder of Catholic Charities Terre Haute, Patricia has spent decades living out her faith through tireless support of Catholic education, charitable outreach, and parish ministry. Her example inspires us all to give generously and live faithfully.

### BUY YOUR TICKETS NOW! SPACE IS LIMITED

We are excited to spend a wonderful evening together in support of three vital ministries in our archdiocese: Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary, Catholic Charities, and Catholic Schools. Come enjoy a fun night of fellowship, hear from Archbishop Thompson, listen to impactful ministry stories, enjoy a delicious meal, bid on great auction items, and enjoy dancing to The Bishops at the end of the evening!

Our 2026 Legacy  
Gala Honoree is:  
**Patricia Etling**

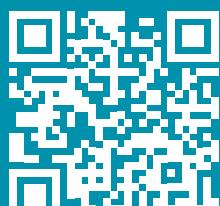
Thank You to all of our Wonderful Sponsors!



FIFTH THIRD BANK



### TO PURCHASE YOUR TICKET



Tickets are \$150 per person or \$1,500 for a table of 10. Scan the QR code to make your purchase online, see special young adult pricing, or view sponsorship opportunities.

Or, visit us online at: [www.archindy.org/LegacyGala](http://www.archindy.org/LegacyGala)

Parking and hotel information available at [www.archindy.org/LegacyGala](http://www.archindy.org/LegacyGala)