



The

# Criterion

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## The ties that bind

Thoughts of a mom, a legendary coach and the gift they shared, page 4.

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## Pope urges peace, warns about wider Middle East conflict

(OSV News)—Pope Leo XIV called for an end to the war in Iran and warned that the conflict could drag more countries in the Middle East into instability.

Speaking to pilgrims after praying the *Angelus* prayer on March 8, the pope said that developing news from Iran and from across the Middle East has caused “deep dismay.”



Pope Leo XIV

“Amid episodes of violence and devastation, and the widespread climate of hatred and fear, there is also the concern that the conflict may widen and that other countries in the region, including Lebanon, may once again sink into instability,” he said.

According to The Associated Press, Israeli forces struck an oil storage facility in Tehran, as well as targeted assaults in southern Lebanon against commanders of the Lebanese branch of Iran’s Revolutionary Guards.

Iran has continued striking U.S. allies in the Gulf, including Bahrain, where it fired missiles at a desalination plant. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi defended the attack, arguing that the “U.S. set this precedent” after it struck a desalination plant in Iran, AP reported.

The pope’s concern for Lebanon came after confirmation that the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah militants resulted in the deaths of 394 people, including 83 children.

Since the start of the war on Feb. 28, at least 1,230 people in Iran, about a dozen in Israel and seven U.S. service members have been killed, AP said.

In his appeal, Pope Leo called on Catholics to pray so that “the roar of bombs may cease, that the weapons may fall silent, and that a space for dialogue may open in which the voice of the peoples can be heard.”

“I entrust this supplication to Mary, Queen of Peace,” the pope said. “May she intercede for those who suffer because of war and guide hearts along the paths of reconciliation and hope.”

Less than a day after the start of the

See POPE, page 9

## A change of heart and defining choices mark ‘awesome,’ first-ever ‘Holy Fire’

By John Shaughnessy

Fourteen-year-old Margo Cave didn’t try to sugarcoat it.

She wanted it to be known that it wasn’t her idea to take part in Holy Fire, a daylong gathering of faith and fun hosted by the archdiocese for middle school Catholics who were being invited into a life-changing commitment to Jesus.

“My parents forced me to come here,” said Margo, a member of St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus. “And I didn’t have any friends with me.”

Then she smiled as she recalled the unexpected change that

happened to her during the event on Feb. 28—an event that began with ice-breaking moments that included a dance party and a performance by a magician and later turned to faith-filled opportunities to take part in the sacrament of reconciliation, eucharistic adoration and the celebration of Mass.

In the late afternoon, she joined a long line of youths who picked up a battery-powered candle, placed it in front of a monstrance containing the holy Eucharist and prayed to Jesus, filling the Pike Performing Arts Center in Indianapolis with a glow of reverence.

See HOLY FIRE, page 9

Photo: Times of prayer and reflection were part of the Holy Fire event on Feb. 28 at the Pike Performing Arts Center in Indianapolis. It also included ice-breaking moments of a dance party and a performance by a magician. (Photo courtesy of Madeleine Budde)

## ‘Your best ability is availability’

## Extended opportunities for confession reflect a renewed dedication to the sacrament

By Sean Gallagher

Brad Macke is a busy man.

Being a husband and father of five daughters, ages 12 down to 7 months, and serving as the director of mission and a theology and math teacher at Fiat Classical Academy in Aurora, keep him hopping.

Finding time to go to confession, something that he seeks to do on a monthly basis, might be a challenge for him, given his hectic

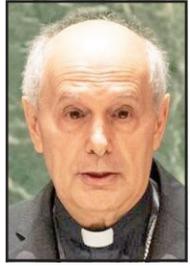
See CONFESSION, page 8

People stand in line for the sacrament of penance on Feb. 20 at St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Church in Aurora, where the sacrament is made available from 9 a.m.-9 p.m. every third Friday of the month in an initiative called “12 Hours of Grace.” (Submitted photo)



# Pope Leo XIV names Archbishop Caccia papal ambassador to U.S.

ROME (OSV News)—Pope Leo XIV has named Italian Archbishop Gabriele Caccia as the Vatican’s ambassador to the United States, selecting a seasoned diplomat to serve as a crucial liaison between Rome and the pope’s home country.



Archbishop Gabriele G. Caccia

The Vatican announced the appointment of the new apostolic nuncio on March 7, naming Archbishop Caccia, 68, to succeed Cardinal Christophe Pierre, who turned 80 in January and had served in the post since 2016.

A nuncio is a Vatican diplomatic representative with the rank of ambassador. He acts as both the Holy See’s ambassador to the government and as its representative to the Catholic Church in the host country, maintaining ties between local bishops and the Holy See at the Vatican.

Archbishop Caccia, a native of Milan, Italy, already has significant experience in the United States, having served as the permanent observer of the Holy See to the United Nations in New York since 2020.

As papal nuncio to the United States, Archbishop Caccia will play a key role in the selection process for U.S. bishop appointments and will serve as a point of contact between the bishops and clergy in the United States and the pope, in addition to carrying out the diplomatic tasks of a foreign ambassador serving in the United States.

Like his predecessor, Archbishop Caccia will serve as the pope’s key contact with President Donald J. Trump’s administration at a time when the administration’s immigration policies have been increasingly met by resistance by the U.S. bishops.

Archbishop Caccia in a March 7 statement said he was “honored and deeply humbled by the decision of the Holy Father to appoint me as apostolic nuncio to the country and the Church where he himself was born and raised.

“I receive this mission with both joy and a sense of trepidation, conscious of the great trust placed in me and of my own limitations, yet confident in his Holiness’s prayerful support and guidance,” the archbishop said.

During his years of service at the United Nations in New York, Archbishop Caccia said, he has experienced “warmth and openness” from the local Church, the government and the people of the United States. “I trust that their generosity and collaboration will assist me in carrying out this new mission at the service of communion and peace.”

Archbishop Caccia invoked “the blessings of Almighty God” on all, “especially in this year that marks the 250th anniversary of the birth of the United States of America.”

The president of the U.S. Conference

of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City, welcomed the appointment on behalf of his brother bishops.

“I wish to extend our warmest welcome and our prayerful support to him as he carries out his responsibilities across the United States, and we look forward to working with him,” the archbishop said in a statement.

Archbishop Coakley also expressed his “sincere and prayerful appreciation” to Cardinal Pierre, noting his “many opportunities to work with Cardinal Pierre over the years, particularly over the last four months through the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops,” since the Oklahoma prelate’s election in November as USCCB president.

“Thank you, Your Eminence, for your tireless service to the Church in the United States, and on behalf of my brother bishops, I offer our heartfelt prayers and best wishes in your retirement,” Archbishop Coakley said.

Archbishop Caccia is a career Vatican diplomat trained at the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy in Rome. He holds a doctorate in sacred theology and a licentiate in canon law from the Pontifical Gregorian University.

His previous diplomatic posts include serving as apostolic nuncio to the Philippines and Lebanon, and earlier as an attaché in Tanzania. He also worked as assessor for general affairs in the Secretariat of State under St. John Paul II in Rome.

Cardinal Pierre, who spent nearly five decades in Vatican diplomatic service, earned widespread respect among U.S. bishops for identifying episcopal candidates who embodied Pope Francis’ priorities while avoiding polarization. He was elevated to the College of Cardinals in 2023 and is expected to divide his retirement between his native France and Rome.

The United States and the Holy See have maintained formal diplomatic relations since 1984, when President Ronald Reagan and St. John Paul II established full ties. However, the relationship dates back to the founding of the U.S., when Benjamin Franklin conveyed a message from George Washington to Pope Pius VI in 1788, affirming that the new republic’s commitment to religious liberty meant no government role in appointing bishops.

The U.S. maintained consular relations with the Papal States from 1797 and diplomatic relations from 1848 to 1867, though not at the ambassadorial level. Congress banned funding for Vatican relations in 1867, a move partly driven by anti-Catholic sentiment. For more than a century afterward, contact relied on personal envoys, including during World War II, until Reagan and John Paul II restored formal ties.

The current Rome-based U.S. ambassador to the Holy See is Ambassador Brian Burch, who presented his credentials to Pope Leo XIV in September. †



## Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

March 14–21, 2026

March 14 – 10:30 a.m.

Mass and lunch for Permanent Deacon Formation at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, Indianapolis

March 15 – 11 a.m.

Mass at Korean Community Chapel, Indianapolis

March 15 – 5 p.m.

Priesthood Promises in Blessed Sacrament Chapel at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis

March 17 – 7 a.m.

Dad’s Day Breakfast at Bishop Chatard High School, Indianapolis

March 17 – 8:50 a.m.

Mass for the students of Bishop Chatard High School, Indianapolis, at Bishop Chatard High School

March 17 – noon

Lunch gathering with archdiocesan priests, Indianapolis

March 18 – 10 a.m.

Catholic Center Connection at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

March 18 – 7 p.m.

Confirmation for the youths of Sacred Heart of Jesus, St. Roch, St. Matthew the Apostle and Good Shepherd parishes, Indianapolis, and Holy Name of Jesus Parish, Beech Grove, at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral

March 19 – 10 a.m.

Clergy Lenten Day of Prayer at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House

March 20 – 2 p.m.

Virtual National Eucharistic Congress Board of Directors meeting

March 21 – 4 p.m.

Mass followed by dinner at St. Augustine Parish, Jeffersonville

## ‘Perpetual pilgrims’ to travel patriotic route in 2026 National Eucharistic Pilgrimage

(OSV News)—Nine young adults have been selected as “perpetual pilgrims” to travel with the Eucharist along the East Coast this summer in the third National Eucharistic Pilgrimage.

The pilgrims—five men and four women—will participate in the pilgrimage’s full route, which begins on May 24 in Florida and reaches Maine before ending in Philadelphia

on July 5 for U.S. semiquincentennial celebrations.

The pilgrims include three young adults with Indiana ties: Cheyenne Johnson, a missionary in New Jersey who is a former campus minister at Butler University in Indianapolis and a former member of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish in Indianapolis; Mary Carmen Zakrajsek, a 2021 graduate of Marian University and member of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish, both in Indianapolis, who serves as director of youth faith formation at St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Elkhart, Ind., in the Fort Wayne-South Bend Diocese; and Zachary Dotson, who is employed at St. Joseph Parish in Hammond, Ind., in the Gary Diocese.

The pilgrims also include Marcel Ferrer, a sophomore at Franciscan

University of Steubenville in Steubenville, Ohio; John Paul Flynn, a sophomore at The Catholic University of America in Washington; Eduardo Gutierrez, an accountant in Phoenix; Angelina Marconi, a college athletic trainer in Kentucky; Raymond Martinez II, a seminarian for the Diocese of San Angelo, Texas; and Sharon Phillips, a high school youth minister in the Archdiocese of Seattle.

With four routes that met in Indianapolis for the 10th National Eucharistic Congress in July 2024, the inaugural National Eucharistic Pilgrimage included 30 pilgrims. Last year’s pilgrimage included eight. Johnson was among the 2025 perpetual pilgrims, and she is returning this year as the team lead. Last year’s pilgrimage also included a returning pilgrim who had traveled one of the 2024 routes to serve as team lead.

With the theme “One Nation Under God,” the 2026 National Eucharistic Pilgrimage route celebrates key Catholic landmarks and events in American Catholic history as part of the nation’s 250th anniversary. The pilgrimage’s route includes public events in 18 dioceses and archdioceses in

See PILGRIMAGE, page 15



Cheyenne Johnson



Mary Carmen Zakrajsek



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# Leaha McCrite and Ken Johnson will be honored at St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities gala on April 16

By Natalie Hoefler

Each spring, St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities (SECC) of New Albany hosts the Giving Hope-Changing Lives gala, the organization's largest fundraising event.

Registration for this year's gala, which will be held on the evening of April 16 at The Galt House Hotel in Louisville, Ky., ends on March 31. Through talks and



testimonials, the event celebrates the organization's achievements in helping serve mothers and children in need.

It also includes a live auction. Among this year's items are several vacation packages, including a week's stay at a cabin in Maggie Valley, N.C., and one week's stay at the Sandy Curls Cottage in Blue Mountain Beach, Fla. Other items include a guitar autographed by Dolly Parton, a jewelry piece from Koerber's Jewelry, and more.

An online, pre-gala auction will open for bidding at 8 a.m. on March 31 at [one.bidpal.net/stegala2026](http://one.bidpal.net/stegala2026).

The gala also provides an opportunity to present the organization's highest honor: the Spirit of Hope Award. This year's recipients are Leaha McCrite and Ken Johnson.

"Both have been valued members of the St. Elizabeth Advisory Council for 16 years," says SECC agency director Mark Casper.

"Not only was St. Elizabeth blessed to have Leaha as part of our Leadership Team, she made the agency better and her impact will be felt for years."

Casper lauds Johnson for his 14 years on the council's Executive Committee, "including two terms as chair for a record five years. Ken has a leadership style that is supportive at all times."

Below, McCrite and Johnson reflect on the time serving on the Advisory Council and share their thoughts on the good works of St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities.

## 'I was all in'

McCrite has always felt strongly about serving the local community. It's a value she attributes to her late father.

"My dad was a significant supporter of New Albany and Floyd County," she says. "He was on the Floyd County Council for years and years. He taught me that serving one's community is a responsibility we should all do, that the community needs support. It needs people to be engaged in helping."

So, while raising her and her husband Pat's three children and working for McCrite Milling & Construction Company, Inc., which the couple started in 1997, she found time to volunteer, including helping the SECC Advisory

Council's Events Committee.

Fast forward to 2010. McCrite was transitioning off the pastoral council of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in New Albany and still helping with SECC events when she was invited to join the Advisory Council. She said yes—and has continued that yes for 16 years.

"St. Elizabeth's just checked every box I was into serving," says McCrite. "I think they're an absolute necessity in this community—they do so many things."

"Once I got in and realized what's going on in our community, how they help and what their mission means to this community, I was all in. And I stayed because I love it."



Leaha McCrite

Her biggest contribution on the council has been chairing the Events Committee, which organizes SECC's two main fundraising events each year—the gala in the spring and a reverse raffle in the fall.

"If you have ever been to a St. Elizabeth's event and you sense the style and attention to detail, you have just experienced the 'Leaha McCrite effect,'" says Casper. "As our Events Committee chair, she is super creative and resourceful in pulling the literally hundreds of details together."

Both events have "grown so much" in the last 16 years, "and I'm real proud of that," McCrite says.

Casper agrees, noting that, "For the last several years, St. Elizabeth has set records for funds raised for both our gala and reverse raffle."

While McCrite believes in the duty of service, Casper notes that she "brings not only a very caring heart, but a passion for helping those in need."

A story she shares encapsulates Casper's sentiment. It involves a witness talk given at the annual gala many years ago by a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteer back when SECC coordinated the association's program for Floyd and Washington counties.

"The speaker was talking about a little girl they were driving to her next foster home," McCrite recalls. "She asked the CASA helper, 'Will they have food there?' I was like, 'Yeah, I'll support this forever.'"

Her "forever" support won't necessarily include serving on the advisory council. Her fourth four-year term is ending soon, and she considers what she might do with her time if she transitions off the council.

"I will definitely go watch my grandbabies play ball," she says of her seven grandchildren, all of whom live nearby.

She would also devote more time to caring for her 93-year-old mother. And as she and Pat approach their 46th wedding anniversary in April, she admits she would like to spend time traveling with him.

McCrite's plans would keep her busy—but such is her norm.

"Mom always says I'm not happy unless my hair is on fire," she admits. "My dad was like that, so the apple didn't fall far from the tree."

She says her 16 years serving on the Advisory Council have given her "hope, pleasure and joy to see that we're helping these people."

As for receiving the Spirit of Hope Award, McCrite is honored. But she sees Casper and the staff of St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities as "the real 'Spirits of Hope.'"

"They work tirelessly and graciously day in and day out. Their commitment and empathy are just above and beyond."

## A 'small piece in something much greater'

When Ken Johnson was invited to serve on SECC's advisory council in 2010, he decided to do some research. What he learned led to an enthusiastic "yes."

"What's impressed me going forward is how the organization evolved based on the needs of the community," he says. "As the needs of mothers change, our services meet that [need]. When Marie's Blessings [distribution program] needed a home, we stepped up. When demographics changed and our schools needed counseling for students, we stepped up to provide counselors."

Casper credits Johnson with playing a pivotal role in SECC receiving accreditation from the Council of Accreditation as a social services agency.



Ken Johnson

"The first year we applied [in 2012], we achieved accreditation, and they had nothing but great things to say," says Johnson.

The status is good for four years. With Johnson's help, SECC has continued to receive accreditation each time it sought renewal.

"It's not a rubber stamp," he notes. "It's a phenomenal amount of work. But accreditation shows how good we are at what we do."

As part of the initial application process in 2012, Johnson became the first chair of the Advisory Council's new Performance Quality Improvement (PQI) Committee.

"It's something unique to [SECC]," he says. "The goal is not to find what you're good at, but what you can improve on."

For each of the agency's eight programs, metrics are determined "based on best standards across states in other organizations and looking at state and federal requirements," Johnson explains.

Each committee member is assigned a program to monitor PQI action steps based on the metrics.

The process "makes sure we provide the best opportunities for staff to do their job as well as best outcomes for clients," says Johnson. "And by tracking how many we served and rating their satisfaction, it gives us good demographics and information when we apply for grants, so they know they're not just funding a budget but a program that has a good outcome."

Casper calls Johnson's role with accreditation and PQI "crucial." He says the retiree's 30-plus years in hospital administration and 22 years in the U.S. Army Reserves provided "great operational and leadership experience at a time when St. Elizabeth was experiencing great growth."

Casper adds that, while "Ken's process-oriented leadership remains key to our success to this day, he always remained the staff's biggest cheerleader."

After 16 years, Johnson is retiring from SECC's Advisory Council this year. His plans for his free time are simple: "Mostly just loaf and read," he says with a chuckle.

He also plans to continue serving at the Kentucky Center for the Arts as an usher with Jean, his wife of 43 years.

"We've been doing that for about 10 years," says Johnson. "We've seen Broadway shows, operas, ballets—we recently saw 'Sawn Lake.' It's a lot of fun."

He and Jean also enjoy spending time with family. Two of their three adult children and three of their five grandchildren live close by, and they travel "about every three months" to Atlanta to visit their third child's family.

When Johnson considers receiving the Spirit of Hope Award, his thoughts turn to the past.

"As a council member once told me, we all stand on the shoulders of those who come before us, and I think that's pretty *apropos* for this group," he says. "I have known most of the Spirit of Hope winners, and they are fantastic. I can't say enough good about them."

Reflecting on his years serving on SECC's advisory council, Johnson says it's a blessing to think "I made some small difference either in the situation or lives of those we serve."

"I'm not a direct care provider, but if I can provide just a little support, it makes me feel successful in helping the organization. I'm one small piece in something much greater."

*(The Giving Hope-Changing Lives Gala will be held on April 16 at the Galt House Hotel, 140 N. Fourth St., in Louisville, Ky. Doors open at 5:30 p.m., followed by dinner, presentations and a live auction at 7 p.m. Registration to attend is required by March 31. To register, call 812-949-7305 or email [info@stcharities.org](mailto:info@stcharities.org). An online, pre-gala auction will open for bidding on March 31 at [bidpal.net/stegala2026](http://bidpal.net/stegala2026).) †*

## Jesus is close by, so just open your eyes, Pope Leo XIV tells young people

ROME (CNS)—Every Catholic parish needs to show that Jesus, who promises a just, true and full life, is always near, Pope Leo XIV said.

"I encourage you to ensure that parish activities are a sign of a Church that—like a mother—takes care of her children, without condemning them, but rather welcoming them, listening to them, and supporting them in the face of danger," he told members of St. Mary of the Presentation Parish in Rome in a homily on March 8.

"As a good and caring shepherd, the Lord always waits for us and accompanies us, wherever we live and however we are. He mercifully heals our wounds and gives himself as a gift to us, enabling us in turn to become a gift for

our brothers and sisters," he said.

Earlier in the day, before praying the *Angelus* with people gathered in St. Peter's Square, the pope urged Catholics to be men and women of peace and charity, which the world is thirsting for.

"Let us ask Mary, Mother of the Church, to be able to serve, with Jesus and like Jesus, those men and women thirsting for truth and justice," he said. "This is not the time for opposition between one Church and another, between 'us' and 'them': those who worship God seek to be men and women of peace, who worship him in Spirit and in truth."

Later in the early evening, Pope Leo made his fourth visit to a parish in Rome in the run-up to Easter. As bishop of Rome, he has been celebrating Mass and

meeting with the faithful and priests in different parts of his diocese, most often in neighborhoods that face a variety of difficulties, such as poverty, violent crime and drug dealing.

"Young people risk growing up deceived by those who peddle death or disillusioned about the future," he said in his homily. "Many are waiting for a home, a job that ensures a dignified life, safe spaces where they can meet, play and plan something beautiful together."

"Men and women arrive at this parish wounded in spirit, their dignity injured and thirsting for hope," the pope said. "You have the urgent and liberating task of showing them the closeness of Jesus, his desire to redeem our existence from the evils that threaten it with a

proposal for a just, true and full life."

The faithful can find strength in the Eucharist, he said, "and may the Gospel, which springs forth in us as a source of truth, help each of us to open our eyes, to wisely evaluate what is good and what is evil, thus forming free and mature consciences."

Before celebrating Mass, the pope met with families and young people outside.

"Jesus is coming to your home, in your heart, in your life. We have to be ready to open that door to find Jesus, who is waiting for us," he said.

"Jesus is close to us. Let's open our eyes!" he continued, indicating the Lord can be found in those who suffer or seek help. "He asks us to bring them what we have received." †



# The Criterion

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

## Editorial

# After judge's ruling, let's use 40 Days for Life campaign as part of our response

We are in the midst of the Lenten season, where prayer, fasting and almsgiving are three pillars of faith that are central to these 40 days.

While all are important, we believe prayer is a powerful weapon and must be a staple of our everyday lives.

And where life is concerned, we continue to be in a spiritual battle.

As we continue our prayerful efforts to build a culture of life, we have run into a roadblock because of a Marion County judge's recent ruling.

As reported on page 10 of this week's issue of *The Criterion*, Judge Christina R. Klineman on March 5 blocked the state's near-total abortion ban from being enforced against Indiana residents who object to the ban on religious grounds. The ruling came in response to a class-action lawsuit claiming the ban violated religious freedom protections.

Indiana Attorney General Todd Rokita has appealed the ruling.

In 2022, the American Civil Liberties Union of Indiana (ACLU) filed a class-action lawsuit claiming that Indiana's Senate Enrolled Act 1, which prohibited most abortions in the state, violated Indiana's Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

The lawsuit was filed on behalf of an organization called Hoosier Jews for Choice, and five women who claimed they held sincere religious beliefs that they must be able to obtain an abortion under circumstances prohibited by the law, the ACLU said.

As people of faith, we believe all life must be protected from conception to natural death. We also hold that the state law passed in 2022 protecting nearly all unborn life isn't a case where one religious group is forcing its beliefs on others that disagree with them. In fact, a strong case can be made on reason alone that unborn life should be protected by law.

And we strongly agree with the sentiments shared by Alexander Mingus, executive director of the Indiana Catholic Conference, in a March 7 statement about the judge's ruling.

"Indiana's religious freedom laws were passed for the purpose of protecting religious practice, not to protect the ending of a human life," he said.

"Religions that preach violence are not protected by religious freedom claims," he continued. "While the court's decision is disappointing, the Catholic Church in Indiana remains committed to upholding the dignity of all life and concretely supporting women with difficult pregnancies."

Mingus wasn't alone in his criticism of the ruling.

Mike Fichter, Indiana Right to Life president and chief executive officer, said in a March 6 statement, "For the

court to rule that taking the life of an unborn child is an exercise of religious freedom is deeply distressing—and a perversion of the law's intent.

"Indiana's Religious Freedom Restoration Act was never intended to equate taking the life of an unborn child with religious expression in our state," he said, adding that the ruling "will be exploited so anyone claiming a spiritual belief, even if personal and non-theistic, can justify taking a child's life."

While each of us should offer prayers that the state is successful in its appeal, our efforts do not need to begin and end there.

Provisionally, we are in the midst of the spring 40 Days for Life campaign, which offers us the opportunity to convert minds and hearts from a culture of death to a culture of life. Through this public witness, we can shine Christ's light on this

dark chapter and especially offer prayers for an end to abortion.

The campaign, which began on Feb. 18 and runs through March 29, has two locations in the archdiocese where people can respectfully pray for life: North Vernon and Indianapolis.

The campaign in North Vernon is taking place at North Vernon Park, 604 N. State St.

To sign up for one or more hours, go to [www.40daysforlife.com/en/northvernon](http://www.40daysforlife.com/en/northvernon). For more information, contact Tim O'Donnell at [tidipsumasapere@att.net](mailto:tidipsumasapere@att.net).

In Indianapolis, the campaign is taking place in front of the Planned Parenthood facility at 8590 Georgetown Road. Parking is available along Georgetown Road. Do not park in the Women's Care Center parking lot or at the industrial complex across from the Planned Parenthood facility.

To sign up for one or more hours during the Indianapolis campaign, go to [www.40daysforlife.com/en/indianapolis](http://www.40daysforlife.com/en/indianapolis). The Indiana Knights of Columbus will hold a 12-hour overnight vigil in front of the Planned Parenthood facility starting at 6 p.m. on March 27. All are welcome to join for a few minutes, an hour or more.

To sign up for one or more hours during the Indianapolis campaign, go to [www.40daysforlife.com/en/indianapolis](http://www.40daysforlife.com/en/indianapolis). For additional information on the Indianapolis campaign, contact Robert Burton at [40daysforlife.indy@gmail.com](mailto:40daysforlife.indy@gmail.com).

We have learned our efforts to protect all human life from conception to natural death have become a never-ending battle.

But that must not deter us in our efforts.

May we stay strong in knowing that each of us—born and unborn—is made in the image and likeness of God.

—Mike Krokos

## Reflection/John Shaughnessy

# Thoughts of a mom, a legendary coach and the gift they shared

The morning of March 4 began by exchanging messages with my four siblings on the first anniversary of our mom's death, all of us sharing the truth that our lives were blessed—and continue to be blessed—by her.



Later that afternoon, I received a round of texts from friends, letting me know that someone else I admired had just died—Lou Holtz, the legendary former head football coach of the University of Notre Dame. (See a story about Holtz on page 14.)

Beyond the mutual day of their death, there wouldn't seem to be much to connect them.

My mom lived in the quiet spaces that many women of her generation did, never seeking the spotlight, preferring to shine it on her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. In contrast, Holtz lived most of his adult life in the ever-increasing spotlight of major college football and television commentary.

Still, there are similarities, including a feisty spirit and a powerful perseverance to overcome the setbacks of life. My mom grew up without a mother, as her mother died when my mom was 2. Holtz had a lisp and the public humiliation of being let go as a coach.

Yet neither chose bitterness. Instead, they both could charm you with their smiles and make you laugh with their stories and their insights about life.

Holtz often offered this thought on how to be happy: "Happiness is nothing more than having a poor memory. If you can't remember what happened yesterday, you feel pretty good today."

In the same vein, my mom would often encourage in the tough times, "Tomorrow will be a better day," adding her frequent sign-off, "God bless."

Faith in God was at their core.

When I interviewed Holtz 15 years ago before he gave a talk at a Catholic Charities fundraising event in Indianapolis, one of the questions I asked was, "What are some of the main ways you have tried

to make the connection between sports and faith in your coaching career?"

Holtz replied, "I never really preached it, but I hope the way you live your life reflects the faith you have in God."

And so, I still remember all the years that my mom and dad—who introduced me to the magic and occasional misery of being a Notre Dame football fan—made daily Mass a part of their lives.

Holtz and my mom were also connected by what he considered "the four things that we must do and have to succeed in life:

"Something to live for. Someone to love and love us. Something to hope for. Something to believe in."

My parents were married for nearly 67 years. They lived for their family. They believed in God. And as people who grew up in the Great Depression and World War II, they worked and hoped for a better life for their children and the generations that have followed.

Holtz had the same love for his family. It showed in his 59 years of marriage to his late wife Beth. It showed in the ways their four children were with him in his final days.

As with all of us, my mom and Holtz had their flaws and weaknesses. Still, their lives can be measured by the questions that Holtz often asked his audiences to consider about their lives.

"If I didn't show up, who would miss me and why? If you didn't go home, would your family miss you? And if they did, why? If you didn't show up for work on Monday, would anybody miss you?"

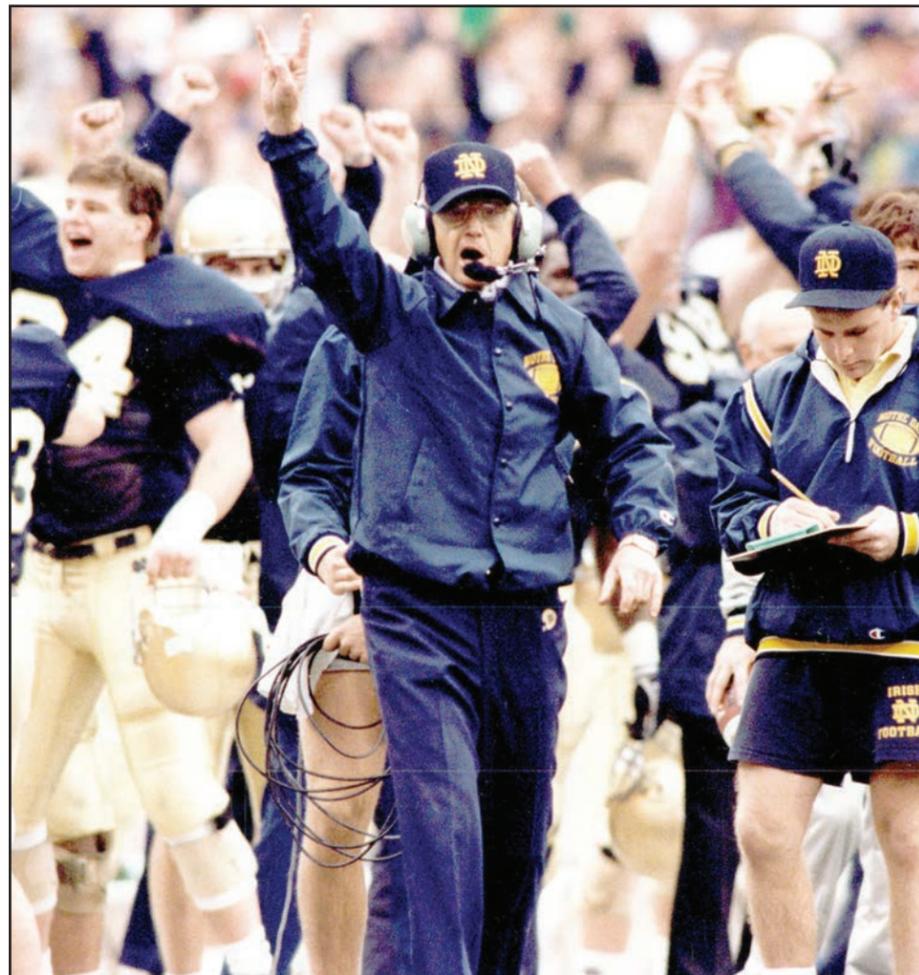
"We should all aspire to make sure that we live our lives in such a way that if we didn't show up, somebody would miss us. Not because we're valuable. Not because we're talented. But because we add value to other people's lives."

Sharing far more than a date of death, my mom and Holtz shared the gift of adding value to people's lives.

They are both missed.

Who would miss us, and why?

(John Shaughnessy is the assistant editor of *The Criterion*. He can be reached at [jshaughnessy@archindy.org](mailto:jshaughnessy@archindy.org).) †



Notre Dame coach Lou Holtz is pictured during the 1989 Fiesta Bowl. Holtz, a legendary college football coach and devout Catholic who led the University of Notre Dame to the 1988 National Championship, died on March 4 at age 89. (OSV News photo/courtesy University of Notre Dame)

## ARCHBISHOP/ARZOBISPO CHARLES C. THOMPSON



# Christ the Cornerstone

## Let Christ's light shine in and through you

The Gospel reading for the Fourth Sunday of Lent (Jn 9:1-41) speaks of blindness as both a physical impairment and as a metaphor for spiritual or moral darkness.

Jesus passes by a man who was born blind, and his disciples ask him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answers, "Neither he nor his parents sinned" (Jn 9:2-3).

Then why was this man born blind? Indeed, why is anyone born into the world with physical or mental disabilities?

Jesus's answer is curious: "It is so that the works of God might be made visible through him" (Jn 9:3). We can only imagine the disciples' confusion. How does anyone's physical disability, including this particular man who was born blind, make visible the works of God?

Jesus is using the reality of natural blindness, which is no one's "fault," to illustrate the spiritual and moral darkness that come upon us (like nightfall) because of the sinful decisions we human beings make and the immoral actions that follow.

Our inner blindness and our moral confusion cause us to sin. Although we

ought to know what is right and good, we deliberately fail to see it and we act accordingly. We choose darkness over light, and we live as people who have been blinded by our own selfishness and sin.

Jesus then adds another curious saying: "We have to do the works of the one who sent me while it is day. Night is coming when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world" (Jn 9:4-5). While Jesus is present in the world, and in our lives, there is moral clarity and spiritual truth. He is the light in our world's darkness.

But without Jesus, darkness prevails. Sin overwhelms ordinary human nature, and evil triumphs. That's why we can only do the works of God successfully when Christ is with us, and when his light shines in and through us. He can work miracles through us, but only if we let his light shine in us.

St. John's Gospel makes it clear that Jesus did not simply speak words of spiritual wisdom. He took concrete action:

*When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva, and smeared the clay on his*

*eyes, and said to him, "Go wash in the Pool of Siloam" [which means Sent]. So he went and washed, and came back able to see. (Jn 9:6-7)*

Jesus is our Savior (from the Greek word *soter* which means "healer"). He heals all our ills both physical and spiritual. He doesn't simply preach to us, offering wise sayings. He acts, and he challenges us to do the same.

The first action that we are challenged to take is an examination of conscience. We must ask ourselves: where is there darkness in our lives? Where have we allowed the light of Christ to be overshadowed by our own selfishness and sin? When have we refused to accept the healing power of Jesus offered to us in prayer, holy reading, or the sacraments (especially Reconciliation and Eucharist)? Have our own choices blinded us to the truth about ourselves and the world we live in?

The second action we must take is to step outside of ourselves, our comfort zones, in an effort to shine the light of Christ on others. The wisdom and example of Jesus, which is visible to us in Sacred Scripture, in the liturgy and in the spiritual and corporal works of mercy, show us

the only light that can successfully illuminate our world's darkness. The works of God are only visible to us in the light of day. If we allow ourselves to be surrounded by darkness, we are lost.

In the second reading for the Fourth Sunday in Lent (Eph 5:8-14), St. Paul admonishes us:

*You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light, for light produces every kind of goodness and righteousness and truth. Try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the fruitless works of darkness; rather expose them, for it is shameful even to mention the things done by them in secret; but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for everything that becomes visible is light. (Eph 5:8-14)*

As children of light, we are meant to live in the light of Christ and to dispel the darkness that surrounds us.

During this Lenten season, let's actively seek the light of Christ. Let's boldly proclaim the refrain that St. Paul quotes in Sunday's second reading: "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light" (Eph 5:14). †



# Cristo, la piedra angular

## Deja que la luz de Cristo brille en ti y a través de ti

La lectura del Evangelio del cuarto domingo de Cuaresma (Jn 9:1-41) habla de la ceguera como deficiencia física y como metáfora de la oscuridad espiritual o moral.

Jesús pasa junto a un ciego de nacimiento, y sus discípulos le preguntan: "Rabbi, ¿quién pecó, él o sus padres, para que haya nacido ciego?" Respondió Jesús: "Ni él pecó ni sus padres; es para que se manifiesten en él las obras de Dios" (Jn 9:2-3).

Entonces, ¿por qué nació ciego este hombre? De hecho, ¿por qué nace alguien en el mundo con discapacidades físicas o mentales?

La respuesta de Jesús resulta curiosa: "Para que las obras de Dios se manifiesten en él" (Jn 9:3). Podemos imaginar la confusión de los discípulos. ¿Cómo puede la discapacidad física de alguien—incluso la de este hombre ciego de nacimiento—hacer visibles las obras de Dios?

Jesús utiliza la realidad de la ceguera natural, que no es "culpa" de nadie, para ilustrar la oscuridad espiritual y moral que se cierne sobre nosotros (como el anochecer) a causa de las decisiones pecaminosas que tomamos los seres humanos y las acciones inmorales que se derivan de ellas.

Nuestra ceguera interior y nuestra

confusión moral nos hacen pecar. Aunque deberíamos saber lo que es correcto y bueno, deliberadamente no lo vemos y actuamos en consecuencia. Elegimos las tinieblas en lugar de la luz, y vivimos como personas que han sido cegadas por nuestro propio egoísmo y pecado.

A continuación, Jesús añade otro comentario curioso: "Mientras es de día tenemos que trabajar en las obras del que me ha enviado; cuando llega la noche, nadie puede trabajar. Mientras estoy en el mundo, soy luz del mundo" (Jn 9:4-5). Mientras Jesús esté presente en el mundo, y en nuestras vidas, habrá claridad moral y verdad espiritual, pues Él es la luz que ilumina las tinieblas del mundo.

Pero sin Jesús, prevalece la oscuridad; el pecado abruma la naturaleza humana ordinaria y el mal triunfa. Por eso solo podemos realizar con éxito las obras de Dios cuando Cristo está con nosotros, y su luz brilla en nosotros y a través de nosotros. Él puede obrar milagros a través de nosotros, pero únicamente si dejamos que su luz brille en nosotros.

El Evangelio de san Juan deja claro que Jesús no se limitó a pronunciar palabras de sabiduría espiritual, sino que tomó medidas concretas:

*Dicho esto, escupió en tierra, hizo barro con la saliva y untó con*

*el barro los ojos del ciego. Luego le dijo: "Vete, lávate en la piscina de Siloé" [que quiere decir "Enviado"]]. Él fue, se lavó y volvió ya viendo. (Jn 9:6-7)*

Jesús es nuestro Salvador (de la palabra griega *soter* que significa "sanador"). Él cura todos nuestros males, tanto físicos como espirituales. No se limita a predicarnos sabios refranes, sino que actúa y nos desafía a hacer lo mismo.

La primera acción a la que se nos desafía es un examen de conciencia. Debemos preguntarnos: ¿dónde hay oscuridad en nuestras vidas? ¿Dónde hemos permitido que la luz de Cristo sea eclipsada por nuestro propio egoísmo y pecado? ¿Cuándo nos hemos negado a aceptar el poder sanador de Jesús que se nos ofrece en la oración, la lectura sagrada o los sacramentos (especialmente la Reconciliación y la Eucaristía)? ¿Acaso nuestras propias decisiones nos han cegado ante la verdad de nosotros mismos y del mundo en el que vivimos?

La segunda acción que debemos emprender es salir de nosotros mismos, de nuestras zonas de confort, y esforzarnos por lograr que la luz de Cristo brille sobre los demás. La sabiduría y el ejemplo de Jesús, que vemos en las Sagradas Escrituras, en la

liturgia y en las obras de misericordia espirituales y corporales, nos muestran la única luz que puede iluminar satisfactoriamente las tinieblas de nuestro mundo. Solo con la luz del día podemos ver las obras de Dios; si nos dejamos rodear por la oscuridad, nos perdemos.

En la segunda lectura del cuarto domingo de Cuaresma (Ef 5:8-14), san Pablo nos advierte que:

*En otro tiempo fuisteis tinieblas; pero ahora sois luz en el Señor. Vivid como hijos de la luz, pues el fruto de la luz consiste en todo tipo de bondad, justicia y verdad. Examinad qué es lo que agrada al Señor, y no participéis en las obras infructuosas de las tinieblas; antes bien, denunciaadlas. Sólo el mencionar las cosas que ellos hacen ocultamente da vergüenza; pero, al ser denunciadas, salen a la luz. Pues todo lo que queda manifiesto es luz. (Ef 5:8-14)*

Como hijos de la luz, debemos vivir en la luz de Cristo y disipar las tinieblas que nos rodean.

Durante este tiempo de Cuaresma, busquemos activamente la luz de Cristo. Proclamemos con valentía el estribillo que san Pablo cita en la segunda lectura del domingo: "Despierta tú que duermes, y levántate de entre los muertos, y te iluminará Cristo" (Ef 5:14). †

# Events Calendar

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

## Every Wednesday:

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

## March 15

Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, 1530 Union St., Indianapolis. **Indianapolis Symphony Sphinx Series Chamber Music Concert**, 2-4 p.m., brass program featuring works by Giovanni Gabrieli, J.S. Bach, Francis Poulenc, Juan Pablo Moncayo, Irving Berlin and Alice Gomez, free. Information: [317-902-3006, judithessex@icloud.com](mailto:317-902-3006).

## March 16

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

## March 20

Liter House, 5301 Winthrop Ave. Indianapolis. **Catholic Business Exchange**, rosary 6:35 a.m., Mass 7 a.m., buffet breakfast and program following, Shawn Collinsworth, Dama Foundation president, presents "Building Better Futures for Children and Adults Facing Life's Greatest Developmental and Behavioral Challenges." \$20 members, \$25 non-members. Register by 4 p.m. March 17. Information, registration: [cutt.ly/CBE-Reg](http://cutt.ly/CBE-Reg).

## March 27-28

Planned Parenthood, 8590 N. Georgetown Road, Indianapolis. **Indiana Knights of Columbus Overnight prayer Vigil**, Fri. 6 p.m.-Sat. 6 a.m., rosary 6 p.m., join for a few minutes, an hour or longer. Information: 317-223-4892.

## March 27-29

Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, 1 Sisters of Providence, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Come and See Retreat**, 4 p.m. Fri.-2 p.m. Sun., for single Catholic women ages 18-42 wanting to explore religious life, free, meals and housing provided. Information, registration:

361-500-9505, [jluna@spsmw.org](mailto:jluna@spsmw.org), [ComeandSee.SistersofProvidence.org](http://ComeandSee.SistersofProvidence.org).

## March 28

St. Felix Catholic Center, 1280 Hitzfield St., Huntington (Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend). **Ava's Grace Healing Retreat**, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., for couples and individuals who have suffered miscarriage, stillbirth or infant loss, witness talks, couple conversation, small group discussion, eucharistic adoration, pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady on the retreat center grounds, lunch, free. Information: [leverett@diocesefwsb.org](mailto:leverett@diocesefwsb.org). Registration: [diocesefwsb.org/avas-grace](http://diocesefwsb.org/avas-grace).

## March 30

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Leave the Light On**, 9 a.m.-7 p.m., sacrament of reconciliation, no appointment needed. Information: 317-545-7681, [lcoons@archindy.org](mailto:lcoons@archindy.org).

## March 31-April 15

**Online auction benefiting St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities in New Albany**, [one.bidpal.net/stegala2026](http://one.bidpal.net/stegala2026), site opens 8 a.m. on March 31. Information: [info@stearcharities.org](mailto:info@stearcharities.org), 812-949-7305.

## April 1

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

## April 2

Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **Simple Soup and Bread Luncheon**, 11:45 a.m.-1 p.m., fundraiser for Catholic Charities Indianapolis Crisis Office, \$15, register online or pay cash at the door. Information, registration: 317-236-1411, [cbush@archindy.org](mailto:cbush@archindy.org), [tinyurl.com/ccsoupbread26](http://tinyurl.com/ccsoupbread26).

## April 3

University Park, 325 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **Way of the Cross with Archbishop Charles C. Thompson**, noon, meet on East Vermont Street across from Indiana War Memorial, sponsored by Knights of Columbus.

Church of the Immaculate Conception, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Way of the Cross for Justice**, 10:30-11:30 a.m. Information: [Events.SistersofProvidence.org](http://Events.SistersofProvidence.org), 812-535-2952, [provctr@spsmw.org](mailto:provctr@spsmw.org).

## April 5

Providence Spirituality and Conference Center, O'Shaughnessy Dining Hall, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Easter Buffet Breakfast or Lunch**, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. breakfast, 12:30-2:30 p.m. lunch, \$30 ages 11 and older, \$15 ages 3-10, ages 2 and younger free, purchase tickets in advance by March 27. Information, registration: [Events.SistersofProvidence.org](http://Events.SistersofProvidence.org), 812-535-2946, [lrobinette@spsmw.org](mailto:lrobinette@spsmw.org).

## April 11

Avon United Methodist Church, 6850 E US Highway 36, Avon. **Stephen Ministries 50th Anniversary Celebration and Learning Event**, 8-4 p.m., \$15 includes light breakfast and snacks, additional box lunch is \$12. Information, registration: [stephenministries.org/celebrateIND](http://stephenministries.org/celebrateIND).

## April 16

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

## April 17

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

## April 18

Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. **Called to Community Women's Breakfast**, 7:30-11 a.m., sponsored by Confraternity of Christian Mothers, Mass at 7:30 a.m. followed by hot catered breakfast and full espresso bar, speaker and craft activity, \$15, register by April 4. Information, registration: 317-752-5172. †

## 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).

## 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).

## March 28

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **The Place that Holds You—Lenten Day Retreat**, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m., led by Father Jeffrey Godecker and Mary Schaffner, \$55, includes room, lunch, Mass and use of common areas and grounds. Registration: 317-545-7681, [ftm.retreatportal.com/events](http://ftm.retreatportal.com/events), [lcoons@archindy.org](mailto:lcoons@archindy.org).

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **Dying and Rising: Finding Your True Self Within**, 9:30-

11:30 a.m., \$30. Information, registration: 812-933-6437, [oldenburgfranciscancenter.org](http://oldenburgfranciscancenter.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).

## March 31, April 1, 2

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Holy Week Days of Silence**, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., \$55 per day,

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).

## April 8-10

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Praise and Worship in the Fine Arts**, Benedictine Father Michael Reyes presenting, \$350 single, \$550 double. Registration: 812-357-6611, [saintmeinrad.org/retreats](http://saintmeinrad.org/retreats). †

## Learn the basics of evangelization at workshop on April 25 in Indianapolis

The archdiocesan Office of Evangelization will offer an Evangelization 101 Workshop at Holy Spirit Parish, 7243 E. 10th St., in Indianapolis, from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. on April 25.

Facilitated by Catholic speaker, writer and storyteller Meg Hunter-Kilmer, the theme of this year's workshop is titled "Elevate Your Spiritual Discipleship Journey." It is open to all those interested in learning more about evangelization: parishioners, parish leaders, ministry leaders and members of existing parish evangelization teams.

The program will provide core concepts of how to evangelize,

including the basics on how to pray, how to share personal faith stories, and how to form evangelization teams and small discipleship groups that help parishes grow in faith. The day will include developing best practices, action steps and the framework to begin goal setting.

The cost is \$30. Attendees may self-pay or contact their parish to see if it will assume the cost. Registration is required by April 20.

For more information or to register, go to [tinyurl.com/Evang101-2026](http://tinyurl.com/Evang101-2026) or contact Anita Bardo, archdiocesan evangelization coordinator, at 317-236-1466 or [abardo@archindy.org](mailto:abardo@archindy.org). †

## Right to Life of Indianapolis student art, essay, speech contests and scholarship deadlines approaching in April

Each year, Right to Life of Indianapolis (RTLII) invites private, public and homeschool students in Marion and its seven surrounding counties to participate in pro-life themed art, essay and speech contests and to apply for a \$1,000 scholarship. The deadline for the scholarship, essay and speech contests is April 1. The deadline for the art contest is April 15.

There are four sets of grade levels for the essay contest: seventh grade; eighth grade; ninth and 10th grades; and 11th and 12th grades.

The speech contest is open to high school sophomores, juniors and seniors.

The art contest is open to students

in ninth through 12th grades.

For the contests, winning students and their school or church will receive matching prizes ranging from \$50-\$250.

The RTLII Joan Byrum Pro-Life \$1,000 Student Scholarship is for graduating high school seniors who have shown pro-life commitment and involvement during high school and dedication to the pro-life philosophy as they continue their education in college or a vocational program.

For more information, applications and specific guidelines for the contests and scholarship, go to [rtlindry.org/scholarship-contests](http://rtlindry.org/scholarship-contests). †

## Wedding Anniversaries

**GARY AND CAROL (HYMER) BERGMAN**, members of St. Gabriel Parish in Connersville, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Nov. 1, 2025. The couple was married on Nov. 1, 1975. They have two children: Tara Campbell and Brett Bergman. The couple also has five grandchildren.



**GENE AND TERRIE (WEINTRAUT) YOUNG**, members of St. Joseph Parish in Shelbyville, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on March 19. The couple was married in St. Joseph Church in Shelbyville on March 19, 1976. They have two children: Emily Breedlove and Sarah Johnson. The couple also has eight 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.

# Hoping to make the second half of Lent more meaningful? Four ideas

By John Shaughnessy

When Carole Likins decided to do something different for Lent, she never imagined the impact it would have on other people and herself.

“Last Lenten season, I wanted to *give* instead of *give up* something for Jesus,” recalls Likins, a member of St. Malachy Parish in Brownsburg.

Likins focused on one of her favorite Bible verses that she has always tried to keep at the heart of her life—the one from Romans 12:12 that encourages people to “Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.”

“I chose the verse as a way to evangelize to people I came across in my daily life,” she says. “I copied the verse with some decorative trim and reduced it to a little larger than a business card.

“When I finished, there were about 200 of these small pieces of faith to pass along to strangers everywhere I went, anytime the Holy Spirit moved me. My approach was simple, ‘A message for you.’”

The response from people surprised and delighted her, including the positive reaction she received when she once waited for her carry-out order in a restaurant and shared the message with a group at a table.

“Several people let me know how much they appreciated it, and that it came at a time they really needed it,” Likins says. “We both got tears in our eyes and said, ‘God bless you’ to each other.

“Only one individual declined to take my little piece of paper. I blessed them anyway. As this year has passed, I have seen my little message posted in my dental office, doctor’s office, car dealership and at a friend’s home. I’m not sure where all of the other ones ended up, but for a moment I believe the message touched someone’s heart.”

Her effort also has had an impact on her heart.

“I thought it was a small thing—and a little risky, not knowing how people would respond—but the way that people responded really gave me a lot of joy and fulfillment. So, here was something that I thought I was giving back to Jesus, and here he was showering it back to me.

“I hope this gives other people a spark of what they can do.”

## A time to act, knowing God will provide

Mike Krokos has had his own spark toward a more meaningful approach to Lent. The spark came when he looked into his clothes closet.

Similar to Likins, a Bible verse called to Krokos, this one from Luke 3:11, “He said to them in reply, ‘Whoever has two



Members of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Parish in Rushville have shared their faith and life’s joys and struggles for four Lents in their women’s book study. (Submitted photo)

tunics should share with the person who has none.’”

“I don’t know if it was the Bible verse—which has always reminded me of the corporal works of mercy—but a few years ago, I came to the realization that I had a closet busting at the seams with clothes, including items that hadn’t been worn in



Mike Krokos

years,” recalls Krokos, the editor of *The Criterion*.

As he looked at the overflowing closet, Krokos knew it was time for a change—and not just another change of clothes.

“I can’t remember where the idea came from, but I’ll credit it

to a prompting of the Holy Spirit. I heard a voice clearly ask that day, ‘Why do you need all that stuff?’”

That question stayed with him as he noticed shorts and pants that no longer fit, sport coats and sweaters that “hadn’t been worn in years, and sweatshirts and T-shirts that were in good condition buried in the back of an area that was filled to the brim.”

“As I approached Lent that year, I knew it was time to act. During that six-week period, I took an article of clothing out of the closet each day, stacked the items in piles, and eventually bagged them to give to others.”

He then took the bags of clothing to stores run by Goodwill and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, hoping they would benefit someone in need.

That Lenten ritual has continued for years, enhancing his other resolutions during this season.

It’s also enhanced his life and his faith.

“During Lent, we focus on the penitential practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving, and each year I now make it a point to donate clothing I know I don’t need anymore,” Krokos says. “I have been blessed my entire life, and I now consider it a privilege to share my abundance with others.

“What began as a tedious process has turned into an act of joy and love, something I believe brings me closer to Christ in living out his mandate to assist our brothers and sisters in need. I’ve yet to see any of my clothes worn by others on the streets of central and southern Indiana, but I pray they are indeed serving their purpose.

“With apologies to Nike, I’ve learned every Lent is an opportunity to ‘Just Do It’ by letting go of material possessions and trusting God will always provide.”

## ‘A time of healing’

The uplifting Lenten tradition began during one of the most devastating times in the recent history of the United States.

Wanting to do something positive after the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic, Sherry Owen and Debbie Bruce of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Parish in Rushville came up with an idea that they hoped would help them move closer to others and Christ.

They started a women’s book study. “Debbie and I were overwhelmed by the turnout,” says Owen, noting that the first book they shared was *Graced and Gifted* by Kimberly Hahn. “The result was a time of healing and the wonderful gift of Catholic community.”

This Lent marks the fourth year of the tradition.

“We have enjoyed learning the faith through the eyes of several of the WINE

[Women in the New Evangelization] books along with *Lectio Divina*, *Visio Divina* and small group discussion breakout sessions.

“We have been blessed to share with one another our faith and life’s joys and struggles through our time together. We are thankful for all the old and new friendships we have made.”

## Bringing a family closer

Barbara Vandygriff has found a creative way to connect her family to a deeper bond with each other and Lent.

“My husband and I are blessed with six lovely adult children, 16 grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren, with one little angel on the way,” notes Vandygriff, a member of St. Rose of Lima Parish in Franklin.

“The way I like to share our Lent every year is to make a Lenten calendar naming each and every family member on a special individual block. I leave Sundays open to name their own intentions. The other blank blocks are to remember people to pray for, such as clergy, firefighters, police officers, souls in purgatory, deceased members of our family and the pope.”

After creating her Lenten calendar, Vandygriff makes copies for each family member. She also adds a special touch as a follow-up.

“We call each family member on their special day to remind them that they are being prayed for by all of their loved ones,” she says.

“I believe this Lenten practice has brought our family closer and gives the season truly a time of prayer and a reminder of sacrifice. And it makes Holy Week more meaningful, and Easter and the Resurrection even more joyful.” †

## Lenten penance services are scheduled at archdiocesan parishes

Parishes throughout the archdiocese have scheduled communal penance services for Lent. The following is a list of services that have been reported to *The Criterion*.

### Batesville Deanery

March 20, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. at St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Aurora

March 24, 6:30 p.m. at St. John the Evangelist Church of St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Decatur County

March 25, 6:30 p.m. at St. Vincent de Paul, Shelby County

March 25, 6:30 p.m. at St. Peter, Franklin County

March 26, 7 p.m. at St. Louis, Batesville

March 28, 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. at St. Louis, Batesville

April 1, 9-11 a.m. and 6:30-8:30 p.m. at St. Louis, Batesville

Additionally, recurring opportunities for reconciliation in the Batesville Deanery:

Fridays 11 a.m.-noon at St. John the Evangelist Church of St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Decatur County

Wednesdays 5-6 p.m. at St. Charles Borromeo, Milan

Saturdays after 8:30 a.m. Mass at St. Nicholas, Ripley County, and 4-5 p.m. at St. Charles Borromeo, Milan

### Bloomington Deanery

March 17, 7-9 p.m. at St. Vincent de Paul, Bedford

March 18, 6:30 p.m. at St. Jude the Apostle, Spencer

March 26, 6-7 p.m. at St. Martin of Tours, Martinsville

April 1, 6-9 p.m. for St. Charles Borromeo, St. John the Apostle and St. Paul Catholic Center, Bloomington, at St. Paul Catholic Center

### Connersville Deanery

March 13, 5:30 p.m. at Holy Family Church of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, Richmond

### Indianapolis North Deanery

March 30, 9 a.m.-7 p.m. at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., no appointment needed

### Indianapolis South Deanery

March 18, 6 p.m. at St. Barnabas Parish, Indianapolis

March 26, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. at Our Lady of the Greenwood, Greenwood

March 28, 8:30-10 a.m. at SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi, Greenwood

### Indianapolis West Deanery

March 24, 7 p.m. at St. Christopher Parish, Indianapolis

### New Albany Deanery

March 23, 7 p.m. for St. John the Baptist, Starlight, and St. Mary, Navilleton, at St. John the Baptist

March 25, 6:30 p.m. at St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd County

March 25, 7 p.m. for St. Michael, Charlestown, and St. Francis Xavier, Henryville, at St. Michael (confession available in English and Spanish)

March 26, 7 p.m. at St. Anthony of Padua, Clarksville

### Seymour Deanery

March 19, 6:30 p.m. for Most Sorrowful Mother of God, Vevay, and Prince of Peace, Madison, at Prince of Peace

March 24, 6 p.m. at Holy Trinity, Edinburgh

March 25, 6:30 p.m. for St. Ambrose, Seymour; St. Patrick, Salem; and American Martyrs, Scottsburg, at St. Ambrose

### Tell City Deanery

March 15, 2 p.m. CT at St. Paul, Tell City

### Terre Haute Deanery

March 24, 6-8 p.m. at Annunciation, Brazil

March 25, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. at St. Margaret Mary, Terre Haute

March 25, 6 p.m. at Sacred Heart, Clinton

March 26, 6-8 p.m. at St. Paul the Apostle, Greencastle

# CONFESSION

continued from page 1

life. But, as a Catholic in Dearborn County, it's actually pretty easy.

All Saints Parish, in the northern part of the county, offers the sacrament of penance from 9 a.m.-9 p.m. every



Brad Macke

first Friday of the month. Confession is also available during the same hours on every third Friday at St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Parish in Aurora along the Ohio River in the southern part of the county.

The initiative is called "12 Hours of Grace," and it began more than a decade ago at All Saints, where Macke and his family are parishioners. He said that it "removes a significant barrier" for him, his wife and their children who are old enough to take part regularly in the sacrament of reconciliation.

"As loved sinners, seeking to be holy, my family continuously needs to be forgiven and strengthened by the sacrament," Macke said. "Obviously, it restores and deepens our relationship with the Lord. But it also helps us to love each other as we really desire to."

"Family life is hard, and we continue to offend and hurt each other. I find that returning to God's mercy in the sacrament each month brings the joy of being forgiven, teaches us to forgive each other and brings freshness or newness in our relationships."

Over the past several years, a number of parishes across central and southern Indiana have begun to offer the sacrament of penance for several hours at a time during Advent and Lent. There have been practical reasons behind some of these changes. At the same time, both priests and penitents have experienced spiritual benefits from celebrating the sacrament in this context. (See accompanying article.)

## Meeting people where they're at

Father Eric Augenstein has observed the merits of this approach over several years. In fact, he may have gotten the ball rolling in the archdiocese by offering the sacrament of penance for several hours at a time.

He was pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in New Albany when it had its first "12 Hours of Grace" in Lent in 2008 and in some years thereafter. He's continued the practice during Lent as pastor of Nativity of Our

Lord Jesus Christ Parish in Indianapolis.

For him, it made the sacrament of reconciliation more easily available for his parishioners.

"Virtually everyone could find time in a 12-hour period if they want to go to confession," Father Augenstein said.

Father Jonathan Meyer has found in offering the sacrament of penance for 12 hours twice a month that people most commonly go to confession in hours not connected to the celebration of Mass, either on weekdays or on weekends.

For several years as All Saints and St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception have had the sacrament available for 12 hours, data has been collected about how many confessions are heard and the hours in which people are going to confession.

"The data actually speaks for itself," said Father Meyer who, along with Father John Hollowell, serves in the four parishes of Dearborn County.

Over the past 12 years, the hours in which people come the most for the sacrament of reconciliation at All Saints are during the 1 p.m., 5p.m and 6 p.m. time slots. Since 2021, people come to St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception the most in the 11 a.m., 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. time slots.

"The most popular hours prove the fact that when we normally offer confession is not when people are actually fully available," Father Meyer said. "The 12-hour model just meets people where they're at."

Father Augenstein and Father Todd Goodson, pastor of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood, where 12 consecutive hours of confessions are offered during Advent and Lent, also noted that it has been easy for them to find priests serving in nearby parishes to commit to being in their faith communities' confessional for a one-hour time slot when the sacrament is available

over a long period of time.

For the most part, that's not an option for Father Meyer and Father Hollowell in the parishes of Dearborn County.

Although they get assistance from some priests in the nearby Archdiocese of Cincinnati, these two

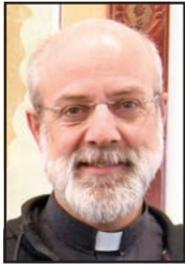
priests will be in the confessional for several hours at a time on the first and third Fridays each month.

But those days are something that Father Meyer actually looks forward to.

"It's almost like a retreat for me," he said. "I'm not in the office. I'll just stay in the rectory or be in the confessional. I actually look forward to it. It's a beautiful, relaxed, calm day."



Father Eric Augenstein



Father Todd Goodson



Father Jonathan Meyer



Father Joseph Moriarty gives absolution on July 17, 2024, in the sacrament of penance to a penitent attending the National Eucharistic Congress at the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

## Setting an example

While Father Meyer may see those two Fridays when he spends several hours in a confessional as a kind of retreat for himself, Macke recognizes that Father Meyer, Father Hollowell and the other priests who take time in the confessional are still making a sacrifice to make the sacrament of reconciliation readily available for the Catholics of Dearborn County.

It's a sacrifice that encourages him in his own vocation.

"The priests who spend themselves in the confessional for hours inspire and challenge me to be more generous and sacrificial to my wife and daughters," Macke said. "They set an example for how I'm called to be a father."

At the same time, Father Meyer sees a good example in the many Catholics who put such a priority on the sacrament of reconciliation that they carve out time in their busy days to avail themselves of the sacrament when it's offered during a 12-hour period.

"It's formed my heart to really think of the penitent, like those who are showing up for confession at 8 o'clock at night," he said. "That's their only time. It's what works for them. That moves my heart."

Father Goodson sees blessings in people reaping the benefits of the sacrament of penance at Our Lady of the Greenwood, which is available there daily.

"It's edifying to see people taking advantage of one of the sacraments of the Church, the one that reconciles them to God, to the Church and to the community," he said.

In addition to offering the sacrament for 12 hours in one day during Lent, Father Goodson said that confession on Wednesday of Holy Week at his parish, just before the start of the Triduum, has also become something of a tradition.

When he first began to minister at Our Lady of the Greenwood in 2019, he said he was shocked when 85 people came for confession on Wednesday of Holy Week that year.

Now, he knows to plan for it. "I try to get three or four priests to hear confessions," Father Goodson said. "We'll hear on that Wednesday before the Triduum up to 200 to 250 confessions."

## 'Your best ability is availability'

What Father Goodson has seen at Our Lady of the Greenwood—and which he knows is happening to various degrees in other parishes across central and southern Indiana—is evidence of a renewal in the sacrament of reconciliation in the lives of many Catholics.

"There is some sort of movement of the Holy Spirit," he said. "Confession opportunities are increasing. More people

are availing themselves of the sacrament."

The Spirit may also have been moving priests and penitents in the archdiocese to the offering of the sacrament of reconciliation over long periods through their participation in major Catholic events held in Indianapolis.

The National Catholic Youth Conference, the Fellowship of Catholic University Students' SEEK conference and the National Eucharistic Congress all included having the sacrament of reconciliation available over several hours.

Father Augenstein said that this is "a major component" of such events held here.

"That's not always the case in the parishes that people have come from when they go [to these events]," he said. "So, they take that experience back with them to their parishes."

For Father Meyer, the data that has been collected in Dearborn County supports the view that a renewal in the sacrament of reconciliation is happening—at least in the parishes in which he ministers.

In 2014, an average of 89 people went to confession at All Saints on the days when the sacrament of penance was available over 12 hours. By 2025, that average had more than doubled, growing to 194.

The practice began in Aurora in 2021 when 96 people on average took part in the sacrament. Just four years later in 2025, the average had grown by more than 50% to 146.

"There were times [early on] when there weren't people coming to confession," Father Meyer said. "Now, when I go to 12 Hours [of Grace], I know I'm just going to be busy the entire time. It's a different experience. The culture has clearly changed."

Father Augenstein has witnessed the same change since he was ordained a priest in 2004.

"When I was first ordained, virtually every parish had confession on Saturday afternoon or by appointment, and that was it," he said. "It was much more limited. It's more available now."

And in making it more available, Father Augenstein sees more people opening themselves to the gift of God's mercy in the sacrament.

"As a Church and as priests, if we make ourselves available in the life of a parish, people will come," he said.

And priests simply making themselves available to share God's mercy in the sacrament of reconciliation is the biggest and best step to further the renewal of the sacrament, according to Father Meyer.

"Your best ability is availability," he said. "Our people need to know that we're available. One of the most beautiful things that we say to people is, 'I'm here for you.' What does that really look like when we're reconciling someone to the Father?" †

## Several parishes offer extended hours to receive sacrament of penance

During the remaining weeks of Lent, the following locations across central and southern Indiana will offer the sacrament of penance from two to 12 hours at a time. Below are times of confession that were reported to *The Criterion*.

### Batesville Deanery

March 20, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. at St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Aurora  
March 28, 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. at St. Louis, Batesville  
April 1, 9-11 a.m. and 6:30-8:30 p.m. at St. Louis, Batesville

### Bloomington Deanery

March 17, 7-9 p.m. at St. Vincent de Paul, Bedford  
April 1, 6-9 p.m. for St. Charles Borromeo, St. John the Apostle and St. Paul Catholic Center, Bloomington, at St. Paul Catholic Center

### Indianapolis North Deanery

March 30, 9 a.m.-7 p.m., at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House

### Indianapolis South Deanery

March 26, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. at Our Lady of the Greenwood, Greenwood

### Terre Haute Deanery

March 24, 6-8 p.m. at Annunciation, Brazil  
March 25, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. at St. Margaret Mary, Terre Haute  
March 26, 6-8 p.m. at St. Paul the Apostle, Greencastle

# HOLY FIRE

continued from page 1

“Adoration was really moving,” Margo said later. “I got to go right up there in front of Jesus with a candle. I felt Jesus was there.”

She paused for a moment and said, “I thought it wouldn’t be a great experience, but it turned out to be a lot of fun. And it didn’t matter that I wasn’t here with any of my friends. I was here with Jesus.”

Standing next to her, her 13-year-old brother Howie nodded and said, “Today was a really good day. I felt like I’ve grown in my faith a lot. During adoration, I never felt that close to Jesus before. It was really emotional. It felt like the Holy Spirit was present in the room.”

## ‘Two moments that blew me away’

The reactions of Margo and Howie are exactly what Rachel Gilman had hoped for as she planned the Holy Fire event that drew 830 middle school youths from the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, the dioceses of Evansville and Lafayette, and other parts of Indiana. Thirty-two groups from the archdiocese participated.

“I call it an encounter experience with Christ—to hear the basic Gospel message of Christ’s love and invite them into that relationship with him,” said Gilman, the archdiocese’s director of youth ministry. “It’s really meant to leave them with having made a choice by the end of the day.”

The Holy Fire event was a first for middle school



Howie Cave and his sister Margo Cave share a moment with their youth minister Tony Eje—of St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus—during the Holy Fire event in Indianapolis on Feb. 28. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson shows his enjoyment in interacting with middle school youths from the parishes of St. Mary in Rushville and St. Gabriel in Connersville following the Mass that ended the Holy Fire event in Indianapolis on Feb. 28. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

students in the archdiocese—an important age group that the archdiocese’s Office of Youth Ministry hopes to influence even more through such large-scale gatherings, Gilman said.

She noted that previous research has shown that young people make the decision to live out their faith by the time they are 13.

“I think it’s now 11,” she said. “This is such a crucial age in their faith development and their decision-making of whether they want to follow Christ or not. So, to provide an event where they’re actually asked that question and given reasons why they should—and also witnesses to that—that alone met my hopes. And there were two moments that blew me away.”

The first occurred just before lunchtime when it was announced that the sacrament of reconciliation was being offered during the event.

“The sheer number of kids who got up to get in line almost ended up wrapping around the entire wall of the auditorium—which probably equaled about 200 kids,” Gilman said. “And that was just when they announced it. I was shocked. During the day, at least several hundred kids received that sacrament, which was amazing.”

The other moment came during adoration.

“The kids were told that if you’re willing to commit yourself to Christ, go up to the side of the stage, pick up a candle and leave it before Jesus in the monstrance. When they announced that, 75% of the auditorium stood up and moved to do that. The immediate desire to do that was incredible. But then also the way they prayed. They were so engaged.”

She beamed as she said, “It was such an inspiring moment that in just eight hours Jesus could work so many wonders with so many kids.”

## ‘There’s where you find joy’

The climax of the day came when Archbishop Charles C. Thompson celebrated Mass for the middle school students, who he called “great witnesses” of the faith.

“You could have slept in today,” the archbishop said during his homily. “You could have watched television, hung out on the computer or played some games, or maybe there’s a ball game or something else you could have done. And you chose to be here.”

Now, the archbishop told the youths, it’s essential to choose to “stay united with Jesus, connected with him, and stay attentive to his voice” because that’s when “things fall into place” in a person’s life.

“There’s where you find courage,” the archbishop said. “There’s where you find hope. There’s where you find joy. There’s where you find peace.”

That’s the Christ-centered approach that guided the life of St. Carlo Acutis, the 15-year-old youth who died in 2006 and was declared a saint by the Church in 2025, the archbishop noted.

“That’s a saint you can identify with,” the archbishop told the youths. “He loved to play soccer, he wore jeans, he wore regular clothes, tennis shoes. You often see him with a backpack on. He’s got a sweatshirt on. He loved playing games. He was an ordinary boy that the



Some of the 830 middle school youths who participated in the archdiocese’s Holy Fire event on Feb. 28 show their reverence during eucharistic adoration. (Photo courtesy of Rachel Gilman)

Church declared a saint. Ordinary as each one of us here. Fifteen years old, but his love for the Eucharist transformed him.”

Let the Eucharist and your relationship with Christ transform your life, the archbishop encouraged the youths.

“As the bread and wine is transformed—transfigured—into the body and blood, soul and divinity of Christ, let our lives be transformed, transfigured, as well.

“Let us offer ourselves with him. To take up our cross. To walk with him. To suffer with him. And to rise with him.”

## ‘This has been awesome, one of my favorite days’

After Mass, Archbishop Thompson followed his ritual of spending time with youths in these moments.

He posed for photos with them and talked with groups, including those from the parishes of St. Malachy in Brownsburg, St. Gabriel in Connersville, St. Rita in Indianapolis, St. Mary in Rushville, St. Joseph in Shelbyville and St. Margaret Mary and St. Patrick, both in Terre Haute.

The joy in those moments reflected the impact of Holy Fire.

Looking back on the day, 11-year-old Gabriel McKenzie felt a sense of transformation for others and himself.

“The Holy Spirit has been on most of us today,” said Gabriel, one of 194 middle school youths from the Evansville Diocese who traveled to Indianapolis for the event. “I wasn’t expecting a change in my life and my spiritual growth so significantly. It was super great for us.”

At 14, Benjamin Dyer also embraced Holy Fire’s invitation to enter into a life-changing commitment to Christ.

“What brought me here was my faith in God and staying true to my faith and sticking with God through all the hard times of my life,” said Benjamin, a member of St. Pius X Parish in Indianapolis. “This has been awesome, one of my favorite days. Just seeing everyone cherishing God.

“It’s crazy to see how many people showed up and are followers of God, who want to stay true to God.” †

# POPE

continued from page 1

war, the pope called for diplomacy to “regain its proper role” and that “the well-being of peoples, who yearn for peaceful existence founded on justice, be upheld.”

At his *Angelus* address on March 1, several hours after the U.S. and Israel revealed that Iran’s supreme leader, 86-year-old Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, was killed, the

pope expressed his concern, highlighting that “stability and peace are not achieved through mutual threats, nor through the use of weapons, which sow destruction, suffering and death, but only through reasonable, sincere and responsible dialogue.”

“Faced with the possibility of a tragedy of immense proportions, I make a heartfelt appeal to all the parties involved to assume the moral responsibility of halting the spiral of violence before it becomes an irreparable abyss,” the pope warned. †



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# Indiana court blocks abortion limits in lawsuit claiming religious objections

(OSV News)—On March 5, an Indiana court blocked the state’s near-total abortion ban from being enforced against any Indiana resident who objects to the ban on religious grounds. The ruling came in response to a class-action lawsuit claiming the ban violated religious freedom protections.

In 2022, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Indiana filed a class-action lawsuit claiming that

See related editorial, page 4.

Indiana’s Senate Enrolled Act 1, which prohibits most abortions in the state, violates Indiana’s Religious Freedom Restoration Act, or RFRA.

The lawsuit was filed on behalf of an organization called Hoosier Jews for Choice, and five women who claimed they held sincere religious beliefs that they must be able to obtain an abortion under circumstances prohibited by the law, the ACLU of Indiana said at the time.

In a 17-page ruling, Marion County Judge Christina R. Klineman blocked the law from being enforced against the plaintiffs, as well as any Indiana resident who objects to the ban on religious grounds.

“The court finds that there is significant public interest in ensuring the religious freedom of all citizens and the state’s position that religious freedom is somehow less important than other exceptions in the abortion law puts the court in an untenable position and finds a permanent injunction the only proper relief,” Klineman wrote.

Indiana Attorney General Todd Rokita has appealed the ruling.

Rokita’s office, according to *The Indianapolis Star*, said in a statement, “As we have with every challenge against our pro-life law, we’ll continue fighting to



Pro-life advocates in Indianapolis gather near a Planned Parenthood abortion facility in this 2018 file photo. (Criterion file photo/Natalie Hoefler)

protect the lives of the unborn.”

Stevie Pactor, senior staff attorney at the ACLU of Indiana, argued in a March 5 statement that the ruling is “a recognition that religious freedom protects people of many faiths and beliefs, not just those favored by the state.

“For more than three years, our clients have challenged a law that forces them to choose between their faith and their autonomy,” Pactor said. “This decision makes it clear that Indiana cannot enforce its abortion ban in ways that violate their religious freedom.”

While some proponents of expanding abortion access have argued that religious freedom claims could be a legal avenue to circumvent or even block abortion bans, pro-life advocates criticized the litigation strategy.

Alexander Mingus, executive director of the Indiana Catholic Conference, said in a March 7 statement, “Indiana’s religious freedom laws were passed for the purpose of protecting religious practice, not to protect the ending of a human life.

“Religions that preach violence are not protected by religious freedom claims,” Mingus said. “While the court’s decision



Alexander Mingus

is disappointing, the Catholic Church in Indiana remains committed to upholding the dignity of all life and concretely supporting women with difficult pregnancies.”

In a March 6 statement, Mike Fichter, Indiana Right to Life president and chief executive officer, argued, “For the court to rule that taking the life of an unborn child is an exercise of religious freedom is deeply distressing—and a perversion of the law’s intent.

“Indiana’s Religious Freedom Restoration Act was never intended to equate taking the life of an unborn child with religious expression in our state,” Fichter said, adding that the ruling “will

be exploited so anyone claiming a spiritual belief, even if personal and non-theistic, can justify taking a child’s life.”

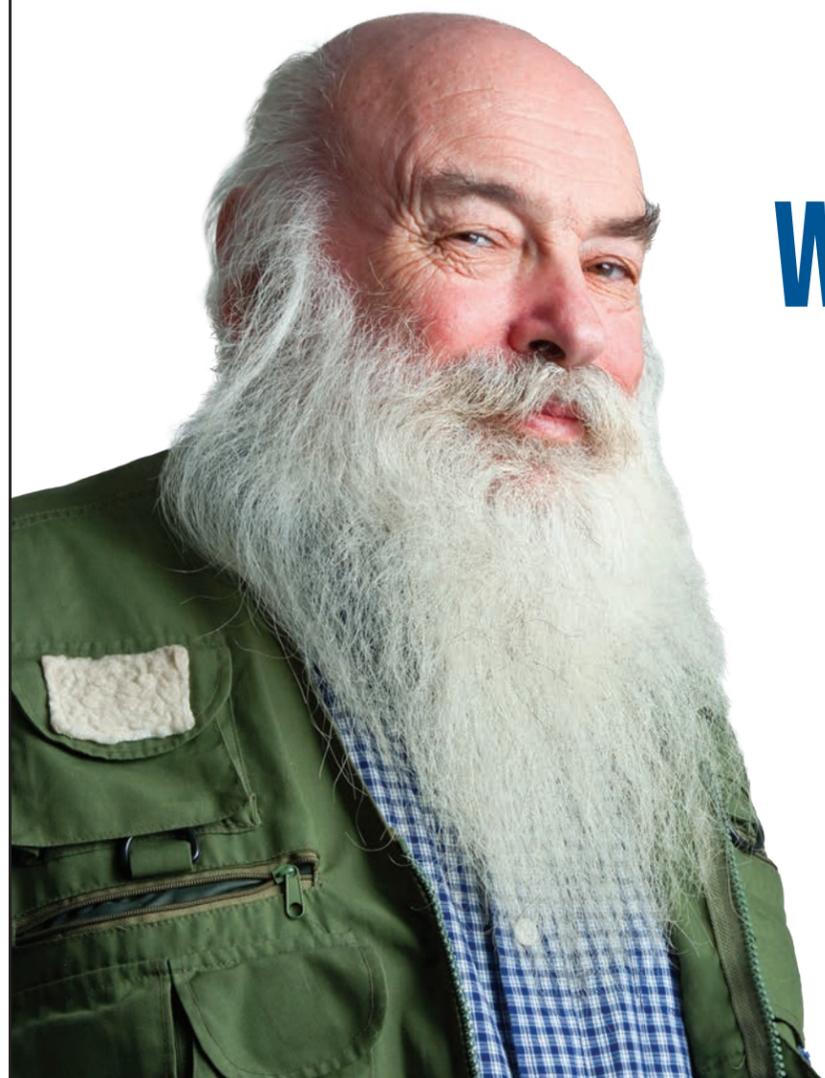
Sen. Jim Banks, R-Ind., wrote on X that the ruling was “outrageous” and argued the judge should be impeached.

“Indiana’s abortion law serves the purpose of protecting unborn life and should be upheld,” he said.

Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America, which works to elect pro-life candidates to public office, argued on X, “We’re confident this absurd ruling will not stand.”

Indiana’s law permits abortion up to 10 weeks gestation only in instances of rape or incest and up to 20 weeks gestation only in cases of lethal fetal anomalies or when the mother’s life is in danger from specific medical issues. The law also requires that abortions take place at a hospital or a hospital-owned surgery center.

The Catholic Church teaches that all human life is sacred from conception to natural death, and as such, opposes direct abortion. †



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# SIMPLY CATHOLIC

## Christ on the cross gave Mary to believers as their spiritual mother

By Fr. James Dominic Brent, O.P.

(OSV News)—When God gives us sanctifying grace in baptism, what he gives us is a share in his own divine life. The Spirit of God is poured into our hearts (cf. Rom 5:5). The Spirit, in turn, forms our hearts into a likeness of the eternal Son (cf. 2 Cor 3:18).

Just as an iconographer reproduces the face of Christ on wood, so the Spirit reproduces the sonship of Christ in our hearts (cf. Rom 8:15). The more we are conformed to Christ in our hearts, the more we turn with him and like him to the “Father of lights” (Jas 1:17). We learn to worship the Father “in spirit and truth” (Jn 4:24).

Yet, all of this takes place gradually. Just as a seed planted in the ground is meant to grow, so the grace of God planted in our hearts is meant to grow, too. Slowly does the Spirit bring to completion the image of Christ in us. Slowly do our hearts learn to trust completely in the mysterious ways of the Father. Slowly, our hearts come to burn with love for God and neighbor.

Much of the time, perhaps, we feel little taking place. Indeed, we might even live in pain. Though God has been generous with his grace toward us, our lives are often full of afflictions of every kind. The same afflictions that bear down upon all of humanity bear down upon Christians, too—even more so in some ways. Our transformation by grace does not mean an end to all our sufferings, but a change of heart amid many sufferings.

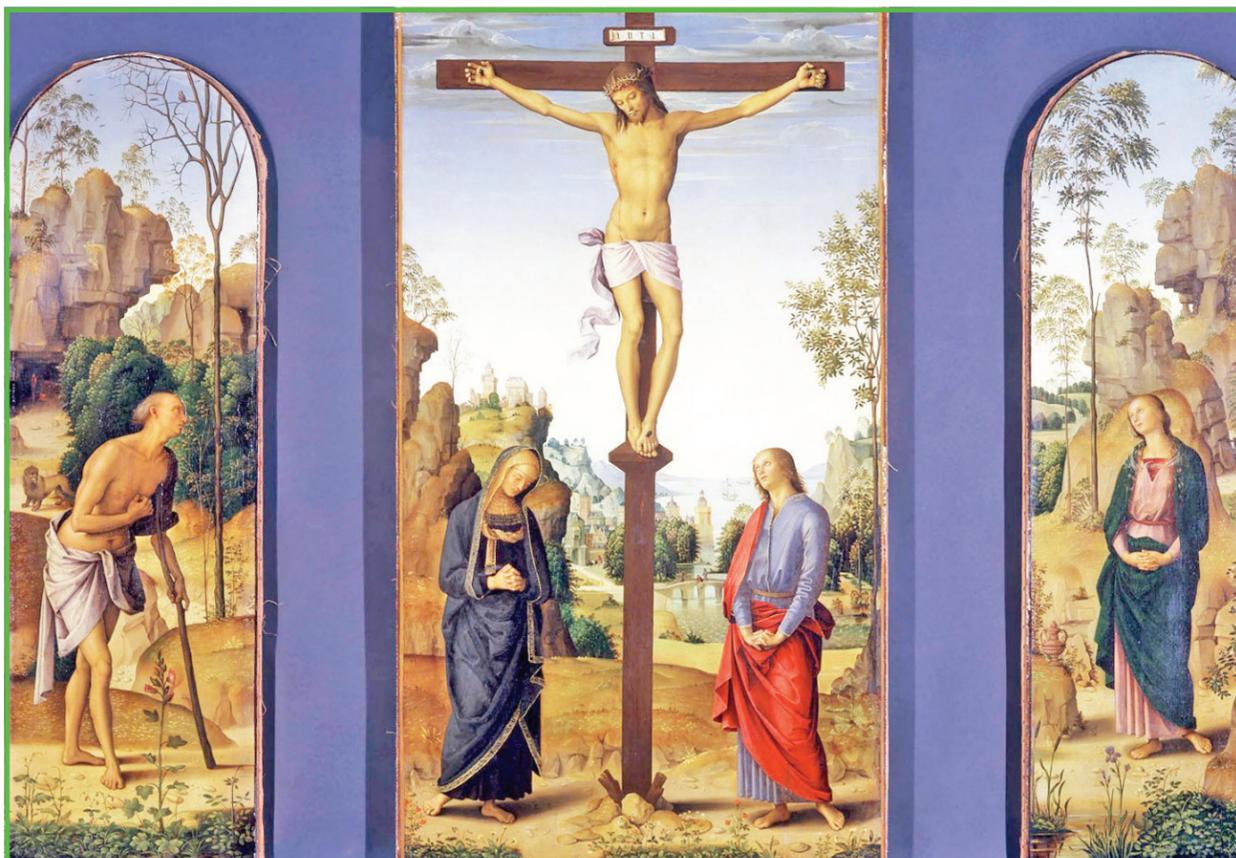
Even while suffering, we can receive the greatest of graces. One of the best examples of this in all of Scripture is St. John. At first, he became a disciple of Jesus, but in time, he became his friend. According to venerable tradition, John was the beloved disciple who reclined at the breast of Jesus during the Last Supper.

St. John was privileged to hear the sacred heart beating in the chest of Jesus. The love of Jesus so captivated him that the eyes of his own heart became illuminated. He became a contemplative soul. The eyes of his heart became completely fixed on Jesus—the eternal truth.

When the hour of Calvary had arrived, all of the Twelve fled—except for St. John. Only the contemplative remained. He remained standing at the foot of the cross. It was without doubt the most tormenting trial of his life to watch his innocent friend be crucified before his very eyes. Yet, amid the suffering, he was granted an awe-inspiring grace.

“When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, ‘Woman, behold, your son.’ Then he said to the disciple, ‘Behold, your mother’ ” (Jn 19:26-27).

With these words, the Lord was not simply making housing arrangements for his mother or asking his beloved disciple to put her up for some time. Jesus was actually giving his own mother to St. John to be his mother, too. It is a sublime grace indeed to receive the



Italian Renaissance artist Pietro Pierluigi painted “The Crucifixion with the Virgin, St. John, St. Jerome and St. Mary Magdalene” for a Dominican chapel in San Gimignano, Italy. From the cross, Christ entrusted his mother to the care of St. John, and him to her. Believers for centuries have held that Christ, in doing this, also made Mary the spiritual mother of all of those who have faith in him. (OSV News photo courtesy National Gallery of Art)

Mother of God as one’s own personal spiritual mother, and it pleased the Lord Jesus to bestow such a grace upon his friend John.

Such a grace, however, is in no way reserved to John alone. John symbolizes us all.

When reading the Gospel of John, Christians spontaneously recognize that when Jesus speaks to certain individuals, he is speaking to you and me. When the Lord speaks to Nicodemus (cf. Jn 3:1-21), to the woman at the well (cf. Jn 4:4-42) and to the man born blind (cf. Jn 9:1-41), what he says to the one individual he says to us all. His words are addressed to you and me.

So, too, when the Lord speaks to the beloved disciple standing at the foot of the cross. “Behold, your mother” (Jn 19:27) is addressed to us all.

“Behold your mother” is one of the last words of the Lord. It was his dying wish for us to receive her and respond to her as our mother, too. It is a divine call for you and me to relate to the Mother of God with all of the love and confident expectations that children have with their own mothers. For, thanks to the gift and grace of Jesus Christ, Mary is truly our mother, too, in the order of grace.

Christians have always turned to Mary and gathered with her in prayer. After the death and resurrection of the Lord, the disciples spontaneously returned to the upper room. They gathered for prayer together with Mary (cf. Acts 1:14). Christian artists and iconographers down through the ages commonly depict the scene in the same way. Mary is in the center at prayer, and the disciples are gathered around her as tongues of pentecostal fire descended upon them all.

The act of gathering with Mary in prayer did not end in the upper room. Even after she was assumed into heaven, it has continued down through the centuries. One of the oldest hymns on record is called the “*Sub Tuum.*” It has been found written in Greek on a fragment of Egyptian papyrus. Some scholars date the fragment to the second century. Although the hymn was written down in the second century, it was likely chanted for years before it was ever written down at all. Conceivably, it goes back to one of the earliest Christian communities. The hymn is short. It sings only of essential things, and it goes as follows:

“To you do we come seeking mercy, O Mother of Christ our God. Do not turn away, nor despise our prayer, but be pleased to hear our plea. Entreat your Son, our God, to save our souls.”

The hymn reveals a certain confidence in Mary and sends up a petition to her. It displays no sense that Mary can do anything for us on her own apart from Jesus Christ, but expresses the simple confidence that she will go to him with our petitions.

She will not stand aloof from our concerns or our

lives. She will not despise us so. She will plead with her Son to give us new graces and, in so doing, she will exercise her special spiritual maternity in our lives. Through her intercession, God will bring to completion the good work he began in our souls at our baptism.

For Mary knows better than we do what the life of grace really means for each of us. She knows that God has poured the grace of the Holy Spirit into our hearts. She also knows what work the Spirit is carrying out in each of us. She knows the Spirit is the iconographer of Christ in our hearts.

She knows well the face of Jesus, and she knows where each of us is in the process of coming to resemble him. She knows the particularities of the plan of God for each of us, and she is ever at prayer for the Spirit to bring his work in our hearts to completion—for each of us to grow “to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Eph 4:13). She prays for us to turn with Jesus and like Jesus to the Father of lights.

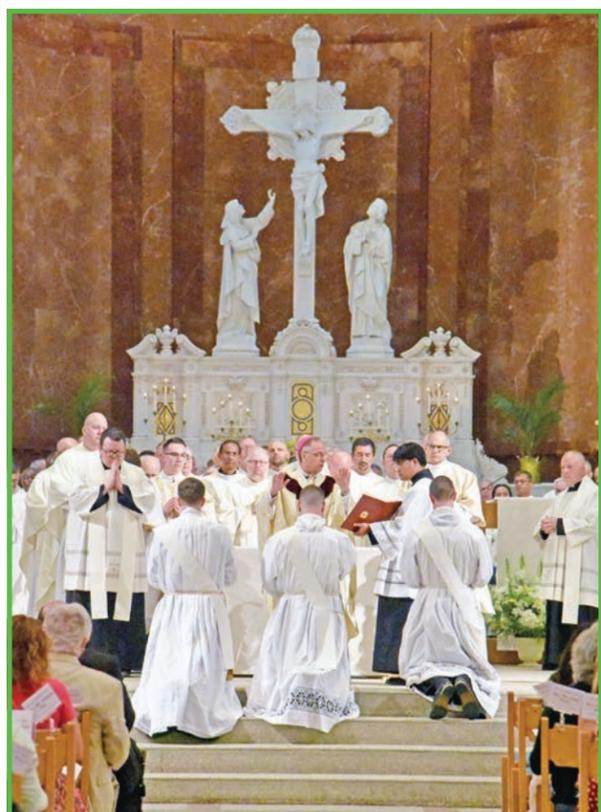
Just as mothers on Earth are keenly interested in the life and growth of their children, so Mary is keenly interested in the life and growth of grace in every one of us. She prays us to the waters of baptism. She marvels at the new life that begins in each soul through that sacrament. She sees the life of grace in each of us as the extension and effect of the life conceived in her own womb by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Just as mothers on Earth are keenly interested in the food and nourishment of their children, so Mary takes a particular interest in each holy Communion we receive. She knows each holy Communion will energize and vitalize the life of grace in our souls. She understands more than we do the inconceivable power of the body and blood of the Lord to stoke the fire of divine love in our hearts. She understands how the Eucharist actively unites the whole Church in heaven and on Earth into the one mystical body of her Son.

The Blessed Virgin Mary prays for each person at each holy Communion to receive the effects of the sacrament to the full. The same holds for the other sacraments, too. She cares immensely about every time a person goes into a confessional for the sacrament of penance, every anointing of the sick, every ordination of a deacon priest or bishop and every exchange of wedding vows.

Once we see Mary as our mother, it only makes sense to fly to her for prayer. It only makes sense to ask her: “Entreat your Son our God to save our souls.” Indeed, it only makes sense to abandon all care for our lives into the hands of Mary our mother.

(Dominican Father James Dominic Brent, an assistant professor of philosophy at the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, D.C., is the author of *The Father’s House: Discovering Our Home in the Trinity.*) †

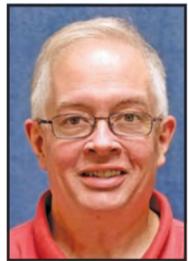


A carved crucifix with statues of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. John beside it are seen on June 7, 2025, during a priesthood ordination Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. From the cross, Christ gave Mary to John as his mother and John to Mary as her son (Jn 19:26-27). (File photo by Sean Gallagher)

Living History/Sean Gallagher

## St. Ephrem passed on the faith through creating beautiful hymn texts

The Church doctors we've learned about up to now—SS. Irenaeus of Lyons, Athanasius and Hilary of Poitiers—were situated in the heart of Greco-Roman culture. They wrote in either Greek or Latin, the primary languages of the Roman Empire. And they lived in two of its key provinces: Gaul (present-day France), for Irenaeus and Hilary, and Egypt for Athanasius.



The next Church doctor we will explore lived in the borderlands of the empire in terms of geography, culture and language.

St. Ephrem was born around 306 in Nisbis, a city in present southeastern Turkey. Nisbis' residents came from many cultures and practiced many religions. Ephrem appears to have been born to Christian parents and raised as a Christian.

Nisbis had been part of the Roman Empire for about five years at the time of Ephrem's birth. And it wouldn't stay that way for long. Rome and Persia fought over the city for decades when Ephrem was an adult, with it ultimately falling to Persia in 363.

Ephrem and other Christians in Nisbis fled and

eventually settled in Edessa, a city with a strong Christian community further west in the same region of present-day Turkey (not to be confused with a major city of the same name in present-day Syria).

Ephrem was devout in his faith and became a noted teacher of it, founding a catechetical school in Nisbis and continuing that ministry in Edessa. Ephrem lived a kind of proto-monastic life and was ordained and remained a deacon at a time when the permanent diaconate was a common part of the life of the Church.

The language that Ephrem spoke and wrote was Syriac, a dialect of Aramaic, a language that Jesus would have spoken. While a common language in that region of the Middle East and an important language for Scripture scholars today, it was not a dominant language in the empire of Ephrem's day.

But his writings on the faith have been revered and studied enough through the centuries that Pope Benedict XV declared him a doctor of the Church in 1920.

In addition to the language in which he wrote, Ephrem also differs from other Church doctors of his time in that he isn't primarily known for writing theological treatises. Instead, he is best known as a composer of hymn texts. More than 400 of them survive to the present day.

Ephrem created beautifully poetic texts that show many influences on him, from Greek science and philosophy to rabbinic Judaism. While there is a highly developed artistic quality to Ephrem's hymn texts, he also approached his writing like the wise teacher of the faith that he was.

So, while he didn't compose treatises related to the theological debates of his day, Ephrem made his contribution to them in his hymn texts, which became an effective way of passing on the authentic faith. This was especially the case in Nisbis and Edessa, which had so many religious ideas competing for their residents' hearts.

As we continue our journey through Lent to the solemn celebration of our Lord's passion, death and resurrection, these words of St. Ephrem about Christ might be good for us to meditate upon: "With the very weapon that death had used to kill him, he gained the victory over death. ... Death killed natural life, but supernatural Life killed death."

Ephrem died in 373 and has been revered as a saint for more than 1,000 years, long before the Church began to develop its canonization process in the Middle Ages. His feast day is celebrated by the Latin Church on June 9. †

Our Works of Charity/David Bethuram

## In caring for the poor, we draw closer to God and to each other

Jesus teaches that true almsgiving means allowing the needs of others—especially the poor—to become our own.

The poor are not distant abstractions; they are children and elders, the sick and the suffering, families and individuals, neighbors next door and people across the world.



When we give, we acknowledge God's generosity to us and extend that blessing in a concrete way to others. Lent still offers us time to give, but as we do, we must resist the temptation to objectify those who are poor.

One afternoon at one of our food pantries, a young mother named Elena arrived just as we were closing. She had recently fled from an unsafe home, carrying only a small backpack and her two children. Our staff welcomed her inside, listened to her story and connected her with emergency housing, counseling and job-readiness support.

Months later, Elena returned—this time with a steady job, safe housing and a bright smile—to volunteer alongside the very team that first helped her. She often says that what changed her life was not only the food or shelter, but the dignity and compassion she was shown in her moment of deepest need. Her journey reminds us that when we allow the struggles of others to become our own, we draw closer to God together.

Catholic social teaching begins with the conviction that every person is sacred and social, created in God's image, and meant to share in the goods of the Earth within a community rooted in justice and mercy.

From the earliest laws of Israel through the covenant and the prophets, Scripture consistently highlights the privileged place of the poor, just like Elena. In the

Old Testament, this often referred to widows, orphans, and strangers—refugees, migrants and immigrants—those who were powerless and frequently victims of injustice. They were known as "Yahweh's poor."

God repeatedly reminded Israel of its responsibility toward them: "You shall not oppress or afflict a resident alien, for you were once aliens yourselves in the land of Egypt. You shall not wrong any widow or orphan" (Ex 22:20-21). Their vulnerability, poverty and exclusion demanded a response rooted not in optional charity but in justice.

Care for the poor became the measure of Israel's fidelity to God. Believers were charged with ensuring that no one lacked the essentials of life or was pushed to the margins because of poverty. If we neglect the poor in our own time, we risk losing sight of the one who says, "I will be your God, and you will be my people" (Jer 31:33).

In these challenging days, our Catholic Charities ministries draw strength from Pope Benedict XVI's call to be "organizers of love;" Pope Francis' challenge to be salt, leaven and light—a beacon of hope for those in need; and Pope Leo's affirmation that "love for the poor is the hallmark of faith." We embrace this mission with renewed commitment, serving tirelessly on behalf of the most vulnerable.

Through our ministry of charity, we hope to inspire others to join in building communities where mercy and justice take root. We strive to lead by example, stepping off the familiar path to encounter those who are poor and vulnerable with compassion. We work to transform unjust systems by advocating for policies and practices that reflect dignity, fairness and solidarity. Filled with Christ's love and strengthened by the Spirit, we engage the hearts of our staff, volunteers, donors, policymakers, partners and especially those we serve.

And because this work cannot be done alone, we invite you—especially during this Lenten season—to join us in caring for and loving the poor.

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

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It Is Good/Elizabeth Scalia

## Do not let fear become the destroyer of your works during this Lenten season

Perhaps fear, after all, is at the root of all sin. I used to think it was selfishness, but it's not. Even selfishness is rooted in fear.



We can see this in the early wreckage of our Lenten practices: We are afraid of material poverty, and so we selfishly hold back on our almsgiving. We are afraid of hunger, and so we selfishly reach for the bread and chocolate. We are afraid of what we might find within ourselves and our interior lives, and so we selfishly cut short our prayers, or abandon them completely, for something that we tell ourselves is "more fun" or "more important."

Obviously, we should not fear these things. Prayer, fasting and charitable giving are edifying and spiritually powerful practices that always, always redound to our benefit.

Be not afraid of giving alms, because God is never outdone in charity. If you think about this, you know it is true.

Be not afraid of fasting, because, as Pope Benedict XVI reminded us, it grows compassion by opening our eyes to the deprivations of others and acts "as a 'therapy' to heal all that prevents [us] from conformity to the

will of God," which should be the ultimate goal of our Christian lives.

Be not afraid of prayer—even the challenging silence of contemplation. Prayer brings us before the feet of Christ and sets loose upon the world a most subversive (yet powerful though unseen) force for good.

Granted, falling short in these three major works of Lent is not actually sinful, but it's fair to reason that if fear can influence us away from them, it can mislead us in other ways.

Fear of not "keeping up" with neighbors or family members or friends can lead us into living a falsehood that keeps us dishonest, in debt and full of self-doubt.

Fear of being alone can drive us to ignore our gut instincts (which are usually spot-on) and our better angels (who are often responsible for those instincts) and end up trusting the wrong person, or accepting the wrong job, or reaching for the wrong goals until—having planted ourselves far from where God intended—we exist in a desperate misery that leads us into further darkness.

Fear of "missing out" has us embracing political, social or even religious "trends" that we don't even like, thus surrendering our truest selves to the world rather than to the stability of the unchanging Christ.

We should already know this about fear: it should be obvious, simply because of how frequently some

variation of "Do not be afraid" or "Have no fear" or "Do not fear" occur in Scripture. Jesus, of course, says it a lot.

In fact, it's almost as if he is saying, "Do not sin because you are too scared to trust. Do not be afraid to be changed. Do not be afraid of the mob mentalities, or of being jeered at or rejected; do not run away from God's plans for you, because my Father's plans are always to the good, even if they cost you something—even if they cost your very life. Only do not be afraid, then you can see where you are rightly being led, and can follow in trust."

Perhaps Christ said those very things to himself, while praying and sweating blood on the rock of Gethsemane, before backing them up completely in his passion and on the cross.

Of course, Jesus was the perfection of love—the All Love—and perfect love casts out fear (1 Jn 4:18).

It is human to be afraid. But this year, in our Lenten disciplines, let us place all of the fears we're conscious of—or will admit to—into the vast depths of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Christ, who said, "Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Lk 12:32).

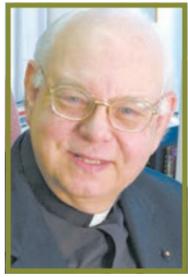
(Elizabeth Scalia is editor-at-large for OSV. Follow her on X @the anchoress.) †

Fourth Sunday of Lent/Msg. Owen F. Campion

# The Sunday Readings

Sunday, March 15, 2026

- 1 Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a
- Ephesians 5:8-14
- John 9:1-41



Drawing from the first word in the original Latin text of the entrance antiphon for this weekend's liturgy, this Sunday long has been called "Laetare Sunday." *Laetare* means "to rejoice." The Church rejoices that, even amid the drabness and penance of Lent, the glory of Christ shines forth, as the Lord rose in brilliant light after being crucified.

The first reading for this weekend is from the First Book of Samuel. An ancient prophet, and therefore God's representative and spokesman, Samuel selected the young David to be king of Israel. To signify this appointment, Samuel anointed David with oil.

Anointings always have marked people for special jobs or to strengthen them in particular circumstances. All Catholics are anointed when they are baptized and confirmed. Priests and bishops are anointed. Faithful people in bad health are anointed to strengthen them and reinforce their spiritual constitution should they near death. Monarchs across history have been anointed.

David was and remains special in the Hebrew mind. He was the great king who united and empowered the nation. But he was much more than a successful political leader. His ultimate duty was in tightening the bond between God and the people. The bond was in the people's genuine acknowledgement of God. Their lives of obedience to his law confirmed this bond.

St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians provides the second reading. This reading is an admonition to the Christian people of Ephesus, in the first century one of the major seaports, commercial centers of the Roman Empire, and home to one of its major pagan shrines.

Drawing heavily upon the imagery of light and darkness, Paul links light with righteousness and darkness with sin, calling upon the Christians in Ephesus to live in the light.

St. John's Gospel furnishes the last reading. Central to the story is the Lord's meeting with a man blind since birth. The Lord gives the man sight. To understand this entire story, it is necessary to realize how Jews at the time of Jesus looked upon physical difficulties.

Unaware of the scientific explanations for blindness and other problems that people of this age have come to see as obvious, the ancient Jews believed such terrible handicaps came as a result of sin. After all, original sin ushered death itself into the world. In this thinking, sin also upset the good order of nature, hence disease and disability.

Thus, the question came. Was this man's blindness the result of his own sin or a sin of his parents?

Searching for an answer, the Pharisees question the man. The Pharisees are shown as obstinate and smug. By contrast, the blind man is humble and sincere. He has faith in God and in Jesus.

An added element, surely of special interest to the early generations of Christians who suffered persecution, was that the Pharisees expelled the man from their synagogue. The righteous often suffer from the ill will of others.

## Reflections

The Gospel story recalls a miracle. It also is a study in contrasts. On the one side is the man born blind whom Jesus healed. The other side is that of the Pharisees, so self-satisfied and so confident in their own knowledge and in their own high estimates of their piety.

We must apply these contrasts to ourselves. We may not be very evil, or even pompous and boastful as were the Pharisees. Still, we must admit our limitations. Our exaggerated judgments of ourselves trick us repeatedly.

All this keeps us in the dark. Lent is the time to face facts. We must recognize our need for God. We must turn to God. He is the light of day, breaking on the horizon after a dark night. God will always receive us, love us, forgive us and give us sight. The light of God awaits us. Rejoice! †

## Daily Readings

### Monday, March 16

Isaiah 65:17-21  
Psalm 30:2, 4-6, 11-12a, 13b  
John 4:43-54

### Tuesday, March 17

St. Patrick, bishop  
Ezekiel 47:1-9, 12  
Psalm 46:2-3, 5-6, 8-9  
John 5:1-16

### Wednesday, March 18

St. Cyril of Jerusalem, bishop and doctor of the Church  
Isaiah 49:8-15  
Psalm 145:8-9, 13c-14, 17-18  
John 5:17-30

### Thursday, March 19

St. Joseph, spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary  
2 Samuel 7:4-5a, 12-14a, 16  
Psalm 89:2-5, 27, 29  
Romans 4:13, 16-18, 22  
Matthew 1:16, 18-21, 24a  
or Luke 2:41-51a

### Friday, March 20

Wisdom 2:1a, 12-22  
Psalm 34:17-21, 23  
John 7:1-2, 10, 25-30

### Saturday, March 21

Jeremiah 11:18-20  
Psalm 7:2-3, 9b-12  
John 7:40-53

### Sunday, March 22

Fifth Sunday of Lent  
Ezekiel 37:12-14  
Psalm 130:1-8  
Romans 8:8-11  
John 11:1-45  
or John 11:3-7, 17, 20-27, 33b-45

Question Corner/Jenna Marie Cooper

## Marriage nullity cases in canon law tribunals must involve both parties

**Q**I've recently decided to return to my childhood Catholic faith after many years away, and my priest told me I need to get an annulment.



When I called the marriage tribunal, they said they needed to contact my ex-husband for this. But I don't see any need to drag him through this whole process. Does my ex-husband absolutely have to be involved, or is there some way around this?

**A**The short answer is yes, the marriage tribunal really would need to contact him about your case.

For some background, a declaration of nullity—which is often popularly, but somewhat less accurately, called an "annulment"—is a formal statement from the Catholic Church that a marital union which initially appeared to be valid actually had some sort of defect that prevented a true marriage from ever being contracted in the first place.

A few examples of such defects are: psychological issues that prevented a person from being able to consent to marriage; the lack of a proper intention; or using deception to bring about the wedding.

If a person's marriage truly was null, the Church owes him or her official clarity on his or her marital status as a matter of justice. But at the same time, the Church also needs to uphold and defend our Catholic teachings on the permanence of a valid marriage bond. And so, to ensure that the truth of the matter will be discerned accurately and fairly, the Church's canon law gives us a legal process for ascertaining whether or not a given marriage should be declared null.

In a marriage nullity process, the petitioner is the individual who is actively seeking the declaration of nullity. The respondent is the other spouse in the case. Some respondents want the declaration of nullity just as much as the petitioner. Sometimes they are indifferent to whatever the Church decides. And some respondents feel that, despite their civil divorce, their marriage was indeed valid and that they therefore wish to argue against a declaration of nullity.

The nullity process begins with the petitioner telling the tribunal the story of why he or she thinks that their marriage might be invalid, in the form of a written

"*libellus*" (the technical term in Latin for a formal petition for a canonical trial investigating their marriage).

But in order for the nullity process to go any further, the Church strictly requires that the respondent be "cited." This means that the respondent is officially informed of the petitioner's request for a marriage nullity trial, is able to read a copy of the petitioner's *libellus*, and is invited to participate and make his or her case in the ensuing trial. (See "*Dignitas Connubii*," articles 126-128, for reference.)

There are a few reasons tribunals need to cite the respondent. The first and most foundational reason is as a matter of basic natural justice. That is, marriage is always between two equal parties, and it would be grossly unfair for the Church to declare a marriage invalid "out from under" the other spouse without giving him or her the chance to tell his or her side of the story.

Practically speaking, when a respondent is willing to participate in the nullity process, this greatly helps the canon lawyer judges in a trial come to a fair and accurate decision, insofar as hearing from the respondent gives the judges a more complete picture of what actually happened. Often this works in the petitioner's favor.

For instance, if a marriage is allegedly invalid due to a problem on the respondent's end, the evidence is much stronger if we have the respondent's own testimony.

Finally, as a matter of canon law, if a tribunal fails to cite the respondent properly—or if the tribunal somehow prevents an engaged and willing respondent from participating fully in his or her own nullity trial—this makes the case itself invalid. This means that a declaration of nullity granted under such illicit circumstances wouldn't actually "count." (See canon 1620, subsection 7, of the *Code of Canon Law*.)

If the respondent is contacted but chooses not to take part, the tribunal can legitimately proceed and reach a valid decision. Most tribunals mail with the citation a response sheet giving several options, including the option of not participating as well as the option of refusing further contact.

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

## My Journey to God

### Prayer of St. Francis

By Natalie Hoefler



(Natalie Hoefler is a member of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis and is a reporter for The Criterion. A statue of St. Francis of Assisi is seen on the grounds of Our Lady of Ostrabrama Church in Cutchogue, N.Y., on Oct. 5, 2025.) (OSV News photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)

When I can't stop the wars that rage,  
Rid evil from the global stage  
Or make world leaders disengage ...  
"Make me a channel of your peace" at home.

When people rant and rave online  
Or face-to-face shout words unkind  
When others' views do not align ...  
"Where there is hatred, let me sow Your love."

When others say unless there be  
A kind of God that they can see,  
They simply never will believe ...  
"Where there is doubt, let me model faith."

When single mom can't seem  
To meet her unborn child's needs  
And there are other mouths to feed ...  
"When there's despair, let me offer hope."

When a loved one or a friend  
Into addiction's hell descends  
And feels the battle will not end ...  
"Where there is darkness, let me shine Your light."

And when I struggle through hard times,  
My spirit trapped in dreary clime,  
Remind me of Your love divine,  
That "Where there's sadness, I may sow Your joy."

Amen.

# Rest in peace

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

**ARMSTRONG, Robert**, 87, Prince of Peace, Madison, Feb. 24. Husband of Beverly Armstrong. Father of Julie Pattison, Angie Vaughn, Tony and Troy Armstrong. Grandfather of seven.

**BISHOP III, Charles H.**, 58, St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower), Indianapolis, Feb. 8. Brother of Lisa Boyle, Rosaire Dreyling and Leticia Hines. Uncle and great-uncle of several.

**BIVENS, Sharon V.**, 81, St. Pius X, Indianapolis, Feb. 20. Mother of Kristin Ford and Jennifer Hill. Sister of Deborah Smith and Mike Fricke. Grandmother of four.

**BLACK, Dr. James**, 85, St. Paul, Tell City, Feb. 26. Husband of Carol Black. Father of Kristy Rightley and Brian Black. Grandfather of three.

**BODER, George B.**, 88, St. Martin of Tours, Martinsville, Feb. 16. Husband of Carla Boder. Father of Stephanie Caiza Valera and Eric Boder. Brother of Dolores Brosk. Grandfather of four.

**BOURDEAU-MORIN, Bonnie J.**, 75, St. Luke the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Feb. 18. Mother of Sara Bartlemann. Sister of Robin Dezanett and Sandi Giebel. Grandmother of two.

**BRAUN, Patricia**, 86, All Saints, Dearborn County, Feb. 20. Mother of Monica Butz, Carolyn Doll, Michelle Kolb, Laraine Kraus, Cheryl McCann, Linda Meyer, Joel, John, Paul and Philip Braun. Grandmother of 42. Great-grandmother of 24.

**CUNNINGHAM, Hubert**, 96, St. Charles Borromeo, Bloomington, Feb. 12. Father of Claire Schaffer, Jean, John and Thomas Cunningham. Grandfather of 11. Great-grandfather of 10.

**DAMIN, Emma**, 97, St. Paul, Tell City, Jan. 26. Mother of Tanya Walzer, Bob, David, Mark, Mike and Phillip Damin. Sister of Ruth Schroeder and Jerome

Gilliand. Grandmother of seven. Great-grandmother of eight.

**DATTOLO, Helen**, 89, St. Augustine, Jeffersonville, Feb. 4. Mother of Julie Harper, Terri Hornung, Jerome, Kenneth and Matthew Dattilo. Grandmother of 15. Great-grandmother of nine.

**FOLTZ, Jason A.**, 54, St. Joseph, Shelbyville, Feb. 17. Husband of Traci Foltz. Father of Jennah and Luke Foltz. Son of Robert Foltz. Brother of Dan Foltz.

**GOBLE, Richard W.**, 94, St. Lawrence, Lawrenceburg, Feb. 27. Husband of Sue Ann Goble. Father of Stephen Goble. Grandfather of five. Great-grandfather of seven.

**HANKINS, Carol J.**, 77, St. Martin of Tours, Martinsville, Feb. 21. Wife of John Hankins. Mother of Tonya Fulford, Jennifer McKinney, Erin Phelps, Joanne Warner, Jason and Joe Hankins. Sister of Glenda Earles, Gary, Ronald and Steven Ayers. Grandmother of 10.

**HEAR, Charles**, 59, Annunciation, Brazil, Jan. 18. Husband of Yvette Hear. Stepfather of Jonathan, Josh and Justin Enos. Son of Jack and Francis Hear. Brother of Deborah, Andrew and Robert Hear. Grandfather of seven.

**JEAN, Norma**, 83, St. Charles Borromeo, Bloomington, Jan. 17. Wife of Rex Jean. Mother of Theresa Bond, Piper Hottell and Kristin Hull. Grandmother of seven. Great-grandmother of three. Great-great-grandmother of one.

**JOHNSON, Gregory M.**, 72, St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Aurora, Feb. 26. Husband of Cheryl Johnson. Father of Angela, Brandon and Byron Johnson. Brother of Cindy Purdon. Grandfather of two.

**KITCHIE, George A.**, 90, St. Charles Borromeo, Bloomington, Feb. 12. Husband of Carol Kitchie. Father of Susan Campbell and Neil Kitchie. Brother of Joseph and Robert Crouse. Grandfather of seven. Great-grandfather of two.

**LEE, Robert T.**, 87, St. Pius X, Indianapolis, Feb. 10. Husband of Paula Von Tobel. Father of Diane Kirschner, Bill and Chip Lee. Brother of Gary and Richard Lee. Grandfather of nine. Great-grandfather of eight.

**MONTOYA, Dr. Ruben**, 80, St. Anthony of Padua, Clarksville, Feb. 22. Husband of Ophelia Montoya. Father of Benjamin, Oliver and Ruben Montoya. Brother of Leticia Reconsal. Grandfather of five.

**NEDEFF, Agnes**, 105, St. Therese of the Infant Jesus

(Little Flower), Indianapolis, Feb. 25. Mother of Novella Nedeff. Sister of Marjorie Weber.

**NOBBE, Shirley**, 90, St. Gabriel, Connersville, Feb. 27. Mother of Carol Grubbs, Donna Mathews, Linda Naylor and Charles Nobbe. Sister of Brenda Reed and Bill Loper. Grandmother of 13. Great-grandmother of 35.

**NORTHAM, Stephen**, 81, St. Augustine, Jeffersonville, Jan. 27. Father of Katie Koch and Tracy Northam. Grandfather of three.

**RICHARDS, Keith S.**, 96, St. Charles Borromeo, Bloomington, Feb. 17. Husband of Lorraine Richards. Father of Julie Davis, Teresa Gorsage, Karen Ioannides, Thomas and Timothy Richards. Brother of Wallace Richards. Grandfather of 18. Great-grandfather of 16.

**ROBINSON, Mike**, 74, Annunciation, Brazil, Jan. 20. Husband of Diane Robinson. Father of Brandon Robinson. Brother of Cindy Estes and Jeff Robinson. Grandfather of two.

**RUSSELL, James**, 73, St. Simon the Apostle, Indianapolis, Feb. 7. Husband of Theresa Russell. Father of Laura, Evan, Jason and Justin Russell. Grandfather of four.

**STRIBY, Timothy A.**, 69, St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower), Indianapolis, Feb. 11. Brother of Maria Grimshaw, Lisa Hanley, Frank, Gerard, Jim, Joe and Steve Striby.

**SUBER, Patricia A.**, 94, St. Christopher, Indianapolis, Feb. 13. Wife of Seymour Suber. Mother of Julie Devine. Grandmother and great-grandmother of several.

**THIEL, Rosemary C.**, 90, St. Roch, Indianapolis, Feb. 19. Aunt of several.

**VENTURA, Linda K.**, 75, St. Roch, Indianapolis, Feb. 15. Mother of Amy Driskell, Gina Emmert, Erica Roganti and Jason Ventura. Sister of Sharon Larsh, Mary Jo Pappas, Kathy Smith, Kim, Chuck, Doug, Mark, Michael and Tommy Cothron. Grandmother of 10. Great-grandmother of two.

**WINN, Donna Rae**, 76, St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd County, Feb. 24. Mother of Charles Winn. Grandmother of two. Great-grandmother of five.

**WRYNN, Brendan**, 67, St. Gabriel, Connersville, Feb. 13. Husband of Patricia Wrynn. Father of Theresa and Brendan Wrynn, Jr. Brother of Deidre McCauley, Brian and Kevin Wrynn. Uncle of several. †

## ND coaching legend Holtz remembered for 'building men, not just players'

(OSV News)—Leading up to a college football clash between Notre Dame and heated rival Miami in the late 1980s, a team chaplain for the Hurricanes proclaimed that God doesn't care who wins football games.



Lou Holtz

Lou Holtz, coach of the Fighting Irish at the time, agreed. "I don't think God cares who wins, either," he replied with a smile. "But his Mother does."

This now-famous quip captured the essence of the legendary coach: an uncanny wit, an unwavering Catholic faith and an unshakable love for Notre Dame—Our Lady's university.

On March 4, Holtz died in Orlando, Fla., at the age of 89, surrounded by his family. Forever etched in Fighting Irish lore for leading Notre Dame to a national championship in 1988, Holtz leaves behind not just a decorated football résumé but also a legacy of shaping young men and inspiring people to live virtuously.

"Notre Dame mourns the loss of Lou Holtz, a legendary football coach, a beloved member of the

Notre Dame family, and a devoted husband, father and grandfather," said Holy Cross Father Robert Dowd, Notre Dame's president, in a public statement. "Among his many accomplishments, we will remember him above all as a teacher, leader and mentor who brought out the very best in his players, on and off the field, earning their respect and admiration for a lifetime."

Louis Leo Holtz was born on Jan. 6, 1937, in Follansbee, W. Va., and grew up in East Liverpool, Ohio. He played linebacker at Kent State University before beginning a coaching career that would span four decades. With head coaching stops at William and Mary, North Carolina State, Arkansas, Minnesota, Notre Dame and South Carolina, Holtz became the ninth-winningest coach in college football history with a record of 249-132-7. He received national Coach of the Year honors on three occasions and remains the only coach to lead six separate programs to bowl games.

However, Holtz is best remembered for his 11 seasons in South Bend, where he revitalized the Notre Dame football program. From 1986 through 1996, the Fighting Irish won 100 games, reached a program-record nine consecutive bowl games, and were undefeated national champions in 1988—Notre Dame's most recent national title.

As coach of the Irish, Holtz was humble but confident, respectful but fearless, and wise but candid. He established several traditions at Notre Dame that remain in place today, from the iconic "Play Like a Champion" sign that players slap on their way to the field, to the removal of names from the football jerseys to emphasize the team dynamic. The mark Holtz left on the program, the university and especially the young men who played for him cannot be overstated.

"Lou and I shared a very special relationship," Notre Dame Head Coach Marcus Freeman said in a statement. "He welcomed me to the Notre Dame family immediately, offering me great support throughout our time together. Our relationship meant a lot to me as I admired the values he used to build the foundation of his coaching career: love, trust and commitment. Lou's impact at Notre Dame has gone well beyond the football team. He and his wife Beth are respected across campus for their generous hearts and commitment to carrying out Notre Dame's mission of being a force for good."

Former Irish great and Pro Football Hall of Fame member Jerome Bettis shared on social media that Holtz "believed in building men, not just players."

"Coach was so much more than a football coach to me. He was family," Bettis, a fullback for the Irish from 1990-1993, posted on March 4. "I still remember the

day he came to my house to recruit me. He didn't just sit down and talk to me about football or what I could do on the field. He talked to me as a young man.

"And he spoke to my mom the way a man should speak to a mother who was trusting someone with her son. He looked her in the eye and promised that I would be taken care of at Notre Dame. That moment meant everything to us, and it's something I've carried with me my entire life."

After retiring from coaching, Holtz spent time as a studio analyst for ESPN, a best-selling author and a motivational speaker, where he continued inspiring people with the same energy and charisma.

He often told crowds, "I follow three rules: Do the right thing, do the best you can, and always show people you care." Holtz preached that "life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you respond to it." He challenged people to live exceptional lives, famously stating, "I can't believe that God put us on this Earth to be ordinary."

Central to everything Holtz did was his faith. A lifelong Catholic, Holtz served as an altar boy and credited the education he received from the Sisters of Notre Dame with instilling the desire to make God the focus of his life. Holtz was outspoken about his faith and believed following Church teachings "brings meaning and lasting happiness to life."

He possessed a deep and profound love for Notre Dame—not just his team, but the university, the students, the fans and the faith alive on campus. "Every single day being there was very special," Holtz told the *National Catholic Register* in a 2012 interview, "because there were so many opportunities to encounter and live out the Catholic faith."

The late Bishop John M. D'Arcy of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend once asked Holtz what it meant to be the head football coach at Notre Dame. His answer displayed a life not consumed by his career but anchored by his Catholic faith. "It means if you have an 8 o'clock meeting, you can find a 7 o'clock Mass," Holtz responded. "When you want to go to confession, you just walk across the campus to the basilica. When you are leaving at 10 o'clock at night, the Lady on the dome is smiling down at you."

Holtz reaffirmed his love for Our Lady after coaching his final game at Notre Dame Stadium. When asked by a *Fort Wayne News-Sentinel* columnist how he'll be remembered, a tearful Holtz said, "I never disgraced the Lady on the dome." Holtz was a living embodiment of the final line of the university's alma mater song, "Notre Dame, Our Mother," that marks the end of each sporting event: "And our hearts forever love thee, Notre Dame!" †

### Online Lay Ministry Formation

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

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

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



### REPORT SEXUAL MISCONDUCT NOW

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

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

# From the Archives



## In This Photo

In this photo from 1990, Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara of Indianapolis visited the African nation of Angola. The visit was on behalf of a national Catholic organization that Archbishop O'Meara chaired at that time.

## Trivia Question

Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara served as chairman of which national Catholic organization from 1987-91?

Let us know your answer at

[www.archindy.org/ArchivesTrivia](http://www.archindy.org/ArchivesTrivia)

## Previous Answer

The name of the co-educational Catholic high school that opened in Terre Haute in 1953 was Paul C. Schulte High School.



## PILGRIMAGE

continued from page 2

13 states and the District of Columbia.

Registration for public events such as Masses, eucharistic processions, adoration and Holy Hours opens on March 18 at [eucharisticpilgrimage.org](http://eucharisticpilgrimage.org).

The pilgrimage will launch on Memorial Day weekend with Mass at Our Lady of La Leche Shrine at Mission

*Nombre De Dios* in St. Augustine, Fla., 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 beatification is expected on Oct. 31; 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 route is dedicated to St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, an Italian-American religious sister who cared for the immigrants and poor in New York during the turn of the 20th century.

The nonprofit National Eucharistic Congress, Inc., organizes the pilgrimage. This year's pilgrimage will take place in solidarity with the U.S. bishops' call to consecrate the United States to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It also aims to broadly involve the Church in the

U.S. through a campaign to offer 250,000 Holy Hours "for the renewal and blessing of America," according to its website.

Dioceses and archdioceses with stops along the route are St. Augustine; Savannah, Ga.; Charleston, South Carolina; 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. †

## Classified Directory

For advertising rates call  
(317) 236-1585.

### Employment

### Design, Layout and Editorial Assistant *The Criterion*

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis seeks a detail-oriented and creative Editorial Assistant to support the weekly production of its newspaper, *The Criterion*. The position resides within the Secretariat for Communications, supporting mission-driven storytelling across print and digital platforms.

This position is ideal for someone with basic layout/design skills (InDesign or similar), strong writing, proofreading, and attention to detail, ability to meet weekly deadlines and an interest in journalism, communications, or Catholic media.

For the Full Job Description and Qualifications, visit [www.archindy.org/hr/jobs/2026-01-Editorial.html](http://www.archindy.org/hr/jobs/2026-01-Editorial.html) or scan the QR code.

To Apply: Send résumé, cover letter, and writing/design samples to Mike Krokos, editor, – [mkrokos@archindy.org](mailto:mkrokos@archindy.org).



### Employment

### Chancellor Archdiocese of Indianapolis

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis is seeking a faithful, mission focused Catholic leader to serve as Chancellor, a senior advisor to the Archbishop responsible for coordinating internal operations and supporting the work of the Curia.

#### Core Responsibilities

- Oversee canonical records and serve as ecclesiastical notary
- Support the Archbishop's leadership team and pastoral planning
- Supervise major directors and ministries
- Lead major projects and represent the archdiocese publicly
- Collaborate on budgeting and oversee sensitive administrative matters
- Approve job requisitions, professional development, and external speakers

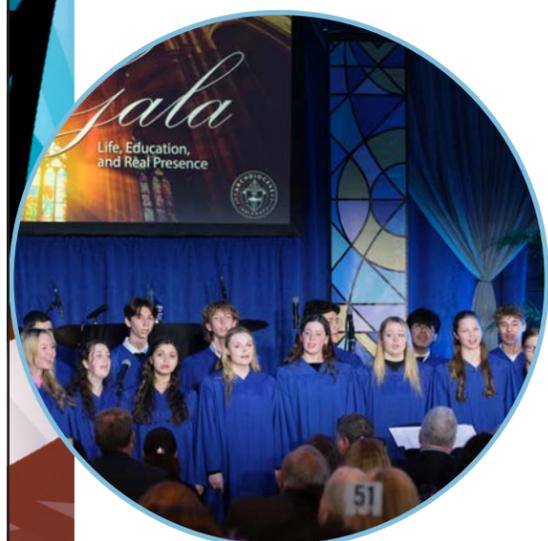
#### Requirements

- Master's degree in theology, religious education, or related field
- 10+ years of leadership and administrative experience
- Practicing Catholic in good standing
- Strong communication, leadership, and problem solving skills

#### Additional Information

- Evening/weekend work and regular travel required
- Role involves handling confidential information

Interested candidates are invited to submit a cover letter, résumé, and three professional references in confidence to Andrea Wunnenberg at [awunnenberg@archindy.org](mailto:awunnenberg@archindy.org). The application deadline is March 31, 2026.



# Legacy Gala

Life, Education,  
and Real Presence

## Thank You for Making the 2026 Legacy Gala a Success!

On February 6, we gathered in support of three vital ministries in the archdiocese: Catholic Charities, Catholic Schools, and Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary. Thanks to your generosity, we raised nearly **\$600,000** to further their important work. We are deeply grateful to all who attended and contributed. Your support is a beacon of hope for so many!

## Save the Date!

We're already looking forward to next year's event! Mark your calendars for **February 5, 2027**—more details to come. We hope to see you there as we continue to build a bright future for our faith and community.

## Nominate an Honoree for the 2027 Legacy Gala!

Know someone whose leadership and service has made a lasting impact? Nominate them to be honored at the 2027 Legacy Gala. Nominations are open until **March 31, 2026**. Submit a nomination at [bit.ly/LG27HonoreeNomination](https://bit.ly/LG27HonoreeNomination), scan the QR code, or email your submission to [LegacyGala@archindy.org](mailto:LegacyGala@archindy.org)

Together, we continue to strengthen the faith and future of our archdiocese.

**Thank you for your ongoing support!**

