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Serving the Church in Central and Southern Indiana Since 1960

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2026 UNITED CATHOLIC APPEAL

FAITH FORMATION & CATHOLIC EDUCATION | CHARITY & OUTREACH | SEMINARIAN EDUCATION & CLERGY CARE



ARCHDIOCESE
OF INDIANAPOLIS

The Church in Central and Southern Indiana

Go Forth



Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

At the end of every Mass, we are called to “*Go Forth*,” nourished by the Body of Christ in the Eucharist. We are sent out to bring Christ to others, a mission that extends far beyond the walls of the church. It is meant to be lived every day in everything we do. Likewise, every ministry and service of the Church is rooted in the Eucharist and our baptismal call to make Christ present in the world. The United Catholic Appeal is one of the most concrete ways we live this out together as a Church.



Through the United Catholic Appeal, we evangelize and form God’s people, ensuring the continuity of the priesthood, serving those most in need, strengthening families and parishes, supporting Catholic education, cultivating a culture of vocations, fostering stewardship, promoting the dignity of human life and caring for our retired priests.

The United Catholic Appeal touches every parish, every priest, every school, every ministry and every corner of our archdiocese. Without it, many of the Church’s vital works simply would not be possible.

So, I ask you to prayerfully reflect on how you are being called to *Go Forth*. How can you bring the love of Christ to those around you? Whether it is a widow’s mite or an abundant gift, what matters is the faith and sacrifice behind it.

Thank you for being part of this mission to build up the Church and transform our world in Christ’s name. Together, let us *Go Forth* in faith, with hearts renewed in the Eucharist, and lives poured out in love.

With assurance of my prayers and best wishes for you, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ *Charles C. Thompson*

Most Reverend Charles C. Thompson
Archbishop of Indianapolis

FATHER JOHN MCCASLIN EMBRACES AN ‘AMAZINGLY JOYFUL’ VOCATION AS A PRIEST

By Sean Gallagher

Thoughts about being a priest kept coming to Father John McCaslin 30 years ago when he was a young adult working for what is now Roche Diagnostics in Indianapolis.

While he had thought about the priesthood when he was a child growing up in St. Simon the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis, those thoughts had faded but never totally went away as a high school student and then in college.

As Father McCaslin got involved in St. Simon as a young adult, he said that thoughts about the priesthood “came back pretty hard and pretty strong.”

That led him eventually to speak about his vocation with the late Father Noah Casey during the sacrament of penance.

Father Casey took out a business card and wrote on it the name and phone number of the archdiocesan vocations director at the time.

“He said I owed it to myself and to the Church to look at that and explore it,” recalled Father McCaslin, now pastor of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis.

He put that card in his wallet. And there it remained for a couple of years before he finally called the number written on it. In a visit to Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad, he learned that a man becoming a seminarian didn’t have to know at the start if he was meant to be a priest.

“There’s freedom there,” Father McCaslin said in an interview reflecting on the start of his journey into priestly formation. “That gave me the freedom to go [to seminary]. And so, I went.”

Father McCaslin’s journey from discernment through five years of priestly formation to ordination in 2002 was supported through the generous giving of Catholics across central and southern Indiana to the United Catholic Appeal (UCA).

Just as it did when Father McCaslin was in seminary 25 years ago, the UCA continues today to support the freedom of the archdiocese’s potential future priests as they discern God’s call in their lives and prepare for ordained ministry.

‘What heaven’s going to look like’

When Father McCaslin drove along the winding roads of southern Indiana to arrive for the first time at Saint Meinrad as a seminarian, he could not have imagined the twists and turns of the journey of priestly formation he was beginning to take.

It was a road that took him far from his home in Indiana to Antigua, Guatemala, in the spring of 2001, where he spent several months learning Spanish in an immersion program there, a time he described as his “most transformative semester” in seminary.

Father McCaslin traced his interest in learning Spanish to seeing a growing number of Spanish-language businesses in Indianapolis in the 1990s. He then wondered if there might be a need to celebrate Mass in Spanish.

“That was really the scope of my thinking,” he said. “I wasn’t thinking that, once you offered Mass in Spanish, you have to offer everything.”

That knowledge came later in priestly formation and especially in serving as pastor of parishes with large Hispanic communities.

One of the largest parishes in the archdiocese, St. Monica boasts more than 2,000 households. Its members speak English, Spanish, French, Haitian Creole and other languages.

“This is what heaven’s going to look like,” Father McCaslin said. “It’s really just beautiful. It’s breathtaking. Every time I celebrate Mass, it just takes my breath away to look out and see the people of God worship. It’s like

the mosaic of humanity.”

That mosaic continues to grow larger and larger at the Indianapolis West Deanery faith community. Dozens of new Catholics are received into the Church each year at its celebration of the Easter Vigil that goes well into the night.

“What I love about it is that nobody cares about time when you go to the Easter Vigil [at St. Monica],” he said with a laugh.

In leading a large parish of Catholics from many cultures, Father McCaslin appreciates the support given to the archdiocesan Office of Intercultural Ministry through the UCA.

“I desire to empower the baptized to do the mission,” he said. “And a big part of supporting the archdiocese is so that [it] can empower the parishes to do what they’re supposed to do, which is to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ to the best of their ability in their particular geographical region.”

Other archdiocesan offices supported by the UCA, such as the Office of Evangelization, the Office of Catechesis, the Office of Youth Ministry and the Office of Young Adult and College Campus Ministry, help parishes form lay Catholics to carry out the Church’s mission of evangelization in their own lives.

“I’m a big believer that the mission of the Church is carried out mostly by the baptized,” Father McCaslin said. “So, my role is to form, encourage and send forth the baptized to transform the world. I come in contact with my parishioners. They come in contact with tens of thousands of people in any given week.

“Nothing gives [me] more joy than to watch my parishioners get so excited and enthused about carrying on ministry. It fills my heart. That’s how you see the multiplication of the loaves.”

‘Amazingly joyful’

In addition to being formed for ordained ministry at Saint Meinrad, Father McCaslin benefitted by building relationships with three generations of priests soon after he was ordained in 2002.

He was assigned as associate pastor of St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis, serving under its pastor at the time, Father James Farrell, who was ordained in 1975. Two of St. Barnabas’ retired pastors, Father Joseph McNally, ordained in 1958, and its founding pastor, Father John Sciarra, ordained in 1945, were often present in the faith community.

“I could not have asked for a better beginning to priesthood,” Father McCaslin said. “I received a great gift in that.”

He is grateful for the way that many retired archdiocesan priests continue to serve Catholics across central and southern Indiana. Those Catholics in turn support the care

of retired priests through their contribution to the UCA, something that Father McCaslin appreciates.

These retired priests, he said, “stayed faithful to their promises and stayed faithful to the people of God. They served the Church and helped it weather some challenging years. Now that they’re retired, I think it’s right and good that we should want to pour out love and support upon them.”

And his journey to sharing priestly life and ministry with generations of priests, all of whom have given their lives to building up the faith of Catholics across the archdiocese, started some 30 years ago when Father Casey gave him that business card with the name and phone number of the archdiocesan vocations director.

That business card remains in Father McCaslin’s wallet to this day. He’s even had it laminated to preserve it.

“There’s a sentimentality about it,” he said. “But I also think it’s symbolic of God’s faithfulness to me and that I don’t have to know everything to say ‘yes.’ I don’t have to understand all of the mystery to walk into it. Maybe it’s a symbol of the ongoing trust that I’ve had in all of my ministry.

“I presume that if [the card] lasts, then it’ll be buried with me.”

If it does last, then it will also become a symbol of the joy that Father McCaslin has found in giving himself to priestly life and ministry in the archdiocese.

“Priesthood has been so joyful for me, so amazingly joyful,” he said. “It’s been beautiful. It’s been a wonderful call and vocation.”

(For more information about a vocation to the priesthood in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, visit HearGodsCall.com. For more information about the United Catholic Appeal, visit www.acrossthearch.org/uca/home.) †



Father John McCaslin, pastor of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis, shows a business card with the archdiocesan vocations director’s contact information he received 30 years ago that was a pivotal moment in his discernment of his vocation to the priesthood. He’s kept the business card as a “sign of God’s faithfulness to me.” (Photo courtesy of Cantaloupe)

FROM FRIENDSHIP TO FAITH: YOUNG ADULT FINDS GOD AND COMMUNITY THROUGH SPORTS

By John Shaughnessy

It was a moment of need and longing for Thomas Robbins—not unusual feelings for a young adult.

At the age of 25 then, Robbins had just moved back to Indiana—looking for something to do to get him out of his house, looking really for friends and a community to call his own.

As someone who has always enjoyed sports, Robbins googled “intramurals” and the first thing that popped up was the IndyCatholic website, the one for the archdiocese’s Young Adult and College Campus Ministry. There, he saw a notice about a bowling league starting.

Robbins ignored the fact that he wasn’t Catholic, that faith didn’t have much of a place in his life. Instead, he focused on the feeling that he had always enjoyed the sport, and the thought that being part of a team would let him meet new people.

He just never expected that the experience would lead to the best friends he’s ever known, a community he embraces or especially to the moment on June 22 of this year that signaled a dramatic change in his life.

On that evening, Robbins received the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and the Eucharist during Sunday Mass at St. John the Evangelist Church in Indianapolis.

Now 35, Robbins looks back on how the past 10 years have unfolded—from an internet search for intramurals to a longing to enter into a deeper relationship with Christ.

“I think a lot of people are coming from the same spot I was coming from—struggling and trying to find their way,” he said. “I think significant things had to take place in my life, which I believe is what God has been doing for me. And that’s really helped me grow into the man I am now. I would encourage anybody to try to find their way through God, through Jesus.

“I think, realistically, if it wasn’t for IndyCatholic, I feel my life would be completely different.”

‘We meet them where they are’

Making a difference in the lives and the faith of young adults is the obvious purpose of the archdiocese’s Young Adult and College Campus Ministry—one of the ministries supported by the archdiocese’s United Catholic Appeal. But the path to leading young people to Christ often involves different approaches.

“Today’s young adults are not the future of the Church—they are the Church right now,” says Meagan Morrissey, director of the archdiocese’s Young Adult and College Campus Ministry. “We meet them where they are—in gyms, breweries, lecture halls and coffee shops—and walk with them toward a deeper purpose and lasting community. It starts with friendship, and sometimes it leads to faith.”

Robbins reflects that reality, as a flashback to an evening in November of 2024 reveals.

During that evening, 30 teams—involving 179 young adults—participated in IndyCatholic’s bowling league at Woodland Bowl in Indianapolis.

The fun names of some of the teams showed the joy of the league: Split Happens, We’ve Been Framed, Living on a Spare, Ten Pin Commandments, Can’t Believe It’s Not Gutter, Alley-Lujahs and Who You Calling Pinhead?

The league is where Robbins found great friends in Andrew Moster and Moster’s wife, Natalie. The friendship between Robbins and Moster evolved as the two young men initially played on different teams, competed fiercely against each other and then decided to become teammates on Spare Us, O Lord. The fact that they both enjoy singing karaoke sealed their friendship.

As Robbins grew closer to Andrew and Natalie, he found himself “wanting to know more about the Catholic faith.” And with that faith being important in their lives and their marriage, Andrew and Natalie wanted to be there for Robbins as he began his journey to move closer to God.

The couple suggested the idea to him about taking part in the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA), toward being received into the full communion of the Church.

“I went over to Andrew’s and Natalie’s one night for a beer, just to hang out,” Robbins recalled on that night last year as the sound of pins crashed in the background. “They asked me how I felt about [faith]. I had dabbled in it before, wanting to understand the Catholic faith. But I never wanted to leap forward like this and jump in with both feet.”

Robbins made the leap, but only after he made sure that Andrew was along for the jump.

“It’s been nice that Andrew wanted to be that sponsor for me and learn the faith a little bit stronger for himself. He knows me really well. He knows that I needed that kind of support to do that and get through it.”

Robbins felt that same support in his faith journey



More than great friends and bowling teammates, Andrew Moster, left, served as the sponsor for Thomas Robbins as he was received into the full communion of the Church earlier this year. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

admin throughout the IndyCatholic community.

“One of the main reasons I chose this community is because the entire time I’ve been here, everyone has been so welcoming. Everybody has been easy to talk to, supportive and friendly. Because of that, I felt going forward was the right thing to do.”

As Robbins excused himself to take his turn on the lane, Moster stepped into the conversation, talking about his offer to accompany his friend on this journey.

“I love it,” said Moster, a member of St. Louis de Montfort Parish in Fishers, Ind., in the Lafayette Diocese. “It’s a great opportunity to grow in the faith for him. My wife and I are big Catholics. It’s exciting to see him grow and become Catholic himself.”

‘It just felt like a community’

During the Sunday evening Mass in June when Robbins joined the Catholic faith, Moster often had his hand on his friend’s shoulder or gave him a reassuring smile.

After the Mass, as they stood together, Robbins shared that he had been “a little bit anxious, excited and scared” during the Mass, but Moster’s presence and support made a difference.

“Andrew knows me really well,” Robbins said then. “The last eight, nine years, he’s been a brother. He’s really been supportive. He’s shown me a solid path going forward.”

Moster smiled at Robbins and said, “It’s phenomenal watching him grow in the faith and continuing to evolve and improve his whole life as well. It’s been great to be with him on this journey, and now he has this clear path ahead of him. It’s just exciting.”

Their shared thoughts and experiences reveal a fundamental truth: Many young adults—and maybe people of all ages—need and want connection, a sense of belonging, a belief that they are valued first for who they are, even if the goal is to eventually help lead them on a journey of faith.

Consider one of Robbins’ previous experiences with a faith community.

“I think everybody has their own journey of trying to find God. I had a friend that was Pentecostal, and I’ve been in that church,” he says. “There were a bunch of people. They put their arms over me. That was the devil getting out of me or something.

“It didn’t feel right.”

Moster’s offer of friendship did.

“When it comes to the Catholic community—meeting a lot of people like Andrew and Natalie—I haven’t come across the scenario where I’ve met somebody that’s been cross with me,” Robbins said. “When I’m talking to them, they’re not giving me this notion of maybe I’m talking to a wall. And that to me is significant.

“It just felt like a community that I was easily brought into and felt a part of.”

That offer of community, acceptance and connection is

at the heart of the archdiocese’s Young Adult and College Campus Ministry, its director says.

‘Making people feel seen, known and loved’

“IndyCatholic designs low-barrier, social-based events intentionally held in neutral spaces—not churches—so anyone, including non-Catholics, feels welcome,” Morrissey says. “Events like Theology on Tap or bowling allow people to attend without pressure, but with a deeper purpose of encountering Jesus and becoming lifelong missionary disciples. It starts with making people feel seen, known and loved.

“Young adults crave connection, and they say so when they attend our IndyCatholic events, often citing the lack of other chances to meet people. Even college students face this, unlike a decade ago when I was in school. In lecture halls, everyone is on their phones or laptops, with no chance to connect.

“Simple acts like having volunteers greet people and remember their names go a long way. Young adults want real conversations about what’s hard, good or exciting in their lives, and our programming provides that.”

That programming is made possible when people in central and southern Indiana contribute to the archdiocese’s annual United Catholic Appeal, Morrissey says.

The contributions help the four staff members of the young adult ministry work toward their goal of creating “a joyful community” that leads young adults closer to Christ.

“The generosity of United Catholic Appeal donors makes this possible, enabling meaningful relationships that lead to marriages, active parish involvement and legacies of faith through Bible studies or school participation,” Morrissey says.

“Money should never be an obstacle in ministry. We plan programs and trust donors will provide. And they do, seeing young adult ministry as an investment in the Church’s future.”

Robbins’ journey of becoming Catholic and moving closer to Christ exemplifies the theme of the 2026 UCA, “Go Forth.”

He knows the difference that IndyCatholic has made in his life, giving him friendships he values, a faith he has embraced, and a community that offers him hope and purpose.

“One thing we’ve talked about is divine planning,” Robbins says about his conversations with Moster. “God has a divine plan. If everything happens for a reason, then I was meant to go down this path.

“Every single person I’ve met through IndyCatholic has been phenomenal and warm. So, for anyone who’s looking for community—you’re feeling like you’re an outsider or you’re searching for something—they make you feel that you’re part of something.”

(For more information about the United Catholic Appeal, visit www.acrossthearch.org/uca/home.) †

SPECIAL WRAPAROUND HIGHLIGHTS MINISTRIES SUPPORTED BY UNITED CATHOLIC APPEAL

This week’s special issue of *The Criterion* includes four pages highlighting important ministries supported by the annual United Catholic Appeal.

You’ll find stories focusing on a priest reflecting on his vocation, a young adult who entered into the full communion of the Church because of the witness of faith he saw in young adult Catholics

and the friendships that evolved through their shared activities, and a young mother in southern Indiana who overcame domestic violence by reaching out to a Catholic Charities agency that helped her and her two young children.

The ministries highlighted in these articles, along with countless others, are supported by the United Catholic Appeal. This year’s goal is \$6.3 million.

The regular Nov. 7 issue of *The Criterion* is included as 12 pages inside this special edition.

You’ll find many of our regular features there: Archbishop Charles C. Thompson’s weekly column, the calendar of events, our perspectives page and obituaries.

Thank you for reading your archdiocesan newspaper. †



To learn more about the annual appeal or to donate, scan the QR code to the left or log on to UnitedCatholicAppeal.org.

ST. ELIZABETH CATHOLIC CHARITIES IS ABOUT ‘PROVIDING HELP, CREATING HOPE’

By Natalie Hoefer

NEW ALBANY—In 2019, Dorcas Marrero was a stay-at-home mom in Jeffersonville with two little boys in diapers.

“Almost everything was going good,” she says. “But there were some things I was battling that I knew I had to get away from.”

Her phrasing minimizes the severity—Marrero was a victim of domestic violence.

“Realizing that the path I was on was not a good example” for her children, Marrero called a domestic abuse hotline. They referred her to help close to home: St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities (SECC) in New Albany.

Through the agency’s Women and Children Emergency Shelter and Affordable Supportive Housing—two of SECC’s eight programs, all made possible in part through the archdiocese’s United Catholic Appeal—Marrero and her children were provided temporary housing, and she received the help she needed to heal, find a job, afford permanent housing and become self-sufficient.

SECC is “definitely a bridge between a life you shouldn’t be living, [that’s] not for you, and the one that you deserve,” says Marrero.

‘Reassuring and just non-judgmental’

SECC’s mission has “always been about providing help, creating hope and sharing all of our gifts that we’ve been blessed with, with anyone who comes to our door,” says agency director Mark Casper.

Sadly, he notes, “Dorcas is very common to what we see.

“The women that come to St. Elizabeth all have special circumstances that led them here—from mental health, addiction, domestic violence, poor life choices, or just ‘life happens.’ They all come here needing to be built back up, relationships restored, their self-esteem put back and assistance to get them returned to the community.”

Some women arrive “with no other option, often homeless,” says Casper. “Many of them have been couch surfing and suffering other trauma. Our case workers and staff [first] deal with their basic needs of life—security, food, clothing—to get them through the first few nights of living in a shelter.”

Feeling secure with those needs met, women are in a better place for the next crucial step—healing.

The counselors and case managers “try to meet them where they are and see what trauma they experienced and what best we can do to help them with their needs,” Casper explains.

Marrero’s experience is proof of that approach.

“The first impression was very welcoming, very warm, very reassuring and just non-judgmental,” she says. “... It was just an environment of, ‘Hey, it’s OK, we’ll meet you where you’re at’ type of thing.”

She calls both the group and individual mental health counseling “outstanding.”

“Hearing others’ stories, that was extremely important to me at the time,” says Marrero. “That was one of the major ones for me—just not feeling alone.

“I just needed reassurance that I was doing the right thing or that I wasn’t crazy. ... The validation for me was extremely important in order to find the strength to continue on.”

‘I saw myself being able to move forward’

She says that emotional support continued “even after I left the shelter,” a grant-driven requirement after 90 days.

With that time limit in mind, SECC’s case managers help women achieve their goals for their next step after leaving the shelter.

For Marrero, that next step meant finding a job so she and her children could move into one of the agency’s sliding-scale fee, furnished Affordable Supportive Housing (ASH) units.

“That’s what I like about [SECC],” says Marrero. “They give you the tools to succeed. I had access to a computer to find a job. They gave me rides to the store, to job interviews” and helped enroll her children in day care.

“Within three months of her being here, [Marrero] had received a certification to be an interpreter and got a very good job that she really enjoyed and did well,” says Tricia Byrd. As SECC’s residential program director, she oversees the emergency shelter, the ASH program and the Domestic Violence Transitional Housing and Rapid Rehousing programs.

As her ASH rent slowly increased, Marrero found a higher-paying job.

“The reason for the rent increase in the ASH program



Dorcas Marrero, left, poses with Tricia Byrd, residential program director for St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities in New Albany, and agency director Mark Casper in the agency’s Holy Trinity Park on May 30. (Photo courtesy of Cantaloupe)

is because we want residents to make it up to the point where they can pay fair market rent” and move out on their own, Byrd explains.

Marrero appreciates the approach.

“The services are supposed to be temporary,” she says. “That’s the whole point. It’s to empower you, move you forward. That really helps motivate you to seek better things.”

As she met the challenge of the rate increases, “That’s when I saw myself being able to move forward on my own,” says Marrero. “... It allowed me to see, ‘This is temporary. I’m going to get out of here one day. It can only get better from here.’ ”

When it was time for Marrero to seek her own housing, Byrd suggested she apply for a Habitat for Humanity home, where accepted applicants help to build an affordable home with 0% monthly mortgage payments.

Marrero’s application was approved.

She credits Byrd and her former case manager Erin Goodlett with helping her believe in her ability to succeed.

“Sometimes, when there’s so much going on, you can’t see it,” says Marrero. “They did. They would stress that I was this independent person and helped me see that quality in me.”

SECC staff, board members and volunteers helped build the interior walls of Marrero’s new home.

“We were all there in tears on the ribbon-cutting day,” says Casper. “Her two little boys had come in as babies when they first came to St. Elizabeth. And now they were little boys running around playing in their own yard.”

‘Going forth and providing’

St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities offers more than the Women and Children Emergency Shelter and ASH program that Marrero benefited from.

Those housing options, as well as the agency’s Domestic Violence Transitional Housing, maternity home and offices are all located on a one-block campus.

The agency also offers a Domestic Violence Rapid Rehousing program; Adoption Bridges of Kentuckiana, an adoption agency licensed in Indiana and Kentucky; Marie’s Blessing Distribution Program, providing free mom-and-baby items to those in need in the community; counselors for Catholic schools in the New Albany Deanery; and a Supported Living Program for adults with developmental delays in Clark and Floyd counties.

“We simply would not be who we are without our volunteers,” says Casper. Volunteers served 5,750 hours across all of the agency’s programs last year, with an average in-kind equivalent of about \$250,000 annually, he says.

Marrero calls those volunteers “angels, even if you’re just here talking to some of the women in the shelters or just helping them cook a meal. Because a lot of days, that was the highlight of our week.

“You don’t understand,” she continues, her eyes tearing up. “That goes a long way. When you’re in that

dark place and they just come to you, it’s like seeing an angel. It may just be another day in your week, but for us, it has a lasting impression.”

Still, it costs the agency nearly \$1,700 a month per person housed at the Women and Children’s Shelter and the Domestic Violence Shelter.

And with an overall annual budget of slightly more than \$2 million, financial support is imperative to ensure “that our doors are open and that we’re able to meet the needs of our local community,” says Casper.

The agency receives money “from earned income, to government grants, to donations,” he explains, with the archdiocese’s United Catholic Appeal making up “about 10% of our revenue support.”

He pauses to reflect on this year’s appeal theme, “Go Forth.”

“Every Sunday when I attend Mass, when Father says, ‘Go forth,’ he means to go out and live and preach the Gospel,” says Casper. “St. Elizabeth is a perfect example of the Church, God’s Church, going forth and providing for those in need. ...

“Not everybody can be hands-on and work on our campus. But everyone can ensure that our services continue to meet the needs of our community by going forth and contributing.”

‘You’re Jesus’ hands and feet’

Despite the undeniable costs to offer its many services, the help SECC provides “is priceless,” says Marrero.

“You’re Jesus’ hands and feet, and that’s literally because you’re not just telling me I’m going to get better,” she says.

“You’re not just giving me a coping mechanism. You’re actually holding my hand through this process. And [SECC] can affect future generations. That’s just priceless.”

Priceless, too, was the “shift in mentality” Marrero gained.

“Nowadays, I can definitely say that I’m just mentally stronger,” she says. “They are so supportive, and I could see myself as empowered to move forward.

“And being able to pay for housing on my own—that is super empowering for a woman with two children, especially when you feel alone at first. ... I’m in a much better place—mentally, emotionally, spiritually.”

Not that all is smooth sailing.

“Life still throws things at me,” Marrero admits. “It’s a process.”

But thanks to SECC’s help, she says there “is nothing life is going to throw at me that I can’t make it through.”

Because with St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities, it’s not just about “the fish I need to eat today,” she says, but also about providing “the fishing pole [and] showing me how to fish so I can eat forever.”

(For more information about St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities in New Albany, go to stcharities.org. To donate online to the United Catholic Appeal, go to acrossthearch.org/uca/give-now-form.) †