



The

Criterion

Serving the Church in Central and Southern Indiana Since 1960



Evangelization Supplement

Read how everyday Catholics share their faith and lead others to Christ, pages 12-15.

CriterionOnline.com

May 30, 2025

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Deacon Siefker's desire 'to be a priest when I grew up' will be fulfilled on June 7

By Natalie Hoefer

For some men, their call to the priesthood might come as a slow, gradual awareness.

For others it might come as a powerful, St.-Paul-knocked-off-his-horse realization.

For transitional Deacon Isaac Siefker, it was just something he always knew.

"As long as I can remember, I always said that I wanted to be a priest when I grew up," he says. "For a while, that just meant I would either be a diocesan priest or I would join the Franciscan Friars of the Immaculate. Later, when my sister became a Carmelite [nun], that really inspired me, and I considered the Carmelites.

"But I was like, 'I'll just figure it out when I'm older.'"

In time, God made the path clear. On June 7, Deacon Siefker will be ordained a priest of the archdiocese at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis.

As the day approaches, he admits he's "a little bit nervous but very excited. I'm glad I can say this: It just feels right. It feels like I'm ready. But I know it's going to be a life's work to continue formation."

'If God calls, he gives the grace'

Deacon Siefker's formation began in his family's home.

"I grew up in a very, very Catholic household," he says. "My five siblings and I were homeschooled, and our school day was, in some ways, centered around prayer."

The day began with morning prayer and

See SIEFKER, page 9

Transitional Deacon Isaac Siefker proclaims the Gospel during the annual archdiocesan chrism Mass on April 15 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)



Pope pledges prayers for China, marks 'Laudato Si' anniversary

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Leo XIV called attention to two important events that fell on May 24: the day of prayer for Catholics in China and the 10th anniversary of Pope Francis' encyclical on the environment.



Pope Leo XIV

He also made two appointments: naming Filipino Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle the titular bishop of Albano, Italy, and designating Guinean Cardinal Robert Sarah to be

his envoy to celebrations on July 25-26 at the Shrine of Sainte-Anne-d'Auray in France.

After praying the "Regina Coeli" with visitors in St. Peter's Square on May 25, Pope Leo noted that the previous day was the feast of Mary Help of Christians, which Pope Benedict XVI had designated as the Day of Prayer for the Church in China.

"In churches and shrines throughout China and around the world, prayers were offered to God as a sign of concern and affection for Chinese Catholics and their communion with the universal Church," Pope Leo said.

He prayed that through the intercession of Mary, all Catholics, but especially those in China, would receive "the grace to be strong and joyful witnesses of the Gospel, even in the midst of trials, so that we may always promote peace and harmony."

Pope Leo also called people's attention to the anniversary of Pope Francis signing "Laudato Si", on Care for Our Common Home.

The encyclical, Pope Leo said, "has had an extraordinary impact, inspiring countless initiatives and teaching everyone to listen to the twofold cry of the Earth and of the poor."

See POPE, page 2

Catholic faith gives Guilford family 'a clearer path' and 'real direction'

By Natalie Hoefer

GUILFORD—It was the fall of 2023, and Christina May was bored. The house was quiet, now that all three of her and her husband Cole's boys were in school.

Welcome, new Catholics, pages 10-11.

So, she decided to get a part-time job.

"It was to have something outside the house, just to be social and keep myself busy," she says.

There was a new coffee shop opening "just down the road"

See FAMILY, page 18

Cole and Christina May smile with their sons Harrison, front row left, Maxwell, front row right, and David, center, after being welcomed into the full communion of the Church during the April 19 Easter Vigil Mass in Yorkville at St. Martin Church of All Saints Parish. (Submitted photo)



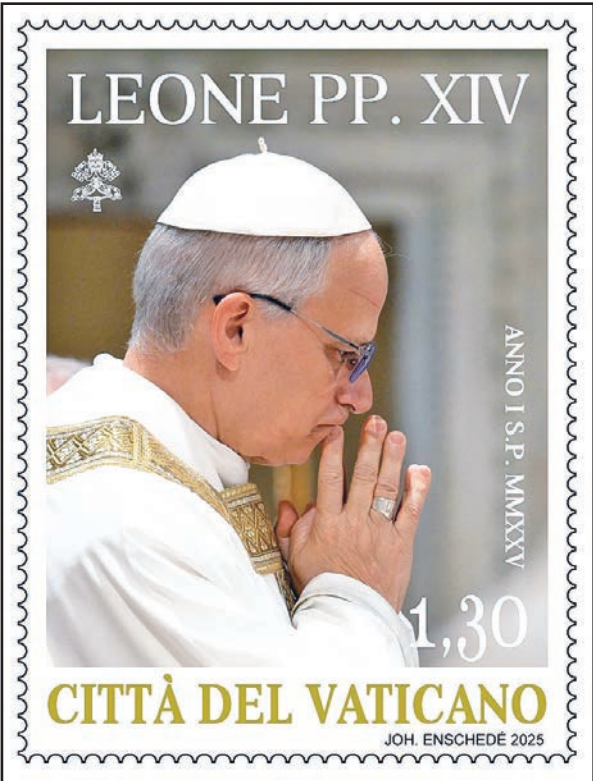
Vatican releases first Pope Leo postage stamps

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The Vatican postal service began selling its first Pope Leo XIV stamps on May 27 and offered a special cancellation of the postage featuring a line drawing of the new pope waving to the crowds in St. Peter’s Square.

Two of the stamps, with values of 1.25 euros (\$1.42) and 2.45 euros (\$2.78), feature photos taken of Pope Leo on May 8 when he appeared on the balcony of St. Peter’s Basilica immediately after his election.

The other two, with values of 1.30 euros (\$1.48) and 3.20 euros (\$3.63), are close-up photos of the pope taken on May 9 when he celebrated Mass in the Sistine Chapel with the College of Cardinals.

The Vatican post office said it was printing 390,000 of the stamps, which have his name in Latin across the top, “Leone PP. XIV,” and in smaller print along the side “Anno I S.P. MMXXV,” a notation that 2025 is the first year of his pontificate. †



A Vatican stamp featuring Pope Leo XIV is seen in this image released on May 27. The stamp is valued at 1.30 euros. (CNS photo/Vatican stamp and coin office)

POPE

continued from page 1

And, on the @Pontifex account on X, he posted: “Pope Francis’ encyclical calls us to renew the dialogue on how we are building our planet’s future, as we unite in the pursuit of sustainable and integral development, taking care to protect the common home entrusted to us by God.”

Naming Cardinal Tagle titular bishop of Albano, Pope Leo confirmed the tradition of the highest-ranking cardinals being technically associated with one of the seven suburbicarian dioceses on the outskirts of Rome. Initially, those seven bishops were among the closest advisers of the popes, and since 1059 they have been among the group of prelates who elect the popes.

Pope Francis had named Cardinal Tagle a cardinal bishop in 2020 but without a suburbicarian diocese. Then-Cardinal Robert F. Prevost was named a cardinal bishop on Feb. 6 by Pope Francis and given the titular diocese of Albano.

Pope Leo also appointed Cardinal Sarah as his representative to celebrations of the 400th anniversary of the apparitions of St. Anne, mother of Mary, to Yves Nicolazic, a peasant farmer in Brittany in northwest France. Nicolazic said St. Anne asked him to build a shrine, which he did, and it attracts thousands of pilgrims each year.

While popes often name special envoys to celebrations like that at Sainte-Anne-d’Auray, Pope Leo’s naming of Cardinal Sarah, who often publicly criticized decisions made by Pope Francis, was seen as newsworthy. †

The Criterion to begin summer schedule with June 13 issue

The Criterion will begin a new summer publication schedule in two weeks. The reduced printing schedule will allow us to make the most efficient use of our resources during the summer. There will not be a June 6 issue. Our next issue will be June 13.

The Criterion will also be published on June 27, July 11 and July 25. There will be issues in August on August 8 and August 22. The newspapers will resume its weekly publication schedule with the September 3 issue.

Thank you for reading *The Criterion* and please continue to go to our website, www.archindy.org/criterion, where our staff will be regularly posting news stories from across the Archdiocese of Indianapolis as well as important national and international news. †



Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

May 30–June 20, 2025

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>May 30 – 7 p.m.
Graduation at Cardinal Ritter High School, Indianapolis</p> <p>June 1 – 2 p.m.
Adult Confirmation Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis</p> <p>June 3 – 7 p.m.
Confirmation Mass for the youths of St. Philip Neri and St. Mary parishes, Indianapolis, at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral</p> <p>June 4 – 6 p.m.
Mass for Intercultural Certification for Pastoral Leadership Program followed by dinner at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, Indianapolis</p> <p>June 5 – 10 a.m.
Leadership Team meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis</p> <p>June 5 – 11 a.m.
Virtual USCCB Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis meeting</p> <p>June 6 – 10 a.m.
Pre-ordination brunch with transitional deacons, Indianapolis</p> | <p>June 7 – 10 a.m.
Priesthood Ordination Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral</p> <p>June 8 – 10 a.m. CST
Monastic Priesthood Ordination Mass at Saint Meinrad Archabbey, St. Meinrad</p> <p>June 11 – 6:30 p.m.
Theology on Tap at McGowan Knights of Columbus Hall, Indianapolis</p> <p>June 12 – 8:15 a.m.
Virtual Judicatories meeting</p> <p>June 12 – 10 a.m.
Leadership Team meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center</p> <p>June 12 – 1 p.m.
25th Anniversary Mass for Missionaries of Charity at St. Philip Neri Church, Indianapolis</p> <p>June 15-20
USCCB Special Assembly meeting, San Diego, Calif.</p> |
|--|---|

As the National Eucharistic Revival ends, tell us how you were impacted—and how you’ll keep it going

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ three-year National Eucharistic Revival, which began on June 19, 2022—the feast of *Corpus Christi*—will soon come to a close in terms of official events and programs.

But the goal from the beginning was for the initiative to be the start of renewing our love for Christ in the Eucharist and sharing the good news with the world.

How has the revival—including the National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis last July—renewed your love for Christ in the Eucharist? How has it inspired you to go out and share the good news? How are you continuing the spirit of the revival in your life, your parish or your community?

Please send your submissions to Natalie Hoefer by e-mail at nhoefer@archindy.org or by mail in care of *The Criterion*, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202. Please include your parish and a daytime phone number where you can be reached. †

Pope Leo’s prayer intentions for June



- **That the world might grow in compassion**—Let us pray that each one of us might find consolation in a personal relationship with Jesus, and from his Heart, learn to have compassion on the world.

See Pope Francis’ monthly intentions at archindy.org/popesintentions.



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With blessings by land, air and water, eucharistic pilgrimage is underway

(OSV News)—In their first week of pilgrimage, eight young adults witnessed a bishop blessing his diocese with the Blessed Sacrament via helicopter, visited key sites in the life of sainthood-tracked Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen, and boated across the Mississippi River from Illinois to Iowa—all in the company of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist.

The 2025 National Eucharistic Pilgrimage launched on May 18 from St. John the Evangelist Church in Indianapolis—the same church where last year’s inaugural National Eucharistic Pilgrimage ended in July ahead of the National Eucharistic Congress. Following Mass celebrated by Indianapolis Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, the pilgrimage’s eight “perpetual pilgrims” immediately set out in a van for the Diocese of Joliet, Ill.

“To journey with Christ in this tangible, holy way—adoring him in silence as the countryside replaced the skyscrapers of downtown—was deeply moving,” said Charlie McCullough, the only 2025 perpetual pilgrim who was also a perpetual pilgrim last year, in a post on OSV News’ live blog featuring the pilgrims’ daily reflections.

Two of the perpetual pilgrims are from the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. Rachel Levy, archdiocesan coordinator of young adult ministry, and Cheyenne Johnson, director of Catholic campus ministry at Butler University in Indianapolis, are among those participating.

The pilgrims spent that first afternoon and evening at St. Mary Church in Paxton, Ill., where Joliet Bishop Ronald A. Hicks received the Blessed Sacrament in a monstrance and led adoration. A second Holy Hour was then held 25 miles away at Immaculate Conception Church in Gilman, followed by a eucharistic procession and adoration about 50 miles north at St. John Paul II Church in Kankakee.

The next day began with Mass at St. John Paul II, followed by a eucharistic procession at nearby Bishop McNamara Catholic School, and then a eucharistic procession and adoration at Immaculate Conception Church in Morris, Ill. Then, they entered the Diocese of Peoria, Ill., where they had five more events, including Mass, on May 19.

The fast pace of this year’s 36-day pilgrimage makes it possible for pilgrims to cross 10 states and 20 dioceses in a part of the United States largely missed by the 2024 four-route pilgrimage: the American Southwest. This year’s pilgrimage entered the Diocese of Davenport, Iowa, on May 21, and plans to pass through Iowa and into Kansas before going through Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California, ending in Los Angeles for the feast of *Corpus Christi* on June 22.

The eight “perpetual pilgrims” were chosen among applicants by National Eucharistic Congress Inc., the pilgrimage’s organizer. The pilgrims, all in their 20s, bring a variety of education, work and ministry experience to their roles, accompanying the Eucharist across the country and being witnesses to Jesus’ real presence in the Eucharist. Like last year, they are accompanied by chaplains from the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal.

On May 20, the pilgrims visited at least two sites of importance to the life of Archbishop Sheen: his baptismal site in St. Mary Parish in El Paso, Ill., and his tomb in the Cathedral of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception in Peoria, where the future bishop of Rochester, N.Y., was also ordained.

That day, pilgrims also witnessed Peoria Bishop Lou Tylka travel with the Blessed Sacrament via helicopter from OSF St. Francis Medical Center in Peoria to OSF St. Mary Medical Center in Galesburg, Ill., to bless his diocese as part



Bishop Dennis G. Walsh of Davenport, Iowa, kneels during Benediction at the grotto outside SS. Mary and Patrick Parish in West Burlington, Iowa, on May 21 as part of this year’s National Eucharistic Pilgrimage. (OSV News photo/Anne Marie Amacher, The Catholic Messenger)

of the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage.

Bishop Tylka had welcomed the pilgrims to the diocese the day before with a horse-led eucharistic procession and then Mass, where he preached about the “hunger that is out there for something more than what the world presents.

“I think that hunger, especially among young people—they are discovering that the only way to feed that hunger, it’s a spiritual hunger, a hunger to be united with God—is to find a home in church, and they are finding that in the Catholic Church,” Bishop Tylka said, according to *The Catholic Post*, the newspaper of the Diocese of Peoria.

On May 21, the pilgrims crossed from Illinois into Iowa in dramatic fashion: via a boat across the Mississippi River.

“As I sat in the boat adoring our Lord as we crossed the Mississippi River with Bishop Tylka and four fellow pilgrims, I felt an overwhelming joy,” perpetual pilgrim Stephen Fuhrmann wrote in a reflection for OSV News.

“To be on the water with Jesus, just like the Apostles, was an experience that has illuminated my prayer today and will forever be something that I remember, even if I wasn’t asked to walk on water,” he said.

Once ashore in Iowa’s Diocese of Davenport, they were met by Davenport Bishop Dennis G. Walsh and around 60 people for a 4-mile eucharistic procession that Fuhrmann described as “along the water, up and down hills [and] through the town of Burlington, Iowa.

“With our hearts continuing to burn for our Lord,” Fuhrmann continued, “he continues to pour out grace upon grace on each of us pilgrims and on everyone that encounters the pilgrimage.” †

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Editorial



Pope Leo XIV gives his blessing as he leads the midday praying of the “Regina Coeli” prayer for the first time from the central balcony of St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican on May 11. (CNS photo/Lola Gomez)

God calls each of us to follow him in a special way, Pope Leo reminds us

It should come as no surprise that in his first Sunday praying the “Regina Coeli” on May 11, Pope Leo XIV urged Catholics to pray for vocations, especially to the priesthood and religious life.

That day, the Fourth Sunday of Easter, marked Good Shepherd Sunday, where John’s Gospel (Jn 10:27-30) features Jesus speaking about his role as the Good Shepherd. He describes himself as the one who leads his sheep, knows them and is willing to lay down his life for them.

The Scripture passage offers a powerful symbol of Jesus’ care and love for his followers. The sheep represent the people, and the Good Shepherd symbolizes Jesus’ protective and guiding role toward us, his disciples.

It was also a day to recognize priests throughout the archdiocese who have faithfully served our parishes through their selfless ministry. We likely do not thank our priests enough for their ministry and for the sacrifices they make in faithfully leading our parish families. We pray that parishioners don’t limit their appreciation of their priests to a single Sunday during the Easter season, that our heartfelt gratitude continues beyond that day.

Good Shepherd Sunday is a day to pray for vocations, and in his address, Pope Leo reminded his audience that “it is important that young men and women on their vocational journey find acceptance, listening and encouragement in their communities, and that they can look up to credible models of generous dedication to God and to their brothers and sisters.”

Noting that Pope Francis had released a message in March in preparation for the day of prayer, Pope Leo told the crowd, “Let us take up the invitation that Pope Francis left us in his message for today: the invitation to welcome and accompany young people.

“And let us ask our heavenly Father to assist us in living in service to one another, each according to his or her state of life, shepherds after his own heart, capable of helping one another to walk in love and truth,” Pope Leo said.

Setting aside his prepared text, he told young people in the square, “Do not be afraid! Welcome the call of the Church and of Christ the Lord.”

As we prepare for the ordination of three transitional deacons to the priesthood by Archbishop Charles C. Thompson at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis at 10 a.m. on June 7, we would do well to keep them in our prayers as they prepare to begin their priestly ministry.

We must remember that God calls each one of us to follow him in a special way, a way that corresponds to the unique gifts and talents that he has given us.

Transitional Deacons Thomas Day, Liam Hosty and Isaac Siefker have taken different routes in answering their call to minister to parishes in central and southern Indiana.

As we have read in profile stories of them shared during the month of May in *The Criterion*, each man brings unique gifts to his priestly ministry. But they also have at least these desires in common: to serve our Church as holy priests and to help each of us grow in our lives of faith.

As they prepare for their ordination, let us pray the soon-to-be priests assume their responsibilities with great confidence, since God’s will never takes us to a place where his grace cannot sustain us.

Our prayers can help uplift men on the verge of priestly ministry and all who serve our Church.

Pray, as St. John Vianney (the patron saint of parish priests) said, that for each and every priest, “The priesthood is the love of the heart of Jesus.”

Let us encourage parishes and families to continue praying for vocations, too.

Make no mistake: Our prayers are making a difference.

May the seeds that are planted continue to bear fruit.

Please, Lord, here in the archdiocese and throughout the universal Church, may it be so.

—Mike Krokos

Reflection/Sean Gallagher

Competing in the Indy 500 is a ‘pathway to humility’

Alex Palou has dominated IndyCar racing for the past four years, winning the series championship in 2021, 2023 and 2024. So far this season, he continues to be head and shoulders above the competition, winning five of the series’ first six races, including the 109th running of the Indianapolis 500 on May 25.

So, maybe it wasn’t a surprise when he took the checkered flag at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway last Sunday.



Nonetheless, Palou’s win was not a dominant one. He led only the last 14 laps of the race.

Drivers who dominate the race don’t always win it, though. Mario Andretti led 170 laps in 1987 before mechanical issues ended his run with 23 laps to go. His son Michael Andretti led 160 laps five years later and was 30 seconds ahead of the second-place driver with 11 laps to go when his car’s fuel pump failed.

And racers who dominate open-wheel racing in the U.S. don’t always win at Indianapolis. The last time a driver started off a season leading up to the 500 as Palou did earlier this year was legend A.J. Foyt in 1979. He finished the 500 that year a very distant second to first-time winner Rick Mears.

In many instances, the winner of the Indy 500 is the driver who can stay close to the front through the long race and avoid crashes and mistakes during pit stops.

That was the recipe for the first 500 win for Palou, a 28-year-old Spaniard.

Cool weather conditions and some risky racing led to several crashes early in the race. Two accidents happened on pit lane, one leading to an injury of a pit crew member. Alexander Rossi, who won the 100th Indy 500 in 2016, saw his day end with a fire during a pit stop.

Through it all, Palou remained safe,

narrowly avoiding a collision on pit lane early in the race. And he stayed competitive, always in the top 10, but not in the lead until lap 186.

His pass of 2022 Indy 500 winner Marcus Ericsson for the lead shows how narrow the margin can be in the race between winning and, at best, finishing second. Entering into turn one, Ericsson moved slightly up the track to get a good angle into the corner. That left a window open for Palou that he had to take advantage of in a fraction of a second.

He did, shooting low under the Swedish driver, taking the lead and never relinquishing it.

But Palou’s hold of the lead in the race’s last 14 laps wasn’t all due to his great racing skills. A good part of it had to do with two slower cars being in front of him at the time of the pass. Staying behind them increased his fuel efficiency, allowing him to avoid pitting to refuel before the end of the race.

Key factors in Palou’s victory were thus out of his control. He was never around the seemingly constant carnage early in the race. And there just happened to be two slower cars ahead of him when he took the lead that helped him make it to the end.

As dominant a driver as Palou has been since 2021, competing at the Indy 500 is a pathway to humility.

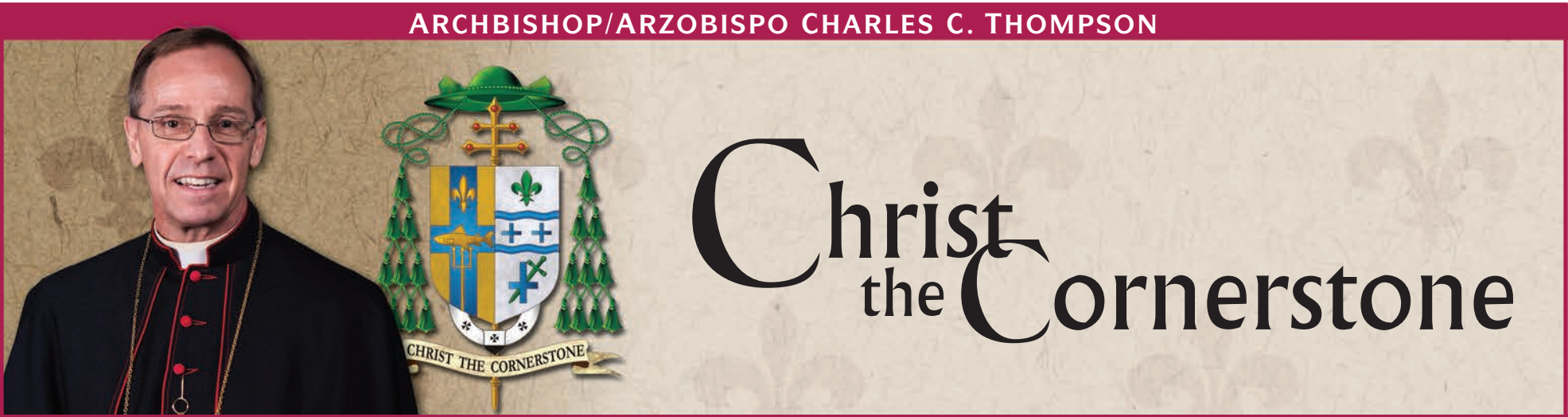
So is our Catholic faith in our journey to heaven. St. Paul showed us in his Letter to the Philippians that Christ is our leader on that path. Even though Christ was God’s Son, “he humbled himself, obediently accepting death, even death on a cross” (Phil 2:8).

We are only children of God by adoption, not by nature like Christ. Therefore, we have all the more reason to be humble before the great graces that our heavenly Father gives us that lead to the many little and sometimes big victories of our lives of faith.

(Sean Gallagher is a reporter for The Criterion.) †



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson delivers a homily during a trackside garage Mass on May 25 at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. The archbishop also later offered the invocation before the start of the Indianapolis 500. Spain’s Alex Palou won the 109th running of the race later that day. (Submitted photo by Charles Schisla)



Join with Mary as her son’s missionary disciple

May the Virgin Mary, whose entire life was a response to the Lord’s call, always accompany us in following Jesus (Pope Leo XIV).

Tomorrow, May 31, is the Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This is a very appropriate conclusion to this month dedicated to Mary. Tomorrow, as we recall her journey to visit her cousin Elizabeth, we will acknowledge gratefully Mary’s role as the first missionary disciple of her Son, Jesus Christ.

Mary was also the first Christian evangelist, the first to introduce the Incarnate Word of God to the world.

In her journey to “the hill country” to visit Elizabeth, who was also carrying an unborn child, Mary brought with her *Emmanuel* (God-with-us) and shared him with her cousin and with the child who Scripture tells us “leaped in his mother’s womb” (Lk 1:39-56).

This child would, of course, become St. John the Baptist, “the voice crying in the wilderness: Prepare for the coming of the Lord!” and the last great Old Testament prophet (Mk 1:3). What Mary set in motion, silently proclaiming the joy of the Gospel, John carried forward.

On the day he was elected pope, May 8, 2025, in his very first public message, “*Urbi et Orbi*” (to the city and the world), Pope Leo XIV called our attention to the Blessed Virgin Mary:

Our Mother Mary always wants to walk at our side, to remain close to us, to help us with her intercession and her love. So I would like to pray together with you. Let us pray together for this new mission, for the whole Church, for peace in the world, and let us ask Mary, our Mother, for this special grace: Hail Mary ...

Our new pope continues what Mary started in her journey to “a town of Judah where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth” (Lk 1:39-40). Her cousin’s response is powerful:

Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled. (Lk 1:42-45)

This greeting is the inspiration for the Hail Mary, the prayer that Pope Leo invited us to join him in praying on his first day as pope, and we are urged to pray this familiar prayer frequently, in the Rosary and in our daily prayers, because it brings us close to the Mother of Jesus who is also our Mother, the Mother of the Church.

In the Gospel reading for the Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Lk 1:39-56), St. Luke the Evangelist recounts Mary’s exuberant song, the *Magnificat*, which not only celebrates God’s goodness, but also provides the Church with the foundational elements of her social teaching:

He has mercy on those who fear him in every generation. He has shown the strength of his arm, he has scattered the proud in their conceit. He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, and has lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. (Lk 1:50-53)

As Pope Leo teaches, our Blessed Mother wants to remain close to us, and walk with us, as we seek to be her Son’s missionary disciples. Our

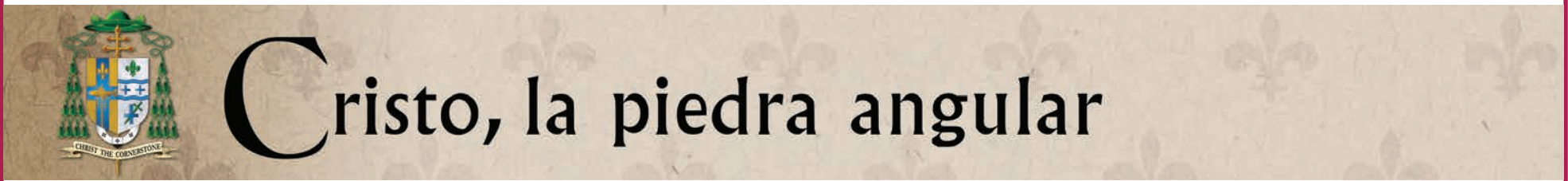
mission is to praise Almighty God as Mary did. And the plan we are called to execute is spelled out for us in the Beatitudes and in the Lord’s call to deny ourselves and take up our crosses as we follow him, the only true source of our unity and peace.

The program that we missionary disciples are called to follow is outlined in tomorrow’s second reading from St. Paul’s Letter to the Romans:

Rejoice in hope, endure in affliction, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the holy ones, exercise hospitality. Bless those who persecute you, bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Have the same regard for one another; do not be haughty but associate with the lowly; do not be wise in your own estimation. (Rom 12:12-16)

This is the way Mary lived, and by her witness we can discover what is required of us if we truly want to be Spirit-filled evangelizers as she was.

With Mary, let us proclaim God’s greatness and rejoice in the glory of his name. May we be faithful missionary disciples. Now and forever. Amen! †



Unámonos a María como discípulos misioneros de su hijo

Que la Virgen María, cuya vida entera fue una respuesta a la llamada del Señor, nos acompañe siempre en el seguimiento de Jesús (Papa León XIV).

Mañana, 31 de mayo, celebramos la Solemnidad de la Visitación de la Virgen María, lo cual resulta una forma muy apropiada para concluir este mes dedicado a María. Mañana, al recordar su viaje para visitar a su prima Isabel, reconoceremos con agradecimiento el papel de María como primera discípula misionera de su Hijo, Jesucristo.

María fue también la primera evangelizadora cristiana, la primera en presentar al mundo al Verbo de Dios encarnado.

En su viaje a “la región montañosa” para visitar a Isabel, que también estaba encinta, María trajo consigo a *Emmanuel* (“Dios con nosotros”) y lo compartió con su prima y con el niño que llevaba en su vientre y que, según las Escrituras, “saltó de alegría” (Lc 1:39-56).

Ese niño se convertiría, por supuesto, en san Juan Bautista, “la voz que clama en el desierto: Prepárense para la venida del Señor” y el último gran profeta del Antiguo Testamento (Mc 1:3). Lo que María puso en marcha, proclamando silenciosamente la alegría del

Evangelio, Juan lo llevó adelante.

En su primer mensaje público “*Urbi et Orbi*” (a la ciudad y al mundo), pronunciado el 8 de mayo de 2025, el mismo día en que fue elegido sucesor de Pedro, el Papa León XIV destacó la figura de la Santísima Virgen María:

Nuestra Madre María siempre quiere caminar con nosotros, estar cerca, ayudarnos con su intercesión y su amor. Quisiera, pues, rezar junto con ustedes. Recemos juntos por esta nueva misión, por toda la Iglesia, por la paz en el mundo y pidamos esta gracia especial a María, nuestra Madre: Ave María...

Nuestro nuevo Papa continúa lo que María inició en su viaje “a un pueblo de la región montañosa de Judá. Entró en casa de Zacarías y saludó a Isabel” (Lc 1:39-40). La respuesta de su prima es contundente:

Bendita tú eres entre todas las mujeres y bendito es el fruto de tu vientre, Jesús. ¿Cómo pudo sucederme que la madre de mi Señor venga a visitarme? ¿Tan pronto como escuché tu saludo, la criatura saltó de alegría en mi vientre! ¡Dichosa tú, que has creído, porque se cumplirá lo que el Señor te ha anunciado! (Lc 1:42-45).

Este saludo es la inspiración del Ave María, la oración que el Papa

León nos invitó a rezar con él en su primer día como Sumo Pontífice, y se nos insta a rezar esta oración familiar con frecuencia, en el Rosario y en nuestras oraciones diarias, porque nos acerca a la Madre de Jesús, que es también nuestra Madre, la Madre de la Iglesia.

En la lectura del Evangelio de la Solemnidad de la Visitación de la Virgen María (Lc 1:39-56), el evangelista san Lucas narra el exuberante canto de María, el *Magnificat*, que no solo celebra la bondad de Dios, sino que también proporciona a la Iglesia los elementos fundacionales de su doctrina social:

De generación en generación se extiende su misericordia a los que le temen. Hizo proezas con su brazo; desbarató las intrigas de los soberbios. De sus tronos derrocó a los poderosos, mientras que ha exaltado a los humildes. A los hambrientos los colmó de bienes, y a los ricos los despidió con las manos vacías. (Lc 1:50-53).

Como enseña el Papa León, nuestra Santísima Madre quiere permanecer cerca y caminar junto a nosotros, mientras buscamos ser discípulos misioneros de su Hijo. Nuestra misión es alabar a Dios Todopoderoso como hizo María y el plan que estamos

llamados a ejecutar se nos explica en las Bienaventuranzas y en el llamado que nos hace el Señor a negarnos a nosotros mismos y a tomar nuestras cruces mientras le seguimos a Él, la única fuente verdadera de nuestra unidad y paz.

El programa que estamos llamados a seguir los discípulos misioneros está esbozado en la segunda lectura de mañana, tomada de la Carta de San Pablo a los Romanos:

Vivan alegres por la esperanza, animosos en la tribulación y constantes en la oración. Solidarícense con las necesidades de los creyentes; practiquen la hospitalidad; bendigan a los que los persiguen y no maldigan jamás. Alégrense con los que están alegres y lloren con los que lloran. Vivan en plena armonía unos con otros. No ambicionen grandezas, antes bien pónganse al nivel de los humildes. Y no presuman de inteligentes (Rom 12:12-16).

Así vivió María, y por su testimonio podemos descubrir lo que se requiere de nosotros si realmente queremos ser evangelizadores llenos del Espíritu como lo fue ella.

Proclamemos con María la grandeza de Dios y alegrémonos por la gloria de su nombre. Que seamos fieles discípulos misioneros desde ahora y para siempre. Amén. †

Events Calendar

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

June 3, 10, 17, 24

St. Patrick Parish, 950 Prospect St., Indianapolis. **“Know Your Fertility” Class in Spanish**, 7-9 p.m., series of four sessions, \$75. Information, registration: ccorona@archindy.org, 317-800-9306.

June 4

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

June 5-7

St. Anthony Parish, 337 N. Warman Ave., Indianapolis. **Crossroads of the Americas Festival**, Thurs. 4-10 p.m., Fri. 4-11 p.m., Sat. 2 p.m.-midnight, live music, beer garden, American, Mexican and international food, \$20,000 cash raffle, free admission. Information: 317-636-4828. saintanthonybusiness@gmail.com.

June 6

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

Our Lady of the Greenwood Church, 335 S. Meridian St.,

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

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

June 7

Virtual Prayer with the Sisters of Providence, 7-7:45 p.m., for single women ages 18-42, prayer and sharing on topic of gratitude. Information, registration: events.sistersofprovidence.org, 361-500-9505, jluna@spsmw.org.

St. John Paul II Church, 2253 St. Joe Road W., Sellersburg. **First Saturday Devotion**, 8 a.m., rosary, litany, consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, confession 8-8:30 a.m. followed by 8:30 a.m. Mass. Information: 812-246-2512.

St. Matthew the Apostle Church, 4100 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Children’s Rosary**, 9 a.m., children of all ages invited to pray rosary every first Saturday, donuts and fellowship to follow, free. Information: julie3reyes@gmail.com.

June 8

Marian University, Norman Center Room 222, 3200 Cold Spring Road, Indianapolis. **People of Peace OFS Monthly Meeting**, 12:30-3 p.m., explore Franciscan spirituality with lay Franciscans, free. Information: 317-432-0909, jodymdalton@aol.com.

June 10

Church of the Immaculate Conception, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Taizé Prayer at the Woods**, 7-8 p.m., silent and spoken prayers, simple music, silence, virtual option available. Information: Taize.SistersofProvidence.org, 812-535-2952.

June 12

Hickory Stick Golf Club, 4422 Thompson Blvd., Greenwood. **SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Parish Men’s Club Annual Golf Outing**, noon-5 p.m., benefiting SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Parish youth athletic program, volunteer and sponsorship opportunities available. \$125, May 30-June 8; \$150, June 9-12. Information, registration: tinyurl.com/ssfcgolf25, text “2025golfouting” to 76278, jececil@ss-fc.org.

June 13-14

Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish, 520 Stevens St., Indianapolis. **Italian Street Festival**, 5-11 p.m., Italian food, wine, live music, free parking in Eli Lilly lots on

East and New Jersey streets, free admission. Information: 317-636-4478, info@holyrosary.org, indyitalianfest.org.

June 14

St. Anthony of Padua Parish, 316 N. Sherwood Ave., Clarksville. **Young Adult Feast of St. Anthony Celebration**, 4:30-8 p.m., 5 p.m. Mass with dinner following, free admission. Information: 812-282-2290, stayouth22@gmail.com.

June 18

Calvary Mausoleum Chapel, 435 W. Troy Ave., Indianapolis. **Mass**, 2 p.m. Information: 317-784-4439, catholiccemeteries.cc.

June 19

Our Lady of Peace Cemetery and Mausoleum, 9001 Haverstick Road, Indianapolis. **Mass**, 2 p.m. Information: 317-574-8898, catholiccemeteries.cc.

June 20

Northside Events and Social Club, 2100 E. 71st St., Indianapolis. **Catholic Business Exchange**, presenter

TBA, rosary 6:35 a.m., Mass 7 a.m., buffet breakfast and program following, \$20 members, \$25 non-members. Register by 4 p.m. on June 17. Information, registration: cutt.ly/CBE-Reg.

June 20-21

Christ the King Parish, 5884 N. Crittenden Ave., Indianapolis. **Summer Social**, 6-11 p.m., food, beverages, dancing, kids’ games, prizes, \$1 admission. Information: 317-255-3666, ctksummersocial@gmail.com.

June 21

Griffin Bike Park, 10700 Bono Rd., Terre Haute. **Quick Quack 5k Trail Run**, 6:30-7:30 a.m. registration, 8 a.m. race, benefiting Terre Haute Catholic Charities, chip timing, refreshments, register by June 12 for T-shirt; \$30 until June 20, \$35 walk-up price, \$5 discount for each member of four-member teams received at on-site registration. Information and registration: tinyurl.com/quickquack25.

Huber’s Orchard and Winery, 19816 Huber Road, Borden. **Huber’s Orchard**

Wine Run 5k, 9 a.m., benefitting St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities; includes T-shirt, shatterproof wine glass, finisher medal, race bib, online race results, pour of wine; \$25 ages 20 and younger, \$30 ages 20 and older. Information, registration: bit.ly/SECC25.

June 22

SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **Filipino Mass**, Divine Mercy 3 p.m., rosary 3:10 p.m., Mass 3:30 p.m. with homily in English, every fourth Sunday. Information: mariasolito@yahoo.com.

June 28

Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish, 520 Stevens St., Indianapolis. **Faithful Citizens Rosary Walk**, 10:45-11:45 a.m., meet in front of church. Information: holyrosaryprolife@gmail.com.

St. Ambrose Parish School Gym, 325 S. Chestnut St., Seymour. **Parish Festival**, 4-8 p.m., fellowship, food and fun, free admission. Information: 812-522-5304, memchdominik@gmail.com. †

Grand opening of 1st Choice for Women pregnancy care center in Indy is June 14

The grand opening of 1st Choice for Women’s new pregnancy care center, 3727 Kentucky Ave., in Indianapolis, will take place from 10 a.m.-noon on June 14.

Great Lakes Gabriel Project (GLGP) executive director and president Linda Kile and Indiana Attorney General Todd Rokita will speak at the event, which celebrates a nearly six-year effort of GLGP after a 2019 fire destroyed the former location of its 1st Choice for Women pregnancy care center.

Filling the need for a pregnancy care center on the west side of Indianapolis, 1st Choice for Women will offer free pregnancy testing, free ultrasounds and a Life Skills Education Curriculum for moms and dads to take classes and earn points for free items in the facility’s baby store.

The event will include a blessing of the new facility, light refreshments and tours.

For more information, contact Linda Kile at 317-213-4778 or linda@goangels.org. †

St. Michael the Archangel Parish will offer spiritual opportunities on June 4-6—including 36-hour adoration—ahead of Pentecost

In preparation for the feast of Pentecost on June 8, St. Michael the Archangel Parish, 3354 W. 30th St., in Indianapolis, will offer a series of spiritual opportunities on June 4-6.

At 7 p.m. on June 4, Franciscan Father Rick Martignetti will give a talk on “The Work of the Holy Spirit in the Eucharist” in the parish’s Kavanagh Hall.

Next, 36 hours of adoration will be offered in the church from 6 a.m. on June 5 through 6 p.m. on June 6, immediately followed by Benediction and Mass.

The talk, adoration, Benediction and Mass are opportunities to contemplate and honor the Holy Spirit in the days

before the feast of Pentecost.

They also provide ways to grow in love with Christ in the Eucharist and to experience the blessing, peace and transformation of time spent before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

All are invited—individuals, couples and families—to spend an hour or more in prayer then worship at the closing Mass.

Although anyone is welcome to come at any time, signing up for a specific slot(s) in advance is preferred, if possible, to ensure that someone is always present with Christ. To sign up, go to tinyurl.com/36-HourAdoration.

For more information, call 317-926-7359 or e-mail gabrielandelaine@live.com. †

Wedding Anniversaries

TOM AND CATHERINE (FAKER) DAILY, members of SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Parish in Greenwood, will celebrate their 65th wedding anniversary on June 11. The couple was married in Holy Spirit Church in Indianapolis on June 11, 1960. They have three children: Chris, Tim and Tony Daily. The couple also has nine grandchildren and one great-grandchild.



ROBERT AND JAN (GREENLEE) CAMPBELL, members of St. Simon the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis and former longtime members of St. Matthew the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis, will celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary on June 12. The couple was married in St. Mary Church in Muncie, Ind. (Diocese of Lafayette), on June 12, 1965. They have four children: Alexis Donaldson-DiMauro, Alysse Nemechek, Aaron and Chad Campbell. The couple also has seven grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.



ANDREW AND DARLENE (HILBERT) FRANK, members of St. Gabriel Parish in Connersville, will celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary on June 12. The couple was married in St. Gabriel Church in Connersville on June 12, 1965. They have two children: Deborah Napier and Steven Frank. The couple also has three grandchildren.



DONALD AND DOLORES (SCHUMAN) ALEXANDER, members of St. Peter Parish in Franklin County, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on May 31. The couple was married in St. Peter Church in Franklin County on May 31, 1975. They have three children: Amy Phillips, Dawn and Kevin Alexander. The couple also has six grandchildren.



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

The life of a mom: amazing generosity, shared faith and even guilty pleasures

(Editor’s note: The Criterion invited you, our readers, to share your stories and tributes about motherhood from two perspectives—the gift of having your mom and the gift of being a mom. We have received so many wonderful responses that we are sharing another collection of stories this week—with more planned for future issues.)

By John Shaughnessy

It took a life-changing moment for Mimi McKee to learn one of the most enduring truths about being a mom. “Like most, I didn’t quite realize the sacrifices and energies most mothers put into their lives until I became a mother myself,” says McKee, a member of St. Michael Parish in Greenfield.

Still, there was a moment in high school when she understood just how special her mom and her dad were. At the time in 1977, McKee and a friend were working together near the milkshake machine in a McDonald’s when her friend shared her heartbreaking situation. “She lived in an abusive home and was going to have to move away and would not have finished high school,” McKee recalls.

After her shift ended, McKee went home and shared her friend’s story with her parents, Pat and Ray Robak. Years later, she’s still amazed at how her parents responded.

“My dad was a lawyer, and he insisted we do a guardianship for her with another family. They had her the first half of our senior year, and my parents had her for the second half and several summers afterward. “I look back at this and am astonished that when I told my parents she needed help, they made it happen. They did not even know her really, and it was a true ‘Pope Francis message’ of being a place of mercy and hope where she was welcomed and loved. A true example of loving your neighbor as yourself. They helped her gain entrance to college, and they played a big part in her life while giving her a soft place to land.”

That extra effort reflects the approach that her mother has brought to all parts of her life, McKee says. A longtime volunteer at St. Michael School and Parish, and in the community, her mom was twice named Hancock County’s Senior Volunteer of the Year.

“Mom is generous and thoughtful,” McKee says. “At 89, the one thing that has remained constant is her faith.

I believe that is the most important example I was given.”

Keeping the memories alive

Among the great joys in the relationship between a mother and a child are the memories they have made together, the stories they continue to replay through the years with smiles, laughs and even tears.

One of the great heartbreaks of life is losing that connection.

“First, I would like to say that I miss my mom, our conversations, her laugh and how she loved all the little ones,” says Mary Igel of St. Jude Parish in Indianapolis. “Now, my mom has not passed yet, but she has had Alzheimer’s for many years and has not been able to communicate with all of her six children, her 21 grandchildren and 24 great-grandchildren.”

At the same time, Igel feels a need to share some of the details of her mother’s life—to keep her memory alive.

“She and my dad were married 69 years before he passed last December at the age of 91,” she says. “They led by the great example of their loving marriage and what our Catholic faith has taught us. She lived her Catholic faith.

“I was so close to my mom, and while raising my four daughters I would always call Mom first before calling a doctor when something was wrong with one of them.

“No one was a stranger to my mom; she was friendly to all and loved making people laugh. She came from a big family of six children herself and would always host the family Christmas in our family home. She loved being surrounded by her family.”

The tone of Igel’s memories turns wistful when she



Smiles and shared experiences often mark the relationship of Mimi McKee and her mother, Pat Robak. (Submitted photo)

adds, “She was very close to her mother and lost her when my mom was 60. She lost her best friend, and I feel like it really affected her, and she started to be depressed. We all think that is when she started to not remember things.”

The last memory Igel shares of her mother is one of joy and laughter.

“My mom was a great cook, and everything she made was homemade,” she recalls. “I went home one weekend to visit, and she made me and Dad’s favorite banana cream pie. The pie did not taste right, and she thought she left out an ingredient. Me and her laughed and ate it anyway.”

Joy, faith and guilty pleasures

The fun memories blend with the faith-filled ones, bringing joy to Joan Gutzwiller as she remembers her mother.

See **MOTHERS**, page 18

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Gladys Tarter of Holy Spirit Parish in Indianapolis receives the Archbishop Daniel Buechlein Excellence in Catechesis award from Ute Eble, archdiocesan director of catechesis. (Submitted photo)



Stephanie Whitley of Holy Angels Parish in Indianapolis receives the Archbishop Daniel Buechlein Excellence in Catechesis award from Ute Eble, archdiocesan director of catechesis. (Submitted photo)

Longtime catechetical leaders honored for their dedication to parishes

Criterion staff report

Two parish catechetical leaders in the archdiocese were recently honored for their longtime commitment to ministry. Stephanie Whitley of Holy Angels Parish in Indianapolis and Gladys Tarter of Holy Spirit Parish, also in Indianapolis, received the Archbishop Daniel Buechlein Excellence in Catechesis award. The honor recognizes catechists who have formed parishioners and helped them grow as disciples of Jesus in their lives of faith. Honorees have been recognized by the archdiocesan Office of Catechesis since 1996. Whitley served as coordinator of religious education at Holy Angels Parish for 24 years, where she led religious

education programs for children, youths and adults, recruited, trained and supervised catechists, and oversaw sacramental preparation programs for baptism, reconciliation, Eucharist and confirmation. She served as a liaison to parents, catechists and pastoral leadership, effectively communicating in a pastoral manner, and developed and implemented faith formation activities and programs for the parish community. Whitley also worked with the parish’s youth ministry program. A native of Lima, Peru, Tarter moved to the United States with her family several years ago, settling in Minnesota then later relocating to Indiana. She took part in an archdiocesan

Intercultural Ministry initiative and began serving Holy Spirit Parish as an assistant to Benedictine Sister Joann Hunt in its religious education office. When Sister Joann retired, Tarter became the parish’s religious education coordinator. She worked for 16 years at the parish, teaching Sunday school and preparing youths for the sacraments. She also worked with the parish’s Order of Christian Initiation of Adults program. “The Excellence in Catechesis award is given to parish catechetical leaders who do a great job in finding creative ways to authentically proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ and teach the doctrines of our faith, reaching and nurturing parishioners, and leading their catechists,” said Ute Eble, archdiocesan director of catechesis.

“Both Gladys and Stephanie have excelled at these things, and they have done it an authentic, caring and faithful way that has produced much fruit in their parishes and has set an example for other parish catechetical leaders.” The archdiocesan Office of Catechesis is again seeking parish catechetical leader (PCL) nominees for its Excellence in Catechesis award. Pastors and catechists may nominate their PCL, and current parish catechetical leaders may nominate each other. Nominations must include the name and parish of the PCL and briefly state why this individual deserves this prestigious award. Nominations must be emailed to catechesis@archindy.org by June 30. †



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SIEFKER

continued from page 1

often included the *Angelus* at noon and the Divine Mercy chaplet at 3 o’clock. And every evening included the family rosary.

“But my favorite devotion is the brown scapular,” says Deacon Siefker. “I began wearing it even before I made my first Communion.

“Most devotions aren’t things you can necessarily practice 24-7. But I always wear the scapular. It’s both a sign of my love for Mary and Mary’s love for me. And that’s something that exists 24-7.”

Daily morning Mass at 6:30 a.m. with the Franciscan Friars of the Immaculate at Mother of the Redeemer Retreat Center chapel in Bloomington was also a staple. And so was Deacon Siefker serving as an altar server at the daily Mass.

“I started serving at the Mass probably when I was 7 years old until I was 20” and entered Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary in Indianapolis, he says.

The desire to become a priest remained with Deacon Siefker until “somewhere in high school when I realized I was attracted to girls,” he recalls. “That opened a whole other kind of world and possibilities. For a while, I wasn’t sure what I was going to do.

“The bottom line was when my older brother entered seminary [at Bishop Bruté] for three semesters. I was graduating from high school and thinking about what I was going to do next. I realized that I was just kind of scared of the idea of being a priest.

“With my brother entering seminary, I realized I don’t have to make the decision before I go to seminary—you go to seminary to discern.”

Still, Deacon Siefker waited two years after graduating from high school before entering Bishop Bruté, which includes classes at Marian University in Indianapolis.

While his parents were supportive, his mom had concerns.

“He always had this purity of heart and this beautiful innocence, just this childlike simplicity,” Monica Siefker recalls. “I thought, ‘Oh, I bet God’s got some plans for him.’

“I thought it might be to the religious life, maybe something like a brother. But ironically, not to the priesthood.”

As his teacher, she knew her son had some learning disabilities and struggled with homework. She was concerned the rigors of higher education would be a stumbling block.

“But if God calls, he gives the grace,” says Siefker. “My husband Dale and I saw this change in Isaac that was just

tremendous. Isaac seemed to just flourish there” at the college seminary and university.

‘An enormous gap in my soul’

Deacon

Siefker continued to flourish at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad.

As in his childhood, prayer was central to his ongoing discernment—his prayers, and those of others.

“Several years ago, we asked family members to take one hour each day in adoration in front of the Blessed Sacrament to pray for Isaac and his vocation, so that he would clearly see where God was calling him and to pray for whatever graces that he needed,” says his mother.

Those who prayed include Deacon Siefker’s parents, godparents and siblings. His mother says they “hope to continue after he’s ordained, God willing.”

Love for the Eucharist, particularly in the setting of the Mass, is central to Deacon Siefker’s faith.

He credits Father Daniel Mahan, his pastor at St. John the Apostle Parish in Bloomington from 2013-19, with instilling in him “a love of the liturgy. I continued to love serving at Mass even as I got older and other boys my age were dropping out of it. But with Father Mahan, I just kept loving the Mass and serving and learning more about the Mass from him.”

That love for the Eucharist and the Mass caused him much suffering in March of 2020 when the COVID pandemic struck.

“When the lockdown happened, I went home to my parents’ house and was taking classes online,” he recalls. “For about a week, for the first time in my life, not only was I not serving Mass, but I wasn’t going to Mass at all, which was kind of a spiritually heavy blow.”

He connected with Father Thomas Kovatch, pastor of St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Bloomington, who was



Transitional Deacon Isaac Siefker, left, walks beside Archbishop Charles C. Thompson on Oct. 26, 2024, during a Mass in the Archabbey Church of Our Lady of Einsiedeln in St. Meinrad as the archbishop incenses the altar there. During the liturgy, Deacon Siefker was ordained a transitional deacon for the archdiocese. (Photo courtesy of Saint Meinrad Archabbey)

livestreaming Mass daily from his faith community’s church.

“He allowed me to come and serve for him every day,” says Deacon Siefker. “Still, even just that one week without the Eucharist felt like an enormous gap in my soul.”

‘A heart dedicated to the Lord’

That “unwavering commitment to the Eucharist,” says Ana Perez, is one of many traits she admires in Deacon Siefker. The director of the Office of Hispanic and Latino Ministry at Saint Meinrad got to know him during his work study in her office as a seminarian.

“He’s a gentle soul with a quiet strength, grounded in sincerity and guided by empathy,” says Perez. “His presence brings peace, his words offer comfort, and his actions reflect a heart deeply attuned to the well-being of others.”

She uses words like humble, compassionate and steadfast in faith to describe Deacon Siefker.

“His devotion to Christ, his reverence for the sacraments and the quiet strength he draws from his relationship with God are true inspirations,” says Perez. “His wisdom in teaching and preaching will help others grow in understanding and love of the faith.”

Father Mahan agrees. He sees Deacon Siefker “bringing a very keen mind that will help to explain better our Catholic faith and will help people to understand the riches of our Catholic faith.”

He thinks back to the years Deacon Siefker was an altar server at St. John the Apostle.

“He was very sincere, very devout and very clearly in love with his Catholic faith,” says the priest, who now serves in Washington as director of the U.S. Conference Bishops’ Institute on the Catechism.

He also recalls a conversation about the priesthood he had with Deacon Siefker, who was in high school at the time.

“I remember him asking how long it will take to become a priest,” says Father Mahan. “I explained that he had four years of college seminary before him, and four years of work with theology afterward.

“I’ll never forget the look on that young man’s face. Eight years! That was like a life sentence!”

The priest kept in touch with Deacon Siefker throughout those seminary years, and he is honored to assist Deacon Siefker in donning his first priestly vestments at the ordination Mass on June 7.

“I see a heart dedicated to the Lord and the service of the Church,” Father Mahan says of Deacon Siefker’s future priestly ministry.

“I see someone who will work hard in the vineyard of the Lord, somebody who will be very dedicated, somebody who will give it his all.”

‘He’s got just a great love for people’

Deacon Siefker has already started that work. Upon graduating from Saint Meinrad last December, he began serving as a deacon at Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Beech Grove.

“Being in a parish [before ordination as a priest] is a great idea,” he says. “You get to put theory into practice.”

That “practice” will become a lifetime mission for Deacon Siefker after his ordination. He will start his first priestly assignment in July serving as parochial vicar (associate pastor) at Holy Name and at Good Shepherd Parish in Indianapolis.

Deacon Siefker looks forward to taking part in “everything a priest does—marriage prep, baptism prep, teaching OCIA [Order of Christian Initiation of Adults],” he says.

But he is particularly excited “to preach the word, to break open Scripture,” he says, his voice unable to mask his enthusiasm. “Certainly in homilies, yes. But to make reflections and talks I give rooted in Scripture.

“In seminary, what I was most enthusiastic about was my Scripture studies. And then when I pray, the most fruitful prayer that I have is prayer that’s rooted in Scripture.”

But Deacon Siefker also draws inspiration from St. Anthony Mary Claret.

“He just had an incredible amount of zeal for converting souls,” he says. “His zeal and how much effort and enthusiasm he put into his mission—that’s something I want to imitate.”

It’s a vision that rings true with the woman whose little boy “always said that [he] wanted to be a priest when [he] grew up.”

“He’s just genuinely caring about the person in front of him, every single person that he meets,” says Monica Siefker of her soon-to-be ordained son.

“He’s got just a great love for people and wants to see them grow closer to our Lord and to his Church and to the sacraments.”

(For more information about a vocation to the priesthood in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, visit HearGodsCall.com.) †

About Transitional Deacon Isaac Siefker

Age: 28

Parents: Dale and Monica Siefker

Home Parish: St. John the Apostle Parish in Bloomington

Education: Homeschooled through high school; Marian University and Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary, both in Indianapolis; Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad

Favorite Scripture passage: Gen 3:15—“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers. They will strike at your head, while you strike at their heel.”

Favorite saint: St. Anthony Mary Claret

Favorite prayer or devotion: Brown scapular

Favorite book: *The Shadow of His Wings* by Father Gereon Goldmann

Hobbies: Chopping wood, gardening, making maple syrup

WELCOME, NEW CATHOLICS

Since Easter 2024 and at Easter Vigil Masses held on April 19 in parishes throughout central and southern Indiana, the Archdiocese of Indianapolis welcomed 824 souls into the full communion of the Church through the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults. Following is a list of the catechumens and candidates reported to *The Criterion*.

Batesville Deanery

All Saints, Dearborn County

Ryan Batchelor, Michael Gardner, Mason Gilbert, Olivia Hatfield, William Kelly, Matthew Magis, Christina May, Cole May, David May, Harrison May, Maxwell May, Daniel Roberts, Samuel Roberts, Zachery Streng (catechumens); Alexis Allison, Hayley Hatfield, Maria Rutherford, Donald Sydzzyik (candidates)

Holy Family, Oldenburg

Katey Stout (catechumen); Dave Adams, Linda Adams, Brandi Cornett, Kayne Cornett (candidates)

Immaculate Conception, Millhousen
Brittani Hamilton (candidate)

St. Joseph, Shelbyville

Audrey Berauer, Levi Burnside, Stefanie Garcia Ramirez, Bentley Held, Beverly Held, Judith Hettinger, Erick Luis-Julian, Myleth Luis-Julian, Johanna McNeely, Nayeli Muñoz, Alexander Garcia Ramirez, Christian Garcia Ramirez, Rogelio Reyes Rojas (catechumens); Judi Deak, Alan Joseph, William Lancaster, Wyatt Lancaster, Rocky Miano, Erica Plasterer, Brooke Southern (candidates)

St. Lawrence, Lawrenceburg

Brayden Ballart, Earl Beeman, Diane Craig, Kylie Flores, James Freeman, Bradley Hudgins, Molly Hudgins, Elijah Hudson, Gabriel Hudson, Jessica Pierce, Reagan Wahl (catechumens); Danelle Bartley, Teresa Cox, Allison Haire, George Hoffman, Virginia Hudgins, Samantha Pursell, Aislinn Steele, Kristyn Yelton (candidates)

St. Louis, Batesville

Devin Combs (catechumen); Ryan Holtkamp, Joshua Pohlman, Shirley Waldron (candidates)

St. Mary, Greensburg

Jacob Hempstead, David Henderson, Daniel Howard, Teresa Preble, Justine Ramirez, Stephanie Richards, Travis Snyder, Carli Weiler (catechumens); Joshua Avery, Shari Blackburn, Madalyn Bohman, Jenny Bruce, Kinsey Hempstead, Lillian Nobbe, Caitlynn Osting, Corbin Robbins, Colin Rodgers, Matthew Stewart (candidates)

St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Aurora
Thomas Sutton, Kaitlyn Waldon, Sydney Yauch (catechumens); Michael Fisher, Harlan Henry Hoffman (candidates)

St. Michael, Brookville

Mason Allen, Noah Sorensen (catechumens); Amanda Allen, Matthew Allen, Ryan McQueen, Chelsea Stall, Fred Wolber (candidates)

Bloomington Deanery

Our Lord Jesus Christ the King, Paoli

Michael Bush (catechumen); Joseph Bush, Michelle Bush (candidates)

Our Lady of the Springs, French Lick

Jesse Zehr (catechumen); Jacob Zehr (candidate)

St. Agnes, Nashville

Zachary Burton (candidate)

St. Charles Borromeo, Bloomington

Alexander Brown, Emmett Churchfield, Katherine Gantz, Madison Gantz, Mazey Gantz, Isabella Gonzalez, Allison Hartley, Susan Hartley, Ryley O'Brian, Kamara Womack (catechumens); Lidia Albright, Jay Arther, Shea Barrow, Jackson Hembree, Eleanor McCullumsmith, Jennifer Mills, Jacob Parliament, Erin Rayman, Thadius Wooden (candidates)

St. Martin of Tours, Martinsville

Milan Bravo, Sara Chouinard, Jessica Courville, Jeffrey Hilliker, Carly Hurst, Christopher Iacobucci (catechumens); James Alspaugh, Syreeta Bravo, Shelby Gallien, Shelby Huseman, Lauren McNichol, Suzi Ringer (candidates)

St. Mary, Mitchell

Luke King (catechumen); Benjamin Skees (candidate)

St. Vincent de Paul, Bedford

Logan Setzer (catechumen); Christian Davis, Chad Farmer, Charlene Hall, Georgia Key (candidates)

Connersville Deanery

St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Cambridge City

Stacy Herr (candidate)

St. Gabriel, Connersville

Mandy Becker, Kai Fairchild, Makenzie Fairchild, Sky Fairchild, Ashley Hall, Ellie Lakes, Jackson Lakes, BethAnn Mundt, Chad Reeves, Ashley Riedman, Nick Rybolt, Charles Smith (catechumens); Jonie Brock, Abida Fishburn, Vienna Smith, Tyler Snow, Kristie Weiler (candidates)

St. Mary, Rushville

Ashlee Ballinger, Bobbie Bialk, Alison Gates, Noah Gates, Austin Trebley (catechumens)

Indianapolis East Deanery

Holy Spirit

Adelyn Anastacio, Yaretzi Anastacio, Jahaziel Arreola, Kayla Arreola, Domingo Bonilla, Nayeli Castro, Angie Cuellar, Luna Evangelista, Sol Evangelista, Jose Javier Gallegos, Maysn Glesin, William Glesin, Joseph Gomez-Hernandez, Jose Luis Gonzalez, Sophia Grande, Nathan Hernandez, Carolina Hernandez, Karely Hernandez, Karina Hortelano, Natalie Hortelano, Emily Lopez, David Marquez, Edson Mejia, Amber Melton, Amiah Melton, Marly Morales, Omar Morales Lopez, Hanna Noveron, Odalis Oliva, Arlett Olivarez, Jo'smar Olivarez, Oliver Patterson, Cesar Puente, Edgar Puente, Maritza Puente, Charlee Seketa, Ryan Thomas, Giselle Xique, Maria Valeria Xique, Mateo Xique, Angel Zamora (catechumens); Collin Patterson (candidate)

Our Lady of Lourdes

Marki Jared, Andrea Mottern, Matthew Rohlf, Shirley Vazquez, Holly Ware (catechumens); Lacey Hersman (candidate)

St. Mary

Ivan Jasir Angel Bueso, Esteban Medina Jauregui, Diego Alejandro Discua Lainez, Victor Rodrigo Discua Lainez, Keler Jose Espinal Maldonado, Dionisio Gomez Oros, Michael Enrique Gutierrez Orozco, Dereck Jahir Rivas Sandoval (catechumens)

SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral

Daniel Klabunde, Amanda Works (catechumens); Hannah Carroll, Victor Creed, Isaiah Doss, Rowena Eaton, Elias Herrera, Dennis Nwandu, Eric Pruneda, Wayne Sanford, Chad White (candidates)

St. Philip Neri

Gianna Adams, Joshua Bautista, A'Mari Moorehead, Arailius Moorehead, Faith Parnell, Daniel Popoca, Dylan Ramirez, Jonatha Ramirez, Wagner Ramirez, Dulce Ramos, Osiel Rangel, Jacob Rodriguez, Gisselle Smith, Roman Tello, Irvin Tiego, Juan Tiego, Mariana Tiego, Kevin Tiul (catechumens); Devin McConnell (candidate)

St. Rita

Dr. Charlene Fletcher, Rose Wilkins (candidates)

St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower)

Myka Blackwell, Tracy Olsen, Sebastian Ponce-Rosas, Javier Welchez-Guerro (catechumens); Kyrese Rhodes, Nathaniel Blucker, Jeffrey Cannon, Suzanne Cannon, Johnna Castedo, Linda Chapman, Robert Freeman, Allison Gates, Chase Howard, Grant Howard, Octavia Jimerson, Lindsay Lindsey, Jeffrey Mull, Jennifer Mull, Eliot Stephens, A'isha Tandoc, Ojulu Thatha, Caleb Thornton, Rachael Williams (candidates)

Indianapolis North Deanery

Christ the King

Kristy Karpinski, Brody Langlois, Tyler Langlois (catechumens); Michael Chandler, Chad Collyer, Michael Mitchell, David Mohler, Steven Sharp (candidates)

Immaculate Heart of Mary

Margot Barnard, Beau Durham, Otis Gregory, Otis Gregory, Jr., Ari Lickliter, Gia Lickliter, Reggie Lickliter, Maya Louks, Brodie Osborn, Elise Osborn, Henry Schouten, Lucy Stepusin, Gabrielle Van Winkle (catechumens); Barnard Amanda, Megan Boocher, Hazel Brackett, Ramona Brackett, Milana Burke, Alexandra Hicks, Courtney Kelly, Brian Kemper, Claire Kemper, Heather Kemper, Natalie Kemper, Emma Legg, Jennifer McMahon, Paul Musson, Alison Osborn, Stephen Panah, William Tiebout, Nicholas Wildeman (candidates)

St. Joan of Arc

Anakin Demaree, Nolan Demaree, Margot Hume, Vincent Malainy, Jasmine Mitchell-Varga, Bryan Rodriguez, Valery Rodriguez, Colton Smedley, Nora Smedley, Tanner White, Daniel Wirt (catechumens); Jackson Bell, Will Kinder, Cameron Line, Jonathan McPike, Seth Pedersen, Kellie Swift, Yvette Williamson (candidates)

St. Luke the Evangelist

Lennon Bell-Hicks, Ann Conner, Noah Dieveney, Dayanny Garcia-Zelaya, Alec Kent, Fiona Kent, Jack Kent, Erica Patton (catechumens); Xya Bacon, Seth Biggerstaff, Taylor Bynarowicz, Katherine Crawford, Milanya Dickerson, Jamie Ellis, Joseph Farley, Sophie Fenech, Nick Forche, Betty Grady, Jake Matters, Morgan Matters, Jeff Meier, Christopher Wilburn, Jude Wilburn (candidates)

St. Matthew the Apostle

Byron Bedolla, Owen Bedolla, Aria Burgess, Walli Frost, Joseph Renie, Caius Sergi, Emilie St. Pierre, Kennedy Tarpey (catechumens); Eric Wunnenberg (candidate)

St. Simon the Apostle

Christian Cheatham, Yajaira Gomez, Parker Hollo, Charlotte Jared, Chris Kohler, Titus Miller, Champ Pittman, Logan Renfrow, Laura Roland, Theodore Wieczorek, Savannah Wyatt, Stephanie Wyatt, Troy Wyatt (catechumens); Jason Alaniz, Suzanne Alaniz, Megan Cheatham, Erica Church, Grant Church, Bob Goff, Morgan Holtzclaw, Elizabeth Jared, Lorna King, Joseph Malone (candidates)

St. Thomas Aquinas

Alexander Mitchell, Alan Trinh (catechumens); Zachary Deitch, Taya Wagner (candidates)

Indianapolis South Deanery

Holy Name of Jesus, Beech Grove

Russell Baker, Don Kord, Alexis Lynn, Adrian Maynard, Jenna Parrett, Ashley Shackelford, Katie Ward (catechumens); Michael Anderson, Emily Hartnett (candidates)

Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Mason Betzner, Reese Betzner, Noreen Dine, Michelle Griffith, Spencer Griffith, Franklin Holman, Harrison Holman, Ronnie Moeller, Stefeni Ramaekers, Kendall Richey, Lincoln Richey, Ethan Scott, Lucas Thieman (catechumens); Rachel Gutzwiller, Colleen Lane, Sean Lane, Jess Moerland, Christopher Richey, Tara Sexton (candidates)

Our Lady of the Greenwood, Greenwood

Delilah Baza, Christopher Brant, Anthuan Meza Chirinos, Luis Meza Chirinos, Fernando Cisneros, Britney Cruz-Cortes, Jesus Tello Cuatlaucatl, Nathan Garcia, Kaylie Hernandez, Sebastian Juarez, Gabriel Means, Dahyana Mora, Aubrey Nesses, Raelyn Rojas, Lisa Rudolf, James Schwitzer, Lilimar Valazquez-Cortes, Jade Valerio, Gael Vargas-Cunha (catechumens); John Feidl, Katherine Knecht, Joshua Ver Steeg (candidates)

St. Ann

Nicholas Freyberger, Emiliano Macedao (catechumens)

SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi, Greenwood

Brian Breedren, Grace Brown, Tanner Brown, Tucker Brown, Brayden Gordan, Connor Hawley, Andrea Kahrer (catechumens); Dawn Bilek, Mack Garsey, Megan Gerhard, Liza Nash Gordan (candidates)

St. John the Evangelist

Andrew Byers, Madison Considine, Jennelle Criss, Benjamin Dinkel, Airyn Hutt, Brian Leon, Bailey Moore, James Raines III, Alizon Rosales, Edgar Rosales, Ezra Speelman, Mirosлав Staffl, Mikayla Vega (catechumens); Emily Barajas, Michael Barnes, Anton Bezborodov, Nathaniel Blucker, Jeffrey Cannon, Suzanne Cannon, Johnna Castedo, Linda Chapman, Robert Freeman, Allison Gates, Chase Howard, Grant Howard, Octavia Jimerson, Lindsay Lindsey, Jeffrey Mull, Jennifer Mull, Eliot Stephens, A'isha Tandoc, Ojulu Thatha, Caleb Thornton, Rachael Williams (candidates)

St. Jude

Gary Garrigus, Mehm Hain, Jasleen Singh, Avery Slack,

Emma Slack, Elle Stouch, Oscar Thomas, Ian Waters (catechumens); Stephanie Adams, Emma Carmichael, Noah Conway, Sara Doyle, Emily Horatschki, Nathan Horatschki, Ken Johnson (candidates)

St. Mark the Evangelist

Angela Cing Lam Huai, Cheryl Jackson, Joseph Zen Khat Kiim, Keely Meadows, Kylie Miller, John Pau Nun Tuang (catechumens); Eden Majorins, Philip "Manny" Majorins, Rachel Majorins, Marvin Mathews, Justin Miller, Sarah Majorins (candidates)

St. Patrick

Ariana Gaspar, Fernanda Gomez-Terrez, Adrian Gonzalez, Yareli Hernandez, Anthony Joseph-Bays, Paula Lopez-Ramirez, Dylan Macias-Diaz, Elsa Mata-Zacapa, Carolina Ramirez, David Reyes-Avila, Mario Rivera-Bueno, Raul Salgado-Bedolla, Esteban Vazquez-Lemus, Bessy Velasquez-Varela, Jessica Velasquez-Varela, Daniela Velez-Garfias (catechumens); Paula Jones (candidate)

Indianapolis West Deanery

St. Anthony

Josue Barradas, Yathir Soto Cortez, Yetzeal Deciano-Nash, Fernando Garcia, Ofelia Gomez Gomez, Brandon Gomez-Caballero, Isai Rico Gonzalez, Lexsie Gonzalez, Yasmin Granados, Melany Grandos, Lesly Hernandez Suchite, Selvin Velasquez Herrera Gustavo Jacinto, Roger Leiva Lara, Nathalie Lopez, Jorden Munoz, Ayden Nurnberg, Osmar Ramirez Pani, Susy Pineda Rivera, Lennon Pinedo, Danae Ramirez Pani, Cielo Rodriguez V, Jonathan Serrano, Gianna Soto Cortez (catechumens); Olga Cazares, Amairany Cruz Betanzos, Amelia Garcia, Sayra Garcia, Dylan Granados, Ramiro Grijalba, Adolfo Herrera, Mauricio Gomez Lopez, Enrique Ondaz, Brenda Perez Lorenzana, Jose Villagomez Ruiz (candidates)

St. Gabriel the Archangel

Ariadne Rishell Arteta-Mendoza, Ashley Mariana Arteta-Mendoza, Eiden Ángel Baret-Infante, Kelly García-Leocadio, Melanie García-Leocadio, Melissa Lizbeth Hernández, Horacio López Isidro, Erick Alexander López-Villanueva, Giovanni David López-Villanueva, Frederica-Oluwakemi Malomon, Wilkencia Nelson, Marelín Consuelo Orellana Gabriel, Ángel Luis Pacheco-Ochoa, Sayri Gissela Pérez Carrera, Kelsey Rios-Senobio, Lindsay Rios-Senobio, María Félix Rivera González, Carl Evan Tanoh, Reina Isabel Villanueva Vega, Camila Monserrat Villeda Pérez, Elvin Andrés Molinares Zeledón, Christ-Kerryl Zossou, Frijuste Arnaud Zossou (catechumens); Yennifer Arellano Betancourt, Fernando Isaul Soza Avendaño, Yessi Claribel Bonilla Padilla, Joely Campohermoso, Ismael Morales Carranza, Kristhell Alexania Castro Pérez, Alejandro Hernández Corona, Jonathan Miguel Hernández Jaramillo, Erika Anahy Jijón Rivas, Stephanie León-García, Joandri Morales Carranza, Melania Morales-Garcia, Dieter Jesús García Oliva, Yesica Tiburcio-Ríos, Paola Stephanía Vallenilla Figuera, Dossi Belvia Yedemey, Lisbeth De Fátima Zeledón Tinoco (candidates)

St. Malachy, Brownsburg

Alan Navas Brito, Dylan Navas Brito, Christian Carter, Lauralee Datzman, Addison Dellinger, Tim Foy, Finnley Graves, Marlee Graves, Zach Gredy, Emma Guarino, Claire Hubbard, Matthew James, Samuel Jones, Jameson Juliano, Kristopher Moeller, Mia Moeller, Tami Nantz, Emma Rody, Grace Rody, Brittney Szczepanski, Trinette Szczepanski, Abigail Tano, Alexa Tano (catechumens); Scott Clodfelter, Jonathon Price, Kaylee Price, Bill Rickus (candidates)

St. Michael the Archangel

Denon Gibson, Christin Guedezeounme, Nellie Guedezeounme, Jamel Lissanon, Frank Menjivar (catechumens)

St. Monica

Sally Adams, Pam Carter, Melanie Castillo, Alexander Corea, Adriano Cueto-Gonzalez, Vanessa Diaz de Leon, Giovanni Ramos Gonzalez, Brayden Green, Adrian Reyes Hernandez, Juan Joaquin, Ariana Leyva Agustin, Edain Granados Lopez, Yuritzi Manuel Desales, Aiden Martinez, Maryerine Martinez Yanez, Santiago Franco Melendez, Adrian Rios Mendoza, Sindy Mondragon, Jeremy Murillo, Addy Norman, Maria Perez-Ayala, Ivan Perez-Bahena, Katherin Pineda Hernandez, Daisy Ramos Gonzalez, Gabriela Roque, Marlon Sanabria, Iver Sanchez, Alessandra Sotelo Lopez, Ricardo Martinez Yanez (catechumens); Gael Alanis Cruz, Fernanda Aquilar Ramirez, Juan Arroyo, Alexis Ascencion Francisco, Astrid Barraza Moreno, Brian Candlish, Guillermo Castro, Primitivo Chaga, Elisa Combs, Mariana Diaz, Jorge Fernandez, Yuliana Deydad Galindo Ibanez, Ariana Garcia, Fernando Garcia, Glenda Garcia Mezo, Geovanni Guadarrama Garduno, Ulises Esquivel Gonzalez, Victor Bernal Guerrero, Abigail Hernandez Balbuena, Ashly Lozano, Isa Mariz Barrera, Bairon Garcia Martinez,



The May family, featured in an article starting on page 1, hold candles after being baptized on April 19 during the Easter Vigil Mass in St. Martin Church in Yorkville, one of four churches of All Saints Parish in Dearborn County. The family members are David, left, Cole, Christina, Harrison and Maxwell. (Submitted photo)

Ivan Martinez, Yami Maus, Jose Nunez, Victoria Perez, Cristian Quintana, Diego Rangel-Andrade, Joselyn Rosales, Arely Santana Aparicio, Clehenemias Santiago-Robles, Jesus Villanueva, Emily Villeda Ayala (candidates)

St. Thomas More, Mooresville

Anna Allen, Derek Hawkins, Jon Rubeck, Lisa Worman (catechumens); Seth Emenaker-Cones, Theresa Rubeck (candidates)

New Albany Deanery

Holy Family, New Albany

Emerie Becht, Easton Hayes, Joshua Kidd, Larry Tonkel, Solomona Tuiolosega, Cathern Velasquez, Bernice Walker, Matthew Watson (catechumens); Kaitlynn Allgeier, Porter Blackman, Keira Chapin-Muth, Elise Edelen, Lydia Edelen, Robert Krugler, Everleigh Montgomery, Patricia Tonkel, Amy Watson (candidates)

Our Lady of Perpetual Hep, New Albany

Kevin Cleek (catechumen); Arthur McCormack, Cathy Zimmer (candidates)

St. Anthony of Padua, Clarksville

Sutton Jayne Skaggs (catechumen); Brad Coleman, Dana Skaggs, Kash Wharton (candidates)

St. John Paul II, Sellersburg

Jordan Arnold, Cordelia Bauhs, Lincoln Burke, Jay Byland, Nigel Couch, Laura Desmangles, Ellie Garrow, Andrew McAfee, Emma O'Leary, Artie Popplewell, Benjamin Popplewell, Mary Popplewell (catechumens); Sarah Brutscher, Jessica Dambros, Mark Foster, Ken Pettit, Ashleigh Schuhmann, Donna Vincent (candidates)

St. Joseph, Corydon

Roma Helma, Benjamin Miller, Lincoln Morgan (catechumens); James Havekotte, Christian Miller, James Miller, Brandi Sailor, Clay Sailor, Sarah Walker (candidates)

St. Mary, Lanesville

Gustavo Torres-Alejo (catechumen)

St. Mary, New Albany

Ana Cielo Jimenez Nucamendi, Cooper Pickles, Michael Pickles (catechumens); Katie Hentrup, Juliana Leite (candidates)

St. Michael, Bradford

Stephanie Jones (catechumen); Hannah Campbell, Jeff Krohn, Tyler Scherer, Cameron Shupe (candidates)

St. Michael, Charlestown

Kenneth Alcorn (catechumen); Brenda Wilson (candidate)

Seymour Deanery

American Martyrs, Scottsburg
Hiroyuki Willison (catechumen); Kasie Willison (candidate)

St. Ambrose, Seymour

John Barnard, Bladymir Gonzalez Barradas, Shelby Combs, Berenise Bialemy Escalante Perez, Everardo Ordonez Espinosa, Gomer Jafet Crisostomo Isidro, Tyler Maggard (catechumens); Miguel Arcos Carmona, Eber Crisostomo Isidro, Laurana Speer (candidates)

St. Bartholomew, Columbus

Aiden Alva, Eulices Antonio, Arleth Cordova, Thais Cruz, Juana Dominguez, Roberto Dominguez, Jason Gagnon, Brandon Gonzalez, Sharlyn Gonzalez, Julissa Leon, Camila Nolting, Brittany Perez, Naithan Perez, Alberto Rodriguez, Cassie Welker (catechumens)

St. Mary, North Vernon

Bentley Blount, Brynlee Blount, Braden Lewis, Nathan Lewis, Charles Woolf (catechumens); Kenny Blount, Jeff Eggers, Sherri Hornback, Sonya Lewis, Baley Waltz-Sander (candidates)

St. Rose of Lima, Franklin

Zackery Estes, Zahra Estes, Samuel Johnson, Terry Peck, Bethany Skaggs, James Skaggs, Xander Skaggs, Ian Taylor (catechumens); Jamie Lewis, Widd Lewis, Delaney O'Rourke, Ian Wilck (candidates)

Tell City Deanery

St. Augustine, Leopold

Aaron Mosby (candidate)

St. Paul, Tell City

Jacob Ling, Treylen Rogier, Eli Vincent (catechumens); Corinna Waggoner (candidate)

Terre Haute Deanery

Annunciation, Brazil

Kendra Miller (catechumen)

St. Benedict, Terre Haute

Anna Adler, Kimberly Dmitruk, Kimberly Walker (catechumens); Robert Barcus, Matthew Kish, Jacob McClure, Kristy Rightley, Kody Walker (candidates)

St. Joseph University, Terre Haute

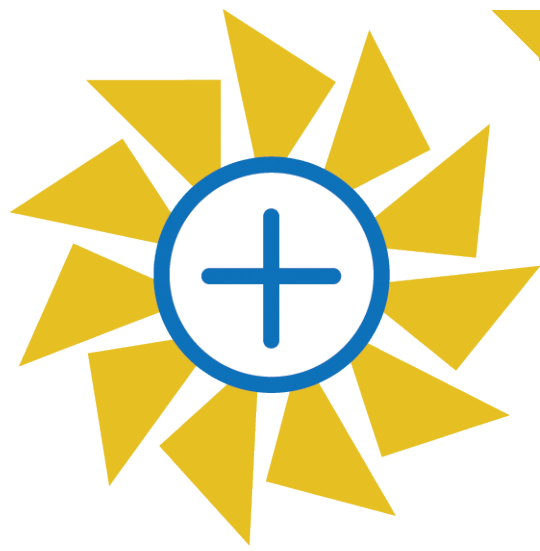
Stephen Antwi, Jordin Arney, Nicholas Cheever (catechumens); Nolan Mears, Renee Pierce (candidates)

St. Margaret Mary, Terre Haute

Yahir Martinez (catechumen)

St. Paul, Greencastle

Makayla Butler, Debbie Curl, Jay Fogle, Haiden Gibbs, Parker Rausch, Tracy Sievers (catechumens); Maggie Elwood-Dory, Alexis Meyer, Lauren O'Rourke, Sara San Miguel (candidates) †



2025 Evangelization Supplement

A summer road trip: College students lead teens and children on a journey to Christ

By John Shaughnessy

There's no doubt that many of the children who will return for the weeklong, faith-filled Totus Tuus summer vacation program will miss one of its fun-filled rituals this year.

In the past few years on a Friday afternoon, a water truck from a local fire station approached the hill by St. Mark Church in Perry County in southern Indiana, where the children waited in anticipation. And when the firefighters unleashed the water onto a slip-and-slide, the children took turns giddily heading down the hill with huge smiles.

That ritual will end this year. But the change is also an indication of how what seems like bad news is actually good news in more important ways for the archdiocese's Totus Tuus program—a program that's designed to bring children and teenagers closer to Jesus, the Blessed Mother and the Church.

Participation in the program in the Tell City Deanery is growing so much that it's being moved to St. Paul Parish in Tell City, where more classroom space is available for the estimated 90-95 young people who plan to attend the program from June 15-20.

Besides, there's good news on the water front, too. The program-ending water balloon battle will continue again this year, with Tell City mayor Chris Cail planning to participate.

While the number of children and teens participating in Totus Tuus—Latin for “Totally Yours”—is growing, it's the growth that she sees in the participants that most excites Megan Rust, the catechetical leader of St. Paul Parish in Tell City.

‘They had so much fun’

In her seven years of leading the program, Rust has seen more involvement from participants in Mass during



Maggie McBride, left, Katie Alley and Gabby Bickford show the joy that marked their involvement in the archdiocese's Totus Tuus program in the Tell City Deanery during summer vacation of 2024. (Submitted photo)

the week of the program, which has also led to more attendance at Mass throughout the year.

“I think Totus Tuus is a great jumping point,” she says. “For our youth group program, it lights these kids on fire. They're excited. They had so much fun at Totus Tuus, they're ready for the next thing. We've seen our numbers increase in the youth group, especially from kids who attended Totus Tuus.

“We had one young man who was on the fence about coming into the Church.

He attended Totus Tuus last summer, and we just

baptized and confirmed him at the Easter Vigil.”

Jennifer Beyer has seen Totus Tuus have a similar impact on the children and teens who have participated in the program at St. Michael Parish in Greenfield.

“I had a parent come tell me, ‘Thank you,’ at the end of one of our Totus Tuus weeks,” says Beyer, the parish's religious education coordinator. “She shared with me that during the past week when she would go to check on her son going to bed, he would have his rosary out praying—completely on his own initiative.

See **TOTUS TUUS**, page 15

Encounter: Who are you meeting unexpectedly these days?

By Anita Bardo

Who are you meeting unexpectedly these days? In the store, at the market, at a sports game or at coffee and donuts after Mass, there are those times of encountering others. And in those moments, we may not know the impact we have on others or the impact they could have on us.

The Samaritan woman's life was transformed when she had the encounter with Jesus at the well. Jesus said, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again” (Jn 4:14). When we see someone else's encounter with God or hear about their encounter, it should motivate us to have that same encounter with him, too. Have you had an opportunity to encounter others?

I was out one Friday afternoon with my mom, and I needed to stop by the

bank. I was depositing a check and the name on the check prompted the teller—a young man—to tell me his story.

He said, “You don't know me, and I don't know you, but can I share something with you?” It was about the birth of his son, and the name he gave him. Within that conversation, faith came up and he said, “I am not religious, but I am spiritual.” He began to share with me. He said, “We are all called to share the good news of Jesus,” and I smiled.

The young man continued, and at the end of our conversation, he asked if he could pray for me. “Whatever you are going through in your life right now, any challenges that you are facing, know that God is with you, and he will give you answers to your prayers in time, and tomorrow will be a better day,” he prayed.

At that moment I had tears flowing from my eyes, and I felt the Holy Spirit within me. The power of the Holy Spirit was present, and I could hardly contain myself getting back in the car to share this with my mom.

In the same way, in his 2013 apostolic exhortation “*Evangelii Gaudium*” (“The Joy of the Gospel”), Pope Francis says, “Jesus' whole life, his way of dealing with the poor, his actions, his integrity, his simple daily acts of generosity, and finally his complete self-giving, is precious. ... Whenever we encounter this anew, we become convinced that it is exactly what others need, even though they may not recognize it” (#265). I could have said no to the young man and went on my way, but the Spirit said otherwise. I felt that little moment made a difference in my life.

My encounter with this young man was a moment I needed and didn't know it. God provides when we need it most. When we encounter others or we have our own encounter, we let go of the shield we have put up and let God be in control.

At a recent workshop I was leading, a phrase was shared about being a “front porch”—being available for others to share their stories or to give an open invitation to join you for Mass or an event. One participant spoke to me afterward

and said, “Anita, you provide that ‘front porch’ for us. You offer opportunities for us to learn more about evangelization, simple approaches, and you inspire and empower us to know more.”

The work we do in the vineyard is built on love, strong relationships and encounters. It is not only about growing grapes; it is about connecting with each other and sometimes unexpectedly with God.

God desires for you to experience him on a personal level not just through stories or teachings. To truly know him is to understand his heartbeat, which reflects his love and purpose for our lives. This deep connection enriches our journey and helps us grow spiritually, just like the vines in the vineyard.

Who are you meeting unexpectedly these days?

(Anita Bardo is the archdiocesan Coordinator of Evangelization and Discipleship. She can be reached at abardo@archindy.org or 317-236-1466.) †





Parish evangelization teams work to help Catholics share their faith

By Sean Gallagher

There may be some 1.4 billion Catholics throughout the world today, but the Church began 2,000 years ago with a small number of disciples led by the 12 Apostles.

It was they who, empowered by the Holy Spirit, went forth from Jerusalem to proclaim the Gospel to all nations, inspiring others to place their faith in the risen Christ and bringing growth to the Church.

In a similar way, there are small groups of people in parishes across central and southern Indiana who have a passion to draw others to Christ and the Church and want to have more people join them in this effort.

This is happening in faith communities as diverse as St. Jude Parish and its more than 1,500 households on the southside of Indianapolis and St. Patrick Parish with about 100 households in Salem in rural southern Indiana in the New Albany Deanery.

In both instances, those involved in evangelization efforts are following the model of the Apostles who gathered in prayer with the Blessed Virgin Mary before setting off as missionaries (Acts 1:14).

Tammy Stewart, St. Jude’s recently retired director of evangelization, outreach and campus ministry, said that her parish’s evangelization team spent several months in 2024 in discernment and prayer before launching initiatives last December.

Both its “Mission Possible” workshop held late last year and its “Rescue Project” initiative held earlier this year have met with a good response from St. Jude parishioners. About 100 people attended each of the eight weekly sessions of the latter program,

which ended in April on Palm Sunday.

“Honestly, I think it’s prayer,” Stewart said. “We’re just going to give credit to the Holy Spirit on this.”

For the evangelization team at St. Jude, this time of prayer flowed into the nine team members sharing their faith in conversation. Stewart said that, at first, some were uncomfortable, believing they weren’t good representatives of the faith because of the many struggles they had experienced in their lives.

Nonsense, Stewart said, noting that such people are the “perfect example” of showing how Christ can change people’s lives for the better.

“We’re all broken, and we need to hear that you were broken, too,” she said. “Now you have Christ in your life. Look at your life. We have to hear those stories. That’s our main message here.”

Learning to listen well to other people’s stories was an important lesson for team member Mary Ball.

“It taught me to stop and to listen to people,” Ball said. “The number one thing I learned from our discernment is that we have to meet people where they are.”

At the same time, Ball also learned how to share her faith in concise ways that can be well-received by others.

And being willing to speak directly about the role faith plays in one’s life is a key skill the evangelization team at St. Jude wants to pass on to their fellow parishioners.

Stewart bluntly said that the saying attributed to St. Francis of Assisi, that believers are to “preach the Gospel always

and, if necessary, use words,” is often used as “a cop out” by people seeking an excuse for not sharing their faith.

“We have to use words,” Stewart said. “You have to share how Jesus Christ has made a difference in your life. What was your life like before you encountered Jesus Christ? What’s it like now? You have to share those stories.”

The parish’s “Mission Possible” workshop last December helped the team share that message with parishioners. The one-day workshop emphasized the importance of sharing faith and gave participants practical advice and suggestions for doing so.

“So often, Catholics feel like sharing our faith is impossible,” Stewart said. “They can feel intimidated by that. This [workshop] was a way of showing them that this mission is very possible.”

The team then built upon the success of the December workshop by offering the eight-week Rescue Project, which was developed by Father John Riccardo, a priest of the Archdiocese of Detroit, and his Acts XXIX ministry.

The program is centered around videos featuring Father Riccardo and included dinner for the participants and small group discussions.

The discussions allowed those at each table to practice how they can share their own faith with others.

“Catholics don’t talk about their faith enough,” Ball said. “In the Rescue Project, we did just that. It brought people out of their comfort zones to talk about it so that when they go out afterward, they’ll feel more comfortable doing it.”

When the evangelization team was planning the program, which started in February, they hoped that maybe 30 parishioners would take part. They ended up welcoming around 100 at each session.

“It was encouraging,” Stewart said. “For 100 people to come to show that their faith mattered to them and they’re open to going out and sharing their faith gave us so much hope and really energized our committee.”

Terry Thixton of St. Patrick Parish in Salem said that she and a group of fellow parishioners are taking a “prayer first, action later” approach similar to the one adopted at St. Jude.

They face different circumstances than the team at St. Jude, where the Catholic presence on Indianapolis’ southside is fairly strong.

“We don’t have a lot of Catholics here,” Thixton said. “But the Catholics we do have are very active in the community. I just would like us to be able to share the love of God and have more people come [to the parish].”

“We’re a tiny parish. But, you know what? It’s all good. God is good.”

Thixton was moved in part to help get St. Patrick’s evangelization team off the ground by her experience at the National Eucharistic Congress held in Indianapolis last July.

“I was like, ‘I’ve got to share this,’ ” Thixton recalled.

While the team in her parish is still discerning what concrete steps to take next, Thixton and her fellow team members are starting from a place where they know the ultimate goal—making evangelization a part of the everyday life of all Catholics at St. Patrick.

“I don’t think it just ends with our parish,” she said. “I think that it just becomes a way of life.” †



Tammy Stewart



Terry Thixton



Participants in a “Rescue Project” evangelization program at St. Jude Parish in Indianapolis share a dinner during a Feb. 16 session at the Indianapolis South Deanery faith community. (Submitted photo)



Listen-teach-send approach is dynamic way to evangelize

By Natalie Hoefer

When the resurrected Christ encounters two of his disciples discussing his crucifixion as they walk from Jerusalem to Emmaus (Lk 24:13-35), three things happen.

First, Christ asks what they're discussing, then listens to their story.

Next, when they're done speaking, he teaches them all that Scripture revealed about him.

Last, once the disciples recognize Christ in the breaking of the bread, their burning hearts send them out to share the good news.

Listen. Teach. Send.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) adopted this approach in their 2024 document "Listen Teach Send: A National Framework for Ministries with Youth and Young Adults."

The same three words provide "a methodology for evangelization" not just of youth and young adults but for those of all ages, said Paul Jarzembowski.

He shared these thoughts with *The Criterion* during a USCCB-sponsored workshop on "Listen Teach Send" at Marian University in Indianapolis on April 7-8. The document was created by the USCCB's Secretariat of Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth, for which Jarzembowski serves as associate director for laity.

Each of the three words is a section in the document, and each section has four parts.

"Listening can take place in a sense of encounter, presence, understanding and healing," Jarzembowski explained in the workshop. "Teaching is about proclamation, catechesis, sharing the truth in love and renewing sacramental life," and the person is then sent "to be a bold witness, to work with charity and justice, to discern their vocation

and to be faithful protagonists today."

He later shared with *The Criterion* how these concepts also apply to evangelization.

"If you just kind of share your story or proclaim Christ but you don't know how it can fit into that person's life because you haven't listened—you haven't encountered their realities, you haven't heard some of the things that need to be healed—then it could potentially go nowhere," said Jarzembowski.

"But the other part of the methodology is the sending, that it isn't just, 'Well, I'm just going to share this with you and have a nice day,' but that the end goal of evangelization is ultimately that we want a person to take ownership of that faith, to be a protagonist of their faith, to discern where God is calling them. It's not just to get them in the pew, but it's rather to inspire them to lead a life of discipleship."

Rachel Gilman, archdiocesan director of youth ministry, agreed with Jarzembowski that the listen-teach-send approach to youth and young adult ministry is applicable for evangelizing those of any age.

"The section on listening, I think, really gets into the heart of evangelization, of starting at that point of listening to the [person's] stories," she said. "Before we can even teach them about Christ, we have to let them know that we are here and that we listen, and we value their lived experience, and that we give them a place where they can share and ask questions without judgment."

As questions arise, the process flows naturally into teaching, Gilman said.

"It wouldn't necessarily be like, just hunker down and teach the faith," she explained. "It's more about using the experiences they've had but then continually walking with them and leading them to Christ."

"If we look at the road to Emmaus story, Jesus at some point does break open the Scriptures with them. But he doesn't just say, like, 'What are you doing? Let's read Scripture.' He converses with them first, gets to know their story, what they're struggling with, and then says, 'Hey, your answers are here in Scripture. Let me break it open to you.'"

Evangelization isn't complete without sending, Gilman continued.

"If we're listening to them and we're teaching them, but we're not asking them to also engage in evangelization themselves, then we're missing the boat on the whole story of what Christ wants us to do," she said.

"The sending really gets into, like, how do we empower [them] to then be evangelizers themselves, to use all that they have learned in their own accompaniment and then go do that same process with a peer or a family member, maybe who has fallen away from the faith."

Jarzembowski emphasized multiple times during the workshop that youth and young adult ministry is not a program to be conducted by one or a few people. His explanation holds true for evangelization.

"It's also the parents," he said. "It's also the families. It's also the



Participants in a workshop on the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' new "Listen Teach Send: A National Framework for Ministries with Youth and Young Adults" document take time for adoration in Bishop Chartrand Memorial Chapel at Marian University in Indianapolis on April 7. (Photo by Natalie Hoefer)

parishioners. Because it's not a program or a process. It's a journey. It's an experience. It's a walking-with.

"It's accompaniment—and each [person] deserves no less than to be accompanied."

(For more information on the "Listen Teach Send" document or to download or order a copy in English or Spanish, go to www.usccb.org/listen-teach-send.) †



Jeff McQueen, right, a volunteer for several ministries at St. Susanna Parish in Plainfield, listens to Veronica Castillo-Rogers, left, director of youth faith formation and teen ministries at St. Patrick Parish in Terre Haute, on April 8 during a workshop on the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' "Listen Teach Send" document. Written for ministries of youths and young adults, the listen-teach-send method also serves as a dynamic model for evangelization. (Photo by Natalie Hoefer)



TOTUS TUUS

continued from page 12

“Another fun story is I received an e-mail earlier in the year from a parent asking about the dates for Totus Tuus. She apologized for asking for the dates so early, but her child was just chomping at the bit. She said that her kiddo talks about Totus Tuus more than their Disney trip.”

Those stories reflect the overall power that the program has had at St. Michael.

“The program has encouraged students to live authentically as disciples and discern their vocations,” Beyer says. “It deepens their prayer life by emphasizing the importance of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, and Marian devotion. The missionaries bring not only their knowledge and love of the faith, but their excitement and energy. The students are just sponges, soaking it all in.”

That impact brings joy to Anita Bardo, the coordinator of evangelization and discipleship for the archdiocese. She’s excited about the six parishes across central and southern Indiana that will host the Totus Tuus program for a week this summer.

‘They build these friendships’

Besides St. Paul Parish in Tell City and St. Michael Parish in Greenfield, the program is being offered at St. Gabriel Parish in Connersville, a combined effort by Holy Family and Our Lady of Perpetual Help parishes in New Albany, and St. Joan of Arc Parish and St. Michael the Archangel Parish, both in Indianapolis.

Bardo is also excited about the potential impact on the four young adults who will lead the program throughout the summer: Mia Tyler, Ethan Szajko, Stephanie Gonzalez and Nathan Huynh.

“When they say yes to being a Totus Tuus missionary, they’re saying yes to sharing their faith and building upon it,” Bardo says. “It provides an opportunity for the college students to discern what God is calling them to do. They’re also able to share more of their faith journey with the young people they lead during the week.”

There’s also something about the bond between the young adults and the children and teens they teach that makes a deep impression on everyone involved.

“It’s like, ‘Wow!’” Bardo says. “They build these friendships for the whole week. To see the bond from the

first day to the end of the week, they don’t want them to leave.”

For Rust, that bond is the essence of what she calls “relational ministry.”

“When you can put a young person who is not necessarily familiar to those kids but is a shining example of their faith, you are planting seeds in these kids, in these teenagers,” she says.

“They see that faith, that commitment to Jesus that these young people on the team have. Do we see results two days later? Sometimes, but not necessarily. But it’s planting those long-term seeds about the importance of having that relationship with Christ.”

‘It’s really a joy’

As one of the young adults who will be a Totus Tuus missionary in the archdiocese this summer, 20-year-old Nathan Huynh has several hopes for his involvement in the program.

“I’m looking forward to teaching the children about our faith,” says Huynh, a student at Marian University in Indianapolis and an archdiocesan seminarian at Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary in Indianapolis. “It’s something I’ll have to do in the future as a priest, and I think this is a good way to get me started on that.”

The member of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in New Albany also hopes to form lasting friendships with the other three young leaders of the program. At the same time, he wants to help the children and teenagers in the program grow in their relationship with Christ.

“I’ve always wanted to bring people closer to Christ, even if their relationship with God hasn’t been the strongest,” says Huynh, a 2023

graduate of Our Lady of Providence High School in Clarksville. “There’s always time to turn to him.”

In her third year of leading the program, Bardo will once again strive to be a guide for the Totus Tuus missionaries.

“I get to walk alongside them on their journey to every parish,” she says. “I get to know them. It’s like being a mom. I treat them as my own. It’s really a joy. I tell them I’m here for them if they have any struggles, if they need to talk. I stay connected with them after Totus Tuus, too. I’ve had a couple kids get engaged, and two of my former kids are in seminary.”

Bardo also hopes to expand the program to more parishes in future summers.

Rust vouches for the difference the program makes.

“Totus Tuus is absolutely worth every penny, every act of sweat equity you put into it,” she says. “You see the ways the kids grow through the course of the week. You see both the little kids and the teenagers grow closer to Christ. All because we introduced four unknown college students to them and let them lead them to the Gospel.” †



Anita Bardo, coordinator of evangelization and discipleship for the archdiocese, takes a selfie with the four young adults who formed the Totus Tuus leadership team in the summer of 2024: Jordan Olarewaju, left, Alyssa Wanstrath, Maria Post and Jacob Russell. (Submitted photo)



CONGRATULATIONS TO CLASS OF 2025 CUM LAUDE GRADUATES

SUMMA CUM LAUDE

Oliver Berle, Mr. Robert and Dr. Sonya Berle, *Saints Peter and Paul Cathedral* | **Gregory Bishop**, Colonel James Bishop and Mrs. Lyudmila Aslanyan, *Joy of All Who Sorrow Orthodox Christian Church* | **Reece Bonhomme**, Drs. Chad and Chris Bonhomme, *St. Joan of Arc Parish* | **Kristen Castellino**, Mr. and Mrs. Dinesh and Cherissa Castellino, *St. Matthew Parish* | **Samuel Everly**, Mr. and Mrs. Trey and Shannon Everly, *St. Matthew Parish* | **Gabrielle Hadad**, Dr. Ivan Hadad and Ms. Angelic Gisclair, *Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish* | **Briar Keehn**, Mr. Alva Keehn and Mrs. Tracey Gillespie, *St. Jude Parish* | **Danica McLinn**, Mr. and Mrs. Jeffrey McLinn, *St. Jude Parish* | **Ryan Peterson**, Mr. Tim and Dr. Katie Peterson, *St. Simon Parish* | **Emily Pohl**, Mr. and Mrs. Chris and Candice Pohl, *St. Simon Parish* | **Olivia Uskert**, Mr. and Mrs. Michael and Amanda Uskert, *St. Simon Parish* | **William Wise**, Mr. William Wise and Ms. Erica Wise, *St. Simon Parish* | **Lauren Wright**, Mr. and Mrs. Michael and Sara Wright, *St. Simon Parish*

MAGNA CUM LAUDE

Sophia Beeson, Dr. Jim and Mrs. Karen Beeson, *St. Simon Parish* | **Reina Brooks**, Mr. Jeremy Brooks and Dr. Aarti Brooks, *Northside Baptist Church* | **Emily Cortese**, Mr. and Mrs. Patrick and Terry Cortese, *Christ the King Parish* | **Jill Dorsey**, Mr. and Mrs. Scott and Erin Dorsey, *St. Pius X Parish* | **Elise Elpers**, Mr. John Elpers and the late Mrs. Karey Elpers, *St. Jude Parish* | **Katherine Lade**, Mr. and Mrs. Jeffrey and Kristen Lade, *Holy Spirit Geist Parish* | **Isabella Miramonti**, Ms. Julie Miramonti, Drs. Charles Miramonti and Tricia Kreuter, *St. Louis de Montfort Parish* | **Anna Moore**, Mr. and Mrs. David and Nancy Moore, *St. Simon Parish* | **Mary Pastorino**, Mr. and Mrs. Anthony and Katherine Pastorino, *St. Pius X Parish* | **Justin Scott**, Mr. and Mrs. Brian and Ashley Scott, *St. Matthew Parish* | **Joseph Webb**, Lt. Joseph Webb and Mrs. Karen Houk-Webb, *Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish* | **Gideon Zawadzki**, Mr. and Mrs. Brian and Autumn Zawadzki, *Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish*

CUM LAUDE

Paul Arthur, Mr. and Mrs. Eric and Victoria Arthur, *Little Flower Catholic Church* | **John Bradshaw III**, Mr. and Mrs. John and Lizabeth Bradshaw, *St. Joan of Arc Parish* | **Anna Brennan**, Mr. and Mrs. Dan and Carla Brennan, *St. Simon Parish* | **Dominico Busack**, Mr. Anthony Busack and Ms. Kristina Busack, *Holy Spirit Geist Parish* | **Christopher Dravis**, Mr. and Mrs. Bryan and Barbara Dravis, *St. Simon Parish* | **Emma Drewry**, Mr. and Mrs. Chris and Stephanie Drewry, *Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish* | **Kathryn Kirschner**, Mr. and Mrs. David and Kris Kirschner, *St. Jude Parish* | **Alexander Lefebvre**, Dr. Christopher Lefebvre and Mrs. Emily Lefebvre, *Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish* | **Thomas Mariani**, Mr. and Mrs. Tom and Myra Mariani, *Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish* | **Zayra Pallikan**, Mr. and Mrs. Robert and Ana Alfonso Pallikan | **Jacqueline Quadrini**, Mr. and Mrs. Tom and Tamra Quadrini, *St. Pius X Parish* | **Veronica Rondinella**, Mr. and Mrs. Tony and Meg Rondinella, *St. Pius X Parish* | **Jake Shelton**, Mr. and Mrs. Nick and Allison Shelton, *St. Simon Parish* | **Addison Stanley**, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph and Emily Stanley, *Indian Creek Church*

Faith and Family/Sean Gallagher

Pass on stories of faith—and basketball—to the next generation

I was a young adult on my own 30 years ago when the Indiana Pacers had legendary playoff games against the New York Knicks. In many of them, Reggie Miller made unbelievable late-game shots to lead the Blue and Gold to amazing comeback wins in New York’s Madison Square Garden (MSG).



Those memories remain today like they happened yesterday. Oh, wait a second, they did happen yesterday as I write this column on May 22. Or something very much like them did. Or maybe even greater.

In game 1 of this year’s NBA Eastern Conference Finals on May 21, the Pacers were down 9 points with less than a minute to go against the Knicks in MSG.

After other late-game heroics, Tyrese Haliburton, this generation’s Reggie Miller, hit a two-point shot at the buzzer that hit the back of the rim, bounced high in the air and then came down through the net to tie the game and take it into overtime.

From there, with more amazing plays, the Pacers

ultimately pulled out a 138-135 victory over the Knicks. Ordinarily, I’d say it was an improbable win. But in the Pacers’ two earlier playoff series in this postseason, they’ve had two other crazy comeback wins in which they had been down 7 with less than 50 seconds to go. The improbable is becoming probable with the Blue and Gold.

These Pacers playoff wins have been neat for me to experience given my memories of their similar incredible performances from 30 years ago.

But what makes them so much more special is that I’m sharing them with my 18-year-old son Victor. Basketball has brought us together through the years. I helped coach him in Catholic Youth Organization basketball from when he was 10 and in the fourth grade. Now, he’s graduating from high school.

Along the way, he and I have followed the Pacers and gone to some of their games at Gainbridge Fieldhouse in Indianapolis, including a playoff game against the Milwaukee Bucks earlier this postseason.

In our mutual love for basketball and for the Pacers, it’s been special for me to share with Victor the stories of the Blue and Gold’s great playoff wins from the 1990s against the Knicks.

Now we’re making new memories together that resonate so well with ones I made by myself when I was on my own as a young adult 30 years ago.

All of this reminds me of a passage from Psalm 78 that touches on something that is at the heart of our faith and the way it’s lived out and passed on in families: “The things we have heard and understood, the things our fathers have told us, these we will not hide from our children, but will tell them to the next generation” (Ps 78:3-4).

As much as I love following the Pacers and making memories of them with Victor, my wife Cindy and I take much more seriously telling Victor and his four brothers “the glories of the Lord and his might and the marvelous things he has done” in the death and resurrection of Christ (Ps 78:4).

With the help of God’s grace, we also joyfully seek to help them see how the great stories of the Lord are unfolding in their own lives here and now through the power of the Holy Spirit given to them in baptism.

Pacers games, like other sports, attract people because they’re dramatic. But there’s no greater drama than the timeless love and mercy of Christ playing out in our families each day. †

Corrections Ministries/Deacon John Cord

Corrections Ministries sets 2026 goal to launch re-entry program

When a person leaves jail or prison, the odds are greatly stacked against them. Even though they have “paid their debt to society,” there are many prejudices, personal issues, and legal and financial challenges.



Most leave incarceration with a large financial debt, caused by legal bills and unpaid fines. This debt can be in the thousands or tens of thousands of dollars and is not forgiven. It may be challenging or nearly impossible to get a driver’s license. Finding a company that will hire them is very difficult at best. And finding a safe, affordable place to live can be almost impossible.

All these challenges are on top of the personal issues that face them. Recall, most people who are incarcerated have some form of mental illness. And most are also addicted to drugs and/or alcohol. Many also have physical issues. In addition, for those who have been incarcerated for many years, they are way behind in the use of technology and social media.

When a person leaves incarceration, they may have little idea of exactly where they are going to live and find a job. They are not given many resources and contacts. So, they are left to their own ingenuity to try to find help.

All of these compounding issues can cause a person to revert to their old ways. Most end up being arrested and incarcerated within a year or two.

Recidivism is the word we use for people who re-offend and go back to jail. Being released and sent out on their own wit and skills can cause most people to do exactly that.

Our society is not designed to help people coming out of jail or prison. In fact, we make it harder for people to succeed. Our prejudices and closed doors create a vicious circle.

Imagine if there was a way to change all of this. What if we could evaluate people and educate them before they are released? What if we could help them find a safe and secure place to live on the very first night? What if we could connect them to mental and physical health services right away? What if we could help them enroll in addiction recovery? What if we could help them find a well-paying job?

What if we could surround them with a mentoring team that would be there to guide them when they need help the most? What if we could help them to live in safe, permanent, affordable housing? And what if we could connect them to a church so they could create a social network in a place that would accept them as their sister or brother?

The archdiocese’s Corrections Ministries is in the very early stages of launching a re-entry program that will one day be able to do all of these things. We have a long way to go before we are ready to help people. Right now, we are in the planning and fundraising stages. Our goal is to launch this program on a very small scale in a few counties outside of Marion County in 2026.

You will be hearing a lot more about this program in the coming months. If you are interested in learning more and becoming involved, please mark your calendar for Saturday, Oct. 11 to attend our annual conference. The topic for this year is re-entry. The conference will have speakers who are experts in this field. We hope to see you there.

(Deacon John Cord is the coordinator of Corrections Ministry for the archdiocese. For more information on supporting the office’s re-entry ministry, contact Deacon Cord at 317-432-6604 or by e-mail at jcord@archindy.org.) †

Our society is not designed to help people coming out of jail or prison. In fact, we make it harder for people to succeed. Our prejudices and closed doors create a vicious circle.

Called to Holiness/Jaymie Stuart Wolfe

Thérèse of Lisieux: A century after canonization, her light still shines

When there were too many big headlines in the old days, news that otherwise would have garnered our attention often got pushed below the fold, or onto page two.



As we have observed the death of Pope Francis, the conclave and the early days of Pope Leo XIV’s pontificate, the centenary of St. Thérèse of Lisieux’s canonization—on May 17, 1925—has mostly fallen off the radar. But the details of that momentous event are worth remembering.

All the stops were pulled out for the Little Flower’s canonization.

Contemporary reports of it are spellbinding. Huge crowds gathered: nearly 60,000 inside the church and another 200,000 in the square.

Representatives of Europe’s royal houses, high officials and statesmen were present. But although they had been invited to attend, Thérèse’s four surviving sisters chose not to leave their cloistered vocations to do so.

Garlands of roses decorated the altars, pillars and ceiling. Twenty-five thousand electric light bulbs illumined the inside of St. Peter’s Basilica and loudspeakers were installed for the first time so that everyone could hear the Holy Father.

The procession began with 23 cardinals, 250 bishops, a large number of abbots, and other representatives of the Church’s religious orders, priests and missionaries. Then came the canonization banner, depicting the new Carmelite saint dressed in

her habit scattering roses. Pope Pius XI entered the basilica, crowned with the triple tiara, enthroned and borne aloft with immense fans waving around him. Everyone broke into applause. The procession alone lasted a whole hour and the ceremony for six hours.

Perhaps the most memorable thing about Thérèse’s canonization, however, was witnessed later that night. A centuries-old custom that had been set aside was revived, and the exterior façade of St. Peter’s was illuminated by thousands of lanterns and torches. Synchronized flames flickered from every architectural point, lining them all in fire. It must have been truly glorious.

Before tensions between the Vatican and the new nation of Italy erupted in 1870, the basilica’s exterior was routinely lit for special occasions such as papal coronations, some canonizations, and annually for Christmas and the feast of SS. Peter and Paul on June 29.

By all accounts, including one written by the German poet Goethe in 1780, the effect was breathtaking. This spectacle of lights required 360 men, called *sanpietrini*, suspended by ropes or climbing down the dome, to install and ignite them. By 1925, most of the *pietrini* had died—or were too old to dangle from ropes. Few men remembered how this feat had been accomplished, but somehow, they managed to make it happen. And at the canonization of St. Thérèse, nearly a million people came to see it.

In her brief life, the Little Flower shows us what we most need to know. God created every one of us for glory. We do not need to accomplish a long list of extraordinary

deeds or possess a full storehouse of riches, talents or even time.

St. Thérèse gives us what Pope Leo XIV ascribed to Christ Jesus in his first homily: “a model of human holiness that we can all imitate.” The fact that the centenary of her canonization occured one day before Pope Leo was formally installed gives us a chance to remember that the pope who granted Thérèse Martin permission to enter Carmel at the age of 15 was Pope Leo XIII. The Little Flower’s path to heaven was opened just when she needed it to be. The same is true for us. We already have everything we need.

Traditions grow and go. The last firelit illumination occurred in 1937. The installation of new exterior lighting at St. Peter’s this year makes it even less likely that we will ever see lanterns and torches on the basilica’s façade again. But what that tradition signified lives on. God places each one of us like lanterns on St. Peter’s dome, to illumine the night, show forth the beauty of faith, to draw souls to Christ, and inspire those who already know him to persevere.

God’s grace does not fade away. Saints are God’s gift to us, not just for a century, but for eternity. And each saint is unique. Sanctity is the fingerprint of every soul; holiness is unrepeatable because it is quintessentially personal. Whatever our vocation, God calls us to holiness, to be torches and lanterns of his love that all can see.

(Jaymie Stuart Wolfe is a sinner, Catholic convert, freelance writer and editor, musician, speaker, pet-aholic, wife and mom of eight grown children, loving life in New Orleans.) †

The Ascension of the Lord/*Msgr. Owen F. Campion*

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, June 1, 2025

- Acts of the Apostles 1:1-11
- Ephesians 1:17-23
- Luke 24:46-53

Celebrating the Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord varies from place to place. In some places, this feast will have been celebrated on Thursday, May 29. In these places, the liturgy for this weekend will be that of the Seventh Sunday of Easter.

In other dioceses, including the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, the feast is celebrated this weekend. These reflections will address the readings for the Ascension of the Lord, not for the Seventh Sunday.

The Acts of the Apostles supplies the first reading for Mass on this feast. It recounts the story of the ascension of the Lord from Earth into heaven. This passage begins this New Testament book.

As with the Gospel of St. Luke, Acts seems to have been composed for one person whose name was Theophilus. It is not known if this was a proper name or title. (In Greek, “Theophilus” means “friend of God.”)

Regardless, Acts opens with a powerful message. Resplendent is the ascension of Jesus from earthly space and time to return to heaven. This act of ascending, not of being assumed, reveals, as the resurrection, that Jesus came from God, is with God, is eternal and possesses the power of God.

Other points are important. The reading gives the credentials of the Apostles. Jesus chose them in a divine act. The Holy Spirit came upon them.

Jesus taught the Apostles as no one else was taught. He guided and directed them. They obeyed him. They witnessed the Ascension. They were especially trained because they had a unique mission. Yet, they were humans and confused. But Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would give them insight and wisdom. Indeed, the Holy Spirit came to them, which the Church will celebrate on Pentecost.

To underscore the divinity of Jesus and the Apostles’ mission, angels appear after the ascension telling the Apostles to go forward with their mission to preach the

Gospel and to bring into the world the mercy, love and presence of God in Jesus.

St. Paul’s Epistle to the Ephesians is the source of the second reading. It is a beautiful prayer, asking God to give the followers of Jesus wisdom and perception. The Apostle praised Christ who is now seated at the right hand of God “far above every principality, authority and dominion” (Eph 1:17).

St. Luke’s Gospel, the source of the last reading, also offers an ascension narrative. Jesus leads the Apostles to a place near Bethany. (The Mount of Olives, traditionally said to have been the site of the Ascension, is near Bethany.) Jesus tells the Apostles that the Scriptures have been fulfilled. This too is proof of the divine identity of Jesus.

It also is proof of God’s communication with people through the centuries and of his mercy.

The Gospel further establishes the Apostles as the chief witnesses and primary students of the Lord. The Apostles watch the ascension of Jesus and then return to the city determined and committed to pray in the temple constantly and to proclaim the praises of God.

Reflection

The readings powerfully testify that Jesus is God. He rose again to life after being crucified and dying. Jesus ascended into heaven. He was not assumed into heaven or taken to heaven by a power outside of himself. He went to heaven, breaking the bonds of Earth with the power of God. But he did not forsake the people of the Earth, then or in all the subsequent years.

The readings are strongly ecclesial, stressing the identity of the Apostles, who learned from Jesus. The Spirit would come to guide them.

Important for us today and for the continuing unfolding of salvation is that the Apostles formed the Church that continues today. Through the Church, God in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit lives and touches us still.

The Easter story and the story of salvation are approaching their climax. Jesus lives still in the Church. He has not gone from us. †

Daily Readings

Monday, June 2

St. Marcellinus, martyr
St. Peter, martyr
Acts 19:1-8
Psalms 68:2-3b, 4, 5ac, 6-7b
John 16:29-33

Tuesday, June 3

St. Charles Lwanga and companions, martyrs
Acts 20:17-27
Psalm 68:10-11, 20-21
John 17:1-11a

Wednesday, June 4

Acts 20:28-38
Psalm 68:29-30, 33-36b
John 17:11b-19

Thursday, June 5

St. Boniface, bishop and martyr
Acts 22:30; 23:6-11
Psalm 16:1-2a, 5, 7-11
John 17:20-26

Friday, June 6

St. Norbert, bishop

Acts 25:13b-21
Psalm 103:1-2, 11-12, 19-20ab
John 21:15-19

Saturday, June 7

Acts 28:16-20, 30-31
Psalm 11:4-5, 7
John 21:20-25

Vigil Mass of Pentecost

Genesis 11:1-9
or Exodus 19:3-8a, 16-20b
or Ezekiel 37:1-14
or Joel 3:1-5
Psalm 104:1-2a, 24, 35c, 27-28, 29bc-30
Romans 8:22-27
John 7:37-39

Sunday, June 8

Pentecost Sunday
Acts 2:1-11
Psalm 104:1ab, 24ac, 29bc-30, 31, 34
1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13
or Romans 8:8-17
John 20:19-23
or John 14:15-16, 23b-26

Question Corner/*Jenna Marie Cooper*

Basic historical knowledge, common sense lend credence to the Gospels

Some of my non-Catholic friends say that most of the Gospel is made up, as the earliest records show



like this. Could you comment? (Indiana)

I have heard various statements like this through the years in different contexts as attempts to supposedly refute Christianity in general. But in my mind, a basic knowledge of history and a bit of logical, common-sense reasoning makes such assertions seem far less plausible.

First of all, when your friends refer to “the earliest records,” my guess is that they are not specifying exactly which writings they have in mind. This is

because the books and letters of the New Testament, as well as some of the writings of the early Church Fathers, are actually our “earliest records” with respect to Christianity.

The New Testament is generally considered to have been written roughly between the years 40-100, within the lifespan or at least the living memory of the Apostles who knew Jesus personally while he still walked the Earth.

While there are some pseudo-Gospels (like the so-called “Gospel of Thomas”) from the ancient world which describe radically different and often more fanciful versions of Jesus’ life story, these were not included in the compilation that would ultimately become the Christian Bible for a very good reason. Namely, because the Fathers of the Church—who were much closer in time to Jesus’ earthly life than we are now—discerned that these works were not historically accurate.

Perhaps this discernment

might be construed as “knowing and covering it up,” but I think that’s a bit of a stretch. In the Church’s early centuries there were many spurious Gospel-themed accounts in existence, but they had roughly the same status as “fan fiction” today. Declining to lend official endorsement to such spurious writings is not the same as arranging to hide them via secret conspiracy.

Furthermore, aside from Judas, all of the original Apostles and many of the early popes and bishops either died as martyrs for the faith or endured comparable levels of persecution. It seems unlikely that these men would have been willing to suffer so intensely and give up so much if they themselves did not sincerely believe in the truth of what they were professing. Reasoning it out, what would have been the Apostles’ motivation for making up a new religion if it meant that they had everything to lose but nothing in this world to gain?

Looking at the idea that Jesus survived the crucifixion, this seems improbable from a purely historical perspective, since it’s well known to historians that the Romans were very effective executioners.

And the Gospel accounts themselves do not describe Jesus’ post-resurrection appearances as being emblematic of someone who suffered brutally but recovered. Rather, the Gospels describe Jesus as having been truly resurrected, that is brought from real death into a radically new kind of life.

For example, the resurrected Jesus is able to enter locked rooms (Jn 20:19), disappear from sight in an instant (Lk 24:31), and described as having changed his appearance (Lk 24:16).

Finally, if Jesus had been married in the normal human way, there would have been no reason for the Gospels to hide this fact. Marriage was generally understood in Jesus’ culture as the normal way of serving God and growing in holiness.

The idea of celibacy for the sake of the kingdom of heaven is something novel that Jesus introduces in the Gospels. The Church does not teach that Jesus was holy because he was celibate. Rather, the Church teaches that evangelical celibacy is holy because this was the new way of life that Jesus freely chose for himself.

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

My Journey to God

to be here

By Wendy Yanikoski

I stand
at the edge
digging my toes
in the sand
letting You know
that it’s good
to be here
sending waves of love
back to Your Hand
holding us together
through all the land
wherever we’ve been
or would like to be
but most of all
it’s good
to be here

(Wendy Yanikoski is a member of Most Sorrowful Mother of God Parish in Vevay. Photo: Footprints imprint the sand along a beach in Pensacola, Fla., on June 22, 2024.)(Photo by Natalie Hoefer)



MOTHERS

continued from page 7

And her joy turns to laughter when she recalls a hilarious moment of her own as a mom, a moment involving her children and an insurance adjuster.

Let’s start with the influence of her mother’s faith.

“One of my most cherished blessings was having my mom, Mildred Ann [Pope] Fitzgerald, as my mother,” says Gutzwiller, one of eight children. “Mom shared her faith by modeling the Blessed Virgin Mary in her everyday life. Her vocation in life was to be a mom, and she knew she couldn’t do it without her faith. Her favorite prayer was the ‘*Memorare*,’ which she taught each of us at a young age. To this day, that is my go-to memorized prayer.

“I have tried to repeat this faith pattern with my own children and grandchildren,

so they will believe that we can’t do it alone.”

While her mom loved her faith, she also had her guilty pleasures, including playing the slot machines at a casino.

“When Dad was still alive, Mom would always say on the way home, ‘Now don’t tell your father that I won because he will make me give 10% back to the Church!’ ”

Her mother also had a flair for cranking up the radio as she drove the family’s white Oldsmobile station wagon with the red roof.

“She would keep the beat of the music with the accelerator,” says Gutzwiller. “I tried that one time with one of the kids in the car. I was going up our driveway, the radio was playing loud, and I was keeping the beat with the accelerator, but I ran out of space. My car crashed right through the overhead garage door.

“I don’t know what happened, but when the insurance man came out and interviewed me, I told my kids not

to say anything. The insurance guy asked me a lot of questions, such as, ‘Were you drinking or taking any medications?’ I answered no, but one of my kids chimed in with, ‘Mom, you drink, and you take medicine!’ Oh, my.”

While Gutzwiller’s mom died in 2013 at the age of 92, the memories keep her close in her heart. So does a reality she shared with her mom, a reality that all moms share.

“You never stop being a mom even when your children are grown and have families of their own. It’s our special gift from God that no one can take away.” †



Joan Gutzwiller and her mother, Mildred Ann (Pope) Fitzgerald, shared faith and fun throughout their years together. (Submitted photo)

FAMILY

continued from page 1

in Dover called Ars Café & Meeting House, a ministry of All Saints Parish in Dearborn County.

“I love to talk to people, and I just really enjoy the whole coffee culture,” says Christina.

And as a non-denominational Christian at the time, she adds, “I thought, ‘Well, they love Jesus, so it’s not that bad.’ ”

Eighteen months later, Christina, Cole and their sons David, 11, Maxwell, then age 8, and Harrison, then age 6, were welcomed into the full communion of the Church during the Easter Vigil Mass on April 19 at All Saints’ St. Martin Church in Yorkville.

“I didn’t take the job to try to change anyone’s faith,” Christina recalls. “But I did think, ‘I’m going to show these [barista] girls what a relationship with Jesus looks like.’

“God has a good sense of humor, that’s for sure.” Because it was the employees’ day-in-day-out living of their Catholic faith that made Christina think, “I want that.”

‘There was no depth’

Christina was raised in California as a non-denominational Christian.

“I always had faith in my life,” she says. “But I always felt kind of separated from it, like all these people around me seemed really connected with their faith but I didn’t, no matter how many Bible studies I was in.”

Cole, on the other hand, was raised in no faith tradition when he grew up in Guilford. He did get baptized while serving in the Air Force—although his initial “call” to faith had nothing to do with God.

“I’m not super proud to say, but in bootcamp some of us would go to [a non-denominational church service] on Sundays to not be yelled at for two hours,” he admits. “But I did start to appreciate faith and felt drawn to it. So, I chose to get baptized.”

Christina was in the Air Force, too. She and Cole met on active duty while receiving air traffic controller training in Missouri. The couple married in 2010.

With Cole’s continued service with the Air Force, a switch to the Air National Guard and work with the Federal Aviation Association (FAA) as an air traffic controller, the couple and their growing family moved frequently.

That changed after the death of Cole’s brother in 2019. With that loss and Cole’s desire to spend time with his aging grandfather, he felt a pull to settle his family in the area where he grew up.

The Mays moved to Guilford in April 2020. The FAA transferred Cole to Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport as an operation supervisor. After 10 years, the family could finally lay down some roots.

Then began the search for a local faith community their family could call home.

“We went to some churches around here, and they were great at the time,” says Christina.

“But there was no depth,” Cole adds. “There wasn’t something that I could really buy into.”

Christina nods in agreement.

“We just were always kind of missing something,” she says.

“And then I started working at the coffee shop.”

‘A snowball that turns into an avalanche’

Like Christina, not all of those who work at the café are Catholic. But there was something she noticed about the Catholic baristas, all high school-aged and young adult women.

“They were never trying to shove anything down my throat,” she says.

Rather, it was how they lived, like mentioning going to adoration or making the sign of the cross before eating.

“You could tell faith was at the center of their lives,” says Christina. “I just felt like they had such a clear understanding of who they were fundamentally and what their faith meant.

“I was just so blown away and so impressed by that and thought, ‘I want that.’ ”

So, Christina started asking them questions about their Catholic faith. Then at home she would “just research more and more and more.

“And then I started thinking, ‘Why is it that one church believes that but another doesn’t? Why did Martin Luther take out those books [from the Bible]?’ And all of a sudden it’s just kind of like a snowball that turns into an avalanche.”

When Christina asked her barista friends about the Eucharist, they referred her to “John chapter six”—particularly the Bread of Life Discourse in Jn 6:22-59.

“So, I went and read it,” says Christina. “I’ve read it before, but this time it was like I was seeing over and over how Jesus is repeating that *he* is the bread.

“I remember a pastor at one church who always said, ‘If it’s repeated [in the Bible], it’s important.’ And here is Jesus repeating it is his body and his blood. It’s not just symbolic, because it’s repeated. And if it’s repeated, it’s important.”

Christina continued to research the Catholic faith, its history and origins.

“It’s like that quote [by St. John Henry Newman], ‘To be deep in history is to cease to be Protestant,’ ” she says. “I reached a point where I knew I had to be an atheist or I had to be Catholic, because there’s no in between—and I couldn’t be an atheist.”

It was a summer night in 2024. Christina and Cole were out on a rare night alone enjoying some ice cream, when she knew she had to say something to her husband: “I think I want to try to be Catholic.”

‘I want a church with roots’

Cole not only approved but joined Christina on the journey of exploring the Catholic faith. They started by going to a Sunday Mass.

“It was so reverent,” Cole recalls. “I really appreciated that and the tradition, how what they’re doing now is the same thing they’ve been doing for centuries,” versus the “flavor of the week” feel of the non-denominational churches they had attended.

“It’s like [those churches] were just evolving with the world, which is what we’re told not to do,” he says. “If I’m going to be Christian, I want a church with roots.”

The couple signed up for Order of Christian Initiation of Adults classes through All Saints “just to learn more” about Catholicism, says Christina.

And learn they did—she likened the stream of knowledge to “drinking from a fire hose.”

The content and discussions were “very educational and helpful,” says Cole. But what especially impressed him was the dedication of priests.

“The schedules that these men have taking care of one parish or multiple parishes is just—,” he says, stopping short as he shakes his head in awe. “They commit their entire lives to serving others with no breaks. It’s so commendable.”

Before long, the couple’s desire “just to learn more” became a desire to be welcomed into the full communion of the Church, along with their three boys.

Christina and Cole appreciated the reverence of the Mass from the beginning. But nothing prepared them for the beauty of the Easter Vigil liturgy.

“I cried the whole time,” says Christina. “It was just amazing, just so amazing.”

She’d “been waiting so long” to receive the Eucharist, she recalls. “The first time I got to receive it I just cried and cried.”

Cole describes the “whole Mass, every portion,” as “surreal. It was truly beautiful.”

While Christina and Cole had both been baptized, no records of the baptisms could be found. So, all five members of the family received the sacraments of initiation: baptism, confirmation and the Eucharist. And Christina and Cole had their marriage convalidated in the Church.

‘It gives us a real direction’

Life has changed for the Mays since seeking “just to learn more” about Catholicism.

Christina recalls the churches of her childhood as having “a lot of doomsday stuff, this kind of undertone of end times. So, I felt really affected by whatever was going on in the world.

“But now, I just don’t feel like I’m so emotional and devastated by any horrible thing that happens, like I don’t need to worry because God will be faithful through all of it.”

The couple’s prayer lives are different, too.

“You don’t know this,” Cole says with a shy glance at his wife, “but I pray at work before I take my shift ... asking for wisdom for myself and my [air traffic] controllers as we get through our shift. I never would have done that before.”

The journey has even enriched the couple’s marriage, says Christina.

“I felt that we had a strong relationship, but we wouldn’t really talk about God that much, and now we actually do.”

Compared to life before embracing the Catholic faith, Cole says he feels “like now I’m on a clearer path, versus just kind of meandering around.”

Christina agrees.

“I feel that our faith is truly, every day, being integrated more and more into our lives,” says the former coffee barista, who now homeschools David, Maxwell and Harrison. “And like Cole said, it gives us a real direction, a true north, not just, ‘Oh, I like what the pastor said this week.’

“Because even if there was no homily, even if it’s not a pretty church, even if I don’t like the vestments or whatever—it doesn’t matter because Jesus is truly there.

“The tradition and history and sacraments— [Catholicism] truly is the fullness of faith and fullness of truth. It’s literally alive, and Jesus is literally there. And it’s just amazing.” †

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



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 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

Investing with Faith/Jim Maslar

Help the Church be a good steward of your future gifts

A few years ago, we received a sizable check from a man’s estate. He was not a registered parishioner, nor did we have any record of prior giving.



There was no parish or ministry listed anywhere in the documentation nor instructions of “for the benefit of.” It was merely made out to the “Archdiocese of Indianapolis.”

It could have simply been an estate gift to the archdiocese from someone out of state or a non-parishioner of goodwill in the community. But honoring donor intent is something we take very seriously—gifts left through a will, trust, retirement account or other estate asset are often made by a person from a place of deep generosity, gratitude and meaning. They are also frequently the largest contribution a person will make to their beloved parish or favorite Catholic ministry. We, as the Church, want to steward them faithfully.

So we started looking. We reviewed the man’s obituary, found some family connections and eventually discovered that he was buried in a parish cemetery alongside his parents. We

contacted the parish and asked if they knew anything about him or this gift. Fortunately, they did. Years earlier, the man’s nephew—who also served as his executor—had stopped by the parish office and shared that his uncle intended to leave a third of his estate to the parish. However, there was no documentation of that conversation—or so we thought.

We reached out to the executor, who was grateful and able to confirm his uncle’s original intention. Thankfully, he also had dated notes from that original conversation. With this confirmation, we were able to direct the gift to its rightful recipient—to the delight and gratitude of the parish and the donor’s family.

But somewhere along the way—from the donor’s conversation with his nephew, to the drafting of estate documents, to the completion of beneficiary forms, to the execution of the estate when he passed away—the “for the benefit of X Parish” note had been lost in translation.

This experience serves as a powerful reminder: If you’ve included—or are considering including—a parish, school, ministry or the archdiocese itself in your estate plans (through a will, trust, retirement account, life insurance or other asset), please also consider letting them know.

You don’t have to disclose the amount. Simply sharing the type of gift and how you’d like it to be used can go a long way in ensuring it’s stewarded properly when the time comes. To help with this, we’ve created a secure online form that you can use (see link or QR code below).

How the archdiocese’s Catholic Community Foundation (CCF) helps

The CCF serves as a centralized resource that, among other things, assists our parishes, schools and ministries in processing estate gifts. The process can be nuanced, require careful paperwork and legal review, and differ significantly from daily parish/school operations.

In nearly every instance, the staff members are happy and relieved that we provide this free service and can take that work off their plates. Rest assured, 100% of an estate gift goes to the designated beneficiary—neither the archdiocese nor CCF takes a fee or percentage.

CCF also maintains a central archive of estate gift intentions for any archdiocesan parish, school, agency or the archdiocese itself. With 126 parishes, 67 schools and more than a dozen agencies, it’s proven helpful to provide a standard form that they (or we) can share with a donor to help capture this

important information. This practice also ensures donor wishes are documented, protected and easily referenced, even if local staff or recordkeeping changes.

Sharing your future gift’s basic details helps the Church:

- Process your gift efficiently when the time comes.
- Ensure your intentions are documented and honored.
- Respect any anonymity preferences.
- Express gratitude during your lifetime.

If you’ve included a parish, school, ministry or the archdiocese in your estate plans, please consider filling out our Planned Gift Intention Form at archindy.org/GiftIntention or scanning the QR code.

(Jim Maslar is a Catholic philanthropic advisor for the archdiocese’s Catholic Community Foundation [CCF]. Tax or legal information provided herein is not intended as tax

or legal advice. Always consult with your legal, tax or financial advisors before implementing any gift plan.) †



First Communion moment adds a chapter of faith and family for great-grandmother

By John Shaughnessy

As an early Mother’s Day present, Betty Ripberger couldn’t have asked for a better gift than the one she received from four of her great-grandchildren.

At 88, Ripberger has always considered her Catholic faith as a great gift that her parents gave her, a gift she also shared with her five children.

So on May 4, Ripberger was filled with joy and anticipation as she entered St. Mary Church in Rushville. She smiled knowing she was there with so many members of her extended family—everyone sharing in the special occasion of Camden, Emarie, Joel and Leah Ripberger all receiving their first Communion together.

When she saw her four great-grandchildren—Emarie and Leah in their white dresses and Camden and Joel in their dark suits—a heartwarming feeling filled her.

“How wonderful, how beautiful they looked. The boys might not like me saying that, but as their grandma, I can get away with that,” she says with a laugh. “There were 15 little ones who made their first Communion, and all the boys had suits, and all the girls had white dresses.”

She also savored the interaction that St. Mary’s pastor, Father Dustin Boehm, had with the children during the celebration of the Mass—the way he talked with them and asked them questions, which led all the children to raise their hands, wanting to answer.

Then came the moment when each of her four great-grandchildren received their first Communion.

“It was very, very special to be there—just to see that they love the Lord,” says Ripberger, a mother of five who has 14 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.

The memories of other first Communion came back to her, too, including her own

nearly 80 years ago in St. Elizabeth of Hungary Church in Cambridge City—the same church where her parents, Wilbur and Rose, had her baptized.

“My mom and dad were very active in the church,” she recalls. “They were farmers. They were a team, and they always went to church. So did my husband’s parents, Adam and Eleanor. They had a farm, too.”

That lifegiving combination of faith and farming also marked her 59 years of marriage to her late husband, Gene. They were married at St. Elizabeth and were involved in the parish. They also watched proudly together as their five children—Chris, Tom, Glen, Neil and Carol—received their first Communion at St. Elizabeth at different times.

She remembers all those first Communion as scenes of joy that were celebrated with a family get-together after the children had received the Eucharist. And the joy and the celebration flowed

again for Camden, Emarie, Joel and Leah, who are all 8 years old.

Now the four children share the closeness of another sacramental bond with their family, with their great-grandmother.

“It was special because I got to take the real body and blood of Jesus for the first time. And it was cool that we got to do it together as a family,” Joel says. “A lot of kids don’t have their great-grandparents still around. It was good she got to be there and see us receive Communion. I think it made her happy.”

There’s no doubt that it did. Weeks later, she still beams about that special day of faith and family.

“The Catholic faith has always been important to us,” she says. “It was wonderful to see them make their first Communion. They want to be a Catholic and make their parents proud, and I know they did. They’re very special. It was a wonderful day.” †



Betty Ripberger experiences the joy of being with four of her great-grandchildren—Camden, left, Emarie, Joel and Leah—on the day they received their first Communion at St. Mary Church in Rushville on May 4. (Submitted photo)

Marriage ANNOUNCEMENTS

Be a part of our Fall Marriage Edition

July 11 issue of The Criterion

Couples who are planning to be married between July 11, 2025, and Jan. 31, 2026, in a marriage that is recognized as a valid sacramental or valid natural marriage, or couples who were wed between Feb. 1 and June 14, in such a recognized marriage and did not have their engagement announcement in *The Criterion* are invited to submit the information for the upcoming July 11 Fall Marriage Edition. Announcements can be submitted by mail using the form at www.archindy.org/engagements.

E-mailed photos

Photos should be saved in jpg format and be at least 500 kb. Color photos are preferred. We recommend sending a photo where the couple’s faces are close to each other. Please send the photo as an attachment to the e-mail: alewis@archindy.org. Subject line: Spring Marriage (Last name). In the e-mail, please include the information in the form located below.

If it is not possible to e-mail a photo, a photo can be mailed with the bottom form. Please no photocopies or laser prints. To have the photo returned, please include a return addressed envelope with a postage stamp on it.

Deadline

All announcements and photos must be received by 5 p.m. on June 16.



Reported scholarship offers of more than \$55 million!

Where the Cathedral journey is taking the Class of 2025

Alabama A&M University
American University
Anderson University
Auburn University
Austin Peay State University
Ball State University
Belmont University
Bishop Simon Brute College Seminary
Boston College
Butler University
Citadel Military College of South Carolina
College of Saint Benedict
College of Charleston
Dartmouth College
DePaul University
DePauw University
Earlham College
Eastern Kentucky University
Franklin College
Grand Canyon University
Hanover College
Haverford College
Holy Cross College
Indiana State University
Indiana University
Indiana University – Columbus
Indiana University – Indianapolis

Indiana Wesleyan University
Ivy Tech Community College
John A. Logan College
Loyola University Chicago
Marian University – Ancilla
Marian University – Indianapolis
Marquette University
McKendree University
Miami University
North Carolina State University
Northern Kentucky University
Nova Southeastern University
Oregon State University
Purdue University
Purdue University – Indianapolis
Purdue University – Fort Wayne
St. Charles Community College
St. Edward’s University
Saint Louis University
Saint Mary’s College
San Diego State University
Syracuse University
Tennessee State University
Texas Christian University
The Ohio State University
The University of Alabama

The University of Tennessee
Trine University
Tusculum University
University of Arizona
University of Cincinnati
University of Dayton
University of Detroit Mercy
University of Evansville
University of Indianapolis
University of Kentucky
University of Leeds
University of Miami
University of Missouri – St. Louis
University of New Hampshire
University of Notre Dame
University of Southern California
University of Tampa
University of Utah
University of Wisconsin
United States Naval Academy
Vincennes University
Wabash College
Western Kentucky University
Xavier University
Xavier University of Louisiana
Yale University

GREATNESS CALLED AND THE CLASS OF 2025 ANSWERED!