



The Criterion

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See our annual Vocations Awareness Supplement, pages 1B-12B.

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Drawing closer to God 'God makes his glory known' through two children and the people who pray for them

(Editor's note: The Criterion invited our readers to share the special moments in their lives—or the one thing—that has brought them closer to God. Here are some of their stories.)

First of three parts

By John Shaughnessy

It was a time of heartbreak for Helen Stephon, a time when the grandmother first learned that her 3-year-old grandson was diagnosed with cancer.

The diagnosis of leukemia for Theo Quillen came more than a year ago, on Oct. 1, 2020.

Knowing the heartbreak could be overwhelming, Stephon instead chose to focus on hope for her grandson. And she found a special reason to do so nine days later.

On Oct. 10, 2020, Pope Francis had beatified Carlo Acutis, a youth who had dedicated his life to documenting and sharing eucharistic miracles from around the world before he died at 15.

"He and Theo have the exact same diagnosis," Stephon says. "Theo just celebrated his fourth birthday. Carlo needs one more miracle to reach sainthood. We thought the miracle could

See CHILDREN, page 10A

Helen Stephon enjoys a loving moment with her super-hero, cape-wearing grandson, Theo Quillen, who holds a copy of a book about Blessed Carlo Acutis. Stephon, her extended family and others have drawn closer to God through the connection they see between Theo and Blessed Carlo. (Submitted photo)



Supreme Court could be leaning to allow challenges to Texas abortion law

WASHINGTON (CNS)—During oral arguments just shy of three hours on Nov. 1, the U.S. Supreme Court closely examined—and seemed to have concerns about—how the new abortion law in Texas was framed and is enforced.

The justices were specifically considering if the Justice Department and if abortion providers in Texas can challenge the Texas abortion law in federal court. The law, in effect since Sept. 1, bans most abortions after six weeks of pregnancy and allows individuals to sue anyone involved in helping a woman obtain an abortion.

Among the justices who expressed some unease with the law's framing were Justices Brett Kavanaugh and Amy Coney Barrett, which could lead to a narrow ruling to enable the lawsuits against the abortion law to proceed.

Such a ruling would not address the broad scope of the law's constitutionality, but would return the cases to lower courts.

Many of the justices' comments during two back-to-back cases acknowledged this is a new challenge to face the court, but they drew on one case in particular for some guidance. Many brought up *Ex Parte Young*, a 1908 Supreme Court case that said state officials could be sued in federal court to prevent them from trying to enforce unconstitutional laws.

Kavanaugh said Texas had exploited a "loophole" in the abortion law preventing it from being challenged in federal court. And Barrett pointed out that the way the law's enforcement mechanism was designed—preventing defendants from arguing about the undue burden placed on them—seemed in conflict with the court's previous abortion rulings.

When Kavanaugh asked if states could enact similar laws limiting other constitutional rights, like gun rights under the Second Amendment and free speech rights under the First Amendment, Judd Stone II, solicitor general of Texas, said such laws could not be challenged in federal court either.

See SCOTUS, page 8A

Biden says pope told him to continue receiving Communion

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis and U.S. President Joe Biden had an unusually long private meeting at the Vatican on Oct. 29, talking about the climate crisis and poverty, but not about abortion, the president said.

Some U.S. bishops have argued that Biden, who regularly attends Mass, should not receive Communion because of his support for legalized abortion, while Catholic Church teaching emphasizes the sacredness of human life from conception to natural death.

See BIDEN, page 2A



U.S. President Joe Biden greets Pope Francis at the Vatican on Oct. 29. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

BIDEN

continued from page 1A

Asked if abortion was one of the topics of his meeting with the pope, Biden responded, “We just talked about the fact he was happy that I was a good Catholic, and I should keep receiving Communion.”

Biden spoke to reporters at Rome’s Palazzo Chigi where he was meeting Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi after meeting Pope Francis.

The Vatican described the president’s meetings with both the pope and with top Vatican diplomats

as consisting of “cordial discussions,” with both sides “focused on the joint commitment to the protection and care of the planet, the health care situation and the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.”

They also discussed “refugees and assistance to migrants,” the Vatican said, and “reference was also made to the protection of human rights, including freedom of religion and conscience.”

The pope and the president also exchanged “views on some matters regarding the current international situation, also in the context of the imminent G20 summit in Rome, and on the promotion of peace in the world through political negotiation,” it said.

According to a statement released by the White House, “President Biden thanked His Holiness for his advocacy for the world’s poor and those suffering from hunger, conflict and persecution.

“He lauded Pope Francis’ leadership in fighting the climate crisis, as well as his advocacy to ensure the pandemic ends for everyone through vaccine sharing and an equitable global economic recovery,” the statement said.

During a nearly 90-minute meeting in the library of the Apostolic Palace, which included 75 minutes of closed-door discussions between the two leaders, Pope Francis gave Biden a large painted ceramic tile of a pilgrim walking along Rome’s Tiber River and pointing to St. Peter’s Basilica in the distance. It and its border of shell designs symbolize “protection from adversity” during one’s spiritual growth and the hope of reaching a deeper and more fulfilling purpose at the end of this spiritual journey, according to an explanation of the artistic piece.

Pope Francis also gave the president a signed copy of his message for World Day

of Peace 2021, a collection of his major documents, including his document on human fraternity, and the book, *Why Are You Afraid? Have You No Faith? The World Facing the Pandemic*. The book contains photographs and homilies, messages and prayers the pope delivered during the pandemic, emphasizing the importance of love, hope, solidarity and the common good.

Biden presented Pope Francis with a framed, handwoven “fiddleback” chasuble that had been made by Gamarellis, the famous Rome tailor shop, in 1930, for Jesuits in the United States. The White House was also making a donation of winter clothing to charities in the name of Pope Francis to commemorate the World Day of the Poor on Nov. 14.

Biden also gave the pope a copy of his memoir, *Promise Me, Dad: A Year of Hope, Hardship, and Purpose*, about losing his firstborn son, Beau Biden, to brain cancer at the age of 46 and a presidential command coin inscribed with the unit of his late son, who had been deployed to Iraq in 2008.

Biden explained the reason for the coin to the pope, “I’m not sure this is appropriate, but there’s a tradition in America that the president has what is called a command coin that he gives to warriors and leaders and you are the most significant warrior for peace I’ve ever met.

“And with your permission, I’d like to give you this coin,” he said, saying, “I know my son would want me to give this to you.

“The tradition—I’m only kidding about this—next time I see you, if you don’t have it, you have to buy the drinks,” Biden said, adding, however, “I’m the only Irishman you’ve ever met who’s never had a drink.”

Later, as the pope walked Biden to the door, he thanked him for the visit and “for this,” he said, clutching the coin.

After meeting the pope, Biden went downstairs to meet Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, and Archbishop Paul Gallagher, the Vatican foreign minister. In addition to his wife, Jill Biden, the president traveled with a 10-person entourage of senior White House staff, including U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Jake Sullivan, his national security adviser.

The White House said in a statement that those discussions included “efforts to rally global support for vaccinating the developing world against COVID-19,” and Biden thanking the Vatican for its “leadership in fighting the climate crisis” and for



Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

November 5–18, 2021

November 5 – 5 p.m.
LIFE Runners Mass and Dinner at St. Michael the Archangel Parish, Indianapolis

November 6 – 10 a.m.
Archdiocesan Pastoral Council meeting at St. Bartholomew Parish, Columbus

November 7 – 9:30 a.m.
Mass for the Sisters of St. Francis at Oldenburg Franciscan Center Chapel, Oldenburg

November 7 – 2 p.m.
Confirmation Mass for the youths of St. Bridget of Ireland Parish, Liberty; St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, Richmond; St. Elizabeth of Hungary Parish, Cambridge City; St. Gabriel Parish, Connersville; St. Anne Parish, New Castle; and St. Mary Parish, Rushville, at St. Gabriel Church, Connersville

November 7 – 5 p.m.
First Sunday Dinner with priests at St. Gabriel Parish, Connersville

November 8 – 2 p.m.
Catholic university presidents meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

November 9 – 10:30 a.m.
Priest Personnel Board meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center

November 10 – 10 a.m.
Department Heads meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center

November 10 – 12:30 p.m.
Lunch gathering with Archdiocese of Indianapolis priests, Indianapolis

November 11 – 8:15 a.m.
Virtual Judicatories meeting

November 11 – 3 p.m.
Archdiocesan Finance Council meeting and Mass at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center

November 13-18
U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee and General Meeting, Baltimore, Md.

“speaking out on behalf of the wrongfully detained, including in Venezuela and Cuba.

“The leaders committed to continue using their voices to advocate for personal and religious freedoms worldwide,” the White House said.

The Vatican had unexpectedly canceled—about 24 hours before Biden’s arrival—a scheduled livestream of the visit to the objections of reporters. Accredited journalists covering the Vatican have not been present for the beginning and concluding portions of any meetings with heads of state in the papal library since late February 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A group of reporters was given permission to be present for Biden’s arrival by car in the San Damaso Courtyard of the Apostolic Palace and a livestream was aired only of the

presidential vehicle convoy arriving at the Vatican and stopping in the courtyard.

The only explanation the Vatican provided was that no livestreams of the pope’s meetings with heads of state have been provided since the pandemic began. However, as is customary, Vatican Media provided photographs and edited footage of some parts of the meeting.

The private papal audience was Biden’s first presidential visit to the Vatican. Pope Francis had previously met Biden three times when Biden was vice president; the previous time was in 2016, after they both spoke at a conference on adult stem-cell research at the Vatican.

Biden is now the 14th U.S. president to have met a pope at the Vatican and the second Catholic president after President John F. Kennedy met Pope Paul VI almost 60 years ago. †

Biden attends Mass in Rome, tells reporters of his admiration for pope

ROME (CNS)—Pope Francis “is a man who has a great empathy. He’s a man who understands that part of his Christianity is to reach out and forgive,” U.S. President Joe Biden told reporters in Rome on Oct. 31.

On the margins of the G-20 summit in Rome, Biden repeatedly was asked about his faith and his meeting with Pope Francis.

Skipping a cultural event planned for the heads of state on Oct. 30, Biden went to the vigil Mass at St. Patrick’s Church, official home of the U.S. Catholic community in Rome. A reporter for the Associated Press, who was at the church for the Mass, said the president received Communion.

The parish, located across the street from the U.S. Embassy to Italy, is staffed by Paulist priests. Paulist Father Joe Ciccone was the main celebrant and homilist at the Mass; Paulist Father Steven J. Petroff, the pastor, concelebrated and gave Biden Communion. Paulist Father Matthew Berrios also concelebrated.

In a post on the parish Facebook page later, Father Petroff said the three priests “were honored to welcome the president and first lady on behalf of St. Patrick’s Catholic American community in Rome and the Paulist Fathers. All are welcome!”

Before leaving Rome, Biden also went to Mass on Nov. 1 in the residence of the U.S. ambassador to Italy. Jesuit Father David McCallum, the Rome-based

executive director of the Jesuit’s Discerning Leadership Program, said he celebrated the early morning Mass for the feast of All Saints. He also posted photos on his Facebook page.

Some Catholics, including a few U.S. bishops, have argued that Biden, who regularly attends Mass, should not receive Communion because of his support for legalized abortion, which clearly runs counter to Catholic Church teaching on the sacredness of human life from conception to natural death.

Several hours after meeting Pope Francis on Oct. 29, Biden was asked if abortion was one of the topics of his meeting with the pope. Biden responded, “We just talked about the fact

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Holiness always comes with joy, pope says on All Saints' feast

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Christian joy is neither a passing emotion nor an optimistic worldview but a sign of holiness that bears witness to God's love even in the direst circumstances, Pope Francis said on the feast of All Saints.



Pope Francis

"The saints, even amid many tribulations, have experienced this joy and have borne witness to it. Without joy, faith becomes a rigorous and oppressive exercise, and risks falling ill with sadness," the pope said.

Before reciting the *Angelus* on Nov. 1 with pilgrims gathered in St. Peter's Square, the pope reflected on the eight beatitudes, which are the path of "humility, compassion, meekness, justice and peace" laid out by Jesus to show all men and women a

way "that leads to the kingdom of God and to happiness."

The Church's saints, he continued, walked along the path of "joy and prophecy," which are "two aspects that are proper to this saintly way of life."

Focusing on joy, Pope Francis explained that achieving holiness is not solely a matter of "effort and renunciation" but instead it is found when people discover that they are "God's beloved sons and daughters."

"It is not a human achievement, it is a gift we receive: We are holy because God, who is the Holy One, comes to dwell in our lives," the pope said. "It is he who gives holiness to us. For this, we are blessed!"

Prophecy is another aspect of holiness underlined in the beatitudes, especially when crying out on behalf of "the poor, the afflicted and those who hunger for justice," he said.

While a worldly mentality can lead one to believe

that happiness comes from being "rich, powerful, always young and strong," Jesus makes a "prophetic proclamation" that holiness can be achieved by "putting his word into practice."

"Those who believe themselves to be rich, successful and secure base everything on themselves and close themselves off from God and their brothers and sisters, while those who know that they are poor and not self-sufficient remain open to God and to their neighbor. And they find joy," the pope said.

Pope Francis said the beatitudes are the "prophecy of a new humanity" and a new way of living that would require "making oneself small and entrusting oneself to God, instead of prevailing over others."

"Holiness is accepting and putting into practice, with God's help, this prophecy that revolutionizes the world," he said. †

Cardinal: Protecting human life at all stages is more important than ever

NOTRE DAME, Ind. (CNS)—In an Oct. 27 address at the University of Notre Dame, Cardinal Gerhard Müller stressed



Cardinal Gerhard Müller

the importance of proclaiming the human dignity of every person, from conception until natural death.

This proclamation is particularly necessary in "a secularized society that has surrendered to relativism and thus to the destruction of ethics," he told an

audience of Notre Dame faculty, staff and students.

The cardinal is the former prefect of the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, serving in the post from 2012 to 2017.

Life on Earth is a "pilgrim state," he explained, for we are on a journey toward our ultimate goal of eternal salvation;

however, this lofty goal doesn't mean that we have no responsibility toward the world and the people around us.

Cardinal Müller cited the Second Vatican Council document "*Lumen Gentium*" (the "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church") to explain that the two goals of the Church go hand in hand: to bring people to Jesus, and to work for "the unity of mankind." These goals include not only adoration, worship and striving for holiness, but also civic responsibility, care for the Earth and working for better living conditions.

To this end, he continued, the Church addresses the moral principles of human action to promote the truth that "every human being exists for its own sake and must never be a means to an end." Rather, "humans are individually called by God, adopted as his children and regarded as his friends," he said.

The popes, through the centuries, "as universal teacher and shepherd of the Church" have led this effort by the Church to be in the world to "illuminate"

and "educate" the conscience of people and to speak up about threats to human freedom, equality and the common good, he said, citing various papal encyclicals.

Cardinal Müller observed that one of the greatest challenges of our time is the protection of all human life, and he said that "the Church is the only community that has always risen to the occasion" by emphasizing Catholic social teaching and moral theology principles.

The Church should not just passively react to problems, he continued, but rather "all Christian communities can shape the future by emphasizing the vocation of humanity in the story of God's creation."

On the other hand, rejecting God degrades humans to a mere biological life form without "objective standards, values and virtues."

The result is a world based on arbitrary decisions that is ever-changing and without hope or love, he said. "After all, human rights need to be rooted in more than consensus in order to last and be truly universal: They

must be based on the recognition of an authority that is beyond the reach of man."

While people of goodwill can and should work together to build a more just world, Cardinal Müller stressed that "we can never replace the final goal of human existence: being with God."

The cardinal's presentation was co-sponsored by Notre Dame's theology department and by the Religious Liberty Initiative of the Notre Dame Law School.

Cardinal Müller was in the United States on a tour to promote his book *The Pope: His Mission and His Task* (Catholic University of American Press, 2021). The book originally was published in German in 2017; the English version is a translation by Father Brian McNeil.

According to the publisher, the book covers the theological and historical aspects of the papacy and "addresses in particular, those dimensions of the papal office which are crucial for understanding more deeply the pope as a visible principle of the Church's unity." †

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All contributions to the United Catholic Appeal are used solely for the ministries outlined above and through the video stories. The Appeal helps to fund ministries that serve families, strengthen parishes, care for retired priests, support schools and form priests and parish leaders within the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.



The Criterion

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Editorial

Let's continue to pray for vocations in the local Church

"The harvest is abundant, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into the harvest" (Mt 9:37-38).

These words from the Gospel of Matthew have been cited by deacons, priests, bishops, religious and the lay faithful when it comes to praying for vocations.

And the above Scripture is also a quotation cited by Father Michael Keucher, archdiocesan director of vocations, in a "by the numbers" fact sheet he shared for National Vocations Awareness Week, which the Church in the United States celebrates on Nov. 7-13.

During this time, dioceses and parishes across the U.S. are being asked to foster an appreciation for all vocations and pray specifically for those discerning a vocation to ordained ministry and consecrated life.

In his message for the 58th annual World Day of Prayer for Vocations, Pope Francis offered St. Joseph, the foster father of Jesus, as a model for vocational discernment.

"[St. Joseph] found the courage to follow God's will. So too in a vocation: God's call always urges us to take a first step, to give ourselves, to press forward. There can be no faith without risk. Only by abandoning ourselves confidently to grace, setting aside our own programs and comforts, can we truly say 'yes' to God," the pope said. The Holy Father exhorted the Church to look to St. Joseph as an "outstanding example of acceptance of God's plans."

Bishop James F. Checchio of Metuchen, N.J., chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations, is encouraging dioceses to use this weeklong observance as a time to foster vocations in their local faith communities.

"Studies of those recently ordained and religiously professed consistently show that the encouragement of the parish priest is the most influential factor in vocational discernment," Bishop Checchio said in an Oct. 20 statement about the observance.

"But the accompaniment of the whole faith community is key for genuine vocational discernment—from one's parents and family members, to the Catholic educators, as well as the vital role that youth ministers and fellow parishioners play as the early encounters for young people to the faith," he added.

Praying for vocations is a constant of parishes across central and southern Indiana, and the statistics Father Keucher recently provided demonstrate those petitions are bearing fruit.

The archdiocese currently has 26 seminarians in priestly formation—11 at Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary in Indianapolis and 15 at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad.

There are also four men and 10 women in religious formation in the archdiocese, and 11 men and 13 women in formation from the archdiocese.

While we should be thankful for those numbers, a deeper look into the statistics shows there are ongoing



A woman holding a rosary prays during Mass. The Church in the U.S. celebrates National Vocations Awareness Week on Nov. 7-13. (CNS photo/Hannah McKay, Reuters)

challenges. There are currently 101 active priests in assigned ministry and six priests beyond retirement age who are still currently serving full time in central and southern Indiana. To take it a step further, there are 2,198 Catholics per active priest in our archdiocese.

The statistics also reveal that 20 priests are eligible to retire in the next five years, and God willing, 17 seminarians could be ordained new priests in the next few years.

What do those numbers mean? They confirm our prayers for vocations to the priesthood, diaconate and consecrated life must continue.

While we know of 336 people offering holy hours for vocations each week, we must strive to double, triple or increase that figure more.

Through our witness and prayers, we must continue to plant seeds for vocations so God can bear fruit.

Finally, Father Keucher shared, if 1% of students in Catholic schools in the archdiocese entered the priesthood or religious life, we would have 200-plus new priests and religious. Now, that is a goal worth praying for!

For more information about vocations to the priesthood or religious life, send an e-mail to vocations@archindy.org or visit hearGodscall.com.

And may we recite this "Prayer for Vocations" from the USCCB often:

(Jesus) said to them "Come and See." They came and saw where he was staying (Jn 1:39).

God of all nations, we are most grateful

for the first Catholic missionaries and explorers who came to the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

As strangers in a strange land they brought with them countless skills, talents and traditions, but their greatest treasure was their faith. May the good News of Jesus Christ, which molded and shaped their lives, continue to mold and shape our lives today.

Bless our archdiocese with men and women who will follow in their footsteps to serve the Church

as religious brothers, sisters, priests, and deacons.

Lord Jesus Christ, help to hear your call to "Come and See."

—Mike Krokos

Be Our Guest/Sr. Constance Veit, L.S.P.

Joy and encouraging vocations

I do a lot of outreach to the young on behalf of my religious congregation, so I try to be aware of trends in vocations work and the common traits of emerging generations.

Recently I took some time to review the latest "Study on Religious Vocations," co-sponsored by the National Religious Vocation Conference (NRVC) and the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA), hoping that it would give me an "aha moment" on how to interest young women in our community of Little Sisters of the Poor.



I was struck by a section of the report titled "Intergenerational Living." According to the 2020 NRVC/CARA study, a mere 13% of perpetually professed members of religious communities are younger than 60, while the same proportion are at least 90 years of age.

These are pretty sobering statistics! I was consoled to read the following testimony from a young religious: "It is beautiful to have all different generations and ethnicities in one community, in one house, if we allow ourselves to see that beauty."

What a hope-filled attitude on the part of a young religious! It really inspired me to stop bemoaning the aging of our religious communities and start seeing the beauty.

So, as we observe National Vocations Awareness Week on Nov. 7-13, I would like to address a message of hope to my fellow women and men religious who, like me, are not so young anymore.

May you too take heart in realizing that young people seeking religious life are not as deterred by the older demographics of most of our communities as we thought. They don't seem to mind that many of us are older—but they do hope that we will live simply, in solidarity with the poor, and that we will live and pray together in a spirit of joy.

So how do we connect with the young? Let's take a few cues from Pope Francis.

We might begin by striving to become young again. The pope has suggested that we seek to renew our youthfulness at every stage of life.

"As we mature, grow older and structure our lives," he wrote, "we should never lose that enthusiasm and openness

to an ever greater reality."

In "*Christus Vivit*" ("Christ Is Alive"), our Holy Father encouraged us to let ourselves be loved by God, for he loves us just as we are.

A young friend and former FOCUS missionary told me that this is the essential message we need to communicate to young people. They need to know that they are loved as they are, even though God wants to give them more.

God "values and respects you," we might say to them, borrowing from the pope's words "but he also keeps offering you more: more of his friendship, more fervor in prayer, more hunger for his word, more longing to receive Christ in the Eucharist, more desire to live his Gospel, more inner strength, more peace and spiritual joy."

This joy is something about which the pope very often speaks, and it is something that speaks deeply to young people in their vocational discernment.

It is something they see in the quality of a gaze or a smile, in the serenity with which a consecrated person embraces trials or suffering, and in the generous gift of self to the poor day after day.

Pope Francis insisted on joy in a recent speech to Discalced Carmelites.

"It is ugly to see consecrated men and women with a long face. It is ugly, it is ugly. Joy must come from within: that joy that is peace, an expression of friendship."

God forbid that any of us become ugly as we grow older!

In "*Christus Vivit*," the apostolic exhortation he wrote following the Synod on Young People in the life of the Church, Pope Francis reminded us that Christ is alive and he wants us to be fully alive.

"When you feel you are growing old out of sorrow, resentment or fear," he wrote, "he will always be there to restore your strength and your hope."

So, let's ask Jesus, "himself eternally young," to give us hearts that are ever young and capable of loving, ready to welcome the new generations who knock on our doors just as Elizabeth welcomed the Virgin Mary into her home in the Visitation.

Let's witness to these young women and men the joy that fills our hearts, and is eager to fill theirs as well, if only they give themselves to him!

(*Little Sisters of the Poor Sister Constance Veit is director of communications for the Little Sisters of the Poor in the United States.*) †

Letter to the Editor

Reader: We must reduce the many threats which attack the sanctity of life

One important issue to consider when voting for our government representatives is that of addressing climate change and the existential threat it poses to humanity—extinction.

We are the stewards of the Earth. To dismiss the pollution of the planet is a dereliction of our Christian duties. To me, this is a most urgent issue.

President Joe Biden has made addressing climate change a top priority of his agenda, allotting a large financial commitment of the infrastructure package to address this challenge. Some objectives of the Build Back Better agenda are to cut carbon emissions in half by 2030 and to reach net-zero emissions by 2050.

He was in attendance at the United Nations Climate Summit (COP 26), advocating, as a world leader, for a global commitment to repair the planet. Time is running out.

Abortion also is an existential threat to human life. As Catholics, we have an obligation to reduce the numbers of abortion. President Biden has introduced legislation that will help strengthen

families: providing pay during family sick leave, enhancing child care for working families and providing health insurance for those who need help, to name a few. These legislations give people options (other than abortion) in dealing with an unplanned pregnancy.

Reducing the attacks on the sanctity of life involves many threats: carbon emissions, abortion, war, poverty, disease, famine and gun violence to name a few. Making these threats illegal is too simplistic for these complex situations and will be ineffective. These threats will still exist.

For example, although Indiana has laws against domestic violence, experts estimate that as many as 40% of women and 27% of men in Indiana have been victims of domestic violence. Our goal should be to reduce the occurrence of these threats—no easy task, but one that we are called to do by exercising our God-given intelligence, using compassion, educating people and helping each other.

Melinda Fish
Bloomington



Christ the Cornerstone

The challenge of giving back to God in love

“Amen, I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the other contributors to the treasury. For they have all contributed from their surplus wealth, but she, from her poverty, has contributed all she had, her whole livelihood” (Mk 12:43-44).

The Gospel reading for the Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time (Mk 12:38-44) tells the familiar story of what has come to be known as “the widow’s mite.” St. Mark tells us that Jesus “sat down opposite the treasury and observed how the crowd put money into the treasury” (Mk 12:41). As Jesus watches the people contributing money, he observes that “many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow also came and put in two small coins worth a few cents” (Mk 12:41-42).

The “two small coins” that St. Mark tells us were “worth a few cents” have been identified as bronze mites (*lepta* in Greek) that are together worth a *quadrans*, the smallest Roman coin. A mite, or *lepton*, was the smallest and least valuable coin in circulation in Judea at the time of Jesus, worth about six minutes of an average daily wage. This is certainly not a substantial financial contribution, but as Jesus tells his disciples, the

widow’s gift is worth far more than the large sums contributed by the wealthy.

Jesus does not disparage the large gifts from wealthy donors, but he does praise the widow’s sacrificial gift of two small coins. Why? Because “she, from her poverty, has contributed all she had, her whole livelihood” (Mk 12:44). The widow has made a substantive, sacrificial gift. After contributing her two small coins, she has nothing left. The wealthy donors have made significant large gifts that, presumably, will make a difference in the operations of the Temple. But their gifts come from surplus, not substance. In effect, they are giving what is left over after all their other needs are met.

Who is the good steward here? The wealthy who have lots to give and share their wealth generously? Or the poor woman whose small coins are practically worthless? The answer is obvious, but the reasons behind this answer are not always so clear. After all, stewardship is not about money. It’s about giving from the heart.

When our Lord praises the widow for giving “all she had, her whole livelihood” (Mk 12:44), he is commenting on her disposition, or

fundamental attitude, toward life. St. Mark gives us no information about this poor widow’s situation. We can assume she lives from hand to mouth. It’s likely that she has experienced much hardship, disappointment and loneliness. But she is not bitter or angry. She gives freely from the little she has without complaining or holding back. She is generous, as God is generous, giving out of a superabundance of love.

We also know nothing about the wealthy donors. If they are anything like the people who give generously to support the work of the Church here in central and southern Indiana, we can assume they are good, honest, charitable people who want to share what they have with others. In all likelihood, these rich people who put large sums into the treasury are also good stewards who give back to God out of gratitude for their many blessings.

So what is the point of the story? We might say that the Lord is reminding his disciples (all of us) that how much we give is far less important than its impact on the way we live. If we give whatever is left over, nothing much changes in our lifestyle or in our attitudes toward

the people we are helping with our charity. On the other hand, if we give from substance (from our livelihood), we have to make sacrifices, and that always requires a shift in our thinking and our attitude.

Stewardship is about *how we give* much more than *how much we give*. This does not mean that we can hold back (giving one small coin instead of two). On the contrary, it means that regardless of our wealth (or lack of it), we are challenged to be responsible stewards who are grateful, accountable, generous and willing to give back to the Lord with increase.

There’s an old Egyptian proverb that says, “As long as your heart is full of love, you always have something to give.” Jesus praises the widow’s generosity because of the depth of her love. She is recognized as a generous steward because her sacrificial gifts come from a heart overflowing with love.

Let’s follow her example, giving from substance more than from surplus. Let’s pray for the grace to fill our hearts with love and, so, embrace stewardship as a way of life that is far more valuable than money. †



Cristo, la piedra angular

El reto de retribuirle a Dios en el amor

“Les aseguro que esta viuda pobre ha echado en el tesoro más que todos los demás. Estos dieron de lo que les sobraba; pero ella, de su pobreza, echó todo lo que tenía, todo su sustento” (Mc 12:43-44).

La lectura del Evangelio del trigésimo segundo domingo del tiempo ordinario (Mc 12:38-44) cuenta la conocida historia también llamada popularmente “la ofrenda de la viuda.” San Marcos nos dice que Jesús “se sentó frente al lugar donde se depositaban las ofrendas, y estuvo observando cómo la gente echaba sus monedas en las alcancías” (Mc 12:41). Mientras Jesús observaba a la gente aportar dinero, se fijó en que “muchos ricos echaban grandes cantidades. Pero una viuda pobre llegó y echó dos moneditas de muy poco valor” (Mc 12:41-42).

Las “dos moneditas de muy poco valor” que san Marcos menciona han sido identificadas como óbolos de bronce (*lepta* en griego) que juntos valen un cuadrante (o *quadrans*), la moneda romana de más baja denominación. Un óbolo, o *lepton* era la moneda más pequeña y de menor valor que circulaba en Judea en la época de Jesús, con un valor equivalente a unos seis minutos de un salario promedio diario. Ciertamente no se trata de una aportación

económica importante, pero, como dice Jesús a sus discípulos, la ofrenda de la viuda vale mucho más que las grandes sumas aportadas por los ricos.

Jesús no desprecia los grandes regalos de los donantes ricos, pero sí alaba el sacrificio de la viuda con dos pequeñas monedas. ¿Por qué? Porque “ella, de su pobreza, echó todo lo que tenía, todo su sustento” (Mc 12:44). La viuda hizo un regalo sustancial y sacrificado, ya que después de aportar sus dos moneditas, no le quedaba nada. Los donantes acaudalados hacían importantes donaciones que, presumiblemente, marcarían la diferencia en el funcionamiento del Templo. Sin embargo, sus dones provienen del excedente, no de la sustancia. En efecto, dan lo que les sobra después de satisfacer todas sus otras necesidades.

¿Quién es ejemplo de corresponsabilidad aquí? ¿Los ricos que tienen mucho para dar y comparten su riqueza generosamente? ¿O la pobre mujer cuyas moneditas no tienen prácticamente ningún valor? La respuesta es obvia, pero las razones que la respaldan no siempre están tan claras. Al fin y al cabo, la corresponsabilidad no es una cuestión de dinero sino de dar desde el corazón.

Cuando el Señor alaba a la viuda por dar “todo lo que tenía, todo su

sustento” (Mc 12:44), se trata de un comentario acerca de su disposición, o actitud fundamental, ante la vida. San Marcos no nos da ninguna información sobre la situación de esta pobre viuda. Podemos asumir que vive con una mano adelante y otra atrás. Es probable que haya experimentado muchas dificultades, decepciones y soledad, pero no está amargada ni enojada. Da libremente de lo poco que tiene sin quejarse ni contenerse. Es generosa, como lo es Dios, y da desde una superabundancia de amor.

Tampoco sabemos nada de los donantes ricos. Si se parecen a las personas que dan generosamente para apoyar el trabajo de la Iglesia aquí en el centro y el sur de Indiana, podemos asumir que son personas buenas, honestas y caritativas que quieren compartir lo que tienen con los demás. Con toda seguridad, estas personas ricas que aportan grandes sumas a las arcas son también buenos corresponsables que retribuyen a Dios como agradecimiento a sus muchas bendiciones.

Entonces ¿cuál es la moraleja de la historia? Podríamos decir que el Señor recuerda a sus discípulos (a todos nosotros) que la cantidad que damos es mucho menos importante que su impacto en la forma en que vivimos. Si damos lo que nos sobra,

esto no cambia mucho nuestro estilo de vida ni nuestra actitud hacia las personas a las que ayudamos con nuestra caridad. Por otro lado, si damos de la sustancia (de nuestro sustento), tenemos que hacer sacrificios, y eso siempre requiere un cambio en nuestra forma de pensar y en nuestra actitud.

La corresponsabilidad tiene que ver con la *forma de dar* mucho más que con la *cantidad que damos*. Esto no implica que debemos dar con reserva, es decir, dar una monedita en lugar de dos, sino al contrario: significa que, independientemente de nuestra riqueza (o de la falta de ella), tenemos el reto de ser administradores responsables, agradecidos, generosos y dispuestos a retribuir al Señor con creces.

Hay un viejo proverbio egipcio que dice: “Mientras tu corazón esté lleno de amor, siempre tendrás algo que dar.” Jesús alaba la generosidad de la viuda por la profundidad de su amor. Se la reconoce como una corresponsable generosa porque sus dones sacrificados provienen de un corazón rebosante de amor.

Sigamos su ejemplo, dando de lo esencial más que de lo que nos sobra. Pidamos la gracia de llenar nuestros corazones de amor y, así, acoger la corresponsabilidad como una forma de vida mucho más valiosa que el dinero. †

Events Calendar

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

November 8, 15

St. Therese of the Child Jesus (Little Flower) Parish Center, St. Therese Room, 4720 E. 13th St., Indianapolis. **SoulCore Rosary Workout**, 6:30-7:15 p.m., prayer and exercise, free. Information: 317-727-1167, joane632003@yahoo.com or soulcore.com.

November 8-14

St. Susanna Women's Club Online Holiday Auction, baskets and auction items are available for viewing online from Nov. 8-14 and in-person on Nov. 13-14 after weekend Masses at St. Susanna Church, 1210 E. Main St., Plainfield, bidding ends 1 p.m. on Nov. 14. Information: 317-839-3333 or www.saintsusannachurch.com.

November 8-Dec. 13

Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **Divorce and Beyond** support group, 7-9 p.m. six consecutive Monday evenings, sponsored by archdiocesan Office of Marriage and Family Life, must commit to six

sessions, \$20, scholarships available. Information and registration: cutt.ly/divorceandbeyondfall2021 or 317-236-7310.

November 9

The Atrium, 3143 Thompson Road, Indianapolis. **Gabriel Project Dinner**, 6:15 p.m. doors open, 7 p.m. dinner, Father Jerry Byrd speaking, registration required by Nov. 5, free. Information and registration: sheri@goangels.org or make donations at cutt.ly/gabrieldonations.

Church of the Immaculate Conception, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. **"The Spirit Breathes" monthly Taizé Prayer Service**, 7-8 p.m., silent and spoken prayers, simple music, silence, virtual option available at cutt.ly/Taize. Information: 812-535-2952, provctr@spsmw.org.

Holy Name of Jesus Parish, 89 N. 17th Ave., Franciscan Room, Beech Grove. **Ave**

Maria Guild of St. Paul Hermitage, noon, bring drink, snacks available. Information: Kathy Spotts, 317-783-6967.

November 10

Group Lectio via Zoom, 7 p.m., second and fourth Wednesdays of each month, Benedictine Sister Jill Marie Reuber, facilitator, sponsored by Sisters of St. Benedict, Ferdinand, Ind. (Diocese of Evansville). Information: vocation@thedome.org.

St. Elizabeth Seton Parish, 10655 Haverstick Rd., Carmel (Lafayette Diocese). **Annulment Information Evening**, 7-9 p.m., Father Timothy Alkire, Judicial Vicar for the Lafayette, Ind., Diocese Marriage Tribunal, presenter, free. Registration: Claudia Castillo, 765-269-4662. Information: Susan McIntosh, 317-938-8950.

November 11

St. Michael Parish, 519 Jefferson Blvd., Greenfield. **The Parables of Jesus Bible Study**, Thursdays, 1-2:30 p.m.,

offered by Guadalupe Bible college graduates, bring Bible, online option available, free. Information and registration: ljdarlene@gmail.com.

November 13

Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. **Recharge Women's Retreat**, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Father Mike Keucher presenting, for women of all ages, prayer, speaker, reflection, \$20 suggested donation, includes breakfast and lunch. Registration deadline Nov. 10. Information and registration 317-691-2633 or womenofourlady@gmail.com.

Clowes Memorial Hall, 4602 Sunset Ave., Indianapolis. **C.S. Lewis' The Great Divorce**, theatrical performance, \$49-\$69. Information and tickets: 317-940-6444 or GreatDivorceOnStage.com.

Sidewalk Advocates for Life training, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., location and other details given by phone, \$10 for materials, register by Nov. 9.

Information and registration: Sheryl Dye, smdye1@gmail.com or 317-407-6881.

Our Lady of Lourdes School, 30 S. Downey Ave., Indianapolis. **Chili Cookoff**, noon-4 p.m., \$5 ages 7 and older, live music, entrants and volunteers welcome. Information: 317-356-7291 or ajradomski@gmail.com.

November 14

St. Monica Church, 6131 Michigan Rd., Indianapolis. **Mass in French**, 4:30 p.m., second Sunday of every month. Information: 317-236-1474 or pspringer@archindy.org.

November 17

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

November 18

St. Joseph Church, 1401 S. Mickley Ave., Indianapolis. **Third Thursday Adoration**, interceding for women

experiencing crisis pregnancy, 11 a.m.-7 p.m., with Mass at 5:45 p.m.

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

St. Michael Parish, 519 Jefferson Blvd., Greenfield. **The Parables of Jesus Bible Study**, Thursdays, 1-2:30 p.m., offered by Guadalupe Bible college graduates, bring Bible, online option available, free. Information and registration: ljdarlene@gmail.com.

November 19

Northside Events and Social Club, 2100 E. 71st St., Indianapolis. **Catholic Business Exchange**, Monica Kelsey, founder of Safe Haven Baby Boxes, presenter, rosary 6:35 a.m., Mass 7 a.m., buffet breakfast and program following, \$18 members, \$24 non-members. Register by 4 p.m. on Nov. 16. Information and registration: cutt.ly/CBE-Reg. †

Retreats and Programs

For a complete list of retreats as reported to The Criterion, log on to www.archindy.org/retreats.

November 19-21

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 100 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Popular Stories from the Gospel of John**, Benedictine Father Eugene Hensell presenting, \$255 single, \$425 double. Registration: saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

November 20

Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis. **With Grateful Hearts**, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Judy Ribar presenting, \$50 includes lunch. Information and registration: mountsaintfrancis.org/with-grateful-hearts or 812-923-8817.

Providence Spirituality and Conference Center, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Faith Thinkers Through the Ages**, 9 a.m.-noon, fourth of five sessions (Dec. 4), \$20 per session, register by Nov. 16. Information and registration: 812-535-2952,

provctr@spsmw.org or Events.SistersofProvidence.org.

November 22

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Day of Silence**, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., \$35 per day, includes room, continental breakfast, lunch and use of the common areas and grounds, overnight stays available for additional \$28 per person, dinner additional \$9. Registration: cutt.ly/fatimaretreats, 317-545-7681 or jburger@archindy.org.

November 22

Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis. **"Brother Bob's Bible Study"**, Mondays 10:30 a.m. or 6:30 p.m., led by Andrew Hennessy, free. Information and registration: mountsaintfrancis.org/bible-study or 812-923-8817.

November 26

Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Dr.,

Mt. St. Francis. **Painting with Padre**, 6-9 p.m. last Friday of each month, led by Conventual Franciscan Father Vincent Petersen, includes painting supplies and snack, bring beverage, \$40. Information and registration: mountsaintfrancis.org/painting-with-the-padre or 812-923-8817.

November 29

Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **Come to the Manger Advent Retreat**, 6-9:30 p.m., Benedictine Sister Julie Sewell presenting \$45, includes dinner. Information and registration: benedictinn.org/programs, 317-788-7581, benedictinn@benedictinn.org.

Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis. **"Brother Bob's Bible Study"**, Mondays 10:30 a.m. or 6:30 p.m., led by Andrew Hennessy, free. Information and registration:

mountsaintfrancis.org/bible-study or 812-923-8817.

December 1

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Advent with St. Joseph Day of Reflection with Father Jim Farrell**, 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m., \$45 includes continental breakfast, lunch, program, and Mass. Registration: cutt.ly/fatimaretreats, 317-545-7681 or jburger@archindy.org.

Dec. 1, Dec. 2

Providence Spirituality and Conference Center, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-

of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Art and Soul Creation Guild**, choose between 9:30-11:30 a.m. first Wednesday of the month or 6:30-8:30 p.m. first Thursday of the month, Providence Sister Rosemary Schmalz presenting, \$30 membership fee to join group, \$5 per session after. Information and registration: Jeanne Frost, 812-535-2952, jfrost@spsmw.org or Events.SistersofProvidence.org.

December 2

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Advent with St. Joseph Evening of**

Reflection with Father Jim Farrell, 5:30-9 p.m., \$45 includes light dinner, program, and Mass. Registration: cutt.ly/fatimaretreats, 317-545-7681 or jburger@archindy.org.

December 4

Providence Spirituality and Conference Center, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Faith Thinkers Through the Ages**, 9 a.m.-noon, fifth of five sessions, \$20 per session, register by Dec. 1. Information and registration: 812-535-2952, provctr@spsmw.org or Events.SistersofProvidence.org. †

Batesville Deanery to hold Adoration Summit on Nov. 27

A Batesville Deanery Adoration Summit will be held at St. Louis Parish, 13 St. Louis Pl., in Batesville, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. on Nov. 27. The event will include Mass and talks by Msgr. Joseph Schaedel, Father Michael Keucher, Father

Daniel Mahan and Father Jonathan Meyer. The summit is free and includes lunch. All are invited to come. To register, call the office of All Saints Parish in Dearborn County at 812-576-4302. †

St. Louis de Montfort to host free Thanksgiving Day dinner on Nov. 25

St. Louis de Montfort Parish, 11441 Hague Road, in Fishers (Lafayette Diocese), is hosting a free Thanksgiving dinner with turkey, mashed potatoes, stuffing, vegetables, rolls and dessert in Craig Willy Hall

(the building behind the church with the flags in front of it) from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. on Nov. 25. All are welcome. Dine-in or take-out is available. For more information, call 317-517-4256. †

Wedding Anniversaries

JOHN AND NANCY WALTER



JOHN AND NANCY (FUGIT) WALTER, members of St. Mary Parish in Lanesville, will celebrate their 65th wedding anniversary on Nov. 10. The couple was married in St. Anthony of Padua Church in Clarksville on Nov. 10, 1956. They have nine children: JoAnn Baker, Angela Elder, Diana Kerr, Denise Sanders, Bob, Jim, Mike, Tom and Tony Walter. The couple also has 23 grandchildren and 25 great-grandchildren. †

MELVIN AND SANDRA MEISBERGER



MELVIN AND SANDRA (RICKETTS) MEISBERGER, members of Prince of Peace Parish in Madison, celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on Sept. 17, 2020. The couple was married in SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis on Sept. 17, 1960. They have five children: Caroline Cumberworth, Amy Fichner, Debra Gloyd, Julie Underwood and Brian Meisberger. The couple also has 10 grandchildren and two great-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.

Marian starts new program to build up Latino Catholic congregations

By Mike Krokos

Oscar Castellanos described it as “reading the signs of the times.”

And when examining the growing Latino presence across Indiana and beyond, leaders at Marian University in Indianapolis agreed with that sentiment.

The result? The school has launched its Latino Parish Renewal Program, or *Renovación* (Spanish for “renewal”), funded through a \$1 million grant from Lilly Endowment Inc.’s Thriving Congregations Initiative. The program will provide the support and resources needed to strengthen Latino Catholic congregations by providing a parish-focused certificate program, curriculum and congregational support.

“The proposal [for the grant] was to connect *Renovación* [parish renewal] to the Latino leadership initiative that started about three years ago here at Marian,” said Castellanos, who was hired by the university to serve as the program’s founding director and whose title is director of the Initiative for Parish Renewal. Castellanos previously served as the director of intercultural ministry for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

The school’s leadership initiative provides networking to support Latinos who are considering attending Marian University, he added.

Adam Setmeyer, Marian’s vice president for mission and ministry, saw that one of the ways to connect the university’s Latino initiative with Lilly’s Thriving Congregations Initiative was “precisely to address the needs of parishes that are considered Hispanic, Latino- serving communities,” Castellanos noted. “So that’s how the idea [for *Renovación*] came about.”

The program will offer college credits via a two-year certification through 12 modules, or courses, on “Latino theology and Latino pastoral realities” in the U.S., Castellanos said. Participants will earn a certificate in Latino Ministry Leadership through Marian.

Through *Renovación*, parish pastors and congregations will receive support in growing faithful, creative and collaborative engagement in their communities; lay leaders will obtain certifications and lead retreats in parishes; and small Latino parish communities will be created to support the spiritual lives of families. These parish communities can, in turn, implement innovative mission plans to meet the needs of the parishes and the local communities.

“At Marian University, we are committed to putting faith into action,” said Daniel Elsener, the school’s president. “*Renovación* contributes to



‘Ministry is my passion. This is my first experience in higher education. I was attracted to a position that could bridge pastoral ministry, faith formation, Spanish/Latino ministry and higher education. I think it’s unique.’

—Oscar Castellanos, director of the Initiative for Parish Renewal (*Renovación*) at Marian University

strengthening Latino parishes ... by fostering synergies between pastors and congregations.”

One of the beauties of the initiative, Castellanos noted, is that pastors or parish life coordinators will be choosing those participating in *Renovación*.

“Ideally, it will be three [individuals] from each parish,” he said. And the goal is that parish leaders chosen for the initiative are young adults who are bilingual. “They are the perfect candidates to bridge any community that is multi-cultural,” he added.

“*Renovación* is a response to the Fifth *Encuentro* [Spanish for ‘encounter’],” Castellanos noted. The 2018 national *Encuentro* gathering in Texas offered a discernment process that allowed the

Hispanic community to understand its call in the Church in the U.S.

Among the priorities of *Encuentro*, he continued, are leadership development, family, and evangelization and catechesis.

“Small faith communities [that will form in parishes through those participating in *Renovación*] are an opportunity for parishioners and those on its peripheries to congregate ... inside a parish or in homes, and do a little bit of evangelization, but especially some consultation,” Castellanos said.

Like the *Encuentro* process, it hopes to identify where people are, what obstacles they face “and what can we do to bring [those who have fallen away] home, what can we do to connect a bridge,” he continued.

See MARIAN, page 15A

Marian pone en marcha un nuevo programa para fortalecer las congregaciones católicas latinas

Por Mike Krokos

Oscar Castellanos lo describió como “interpretar las señales de los tiempos.”

Y al examinar la creciente presencia latina en todo Indiana y más allá, los líderes de la Universidad Marian de Indianápolis coincidieron con esa sensación.

¿El resultado? La institución de educación superior ha lanzado su programa titulado *Renovación* orientado a las parroquias latinas, financiado a través de una subvención de un millón de dólares de la Iniciativa de Congregaciones Prósperas de Lilly Endowment Inc. El programa proporcionará el apoyo y los recursos necesarios para fortalecer las congregaciones católicas latinas mediante un programa de certificación centrado en la parroquia, así como un plan de estudios y apoyo a la congregación.

“La propuesta [para la subvención] era conectar *Renovación* con la iniciativa de liderazgo latino que comenzó hace unos tres años aquí en Marian,” comentó Castellanos, que fue contratado por la universidad en calidad de director fundador del programa y cuyo título es director de la Iniciativa para la *Renovación* Parroquial. Castellanos trabajó anteriormente como director del ministerio intercultural de la Arquidiócesis de Indianápolis.

La iniciativa de liderazgo de la universidad brinda una red de apoyo a los latinos que están considerando asistir a la Universidad Marian, añadió.

Adam Setmeyer, vicepresidente de misión y ministerio de Marian, vio que una de las formas de conectar la iniciativa latina de la universidad con la Iniciativa de Congregaciones Prósperas de Lilly era “precisamente para atender las necesidades de las parroquias que se consideran hispanas, comunidades que prestan servicios a los latinos,” señaló Castellanos. “Así es como surgió la idea [de *Renovación*]”.

El programa ofrecerá créditos universitarios a través de una certificación de dos años mediante 12 módulos, o cursos, sobre “teología y realidades pastorales latinas” en

Estados Unidos, dijo Castellanos. Los participantes obtendrán un certificado en Liderazgo Pastoral Latino a través de Marian.

A través de *Renovación*, los párrocos y las congregaciones recibirán apoyo para aumentar el compromiso fiel, creativo y colaborativo en sus comunidades; los líderes laicos obtendrán certificaciones y dirigirán retiros en las parroquias; y se crearán pequeñas comunidades parroquiales latinas para apoyar la vida espiritual de las familias. Estas comunidades parroquiales podrán, a su vez, implementar planes de misión innovadores para satisfacer las necesidades de las parroquias y de las comunidades locales.

“En la Universidad Marian, estamos comprometidos a poner la fe en acción,” aseguró Daniel Elsener, rector de la universidad. “El programa *Renovación* contribuye a fortalecer las parroquias latinas [...] al fomentar las sinergias entre pastores y congregaciones.”

Castellanos señaló que uno de los aspectos más positivos de la iniciativa es que los párrocos o los coordinadores de la vida parroquial elegirán a los participantes de *Renovación*.

“Lo ideal es que sean tres [personas] de cada parroquia,” comentó. Y el objetivo es que los líderes parroquiales elegidos para la iniciativa sean jóvenes adultos bilingües. “Son los candidatos idóneos para tender un puente a cualquier comunidad que sea multicultural,” añadió.

“*Renovación* es una respuesta al V *Encuentro*,” aseveró Castellanos. El *Encuentro* nacional de 2018 en Texas ofreció un proceso de discernimiento mediante el cual la comunidad hispana pudo entender su llamado en la Iglesia de Estados Unidos.

Según aseguró, entre las prioridades del *Encuentro* se encuentran el desarrollo del liderazgo, la familia, la evangelización y la catequesis.

“Las pequeñas comunidades de fe [que se formarán en las parroquias a través de quienes participen en *Renovación*] son una oportunidad para que los feligreses y los que están en sus periferias se congreguen ... dentro de

una parroquia o en los hogares, y hagan un poco de evangelización, pero sobre todo de consulta,” afirmó Castellanos.

Al igual que el proceso del *Encuentro*, espera identificar dónde se encuentra la gente, qué obstáculos enfrentan “y qué podemos hacer para atraer a casa [a los que se han alejado], qué podemos hacer para tender un puente,” continuó.

Los líderes que participen en los módulos ayudarán a facilitar los retiros en sus parroquias y trabajarán con el párroco, y los líderes y personal de la parroquia para organizar pequeñas comunidades de fe.

En lugar de hacer un trabajo de graduación o un proyecto final, los estudiantes “se reunirán en algún momento y recopilarán los datos, la información, las experiencias y las historias”, dijo Castellanos, que se utilizarán para formular un plan pastoral.

“El párroco puede aprovechar esto como método de evangelización,” señala. “Con suerte, el párroco y el personal o el consejo pastoral podrán utilizarlo como recurso.”

El primer módulo del programa, o serie de cursos, comenzará en enero. El objetivo inicial es que participen nueve parroquias con comunidades latinas. El plan, señala Castellanos, es contar inicialmente con parroquias de la arquidiócesis de Indianápolis, las diócesis de Evansville, Fort Wayne-South Bend, Gary y Lafayette, y la arquidiócesis de Louisville en Kentucky.

La idea es dividir la oferta de cursos, con 10 impartidos en línea y dos en el campus de Marian. Las clases se dictarán en inglés, aunque la mayoría de los instructores serán bilingües.

A medida que avance el programa *Renovación*, la Universidad Marian espera ampliar regionalmente el alcance de su programa más allá de las parroquias de Indiana y Kentucky, para incluir parroquias de Ohio e Illinois.

Según expresó Castellanos, la esperanza es que los participantes salgan con una sólida formación.

“Estamos tratando de recrear de una forma realista lo que sucede en una parroquia hispana o en una comunidad que presta servicio a los latinos,”

dijo. “Espero que aprovechen esta experiencia. ... Habrá una invitación para que profundicen en ella.”

También espera que los participantes experimenten el liderazgo “porque van a estar a cargo de estas comunidades. ... Quizá no terminen trabajando para la Iglesia, tal vez su destino no sea en un puesto de autoridad, pero definitivamente buscamos ampliar todas las posibilidades de desarrollo del liderazgo.”

Por último, Castellanos espera que los líderes parroquiales acepten lo que el programa ofrece.

“Esperamos que los pastores se involucren con las comunidades a este nivel,” dijo. “¿Qué quiero decir con esto? No vamos a pedirles que hagan más trabajo. En realidad, queremos despejar un poco sus agendas tan apretadas. Esta será una oportunidad para que se comprometan de una manera diferente, para que comprendan más lo que está sucediendo algunos peldaños más abajo, en la base.”

Castellanos, que está cursando un doctorado en educación en liderazgo organizacional en Marian, dijo que está entusiasmado con el prospecto de dirigir la iniciativa, que cree que es la primera de su tipo.

“Me apasiona el ministerio. Esta es mi primera experiencia en educación superior,” afirmó. “Me atrajo un puesto que pudiera combinar el ministerio pastoral, la formación en la fe, el ministerio hispano o latino y la educación superior. Creo que es algo único. Espero que esto convierta a Marian en un modelo a seguir,” añadió.

En palabras de Castellanos, la subvención de Lilly, que cubre un compromiso de cinco años, demuestra la interrelación entre los socios locales y este donante con sede en Indianápolis.

“Son un ejemplo de cómo cumplir en verdad con el compromiso de apoyar la educación, la fe y la caridad,” aseguró.

(Para obtener más información sobre *Renovación*, visite cutt.ly/renovacion, comuníquese con Oscar Castellanos en el 317-955-6508, 317-797-8937, o envíele un correo electrónico a ocastellanos@marian.edu.) †

Tombs of fallen soldiers are cry for peace, pope says on All Souls' feast

ROME (CNS)—The tombstones of soldiers killed in war cry out to people today to end all wars and to stop the production of weapons, Pope Francis said.

"I am sure that all of those who went with goodwill [to war], called by their country to defend it, are with the Lord," he said, celebrating Mass on the feast of All Souls, on Nov. 2, at the French Military Cemetery in Rome.

"But we, who are journeying [on Earth], are we fighting enough so there will be no more wars, so there will be no more domestic economies fortified by the arms industry?" he asked.

An easing of restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic allowed Pope Francis to resume his usual practice of celebrating Mass on the feast of All Souls in a cemetery—in Rome or nearby—but only about 250 people were in attendance. Last year, he presided over a private Mass in a chapel and then visited and blessed graves in a small cemetery inside the Vatican.

The Italian government established the French Military Cemetery to honor the French soldiers who fought against Nazi and fascist forces on Italian soil from 1943 to 1944. Nearly 2,000 French soldiers are buried here, many of them Moroccan soldiers who served under French officers. Among those present at the Mass was Cardinal Dominique Mamberti, prefect of the Vatican's highest court, who was born in Marrakech, Morocco, to French parents.

The pope arrived by car to the hilltop cemetery just a few miles north of the Vatican and placed white roses on several graves. He prayed in silence before walking slowly through one of the rows marked by marble crosses.

"These tombs that speak, they cry out, cry out by themselves, 'Peace!'" he said during his off-the-cuff homily at the Mass.

"These graves are a message of peace," urging people today to stop all war and calling on weapons manufacturers to cease production, the pope said.

As people visit cemeteries on the feast day, he said, they should take time to pause and realize they are on a journey that will end someday.

The journey of life should not be a leisurely "stroll" in the park nor is it an impossible "labyrinth," he said, but it is a journey that involves effort and understanding there will be "a final step" at the end of that earthly path.

Everyone is on a journey which entails facing "many historical realities, many difficult situations," and cemeteries are a reminder to take pause and reflect on the nature of one's own journey and where it is heading, he said.

Looking at the gravestones, the pope said he sees "good people" who died at war, "died because they were called to defend their country, to defend values, ideals and, many other times, to defend sad and regrettable political situations."

"And they are victims, victims of war which devours the sons and daughters of



Pope Francis holds white roses as he visits graves at the French Military Cemetery in Rome on Nov. 2. (CNS photo/Remo Casilli, Reuters)

a nation," he said, recalling a number of deadly battles fought in the 20th century.

The graves marked "unknown" instead of with a name show "the tragedy of war," even though God always keeps the name of everyone in his heart, he said. †

SCOTUS

continued from page 1A

Stone emphasized that neither the federal government nor the abortion providers had legal grounds to sue the state in federal court.

In the first set of arguments, Marc Hearron, a lawyer for the Center for Reproductive Rights, argued that the Supreme Court should issue an injunction against Texas state court clerks, preventing them from accepting lawsuits against abortion providers and those who assist women seeking abortions.

He also said the way the state's law is enforced will have a "chilling effect" by encouraging repetitive lawsuits that would put defendants at risk of \$10,000 judgments plus attorney fees.

In the second set of arguments, Elizabeth Prelogar, solicitor general of the United States, emphasized that Texas should not be allowed to evade previous Supreme

Court rulings on abortion through its law that evades judicial review.

"I recognize that this is a novel case," she said, adding: "That's because it's a novel law."

The Nov. 1 argument was the third time the court considered the Texas abortion law agreeing to emergency requests filed by the Department of Justice and the abortion providers' challenge to the state's abortion law.

On Sept. 1, the court ruled against blocking the Texas abortion law, and on Oct. 22 it said the law would remain in effect before it would get its expedited review on Nov. 1.

Just prior to November's oral arguments, John Seago, legislative director of Texas Right to Life, said his organization was "optimistic" about the outcome of the case.

"Not only have the justices continued to show judicial restraint by allowing the law to continue to save lives, but they are committed to taking these procedural and standing questions seriously, unlike the federal district court. We are hopeful the justices will clarify that these

current legal attacks on this life-saving law are invalid," he said in a statement.

On Dec. 1, the court will take up a broader abortion case, examining Mississippi's ban on abortion after 15 weeks of pregnancy.

The Texas abortion law, signed by Republican Gov. Greg Abbott in May, became effective at midnight central time on Sept. 1. It is one of the strictest abortion measures in the country, banning abortions in the state after a fetal heartbeat is detectable, which the law says is six weeks. The law has an exception for medical emergencies but not for rape or incest.

Currently, at least 12 other states have legislation banning abortions early in pregnancy, but these bans have been blocked by courts.

When the Supreme Court first ruled against blocking the Texas abortion law, the Texas Catholic Conference, the public policy arm of the state's Catholic bishops, said this action marked the first time since *Roe v. Wade* that the nation's high court "has allowed a pro-life law to remain while litigation proceeds in lower courts." †

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson
and the Catholic Community Foundation INVITE YOU to

An Evening
of
Lights

Thursday, December 2, 2021
Catholic Center Assembly Hall

1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202

Doors will open at 6:00 p.m. | Prayer service begins at 6:30 p.m.
Reception with light refreshments to follow.
Parking is available at the Catholic Center.

Just as the Vatican in early December lights the Christmas tree in St. Peter's Square and the Holy Father reflects on the Nativity, so, too, will Archbishop Thompson lead an Archdiocesan Christmas tree lighting and prayer service.

At this special event, we will prepare our hearts for Jesus' coming as the Light of the World and celebrate those who have shared their own light by establishing memorial endowments in the names of loved ones.

FAMILIES WELCOME. This year, we will offer a supervised children's program for ages 4+ as an alternative to children participating in the Evening of Lights prayer service. When submitting your RSVP, please be sure to note how many children will be attending and their ages.

PLEASE RSVP (no later than November 22nd) below to join Archbishop Charles C. Thompson and the Catholic Community Foundation for An Evening of Lights.

For a donation of \$10 or more, you can dedicate a luminaria in memory of a loved one, which will be lit at the prayer service.

Their legacy will live on as the gifts will be invested in the Catholic Community Foundation to support the growth of parish, school, and agency ministries.

For any questions regarding your RSVP or online donation, contact us at ccf@archindy.org or (317) 236-1482.





(CNS photo/Chaz Muth)

2021 Vocations Awareness Supplement

Living a holy life inspires holy vocations in others

By **Father Michael Keucher**

Special to *The Criterion*

In speaking to a group of priests responsible for recruiting new seminarians, a saintly priest said this:

“If you want Godly men, be Godly men.”



These words have become a motto for me lately. I carry them around with me in my mind and heart. I tell them to my brother priests. I tell them to myself.

Holy vocations produce more holy vocations. Put another way, a saint produces other saints.

If priests want more holy priests, then they must *be* holy priests—and vocations will follow.

Venerable Fulton Sheen commented that seeing a priest kneeling in silent

prayer in a sacristy before Mass inspires more priestly vocations among altar boys than a thousand pieces of inspirational literature about the priesthood.

Holy, pious, active, zealous, charitable priests generate a future army of priests of the same sort. Brother priests: if we want Godly men in our ranks, we must be Godly men!

What about religious and consecrated women and men? It’s the same here, of course. St. Theodora Guérin, co-patroness of our archdiocese, famously wrote in her journals, “How impiety deadens the heart.”

She wrote, too, about the piety and holiness of one sister in particular who had had a profound impact on her vocation: “Sister St. Francis Xavier is necessary for my existence. . . . I have need of her advice, of her example, I will even say of her little scoldings.”

Mother Theodore knew it well: holy vocations inspire holy vocations. Her own vocation was proof. And think

of how many she has inspired down through the years!

We see this principle of holiness begetting holiness in family life as well. Holy married couples tend to generate other holy families. Married couples in love with Jesus inspire other married couples to be in love with Jesus. This is the logic behind sponsor couples in marriage preparation; if an engaged couple is connected with a married couple on fire with love for Christ, that fire spreads.

Naturally, vocations cross pollinate as well. Many a great priest, for example, was inspired by a great nun or priest, or by the holiness they saw in their parents or other relatives.

All vocations need each other! Holy families need holy priests. Holy priests need holy families. Holy religious need holy priests. Holy priests need holy religious. It works in every direction. And we must remember: all vocations require holy families in order to come about and grow in the first place!

In this year’s Vocations Awareness Supplement, you will come to meet some folks who have fallen deeply in love with Jesus. These people were each inspired by others and, having been inspired, they are laying their lives down for our blessed Lord in beautiful ways, ways that God has prepared just for them.

Let us pray for them. Now they are inspiring others. And in this Vocations Awareness Supplement, let them inspire you and strengthen your own vocation.

Finally, let us remember this always: if you want holy vocations—which we all want and need—then be holy!

(Father Michael Keucher is vocations director for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. He also serves as pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Shelbyville and sacramental minister of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Shelby County. He can be reached by e-mail at mkeucher@archindy.org.) †



Compassion and faith guide deacon, page 4B.



Postulant overcomes speech challenges, page 8B.



Photos from a day in the life of a priest, pages 6B-7B.





Seminarian looks to the guidance of Mary in his journey to the priesthood

By Sean Gallagher

ST. MEINRAD—Through four years of priestly formation, seminarian Jack Wright has never wavered in his conviction that God is calling him to be a priest.

God willing, he'll take a significant step toward the fulfillment of that goal next spring, when he is scheduled to be ordained a transitional deacon.

A member of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Richmond, Wright, 31, has known of God's call in his life for 12 years.

But he had a hard time accepting his vocation during much of that time—so much so that he actually stopped practicing his faith for some years.

What led him not only back to the Church, but even further to a firm embrace of his vocation?

Wright credits it all to a relationship he began to nurture with the Blessed Virgin Mary with the help of a book about her that his grandfather had given him at a time when he had not darkened the doors of a church for years.

"One of the reasons that I've felt so solid in my vocation is because of my relationship with her," he said. "As I've been in seminary, I've trusted that she's leading me and that my life is in her hands. She's acquiring the graces for me that I need to become the priest that God wants me to be."

'I didn't want to do it'

As Wright grew up, the Catholic faith gradually took on a more prominent role in the life of his family. By the time he was in high school, he asked God daily what he should do with his life.

For years, the answer to those prayers remained hidden—until his sophomore year at Marian University in Indianapolis.

His awareness of God's answer came to him rather suddenly in 2009, but in a way that disturbed him.

"I woke up at like three or four in the morning," Wright recalled. "For some reason, I had this overwhelming awareness that I was supposed to be a priest. That was what God wanted me to do."

"I got up and started walking around campus and was just crying my eyes out, crying like I had never cried before. It wasn't a joyful cry. It was a cry of misery. I didn't want to do it."

This clear awareness of God's call and his clear resistance to it led him to walk away from the faith.

Most of Wright's friends didn't go to Mass. And with conflict about his vocation in his heart, he stopped going to Mass, too.

"Once you skip one week, it's easier to skip the next week," he said. "Before long, I stopped going."

And it was all rooted in God's answer to Wright's prayer—an answer he turned his back on.

"God had shown me what he wanted—which was what I was asking him in prayer to do—and I rejected it," Wright said. "So, he said, 'OK. I'll let you go your way.' That's really what happened."

"At that point, God wiped the thought of [the priesthood] from my mind. I never thought about it again until 2016, many years later."

'That's when our Lady entered my life'

In the interim, Wright graduated from Marian



Holding a rosary, seminarian Jack Wright stands before a statue of Mary at the Shrine of Our Lady of Monte Cassino in St. Meinrad. A member of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Richmond, Wright credits Mary with guiding him to his priestly vocation.

(Photo courtesy of Saint Meinrad Archabbey)

in 2012 with a bachelor's degree in biology and worked for five years for a small chemical company in Indianapolis.

While living on his own in an apartment on the northwest side of the city, Wright decided to pick up and read a book his grandfather had given him years earlier by an Italian priest with a deep devotion to Mary. The book, titled *To the Priests, Our Lady's Beloved Sons*, included messages that the Blessed Mother had spoken to the priest in his heart.

"I finally picked up the book and started reading it," Wright recalled. "Something about our Lady's messages in that book really touched my

heart, I guess. I think that it was at that point when I really made the decision to start practicing my faith again and to take it seriously."

Looking back on it, Wright sees that moment as a turning point in his life.

"That's when our Lady entered my life," he said. "I had prayed the rosary before, and I always felt a kind of vague connection to our Lady. But that's when she really took over. It started from that book."

Wright began going to Mass, praying before the Blessed Sacrament in adoration chapels and praying the rosary daily.

In 2016, he had a conversation with a retired priest from the Cincinnati Archdiocese who lived near Richmond who had been a spiritual director for his grandfather.

"He told me that I shouldn't be afraid to become a priest, to say 'yes' to the calling to the priesthood," Wright recalled. "That was a big moment. I realized that this whole time I think I had just been afraid. It was out of fear that I was saying 'no' to the priesthood."

That message opened a door to a possible vocation

See SEMINARIAN, page 12B

Vocations Awareness Supplement highlights the priesthood, diaconate and consecrated life

This issue of *The Criterion* features our annual supplement that highlights vocations in the Church to the priesthood, diaconate and consecrated life.

It is ordinarily published during the U.S. bishops' annual Vocations Awareness Week, which this year is on Nov. 7-13.

From the beginning, the Church has recognized that marriage is also a vocation, a pathway to holiness, to which God calls people. *The Criterion*

publishes two marriage supplements annually, usually in February and July.

In addition, the Archdiocese of Indianapolis has three offices which promote vocations. For information on the Office of Marriage and Family Life, visit www.archindy.org/marriageandfamily. For information on the diaconate, go to www.archindy.org/deacon. For information on the priesthood and consecrated life, visit www.archindy.org/vocations. †





Sister of Life from Indianapolis calls Jesus ‘the greatest adventure’

By Natalie Hoefler

Laura Zetzl started at Indiana University in Bloomington in the fall of 2010 “ready to take on the world.”

“I wanted to be a wife, a mother with lots of kids,” she said. “I wanted to be a neonatologist. I had it all. But still, I was unhappy, restless and frustrated.”

So began the first steps in the vocational journey of 29-year-old Sister Lucia Christi, who, “God willing,” will profess her final vows next summer as a Sister of Life.

But before the former member of St. Gabriel the Archangel Parish in Indianapolis could start the baby steps of her journey, there was a seed planted, a thought that would give birth to her vocation.

‘That phrase kept coming back to me’

While a student at Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School in Indianapolis, a call to the religious life was far from Sister Lucia Christi’s mind.

“At that point, I’d never considered a religious vocation as an option,” she said.

While at Ritter, she attended short sessions taught by the school’s then-chaplain Father John Hollowell. One day, the topic was vocations.

“A few days later, he said to me, ‘Maybe you’ll be a sister sometime.’ I laughed it off,” Sister Lucia Christi said.

By the end of her freshman year of college, her restlessness and dissatisfaction became unbearable.

“I looked at my dreams and thought, ‘This can’t be it.’ I was mad at God because I thought this was his plan for me. But I never really *asked* him what his plan for me was.”

So she asked.

“I spent my sophomore year asking him, ‘How have you made my heart to love? What are your dreams for me?’”

“As I started discerning, that phrase ‘Maybe you’ll be a sister sometime’ kept coming back to me.”

Sister Lucia Christi started spending more time in adoration and praying more with Scripture.

“I found that the more time I spent with the Lord, that’s where my heart found joy and rest,” she said.



Sister of Life Lucia Christi smiles while holding a newborn during a Christmas party while serving a two-year mission at the Sisters of Life’s crisis pregnancy center in New York City, where they provide support to pregnant women in crisis and offer continuing support to them following the birth of their children. (Submitted photo courtesy of the Sisters of Life)

“And Father Hollowell’s question came back.”

At first, she said, she was “totally terrified” at what life as a religious sister might look like.

“Jesus was so kind and patient and persistent,” she said. “As I spent time with him and prayed

more deeply, I found myself falling in love without realizing that’s what was happening.

“Finally, I heard Jesus say, ‘Would you be my bride and mother all of my children?’”

“Finally, I was able to say yes. But then I thought, ‘Now what?’ ”

‘What a way to spend a lifetime’

Sister Lucia Christi spoke with a priest at St. Paul Catholic Center in Bloomington at the end of her sophomore year. After sharing her story with him, he simply said, “I have the perfect order for you—the Sisters of Life.”

She looked them up online, and she knew she’d found her vocational home.

“I read through the whole [site],” said Sister Lucia Christi. “It was an experience of encountering my own heart written out.

“All my dreams for my life I found in our charism—to love the human person just because they are. Not because of anything they can do or their status, but just because God loves them and created them.

“To live a life of love and joy and invite people into a life where God loves him. To lay down my life so others may live. To be a voice for the voiceless, the elderly, the unborn, the forgotten, those whose lives count for less in the world. To be a sign pointing to heaven.

“I thought, ‘What a way to spend a lifetime.’ It was everything I wanted without having words to express it at the time.”

Sister Lucia Christi contacted the order’s vocation director, who helped her learn more about the order “and about my own heart.” She also started spiritual direction with a priest.

“It was pretty clear this is where the Lord was calling me,” she said.

The order requires its sisters to have a college degree, so Sister Lucia Christi dropped her pre-med classes and focused on earning a bachelor’s degree in human biology.

She entered the Sisters of Life as a postulant a few months after graduating in 2014.

See ADVENTURE, page 12B



Sister of Life Lucia Christi, far left, smiles with college students of the Colorado School of Mines and three of her fellow Sisters of Life atop Mt. Sherman in Colorado. Her current mission has her ministering to the students of seven colleges in Colorado and one in North Dakota. (Submitted photo)





Deacon's combination of concern, compassion and celebration of faith guide his ministry

By John Shaughnessy

There are heartbreaking moments in life when a person appreciates even more what it means to be part of a faith community.

For Deacon Juan Carlos Ramirez, one of those poignant moments occurred recently when he received the news that one of his brothers had died unexpectedly.

"I was able to travel to Mexico to attend his funeral, and though I was sad for the loss, I also have the consolation that he is now on his way to the presence of God. And the Holy Spirit showed me—through the words and prayers of many co-workers, friends, family and parishioners—that we should be grateful for the blessed moments we had with him, and we should celebrate his life."

That outpouring of concern, compassion and celebration of the faith for Deacon Ramirez reflects the same approach that he has given to members of St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus ever since he began his ministry there after being ordained in 2017.

"Deacon Juan Carlos is well-respected by all the various ministry leaders and brings people together for the benefit of the entire community," says Father Christopher Wadelton, St. Bartholomew's pastor.

"There are lots of people who hold strong opinions about how things should be done in the Church. Deacon Juan Carlos has an amazing ability to enter into the conversations with people of all backgrounds with patience and kindness. He is a peacemaker and a great example for other leaders—including myself—to look up to. I admire the way he interacts with people with the kindness of Christ."

Deacon Ramirez says his approach to people and his ministry has been significantly shaped by a moment that happened during his ordination in 2017—a moment when he felt the presence of the Holy Spirit.

'An opportunity to be in contact with God and his people'

"There were no words," he said at the time, "but I know the Holy Spirit was saying, 'You are now my instrument.'"

Four years into his ministry, the 55-year-old deacon has no doubt that the Holy Spirit guides him in every moment.

"The Holy Spirit continuously reminds me that this is not about me, my capability or my capacity," he says. "It is all about the love God wants to transmit to those in need through us and let them know that he is present in every step of our life."

"There are many moments to see how the Holy Spirit can comfort those who feel lost, or accompany those who need support, motivation or direction. The

relationship is the key factor—the opportunity to be in contact with God and his people, to accompany them where they are."

His relationship with his wife of 32 years, Gabriela, is also key to his ministry. They work together on evangelization efforts for the Hispanic community, serve as part of the parish's healing ministry, take Communion to the sick and participate in eucharistic adoration. They are also involved in planning a weekend retreat to support married couples.

Gabriela has seen the difference that being a deacon has made to the faith of her husband—and also to hers.

"Juan Carlos has been a great husband, father and friend, but what is more visible for me is his praying time," she says. "As a person of faith, he has been improving not only the quantity but also the quality of praying."

"Because of his continuous spiritual growth, I've also had the benefit of accompanying him and growing my personal relationship with God through helping and accompanying others where they are in their journey. Being the spouse of a deacon, I am more conscious of the privilege to serve others as a blessing from God."

The blessings have been many for the couple, including their three grown children, Karla, Carlos and Oscar. Deacon Ramirez strives to keep a focus on family in his ministry.



Deacon Juan Carlos Ramirez says, "The way we treat our families should be the same way we should treat everybody else—with Christian love." In this family photo, he and his wife Gabriela are pictured with their three children, Oscar, left, Karla and Carlos. (Submitted photo)



Then-Archbishop-designate Charles C. Thompson ritually lays hands on deacon candidate Juan Carlos Ramirez on June 24, 2017, in SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis during a Mass in which Ramirez and 20 other men from across central and southern Indiana were ordained as permanent deacons. (File photo by Sean Gallagher)

"Through formation, we frequently were reminded that our first ministry is our family," he says. "It makes a lot of sense because the way we treat our families should be the same way we should treat everybody else—with Christian love."

Trusting in God's will and mercy

That sense of family extends to parishioners for him. One particular moment stands out.

"One time, we were bringing the Eucharist to a home care facility to a great friend who suffered from dementia," he recalls. "She was so happy to receive it with all the solemnity and respect, reminding us of the

presence of God in the Eucharist and in our lives."

Father Wadelton also mentions the difference the couple has made in leading retreats for Latino members of the parish.

"At the end of the retreat, the participants form into 'small Church communities' or 'iglesitas,'" Father Wadelton says. "Many of the *iglesitas* have continued to meet regularly for years, forming strong bonds and spiritual support for each other. The small Church communities have thrived in large part due to Deacon Juan Carlos and Gabby."

Deacon Ramirez deflects any credit, giving it all to God. An industrial engineer by profession, he works as a quality director at Cummins Inc., in Columbus. He says the reason he wanted to become a deacon was to improve his relationship with Jesus "and help others to do the same."

"I was terrified that I would be unworthy, not capable and this could be only a personal desire," he says. "However, through personal and intercession prayer, spiritual direction and discernment—but, more importantly, humility to trust this was God's will—I was able to accept the invitation to serve and become a deacon."

Trusting in God's will has led to the deeper relationship with him that Deacon Ramirez sought.

"Through formation and studies, I have been able to understand better our faith," he says. "Through prayers, I have been able to recognize God's mercy. And through my relationships, I can see his love for all of us. As we know more about our faith, I understand that I have a God that is all merciful."

(For more information on the archdiocesan diaconate program, contact Deacon Kerry Blandford, director of deacon formation, at 317-236-1492 or dblandford@archindy.org †)





Our Lady of Grace Monastery's care for creation rooted in Benedictine spirituality

By Sean Gallagher

BEECH GROVE—The Church's teachings on care for the environment may seem to be fairly new, only coming on the scene following the Second Vatican Council.

The Benedictine Sisters of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove know different.

They see in the 1,500-year-old *Rule* of St. Benedict, which guides the life of their community, the application of Gospel principles to the care of the Earth and understanding humanity's place in it.

And they've been putting those principles into action since the monastery was founded more than 60 years ago, maintaining a forest of more than 1,300 trees on its 30 acres of land in highly urbanized Marion County.

Since 2014, three acres of that land has been turned into the community's Peace and Nature Garden where local flowers and other plants are able to grow free amid paths and benches that dot the landscape.

So, when Pope Francis issued in 2016 his encyclical letter, "*Laudato Si'*: On Care for Our Common Home," the Beech Grove Benedictines knew right away that the spirit of their community resonated well with what the pope taught in it.

"We human beings are related to every single thing on the Earth," said Benedictine Sister Angela Jarboe, who helps oversee the Peace and Nature Garden. "Benedict was ahead of the game in that sense."

Praying together as a community several times a day has been at the heart of Benedictine spirituality since its beginning. Benedictine men and women pray the Liturgy of the Hours and worship together at Mass daily.

Benedictine Sister Marie Therese Racine, Our Lady of Grace's director of liturgy, said care for creation has become an integral part of that prayer.

"We find ourselves always praying for the creation, the poor, for justice and mercy," she said. "We're listening to the world [and its needs]."

Our Lady of Grace has also observed the Season of Creation, a time of prayer for the environment which spans annually from Sept. 1-Oct. 4, ending on the feast of St. Francis of Assisi. Pope Francis began the Church's

participation in the Season of Creation in 2015.

The Beech Grove Benedictines have had Taize prayer services for creation during the season. This year, they used various Masses for special needs found in the *Missal*, including for a Mass following harvest, for the sanctification of human labor, for the preservation of peace and justice and in time of famine.

"Throughout the season, the prayers for Mass were from these ritual Masses," Sister Marie Therese said. "Our chaplain, [Benedictine] Father Matthias [Neuman] loves the season and was grateful that we decided to incorporate it into the Mass."

Benedictines have also at the heart of their charism the virtue of hospitality. So, when guests and the neighbors who live around the monastery come to their grounds, they see a physical witness to the sisters' value of creation.

"We've run programs and given tours," Sister Angela said. "I feel like my calling is to make people aware of what their surroundings are really about."

She especially appreciates helping people understand the place of the Peace and Nature Garden in the wider ecology of the area.

"We're witnessing," Sister Angela said. "People come and think that there's nothing but bugs over there and that they bite. No. They're pollinators, and they're not interested in us."

Benedictine Sister Sheila Marie Fitzpatrick points to the growing efficient use of electricity in the monastery's buildings, to its recycling and care for its grounds as a way of setting an example for those who visit Our Lady of Grace.

She's especially excited about the monastic community currently considering how it can participate in the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform, a coalition between the Vatican, Catholic organizations around the world and people and groups beyond the Church to care for creation.

"We're doing this and are inviting others to do it, too," Sister Sheila Marie said. "It's a constant invitation, encouragement and celebration of progress. It's an ongoing effort to build upon



Sister Marie Therese Racine, left, Sister Angela Jarboe and Sister Sheila Marie Fitzpatrick, all members of the Benedictine Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove, pose on Oct. 4 in their community's Peace and Nature Garden. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

what's already done and to include others."

In considering how to care for the environment in the midst of the particular needs of today and with an eye to the future, Sister Sheila Marie never forgets that this interest of hers is rooted in her Benedictine vow of conversion.

"It's about growing closer to God and growing closer to [others in] relationships," she said. "As we grow closer to God, we grow closer to our neighbors and the Earth. It's all creation that comes together. We do it together, as a community. That's so much of what Pope Francis says throughout *Laudato Si'*."

(For more information about Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove, visit www.benedictine.com.) †

Providence sister's 'recalculation' of life journey leads to her vocation

By Jason Moon

Special to *The Criterion*

Prior to becoming a member of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Providence Sister Joni Luna felt lost and began a journey of discovering her true purpose.

"As my GPS says, when I have taken a wrong turn, 'recalculating,'" Sister Joni commented. "I recalculated my path and began to pursue my spirituality, which I



Providence Sister Joni Luna is seen in this 2015 photo enjoying time with students of St. Patrick School in Terre Haute where she was an administrator and teacher at the time. On Aug. 14, she professed perpetual vows as a member of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. (Submitted photo)

had neglectfully left out of my calculations."

That simple recalculation led Sister Joni to the Sisters of Providence. On Sept. 17, 2012, Sister Joni made real her calling by entering the community of religious sisters in western Indiana. And on Aug. 14, Sister Joni fulfilled her call to the Sisters of Providence by professing final vows with the congregation during a ceremony at the Church of the Immaculate Conception on the community's motherhouse campus in St. Mary-of-the-Woods.

Prior to her visits to the Sisters of Providence, Sister Joni, a self-described overachiever, was close to reaching her life goals. She had graduated college, began teaching and coaching, moved into an athletic coordinator and vice-principal position and was close to becoming an athletic director or principal.

But Sister Joni admitted getting that close to her life goals scared her.

"I realized that this pursuit included very little practice of what my parents had instilled in me about family, community and faith," Sister Joni commented. "I was serving myself and it was not feeling good anymore. I found myself lost, spiritually bankrupt if you will. There was a hole that had eroded within me as I chased the corporate ladder. I realized I had it all wrong."

So, Sister Joni simply "recalculated." And it worked. "That's how I arrived here," she said. "I had to undergo a makeover, which included shedding old, unuseful ideas that did not serve me spiritually. I had been blinded to my spiritual life, to my heritage, my culture and my roots. This was where my journey began."

The journey included many visits to St. Mary-of-the-Woods. She attended come-and-see retreats and even became a Providence Associate before she eventually knew she was destined to be a woman religious. Providence Associates are lay people who seek to live out the charism of the Sisters of Providence in their daily lives.

And nine years later, after professing perpetual

vows, Sister Joni said she is "beyond words" when it comes to describing the "recalculation" of her journey.

"I overcame my fears of saying the first 'yes' and all the little 'yesses' in between," she said. "Through all the good and hard times, I knew one thing: My life was not serving me in a way that was life giving, and I was willing to do whatever it took to find my treasure."

Sister Joni added she has also spent a significant amount of time in recent years studying her heritage, including her Native American background, which has influenced her greatly.

"White Eagle, a Native American who was chief of the Ponca Indians from 1840 to 1914, said, 'Never fear your journey ahead, for as God has watched over you all your life ... so God will take you through the dark valley into the light.' I am resolved to follow these ancient teachings and live my life in faith, truth, virtue and goodness as a devoted partner to my Creator."

Sister Joni spent the past year in what is called tertianship by the Sisters of Providence. It is the final formal period of initial formation.

"We are always welcoming new women who wish to join in our mission," said Providence Sister Jenny Howard, a member of the order's leadership. "The purpose of this congregation is to honor Divine Providence and to further God's loving plans by devoting ourselves to works of love, mercy and justice in service among God's people."

"We're very blessed to have new members so that together we can carry forward God's mission in our world."

(Jason Moon is the media relations manager for the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods in St. Mary-of-the-Woods. To learn more about life as a Sister of Providence, go to SistersofProvidence.org or contact vocation director Sister Joni Luna at 361-500-9505 or via e-mail at jluna@spsmw.org.) †



A Day in the Life of a Parish Priest

By Natalie Hoefler

JEFFERSONVILLE—We are a pilgrim people, always on the move toward our destination of heaven. Our priests are there to shepherd and guide us, in particular our parish priests. In fulfilling that role, they too are on the move—every day, a lot. To get a feel for what a day in the life of an archdiocesan parish priest looks like, *The Criterion* shadowed Father Matthew Tucci for a day on Sept. 29.

As pastor of Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and St. Augustine parishes, both in Jeffersonville, and as the new associate archdiocesan director of vocations for the New Albany Deanery, his day was full, lasting as it often does from 4 a.m. until about 8-8:30 p.m. The journey included prayer time, a workout, a staff meeting, a funeral and burial, a visit to Sacred Heart School in Jeffersonville, Mass at a private Catholic academy, adoration and confession followed by a parish Mass, and ended

with dinner at the home of a family of parishioners. "Today was a pretty busy day," admitted Father Tucci, 34, before heading to dinner. "But some days are busier, and some days are not as busy. You just never know what the Lord's going to throw at you! But it's what you do when you really love your parishioners." And it's what you do when you really love your vocation. "I love being a priest. I do," said

Father Tucci. "It's something different every day. You give your life for Christ, and you go where the Spirit takes you. When you do an examen at the end of the day, there's a different reason every day to be thankful for being a priest." (For more information on vocations to the priesthood in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, call the archdiocesan Vocations Office at 317-236-1490 or go to HearGodsCall.com.) †

'I love being a priest'

4 a.m.

Father Tucci uses his phone to pray the Liturgy of the Hours in his "prayer chair" in a corner of his room he set up specifically for prayer. "I get up at 4 a.m. Sometimes I work out first, sometimes I say my prayers first. I pray the Liturgy of the Hours, do *lectio divina*, pray the rosary—I pray the rosary throughout the day. You have to pray every day, both under the promise you make as a priest and because you can't live a life like this without a life of prayer. It's impossible. That grace you receive from prayer every day is what you need. Sit with the Lord at the beginning of the day and sit with the Lord at the end of the day, and then you'll see all the grace he's given you."



7 a.m.



Father Tucci enters a gym in Jeffersonville. "I do some kind of exercise every day. Sometimes I go to the gym, sometimes I ride my bike, sometimes I go mountain biking."

6:30-8:30 p.m.

Father Tucci's day continued with a meal at the home of a family of St. Augustine Parish. "Generally, there are meetings at night once a week, but it depends. We're in the midst of a capital campaign right now, so I've had more evening meetings lately. I usually get back to the house anywhere between 6:30 to 8 or 8:30 [p.m.]. A lot of times I'm ready to just turn in and go to bed."



5:30 p.m.

Father Tucci is assisted at Mass at Most Sacred Heart of Jesus Church by transitional Deacon Brent Thayer, a seminarian from the Diocese of Nashville, Tenn., who is in formation at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad. During the hour prior, adoration was held, and Father Tucci heard confessions. "People share a lot of things with you whether they're Catholic or not. They bare their soul to you, inside or outside the confessional. I love dispensing mercy to people."



2:30 p.m.

Students of Immaculata Classical Academy in Louisville raise their hands to answer a question Father Tucci poses during a homily. He celebrates Mass there a few times a year upon the invitation of a family of Most Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish with a student at the school.



"What you're doing is representing the Lord in a special way, and you're the Lord's presence in those most important times of people's lives, and that shows that God is there in the critical points of people's lives, from birth to death." (Photos by Natalie Hoefler)

1:10 p.m.

A young student at Most Sacred Heart of Jesus School in Jeffersonville shows his schoolwork to Father Tucci. "I try to do a big visit once a week, do a sweep of the school. I really do wish I had more time to go to the school. I like making kids laugh. It's like feeding them what they need, real joy."



10:15 a.m.



Father Tucci holds a staff meeting with Jesse Schuler, left, Tim Seman, Kelly Ueding (in yellow) and Keri Flowers in the parish office building at St. Augustine Parish. "I do my very best to split my time completely between both of the parishes. As a pastor, I think I really need to do my best to give my all to both. Sometimes administration gets in the way of ministry, and sometimes ministry gets in the way of administration. You have all these grand plans to get all this stuff done, but then all of a sudden you're swept away for three hours."

11-12:30 p.m.

Father Tucci prays at a burial site at Queen of Heaven Cemetery in Jeffersonville after a funeral. "We do a lot of funerals here, about 50 a year. I'm at the hospital three to four times a week."





Postulant with speech challenges finds spiritual home with Oldenburg Franciscans

By Sara Geer

Special to *The Criterion*

OLDENBURG—God’s call to be a Sister of Saint Francis came to Hannah Houser through a familiar Disney song that, unbeknownst to listeners, incorporates Franciscan undertones within the lyrics.

“While I was listening to ‘Colors of the Wind’ sang by Pocahontas one day, I realized that God had been calling me my whole life to become a Franciscan sister,” Hannah said.

It was a big realization for her. She started following his call shortly after her first Communion. Then, during her confirmation, the call strengthened and became more apparent to her through prayers and songs.

She said the Blessed Mother Mary was always calling her through songs and that one day she felt Mary wanted her to use another gift to share the Gospel with others at Mass—American Sign Language.

Hannah learned American Sign Language in school while attending St. Rita School for the Deaf in Cincinnati, located about 20 miles from her hometown in Hamilton, Ohio. While not deaf, Hannah was born with a severe speech disability called apraxia that makes it difficult for her to speak.

A teacher and she worked together to start a program at the school to help children with other speech impediments succeed. Hence, sign language became a second language for her to talk with her family, other students and teachers and to use to share her love for following Jesus Christ. St. Rita “holds a special place” in her heart.

“Apraxia is a speech impediment that affects how the messages are sent from the brain to the mouth,” Hannah explained. “So, sometimes what I want to say, and what I do say, doesn’t always connect correctly. I have to remind myself throughout the day to slow down, pronounce and to use proper grammar.”

Growing up in a family of seven and having two loving parents who were also teachers, her disability was never a problem. Yet, when she attended grade school at St. Joseph Consolidated School in Hamilton, other students teased her because of her disability. The experience, however, was not negative for Hannah. Instead, it helped her become who she is today.

“It taught me a lot about how to stand up for myself and to stand up for others,” she said. “I learned during this time how to accept God into my life and how to be a disciple for others.”

God planted other seeds in her journey to religious life as well. The Franciscan charisms that she now lives by daily were not foreign to her growing up. An uncle is a Franciscan priest, and a great aunt was a Franciscan sister. Her mother, grandmother and several aunts were students at the Oldenburg Academy of the Immaculate Conception in Oldenburg, which is a ministry of the Franciscan sisters there. Hannah remembers fondly visiting the sisters and has many Franciscan roots in her life.

“I grew up knowing the Franciscan way of life, and I’m learning how to adopt the Franciscan charisms into my life right now through formation,” Hannah said.

Hannah also has a strong love for nurturing animals and caring for the environment, another Franciscan value ingrained in her. She attended college at Muskingum University in New Concord, Ohio, where she studied sociology with a focus on animal and environmental issues. And during the summers, she worked as a camp counselor and taught the nature program at the Cleveland Sight Center Highbrook Camp in Chardon, Ohio, for children, families and adults with vision impairments.

“I was trying to connect my love of animals, and faith, and many other things from my life,” Hannah said. “Then when I graduated college and met vocations director Sister Kathleen, I found my vocation calling to be a Franciscan sister. It came full circle.”

Franciscan Sister Kathleen Branham, the vocations director at Sisters of Saint Francis in Oldenburg, explained the uphill battle Hannah experienced through gaining acceptance to join a religious community due to her speech disability.

Hannah had written an initial letter to many religious communities introducing herself and asking for guidance with God’s call for her. She had learned writing and grammar differently in school because



Hannah Houser, a postulant with the Franciscan Sisters in Oldenburg, uses American Sign Language (ASL) by a statue of St. Clare of Assisi on the campus of the sisters’ motherhouse. Although not hearing impaired, Hannah has learned ASL because a disability she has called apraxia can make it difficult for her to speak. (Photo by Sara Geer)

of her use of American Sign Language. She received many letters and e-mails back stating they could not accept her.

“I was at NRVC [National Religious Vocations Conference] when she must have sent out a letter to several different congregations because we all got the same letter. The grammar due to her speech impediment was terrible,” Sister Kathleen said. “So, many vocations directors said after reading the letter, ‘This is a person we can’t accept.’ Yet, they never called or met with her to understand why.”

Sister Kathleen said after reading the letter several times, a red flag went off that Hannah may be deaf. She was not going to turn someone down until she met her. After an initial meeting, connections and clarifications were made and there was a better understanding for her about Hannah.

“Religious life needs to be more open to listening to everybody,” Sister Kathleen said, “People are called to the religious life regardless if they have a disability or not. And that is what a vocations director needs to do. It’s about walking with them in the discernment process. Is religious life for you? Is the single or married life for you? It really should not be my job to judge if religious life is for them or not. There is no room for judgment.”

Sister Kathleen said accepting Hannah to join the Sisters of Saint Francis has been a gift given to all the sisters. She explained since the community has a history of sisters who are educators, many sisters have volunteered their time to help tutor Hannah with improving her writing and grammar. And the congregation is in the process of expanding its education and evangelistic efforts with introducing American Sign Language classes and having Hannah sign at each Mass.

With the help of Laboure Society, an organization that provided financial assistance and spiritual support to pay off \$60,000 in educational debt, Hannah has now entered fully into the discernment process and became a postulant in April.

“I love being a disciple of God, walking the faith and living out the Franciscan way of life,” Hannah said. “I didn’t always see it, but God has been calling me to come home my entire life.”

(Sara Geer is a freelance writer and a member of St. Louis de Montfort Parish in Fishers, Ind., in the Lafayette Diocese. To learn more about the Sisters of St. Francis in Oldenburg, visit www.oldenburgfranciscans.org.) †





Recreation, humor help Benedictine monks draw closer to God, each other

By Br. Zachary Wilberding, O.S.B.

Special to *The Criterion*

I guide tours for visitors to Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad in southern Indiana.

They often ask, “What do you monks do?” My answer usually includes a very basic introduction to our way of life based on the *Rule* of St. Benedict, which he wrote about 1,500 years ago.

Following the *Rule*, our life is focused on seeking God so that prayer is at the center of our life. Our prayer consists of the celebration of the Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours as a community. Privately, monks are expected to engage in *lectio divina*: slow, reflective and prayerful reading of Scripture.

Our prayer then calls us forth to work in service of the monastic community and the wider Church and world. The work we do is wide-ranging and includes teaching in our seminary, pastoral work in parishes, leading retreats, maintenance of buildings and grounds, gardening, fine arts and service on the local volunteer fire department.

Hence, one motto popular with Benedictines since the 19th century is “Pray and Work,” or in Latin, “*Ora et Labora*.” You will see it written in stone at the front of our Archabbey Church of Our Lady of Einsiedeln.

For most visitors, that is as much of a description as they are seeking. They never seem to ask, “What do you do for fun?” Perhaps the sight of black-robed men processing into church singing Gregorian chant leads people to believe that this is a serious place without room for much levity.

It is a serious place. And it is true that St. Benedict never mentions play or recreation in his *Rule*. He urges caution regarding laughter, hoping to discourage mockery of others and encourage quiet.

However, Benedict is very much in favor of moderation in the monastery. He says that the strong should have something to yearn for, but the weak should have nothing to fear from monastic discipline. Correction of faults should not be too harsh.

Benedict warns that, in disciplining others, the abbot should not rub so hard at the rust that he breaks the vessel. From the centuries before Benedict, we have an ancient story about St. Anthony of Egypt, one of the early monks who lived in the fourth century, that illustrates this point.

A visiting hunter noticed some of Anthony’s monastic companions joking and laughing and expressed his dismay at such behavior among monks. Anthony replied, “Put an arrow in your bow and draw the string tight.”

He kept telling the hunter to draw it tighter until the hunter said, “If I make it any tighter the bow will snap.” And Anthony replied, “It is just so with monks. If they do not have some relaxation, they too will snap like your bow.”

A more recent witness to the importance of fun in



Benedictine Archabbot Kurt Stasiak plays catch on May 22, 2020, on the lawn by Saint Meinrad Archabbey and its Church of Our Lady of Einsiedeln in St. Meinrad. Times of recreation can help Benedictines enter more deeply into the work and prayer that is at the heart of their vocation. (Photo courtesy of Saint Meinrad Archabbey)

the spiritual life is Jesuit Father James Martin. He says that joy, humor and laughter are “under-appreciated values in the spiritual life.” He continues, “Anyone truly in touch with God is joyful.” As to extreme seriousness he says: “When you are deadly serious, you are seriously dead.”

St. Irenaeus of Lyons famously said, “The glory of God is the human being fully alive.” To be fully alive depends in part on rest, relaxation and delight. This does not mean that you have to spend the day looking for funny videos on YouTube.

It does mean being open to the beauty and humor that come our way in everyday life as well

as appreciating the occasional joke or funny cat video. The relaxation promoted by humor and laughter goes a long way to supporting the patience and gentleness needed for living in community.

Thus, monks pray, work and play for the sake of spiritual, mental and physical health. At Saint Meinrad, Father Harry Hagan and Brother John Glasenapp find the work of gardening to be a form of recreation.

Their work in the garden yields delightful tomatoes, potatoes, cucumbers and Swiss chard for the monks. Brother John Mark Falkenhain fosters attractive flowers and shrubs

which give pleasure to the eye. Father Simon Hermann keeps the courtyard mowed so that we can actually see those flowers and shrubs.

Bicycling is a popular form of play for a number of younger monks. Father Simon and Brother James Jensen have participated in a famous long distance bike ride across Iowa called “RAGBRAI.” Brother Nathaniel Szdik is fond of running and has participated in marathons as well as our own Saint Meinrad 5 K run. Gym exercise also has its adherents, a few of whom, like Father Adrian Burke and Brother Basil Lumsden, go in for weightlifting.

There are less physically intensive forms of play as well. Brother Francis Wagner enjoys fishing and reading novels. Monks enjoy science fiction, serious novels as well as mystery and crime fiction. For example, I have read all of Lee Child’s Jack Reacher novels.

Movies are popular and available nowadays by streaming. Tastes run from the black and white classics, to foreign films to Disney. Then there are some monks who are avid sports fans and follow their favorite teams. Brother Francis is devoted to the Cincinnati Reds while Father Eugene Hensell supports the St. Louis Cardinals.

Play includes communal as well as individual pursuits. Archabbot Kurt Stasiak, Father Simon and Brother Nathaniel often enjoy a game of catch on the lawn after supper as long as the daylight lasts.

Chess is popular in the evening. There is a regular rotation of chess games between Brother Andrew Zimmermann, Brother Maurus Zoeller and Brother Mario Ibison. Sometimes it is best not to ask who won.

Euchre games also draw some eager players. Banagrams and checkers are also popular.

A person’s sense of humor and fun is individual and personal. We don’t all enjoy the same things all the time. But the joy that results is a part of the monastic goal of seeking God.

(Benedictine Brother Zachary Wilberding is vocations director for Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad. For more information about Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad, visit saintmeinrad.org.) †



Benedictine Brother Mario Ibison, left, plays chess with Benedictine Brother Maurus Zoeller while Benedictine Brother Andrew Zimmermann watches. All are members of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad. (Photo courtesy of Saint Meinrad Archabbey)





ARCHDIOCESE OF INDIANAPOLIS 2021-2022 Seminararians

Saint Meinrad Seminary



Dcn Michael Clawson
Fourth Theology
Annunciation, Brazil



Dcn Matthew Perronie
Fourth Theology
St. Malachy, Brownsburg



Tyler Huber
Third Theology
St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd County



José C. Neri
Third Theology
St. Monica, Indianapolis



Jack Wright
Third Theology
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Richmond



Anthony Armbruster
Second Theology
St. Malachy, Brownsburg



Samuel Rosko
Second Theology
Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary, Indianapolis



Bobby Vogel
Second Theology
St. Joseph, Jennings County



Liam Hosty
Pastoral Internship
St. Barnabas, Indianapolis



Aaron Noll
First Theology
St. Bartholomew, Columbus



Khui Shing
First Theology
St. Mark the Evangelist, Indianapolis



Isaac Siefker
First Theology
St. John the Apostle, Bloomington



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Samuel Hansen
Fourth Year College
St. Roch, Indianapolis



Khaing Thu
Fourth Year College
St. Mark the Evangelist, Indianapolis



James Hentz
Third Year College
St. Michael, Greenfield



Randy Schneider
Second Year College
All Saints, Dearborn County



Nathan Thompson
Second Year College
St. Ann, Jennings County



Emiliano Enriquez De Alva
First Year College
St. Ambrose, Seymour



Luke Hornbach
First Year College
All Saints, Dearborn County



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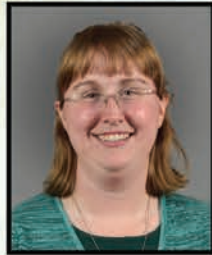
2021-2022



Sr. Maria Nguyen of the Holy Family, OCD - Sisters of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Terre Haute, Temporary professed



Sr. Marie Therese Miciano of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, OCD Sisters of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Terre Haute, Temporary professed



Sr. Arianne Whittaker, SP Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Temporary professed



Sr. Anna Fan, SP Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Temporary professed



Sr. Tracey Horan, SP Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Jude, Indianapolis, Temporary professed



Sr. Emily Tekolste, SP Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Anthony, Indianapolis, Temporary professed



Sr. Teresa Kang, SP Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Temporary professed



Sr. Jessica Vitente, SP Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Temporary professed



Hannah Houser Sisters of St. Francis Oldenburg, IN Postulant



Sr. Mary Lily among Thorns McCann, SSVM Servants of the Lord and the Virgin of Matara, All Saints, Dearborn County, Temporary professed



Sr. Evelyn Lobo, SSps Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters, St. Monica, Indianapolis, Temporary professed



Sr. M. Evangeline Rutherford, OSF Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration, St. John the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Temporary professed



Sr. Mary Peter Ruschke, OSF Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration, Batesville, Temporary professed



Sr. Mary Amata Naville, OSF Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration, St. Mary, Navilleton, Temporary professed



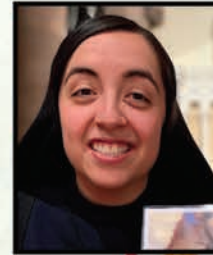
Kelly Armes Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration, St. Ambrose, Seymour, Postulant



Sr. Lucia Christi, SV Sisters of Life, St. Gabriel the Archangel, Indianapolis, Temporary professed



Sr. Agnes Mary Graves, RSM Religious Sisters of Mercy, St. John the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Temporary professed



Sr. Maria Guadalupe Figueroa Religious Sisters of Mercy, St. Anthony, Indianapolis, Temporary professed



Sr. Magdalene Marie Schafer Daughters of the Holy Mary of Sacred Heart of Jesus, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis, Temporary professed



Sister Mary Paul, FSGM Sisters of St. Francis of the Martyr St. George, Novice



Sr. Stephanie Pahren Missionaries of Charity, All Saints, Dearborn County



Sr. Ashley Barnett, SOLT Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity, St. Charles Borromeo, Bloomington, Temporary professed



Br. Basil Lumsden, OSB Saint Meinrad Archabbey, St. Meinrad, IN, Temporary Professed



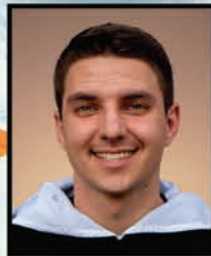
Br. Michael Reyes, OSB Saint Meinrad Archabbey, St. Meinrad, IN, Temporary Professed



Matthew Morris Saint Meinrad Archabbey, St. Meinrad, IN, Novice



Connor Zink Saint Meinrad Archabbey, St. Meinrad, IN, Novice



Br. Dominick Jean, OP Order of Preachers- Province of St. Albert the Great, St. Vincent De Paul, Bedford, Temporary Professed



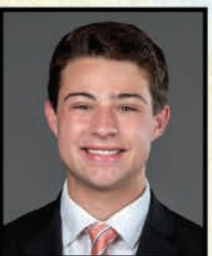
Br. Marcarius Bunch, OP Order of Preachers- Province of St. Joseph, Annunciation, Brazil, Temporary Professed



Br. James Henke, CSC Congregation of Holy Cross, United States Province of Priests and Brothers, Our Lady of the Greenwood, Greenwood, Temporary Professed



Benjamin Sasin Congregation of Holy Cross, United States Province of Priests and Brothers, St. John the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Novice



Josh Amodeo Congregation of Holy Cross, United States Province of Priests and Brothers, SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi, Greenwood, Old College



Br. Alberic Henry, OCSO Abbey of Gethsemani, Our Lady of the Greenwood, Greenwood, Novice



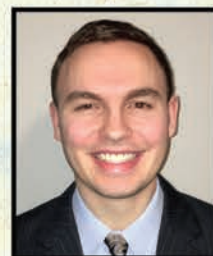
Br. Joseph Michael Kraemer, SJ Society of Jesus- Jesuits West, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Richmond, Theology



Br. Taylor Fulkerson, SJ Society of Jesus- Midwest Jesuits, St. Mary, Lanesville, Regency



Ben Jansen, SJ Society of Jesus- Midwest Jesuits SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi, Greenwood, First Studies



Mike Rushka, nSJ Society of Jesus- Midwest Jesuits, St. Barnabas, Indianapolis, Novice



Br. Nicholas Green, nLC Legionaries of Christ, St. Bartholomew, Columbus, Novice

Religious Communities

Sisters of St. Benedict
Beech Grove | benedictine.com
Congregation of the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis
Oldenburg | oldenburgfranciscans.org

Sisters of Providence
Saint Mary-of-the-Woods | spsmw.org
Sisters of St. Benedict
Ferdinand | thedome.org

Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration, Mishawaka | sspfpa.org

Discalced Carmelite Nuns
Terre Haute | heartsawake.org

Order of St. Benedict | Saint Meinrad Archabbey | saintmeinrad.org

Franciscans of the Immaculate
maryschildren.com

Dominican Friars Central Province
domcentral.org

Conventual Franciscan Friars
franciscansusa.org

Little Sisters of the Poor
littlesistersofthepoor.org

Missionaries of Charity
motherteresa.org

Society of Jesus Midwest Province
jesuitsmidwest.org

Order of Friars Minor St. Louis Province
thefriars.org





SEMINARIAN

continued from page 2B

to the priesthood that Wright had closed so firmly seven years earlier.

“Gradually the desire to become a priest began to grow in me,” he said. “Before, in college, I wanted nothing to do with it. Now, I really started to desire it. I just started praying to our Lady every day just to get me into the seminary.”

By the spring of 2017, Wright was in contact with then-archdiocesan vocations director Father Eric Augenstein and began the process to become an archdiocesan seminarian.

He was accepted and by August of 2017, Wright had quit his job and enrolled at Saint Meinrad Seminary

About Jack Wright

Age: 31

Parents: John and Dotty Wright

Home Parish: St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Richmond

Education: Centerville High School in Centerville; Marian University in Indianapolis; Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad

Favorite Scripture passage: Psalm 23

Favorite saint: St. Francis of Assisi

Favorite prayer or devotion: The Rosary

Favorite book: *New Seeds of Contemplation* by Thomas Merton

Favorite movie: *Into the Wild*

Hobbies: Reading and playing basketball

and School of Theology in St. Meinrad.

‘His leadership is quiet and effective’

Wright’s relationship with Mary during his four years of priestly formation has led him to have a desire to give of himself in service to others—something he began to recognize when he spent Christmas break at his parish a couple of years ago.

“I really started feeling myself loving the people of my parish like I hadn’t before,” he said. “I really wanted to give my life to the people of my parish. I think my love for our Lady is evolving into a love for and desire to give myself to my future parishioners and the Church.”

Benedictine Father Tobias Colgan, Saint Meinrad’s vice rector, sees Wright’s self-giving in his life at the southern Indiana seminary.

“He is well known in the seminary for his quiet outreach to anyone in need, and has been especially attentive to the international seminarians as they continue their process of enculturation,” said Father Tobias.

This leadership in service comes forth from Wright in a variety of ways, from being the liaison between the seminarian community and the seminary’s physical facilities staff, to serving as the grand knight of Saint Meinrad’s Knights of Columbus council.

“His leadership is quiet and effective,” Father Tobias said. “Jack has a very gentle manner and excellent listening skills. People who are hurting or in need, especially, will find Jack to be an outstanding person from whom to seek advice or spiritual counsel.

“Jack has a heart for ministry and will, I think, be especially attentive to the disadvantaged and the marginalized. I cannot wait to see him ordained and out in the field.”

Neither can seminarian Tyler Huber, a classmate of



Seminarian Jack Wright kneels in prayer on Aug. 9 during a Mass at the chapel of Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House in Indianapolis. The liturgy took place during the annual convocation for archdiocesan seminarians. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

Wright and a member of St. Mary-of-the-Knobs Parish in Floyd County. Their friendship deepened over the summer as both were student chaplains at St. Vincent Hospital in Indianapolis, together with their third classmate, seminarian Jose Neri.

“I am really looking forward to the day we are brother priests,” Huber said. “I really appreciated getting to know Jack better and to see him in the chaplain role at the hospital. He was a natural at it, and he will be a great brother priest one day.”

When asked to give a word of encouragement to young men considering a possible priestly vocation, Wright naturally thought of Mary.

“Grow closer to our Lady,” he said. “Give your future to her. Allow her to lead you in whatever direction she wants to.”

(To learn more about a vocation to the priesthood in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, visit www.HearGodsCall.com.) †

ADVENTURE

continued from page 3B

‘The light of Christ’

For the Sisters of Life, postulancy is a roughly 10-month time frame during which the potential sisters learn more about the order and their way of life.

It is also a time when the women discern the religious name they wish to take.

“It’s about asking the Lord, ‘What are you calling me to do and what’s the mission you’re inviting me into?’” Sister Lucia Christi explained.

“I felt like the Lord put that name [Lucia Christi] on my heart. It means ‘the light of Christ.’”

“It’s my experience of Jesus being the light who shines in the dark and the dark cannot, will not overcome it, and him inviting me to be that light in the world in a way only possible for me, and in doing that to have his light shine through everyone I encounter in only the way they can.”

Sister Lucia Christi likens living out her name to the Easter Vigil. The sanctuary is dark until the paschal candle is processed in. Then one person lights a candle from that candle’s flame, and that light is passed on until the sanctuary is lit by the flames of the candles held by each in the congregation.

“When the light of Christ shines brightly in our heart, then the whole world catches fire,” she said. “Letting his light shine through me and bringing

that light to everyone I meet.”

In July 2015, Sister Lucia Christi received her habit and her new name, then entered her two-year novitiate.

‘One of the greatest challenges and joys’

Sisters of Life novices spend the first year “in deep prayer, study and formation, and allowing the Lord to do some deep interior work, healing and growing in our own identity,” she explained.

The second year is spent learning about the sisters’ apostolates, spending two months at a time at their different mission houses.

Sister Lucia Christi professed her first vows in August 2017. The next two years she served at the sisters’ crisis pregnancy center in New York City.

During that mission, she “really grappled with the call to go into the darkest places of humanity and encounter sin in a way I never experienced before, the ugliness of it, and the pain and suffering in other people’s lives, and be invited to bring Jesus into the darkness.

“It’s one of the greatest challenges and also one of the greatest joys.”

She is currently more than halfway through her second two-year mission, “sharing the Gospel and our charism” with students on seven college campuses in Colorado and one in North Dakota.

“I’m preparing to make final vows next summer, God willing,” she said.

‘Be not afraid’

Sister Lucia Christi’s vocational journey has been full of grace, she said, but not without its difficulties.

“In the beginning, the great challenge was to let go of my own dreams and desires, the letting go of what I thought my life would look like, to surrender my will to the will of the Father, which is different sometimes” from ours, she said.

“It required sacrifices along the way—the initial separation from family and friends, the move from Indiana to New York City, which was quite a change.”

But now Sister Lucia Christi sees “the Lord blessing those sacrifices, knowing Jesus never takes something from us without giving something in return.”

To youths and young adults considering a call to a religious vocation, Sister Lucia Christi offers three simple words of advice: “Be not afraid.”

“Jesus is the desire of every human heart,” she said. “He’s the greatest adventure. He knows you and loves you more than you could ever imagine.

“Whatever you go through, it will be your greatest joy. Whatever he asks of us, he has more to give us—more love, more joy, a more abundant life.

“So, be not afraid.”

(To learn more about the Sisters of Life, go to sistersoflife.org. For those seeking crisis pregnancy help, text 212-203-8716 or call 877-7771277. For those seeking help after an abortion, call 866-575-0075 or e-mail hopeandhealing@sistersoflife.org.) †



Christkindlmarkt in Ferdinand is backdrop to follow footprints of faith

By Natalie Hoefler

There's a chill to the night air as people wait in anticipation on a hillside in front of the Sisters of St. Benedict's Monastery Immaculate Conception in Ferdinand, Ind. Finally comes a procession of candle-bearing children piercing the dark to the strains of an Alleluia chorus and a bell choir.

The monastery doors open. From the flood of light, the Christmas angel appears to greet the crowd, singing, "Ye men and womenfolk who once were children too, be a child again today and do rejoice."

So begins the annual Christkindlmarkt festival in the small, German-founded town in the Evansville Diocese.

This year the evening opening will take place at 6:30 p.m. on Nov. 19. The market itself will take place on Nov. 20-21 in various sites around the town, including the monastery.

The event offers more than 200 booths of hand-created items, antiques, art, Christmas wares, regional food and wine, live entertainment and free tours of the monastery. For more information, including lodging, go to www.ferdinandchristkindlmarkt.com.

The peaceful, hilltop monastery that serves as a backdrop to the festival is a reminder of the region's strong Catholic presence, which includes Saint Meinrad Archabbey and seminary six miles to the south, and a unique Catholic find 13 miles to the north in Jasper: a geode grotto spanning a half-acre.

So, make a trek to the Christkindlmarkt festival, but carve out time to appreciate these footprints of the faith, as follows.

Monastery Immaculate Conception, Ferdinand

The town of Ferdinand was founded in 1840 by Father Joseph Kundek, a German-speaking Croatian who came to minister to the area's German settlers.

In 1867, the local parish priest invited German-speaking nuns from St. Walburg, a Benedictine monastery in Covington, Ky., to teach at the parish school.

Four sisters were sent. Within three years, they founded an all-girls boarding school, and one year later became independent of St. Walburg, forming Monastery Immaculate Conception.

The current quadrangle of buildings was constructed between 1883-1887, with other structures built in subsequent years.

The large domed chapel—which can be seen for miles—was added in 1924, featuring 47 stained-glass windows and hand-carved Stations of the Cross, all made in Munich, Germany.

The monastery is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Additionally, the grounds offer serene gardens, outdoor Stations of the Cross, a labyrinth, three shrines and a gift shop.

Touring the monastery is a must. The Sisters of St. Benedict will offer free tours during the Christkindlmarkt from

10 a.m.-noon and 1-3 p.m. on Nov. 20, and from noon-2 p.m. on Nov. 21.

Visitors are also welcome to join the Sisters for Liturgy of the Hours on Monday through Friday at 7:30 a.m., noon and 5 p.m.; Saturday at 8 a.m., noon and 5 p.m.; and Sunday at 10 a.m. and 5 p.m.

Mass is available on Tuesday and Thursday at 7:55 a.m., Saturday at 8:55 a.m. and Sunday at 10:30 a.m.

For more information about the Sisters and the monastery, go to thedome.org.

Saint Meinrad Archabbey, St. Meinrad

Saint Meinrad Archabbey was founded in St. Meinrad in 1854 by Benedictine monks from Einsiedeln Abbey in Switzerland. Father Kundek asked them to come to help meet the pastoral needs of the German-Catholic population in the area and to form men for the priesthood.

The latter purpose continues to this day through Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology. There, men are formed for ordained ministry as diocesan and religious order priests who serve in central and southern Indiana and beyond.

The pastoral, manicured grounds and buildings are listed on the National Register of Historic Places as an historic district. The campus includes the archabbey church, seminary, guesthouse, library, gift shop and more.

A few miles away on property owned by Saint Meinrad is the Our Lady of Monte Cassino Shrine. It was erected in honor of a novena to Our Lady of Monte Cassino credited with saving the village of St. Meinrad from a smallpox epidemic in 1871.

Tours of Saint Meinrad, led by a Benedictine monk, are offered each Saturday at 1:30 p.m. Central Time. The tour begins at the Archabbey Guest House and Retreat Center.

Self-guided tours are available anytime. Free visitor's guides that include a walking tour of the campus are available at the Guest House, Memorial Lobby or the gift shop.

Visitors are also welcome to join the monks for Liturgy of the Hours on Monday through Saturday at 5:30 a.m. (7:15 a.m. on Sunday), noon, 5 and 7 p.m., with Mass at 7:30 a.m. (9:30 a.m. on Sunday). All times are Central Time.

For more information on Saint Meinrad, go to www.saintmeinrad.org.

Geode Grotto, Jasper

Just 13 miles to the north of Monastery Immaculate Conception is the German-founded town of Jasper in the Evansville Diocese.

Approaching Jasper by car, the tower of St. Joseph Catholic Church can be seen for miles. The 141-year-old structure, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is the church for yet another Catholic community founded by Father Kundek. It is usually



The Christmas angel greets visitors for the opening of the annual Christkindlmarkt in Ferdinand, Ind., in the Evansville Diocese. (File photo by Natalie Hoefler)

a must-see when visiting Jasper. Unfortunately, the church is currently closed due to major interior renovations.

But just behind the church lies a half-acre mineral marvel known as the Geode Grotto.

At first glance, geodes, abundant throughout southern Indiana, are simply dull, bumpy, round rocks. But cracked open they reveal crystal interiors shimmering in hues of white, yellow, pink and purple.

Encircling the half-acre space are geode shrines depicting the mysteries of the rosary, with a 12-foot-tall hand-crafted cave as the centerpiece. Inside the grotto are a large cave re-creating the Lourdes Marian apparition site in France, seven smaller saint shrines, flower-lined walls, two fountains, dozens of flowerpots that weigh as much as 2,500 pounds each, and plenty of places to sit, enjoy, meditate and pray.

The shrine was constructed in the 1950s by Sons of Divine Providence Father Philip Ottavi. As a child growing up in Italy, he was trapped beneath rubble by a devastating earthquake that took more than 80,000 lives, including his parents.



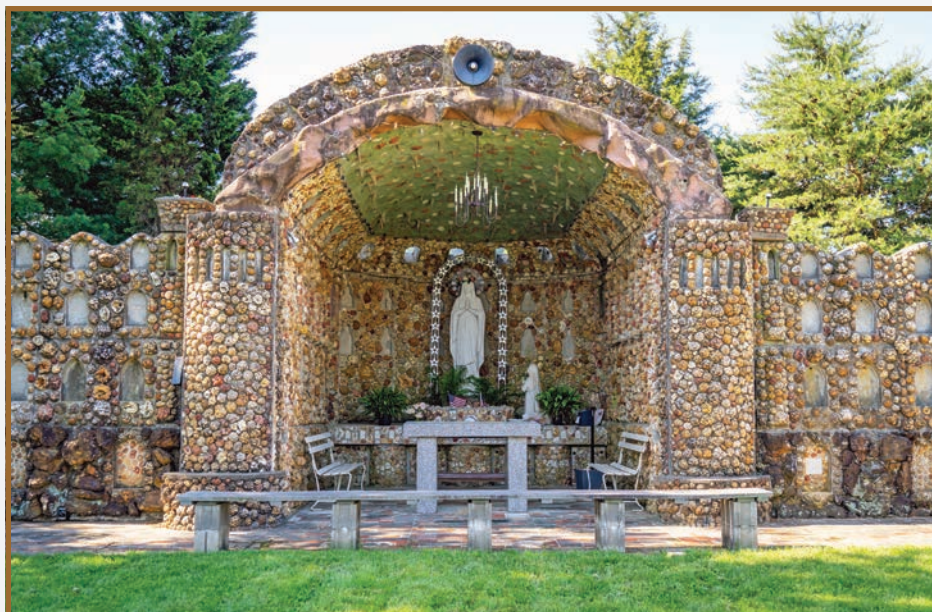
The Sisters of St. Benedict's Monastery Immaculate Conception in Ferdinand, Ind., in the Evansville Diocese, sits high on a hilltop looking over the town. (File photo by Natalie Hoefler)

He decided to take rocks, the source of so much fear and anger in his life, and turn them into a thing of beauty.

It took more than a decade of labor, but the result is stunning. All are welcome to enjoy its beauty for free at any time.

As a side note, those who like authentic German food will want to dine at Schnitzelbank Restaurant in Jasper. Appetizers like kraut balls and Bavarian pretzels, dishes like homemade dumplings and weiner schnitzel, and desserts like hot apple strudel and German chocolate pie will bring out the Deutschlander in any diner.

The restaurant is open on Monday through Saturday from 8 a.m. until 10 p.m. and, true to the Third Commandment, is closed on Sunday. †



The Geode Grotto in Jasper, Ind., in the Evansville Diocese, is seen here on May 30, 2020. The outdoor shrine was built as a place of peace and consolation. (CNS photo/Katie Rutter)



The Archabbey Church of Our Lady of Einsiedeln of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad is seen on March 8. (CNS photo/Katie Rutter)

‘Quiet is the one thing that brings me close to God’

By John Shaughnessy

On a beautiful, blue-skied autumn day in Indiana—with a cool, crispness in the air and the leaves beginning to turn red, orange and gold—Norbert Schott especially senses the presence of God.

As Schott sits on a wooden chair on his porch, the member of St. Paul the Apostle Parish in Greencastle hears God saying, “Where are you running to all the time? Look over at the field of harvested beans, quiet and brown. Look at the trees, at the grass all cut and shaven—and quiet. Look at the tortoise-colored

kitty sitting at your feet. She is quiet. But you are not! Your brain is on a chase, running to the next item, and it’s not quiet. Sit still awhile.”

In such moments, Schott finds himself moving closer to God.

“I think quiet is the one thing that brings me close to God,” he says.

At the same time, Schott wonders, “Why can I not sit on the old chair more often and be still?”

He acknowledges there are distractions all around him, even in the rural setting where he lives.

“The granary across the street is noisy.

Construction crews race back and forth, putting down new hot asphalt on Indiana [Highway] 236 so I can jump in my car and race to town. *Gotta go to town—to do stuff, buy stuff, see stuff. Race, race, race.*”

Then Schott hears God’s voice again, telling him, “Sit awhile. *Feel* the quiet.” And Schott listens, telling himself, “You’ve got time to pray, to sit awhile and hear God. He’s always speaking. You’re not listening.

“That’s it. That’s *the one thing*, the special moment that brings me to God—the quiet.” †



Norbert Schott draws closer to God on an autumn afternoon at his rural Indiana home. (Submitted photo)

The ‘amazing gift’ of the Eucharist helps a mother find peace

By John Shaughnessy

Jenny Annee had the feeling that something was missing in her life.

Even though she had “a loving husband and two children at the time,” she found herself wondering why she “just wasn’t feeling *right*.”



Jenny Annee

In the midst of that unsettling feeling, she received a life-changing invitation.

The invitation was to attend a Christ Renews His Parish weekend at her home parish, Christ the

King in Indianapolis.

“Hearing the witnesses of others and their zeal and love for the Eucharist made me realize I might’ve just been going through the motions at Mass, with a bit of unconscious indifference to what I was experiencing,” she recalls. “In hearing how others went to Mass more than once

a week, I started wondering why they would be drawn to that.”

That retreat—and that wondering—would begin the start of what she calls “my real relationship with Jesus Christ.”

That bond grew gradually through the years as she gave birth to three more children.

“As my older ones began serving weekday Masses, we had many opportunities to attend more than one Mass a week,” she notes. “I began to realize how close I felt to God each and every time I received his precious body and precious blood. The peace of being in Mass was a peace I yearned for, and I knew it was due to his gift of the Eucharist.”

She would need the peace and power of that gift during one of the hardest and darkest times of her life.

“About 15 years ago, my mother died suddenly. The sadness and depression of missing her were so much for me to bear. Within the first year after her passing, I decided to start going to daily Mass

even when my kids weren’t serving. My youngest was 4 years old, so I took him with me each time while the others were in school.

“Receiving the Eucharist as often as possible was life-giving, healing and something that truly helped in the grief I was experiencing. I started to realize that when I received the Eucharist, I was close to God and therefore close to my mother who was now with him. Over time, I was able to cope with her passing because of the ability to be close to Jesus in the Eucharist.”

Her appreciation of the Eucharist—and the impact it has on her life—also increased during the months when churches were closed during the COVID-19 crisis.

“I remember crying and thinking, ‘Please do not take the Lord away from me.’

“Those months without the ability

to receive the Eucharist were hard, but I took the opportunity to memorize the spiritual communion prayer, so I made a point to say it every day. Fast forward to the first day we were able to attend Mass at an outdoor service at Christ the King. I remember crying and thinking, ‘You were never away from me, and I am grateful now more than ever for the gift of the Eucharist.’”

Years have passed since Annee felt there was something missing in her life. Now, she regards the Eucharist as “a true and amazing gift of our Catholic faith,” a gift that deepens her relationships with God and all the people in her life.

“Each time I’m able to receive the Eucharist, the knowledge that Christ is truly present fills me with a peace and gratitude I feel at no other time. Praise God for the gift of our Catholic faith and the ability to be as close to him as we can in the holy Eucharist.” †

CHILDREN

continued from page 1A

come from the south side of Indianapolis. So everybody started to pray. While we were praying, our faith increased.”

It was a time when she found herself drawing closer to God, a time when people also put their faith in action for Theo and his family.

The faith communities of St. Jude—the home parish of Theo’s family—and St. Barnabas—the home parish of Stephon—were at the heart of it all. The two parishes donated 700 rosaries and gave them to every student and teacher at St. Jude School, where five of Theo’s siblings attend.

“In February, we made 1,000 prayer cards for Carlo and sent them home with the St. Jude students,” Stephon says. “The Roncalli High School [in Indianapolis] lunch ladies pray the prayer to Blessed Carlo for his canonization every day.

“They also pass out prayer cards to all students who wish to commit to prayer or just to learn about Carlo. My favorite quote of his is, ‘The Eucharist is your highway to heaven.’”

Beyond the prayers, friends held a pizza fundraiser and have made meals for Jet and Katie Quillen and their seven children. A heating and cooling company also installed a new furnace in their home.

Stephon views the past year as a time

of “prayer and practicing virtues.”

“Prayer took us all on the quickest path to the heart of Jesus,” she says.

So has Theo’s attitude. One of Stephon’s friends made a superhero cape for Theo, and he wears it whenever he goes to Riley Hospital for Children in Indianapolis for chemotherapy treatments.

“He really is a superhero, so brave and strong,” says his grandmother. “When Theo came home from the hospital, he also wanted to pray for all those praying for him.”

The prayer sessions with Theo led to a joyful ritual in which the family began to “fish for souls,” Stephon says.

“We purchased a fishbowl and invited all to leave their intentions. Weekly, we would go outside to the fire pit, burn the intentions and our prayers would go straight to heaven. Then we would fill the fishbowl back up again with new intentions. After our weekly prayer circle, we always celebrated by eating goldfish crackers.”

There has also been the celebration of Theo’s fourth birthday and a great gift.

“We are happy to say that Theo is in remission,” his grandmother says. “We pray to Carlo that he will stay that way. Theo is in maintenance, which means monthly trips to Riley and oral chemo for the next year. We pray that his cancer will never return.

“It is in times like this that God makes his glory known.” †

ROME

continued from page 2A

he was happy that I was a good Catholic, and I should keep receiving Communion.”

The Vatican did not comment on what Biden reported other than to say it was a “private” conversation.

The last question at Biden’s Oct. 31 news conference at the end of the G-20 summit was whether what he said Pope Francis had said should put “to rest” the discussion about his worthiness to receive the Eucharist.

Biden responded, “Look, a lot of this is just personal.”

Rather than addressing the Communion

question directly, the president spoke of his admiration for Pope Francis and, particularly, for how the pope “provided great solace” for him and his family when Biden’s son, Beau Biden, died of cancer in 2015.

“There has always been this debate in the Catholic Church, going back to Pope John XXIII, that talks about how we reach out and embrace people with differences,” Biden said.

“This [Pope Francis] is a man who has a great empathy. He’s a man who understands that part of his Christianity is to reach out and forgive,” Biden said. “And so, I just find my relationship with him one that I personally take great solace in; he is a really, truly genuine, decent man.” †





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Grandparents, parents of adult children continue to learn, pass on life's lessons

By David Gibson

Parenthood always is a work in process. There always seems to be something more and something genuinely important for parents to consider in raising children.

Repeatedly, a parent quietly asks: "What am I? Who is this child of mine?"

I have been a parent for only 48 years. Do I still have lots to learn? Absolutely.

Just as parents of little children continue year by year to reassess their role and its scope, their own parents wrestle with similar challenges. Real life's unique complications leave parents of adult children, who often are grandparents too, asking what it truly means to take parenthood seriously at this point in life.

Long ago, these older parents were their children's first teachers, role models, companions, authority figures, decision-makers. Their children counted on them for so much!

Now they are parents of adult children, who may be parents themselves. How cautious are they about rushing in where angels fear to tread when witnessing an adult child's problems and major challenges?

Of course, many parents of adult children may be more than happy to exchange their long-ago roles for new roles that call for serving as models of support, encouragement and, certainly, commitment and love.

My conversations with other older parents indicate that their relationships with adult children vary across the board. Their interactions reflect their unique personalities and backgrounds.

That means suggestions about how they might interact are only that, suggestions. Notably, however, Pope Francis has made quite a few suggestions for family members to



A grandmother spends quality time with her granddaughter in this photo. Real life's unique complications leave parents of adult children, who often are grandparents too, asking what it truly means to take parenthood seriously at this point in life. (CNS photo/Karen Callaway)

draw upon in their relationships.

Older parents wondering how to keep faith alive in their relationships with adult children may derive inspiration from something Pope Francis wrote in 2016. "It is a profound spiritual experience to contemplate our loved ones with the eyes of God and to see Christ in them," he advised in the apostolic exhortation "The Joy of Love" (*Amoris Laetitia*, #323).

He added: "This demands a freedom and openness which enable us to appreciate their dignity."

Does seeing others through God's eyes sound nearly impossible? Still, attempting to see others through God's

eyes might jump-start an awareness that faith is meant not only to be heard but to be seen.

How will our faith become visible to others if our actions do not show that we respect them and recognize their dignity?

I ought to mention listening. Done well, listening to someone's most pressing concerns is a way to make faith visible.

Listening differs greatly from talking. Good listeners demonstrate that what others have to say should be heard.

Listening is "an act of love," Pope Francis said in 2019. "We are called to encounter others and to listen to their life stories, their cry for help."

But is listening a form of action or of passivity? Pope Francis commented:

"Having time for others, to enter into dialogue, recognizing with a contemplative gaze the presence and action of God in their lives, to bear witness with actions more than with words to the new life of the Gospel is truly a service of love that changes reality."

It can be assumed that neither today's older parents nor their adult children possess immunity to life's difficulties, to times when health issues, financial difficulties or a big job change drain strength from their family.

Several of Pope Francis' observations in the 2018 apostolic exhortation "Rejoice and Be Glad" (*Gaudete et Exsultate*) seem pertinent here. "Those who put their faith in God ... do not desert others in bad times; they accompany them in their anxiety and distress, even though

doing so may not bring immediate satisfaction," he said (#112).

The pope remarked, too, that "it is not good when we look down on others like heartless judges, lording it over them and always trying to teach them lessons." He recommended following this advice of St. John of the Cross: "Rejoice in the good of others as if it were your own" (#117).

Remember, Pope Francis urged, that "Christian joy is usually accompanied by a sense of humor." Furthermore, "ill humor is no sign of holiness" (#126).

I mentioned attentive listening as a skill for parents of adult children to consider keeping close at hand. Life experience can serve as an invaluable resource too.

If parents of adult children learned from experience that life can be hard, did they also experience tough time periods that turned out surprisingly well? Sharing such memories with adult children can be a way to bring the virtue of hope's strength into the real-life mix of family life.

If the adult children also are parents, this may be particularly valuable to them as they encounter each new and possibly turbulent stage of life that rises to the surface as their children explore what "growing up" means.

When shared honestly and with a dose of humility, the long view of life's nerve-wracking moments can be a gift worth sharing with younger family members, one of many ways to allow faith to become visible in interactions across the generations.

(David Gibson served on Catholic News Service's editorial staff for 37 years.) †



Worshippers pray during a Spanish-language Mass on Oct. 14, 2018, at Our Lady of Loretto Church in Hempstead, N.Y., a parish in the Diocese of Rockville Centre, N.Y. Parents of adult children continue to learn and pass on life's lessons. (CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)

Pastoral Ministries/Paul Sifuentes

NCYC provides much spiritual fruit for our parishes

Many parishes and its young people are once again getting ready and excited for the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) in Indianapolis on Nov. 18-20. Every two years, it is the largest gathering of our archdiocesan high school youths. This year, we have more than 1,000 pilgrims in our archdiocesan delegation from



throughout central and southern Indiana.

I am very excited about this year's conference theme: Ablaze! The conference will have our young people enter into the story of the early Church, and the days after Jesus ascended into heaven and his disciples waiting for the Advocate whom he promised he would send.

They were in the upper room when "a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting" (Acts 2:2). This familiar story tells us how next these Apostles went forth from the room filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in the different languages of those who gathered for the feast of Pentecost. Peter then steps up to deliver a powerful witness that ends in 3,000 people being baptized that day!

Now, we are not expecting 3,000 people to be baptized at NCYC this year, but we are expecting the Holy Spirit to descend upon our gathering. We are expecting powerful encounters with our Lord.

Since our last NCYC gathering in 2019, things have been far from normal—and that is an understatement! Many of our youths have spent time in their own "upper room" as they quarantined and/or attended school remotely. This year's NCYC is a reminder that God enters into all of it. God finds us where we are, and God enters into our story.

As our youths have their own powerful encounters during that weekend, the question we need to ask is: "What community are they returning to?"

I believe we can find the answer we desire in the Acts of the Apostles right after the 3,000 people are baptized. "They devoted themselves to the teaching of the Apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers" (Acts 2:42).

As our youths return from NCYC, it is critically important that these experiences are not something that separate them from our parish communities. We need to show our young people that their experiences are essential to the life of our community. Here are four ways you can help our young people as they return to the "real world" after NCYC.

- Ask what was one takeaway they gained from NCYC, what speakers they remember and what messages resonated with them.

- Ask if there is anything you can pray for them about after this experience.

- If you know a youth that participated in NCYC, they might be a great candidate to invite into a liturgical minister role at Mass. A personal invitation goes a long way, and if they say "yes," make sure to help them through the process.

- Often, youth ministers will hold an NCYC recap night for the parish. Make sure you attend, and if the parish doesn't have one, gather some adults and offer to make a meal, so the youths can get together and share their experience.

NCYC is such a gift to our local community, and I believe as a Church we have a great opportunity to feed off this energy and see much spiritual fruit in our parishes.

If you are interested in learning more and want help connecting with youths from your parish attending NCYC, reach out to parish's youth ministry leader or feel free to e-mail me at psifuentes@archindy.org.

(Paul Sifuentes is the director of youth ministry for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.) †

Intellect and Virtue/John Garvey

The will of the people

Left-leaning editorial writers and news anchors have recently been warning us that public approval of the Supreme



Court is dropping. They refer to polls conducted by Gallup and the Annenberg Public Policy Center.

In July 2020, after a term when the court struck down a Texas abortion law and protected gay and transgender employees, Gallup reported that it had an approval rating of 58%. When the court declined to enjoin a new Texas abortion law last month, Gallup said its rating had fallen to 40%.

It's pretty clear what's going on. On Dec. 1, the court will hear arguments in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*. The question presented is whether all pre-viability prohibitions on elective abortions are unconstitutional.

The court has, in other words, agreed to reconsider whether *Roe v. Wade* was correctly decided. The abortion lobby is warning the court that the very prospect of overturning *Roe* is already threatening its legitimacy.

In April, President Joe Biden created a commission to study proposals for reforming the court, such as adding more justices. It's not an original idea. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) proposed packing the court after he won an electoral landslide (523-8) in the 1936 election.

President Roosevelt's proposal failed, but he did have reason to think that the court was getting out of its lane. For 40 years, the federal and state governments had tried to regulate wages, hours and other terms of employment, and the Supreme Court had frustrated their efforts. The court was clearly out of step with the desires of the elected branches of government.

In *Lochner v. New York*, the court argued that the Constitution didn't allow laws like these. They violated the freedom of contract that was, the court said, inherent in the due process clause.

But the due process clause says nothing about freedom of contract. It says that no person can be deprived of life, liberty or property without due process of law. So, for example, the government can't execute (life) or incarcerate (liberty) or fine (property) a criminal defendant without a fair trial. The people who wrote it weren't thinking about minimum wage laws.

Though FDR's court-packing plan failed, the court eventually stopped supervising the economy. In 1937, it acknowledged that "the Constitution does not speak of freedom of contract." From then on, it gave freer rein to the democratically elected branches, unless there was some express prohibition in the Constitution.

That is, until 1973. In *Roe v. Wade*, the court acknowledged that "the Constitution does not explicitly mention any right of privacy." It nevertheless held that such a right might be interpolated into the due process clause's "concept of personal liberty." And this right to privacy, the court said, forbade most kinds of government interference with abortions.

According to a report this year by the Guttmacher Institute, states have enacted 1,313 different abortion restrictions since *Roe* was decided. And for almost 40 years, the court has relied on its unwritten version of the Constitution to strike down laws dealing with when, where, why and by whom abortions may be performed; with informed consent and spousal consent; with reporting and partial-birth abortion.

The parallels between *Lochner* and *Roe* are striking. In both cases, the court invoked a right found nowhere in the Constitution to impose its own vision of social justice on the democratically elected branches of government.

Here's the ironic thing: The court has

See GARVEY, page 14A

It's All Good/Patti Lamb

Reflect on the blessings God showers on you each day

Recently, I found myself enjoying a particularly good day, and I was counting my blessings and thanking God.

First, on my way to work, I was behind a giant dump truck on the interstate and multiple rocks pelted my windshield. I was certain there would be multiple cracks.



Much to my surprise, however, I discovered no cracks on my windshield when I arrived to campus and surveyed the damage. I had been doing mental math in my head during my commute to estimate how much the damage would cost. What a win! "Praise God from whom all blessings flow," I whispered as I breathed in a slow,

deep breath of relief.

Later that morning, I looked at the date and realized an important school application my son was to submit was due the day prior. I frantically texted my son, and he replied with "All is well. I submitted that form a week ago."

"What?" I thought to myself. I have to remind him to load his dishes in the dishwasher, take out the overflowing trash and pick up dirty laundry strewn about his room. He followed through on his own, without me nagging him. I raised my eyes up to God and said a silent prayer of thanksgiving.

And then came the meeting that was seemingly impossible to schedule. A critical and time-sensitive meeting had to happen between a college dean, a vice president and several other staff members who were planning vacations in the days to come. I looked at every possibility and decided there was no way to get these people together for even 30 minutes. Noticing my repeated sighs, a co-worker kindly introduced me to the dean's administrative assistant. She was able to move one meeting on his calendar, which gave us a 30-minute window later that day before two staff members left for fall break.

"A blessing trifecta," I prayed silently. "Thanks again, God," I added.

That afternoon, a friend forwarded me a screen shot of a social media post by a schoolmate of ours from years past. (I should share that I'm the only inhabitant of Earth who doesn't participate in social media.) It was an extremely flattering photo of our former classmate posing with an impressive birthday gift from her generous husband.

The screen shot included a comment someone posted: "Winning at life, gorgeous. Happy bday!"

This former classmate who is "winning at life" is the same woman who played some very unkind tricks on me in college.

In that moment, I admit that I became envious and felt insecure. Here I was having a fantastic Thursday, yet all the blessings I had been thanking God for that day suddenly felt insignificant. I allowed that one little square of social media to reframe my blessings, and that was *not* a good move on my part. I was ashamed at my reaction and sorry for the way it probably made God feel.

A quote from Theodore Roosevelt sprang to mind: "Comparison is the thief of joy."

In a month when we pause to appreciate our blessings and celebrate Thanksgiving, I thought this experience was worth sharing. I don't want you to miss all the blessings God is showering upon you—like I almost did that day, when I foolishly rated my blessings among my peers instead of staying in my own lane.

A quote by Nitin Namdeo says it well: "Two humans are completely different from each other; comparing them is like insulting nature."

What blessings do you notice today?

(Patti Lamb, a member of St. Susanna Parish in Plainfield, is a regular columnist for The Criterion.) †

Guest Column/Richard Etienne

Schedule time, listen for God's direction each day in life

Do you struggle with control issues in your life? Everyone falls on a continuum somewhere between accepting that



they have little or no control over the direction of their life (the victim card) or attempting to control every tiny piece of their existence (a control freak).

Few people would accomplish any major achievements in life

if there was no planning about the future and setting goals to strive toward daily, weekly and yearly.

At what point does one trust that God is ultimately in control of so much

in life and eventually surrender to God's plan?

I have worked with individuals who attempt to micro-manage every subordinate that he or she supervises. It can be quite maddening. At some point, it is necessary for an individual to delegate and trust that others can perform the task for which they have been hired or assigned.

A person must not always approach a task assuming that no other person can perform it as well or, minimally, in any acceptable manner as doing it themselves.

Similarly, I have also observed persons who refuse to take any responsibility for the direction that lies ahead in their life. They seem to live

life like a bumper car at an amusement park—subject to every impact with seemingly little or no ability to maneuver around any oncoming issue or to strive in preparing for a better future.

These people seem to see life as one tempest after another that tosses them around completely beyond any power within their grasp. In the Gospel of Luke, we read, "If even the smallest things are beyond your control, why are you anxious about the rest?" (Lk 12:26) It later continues, "... Your Father knows that you need them. Instead, seek his kingdom, and these other things will be given you besides" (Lk 12:30-31).

See ETIENNE, page 14A

Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, November 7, 2021

- 1 Kings 17:10-16
- Hebrews 9:24-28
- Mark 12:38-44

The First Book of Kings furnishes the first reading for Mass this weekend.

Political governance, in the minds of the ancient Hebrews, was not the chief function of their kings. Rather, assuring the nation's faithfulness to God and to the law of God given through Moses was their kings' primary duty.

Since this religious function was so vital, it is not surprising that many stories in the First and Second Books of Kings revolve around the prophets who were active at the time instead of the kings.

Such is the case this weekend. The central figure in the story is the prophet Elijah. In this story, Elijah appears at the gate of a city and encounters a woman collecting twigs and branches to use as firewood.

The impression left is that she was a widow, and her son was a child. She obviously is quite poor. She must forage for fuel. She needed food to provide for her son.

In fact, she is so poor that she tells Elijah that after she and her son consume whatever she can bake using the meager amount of flour and oil on hand, she and the son will die. There is nothing else.

Elijah tells her that, if she will feed him, she and the son will not die. God will provide. The story ends by telling us that she prepared food for Elijah, and her flour and oil never ran out. The prophet called her to trust.

For its second reading, the Church this weekend gives us a passage from the Epistle to the Hebrews. Building upon traditional Jewish themes, the author writes about Jesus in the most soaring language.

The reading declares that God has ordained that all people must die, but that they all may live if they turn to Jesus.

St. Mark's Gospel offers the last reading. It is a familiar story, in which the

Lord spoke quite sternly about scribes, who, being able to read and write in an era when religious knowledge mattered more than anything else, were specialists in interpreting the law of Moses and were well regarded as such.

Jesus did not belittle the law of Moses, but criticized the self-satisfaction and even sinful pride of the scribes.

He presented a contrast. At the time in that culture, widows could be very vulnerable. People understood the contrast. Jesus described a poor widow who gave to the temple a small donation, but great for her in her poverty. It is the paragon of love for God and trust in God. Jesus spoke of her as such.

Reflection

The widow's mite is a story beloved by Christians. Yet it has been for generations also a challenge for Christians. God wants our heartfelt, deep, genuine love.

Christmas symbols already festoon every store. People are planning for Christmas.

An old European legend tells of a Christmas custom in a great, medieval city. People thronged to Christmas Mass in the magnificent cathedral. After Mass, the rich and mighty marched to a Nativity scene and laid before it gifts of stunning value, sparkling and beautiful, awing the congregation.

The cathedral was unusual. Its massive bells, on rare occasions, just spontaneously rang. People said that the bells rang when God was pleased.

A young orphan boy, poor, forgotten and ignored, found a broken gold button on the street, fallen from someone's coat. He worked and worked to clean it and polish it. At Christmas Mass in the cathedral, he stood in the shadows, embarrassed by his shabbiness. When the church was empty and the grand presentation of gifts by the rich completed, he crept to the crib and placed his little, bended button before it.

Suddenly, the bells rang. People said that their melody had never been more lovely. †

Daily Readings

Monday, November 8

Wisdom 1:1-7
Psalm 139:1-10
Luke 17:1-6

Tuesday, November 9

The Dedication of the Lateran Basilica
Ezekiel 47:1-2, 8-9, 12
Psalm 46:2-3, 5-6, 8-9
1 Corinthians 3:9c-11, 16-17
John 2:13-22

Wednesday, November 10

St. Leo the Great, pope and doctor of the Church
Wisdom 6:1-11
Psalm 82:3-4, 6-7
Luke 17:11-19

Thursday, November 11

St. Martin of Tours, bishop
Wisdom 7:22-8:1
Psalm 119:89-91, 130, 135, 175
Luke 17:20-25

Friday, November 12

St. Josaphat, bishop and martyr
Wisdom 13:1-9
Psalm 19:2-5b
Luke 17:26-37

Saturday, November 13

St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, virgin
Wisdom 18:14-16; 19:6-9
Psalm 105:2-3, 36-37, 42-43
Luke 18:1-8

Sunday, November 14

Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time
Daniel 12:1-3
Psalm 16:5, 8-11
Hebrews 10:11-14, 18
Mark 13:24-32

Question Corner/Fr. Kenneth Doyle

The Church accepts tattoos as morally acceptable under certain conditions

Q I am thinking of getting a tattoo on my arm of my late daughter's handwriting. Is there anything in Catholic teaching against this? I want to do this for my 75th birthday which is coming up soon. (Kentucky)



A There is nothing in Catholic teaching that prohibits getting a tattoo.

Some point to a passage in Leviticus that says, "Do not lacerate your bodies for the dead, and do not tattoo yourselves" (Lv 19:28).

But in its context, that was a Jewish ceremonial prohibition that may have dealt with expressing devotion to a false god.

Tattoos that are sexually explicit or satanic would naturally be immoral, as would a minor's choice to disobey a parent by getting a tattoo.

But a tattoo itself, even though it is permanent, violates no moral principle, and I see no problem with

the questioner's getting a tattoo of her daughter's handwriting as a permanent memory.

I think it wise, though, for anyone considering a tattoo to ask: Will I still want this on my body 10 years from now?

Q My brother is 82 years old and gay. He left the Church many years ago—in part, I think, because he believes some myths about how the Church feels about gays.

He has some strong resentments against the Church. What can I do to help him get reconciled with the Church? (Location withheld)

A In recent years, the Church has reached out to gay people to assure them that they are an essential part of the people of God.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, first published in 1994, says this: Men and women with homosexual tendencies "must be accepted with respect, compassion and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided" (#2358).

A number of parishes (St. Paul's in Manhattan is one notable example) have retreats, Bible studies, speaking engagements and social nights for gay people. Our letter writer might consider inquiring what programs are available locally.

The overwhelming opinion of psychologists today is that people don't choose to be gay—any more than they choose to be right- or left-handed. And while the Church believes (based on sacred Scripture and its consistent teaching) that homosexual acts are morally unacceptable, the Church also teaches that homosexual inclinations are not sinful in themselves.

A person whose orientation is gay has special challenges in living a Christian life, and every help should be given.

There is a special need, then, for gay people to be welcomed by their parish communities. In his life and ministry, Jesus regularly reached out to those who felt excluded or marginalized, and the Church is continuing that effort.

One Catholic organization that does good work in this regard is Courage International. Founded in 1980, it helps people who experience same-sex attraction to find fellowship amongst each other in ways consistent with the teachings of the Church.

(Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at askfatherdoyle@gmail.com and 30 Columbia Circle Dr., Albany, New York 12203.) †

My Journey to God

Chrysalis

By Cynthia Leppert

Her body nearly spent,
and her mind clouded with pain
(he slips a little medication into her water
to make her more comfortable,)
and her spirit,
oh, now it's the Spirit's time ...
it alternately squirms and rests,
squirming, stretching, pushing
as in a live chrysalis,
answering the call
to freedom at last.



(Cynthia Leppert is a member of St. Christopher Parish in Indianapolis. Photo: Women religious of the Little Sisters of the Poor keep vigil with a dying resident, praying together at her bedside, at the Little Sisters of the Poor St. Joseph's Home in Palatine, Ill., in this 2016 photo.) (CNS photo/courtesy Little Sisters of the Poor)

Rest in peace

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

BOWLES, Margaret C., 86, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis, Oct. 7. Mother of Chadd, Greg, Jeff, Matthew and Todd Bowles. Grandmother of 12.

CUSKADEN, Michael W., 75, St. Mary, Greensburg, Oct. 20. Husband of Nancy Cuskaden. Father of Melissa Bruns, Christopher and Michael Cuskaden. Brother of Richard Cuskaden. Grandfather of eight.

DRAGAN, Angeline M., 91, St. Jude, Indianapolis, Oct. 17. Mother of Mary Dragan and Josephine Thompson. Grandmother of three. Great-grandmother of four.

FRY, JoAnn N., 72, St. Mary, Greensburg, Oct. 21. Wife of Douglas Fry. Mother of Jennifer Huber, Brooke Owens, Kristen and Brad Fry. Sister of Betty Lou Andres, Mary Ann Lehr, Lavonne Moorman, Darlene Vicars and Anthony Gillman. Grandmother of eight.

HAMMACK, Zachary D., 27, St. Michael, Bradford, Oct. 3. Father of Spencer Hammack. Son of Douglas Hammack and Jill Stilger Morrissey. Brother of Abigayle Hammack, Keely and Sophia Morrissey and Carson McClain. Grandson of Gary and Sharon Best, Larry and Gayle Humes and Darryl and Peg Stilger.

HANNEMAN, William F., 88, St. Joseph, Shelbyville, Oct. 20. Father of Michael and Randal Hanneman. Grandfather of six. Great-grandfather of one.

HARDESTY, Alma M., 100, St. Vincent de Paul, Bedford, Oct. 26. Mother of Dennis and Don Hardesty. Sister of Martha O'Hara. Grandmother

of three. Great-grandmother of nine.

HOHMAN, Dolores, 97, St. Peter, Franklin County, Oct. 21. Mother of David, Don, Kevin, Mike and Ron Hohman. Grandmother of eight. Great-grandmother of 13.

JACKSON, Kenneth W., 83, St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Aurora, Oct. 22. Husband of Frances Jackson. Father of Valerie Cole, Rebecca Geiger, Cecilia Matos, Paula Reed, Lara Weber, Andrew, Kenneth II and Richard Jackson. Brother of Patricia Hilton and Irvin Jackson. Grandfather of 21. Great-grandfather of 10.

KUCHEFSKI, Olivia, 70, St. Charles Borromeo, Bloomington, Oct. 21. Wife of Mark Kuchefski. Mother of Ann Braunstein and Laura Kuchefski. Sister of Claudia Pickard, Marilyn Sollars, Frank and Steve Lane. Grandmother of two.

LITMER, Carol A., 81, St. Catherine of Siena, Decatur County, Oct. 20. Mother of Chris and Scott Litmer. Grandmother of two.

MCANDREWS, Diane B., 86, St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower), Indianapolis, Oct. 22. Wife of Thomas McAndrews. Mother of Kelly Scheidler and Patrick McAndrews. Grandmother of five.

MEYER, Virginia, 86, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Richmond, Oct. 21. Mother of Thresa Griffith. Sister of Jennette Newton. Grandmother of two. Great-grandmother of one.

PETERS, Norma J., 83, St. Bridget of Ireland, Liberty, Oct. 4. Wife of Jerry Peters. Mother of Kendrea Hufford, Kirsten Sommer, Holly Turner, Andy, Brooks and Tony Peters. Sister of Karen Gesell, Linda Hendrix and Janet Miller. Grandmother of 12. Great-grandmother of eight.

ROEMBKE, Susan K., 74, St. Martin of Tours, Martinsville, Oct. 20. Mother of Paulina Long, Sherry Wilkerson, Dominic, Thaddeus and Tim Roembke. Sister of Kathy Cummings, Mike and Rob Sleeth. Grandmother and great-grandmother of several.

SCHNEIDER, Earl J., 101, St. Gabriel, Connersville,

Oct. 4. Father of Gary Schneider, Sr. Grandfather of five.

SKINNER, Mary Alice, 82, St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower), Indianapolis, Oct. 18. Wife of Frank Skinner. Mother of Ann

Sutton, Andy, David and Doug Skinner. Grandmother of nine.

TANNER, Paul, 83, St. Mary, Lanesville, Oct. 19. Husband of Edna Tanner. Father of Michelle Perkins and Dana Tanner. Brother of Marian Cooper, Leah Hayworth, Judy Skaggs and Scott Tanner.

Grandfather of five. Great-grandfather of one.

WHITE, Roger, 74, St. Joseph, Shelbyville, Oct. 19. Father of Carol Kelsheimer, Shana Wolfey and Richard Skillman. Grandfather of three. †

Pro-life bell



Pope Francis rings a bell called "The Voice of the Unborn," before his general audience at the Vatican on Oct. 27. The bell was made for a parish in Ecuador by a pro-life group in Poland. Among the engravings on the bell are an image of an ultrasound and two hands around a heart with a quote from Blessed Jerzy Popieluszko: "The life of a baby begins under its mother's heart." (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

Providence Sister Agnes Eugene Cordak served in Catholic schools for 31 years

Providence Sister Agnes Eugene Cordak, a member of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods in St. Mary-of-the-Woods, died on Oct. 18 at Mother Theodore Hall on the campus of her religious community's motherhouse. She was 96.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Nov. 3 at the Church of the Immaculate Conception at the motherhouse in St. Mary-of-the-Woods. Burial followed at the sisters' cemetery.

Sister Agnes Eugene was born on Feb. 1, 1925, in Chicago. She entered the Sisters of Providence on Sept. 14, 1941, and professed final vows on Aug. 15, 1950.

Sister Agnes Eugene earned a bachelor's degree in education at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College and master's degrees in education and history at Indiana State University in Terre Haute.

During her 80 years as a member of the

Sisters of Providence, Sister Agnes Eugene ministered as an educator and school librarian for 31 years in schools in Illinois, Indiana and Washington, D.C. At different times, she also served in administration in her religious community, including as treasurer and coordinator of transportation at the motherhouse.

In the archdiocese, Sister Agnes Eugene ministered at St. Mary School (now St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School) in Richmond from 1946-48, the former St. Andrew the Apostle School in Indianapolis from 1955-56, and in Terre Haute at the former St. Ann School from 1954-55, the Gibault Home for Boys (now Gibault Child Services) from 1971-72 and the former Paul C. Schulte High School from 1972-73.

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

Online Lay Ministry Formation

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

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

For more information, please log on to www.archindy.org/layministry



ETIENNE

continued from page 12A

What lesson can be extracted from this Scripture? Is it not that we should refrain from anxiety over the future? Shouldn't each of us plan for the future? And as we plan, isn't it important to trust that God is in control and that he will create the desired outcome—

his will—if we will only cooperate?

This approach requires regular time for prayer and staying open to God's direction.

Do you have time in your schedule to be still and listen for God's direction in your life?

(Richard Etienne has a degree in theology from Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad and resides in Newburgh, Ind.) †

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** Carla Hill, Archdiocese of Indianapolis, Victim Assistance Coordinator
P.O. Box 1410, Indianapolis, IN 46206-1410
317-236-1548 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1548
carlahill@archindy.org

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GARVEY

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proposed to reconsider its behavior in *Roe*, as it did with *Lochner*. And rather than cheering this as a victory for democratic self-government, the media are whining that it would undermine the court's legitimacy because it would be contrary to the popular will.

(John Garvey is president of The Catholic University of America in Washington. Follow him on Twitter @CatholicPres. Catholic University's website is www.cua.edu.) †

Fall conference gives women a spiritual ‘booster shot’

By Sara Geer

Special to *The Criterion*

“It may have taken you a little bit of a struggle to get here,” Gina Bauer told those present at the 2021 Indiana Catholic Women’s Conference. “Yet, Jesus will take all our tears and doubts and raise it up. The Father is going to accept the gift of our suffering, and the Holy Spirit is going to be released on the Church. We are going forward.”

Guest speaker Bauer, a wife and mother, connected with the more than 400 conference attendees by opening up about her own struggle with anxiety and fear during the COVID-19 pandemic. These feelings, she explained, were “blocking” her from happiness, joy and love and needed to be removed to allow grace to fill her life.

“God is above all of this,” shared Bauer. “And he is working through it to draw you back into his heart to give humanity a new heart.”

Sponsored by the Marian Center of Indianapolis, the annual conference welcomes and encourages women across central and southern Indiana to gain inspiration from nationally known Catholic speakers, like Bauer, and to grow closer to God and the Church.

Postponed 18 months due to COVID-19, the annual conference’s return on Sept. 25 at the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis was a much-needed spiritual “booster shot,” said Shelia Ludwig, a member of St. Michael Parish in Brookville.

“I missed this spiritual camaraderie of women and prayer warriors, so it’s wonderful to be here today,” Ludwig said.

And for attendee Tina Schmidt, a member of Holy Trinity Parish in Edinburg, the conference was a nice

“breath of fresh air” as it was the first large-gathering event she registered to attend since the pandemic began. “Good speakers, Mass, lunch—it’s been a good event to get back some normalcy and meet other women.”

Bauer’s stories from her life woven in between teachings of the Catholic faith inspired many listeners to gain a new perspective about their own faith journey. She explained that women and families play an important mission in God’s plan “to guard, to reveal and to communicate love.” And that often God’s love is simply communicated through the simple actions performed daily.

“These tiny sacrifices do so much to help build up the kingdom of Heaven,” Bauer said. “We won’t see until heaven, but it’s so important that love is the principle and power of communion, which is indivisible and indissoluble and poured out through the Church on to the world through our families, through the family of God.”

The connection that small actions create great change resonated well with Cio Davis, a member of St. Mark the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis, who attended the conference for the first time after hearing about it by word of mouth.

“I never knew about the conference until a friend of mine brought it up one day,” Dias said. “The talks have all been relatable and full of impact. I’m looking forward to bringing home what I learned to share with others.”

Other conference speakers included Father James Blount of the Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity, an exorcist, and Catholic singer-songwriter Annie Karto.

Most speakers who had originally been scheduled for the 2020 annual conference appeared at this year’s conference, except

for Missionary Hermit of St. Joseph Father Pio Mandato. He was not only going to speak, but was going to offer individual blessings with a glove of St. Pio of Pietrelcina, popularly known as Padre Pio.

Coincidentally, guest speaker Father Blount started his talk by holding up a relic he brought of an actual habit worn by Padre Pio. He said he felt called by the Lord that the conference attendees needed Padre Pio present even though Father Pio could not be.

“I felt by the Lord that you wanted to have Padre Pio today, a true lover of our Lady,” Father Blount said. “I understand that last year you had a scheduled speaker, and his name was Father Pio. And guess who came today!”

The room erupted with applause. Joan Nobbe, a member of St. Peter Parish in Franklin County, saw the relic as a sign that she was “supposed to be here” at the conference, having accepted the offer to attend from a friend. She shared that she attributes praying through the intercession of St. Padre Pio to the curing of her daughter 51 years ago from cancer—she had not been expected to live. Now 58, her daughter is a living miracle, she said.

The day’s schedule included talks in the morning and afternoon, Mass across the street at St. John the Evangelist Church, and a few breaks in between. Guest speaker Annie Karto, who cantored at Mass, also mentioned how wonderful it was to once again celebrate the liturgy in a church completely filled with faith-filled women.

“Today, I was so lifted up by all of you,” Karto said. “You know from the cantor’s podium you can see the reverence, you can see your love and your devotion to our Lord. And your voices, to hear that many voices, how long has it been to hear that many voices together at a church. How beautiful it was.”

From the stage, Karto sang several of her songs and invited the women to join and sing along with her. Her advice after sharing her own personal family struggles that nearly caused her to not attend the conference, and the hardships felt during the past year and half was to surrender and let go as Mary did “from the womb to the tomb.”

“It’s better to have the courage to step



Society of Our Lady of the Holy Trinity Father James Blount holds a picture of St. Pio of Pietrelcina, popularly known as Padre Pio, during the Indiana Catholic Women’s Conference at the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis on Sept. 25. (Photos by Sara Geer)



Singer Annie Karto invites participants of the Indiana Catholic Women’s Conference to join in a song of praise at the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis on Sept. 25.

out and fulfill our mission in this life than to retreat,” she said.

Many agreed with Karto as the conference brought a renewed purpose for attendees to leave the convention center lighter, refreshed and ready to turn a new page in their faith journey.

“This conference is a reminder to focus more on God, not the evil present in our world,” said Venessa Staley, a member of St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus, who has attended the annual conference four times. “It’s my beginning of the year.”

(Sara Geer is a freelance writer and a member of St. Louis de Montfort Parish in Fishers, Ind., in the Lafayette Diocese.) †

MARIAN

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The leaders participating in the modules will help facilitate retreats at their parishes and will be working with the pastor and parish leadership and staff to organize small faith communities.

Instead of doing a graduation paper or capstone project, the students “will congregate at some point and collect the data, information, experiences and stories,” Castellanos said, which will be used to formulate a pastoral plan.

“The pastor can use it as a method of evangelization,” he notes. “Hopefully, the pastor and staff or pastoral council can use it as a resource.”

The program’s first module, or series of courses, is set to begin in January. The initial goal is to have nine parishes with Latino communities take part. The plan, Castellanos notes, is initially to have parishes from the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, the Indiana dioceses of Evansville, Fort Wayne-South Bend, Gary and Lafayette, and the Archdiocese of Louisville, Ky., involved.

The goal is to split how courses will be offered, with 10 courses taught online and two on the Marian campus. Classes will be taught in English, though the majority of the instructors will be bilingual.

As *Renovación* moves ahead, Marian University hopes to regionally expand its program reach beyond parishes in Indiana and Kentucky, to include parishes in Ohio and Illinois.

The hope, Castellanos noted, is for participants to leave with a great education.

“We’re trying to put together something realistic of what happens in a Hispanic parish or a Latino-serving community,” he said. “I hope they take that with them. ... There will be an invitation for them to go really deep into the experience.”

He also hopes the participants experience leadership “because they are going to be put in front of these communities. ...

“They might not end up working for the Church, they might not end up in a position of authority, but we’re definitely looking to stretch all possibilities for leadership development.”

Finally, Castellanos is looking to parish leaders to embrace what the program will offer.

“We’re hoping pastors get involved with the communities at this level,” he said. “What I mean by ‘involved’ ... is we’re not going to ask the pastors to do more work. We actually want to take some work out of their busy agendas. This will be an opportunity for them to engage in a different way, to understand more what’s happening at the lower, grassroots level.”

Castellanos, who is working on a doctor of education degree in organizational leadership at Marian, said he is excited to lead the initiative, which he believes is the first of its kind.

“Ministry is my passion. This is my first experience in higher education,” he said. “I was attracted to a position that could bridge pastoral ministry, faith formation, Spanish/Latino ministry and higher education. I think it’s unique.”

“I hope we can put Marian on the map,” he added.

The Lilly grant, which covers a five-year commitment, Castellanos said, shows how the Indianapolis-based endowment works with its local partners.

“It’s an example of how they really live up to their commitment to support education, faith and charity,” he said.

(For more information on *Renovación*, go to cutt.ly/renovacion, contact Oscar Castellanos at 317-955-6508, 317-797-8937, or e-mail him at ocastellanos@marian.edu.) †

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Analysis

Pilgrim's path: Parsing what the president said Pope Francis said

By Cindy Wooden

Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—If Pope Francis called President Joe Biden a “good Catholic,” as Biden told reporters, a ceramic tile the pope gave Biden may illustrate what he meant.

The painted 12-inch square tile depicts a pilgrim walking along the banks of the Tiber River toward the Vatican. But he is not there yet.

Pope Francis welcomed Biden to the Vatican on Oct. 29, and the two met privately, assisted by two interpreters, for 75 minutes, a record for a papal audience with a head of state.

For more than a year, Pope Francis’ go-to gift for visiting government leaders has been either a plaque depicting a migrant family with the inscription, “Let’s fill our hands with other hands,” or a sculpture of a dove holding an olive branch with the inscription, “Be messengers of peace.”

But for Biden, the pope chose the pilgrim.

As Pope Francis has made clear throughout his pontificate, defining people as good Catholics or good Christians does not mean canonizing them or approving of everything they say and do. Rather, good Christians recognize they are sinners in need of God’s forgiveness and grace, and they are committed to continuing the journey.

After meeting the pope, a reporter asked Biden if he and the pope had discussed abortion. Biden said no, “we just talked about the fact he was happy that I was a good Catholic, and I should keep receiving Communion.”

Asked if the pope really said that, the Vatican press office—as is normal in such cases—declined to comment, saying the meeting was private.

The Vatican’s official statement on the topics the pope and his secretary of state discussed with Biden included climate change, religious freedom, migration, the COVID-19 pandemic and the promotion of peace.

The statement made no mention of abortion, Communion or the state of Biden’s soul.

The president’s meeting with the pope came just two weeks before the U.S. bishops are set to discuss a document on the meaning of the Eucharist, which a few

bishops have said should include specific language about what constitutes worthiness to receive Communion and how politicians who support legalized abortion are not worthy to receive.

It would be impossible to think Pope Francis did not know the Biden administration supports legalized abortion and perhaps even that Biden renounced his longtime support for the Hyde Amendment, which bans federal funding for most abortions.

Throughout his political career, Biden has acknowledged the tensions between the Democratic Party and the Catholic Church over abortion, which the Church sees as the taking of an innocent human life.

But the president also must have seen the comments Pope Francis made recently when asked specifically about the question of giving Communion to Catholic politicians who support abortion.

“Abortion is more than a problem,” he told reporters on Sept. 15. “Abortion is murder.”

But the question about giving Communion is not theological; it’s pastoral, he said.

“Communion is not a prize for the perfect,” but rather “a gift, the presence of Jesus in his Church and in the community. That is the theology,” he said.

“If we look at the history of the Church, we see that every time bishops have not managed a problem as pastors, they have taken sides on political life, on the political problem. In not handling a problem well, they took sides politically.”

Archbishop William E. Lori of Baltimore, the incoming chair of the U.S. bishops’ pro-life committee and a consultant to the U.S. bishops’ doctrinal committee, which drafted the



U.S. President Joe Biden, accompanied by his wife, Jill, second from left, exchanges gifts with Pope Francis during a meeting at the Vatican on Oct. 29. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

statement on the Eucharist, told Catholic News Service (CNS) that he believes the document will be pastoral.

“I think it would be a beautiful thing if, in November, we were to close ranks and say, ‘We are pastors. We love our people. We want to make this an inviting Church and we want to gather people around the altar of the Lord,’ ” he told CNS in late October.

While teaching the truth and upholding the sacred dignity of all human life, “the Church is called to be the great sacrament of salvation and the great sacrament of unity. And if ever there were a time we needed to live up to that deeply theological description of what the Church is, it’s right now in our polarized culture,” Archbishop Lori said. “So we have to be careful of not allowing ourselves to go down no exit, partisan alleys where there is no life at the end of it, no evangelical life, no spiritual fruit.”

(Cindy Wooden is Rome bureau chief of Catholic News Service.) †

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