



The Criterion

Serving the Church in Central and Southern Indiana Since 1960

Catholic Radio *Indy*

Real Presence Dinner on Feb. 25
to help mark 20 years, page 3.

CriterionOnline.com

January 12, 2024

Vol. LXIV, No. 13 75¢



Jordan and Gabrielle Bullard, left, smile with their baby, Lynne Marie, together with Monica Kelsey, founder of Safe Haven Baby Boxes (SHBB), and her husband Joe in Woodburn, Ind., during the opening of SHBB's new baby box production facility on Dec. 2, 2023. The Bullards adopted Lynne a month after she was surrendered in a Safe Haven Baby Box in Indiana in February 2023. (Submitted photo by Jason Mann of J Michael Photography, LLC)

USCCB affirms pope's description of surrogacy as turning a child into 'an object of trafficking'

(OSV News)—Pope Francis told diplomats on Jan. 8 that he finds surrogacy “deplorable” and would like to see the practice universally banned.



Pope Francis

“I deem deplorable the practice of so-called surrogate motherhood, which represents a grave violation of the dignity of the woman and the child, based on the exploitation of situations of the mother’s material needs. A child is

always a gift and never the basis of a commercial contract,” he said in an annual New Year’s meeting with members of the diplomatic corps accredited to the Holy See. “Consequently, I express my hope for an effort by the international community to prohibit this practice universally.”

The remarks made headlines among major U.S. secular news outlets, prompting calls to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), the conference’s spokesperson and Executive Director of Public Affairs Chieko Noguchi told OSV News.

“As Pope Francis stated, with surrogacy, an unborn child is turned into ‘an object of trafficking’ because it exploits the birth mother’s material needs and makes the child the product of a commercial contract. This is why the Catholic Church teaches that the practice of surrogacy is not morally permissible. Instead, we should pray for, and work toward, a world that upholds the profound dignity of every person, at every stage and in every circumstance of life,” Noguchi said in a Jan. 8 media statement.

Gestational surrogacy is the practice in which a woman carries and delivers a baby for an individual or couple, sometimes for compensation. The

See **SURROGACY**, page 9

Knights of Columbus support is ‘pivotal’ in growth of Safe Haven Baby Boxes

By Natalie Hoefler

Jordan and Gabrielle Bullard of Shelbyville recall with a chuckle the day they welcomed their adopted daughter Lynne Marie last March.

“It felt kind of shady—we picked her up at a gas station that was midway between us and her foster parents,” said Gabrielle. “Every morning, I sing a little song to her, ‘I picked up my baby at the GetGo!’”

Just a month earlier, Lynne’s birth mother had decided that, for whatever reason, she could not care for her newborn. She placed her infant in a Safe Haven Baby Box (SHBB) at

a fire station in Elkhart, Ind., where Lynne was retrieved and medically tended to within minutes. She was placed in a foster home and then gratefully gathered into her adoptive parents’ arms on March 25, 2023.

“Each year, dozens of infants are illegally abandoned or discarded, often in dangerous locations,” says Monica Kelsey, founder and CEO of SHBB, which is based in Woodburn in northeastern Indiana. “Sadly, most have died by the time they are found.”

But thanks to SHBB, life-changing stories like Lynne’s are on the rise. In 2023, more boxes were installed, more states

See **BABY BOXES**, page 8

A surprising question leads to a dramatic transformation, revealing God’s presence and healing power

(Editor’s note: The Criterion invited our readers to share their stories of how God has made his presence known in their lives. Here is another one in this continuing series.)

By John Shaughnessy

Eric Johnson’s atheist co-worker insisted that what happened to Johnson was simply a case of mind over matter.

Johnson insists that what happened to him is a definite sign of God’s presence and healing power.

“I had a neuromuscular disease for 7 ½ years,” begins Johnson, a member of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in New Albany. “I was told that it was a permanent disability.

“As the symptoms developed, I started losing physical abilities. I had pain and twitching in my legs and feet 24 hours a day. I also would lose control of my hips,

See **GOD’S PRESENCE**, page 9

Eric and Darbi Johnson of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in New Albany experienced God’s healing power during a vacation. (Submitted photo)





Members of the assembly of the Synod of Bishops start a working session in the Vatican's Paul VI Audience Hall on Oct. 18, 2023. (CNS photo/Lola Gomez)

U.S bishops asked to hold new rounds of Synod on Synodality listening sessions

(OSV News)—Dioceses across the U.S.—including the Archdiocese of Indianapolis—are being asked to hold additional listening sessions in the next few months. The request came from the Vatican's Secretariat for the Synod of Bishops, which is preparing for the second session of the global Synod on Synodality in October.

In a Jan. 2 letter, Bishop Daniel E. Flores of the Diocese of Brownsville,



Bishop Daniel E. Flores

Texas—who chairs the U.S. bishops' committee on doctrine and coordinates the U.S. bishops' synod process—said his team is requesting “each diocese hold two to three listening sessions regarding the guiding questions” posed by the synod secretariat.

Those two guiding questions were phrased by Bishop Flores and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Synod Team as follows: “Where have I seen or experienced successes—and distresses—within the Church’s structure[s]/organization/ leadership/life that encourage or hinder the mission?” and “How can the structures and organization of the Church help all the baptized to respond to the call to proclaim the Gospel and to live as a community of love and mercy in Christ?”

Leaders of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis are finalizing plans to conduct listening sessions within the broad parameters suggested by the USCCB.

Bishop Flores asked that each diocese summarize responses to those questions in a three- to five-page document and send it to the USCCB by April 8. The diocesan summaries will inform the USCCB’s summary, which is due to the synod secretariat in May.

Bishop Flores noted that, in addition to the listening sessions, “We are encouraged to continue ongoing engagement with the people of God in the dynamism of a synodal style.”

To that end, dioceses may also include with their submissions “a two-page testimony of best practices for synodality”

they have developed, the bishop explained.

Bishop Flores also wrote that, in addition to the diocesan consultations taking place, “the USCCB will be holding additional listening sessions at the national level with a focus on participation, social justice and vocations.”

Diocesan-level synod leaders “will be invited to participate in a national working group with the permission of the bishop,” he said in his letter.

“We all know time is short, but even modest efforts at the local level can bear much fruit,” Bishop Flores said.

“Let us do what we can, as well as we can and trust the Lord to accomplish beyond what we can foresee.”

Launched by Pope Francis in October 2021, the first session of the 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, organized on the theme “For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission,” took place on Oct. 4-29, 2023, in Rome.

The first session of the synod, also known as the “Synod on Synodality,” was summarized in a 41-page report intended to allow the global Church to digest, reflect on and give feedback on its contents ahead of the synod’s final session in Rome next October.

Part of that task is figuring out how decisions are made in the Church in a way that is faithful to its nature—including discerning how episcopal collegiality is exercised in a synodal Church—because the Church’s members have “differentiated co-responsibility for the common mission of evangelization.”

The synod’s report also covers topics such as evangelization as a mandate of baptism, formation in “authentic discipleship” rooted in the Eucharist and Scripture, clerical and lay formation, ministries of pastoral accompaniment, the role of the Eastern Catholic Churches in the life of the universal Church, ecumenism, ordaining married men to the priesthood, the role of women in the Church and the ongoing impact of clerical sex abuse scandals among others.

The synod’s next session in Rome will have the task of making decisions about what concrete proposals to present to the pope. †



Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

January 16–24, 2024

<p>January 16 – 2 p.m. Virtual U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis Consultants meeting</p> <p>January 17 – 10 a.m. Department heads meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis</p> <p>January 18 – 2 p.m. Legal Team meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center</p> <p>January 19 – 1:30 p.m. Virtual Eucharistic Revival Executive Team meeting</p> <p>January 20 – 10 a.m. Deacon ordination of Franciscan Brother John Barker at Holy Family Parish, Oldenburg</p>	<p>January 21 – 10 a.m. Mass and celebration for 200th anniversary of Catholicism in Dearborn County at Chamber of Commerce, Lawrenceburg</p> <p>January 22 – 11:30 a.m. Respect Life Mass at Indiana Convention Center and March for Life, both in Indianapolis</p> <p>January 23 – 1 p.m. Council of Priests meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center</p> <p>January 23 – 7 p.m. Christian Unity Prayer Service at North United Methodist Church, Indianapolis</p> <p>January 24 – 11:30 a.m. Strategic Pastoral Planning Initiatives meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center</p>
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‘9 Days for Life’ unites thousands in prayer for the protection of life

WASHINGTON (USCCB)—Catholics nationwide are invited to pray “9 Days for Life,” an annual Respect Life novena starting on Jan. 16.

In the Church, a novena consists of prayers during nine successive days. This particular novena is an opportunity for prayer and reparation in observance of the annual Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children on Jan. 22.

Participants can access the novena and also subscribe to receive the daily prayers by e-mail or text message in English at 9daysforlife.com or in Spanish at respectlife.org/9-dias-por-la-vida.

Sponsored by the Committee on Pro-

Life Activities of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), the novena began in 2013 in commemoration of the 40th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*—the 1973 Supreme Court decision that made abortion legal throughout the United States.

While the Supreme Court’s 2022 decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization* returned the decision of the legality of abortion to the states, continuing efforts are needed to protect children and their mothers from the tragedy of abortion. This is the 12th year the novena is taking place. Since the novena began, it has reached hundreds of thousands of people in more than 100 countries spanning six continents. †

Who or what helped you navigate the first years of married life?

The first years of marriage bear unique challenges for newlyweds as they adjust to each other and to their new state in life.

“The first years of married life need to be ‘accompanied,’ and newlyweds should not be left in solitude.” So says paragraph #74 of “Catechumenal Pathways for Married Life,” a 2020 document of the Vatican’s Dicastery for the Laity, the Family and Life. It also states that, “From the very beginning of married life, the couple needs to receive concrete assistance to live their interpersonal relationship in all sincerity” (#78).

For *The Criterion*’s upcoming Spring Marriage Supplement in February, we would like to hear from “experienced” couples as a way to help

Catholic newlyweds.

What helped you overcome challenges in the early years of marriage? Was there anyone who accompanied you in your first years of married life? If so, how did they help you grow as a couple as you adjusted to marriage? If you were to accompany a newlywed Catholic couple, what would you do to help them in those first few years?

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



Phone Numbers:
Main office..... 317-236-1570
Advertising..... 317-236-1585
Circulation / Subscriptions ... 317-236-1425

Price: \$22.00 per year, 75 cents per copy

Postmaster:
Send address changes to *The Criterion*, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367

Web site : www.CriterionOnline.com

E-mail: criterion@archindy.org

Published weekly except the last week of December, the first week of January and every other week from June to August (*summer schedule*). Mailing address: 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367. Periodical postage paid at Indianapolis, IN.
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Do you have something exciting or newsworthy you want to be considered to be printed in The Criterion?

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The Criterion (ISSN 0574-4350) is published weekly except the last week of December, the first week of January and every other week from June-Aug.

1400 N. Meridian St.
Indianapolis, IN 46202
317-236-1570
criterion@archindy.org

Periodical postage paid at Indianapolis, IN.
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Feb. 25 dinner will help Catholic Radio Indy mark 20th anniversary

By Natalie Hoefler

Catholic Radio Indy, which covers most of central Indiana, will celebrate its 20th anniversary at its annual Real Presence Dinner on Feb. 25. The celebration will take place at the Biltwell Event Center, 950 S. White River Pkwy. Dr. W., in Indianapolis, starting at 3 p.m. and concluding around 6:30-7 p.m.

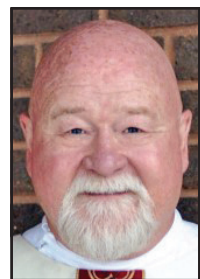
“This is a tremendous achievement,” says Gordon Smith, general manager of Inter Mirifica, Inc., which operates as Catholic Radio Indy (CRI). “We started 20 years ago with one station. We now have five stations covering most of central Indiana with a terrestrial broadcast. At the same time, we put out a digital footprint with streaming through devices.”

The mission of the non-profit organization is “to bring Jesus Christ to everyone, and everyone to Jesus Christ,” as stated on its website.



Deacon Ronald Pirau

Since CRI’s inception, it has served as an Eternal Word Television Network (EWTN) affiliate, offering EWTN programming. “We also add a lot of local programming content, not only our own shows that we create but also a lot of announcements for parish activities and different events and conferences,” says Smith. “It’s been a labor of love from the beginning.”



Deacon Paul Lunsford

The Real Presence Dinner will feature a keynote address by Dr. David Anders, host of EWTN’s “Called to Communion” radio show, broadcast weekdays at 2 p.m. In addition to the keynote address, the event includes a cocktail hour, dinner, a live auction and presentation of the organization’s Archbishop Fulton Sheen Evangelist of the Year award. This year’s co-recipients are Deacon Ronald Pirau of SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Parish in Greenwood and Deacon Paul

Lunsford of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish in Carmel, Ind., in the Lafayette, Ind., Diocese.

In announcing the honorees, Smith noted, “In the spirit of the evangelization that Fulton J. Sheen exuded with his work on television and radio, captivating millions with his shows like, ‘Life is Worth Living’ [reruns of which are seen and heard on EWTN to this day], Catholic Radio Indy each year presents the Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen-

Evangelist of the Year Award to an outstanding supporter [or supporters] of the ministry of Catholic radio in central Indiana.”

In discussing the Feb. 25 dinner honoring the station’s anniversary, Smith says, “We moved the event to downtown Indianapolis at the Biltwell in honor of our two latest acquisitions. One broadcasts from Trafalgar and covers a seven-county area around Johnson County, and a northern station that covers the city of Lafayette [Ind.]”

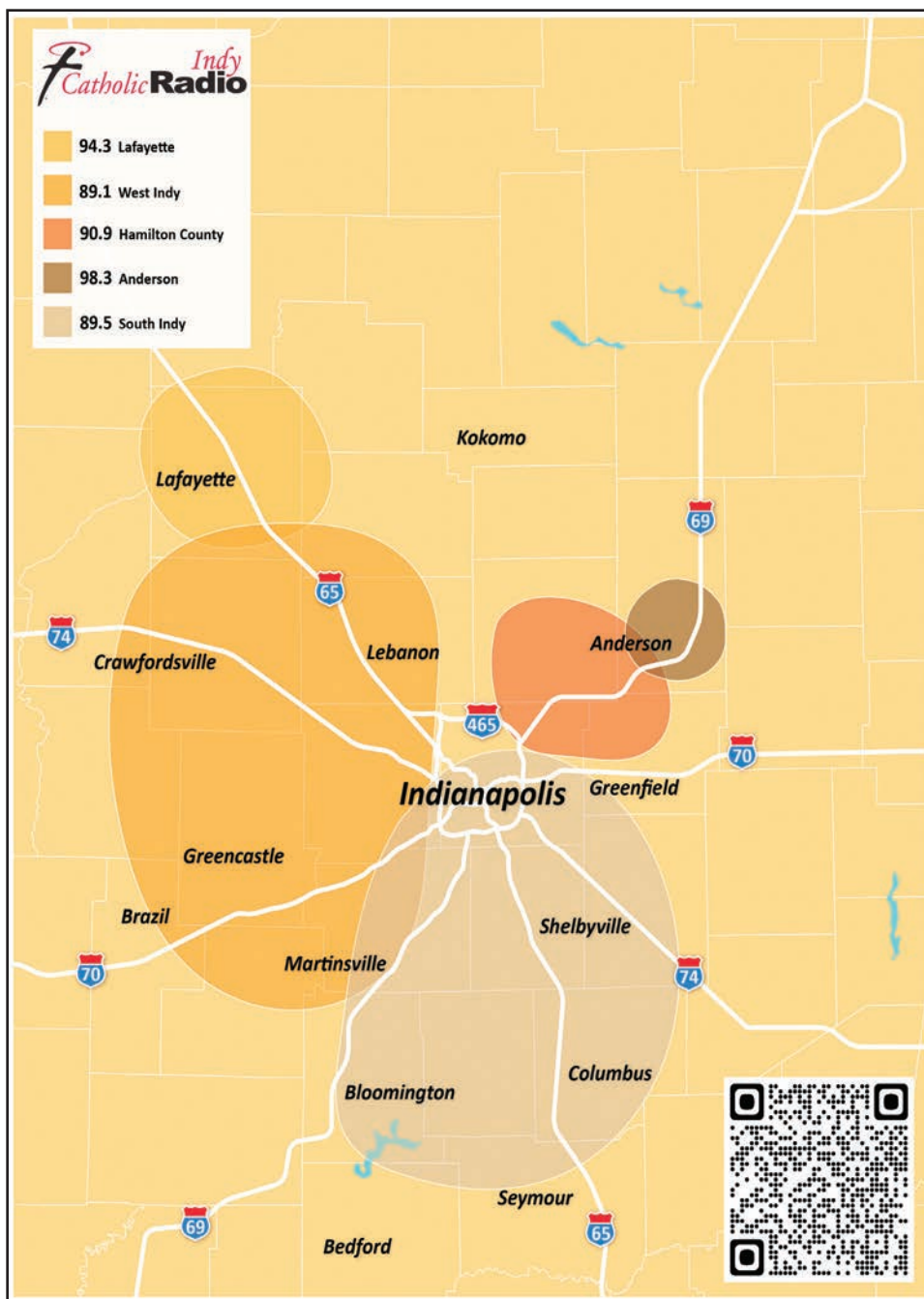
He calls the new venue “a truly beautiful building.” The restored 1922 factory venue offers free parking. And with the event taking place in the afternoon, attendees can take in the view of Lucas Oil Stadium located just across the White River.

Tickets are \$115 per person, \$230 per couple or \$1,150 for a table of 10 and can be purchased online at catholicradioindy.org. To register by mail, send a check made out to “Catholic Radio Indy” to Catholic Radio Indy, 8383 Craig St., Suite 280, Indianapolis, IN 46250.

Sponsors are also needed. Those wishing to sponsor the event can sign up at catholicradioindy.org/sponsorship-portal.

For additional questions, call CRI at 317-870-8400 or e-mail corky@catholicradioindy.org.

(Listen to Catholic Radio Indy locally by tuning in to 89.1 FM—west Indianapolis; 89.5 FM—south Indianapolis; 90.9 FM—Hamilton County, Ind.; or 94.3 FM—Lafayette, Ind., 98.3 FM—Anderson, Ind.; or anywhere by downloading the Catholic Radio Indy app from an app store, by dialing 641-793-5507, by asking Alexa to “play Catholic Radio Indy,” or by clicking “Listen Live Now” at catholicradioindy.org.) †



Shown above at right is the coverage area of Catholic Radio Indy, which has grown from one station to five stations since its inception in 2004. (Graphic courtesy of Catholic Radio Indy)

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Editorial



Pope Francis speaks to visitors gathered in St. Peter's Square before praying the *Angelus* on the feast of Mary, Mother of God, and World Peace Day on New Year's Day at the Vatican on Jan. 1. (CNS photo/Lola Gomez)

Peacemaking in the New Year

Each new year, we give expression to our desire for peace. And yet, as the days and weeks and months progress, every year gives witness to the absence of peace—in our hearts, in families and communities, and among warring nations of the world. Sadly, there is very little peace.

Instead, there is jealousy, hatred, enmity, resistance, intolerance and all-out war. Surely there is something we can do to break the vicious cycle of violence and aggression that we must contend with each new year in spite of our sincere longing for peace.

Jan. 1 is observed publicly as the World Day of Peace, and every year since 1967 the pope, beginning with Pope St. Paul VI, has issued a special message inviting everyone to reflect on the important work of building peace.

Last year, Pope Francis began his World Day of Peace message saying:

We cannot continue to focus simply on preserving ourselves; rather, the time has come for all of us to endeavor to heal our society and our planet, to lay the foundations for a more just and peaceful world, and to commit ourselves seriously to pursuing a good that is truly common.

The Holy Father emphasizes that all of us are responsible for laying the foundations for peace. Indeed, all of us are responsible for peacemaking. As the popular song says, "Let there be peace on Earth, and let it begin with me." But how do we "begin with me?" How do ordinary people like us contribute to the vitally important, but very complex, work of building peace?

Here are five simple steps that are suggested as a roadmap for peacemaking. None of these alone is profound, but all five taken together can be significant building blocks in the architecture of peacemaking.

First, we should all pray for peace. Our prayer should be fervent, frequent and attentive to God's word. If peace is really important to us, we should take the time to pray for it—entrusting to our Lord the things that prevent us from being at peace with one another.

Secondly, we should make sure that we are fully informed about the political, economic, social and moral issues that are at stake in conflicts among individuals and groups. We should not rely solely on

familiar sources but should try to get fresh, even opposing, points of view so that we can fully understand those with whom we disagree and, where appropriate, we should be willing to adjust our positions.

Thirdly, we should be proactive in urging elected officials (and other influential people in the media, in business, in the Church and in society) to make whatever changes are necessary to achieve peaceful solutions to serious problems. We should not be quiet or passive when it comes to holding our leaders accountable for creating opportunities for peace with justice and mercy.

Fourth, we must practice what we preach. There will be no lasting peace in our world until each of us learns to set aside our differences—large and small—and to forgive one another for the real or perceived injuries we have suffered. Unless each of us learns repeatedly to "let go" of resentments and grievances, we will never experience true peace.

Finally, we should ask our Blessed Mother Mary, Queen of Peace, to intercede for us—and all her children the world over—and to help us build a better world. Mary is the ultimate peacemaker. She lived the Beatitudes in all humility and simplicity, and she can show us the way to build peace in her Son's name. Mary has repeatedly asked us to pray the rosary in order to promote peace in our world. If everyone did as Mary asked, what a difference it would make!

Unfortunately, there are no simple solutions to problems that are fundamental to the human condition, but perhaps these five steps, which are simple-but-not-easy, can serve as a roadmap for peacemaking throughout the new year.

We are not so naïve that we think taking these steps will affect an immediate ceasefire in the Holy Land, Ukraine or other regions of the world. And yet, we do believe in miracles. Why not give these steps a try?

As Pope Francis observed in his 2024 World Day of Peace message, "May Christian believers, followers of various religions and men and women of good will work together in harmony to hand on to future generations a world of greater solidarity, justice and peace."

—Daniel Conway

Be Our Guest/Jaymie Stuart Wolfe

Letting go is the greatest challenge facing many of us in this New Year

Undoubtedly, some are glad to see the end of 2023, and others will mentally designate it for the "Best Year Ever" file.

Most of us will find ourselves reviewing what has transpired during the past 12 months with an eye to the future.

We'll contemplate things left undone in the previous year and recommit ourselves to them. And we'll

recall those "well-enough" things we ought to have left alone but didn't.

Whether quietly or out loud, we'll

express our hopes for what the next year will bring. And many of us will try to take the bull by the horns by making resolutions about self-improvement and self-care and plans about what to take with us as we move forward.

What most of us won't do is consider what we ought to leave behind.

If I've learned anything about following Christ, it's that I must let him lead. Jesus won't drag me along if I'm not willing to move, but he won't let me pull him in the direction of my every whim either.

The world as God created it is full of marvelously shiny and genuinely good things and my natural inclination is to chase after them but—when I focus myself on getting and keeping what I want—I'm unlikely to receive what God wants for me.

Being attached to anything other than God himself will prevent me from living in the fullness and freedom of his grace.

Learning to leave things behind might be even more important than figuring out what we should take with us into the new year.

For Christians, self-help programs, radical self-sufficiency and independence are at odds with the call to community, surrender and trust. Of course, there are things in our hearts and lives that need to change, but bootstrapping and white-knuckling our way through the year until we (inevitably) hit the wall won't help us to be made new. Relying on God's grace, on the other hand, will.

Letting go is an art and a discipline that every follower of Christ is called to practice. But we often manage to avoid it by convincing ourselves that we aren't perfectly certain of what to detach from.

What should we leave behind? First of all, our sins. Too many of us justify, rationalize and excuse behaviors we know we shouldn't be indulging. Beyond that, we must let go of our affection for the "little peccadillos" that often masquerade as nostalgia for "good old days" that were anything but good for us or for anyone else.

And then we should let go of everyone else's sins: the ones we facilitated or encouraged, certainly, but especially the

ones that hurt us. It's hard to forgive, but it's even harder to live the Christian life when we do not. Any who have struggled with unforgiveness know that it is both a poison and a prison, not for those we hold in contempt, but for ourselves.

It is also a barrier to grace. Once we abandon everything connected to sin, the work of sanctification can begin in earnest. But if holiness is our goal, it's important for us to recognize that we cannot conform ourselves to the image of Christ. Only God can do that. Only God can make us godly. Only the Holy Spirit can make us grow in holiness.

So why isn't the Church full of saints? Because it's hard to let go of what we're attached to. And yet, attachments—even to spiritual goods and practices—can easily become idols. The only desire or bond that cannot devolve into idolatry is our attachment to God himself. When it comes to everything else and anything less, all bets are off.

Every one of us would do well to begin the new year by letting go and leaving behind not only all that is not of God, but all that simply is not God himself. If we do, 2024 will be a banner year for spiritual growth and for living more faithfully than ever before.

(Jaymie Stuart Wolfe is a sinner, Catholic convert, freelance writer and

editor, musician, speaker, pet-aholic, wife and mom of eight grown children, loving life in New Orleans.) †

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Letters Policy

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

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

The editors reserve the right to select the letters that will be published and to edit

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

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

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

ARCHBISHOP/ARZOBISPO CHARLES C. THOMPSON



Christ the Cornerstone

A vision for peace in our hearts and our world

"I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word." (Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.)

Monday, Jan. 15, is our country's observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day. It has been nearly 56 years since Dr. King's assassination on April 4, 1968, but the issues that he was preoccupied with—especially racism and violence—remain dominant forces we must contend with in our society today.

Dr. King believed that all women and men are equal, created in the image and likeness of God. Regardless of our differences (race, gender, politics, economic status or religious beliefs), we are sisters and brothers who are called to love each other without exception and to cherish and defend the human and civil rights of all.

"I refuse to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become a reality," Dr. King said. "I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word."

This powerful vision, beautifully articulated in Dr. King's famous "I have a

dream" speech, has influenced millions of people throughout the world.

Unfortunately, the forces of racism and violence remain present in our world, and they resist all efforts to overcome them. The tragedy of war in the Holy Land, in Ukraine and in other regions of the world is a striking reminder that nonviolent solutions are desperately needed.

Similarly, the resurgence of antisemitism, racism and many different forms of indifference to the rights and dignity of others calls for a profound renewal of commitment to Dr. King's principles.

Dr. King was determined that the revolution he advocated must be a nonviolent one. Violence is not the way to universal peace and brotherhood.

"Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can," Dr. King said. "Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can."

Only love can overcome the power of sin and death. Only love can unite people who are deeply divided by hatred, prejudice and a history of injustice. Only love can heal the festering wounds of racism and the physical, emotional and spiritual destruction caused by violence.

Sadly, many years after the death of

Dr. King, racism and violence are still dominant forces in the daily lives of Americans and our sisters and brothers throughout the world. Despite the progress that has been made during the past five decades, we still have a lot to learn from Dr. King's teaching that hate cannot drive out hate; only love can.

Every new year, our Holy Father Pope Francis appeals to world leaders—and all of us—to dedicate ourselves to peace. None of the world's problems can be solved by war. The peace and brotherhood we seek must be obtained by forgiving past injuries and injustices, and by resolving to "repair the world" through mutual respect and dialogue, as well as through the commitment to accept responsibility for one another as members of the human family, equal in human rights and dignity.

In his World Day of Peace message last year, Pope Francis said:

What then is being asked of us? First of all, to let our hearts be changed by our experience of the crisis, to let God, at this time in history, transform our customary criteria for viewing the world around us. We can no longer think exclusively of carving out space for our personal or national

interests; instead, we must think in terms of the common good, recognizing that we belong to a greater community, and opening our minds and hearts to universal human fraternity. We cannot continue to focus simply on preserving ourselves; rather, the time has come for all of us to endeavor to heal our society and our planet, to lay the foundations for a more just and peaceful world, and to commit ourselves seriously to pursuing a good that is truly common.

Our Holy Father believes strongly that to build a lasting peace and to live better lives, we must recognize that the many moral, social, political and economic crises we are experiencing are all interconnected, and what we see as isolated problems are actually causes and effects of one another. Surely Dr. King would agree with this approach to peaceful social change.

May the intercession of Mary, Queen of Peace, and the witness of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. inspire us to reject "the starless midnight of racism and war" and dedicate ourselves wholeheartedly to "the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood" that can only come from Jesus Christ, who is the personification of "unarmed truth" and "unconditional love" in our world. †



Cristo, la piedra angular

Una visión para la paz en nuestros corazones y en nuestro mundo

"Estoy convencido de que la verdad desprovista de armas y el amor incondicional tendrán la última palabra." (Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.)

El lunes 15 de enero nuestro país conmemora el Día del Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Han pasado casi 56 años desde el asesinato del Dr. King el 4 de abril de 1968, pero los temas que le preocupaban—especialmente el racismo y la violencia—siguen siendo fuerzas dominantes a las que debemos enfrentarnos en nuestra sociedad actual.

El Dr. King creía que todas las mujeres e todos los hombres son iguales, creados a imagen y semejanza de Dios. Independientemente de nuestras diferencias (raza, género, política, situación económica o creencias religiosas), somos hermanas y hermanos llamados a amarnos los unos a los otros sin excepción, y a valorar y defender los derechos humanos y civiles de todos.

"Me niego a aceptar la visión de que la humanidad esté tan terriblemente sometida a la abyecta oscuridad del racismo y la guerra que la alborada de la paz y la hermandad jamás pueda convertirse en realidad," declaró el Dr. King. "Estoy convencido de que la verdad desprovista de armas y el amor incondicional tendrán la última palabra."

Esta poderosa visión, bellamente articulada en el famoso discurso del Dr. King titulado "Tengo un sueño," ha

influido en millones de personas de todo el mundo.

Por desgracia, las fuerzas del racismo y la violencia siguen presentes en nuestro mundo y resisten a todos los esfuerzos por superarlas. La tragedia de la guerra en Tierra Santa, en Ucrania y en otras regiones del mundo es un recordatorio patente de que se necesitan desesperadamente soluciones no violentas.

Del mismo modo, el resurgimiento del antisemitismo, el racismo y muchas otras formas de indiferencia hacia los derechos y la dignidad de los demás exigen una profunda renovación del compromiso con los principios del Dr. King.

El Dr. King estaba decidido a que la revolución que propugnaba no fuera violenta, ya que sabía que la violencia no era el camino que conduce a la paz universal y a la hermandad.

"La oscuridad no expulsa a la oscuridad; solo la luz puede lograrlo," afirmó el Dr. King. "El odio no expulsa al odio; solo el amor puede lograrlo."

Solamente el amor puede superar el poder del pecado y de la muerte; solamente el amor puede unir a los pueblos profundamente divididos por el odio, los prejuicios y la historia de injusticias. Solamente el amor puede sanar las heridas enconadas del racismo y la destrucción física, emocional y espiritual que provoca la violencia.

Tristemente, tantos años después del fallecimiento del Dr. King, el racismo

y la violencia continúan siendo fuerzas dominantes en la vida diaria de los estadounidenses, así como también para nuestros hermanos en todo el mundo. Pese a los avances que se han logrado en el transcurso de las últimas cinco décadas, todavía tenemos mucho que aprender de las enseñanzas del Dr. King en cuanto a que el odio no expulsa al odio y que solo el amor puede lograrlo.

En cada nuevo año, nuestro Santo Padre, el Papa Francisco, apela a la conciencia de los líderes mundiales y de todos nosotros para que nos concentremos en la paz. Ninguno de los problemas que enfrenta el mundo pueden resolverse a través de una guerra. La paz y la hermandad que buscamos deben alcanzarse perdonando las heridas y las injusticias del pasado, y mediante la determinación de "reparar el mundo" a través del respeto mutuo y el diálogo, así como del compromiso de aceptar responsabilidad por el prójimo, como miembros de una misma familia humana con, igualdad de derechos humanos y dignidad.

Durante su primer mensaje de la Jornada Mundial de la Paz, el año pasado, el Papa Francisco expresó:

¿Qué se nos pide entonces? En primer lugar, dejar que la experiencia de la crisis transforme nuestros corazones, permitir que en este momento de la historia Dios transforme los criterios a los que nos hemos acostumbrado para ver el mundo que nos rodea desde otra

perspectiva. Ya no podemos pensar sólo en preservar el espacio de nuestros intereses personales o nacionales, sino que debemos concebirlas a la luz del bien común, con un sentido comunitario, es decir, como un "nosotros" abierto a la fraternidad universal. No podemos buscar sólo protegernos a nosotros mismos; es hora de que todos nos comprometamos con la sanación de nuestra sociedad y nuestro planeta, creando las bases para un mundo más justo y pacífico, que se involucre con seriedad en la búsqueda de un bien que sea verdaderamente común.

Nuestro Santo Padre cree firmemente que para construir una paz duradera, y para vivir mejor, debemos reconocer que las numerosas crisis morales, sociales, políticas y económicas que estamos viviendo están interconectadas, y lo que vemos como problemas aislados son en realidad causas y efectos unos de otros. Seguramente el Dr. King estaría de acuerdo con este enfoque para lograr un cambio social pacífico.

¡Que la intercesión de María, Reina de la Paz, y el testimonio del Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., nos inspiren a rechazar "la abyecta oscuridad del racismo y la guerra" y que nos dediquemos de todo corazón a "la alborada de la paz y la hermandad" que solamente puede provenir de Jesucristo, quien es la personificación de "la verdad desprovista de armas y el amor incondicional" en nuestro mundo. †

Events Calendar

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

January 17

St. Joan of Arc Church, 4217 Central Ave., Indianapolis. **“True Presence” presentation**, 7 p.m., led by National Eucharistic Revival preacher Dominican Father Patrick Hyde. Information: 317-283-5508.

January 17, Feb. 21

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

January 18, Feb. 15

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

January 18

St. Pius X Church, 7200 Sarto Dr., Indianapolis. **Sensory-friendly Mass**, 7 p.m., for those with sensitivities to light, sound and smell, picture Mass aids available, all are welcome. Information: 317-446-5507, shannyrae67@gmail.com.

January 19

Northside Events and Social Club, 2100 E. 71st St., Indianapolis. **Catholic Business Exchange**, Indiana State Treasurer Daniel Elliott

presenting “How Faith Drives Us,” 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 Jan. 16. Information, registration: cutt.ly/CBE-Reg.

February 2

Gainbridge Fieldhouse, 125 South Pennsylvania St., Indianapolis. **Covenant Resources Miscarriage Ministry Night with the Indiana Pacers**, 7 p.m., Pacers vs. Kings, discounted prices range from \$30-\$58, includes free Pacers branded hat; food voucher for a hot dog, chips and Pepsi product; chance to shoot a free throw after the game, a portion of each ticket purchased will go to Covenant Resources Miscarriage Ministry, e. Information, tickets: 812-212-3463, contactus@covenantresources.org, tinyurl.com/crmmpacers24.

February 2, March 1

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

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

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

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

February 3, March 2

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

February 7

Monthly Prayer with Sisters of Providence: “Prayer on St. Valentine’s Day,” for single Catholic women ages 18-42, via Zoom, 7-7:45 p.m., seventh day of each month. Information, registration: Events.SistersofProvidence.org, 361-500-9505, jluna@spsmw.org.

February 13, March 12

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

February 17

St. Michael Parish, 11400 Farmers Lane NE, Greenville. **The Eucharist and Your Marriage**, 4-7 p.m., Catholic therapist and author Greg Schutte presenting, second of “Three Great Dates” events sponsored by Catalyst Catholic in New Albany Deanery (May 11: “Supporting Your Spouse’s Dreams” with Steve and Jenni Angrisano), \$20 per person, includes dinner, childcare available, registration required by Feb. 11. Information, registration: catalystcatholic.org/3dates.

February 21

All Saints Parish, St. Joseph Campus, 7536 Church Lane, West Harrison. **Double Feature with noted Theology of the Body speaker Jason Evert**, 6-9:30 p.m., for adults and youths ages 13-17 accompanied by an adult, “Purified: A Life-changing Event for Families” 6-7 p.m.,

“Gender and the Theology of Your Body” 7-9 p.m., adoration and confession 9-9:30 p.m., \$25, \$10 discount for registered parishioners of All Saints in Dearborn County, St. Lawrence in Lawrenceburg, St. Mary in Greensburg and St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross in Bright by using code DCC at checkout. Information, registration: kimsprague@dcatholics.com, bit.ly/3PJ7RID.

March 7

Monthly Prayer with Sisters of Providence: “Prayer on Women’s History Month,” for single Catholic women ages 18-42, via Zoom, 7-7:45 p.m., seventh day of each month. Information, registration: Events.SistersofProvidence.org, 361-500-9505, jluna@spsmw.org.

March 9

The Schrott Center for the Arts, 610 W. 46th St., Indianapolis. **The Passion of Joan of Arc silent film with orchestra**, 7:30 p.m., live performance of Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra and chorus, composition by Richard Einhorn, tickets \$35-\$45, students and children free. Information, tickets: 317-940-9607, info@icomusic.org, tinyurl.com/icojoan24.

March 16

Gainbridge Fieldhouse, 125 South Pennsylvania St., Indianapolis. **Covenant Resources Miscarriage Ministry Night with the Indiana Pacers**, 7 p.m., Pacers vs. Nets, discounted prices range from \$30-\$58, includes free Pacers branded hat; food voucher for a hot dog, chips and Pepsi product; chance to shoot a free throw on the court after the game, a portion of each ticket purchased will go to Covenant Resources Miscarriage Ministry, recommended to purchase tickets a month prior to the game. Information, tickets: 812-212-3463, contactus@covenantresources.org, tinyurl.com/crmmpacers24.

March 25

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

Events and retreats can be submitted to The Criterion by logging on to archindy.org/events/submit, or by mailing us at 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202, ATTN: Ann Lewis.

Retreats and Programs

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

January 27

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **Holocaust Speaker: Son of a Survivor**, 9:30-11:30 a.m., son of Holocaust survivor Steve Coppel presenting, \$30. Information, registration: 812-933-6437, center@oldenburgosf.com, oldenburgfranciscancenter.org.

February 1

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Divine Wine and Art with Heart**, 5-9 p.m., artist Mandi Voegele presenting, \$45, includes

all art supplies, snacks and beverage. Registration: archindy.org/fatima, 317-545-7681, lcoons@archindy.org.

February 3

Benedict Inn Retreat & Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **Embracing the Lenten Journey: From Ashes to Resurrection Joy**, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Benedictine Sister Susan Marie Lindstrom presenting, \$75, includes lunch. Information, registration: benedictinn.org/programs, 317-788-7581, benedictinn@benedictinn.org.

February 7, March 6

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **Contemplative Prayer**, in person or via Zoom, 2-3 p.m., Franciscan Sister Olga Wittekind presenting, freewill donation. Information, registration: 812-933-6437, center@oldenburgosf.com, oldenburgfranciscancenter.org.

February 9, March 8

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **A Day of Quiet Renewal**, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., \$20, \$80 with spiritual direction. Information,

registration: 812-933-6437, oldenburgfranciscancenter.org.

February 14

Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **Personal Day of Retreat**, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., \$40, includes private room for the day and lunch; spiritual direction available for additional \$30, must be scheduled in advance. Information, registration: benedictinn.org/programs, 317-788-7581, benedictinn@benedictinn.org.

February 15

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Day of Silence**, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., \$45, includes room, lunch, Mass and use of common areas and grounds, overnight stay available for additional \$32, dinner additional \$11. Registration: archindy.org/fatima, 317-545-7681, lcoons@archindy.org.

February 24

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Embracing our Threefold Call to Holiness as Priest, Prophet and King**, 8 a.m.-3 p.m., Deacon Robert Beyke presenting, \$45, includes Mass and lunch Registration: archindy.org/fatima, 317-545-7681, lcoons@archindy.org.

February 27-29

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Women of the World**, Benedictine Brother Zachary Wilberding presenting, bring Bible, \$300 single, \$425 double. Registration: saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

March 1-3

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Finding Peace in the Chaos of Life—a Silent Guided Retreat**, 6 p.m. Fri.-noon Sun., Father Jeffrey Godecker

and spiritual director Mary Shaffner presenting, \$220, includes accommodations, program materials, breakfast, lunch and dinner on Saturday and breakfast on Sunday. Registration: archindy.org/fatima, 317-545-7681, lcoons@archindy.org.

March 6

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Created in the Image of God: A Woman’s Day of Reflection**, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Dr. Kimberly Baker presenting, \$55. Registration: saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

March 8-10

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Unpacking the Vocation of Marriage through Scripture and Married Saints**, Angie and Josh Greulich presenting, for married couples, \$425 double. Registration: saintmeinrad.org/retreats. †

‘Understanding the Mass’ presentation will take place at Good Shepherd Parish on Jan. 21

A presentation called “Understanding the Mass” will take place at Good Shepherd Parish, 2905 Carson Ave., in Indianapolis, from 3-5 p.m. on Jan. 21.

The talk, sponsored by the Good Shepherd Parish Eucharistic Revival Committee, will be given by Father Robert Robeson, pastor of Good

Shepherd Parish and Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Beech Grove.

The event is free and will include refreshments after the presentation.

For more information, contact Good Shepherd Parish at 317-783-3158 or goodshepherdcc@sbcglobal.org. †

Feb. 3 soup bowl fundraiser for Catholic Charities Terre Haute features works of local artists and chefs

The 14th Annual Soup Bowl Benefit to support Catholic Charities Terre Haute will take place at Maryland Community Church, 4700 State Road 46, in Terre Haute, from 3-5 p.m. on Feb. 3.

At the benefit, guests will select their own hand-crafted bowl created by local artists and sample soups from

local restaurants and chefs.

The event is limited to 300 attendees, and each seat costs \$30.

For more information or to purchase tickets, go to tinysurl.com/THSB24 or contact Jessica Murphy at 812-232-1447, option 3, or jmurphy@ccthin.org. †

Wedding Anniversaries

JOHN AND MARILYN (RAKE) ROWAN, members of St. John the Baptist Parish in Starlight, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Dec. 1.

The couple was married in St. John the Baptist Church in Starlight on Dec. 1, 1973.

They have two children: Alicia Arington and Eric Rowan.

The couple also two grandchildren. †

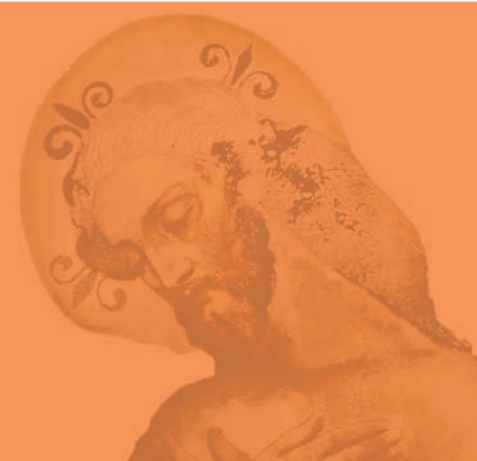


Announcements for couples celebrating 50, 55, 60, 65, 70 or more years of marriage are accepted. Go to cutt.ly/anniversaries or call 317-236-1585.



The Face of Mercy

By Daniel Conway



To say 'yes' to the Prince of Peace means saying 'no' to war

"This is what war is: an aimless voyage, a defeat without victors, an inexcusable folly" (Pope Francis, 2023 "Urbi et Orbi" Christmas message).

Pope Francis hates war. He calls it "an inexcusable folly" and "a defeat without victory." In war, there are no winners, only losers who have paid an exorbitant price.

As the pope said in his 2023 Christmas message to the city and the world ("Urbi et Orbi"):

Isaiah, who prophesied the Prince of Peace, looked forward to a day when "nation shall not lift up sword against nation," a day when men "will not learn war anymore," but instead "beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks" [Is 2:4]. With God's help, let us make every effort to work for the coming of that day!

Swords and spears were, of course, the weapons used in ancient times. Today, they have been greatly exceeded by modern weapons of mass destruction.

Pope Francis hates these as much, or more, than he hates war itself. "To say 'no' to war means saying 'no' to

weaponry," the Holy Father says. "The human heart is weak and impulsive; if we find instruments of death in our hands, sooner or later we will use them. And how can we even speak of peace, when arms production, sales and trade are on the rise?"

As a spiritual father, Pope Francis grieves to see his children slaughtered by the madness of war. Calling attention to the war that is raging in the Holy Land, the pope says:

May [peace] come in Israel and Palestine, where war is devastating the lives of those peoples. I embrace them all, particularly the Christian communities of Gaza, the parish of Gaza, and the entire Holy Land. My heart grieves for the victims of the abominable attack of 7 October last, and I reiterate my urgent appeal for the liberation of those still being held hostage. I plead for an end to the military operations with their appalling harvest of innocent civilian victims and call for a solution to the desperate humanitarian situation by an opening to the provision of humanitarian aid. May there be an end to the fueling of violence and hatred. And may the

Palestinian question come to be resolved through sincere and persevering dialogue between the parties, sustained by strong political will and the support of the international community. Brothers and sisters, let us pray for peace in Palestine and in Israel.

Of course, the Holy Land is not the only theater of war today. Pope Francis regularly prays for the people of Ukraine and for the innocent victims of warfare in Syria, Yemen, Armenia, Azerbaijan, the region of the Sahel, the Horn of Africa and Sudan, as well as Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan.

In our increasingly interconnected world, war is everywhere today. It affects all of us, and it makes all our lives more complicated and more difficult as our hearts go out to all who are suffering the immediate effects of war.

Pope Francis asks each of us, sisters and brothers of all, to be the voices of the oppressed victims of war. In fact, he says that it is Jesus who makes this request:

From the manger, the Child Jesus asks us to be the voice of those who have no voice. The voice of the innocent children who have died for lack of bread and

water; the voice of those who cannot find work or who have lost their jobs; the voice of those forced to flee their lands in search of a better future, risking their lives in grueling journeys and prey to unscrupulous traffickers.

Our Holy Father prays that the Son of God, who emptied himself for our sakes and became a little child, will "inspire political authorities and all persons of good will ... to devise suitable ways to resolve social and political conflicts, to combat forms of poverty that offend the dignity of persons, to reduce inequality and to address the troubling phenomenon of migration movements."

Pope Francis concludes his Christmas message with an appeal to all people of good will in every region of the world to reject war and to embrace peace. In so doing, we will joyfully respond to the Lord's call in the words of Isaiah's prophecy "to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners" (Is 61:1).

(Daniel Conway is a member of The Criterion's editorial committee.) †

"Jesus of Nazareth, by his words, his actions, and his entire person reveals the mercy of God."

—Pope Francis, "Misericordiae Vultus" ("The Face of Mercy")

"Jesús de Nazaret con su palabra, con sus gestos y con toda su persona revela la misericordia de Dios."

—Papa Francisco, "Misericordiae Vultus" ("El rostro de la misericordia")

El rostro de la misericordia/Daniel Conway

Decir 'sí' al Príncipe de la paz significa decir 'no' a la guerra

"Esto es la guerra, un viaje sin meta, una derrota sin vencedores, una locura sin excusas" (Papa Francisco, mensaje de Navidad Urbi et Orbi de 2023).

El Papa Francisco aborrece la guerra, a la cual califica de una "locura sin excusa" y de "derrota sin vencedores." En la guerra no hay ganadores, solo perdedores que han pagado un precio desorbitado.

Como dijo el Papa en su mensaje de Navidad de 2023 a la ciudad y al mundo (Urbi et Orbi):

Isaías, que profetizaba al Príncipe de la paz, escribió acerca de un día en el que "no levantará la espada una nación contra otra"; de un día en el que los hombres "no se adiestrarán más para la guerra," sino que "con sus espadas forjarán arados y podaderas con sus lanzas" (Is 2:4). Con la ayuda de Dios, pongámonos manos a la obra para que ese día llegue.

Las espadas y las lanzas eran, por supuesto, las armas utilizadas en la antigüedad. Hoy en día, han sido ampliamente superadas por las modernas armas de destrucción masiva.

El Papa Francisco las detesta tanto o más que a la propia guerra. "Para decir 'no' a la guerra es necesario decir 'no' a las armas," afirma el Santo Padre.

"Porque si el hombre, cuyo corazón es inestable y está herido, encuentra instrumentos de muerte entre sus manos, antes o después los usará. ¿Y cómo se puede hablar de paz si la producción, la venta y el comercio de armas aumentan?"

Como padre espiritual, al Papa Francisco le aflige ver a sus hijos masacrados por la locura de la guerra. Al señalar la guerra que asola Tierra Santa, el Papa expresa:

Que llegue [la paz] en Israel y Palestina, donde la guerra sacude la vida de esas poblaciones; abrazo a ambas, en particular a las comunidades cristianas de Gaza—la parroquia de Gaza—y de toda Tierra Santa. Llevo en el corazón el dolor por las víctimas del execrable ataque del pasado 7 de octubre y renuevo un llamamiento apremiante para la liberación de quienes aún están retenidos como rehenes. Suplico que cesen las operaciones militares, con sus dramáticas consecuencias de víctimas civiles inocentes, y que se remedie la desesperada situación humanitaria permitiendo la llegada de ayuda. Que no se siga alimentando la violencia y el odio, sino que se encuentre una solución a la cuestión palestina, por medio de un diálogo sincero y perseverante entre las

partes, sostenido por una fuerte voluntad política y el apoyo de la comunidad internacional. Hermanos y hermanas, recemos por la paz en Palestina y en Israel.

Por supuesto, Tierra Santa no es hoy el único escenario de guerra. El Papa Francisco reza regularmente por el pueblo de Ucrania y por las víctimas inocentes de la guerra en Siria, Yemen, Armenia, Azerbaiyán, la región del Sahel, el Cuerno de África y Sudán, así como Camerún, la República Democrática del Congo y Sudán del Sur.

En nuestro mundo cada vez más interconectado, la guerra está hoy en todas partes. Nos afecta a todos y hace que nuestras vidas sean más complicadas y más difíciles, ya que nuestros corazones están con todos los que sufren los efectos inmediatos de la guerra.

El Papa Francisco nos pide a cada uno, hermanas y hermanos de todos, que seamos las voces de las víctimas oprimidas de la guerra. De hecho, dice que es Jesús quien hace esta petición:

Desde el pesebre, el Niño nos pide que seamos voz de los que no tienen voz: voz de los inocentes, muertos por falta de agua y de pan; voz de los que no logran encontrar trabajo o lo han perdido; voz de los

que se ven obligados a huir de la propia patria en busca de un futuro mejor, arriesgando la vida en viajes extenuantes y a merced de traficantes sin escrúpulos.

El Sumo Pontífice reza para que el Hijo de Dios, que se entregó por nosotros y se hizo un niño pequeño, "inspire a las autoridades políticas y a todas las personas de buena voluntad del continente americano, para hallar soluciones idóneas que lleven a superar las disensiones sociales y políticas, a luchar contra las formas de pobreza que ofenden la dignidad de las personas, a resolver las desigualdades y a afrontar el doloroso fenómeno de las migraciones."

El Papa Francisco concluye su mensaje de Navidad con un llamamiento a todas las personas de buena voluntad de todas las regiones del mundo para que rechacen la guerra y abracen la paz. Al hacerlo, responderemos con alegría a la llamada del Señor en las palabras de la profecía de Isaías "llevar la buena noticia a los pobres, a vendar los corazones heridos, a proclamar la liberación a los cautivos y la libertad a los prisioneros" (Is 61"1).

(Daniel Conway es integrante del comité editorial de The Criterion.) †

BABY BOXES

continued from page 1

legalized their installation, and more calls came into the non-profit organization's help line than in any year since SHBB was founded in 2015.

Kelsey credits the Indiana Knights of Columbus for its support from the beginning, including sharing information about the organization with councils outside of the state.

"I always say the Knights are my number one support," she says. "They're right there on the front lines with me."

Indiana Knights of Columbus State Deputy Scott Schutte agrees.

"It's been a great partnership," he says. "And we're seeing the fruits of our labor."

'No shame, no blame, no name'

Kelsey is passionate about providing a lifesaving alternative for mothers unwilling or unable to care for their newborn, and for a powerful reason: she was conceived in rape, abandoned at a hospital in 1973 and later adopted.

The concept for Safe Haven Baby Boxes came to Kelsey on a visit to South Africa in 2013. It was there she first saw a baby box and learned about its purpose.

"It was a way for a woman who couldn't raise her newborn to anonymously give her baby a chance at life—no shame, no blame, no name," Kelsey explains.

All 50 states in the U.S. have "safe haven" laws that allow infants to be surrendered, without legal repercussions, to designated care providers such as hospital staff.

However, for a baby box to be installed, a state must pass legislation allowing an infant up to 30 days old to be surrendered in a box not monitored by cameras to ensure anonymity. Largely through Kelsey's efforts, 20 states currently allow such baby boxes.

The temperature-controlled, incubator-like devices are installed in an exterior wall of fire stations, police stations and hospitals. Staff must be able to reach it within minutes of an internal alarm sounding when the self-locking box door is closed.

The first Safe Haven Baby Box was installed at a fire station in Woodburn in 2016, and Indiana continues to lead the country with 112 boxes.

"At least 75% of them had the Knights'

hands on it somewhere," said Kelsey. "The Indiana Knights rallied around us right from the start. It was an inspiration to see a group of men support women at every level."

'They were all in'

The partnership began in the winter of 2014 when Kelsey met Scott Cunningham, Indiana Knights of Columbus State Deputy from 2014-2016, at a Gabriel Project fundraiser dinner. Both had been invited to share their pro-life story.

"I was kind of pulling information from her about the Safe Haven Baby Box program and how can [the Indiana Knights of Columbus] support this in the best way," recalls Cunningham, who, like Kelsey, is adopted.

"At that time, the baby box was still in its prototype phase. The State Council was able to make a donation to offset the cost of that initial program, building the box and getting it tested."

Kelsey was invited several times to speak at the Knights' annual state convention and offer workshops at their biannual organizational meetings. Interest in SHBB spread among the state's councils.

The first baby box surrender occurred at a fire station in Michigan City, Ind., in 2017.

"There's no record to confirm this, but certain calls that came in from [SHBB's] 800 number and some hints from firefighters indicated that the mother had driven quite a ways," Cunningham says. "When it came to the local [Knights] council, that meant that you didn't have to be in an inner-city situation to have a baby box, that these boxes will save babies in rural areas, too. That save did a lot to help the program grow."

North Vernon is just one example of a rural area that installed a box after the 2017 surrender.

Anthony Callahan, a member of Knights of Columbus St. Bernard Council #1631 in North Vernon, reached out to Kelsey in 2018 "about how to get the ball rolling" in the city. A baby had been abandoned at a local church there in 2015, causing "great awareness of the need for something like



Anthony Callahan



'At least 75% of [SHBB installations] had the Knights' hands on it somewhere. The Indiana Knights rallied around us right from the start. It was an inspiration to see a group of men support women at every level.'

—Monica Kelsey, founder of Safe Haven Baby Boxes

[SHBB] in the community," he says.

When Callahan spoke with his fellow council members about the boxes, "they were all in," he recalls.

A group obtained approval from the local city-county council "since the box would have to be installed on city property," says Callahan.

Between a few private donations and a golf scramble the Knights held, enough money was raised for two boxes, which at the time cost \$10,000 (the cost is now \$15,000). One was installed in North Vernon, and the additional money was donated to install a box in Clarksville.

'The box is always the last resort'

Individual council support of SHBB ranges from promoting a local installation to raising part or all of the money for a box to funding the annual maintenance fee to ensure the device's safety.

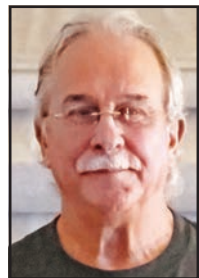
They also sponsor and promote education and awareness campaigns and help finance SHBB's 24/7 crisis hotline and other resources that the nonprofit offers to help mothers keep and care for their babies.

"I want these parents to get the help they need before they put their baby in one of our boxes," says Kelsey. "There's even information and a care package inside the box for them. The box is always the last resort."

Still, there is much rejoicing when a baby that might otherwise have been abandoned is surrendered.

"It was a hurrah kind of moment" when an infant was saved in Seymour in

January 2020 in a box funded entirely by Knights of Columbus Msgr. Rawlinson Council #1252, says member David Rossi. He was finance secretary for the



David Rossi

council when the box was installed in June of 2019.

"More saves inspire more installations, which leads to more saves and more installations," says Cunningham.

In 2023 alone, 15 boxes were installed in Indiana and 57 nationwide, with seven surrenders occurring in the state and 17 nationwide surrenders.

In all, 37 babies have been saved since SHBB was founded, and 191 boxes have been installed among the 20 states that now allow this "no shame, no blame" alternative to abandonment.

"I fully expect we'll be in all 50 states soon," says Kelsey.

The demand for baby boxes has increased so much that the organization opened a new facility in December to help build the lifesaving devices.

Cunningham notes that support for SHBB in Indiana goes beyond the Knights of Columbus.

"The people of Indiana have responded in force," he says, including private donors, churches, townships and municipalities, as well as "tremendous support" from parishes and pastors.

"And Monica has worked her tail off and did a lot of work to branch out," he adds.

But Kelsey calls the Knights' support "pivotal in defending the rights of these children who would be abandoned and these mothers who think that's the only option."

The Bullards are grateful that Lynne's birth mother opted for life.

"My number one goal in life was to be a mother," says Gabrielle. "Safe Haven Baby Boxes has allowed me that opportunity, and our little Lynne is the biggest blessing we could ever ask for."

(For more information, visit SHBB.org.) †

Annual Indiana March for Life schedule includes events on Jan. 21-22

Criterion staff report

The Indiana March for Life events will take place on Jan. 21-22. This year's events, which all take place in Indianapolis, include several new components— participation by all five dioceses in Indiana, Mass in the Indiana Convention Center concelebrated by nearly all of the Indiana bishops, a youth rally in the Indiana Convention Center prior to the Mass, and involvement by the New York-based Sisters of Life.

—As in years past, the 2024 Indiana March for Life schedule of events begins with a vigil at St. John the Evangelist Church, 126 W. Georgia St., on Jan. 21.

The vigil includes a 7 p.m. Mass, followed by eucharistic adoration from 8-10 p.m. That time will include prayer, music and a talk by one or more members of the Sisters of Life. Confession will also be available.

—The day of the march, Jan. 22, kicks off with a youth rally in the Indiana Convention Center, 100 S. Capitol Ave., from 9-11 a.m. The rally will be led by the Sisters of Life for those in grades 8-12 and their chaperones (only open to those who pre-registered). During the youth rally, all are invited to visit pro-life booths in the convention center.

—The 11:30 a.m. Mass for Life—concelebrated by four of the state's five bishops—will also take place in the

Indiana Convention Center.

—Right to Life of Indianapolis will sponsor a pre-march rally from 1-1:30 p.m. at the intersection of Georgia Street and Capitol Avenue.

—All are invited to gather at Georgia and Illinois streets from 1:30-1:45 p.m. to assemble for the march to the south steps of the Indiana Statehouse, 200 W. Washington St., from 1:45-2:30 p.m.

—A post-march rally with speakers will take place there until 3 p.m.

For more information on the events, schedule, travel and parking details, go to cutt.ly/INMFL2024 (case sensitive). †

40 Days for Life spring campaign will take place on Feb. 14-March 24 in Bloomington and Indianapolis

Criterion staff report

40 Days for Life is a campaign of prayer, fasting and peaceful activism held in the spring and fall with the purpose of turning hearts and minds from a culture of death to a culture of life and bringing an end to abortion.

The spring campaign runs from Feb. 14-March 24. Two locations in the archdiocese are participating: Bloomington and Indianapolis.

While state law now prohibits Planned Parenthood from performing abortions, women still visit the facilities in these two cities for out-of-state abortion referrals, birth control, morning-after (Plan B) abortion

pill, transgender hormone therapy and other services that contradict a culture of life.

"During the 2023 fall campaign in Indianapolis, there were three babies' lives saved," says Indianapolis 40 Days for Life coordinator Linda Kile. "From Sept. 1 through Dec. 31, 13 women *that we know of* went to Planned Parenthood for pregnancy help. How can we *not* continue to have a presence on the sidewalk as long as Planned Parenthood is open? How can we abandon even one of the least of God's creatures?"

She adds that, because of a 40 Days for Life campaign outside of a Planned Parenthood abortion referral center in Texas managed by Ramona Travino, "God

spoke to her, and she realized she *had* to quit her job. As a result, the center closed!"

Following is information on the Bloomington and Indianapolis campaigns.

Bloomington: The campaign will take place along the public right-of-way outside of the Planned Parenthood facility at 421 S. College Ave. Parking is available at the meters along the street at \$1 per hour. Do not park in the Planned Parenthood parking lot.

To sign up, go to 40daysforlife.com/en/bloomington.

For more information, contact Deacon Russell Woodard at 812-988-6995 or e-mail rbwoodard@ameritech.net.

Indianapolis: The campaign will take place in front of the Planned Parenthood facility at 8590 Georgetown Road.

Parking is available along Georgetown Road; do not park in the Women's Care Center parking lot or at the industrial complex across from the Planned Parenthood facility.

To sign up, go to 40daysforlife.com/en/indianapolis.

For additional information, contact Kile at 317-213-4778 or e-mail her at linda@goangels.org.

To find other 40 Days for Life campaigns outside of the archdiocese, go to 40daysforlife.com and select "Locations." †

Dicastery: Bishops shouldn't deny blessings for gay couples

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—While bishops may take a cautious approach to the Vatican's guidance on blessing same-sex or other unmarried couples, they should not deny their priests the possibility of discerning and imparting



Cardinal Víctor Manuel Fernández

blessings on people who ask for them, the Vatican doctrinal office said.

"Prudence and attention to the ecclesial context and to the local culture could allow for different methods of application, but not a total or definitive denial of this path that is proposed to priests," said a press release issued on Jan. 4 by the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith.

Each bishop has a responsibility to discern the local application of the declaration "*Fiducia Supplicans*" ("Supplicating Trust") on "the pastoral meaning of blessings," signed by Pope Francis and published by the Dicastery for the Doctrine of Faith on Dec. 18, but a bishop should not deny priests the ability to bless people who come to them, the press release said.

Signed by Cardinal Víctor Manuel Fernández, prefect of the dicastery, the statement said it hoped "to help clarify" the reception of "*Fiducia Supplicans*" among bishops' conferences.

Besides causing both outrage and celebration on social media, the declaration was greeted by bishops' conferences with reactions that ran the gamut from embracing its guidance to outright banning local priests from applying it.

Many bishops' conferences in Western countries, underscoring that the declaration did not change Catholic doctrine on marriage, reacted positively to the document. But others, particularly in Africa, were vocal in their opposition. The Zambian bishops' conference issued a statement on Dec. 20 stating that the Vatican document

should "be taken as for further reflection and not for implementation in Zambia." In Malawi, the bishops' conference directed that "blessings of any kind for same-sex unions of any kind are not permitted in Malawi."

Bishop Robert E. Barron, chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth, said in a statement on Dec. 21 that the document "in no way calls for a change in the Church's teaching regarding marriage and sexuality."

Bishop Georg Bätzing, president of the German bishops' conference, wrote on Dec. 18 that he welcomed the document and was "grateful for the pastoral perspective it takes."

Bishop Oscar Ojea, president of the Argentine bishops' conference, said on Dec. 30 that it would be "inappropriate" to inquire about the moral life of someone asking for a blessing, and he surmised that bishops and ministers who disagree with the Vatican guidance on blessings have not had the experience of witnessing someone simply asking for God's help or, perhaps, have not even acknowledged a need for God's mercy in their own lives.

The statements made by bishops' conferences "cannot be interpreted as doctrinal opposition," the dicastery's Jan. 4 statement said, since "*Fiducia Supplicans*" clearly states the Church's perennial teaching on marriage and sexuality.

"There is no room to distance ourselves doctrinally from this declaration or to consider it heretical, contrary to the Tradition of the Church or blasphemous," the statement said.

Still, it acknowledged that while in some places "no difficulties arise" for the immediate application of the declaration, "in others it will be necessary not to introduce them" or to wait until more time is provided for study and for catechesis.

Some bishops have forbidden priests in their diocese from imparting the pastoral blessings laid out in the Vatican document. Archbishop Tomash Peta and auxiliary Bishop Athanasius Schneider of Astana, Kazakhstan, said in a Dec. 19 statement that they "prohibit priests and the faithful of the Archdiocese of Saint Mary in Astana from accepting or performing any form of blessing whatsoever of couples in an irregular situation and same-sex couples."

In other local contexts, the Vatican statement said some bishops have given priests encouragement to discern when such blessings may be appropriate, but the dicastery insisted a priest may perform the blessings "only in private."

The variety of reactions is not "problematic if it is expressed with due respect for a text signed and approved by the Supreme Pontiff himself, while attempting in some way to accommodate the reflection contained in it," it said.

The statement also discussed at length the situation in countries where homosexuals are threatened with prison, torture or death for being gay. In those places, "it goes without saying that a blessing would be imprudent," it said. "It is clear the bishops do not wish to expose homosexual persons to violence."

But beyond blessings for same-sex couples, the "real novelty" of "*Fiducia Supplicans*," the dicastery said, is not the possibility of blessing couples in irregular situations, rather "the invitation to distinguish between two different forms of blessings: 'liturgical and ritualized' and 'spontaneous or pastoral.'"

The statement recognized that while some bishops will choose not to impart pastoral blessings to couples in irregular situations, "we all need to grow equally in the conviction that: non-ritualized blessings are not a consecration of the person nor of the couple who receives them, they are not a justification of all their actions, and they are not an endorsement of the life that they lead." †

SURROGACY

continued from page 1

gestational carrier is impregnated through *in vitro* fertilization, a practice the Church also proscribes.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states, "Techniques that entail the dissociation of husband and wife, by the intrusion of a person other than the couple [donation of sperm or ovum, surrogate uterus], are gravely immoral. These techniques [heterologous artificial insemination and fertilization] infringe

the child's right to be born of a father and mother known to him and bound to each other by marriage. They betray the spouses' 'right to become a father and a mother only through each other'" (#2376).

Pope Francis has denounced surrogacy before, including in a 2022 meeting with members of the Federation of Catholic Family Associations in Europe, during which he said, "The dignity of men and women is also threatened by the inhumane and increasingly widespread practice of 'womb renting,' in which women, almost always poor, are exploited, and children are treated as commodities."

In 2016, Pope Francis briefly reflected on surrogacy in "*Amoris Laetitia*" ("The Joy of Love"), a post-synodal apostolic exhortation that followed the 2014-2015 Synod of Bishops' meetings on the family, noting, "History is burdened by the excesses of patriarchal cultures that considered women inferior, yet in our own day, we cannot overlook the use of surrogate mothers and the 'exploitation and commercialization of the female body in the current media culture,'" citing a catechesis he gave at a general audience in April 2015.

The commercial surrogacy industry was valued at \$14 billion globally

in 2022, and is projected to reach an estimated value of \$129 billion by 2032, according to a November 2022 Global Market Insights report. Surrogacy laws vary by country.

Surrogacy was just one of many topics Pope Francis touched on in his Jan. 8 meeting with members of the diplomatic corps. After thanking them for their "efforts to foster good relations between the Holy See and your respective countries," he reflected on areas of war and political tension throughout the world, including Israel and Palestine and Russia and Ukraine. †

GOD'S PRESENCE

continued from page 1

knees and ankles. I would go down the steps in my house once in the morning and walk or crawl up the steps once in the evening. Some days, I crawled up the stairs on my hands and knees, using my arms to pull me up each step."

The symptoms progressed to the point that he used an electric scooter when he was in a store, and he reluctantly relied on an elevator and a cane to get around the factory where he worked.

"After falling down steps and stumbling down the hallways at work, I decided to start using a cane."

Then came the moment during a spring break vacation in 2017—on March 25—that started to change everything for him.

As Johnson arrived at Hilton Head, S.C., with his wife Darbi, their two sons and their sons' two friends, he was greeted by a couple as he prepared to enter the condo they had rented.

Noticing that his sons were both wearing Purdue University shirts, the woman asked Johnson if his family was from Indiana. When he said yes, she said the same was true about her and her husband. She also told him that since they had been there for six months and were leaving soon, he should stop by their condo later because they had a lot of food that Johnson's family could have because it would go to waste otherwise.

Once inside their condo, Johnson told his wife that the couple was nice, but he wasn't going to take their food.

"We changed into swimsuits and went to the beach," recalls Johnson, a 1984 graduate of Father Thomas Seccina Memorial High School in Indianapolis. "I had my son carry my beach chair. As we got to the sand, Darbi had to help hold me up because even with my cane I was having trouble stabilizing my legs on the sand.

"After several hours, we returned to our condo and noticed a note on the door with a list of food. I told Darbi, 'Now we have to go meet this couple.' Ronnie

and Joe Jachim loaded two boxes with food, and my kids and their friends took the boxes back to our condo."

That's when Ronnie asked Johnson an unusual question.

A surprising question

"Do you believe in miracles?" Ronnie asked.

"I said yes," Johnson recalls. "She told me that she wanted to share with me some water that has been associated with miracles. At that moment, I felt a strong presence of God. Ronnie asked if I took medicine daily. I said yes. She said, 'Drink this water with your medicine each day, but before you drink it ask Mary, the mother of Jesus, to pray for you and ask God for healing.'"

"That night, I asked Mary to pray for me and asked God for healing. The next morning, Darbi and I went to 8 o'clock Mass at Holy Family Church. After Mass, I saw a shrine to Mary across the parking lot and asked Darbi to go over there and pray with me. I do not recall how long we prayed, maybe 15 to 30 minutes."

Soon, the beach called to the couple, and this time Johnson noticed a difference in himself as he approached the sand.

"I told Darbi that she did not need to help me walk in the sand because I could feel that my legs were getting stronger," he says, recalling that moment when he still relied on his cane. "My wife was reading Harry Potter books, and I continued praying all day as I sat in a chair near the shoreline and watched and listened to the waves crash on the beach."

That evening when they went to dinner, Johnson walked from the parking lot to the restaurant, forgetting that he had left his cane in its usual place in the front seat.

"Monday morning, I said, 'I no longer need this cane,'" Johnson recalls. "I grabbed my own beach chair and walked on the sand without a cane. Each day, I sat and enjoyed the waves as I prayed all day. I prayed for healing at first, but as I gained strength in my legs and the pain and twitching subsided, I began thanking God for healing me and thanking Mary for praying for me."

'I told him there is a God who loves him'

Each day of that week, Johnson says, he grew stronger.

"Darbi and I started taking longer and longer walks on the beach. On Thursday, we went to Savannah [Georgia]. I was walking faster than Darbi and faster than my sons, Nathan and Noah. I thanked God all day. I walked 6.6 miles that day with no twitching, no pain, no loss of joint control, no paralysis. I felt so good.

"On Friday, Darbi and I rode bikes down the beach. We rode inland and saw alligators and birds. We rode to Holy Family Church, where we stopped at the shrine to Mary and prayed. We rode bikes five miles that day. I had not been on a bike for 7 1/2 years because I did not have strength in my legs to pedal a bike."

The physical transformation continued the following Monday when he returned to work.

"I was walking fast up and down the hallway," he says. "I was stopped by co-workers. They asked me if I had surgery or if I was taking a new medicine. I have told at least 50 co-workers about my miracle, three of whom are atheists. One atheist interrupted me repeatedly while I described the events of my miracle and said it was mind over matter, that there is no God. "I told him there is a God that loves him."

On April 8, 2017, the Johnsons visited the Indiana place where Ronnie Jachim had got the water that she gave to him—Mother of the Redeemer Retreat Center in Bloomington. The couple walked the path of the Stations of the Cross and attended Mass, where Johnson thanked God again for his healing.

"I thank God many times a day, every day, as I complete simple tasks such as walking, going up and down stairs, and going shopping with my wife," says the 58-year-old Johnson, who volunteers as an assistant coach for the boys' tennis team at New Albany High School.

Johnson recalls the appointment he had with his neurologist in December of 2017.

"He said that there is no medical or scientific explanation for my healing."

As Johnson continues to thrive, he also continues to hope for his friend who is an atheist.

"My hope and prayer are that I have planted that seed of doubt in his current beliefs and that someday he and others like him become Christians." †

St. Andrew Dinner helps young men learn about the priesthood

By Sean Gallagher

“There’s great power in the ‘yes’ of a young person.”

Those were the words of Father Michael Keucher, archdiocesan vocations director, in a homily during a Mass on Dec. 28 at Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary in Indianapolis.

Among his listeners that day were some 40 teenage boys and other young men in college from across central and southern Indiana taking part in the annual St. Andrew Dinner of the archdiocesan vocations office.

It is named after the Apostle Andrew, who is known for bringing his brother St. Peter to know Christ. For this event, priests and seminarians across the archdiocese invited young men they thought might have a priestly vocation.

“You are all here because an Andrew in your life—one of these priests or a seminarian—sees something in you and says, ‘He would make a really good priest,’” said Father Keucher in his homily. “Maybe your face is to be among our future priests.”

Marin Bonhomme, a home-schooled eighth grader who is a member of St. Joan of Arc Parish in Indianapolis, attended the event with his brother Reece, who is a junior at Cathedral High School in Indianapolis.

Both boys are altar servers and extraordinary ministers of holy Communion at St. Joan of Arc. Their pastor, Father Thomas Schliessmann, invited them to the event.

“It made me realize that we were noticed and appreciated,” Marin said of the invitation. “It was nice to see that he actually noticed that we cared, that we try hard and maybe are interested in the priesthood.”

During a dinner that followed the

Mass, several archdiocesan priests shared with the participants what they’re thankful for in their priestly vocation.

“Some of them really liked giving sacraments,” Reece recalled. “Others liked one-on-one [interactions] with their parishioners, especially giving reconciliation. There were a lot of different reasons that the priests gave for why they do it.”

Chad Bonhomme, Marin and Reece’s father, was grateful that Father Schliessmann invited his sons. He recalled how, when he grew up in Vincennes, Ind., his faith became important to him through being an altar server at the invitation of his parish priest.

“I fell in love with it. I did weddings and funerals,” Chad said. “I even served some when I was home from college.”

“I had a great relationship with my parish priest growing up. So, for Father Tom to take interest in the boys and invite them to this dinner in that special place means a lot to my wife and me.”

Ethan Kawaguchi, a member of St. Louis Parish in Batesville and a student at Marian University in Indianapolis, also attended the liturgy and St. Andrew Dinner.

A participant in other archdiocesan vocations events, Kawaguchi was 12 when his father died. He said coming to know Father Keucher and Father Joseph Moriarty, rector of Bishop Bruté, has been a blessing in his life.

“These two priests feel like they’re family to me and have only treated me like family,” Kawaguchi said. “To know a couple priests personally and have even more supporting us is very life-giving.”

He was glad to see so many other young men at the dinner.

“It is the duty of every Catholic man to consider priesthood,” said Kawaguchi. “It is the definition of a selfless act as you die to yourself just as a man dies to



Young men from across the archdiocese listen on Dec. 28 to Father Michael Keucher, archdiocesan vocations director, speak about priestly vocations during the archdiocesan vocations office’s annual St. Andrew Dinner at Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary in Indianapolis. (Photos by Sean Gallagher)

himself for his wife.”

Zachary Branham, a member of St. John the Apostle Parish in Bloomington and a student at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Ind., also appreciated the event.

“It is always a good thing to see that many of my peers are also seeking a deeper relationship with Christ,” said Branham. “It is great that the priests and seminarians participate and support events like these. It really makes the priesthood appear more approachable.”

Like Marin and Reece, Justyn Anciso appreciated having his pastor, Father Todd Goodson of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood, invite him to the Mass and dinner.

“It was cool and an honor to be invited,” said Justyn, a senior at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis. “It helped me see what others see God is doing in me.”

In comments made to *The Criterion* after the event, Father Keucher spoke about how much he enjoys seeing young men visit a seminary.

“Some look scared,” he said. “Some look excited. But I see on all their faces the image of men following an invitation from God to come and see.”

“Coming to the seminary building, praying with and talking with priests, seminarians and other young men discerning makes a huge difference.”

Father Keucher began the St. Andrew Dinner in 2021 and has seen its attendance grow. Among the 39 who took part last



Father Michael Keucher, archdiocesan vocations director, preaches a homily during a Mass on Dec. 28 in the chapel of Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary in Indianapolis. Some 40 young men from across the archdiocese were there for the archdiocesan vocations office’s annual St. Andrew Dinner.

month, 10 were college students, with the rest being teenagers in high school or middle school. The participants came from 12 archdiocesan parishes.

“I loved seeing the joy and love and fire in these young men,” said Father Keucher. “I can see why their pastors invited them. They love God and his Church.”

In the parting words of his homily, Father Keucher invited the young men at the St. Andrew Dinner to consider a priestly call in their lives.

“St. John Vianney said that every holy priest goes to heaven with thousands of souls behind him,” Father Keucher said. “At this Mass, I want you all to pray if maybe your face, maybe your heart was created for the priesthood.”

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

Marriage ANNOUNCEMENTS

Be a part of our Spring Marriage Edition

Feb. 16 issue of The Criterion

Couples who are planning to be married between Feb. 1 and Aug. 9, 2024 in a marriage that is recognized as a valid sacramental or valid natural marriage, or couples who were wed between July 1, 2023, and Jan. 31 in such a recognized marriage and did not have their engagement announcement in *The Criterion* are invited to submit the information for the upcoming Feb. 16 Spring Marriage Edition.

Announcements can be submitted by mail using the form below or electronically at www.archindy.org/engagements.

E-mailed photos

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

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

Deadline

All announcements and photos must be received by 5 p.m. on Feb. 2.

— Use this form to furnish information by mail —

Clip and mail to: BRIDES, The Criterion, ATTN: Ann Lewis, 1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367. To submit information online go to: www.archindy.org/engagements. Deadline with photos: Tuesday, Feb. 2 at 5 p.m.

Please print or type:

Name of Bride (first, middle, last)		Daytime Phone	
Mailing Address	City	State	Zip Code
Name of Bride’s Parents (first, last)			
City		State	
Name of Bridegroom (first, middle, last)			
Name of Bridegroom’s Parents (first, last)			
City		State	
Wedding Date	Church	City	State
<input type="checkbox"/> Photo Enclosed	Signature of person furnishing information		Relationship
<input type="checkbox"/> Return photo			Daytime Phone
<input type="checkbox"/> No Picture			

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SIMPLY CATHOLIC

Abstaining from meat on Fridays is making a comeback

By Emily Stimpson Chapman

(OSV News)—In the days before the Second Vatican Council, those who felt a certain distaste for the Catholic faith were wont to speak of their papist neighbors as “mackerel snappers.”

The silly term was rooted in Catholics’ centuries-old discipline of abstaining from meat on Fridays throughout the year, not just in Lent. As that discipline disappeared, so did the insult.

Yet “mackerel snappers” just might make a comeback in anti-Catholic circles, or at least in England and Wales, where, since Sept. 16, 2011, all Catholics have been obligated once again to forgo steaks and other meat choices on Fridays, and instead dine on less fleshy fare.

In May 2011, the bishops of England and Wales, wrote: “In accordance with the whole Church, the bishops’ conference wishes to remind all Catholics in England and Wales of the obligation of Friday penance. The bishops have decided to re-establish the practice that this should be fulfilled by abstaining from meat. Those who cannot or choose not to eat meat as part of their normal diet should abstain from some other food of which they normally partake.”

In 2022, they reiterated that commitment, writing, “In this way, we dedicate to God the pressing need for us all to live more simply.”

Why the change? And why should Catholics in America be concerned with what Catholics in England and Wales eat on Fridays?

The answer starts with a brief history of Friday abstinence, the first mention of which comes in the *Didache*, a late first-century compilation of Christian teachings. There, Christians are enjoined to fast on Wednesday and Fridays. The Wednesday fast soon fell out of fashion, but the Friday fast continued for nearly two millennia, with Christians commemorating the day of the Lord’s death through prayer, fasting and abstinence from meat and fowl.

The reason for that, said Rob Corzine, vice president for academic programs at the St. Paul Center for Biblical Theology in Steubenville, Ohio, is that “the Church has always understood that every week is a microcosm of the liturgical year. Every Friday is a little Lent, and every Sunday a little Easter. The two are inseparably linked.”

The Church’s teaching on that point hasn’t altered. It has never changed its insistence upon Friday as a day of penance any more than it has changed its insistence upon Sunday as a day of worship. What it has changed, however, is its insistence upon what form that penance on Friday should take.

In 1966, Pope St. Paul VI issued the apostolic constitution “*Paenitemini*” (“On Fast and Abstinence”). There, he reiterated that “by divine law all the faithful are required to do penance,” and that “abstinence is to be observed on every Friday which does not fall on a day of obligation.”

He went on, however, to grant national episcopal conferences the authority to “substitute abstinence and fast wholly or in part with other forms of penance and especially works of charity and the exercises of piety.”

The reasoning behind the change was that while abstaining from meat was a penitential act in wealthy

nations, it was a way of life in poorer countries. Giving bishops the freedom to adapt the required penance to best suit their flocks’ circumstances was a concession to the changing realities of the Catholic world. It also reaffirmed the penitential nature of Friday, underlining the importance of the faithful uniting themselves with Christ in his passion through meaningful acts of penance.

That was the theory. In practice, it didn’t quite work that way.

Instead of insisting upon abstinence as an act of solidarity with the poor, many affluent nations’ conference of bishops, including those in Britain and the United States, made the traditional practice of meatless Fridays optional, allowing Catholics to choose their own penance instead. Catholics in those countries took that freedom a step further, interpreting the change not simply as an abrogation of meatless Fridays, but as an abrogation of any Friday penance.

The ambiguous language of the U.S. bishops’ 1966 document on the topic didn’t help matters. Nor did the timing. The 1983 *Code of Canon Law* attempted to clear up the confusion over Friday penance, stating in Canons 1250 and 1251, that “the penitential days and times in the universal Church are every Friday of the whole year and the season of Lent. Abstinence from meat, or from some other food as determined by the episcopal conference, is to be observed on all Fridays, unless a solemnity should fall on a Friday.”

By that point, however, the proverbial horse had left the barn. Although a pious few continued to forgo meat or perform some other act of prayer or sacrifice on Friday, the majority of Catholics in the West treated the day just like any other.

Times, however, are changing.

In 2009, Bishop Daniel R. Conlon, shepherd at the time of the Diocese of Steubenville, Ohio, issued a pastoral letter requesting all Catholics in the diocese resume abstinence from meat on Fridays. Two years later, the bishops of England and Wales did likewise. And they did so for similar reasons.

First, both issued their letters as a reminder to Catholics that Fridays should be observed as days of penance. At the time, Bishop Conlon told *Our Sunday Visitor*, “Despite Pope Paul VI’s injunction that Catholics substitute another penitential practice for abstaining from meat on Fridays, most Catholics were not doing anything.”

Second, both wanted to stress the importance of ascetic practices. “It seems to me that the call to asceticism is even greater for those who live in a materialistic society. It’s good for the soul, and it’s good for the body,” said Bishop Conlon, who in 2011 was assigned to lead the Diocese of Joliet, Ill. He resigned in 2020 for medical reasons.

Third, they wanted to revive Friday abstinence as a means by which Catholics bear common witness to the culture. The bishops of England and Wales wrote, “By the practice of penance, every Catholic identifies with Christ in his death on the cross. ... When this is visible in the public arena, then it is also an important act of witness.”

Finally, at least in England and Wales, the bishops reinstated the practice as a means of strengthening Catholic identity. From the bishops’ letter: “The bishops wish to re-establish the practice of Friday penance in the lives of the faithful as a clear and distinctive mark of their own Catholic identity. They recognize that the best habits are those acquired as part of a common resolve and common witness.”

Since then, other U.S. bishops, including Bishop Edward J. Weisenburger of Tucson, Ariz., (while bishop of Salina, Kan.), and Bishop Glen John J. Provost of Lake Charles, La., have encouraged their faithful to return to



A man kneels in prayer before a crucifix at Holy Cross Church in New York City on Good Friday, April 14, 2017. Abstaining from meat is a penitential practice to help Catholics to honor Christ’s death on Good Friday throughout the year. (OSV News photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)

year-round Friday abstinence.

Which brings us back to the question—what does this have to do with the rest of us?

Simply put, all those reasons for abstaining from meat on Fridays are as valid for Catholics in Louisville as they are for Catholics in London.

When the name of the game is “Choose Your Own Penance,” many of us will end up not choosing anything at all. When it’s a settled question, however—that Friday penance means abstaining from meat—the penance is more likely to be observed. Also, because it’s observed at every meal, it keeps one conscious of the day’s particular charism.

Then, there remains the fact that abstinence is good for us.

“In a fully integrated human being, the soul is in charge of the body,” said Father Edward Connolly, a priest of the Diocese of Allentown, Pa. “Abstaining from meat and other foods reminds us of that.”

Likewise, abstinence enables all Catholics to become public witnesses to the faith.

“Like our Jewish brothers and sisters who keep a kosher diet, it’s a visible, tangible way we can testify to the fact that our Lord died for us on a Friday,” said Father Connolly.

Last, but not least, abstaining from meat is still the U.S. bishops’ stated preference for how Catholics should observe Fridays.

As they wrote in 1966: “Even though we hereby terminate the traditional law of abstinence binding under pain of sin as the sole prescribed means of observing Friday, we give first place to abstinence from flesh meat. We do so in the hope that the Catholic community will ordinarily continue to abstain from meat by free choice as formerly we did in obedience to Church law.”

Perhaps it’s time to take them up on their invitation.

(Emily Stimpson Chapman is a best-selling Catholic author of nearly a dozen books, and a former contributing editor to *Our Sunday Visitor*. Her writing can be found at substack.com/@emilystimpsonchapman.) †



A photo of a scallop-and-asparagus “burger” illustrates a meatless meal. Bishops in England and Wales reintroduced the required penitential practice of abstaining from meat on all Fridays in 2011 and refreshed their commitment to it in 2022. (OSV News photo/Bernadette Wurzinger, Pixabay)

Evangelization Outreach/Ken Ogorek

New year's resolution: don't meditate! Let me explain

You might have noticed that in various secular health-related articles the topic of meditation comes up frequently.



"Meditate," we're advised. "It's good for you."

At least two ways of meditating, though, are available to you; one of them you should embrace. The other? Avoid!

"My mind is so open, the good stuff falls out!"

An undesirable understanding of meditation goes something like this: "Empty your mind of everything. Use a word or brief phrase to help do this if you must. But eventually every person, place and thing should vacate your mind, leaving nothing but nothingness. Then and only then will you feel peace, tranquility, serenity."

Jesus touched on this concept, at least indirectly.

"When an unclean spirit goes out of a person it roams through arid regions searching for rest but finds none. Then it says, 'I will return to my home from which I came.' But upon returning, it finds it empty, swept clean, and put in order. Then it goes and brings back with itself seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they move in and dwell there; and the last condition of that person is worse than the first" (Mt 12:43-45).

What, then, is a Christian view of meditation?

"Don't lose your focus."

While meditative prayer might seem the same as nothingness meditation at first glance, here's a key difference:

Christian meditation encourages you to clear your mind of all distraction, even using a word or brief phrase to help. With all that competes for your attention vanquished for a time, you can focus on the one person who really matters. Or maybe one of the three divine persons—Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Or perhaps just one aspect of the unfathomable, inexhaustible riches of who God and his creation are and will remain.

Instead of leaving the house of your mind unguarded and vulnerable to those who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls, you're remaining restfully vigilant—or vigilantly restful—focusing on the personal Being without whom your heart remains restless. To paraphrase St. Augustine, our hearts find rest not in nothingness, but rather in resting with—in a focused way—God almighty.

"Hey, baldie. You're splitting hairs."

You might be thinking, "C'mon, Ken. Aren't you overthinking this? Aren't mindfulness, meditation, yoga's mental practices and Christian meditative prayer all the same thing?"

(Sidenote: I'll leave it to you to figure out why secular, corporate newsletters

can recommend mindfulness, meditation and closely related practices till they're anthem-blue in the face while one mention of Judeo-Christian meditative prayer would send shockwaves through shareholder ranks.)

Simply put, no. All meditative practices are not created equal. Some of them will help you grow closer to God. Others might lower your heart rate and blood pressure, but leave you vulnerable to forces who want you to believe they don't exist.

Feisty

I've been known to stir the pot with my columns occasionally. And I'd welcome any rebuttal that tries equating Christian meditative prayer to the nothingness approach that underlies (if you're aware of it) the meditation commonly mentioned in secular sources of various sorts.

Meanwhile I encourage you to start here: inky.in/USCCB-Meditation, then branch out with the search engine of your choosing, using phrases like "Catholic meditative prayer."

You might still find this feisty, bald guy annoying. But at least you'll avoid new year's resolutions that leave you feeling ... empty.

(Ken Ogorek is executive director within the archdiocesan Secretariat for Evangelizing Catechesis. He can be reached at kogorek@archindy.org.) †

Twenty Something/

Christina Capecchi

Saluting the chroniclers: put 2024 on paper

He began at the beginning: "Left St. Paul [on] Jan. 23rd '98 at 4:30 p.m."

In a leather-bound journal, his neat cursive scrolled in pencil across graph paper, Frank Storms charted his epic pursuit: to strike gold in Alaska.



He arrived in 1898, in the middle of a stampede—some 100,000 prospectors who made up the

Klondike Gold Rush. The Minnesota man was convinced he had what it took, attaching a newspaper clipping that quoted "the millionaire miner" Dr. F.T. King: "No one should go to Alaska in the hope of finding gold unless he is possessed of a good physique, indomitable will and tenacity and a willingness to work long and hard and at anything that presents itself."

Frank chronicled his travels in detail, providing summaries and lists. He noted all his supplies. He documented his Christmas menu: oyster soup, fish, roast, Alaska baked beans, creamed potatoes and mince pie, then a pipe with two friends. And he illustrated his odyssey, sketching tributaries of the Yukon River and "Old Sam's Cabin," where he stayed.

Frank didn't find gold, returning home due to a broken hip. But he did leave his family a treasure: his journal.

More than a century later, we pore over his pages, awed by his daring and his diligence—the latter, necessary for us to learn of the former.

Every Christmas Eve, we pause from our festivities to salute Great Grandpa Frank and the Knights of Pythias, the fraternal organization under which he traveled.

His story lives on.

I've been thinking about journaling, which is both a lost art and a spiritual exercise. Last May, in a fit of end-of-school-year sentimentality, I resolved to begin a simple family journal. I was pained by how quickly it all goes. Journaling felt like the surest way to slow time, to keep all the days from blurring together. They are too sacred to blur.

This was the underlying belief, a sense of urgency and sanctity stirring deep within.

I'd purchased a leather journal and tried to replicate Frank's pencil cursive. But what works for me is sitting down at my desktop computer and tapping a few quick sentences into a Google document. Sometimes right before bed. Sometimes in the window between turning on the stove and bringing water to a boil. Sometimes not at all. (That's part of the deal—no pressure.)

I can think of no better way to launch a new year than to document it. Start with the simplest stuff: the date, the weather. Then keep it simple. What you did, what you ate, who you saw.

A journal requires neither analysis nor poetry. It is the recording itself that counts.

It strikes me as an inherently Catholic undertaking: to see each day as a profound gift, however ordinary; to recognize the dignity in each person and encounter; to possess an abiding gratitude, a heart of thanksgiving.

Every January, I recall a passage from the German poet Rainer Maria Rilke, as much prayer as poem: "And now let us believe in a long year that is given to us—new, untouched, full of things that have never been."

It is a matter of faith: We believe in the year given to us by God. We marvel at its novelty, things that are not only new but "have never been." It sounds so clean and hopeful, like a fresh blanket of snow.

That's how God sees each new life conceived: a unique and unrepeatable

See CAPECCHI, page 16

Guest Column/Gretchen R. Crowe

Five events in 2024 to help us become better Catholics

As we flip the calendar to 2024, I must admit the thought of the coming 12 months fill me with a certain amount of dread. Entering into another election year, with all of the related political drama, can feel anxiety-inducing, to say the least.



Thankfully, as people of faith, we know that our hope is found not in political parties or their candidates, but in Jesus Christ and his Church. So, instead of dreading the first Tuesday in November and the inevitably contentious lead-up, here are five events Catholics can anticipate with joy this calendar year.

The National Eucharistic Congress and related events

In the unlikely off-chance that you haven't heard, the first National Eucharistic Congress in the United States in decades will be held in Indianapolis on July 17-21. The event will include nationally-recognized speakers, opportunities for worship and eucharistic adoration, and plenty of time to deepen one's understanding and love of the Eucharist.

The organizing committee has taken several steps to make the event more affordable for families in recent months, including adding the option of purchasing day passes. Leading up to the national event will be four pilgrimages, starting from different points in the country. And parishes will continue planning and holding events as part of the National Eucharistic Revival's parish year—events that Catholics should make every effort to participate in.

Synod on Synodality, Part 2

In October, the second part of the two-part Synod on Synodality will take place in Rome. After round one this past October, we have more of a sense of what to expect this year. We also have a synthesis document that we can continue to digest. And we have more ideas of how we might incorporate synodality in our parish communities and in our lives in general.

It's always a good time to listen to and learn from one another, especially within the context of faith, but doing so in 2024 is particularly timely in the life of the Church.

Reopening of Notre Dame Cathedral in December

Five years ago this coming April, the world stopped in its tracks as flames devoured portions of the historic and beloved Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris. It was an event that brought nations together in sorrow.

On Dec. 8, 2024, the world once again will come together—but this time in joy for the cathedral's scheduled reopening. "Never has anyone alive seen Notre Dame as we shall see it," Father Olivier Ribadeau Dumas, rector-archpriest of the cathedral, told OSV News in a recent interview. It's enough to make you want to book a flight to the City of Light to celebrate.

10 years since sainthood

On April 27, the Church will mark 10 years since the canonization of Sts. John Paul II and John XXIII. This milestone offers us the chance to pause and reflect on these two monumental figures of the 20th century.

"They lived through the tragic events of that century, but

See CROWE, page 16

Richard Etienne/Guest Column

What if ... we become the people God has created us to be?

What if it just starts with the gathering of the people of God and with the welcoming of each person as they are

about to enter the sacred space of a church?

What if our church is more like a hospital for the broken than an exclusive country club for elite members?

What if, by initially confessing that we are sinful and broken and asking for forgiveness, the faithful become better prepared to hear God's word?

What if the process is helped along by beautiful liturgical music and a magnificent prayer environment?

What if there are inspirational readings and stories that stir the religious imagination of the faithful that have gathered?

What if there are prayers to lift the heart of the faithful to see a "new Jerusalem" and the kingdom of God in the future?

What if those gathered bring their gifts—symbols of their very lives—to lay before the altar?

What if all those present share a meal that actually transforms them into new beings that are inspired and moved to dream new dreams of what God wills for the world?

What if these same "broken" pilgrims are then sent out to share this vision that they have seen with a truly broken world that hungers for hope?

What if eucharistic celebrations are

meant to change each of us into the people that God needs to bring change in this struggling world?

What if each person is called by baptism to become the modern-day prophets who are sent into this current culture to shine light on those practices that are not according to God's design?

What if this has always been a part of God's plan from the beginning?

What if—in the end—the ultimate result is for us to become the people of God as St. Paul describes in his First Letter to the Corinthians, "Now you are Christ's body, and individually parts of it" (1 Cor 12:27)?

(Richard Etienne has a degree in theology from Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad and resides in Newburgh, Ind.) †

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

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, January 14, 2024

- 1 Samuel 3:3b-10, 19
- 1 Corinthians 6:13c-15a, 17-20
- John 1:35-42

The First Book of Samuel is the source of the first reading for Mass this weekend. Originally, First and Second Samuel were one volume. At some point in history, an editor divided them into the two volumes, so two volumes appear in Bible translations today.

As the title of these books implies, the central figure is Samuel, a prophet active several centuries before Christ.

Prophets were highly revered throughout the history of the chosen people. They were seen as God's special representatives, but also personally holy and devoted to God. At times, prophets resisted their calling initially. Such was the case of the great prophets, Isaiah, Ezekiel and Jeremiah. After all was said and done, though, they submitted themselves to God's will and accepted the call to be prophets.

These figures were admired because the call to be a prophet was seen precisely as a vocation, a call from God.

In this weekend's reading, God calls Samuel. This occurs according to God's plan. Samuel at first did not recognize God's voice, but later did through the guidance of the priest Eli.

St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians supplies the second reading for this weekend. Many of the Pauline writings have their luster in their clear revelation of the bond between true believers and Jesus, the Son of God who is also fully human in a mystery called the incarnation.

Truly committed Christians in faith and baptism are inseparably bound to Jesus, both in a shared human nature, but also in the divine life given believers by Christ in the sacrament.

This supernatural bond, the very keystone of personal salvation, requires Christians not only to be of spiritual faithfulness, but bodily faithfulness as well. They must not allow themselves to fall into carnal sin. The grace that comes to them through baptism and the other

sacraments is essential to fulfilling this goal.

Instructing the Christian Corinthians in this fact seems for some to be excessive for Paul. However, it should be remembered, Corinth was known near and far as a virtual capital of lewdness and vice.

St. John's Gospel furnishes the last reading. It is a story about the decision to follow Jesus by Simon, later known as Peter, and Simon's brother, Andrew. In the story, Jesus intrigues Andrew and Simon. They follow Jesus and he invites them to be Apostles.

They recognize Jesus as the Messiah. Jesus calls Peter to a new life, even giving him a new name, Cephas, often translated as Peter.

Reflection

The Church, in the majesty and glory of its liturgy, in a profound gaze into the reality of Jesus born in Bethlehem recorded for us in the Gospels, called us all to celebrate the birth of Christ at Christmas.

On Christmas, the Church revealed to us that Jesus is the son of Mary, therefore a human, as she was only human (despite her unique holiness and singular place in the divine plan of redemption).

Two weeks later, it celebrated for us the feast of the Epiphany, revealing then to us the fact that Jesus, born in Bethlehem, was divine, the Son of God, and that redemption is God's gift for all people.

So, these past weeks have been times in which the Church, with the greatest joy and hope, has told us about the Lord. He is the Savior of the world!

Now, the Church asks us in the readings this weekend to consider how personally we shall respond to these marvelous realities. By the mere fact we are of the Church, or at least interested in God, we are being touched by God's grace. God calls us. He offers us eternal life in Christ.

How should we respond? St. Paul gives very concrete advice. Samuel, Peter and Andrew are examples. We must accept Christ as the only way to fulfillment and peace. †

Daily Readings

Monday, January 15

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

Tuesday, January 16

1 Samuel 16:1-13
Psalm 89:20-22, 27-28
Mark 2:23-28

Wednesday, January 17

St. Anthony, abbot
1 Samuel 17:32-33, 37, 40-51
Psalm 144:1-2, 9-10
Mark 3:1-6

Thursday, January 18

1 Samuel 18:6-9; 19:1-7
Psalm 56:2-3, 9-14
Mark 3:7-12

Friday, January 19

1 Samuel 24:3-21
Psalm 57:2-4, 6, 11
Mark 3:13-19

Saturday, January 20

St. Fabian, pope and martyr
St. Sebastian, martyr
2 Samuel 1:1-4, 11-12, 19, 23-27
Psalm 80:2-3, 5-7
Mark 3:20-21

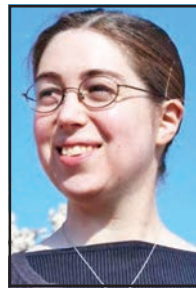
Sunday, January 21

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time
Jonah 3:1-5, 10
Psalm 25:4-9
1 Corinthians 7:29-31
Mark 1:14-20

Question Corner/Jenna Marie Cooper

Protestant churches don't have the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist

What is the Church currently teaching about the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist in other denominations? I thought that at one time we recognized both the Lutherans and the Anglicans as having the real presence. Does that still hold true? Others?



Others?

For context, let us recall that the Catholic teaching on the "real presence" in the Eucharist means that we believe that the bread and wine offered at Mass literally become the body and blood of Christ when the priest prays the prayer of consecration.

This doctrine has been a part of the Catholic faith since the time of the Church's foundation. For example, as we read in St. John's Gospel, Jesus himself states: "Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you. ... For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink" (Jn 6:53, 55).

Later, in the Middle Ages, scholastic theologians such as St. Thomas Aquinas described this teaching in more technical

philosophical terms. Specifically, "transubstantiation" is our word for what happens when the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ at Mass—namely, the "substance" (basically, the essential nature, identity or "being" of a thing) changes, even while the "accidents" (i.e., the physical, observable qualities) of the bread and wine remain.

During the Protestant Reformation and afterward, the vast majority of Protestant ecclesial communities distanced themselves from characteristically Catholic sacramental theology. Most of them rejected the idea of the real

presence of Christ in the Eucharist; that is, if they had any practice similar to holy Communion, this was understood as a purely symbolic means of recalling the Last Supper.

Naturally, the Catholic Church is not going to see the real presence in situations where the ecclesial community in question does not.

A few notable exceptions to this are, as you note, some Anglicans and Lutherans. Historically, the Church of England was established on the more organizational and political premise that the monarch of England is also the head of the Church in England, as opposed to specific theological differences.

So, although Anglicanism now has many branches (such as the Episcopal Church in the United States) that might believe different things today, at least initially the Anglicans did not specifically reject the doctrine of the real presence.

Similarly, while Martin Luther did not teach the Catholic understanding of transubstantiation, he did believe in the similar idea of "consubstantiation," where the substance of Christ's body and blood coexists with the substance of mere bread and wine after the consecration.

Today, the Catholic Church does not recognize any Protestant ecclesial community as having the real presence in the Eucharist. The reason for this is that, even in Protestant traditions that call their clergy priests, the Church does not believe that these clergy were ordained through apostolic succession. That is, we as Catholics believe that all our bishops—and the priests whom they ordain as their co-ministers—were ordained by bishops who were in turn ordained by other bishops in an unbroken chain reaching back to the first bishops, the Apostles, who were consecrated in their vocation by Jesus personally.

Jesus gave the Apostles the power to consecrate the Eucharist, a power which the Apostles then handed down to their successors, and a power which cannot be obtained in any other way.

However, in contrast, we as Catholics believe that the Eastern Orthodox Churches, despite not being in union with the pope in Rome, have nearly identical understanding of the sacraments as well as priests and bishops ordained via apostolic succession. Therefore, the Orthodox do have valid sacraments from a Catholic perspective, and thus we also recognize the real presence in their celebrations of the Eucharist.

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

My Journey to God

New Year's Resolutions

By Sandra Marek Behringer

Perhaps this year the sharp cuts of my intentions will reveal a form slipping like an angel from blank-eyed stone when the dust is brushed away and the chisel of my mind finds a miracle within the reluctant marble of my life.

Perhaps this year I will stand free of tiresome possibility feel the hard surface of my sleep break and know myself fully formed less than perfect and at last awake.



(Sandra Marek Behringer is a member of St. Luke the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis. Photo: In this photo from Oct. 14, 2020, a statue of an angel missing its left hand adorns this tombstone in Crown Hill Cemetery in Indianapolis.) (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)

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.

ARMENDARIZ, Carlos H., 26, St. Anthony, Indianapolis, Dec. 17. Father of Cristina and Noah Flores. Son of Jose Flores. Brother of Martha Armendariz, Monica, Jose and Maximiliano Flores.

ASHMAN, Virginia M., 92, Holy Name of Jesus, Beech Grove, Dec. 16. Mother of Karen Edlin, Nancy Garrigus, Andrew, Billy, Daniel and Randy Ashman. Sister of Bob, David and Larry Hager. Grandmother of 18. Great-grandmother of 34. Great-great-grandmother of six.

BARKER, Duane E., 74, St. Bartholomew, Columbus, Dec. 13. Husband of Janet Barker. Father of Kimberley Rayburn, Duane and Patrick Barker. Brother of Marcia Schwering. Grandfather of nine.

BERTKE, Hilda W., 94, St. Meinrad, St. Meinrad, Dec. 14. Mother of Carol Etienne, Patricia Nigg, David, Kenneth and Lawrence Bertke. Grandmother of 11. Great-grandmother of 14.

CALLAHAN, Barbara A., 81, Good Shepherd, Indianapolis, Dec. 6. Mother of Roxanne Harris and Tammy York. Sister of Jane Helm, Mary, Joseph and Robert Bittelmeyer. Grandmother of five. Great-grandmother of three.

CAMPBELL, Kent L., 54, Christ the King, Indianapolis, Dec. 16. Husband of Danielle Campbell. Father of Sydney and Zoe Campbell. Son of James and Lois Campbell. Brother of Mark and Ned Campbell.

CARLSON, Frederick D., 75, Christ the King, Indianapolis, Dec. 15. Husband of Martha Carlson. Father of Anne Barr,

Michelle Green, Barbara Park, Emily and Bob Carlson. Brother of Alice Kanta and Kathy Rostas. Grandfather of 17.

CIPRIANO CAZAREZ, Teresa, 46, St. Anthony, Indianapolis, Dec. 13. Wife of Hermilo Martinez. Mother of Daisy, Maria, Nancy, Teresa and Daniel Martinez. Sister of Adelina, Aurelia, Margarita, Marta, Minerva and Rosa Cipriano Cazarez. Grandmother of six.

DINN, Cheryl M., 76, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, Dec. 7. Sister of Catherine Smith, Diane VandeBosche, Fred, John, Larry and Robert Dinn. Aunt and great-aunt of several.

EDWARDS, Jr., William, 75, St. Joseph University Parish, Terre Haute, Dec. 11. Father of Rob and Will Edwards. Brother of Patty Cottom and David Edwards. Grandfather of five.

FINNERTY, Dennis R., 68, St. Anthony, Indianapolis, Nov. 18. Brother of Bridget Adams, Kathleen Keller, Maureen Knapp, James and Michael Finnerty.

GIBSON, Robert A., 94, Holy Cross, St. Croix, Dec. 12. Father of Ruthie Etienne, Becky Sprinkle, Bill, Don, James and Pat Gibson. Brother of Marian Baker, Carol Byers, Dick and Joe Gibson. Grandfather of 15. Great-grandfather of 27. Great-great-grandfather of two.

GRAF, Sharon R., 79, St. Anthony, Indianapolis, Dec. 13. Wife of Manfred Graf. Mother of Jon Graf. Sister of Marilyn Logan and Lowell Woods. Grandmother of one.

HALCOMB, Wayne, 73, St. Michael, Brookville, Nov. 20. Husband of Sharon Halcomb. Father of Craig and Doug Halcomb. Brother of Patty Hall, Delores Jackson, Debbie Race, Belva Stirn and Winton Halcomb. Grandfather of two.

HOFFMAN, Patricia (Barth), 93, Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Indianapolis, Dec. 15. Mother of Jan Baele, Pam Goff, Missy Hathaway and Cindy McDaniel. Sister of Donna Ziliak. Grandmother of 15. Great-grandmother of 22.

JACOBI, Lawrence A., 83, St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd County, Dec. 16. Husband of Dian Jacobi. Father of Angela Carter, Kimberly Hardison, Melissa and Dean Jacobi. Brother of Catherine Russo, Eileen, Donald, Jerome, Robert and Wayne Jacobi. Grandfather of seven. Great-grandfather of one.

Epiphany parade



People dressed up as the Three Wise Men pose on Jan. 5 before throwing sweets and gifts from a platform during a traditional Epiphany parade in Ronda, Spain. (OSV News photo/Jon Nazca, Reuters)

KARANDOS, William M., 94, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, Dec. 15. Father of Billie Jean Trumpey, Pam and David Karandos. Grandfather of six. Great-grandfather of two.

MARSEE, Dewey, 91, St. Jude, Indianapolis, Dec. 13. Husband of Jean Marsee. Father of Brenda Lambert, Sharon and Dale Marsee. Grandfather of four. Great-grandfather of one.

MILLER, Steve, 62, St. Mary, North Vernon, Dec. 15. Father of David, Donald and Edward Miller. Brother of Teresa Brown, Mary, Patricia, Bernie, David, Donald, John and Paul Miller. Grandfather of two.

MUNSHOWER, Christine M., 76, St. Anthony, Indianapolis, Dec. 2. Aunt, great-aunt and great-great aunt of several.

NICODEMUS, Mary B., 77, St. Luke the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Dec. 8. Wife of Terry Nicodemus. Mother of Beth Lowe, Lisa and Sean Nicodemus. Grandmother of two.

NOCTON, Robert E., 98, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Richmond, Dec. 11. Father of Martha Goble, Mary Hersey, Nancy Moore, Joe, Kevin, Robert, Jr., Steve and Tim Nocton. Grandfather of 19. Great-grandfather of 30.

RINEAR, Lisa M., 53, St. Lawrence, Lawrenceburg, Dec. 8. Wife of Mark Rinear. Mother of Jack Rinear. Daughter of Jackie Earhart. Sister of Charmi and Donald Bray.

ROUTON, Lorraine T., 97, St. Charles Borromeo, Bloomington, Dec. 16. Mother of Linda Darnell, Patricia Feldhake, Suzanne Melsheimer, Rick and Thomas Routon. Grandmother of 10. Great-grandmother of 16.

SCHAFFER, Carroll, 89, St. Michael, Charlestown, Dec. 17. Husband of Frances Schaffer. Father of Mary Cochran and Carolyn Cutshall. Stepfather of Melinda Ross, Alice Stamp, Tina Watson and Wayne Priddy. Brother of Kathleen Lentz and Clifford Schaffer. Grandfather of two. Step-grandfather of nine. Great-grandfather of one. Step-great-grandfather of 12.

STEEB-LONG, Ruth A., 73, St. Joseph, Jennings County, Dec. 13. Mother of Anna and Richard Long and David Morgan. Sister of

Vicki Goldsby, Rickie Long, Barbara Raye, Laura and Lois Steeb and Eileen Washington. Grandmother of three.

TOOLEY, Eileen M., 63, St. Bartholomew, Columbus, Dec. 9. Wife of Brad Tooley. Mother of Kristy Burton, Chris Denton, Daniel and Donald Tooley. Sister of Patty Hancock, Carol Huesman, Cathy Scott, David, John, Kevin and Pete Cangany. Grandmother of five. Great-grandmother of six.

WALKE, Doris A., 86, St. Louis, Batesville, Dec. 13. Wife of Allen Walke. Mother of Jane Peterson, Barbara and James Walke. Sister of Mary Grote, Roseann Prickel, Edward and Richard Gindling. Grandmother of three.

WELSH, Thomas, 81, St. Gabriel, Connersville, Dec. 16. Husband of Sherri Thomas. Father of Theresa Welsh and Kimberly Welsh-Shafer. Brother of Carol Hanagan.

WESTON, LaVerne, 84, St. Lawrence, Lawrenceburg, Dec. 13. Mother of Amy Hoffman, Nancy Specht, Christopher and Kenneth Weston. Grandmother of nine. Great-grandmother of 16.

WILLIAMS, Lillian M., 94, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Richmond, Dec. 13. Mother of Carol McCurdy and Tom Williams. Grandmother of four. Great-grandmother of six.

WITKA, Michael J., 74, Our Lady of Grace, Noblesville, Ind. (Lafayette Diocese), Dec. 25. Husband of Charlene Witka. Father of Kimberly Tekippe, Kelly Thomas and Richard Witka. Grandfather of seven.

YANIS, Thad C., 52, St. Jude, Indianapolis, Dec. 12. Son of Ruben and Karen Yanis. Brother of Tara Richwin and Jeff Yanis. Uncle of several.

ZALESKI, Mary Margaret, 91, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Richmond, Dec. 15. Mother of Ann Meuleman, Lynn Miller, Carol Overstreet, Peter and Raymond Zaleski, Jr. Grandmother of 14. Great-grandmother of 10. †

Providence Sister Lucille Nolan was a music educator, parish music leader

Providence Sister Lucille Nolan, a member of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods in St. Mary-of-the-Woods, died on Dec. 25 at the Gibson Family Center in Terre Haute. She was 94.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Jan. 10 at the Church of the Immaculate Conception at the motherhouse in St. Mary-of-the-Woods. Burial followed at the sisters' cemetery.

Sister Lucille was born on March 11, 1929, in Galesburg, Ill. She entered the Sisters of Providence on July 22, 1947, and professed final vows on Jan. 23, 1955.

Sister Lucille earned a bachelor's degree in music education at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College and a master's degree in music education at the University of Illinois in Champaign, Ill.

During her 76 years as a member of the Sisters of Providence, Sister Lucille ministered

as an educator in Catholic schools for 33 years in Illinois, Indiana, North Carolina, Oklahoma and Texas. In 1983, she began ministry in parish liturgical music, serving as director of music and liturgy in two parishes in the Chicago area for 23 years. Sister Lucille later ministered in Illinois and Indiana to the homebound and those in hospice. Beginning in 2022, she dedicated herself entirely to prayer.

In the archdiocese, Sister Lucille served in Indianapolis at the former St. Bridget School in 1950, at the former Holy Cross Central School and at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral Parish from 1968-69, and at the former St. Ann School in Terre Haute from 1955-56.

She is survived by a sister, Providence Sister Carol Nolan, and a brother, John Nolan.

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. †

Franciscan Sister Marie Camille Schmaltz served in Catholic schools for 46 years

Franciscan Sister Marie Camille Schmaltz died on Dec. 29 at the motherhouse of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis in Oldenburg. She was 95.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Jan. 5 at the Motherhouse Chapel in Oldenburg. Burial followed at the sisters' cemetery.

Sister Marie Camille was born on Feb. 11, 1928, in Cincinnati. She joined the Sisters of St. Francis on Aug. 8, 1946, and professed final vows in on July 12, 1952. Sister Marie Camille earned a bachelor's degree in education at Marian University in Indianapolis and a master's degree in education and history at Xavier University in Cincinnati.

During her 77 years as a member of the Sisters

of St. Francis, Sister Marie Camille ministered in Catholic schools and parish liturgical music for 46 years in Indiana, Missouri and Ohio. She later served at *St. Anthony Messenger* in Cincinnati for 13 years before retiring to the motherhouse.

In the archdiocese, Sister Marie Camille served at St. Mary School in North Vernon from 1952-53, St. Louis School in Batesville from 1953-54 and in Indianapolis at the former Holy Trinity School from 1954-58 and St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) School from 1963-66.

She is survived by her brothers, Herbert and Robert Schmaltz.

Memorial gifts may be sent to the Sisters of St. Francis, P.O. Box 100, Oldenburg, IN 47036-0100. †

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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:

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

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



Left, Marianhill Father José Ferney Aragón Bríñez, parochial vicar of Holy Spirit Parish in Indianapolis, addresses the more than 100 women who attended the Intercultural Pastoral Institute's first congress for Spanish-speaking women on Dec. 9 at Holy Trinity Parish in Edinburgh. (Submitted photo)



Right, women taking part in the Intercultural Pastoral Institute's first congress for Spanish-speaking women on Dec. 9 at Holy Trinity Parish in Edinburgh listen to a speaker. (Submitted photo)

Congress for Spanish-speaking women in archdiocese addresses strength, dignity

Criterion staff report

Lucy Sanchez was glad she spent a recent Saturday with 100 other Spanish-speaking women growing in their lives of faith.

And she hopes a similar opportunity arises again soon.

"Attending the first conference for women in Spanish was a great blessing. In this gathering, Jesus gave me back the dignity that, as a woman, is often taken away," said Sanchez, a member of St. Lawrence Parish in Indianapolis. "I experienced a lovely embrace by Jesus with love. God has cleansed my wounds in many ways. He has set me free and comforted me to continue my daily life with dignity."

Sanchez was among the attendees who

took part in the archdiocese's Intercultural Pastoral Institute's (IPI) first congress for Spanish-speaking women as part of its extension program in southern Indiana.

On Dec. 9, Holy Trinity Parish in Edinburgh hosted 103 women from more than 15 parishes—mostly from south of Indianapolis—as they gathered for the event. A team of volunteers formed through the institute helped organize the conference.

Dr. Carmen Hernandez, IPI coordinator, and her volunteers admitted they did not think there would be such a demand. But the number of women who attended proved otherwise.

Speakers included Oscar Castellanos, director for the Initiative for Parish Renewal (*Renovación*) at Marian University in Indianapolis, and

Marianhill Father José Ferney Aragón Bríñez, parochial vicar of Holy Spirit Parish in Indianapolis. The theme of the gathering was from the Book of Proverbs: "She is clothed with strength and dignity" (Prv 31:25).

Other priests in attendance helped participants receive the sacrament of reconciliation, and two women psychologists led a panel discussion. The conference also included Mass and the opportunity for women to take part in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

According to Hernandez, the joy and motivation of being able to continue experiencing events like this was evident in all the women. Some are hopeful and advocating for more opportunities like this one that IPI offered, she added.

Sanchez is one of them.

"We needed something like this. A lot of times, Hispanic women have been left out by the system and institutions for many years," said Sanchez, who is a graduate of IPI. "I am thrilled and grateful to each of the organizers and preachers who have brought light, hope and courage to my life through this conference."

"I pray to God that another conference for women will be scheduled soon, and that I will be able to invite other women who I know are desperate to find Jesus the way I encountered him through this event."

(For more information on the Intercultural Pastoral Institute and its programs, contact Dr. Carmen Hernandez, IPI coordinator, at 317-261-3381 or e-mail chernandez@archindy.org.) †

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Employment

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The Executive Director is the chief administrative officer of the Indiana Catholic Conference and as a registered lobbyist serves as spokesperson for the five Roman Catholic Bishops in Indiana. The Executive Director also serves as the liaison to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, members of Federal and State legislatures, Executive and Administrative offices, and multiple statewide organizations.

Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC) is the statewide coordinating body for the five Roman Catholic Dioceses in Indiana. Its basic purpose is to serve the spiritual, moral and material well-being of the people of the state.

Candidates must be practicing Roman Catholics with an in-depth knowledge of the faith and Catholic social teachings. Excellent oral and written communication skills along with demonstrated analytical and organizational ability are required. An advanced degree (or equivalent experience) in one or more of the following related fields is preferred: theology, political or social sciences, philosophy, or education. Previous employment or volunteer experience in the Catholic Church, ideally involving administration, is preferred.

Please e-mail a cover letter, resume, and list of references by February 5, 2024, to:

Andrea Wunnenberg
Director, Human Resources
Archdiocese of Indianapolis
1400 N. Meridian St.
Indianapolis, IN 46202
E-mail: awunnenberg@archindy.org

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Late Pope Benedict remembered on first anniversary of his death

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—As an expression of ongoing affection and gratitude for the late Pope Benedict XVI, Pope Francis led tens of thousands of people in St. Peter’s Square in a round of applause for his predecessor on the first anniversary of his death.



Pope Benedict XVI

“A year ago, Pope Benedict XVI concluded his earthly journey after having served the Church with love and wisdom,” Pope Francis told an estimated 20,000 people gathered in the square for the midday recitation of the *Angelus* prayer on Dec. 31.

Pope Benedict, who led the Church from 2005 to 2013, died on Dec. 31, 2022, at the age of 95.

“We feel so much affection, gratitude and admiration for him,” the pope said. “From heaven, he blesses and accompanies us.”

Before the *Angelus*, Archbishop Georg Gänswein, Pope Benedict’s former personal secretary, presided over a memorial Mass at the Altar of the Chair in St. Peter’s Basilica. German Cardinal Gerhard Müller and Swiss Cardinal Kurt Koch, prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity, concelebrated the liturgy.

In his homily, the archbishop shared some of Pope Benedict’s meditations on the readings for the day’s feast, the feast of the Holy Family. Several times, his voice broke with emotion remembering the pope he lived with and served.

Looking at how prayer was an essential part of the life of Mary and Joseph, Archbishop Gänswein quoted Pope

Benedict’s last *Angelus* address, just days before his resignation went into effect, when he explained:

“The Lord is calling me ‘to scale the mountain,’ to devote myself even more to prayer and meditation. But this does not mean abandoning the Church; indeed, if God asks me this, it is precisely so that I may continue to serve her with the same dedication and the same love with which I have tried to do so until now, but in a way more suited to my age and strength.”

In the same way, the archbishop said, prayer marks the rhythm of the life of the Church, “which is the great family of God.”

As the retired pope aged, he said, his life—with a growing intensity and interiority—became more focused on prayer.

Born Joseph Ratzinger, he tried to model his life on



Archbishop Georg Gänswein, former secretary to Pope Benedict XVI, blesses with holy water the late pope’s tomb in the grotto of St. Peter’s Basilica on the first anniversary of his death on Dec. 31, 2023. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

St. Joseph, the archbishop said. It could be seen in his intimacy with the Lord and with the people around him, “relationships distinguished by great courtesy, humility and simplicity.” †

CROWE

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they were not overwhelmed by them,” Pope Francis said at the canonization Mass. “For them, God was more powerful; faith was more powerful—faith in Jesus Christ the Redeemer of man and the Lord of history; the mercy of God, shown by those five wounds, was more powerful; and more powerful too was the closeness of Mary our Mother.” This year is the perfect time to grow in devotion to these two saints who

made such an impact on the Church.

A new jubilee year

Finally, the start of the 2025 ordinary jubilee year, a time of great grace for the church, will begin on Dec. 24, with the opening of the Holy Door at St. Peter’s Basilica. Pope Francis has asked that Catholics worldwide prepare for the jubilee year by studying the documents of the Second Vatican Council, especially its four constitutions. The pope has also asked that Catholics enter into a year of preparatory prayer in 2024.

To that end, forthcoming from the Dicastery for Evangelization will be an “in-depth series” called “Notes on Prayer” that will promote “the centrality of prayer, personal and communal,” according to Archbishop Rino Fisichella, pro-prefect for the dicastery.

We might be facing a contentious election season this year, but we can never forget how much we have to look forward to. May your 2024 be filled with joy.

(Gretchen R. Crowe is the editor-in-chief of OSV News.) †

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soul, someone who has never been, who will change the course of human history. All the details of that life matter, so we give witness to each day, each gift—pencil to paper, fingers to keys.

“Here’s what happened,” we write. And we mean, “Thank you.”

(Christina Capecchi is a freelance writer from Inver Grove Heights, Minn.) †



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