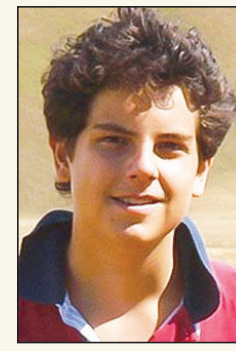




The

Criterion

Serving the Church in Central and Southern Indiana Since 1960



'Millennial' saint

Pope recognizes second miracle for Blessed Carlo Acutis, page 14.

CriterionOnline.com

May 31, 2024

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Father Sengole Thomas Gnanaraj baptizes 15-year-old Aubrey Bihl during the Easter Vigil Mass on March 31 at Holy Family Church in Richmond, one of three churches comprising St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in east central Indiana. To her left is her sponsor and uncle, Mark Bihl, and behind the baptismal font is Deacon James Miller, who helped Aubrey on her path to Catholicism. Assisting Father Gnanaraj is altar server Kenny Gihozo. (Submitted photo by Dr. Sam Krutz)

After Easter Vigil, Richmond teen wants to 'tell everyone I'm Catholic'

By Natalie Hoefler

It was 17th-century scientist and philosopher Blaise Pascal, a devout French Catholic, who wrote that each person's heart has a God-shaped hole that only God can fill.

His words apply quite literally to Aubrey Bihl. Born with ventricular septal defect—a hole in the heart—the now healthy 15-year-old is close to the Lord.

"When I pray, I like to just talk to God because I feel like he's my best friend," says the soon-to-be sophomore at

Seton Catholic High School in Richmond.

There was one time—during the fall of 2022—when Aubrey was angry with God. As with most "besties," the friendship not only endured but was strengthened—and God filled the hole in her heart with a call to the Catholic faith.

Aubrey was welcomed into the full communion of the Church during the Easter Vigil on March 31 at Holy Family Church, one of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish's three campuses in Richmond.

Vicky Roosa calls Aubrey "the real meal deal."

See RICHMOND, page 7

Welcome, new Catholics, pages 8-9.

'All gifts from God': Crowds, connection, conversion mark pilgrimage's first week

(OSV News)—In their first week, pilgrims on the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage have faced blisters, a busted toe and thunderstorms,

but those "hiccups" along the routes are "all gifts from God," said Jack Krebs, a perpetual pilgrim on the pilgrimage's St. Junipero Serra Route.



Jack Krebs

As the pilgrims make their way to Indianapolis with the Eucharist, Krebs said

he is amazed at the number of people showing up for processions or adoration. In San Francisco, where the Serra Route launched on May 18, an estimated 4,000 people walked in a eucharistic procession over the Golden Gate Bridge following Mass on May 19.

Krebs has witnessed "the excitement that the people are showing for the Eucharist," he said during a May 22 media conference, "and I really do trust that it is having a bigger impact on their hearts."

On May 18-19, Krebs and 22 other young adults chosen to be perpetual pilgrims, along with seven seminarians and a rotating cadre of chaplains, began the pilgrimage in four groups from Brownsville, Texas; New Haven, Conn.; northern Minnesota; and San Francisco.

During the next eight weeks, they are journeying—often by foot but always with the Eucharist—to Indianapolis, where the first National Eucharistic Congress in 83 years takes place on July 17-21.

The pilgrimage and the congress are highlights of the National Eucharistic Revival, a three-year initiative the U.S. bishops launched in 2022 to inspire deeper love for and understanding of

See PILGRIMAGE, page 3

Bishop Bruté College Seminary sees new leadership as anniversary approaches

By Sean Gallagher

Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary in Indianapolis will have a new team of priests leading it when it marks the 20th anniversary of its founding later this year.

Father Andrew Syberg will be the seminary's new rector after having served on its formation staff since 2017 and as vice rector for the past three years. He will succeed Father Joseph Moriarty, who began ministry as Bishop Bruté's rector in 2016.

Father Peter Marshall will be Bishop Bruté's new vice rector, while continuing

to serve as pastor of St. Jude Parish in Indianapolis.

And Father C. Ryan McCarthy will be the seminary's new spiritual director

while continuing to minister as pastor of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish in Indianapolis.

These three priests take up their new ministries at Bishop Bruté on May 31.

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson values the witness that Father Moriarty gave in his ministry at the seminary and that its three new leaders will give there.

"What all four of these priests bring to their roles of formation, education and pastoral ministry is a very Christ-centered focus on holiness and mission

in service to the people of God," he said. "It is their witness as much as or more than anything they might say that leaves a lasting impression on the young men entrusted to their care and leadership in preparation to ordained priesthood."

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis has sponsored Bishop Bruté since its beginning in 2004. Dioceses across the Midwest send college

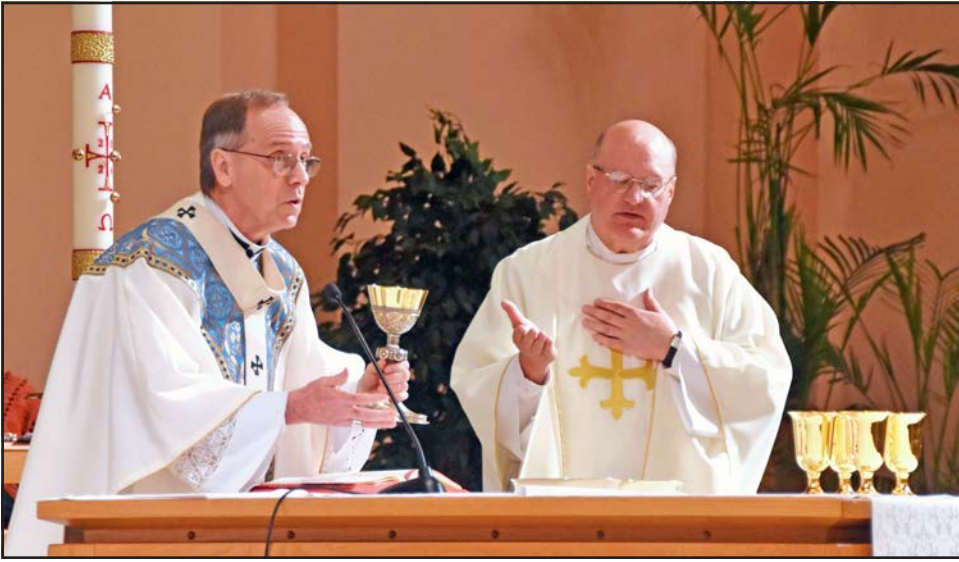
See BRUTÉ, page 15



Fr. Andrew Syberg



Fr. Peter Marshall



Msgr. William F. Stumpf, archdiocesan vicar general, right, joins Archbishop Charles C. Thompson in praying the eucharistic prayer at a Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis on May 9 as part of the annual Circle of Giving event. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)

UCA and CCF donations ‘make a difference’ in Church’s ability to serve

By Natalie Hoefler

Members of 126 parishes in 11 deaneries perform charitable works and bring the good news of Christ to the 39 counties that comprise the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

But some efforts are beyond the scope of what one parish or deanery can offer—deacon and priest formation, Catholic Charities, college campus ministry and more.

Donations to the United Catholic Appeal (UCA) and endowments established with the Catholic Community Foundation (CCF) enable the archdiocese to provide such ministries and to ensure they continue far into the future.

The annual Circle of Giving event celebrates the generosity of UCA and CCF donors.

This year’s event on May 9 at the Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center in Indianapolis highlighted the ways in which those donations help seminarians and priests.

The evening began across the street at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral with a Mass celebrated by Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, who noted that all efforts of the Church stem from the Eucharist.

‘We are not sent out alone’

The Eucharist is “Jesus, still with us, to assure us that he is with us, that we’re not sent out alone” on the mission to share the good news, the archbishop said in his homily. “We do this together as a diocese. We do all that we do as one body of Christ.”

Each member of that body has gifts, talents, treasure and “ways of participating in that mission and continuing to hold up and increase the Catholic presence, the Catholic witness, the Catholic mission that’s nearly 200 years old” in central and southern Indiana, the archbishop continued, noting the archdiocese recently celebrated its 190th anniversary.

“And we carry on that mission of good news, striving to give our witness in the

mission to transform, remembering that we allow Christ to be at the center of our lives, the Spirit to work through us and, ultimately, we lead the rest to God.”

The witness of each Catholic is essential to that mission, Archbishop Thompson said.

Priests are essential, too, uniquely carrying on Christ’s presence in the world through the sacraments.

A video shown during the event highlighted how UCA and CCF funds help in nurturing priestly vocations, forming seminarians and supporting priests in retirement.

‘It’s not just me getting these benefits’

The archdiocese offers several events for young men considering a call to the priesthood. One example is Bishop Bruté Days, a summer vocations camp for middle school and high school boys.

“I never met a seminarian in my life until I was 13, 14 years old, and it’s like I saw an older, better version of myself,” said Samuel Hansen in the video. He is now a seminarian at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad. “There’s this thing that clicked, and it was like, ‘Yeah, I see myself here.’”

Castle Night is another opportunity held several times through the academic year at Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary in Indianapolis.

“They’re an opportunity [for young men] to get to know seminarians, to bring high school men and seminarians together,” Father Eric Augenstein, archdiocesan director of seminarians, explained in the video. “They pray together, they eat meals together, they might go out and play basketball or play soccer.”

“The best thing about these Castle Nights is getting young men and seminarians together so that they can see that, ‘Yeah, I can do this.’”

The video noted some expenses of seminarian formation, including a cost of about \$300,000 per seminarian for

See DONATIONS, page 10



Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

May 31–June 8, 2024

May 31 – 10 a.m.

Pre-ordination brunch with transitional deacons, Indianapolis

June 1 – 10 a.m.

Priesthood ordinations at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis

June 2 – 1:30 p.m.

Mass and graduation at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton High School, Richmond

June 4 – 2 p.m.

Virtual National Eucharistic Congress board of directors meeting

June 4 – 6 p.m.

Mass for Intercultural Certification for Spiritual Direction and Leadership Program at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, Indianapolis

June 5 – 2 p.m.

Class interviews by propaedeutic seminarians at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

June 6 – 10 a.m.

Leadership Team meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

June 6 – 11 a.m.

Virtual USCCB Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis meeting

June 6 – 7 p.m.

Confirmation Mass for youths of St. Lawrence Parish, Indianapolis, at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral

June 8 – 4:30 p.m.

100th Anniversary Mass at Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, Terre Haute

Breakout sessions and special experiences still open at National Eucharistic Congress

Criterion staff report

Afternoon breakout sessions are offered on days two, three and four during the National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis on July 17-21.

Some sessions have filled up. But, as of *The Criterion* going to press this week, there are still 21 sessions to choose from.

Some of the sessions still open include:

- How to answer fundamentalist attacks on the Eucharist, presented by Catholic Answers staff apologist Trent Horn;
- Incarnating the Eucharist, presented by Father Leo Patalinghug;
- Transforming the world through the Eucharist and evangelization, presented by several EWTN hosts;
- A biblical walk through the Mass, presented by Dr. Edward Sri;
- A men’s session on Jesus as the icon of manhood, presented by Exodus 90;
- The intersection of faith and business, presented by Legatus;
- Defending the pro-life position by Live Action founder and president Lila Rose;
- Parish vocation ministries as a solution to the vocations crisis, presented by The Serra Clubs of the United States;
- A Catholic approach to gender dysphoria, presented by Jason Evert;
- Breaking free from post-Christian influence, presented by Msgr. James Shea, president of the University of Mary in Bismarck, N.D.;
- And many more.

To register for the National Eucharistic Congress, go to eucharisticcongress.org. Members of the archdiocese can receive a 20% discount on five-day passes by entering the code **Indy2024** when registering. †



NATIONAL EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS WEEKLY UPDATE

Official Appointment

Effective June 23, 2024

Deacon James Miller, permanent deacon to St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

Parish, Richmond, granted permission to retire from active diaconate ministry.

(This appointment is from the office of the Most Rev. Charles C. Thompson, Archbishop of Indianapolis.) †



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PILGRIMAGE

continued from page 1

Jesus' real presence in the Eucharist.

In California, Serra Route pilgrims began in San Francisco at the Mission Dolores Basilica, one of the missions established in the 1700s by the route's patron, the Spanish Franciscan missionary priest Junipero Serra. After the milestone of crossing the Golden Gate Bridge, they continued their pilgrimage on May 20-24 in the Diocese of Sacramento, Calif.—the state's capital—and its adjacent river were named for the Blessed Sacrament.

On May 23, the Serra Route pilgrims visited Folsom Prison; this portion of their journey has included several boat processions down the river and will end with a boat procession across Lake Tahoe into the Diocese of Reno, Nev.

Pilgrims on its Marian Route began at the Mississippi River's headwaters in the Diocese of Crookston, Minn., and continued through the state in the Diocese of Duluth and into the Diocese of St. Cloud, before spending May 24-31 in the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, where they joined a 5-mile procession down a historic St. Paul avenue on May 27.

For the first four days, they were accompanied by Crookston Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens, who led the development of the national congress and pilgrimage while serving as the chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis from 2020-2023, and who is now board chairman of National Eucharistic Congress, Inc., the organization created to oversee the congress.

On the St. Elizabeth Seton Route, which began in the Diocese of Hartford, Conn., pilgrims took a boat on May 19 to the Diocese of Bridgeport. On May 22, they entered the Archdiocese of

New York, where they joined Auxiliary Bishop Edmund J. Whalen for a bilingual Mass in English and Spanish, followed by a holy hour that led into all-night adoration.

On May 26, they processed from St. Patrick's Cathedral through Manhattan to the Brooklyn Bridge for Benediction before continuing into the Diocese of Brooklyn.

At St. Cyril and Methodius Oratory on Bridgeport's East Side, where the pilgrims stopped on a procession route, Canon Francis Xavier Altieri told the *Fairfield County Catholic*, the Diocese of Bridgeport's monthly newspaper, that "in a world that's very indifferent or even just ignorant of the faith, a public procession like this is a good opportunity also to share the faith."

"It's important for the Catholics of Bridgeport," the oratory's rector, a member of the Institute of Christ the King Sovereign Priest, added. "But whether they know it or not, it's also very important for the non-Catholics of Bridgeport."

Pilgrims on the St. Juan Diego Route spent May 19-22 in the Diocese of Brownsville, leaving after a closing Mass with Bishop Daniel E. Flores at the beloved Basilica of Our Lady of San Juan del Valle-National Shrine in San Juan, Texas. They spent May 22-27 in the Diocese of Corpus Christi, Texas, which, like Sacramento, is named for the Eucharist—"Corpus Christi" is Latin for "the body of Christ."

At a May 19 Mass, Bishop Flores—a board member of National Eucharistic Congress, Inc., and its USCCB liaison—talked about St. John's vision of the celestial city "where the Lamb is on his throne" in the Book of Revelation, and said that the Church's mission is to go to that city.

"What we do as people today is gather around the throne of the Lamb, which is the altar of sacrifice," Bishop Flores

said. "It helps us understand why it is important for us Catholics to have the Mass—because God is preparing us, because without this we become disoriented."

Shayla Elm, one of the Juan Diego Route perpetual pilgrims who is originally from Minot, N.D., and currently lives in Denver, Colo., noted that Brownsville's 10-mile procession had a local flair, with lively expressions of personal faith and Texas hospitality, as they followed the Eucharist in a monstrance on an altar affixed to an open-air roofed trailer hauled by a white pickup truck.

"It was very much Brownsville's pilgrimage today," she said. "It was just really beautiful to see how personal the Lord is with the people here." As she and the other pilgrims journey from the south to Indianapolis, Elm said she hoped that every city they go through embraces the pilgrimage as their own.

On all routes, the perpetual pilgrims are collecting prayer intentions, asking people at each stop to share them in writing or via a website at tinyurl.com/NEP-prayers.

Pilgrims said they were already getting glimpses into the pilgrimage's impact. On the Seton Route, perpetual pilgrim Natalie Garza said a policeman who assisted them in the Diocese of Bridgeport told them that the experience has inspired him to bring his family back to church.



Crookston, Minn., Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens and pilgrims process in a 12-mile walk from Laporte to Walker, Minn., along the Paul Bunyan State Trail during the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage on May 20. (OSV News photo/Courtney Meyer)

For her, the tremendous amount of time with Jesus concealed under the appearance of bread has prompted reflection on "the profundity and mystery that it is to say that we eat God," she said while in Greenwich, Conn.

"I find myself staring at him in what looks like bread, though it is actually him, and marveling at how outrageous the claim is that we can eat God—this idea that the God of the universe doesn't even just become creation ... but something that was created by creation," Garza said. "That is the thing that God uses as his vehicle, so this is the idea—that God himself becomes food and we eat him—[that] is remarkable to me."

The pilgrims hope that that kind of wonder and reverence spreads to the people who encounter the Eucharist during the pilgrimage, even those who don't understand that the Eucharist is Jesus' body, blood, soul and divinity.

"It's big," Krebs said of the pilgrimage. "And lives are going to be changed." †

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Editorial



Raymundo Valdem, second from left, and Mosmary Bañuelos from the University of Texas at Rio Grande Valley pray as Bishop Daniel E. Flores leads the Pentecost Mass at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Brownsville, Texas, on May 19.

(OSV News photo/Tom McCarthy)

The obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and holy days

“You shall attend Mass on Sundays and on holy days of obligation and remain free from work or activity that could impede the sanctification of such days.” (First precept of the Church, *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church*)

This weekend, we celebrate the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (*Corpus Christi*).

This year’s *Corpus Christi* celebration is happening during a three-year revival of devotion to the holy Eucharist endorsed by the Catholic bishops of the United States as a means of helping Catholics in our country find unity and renewal through a personal encounter with Jesus Christ.

This popular feast also takes on special significance because we are only weeks away from the National Eucharistic Congress, which will draw tens of thousands of pilgrims to Indianapolis on July 17–21.

One of the reasons for the National Eucharistic Revival is the significant decline in Sunday Mass attendance throughout our country. According to research published by the Pew Research Center (www.pewresearch.org), “about four-in-ten U.S. Catholics [39%] say they attend religious services at least once a week, and an additional 45% say they do so once or twice a month or a few times a year. Roughly one-in-eight Catholics say they attend religious services less than once a year, and 5% say they never attend Mass.” This is far from the Church’s requirement as described in the *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

The first precept (law or commandment) of the Catholic Church is to attend Mass on Sunday and holy days of obligation, and to keep the Lord’s Day holy by avoiding work or other activities that could prevent us from recognizing the sacredness of this time.

The Sunday eucharistic celebration, which may begin with an anticipated Mass on Saturday evening, is at the heart of the Church’s life. Sunday is that special day when we celebrate the Lord’s passion, death and resurrection until he comes again. It is here that we are fed with the bread of life. It is here that we prepare ourselves for discipleship and service during the coming week. If we fail to worship God on the Lord’s Day,

we betray our baptismal promises and we neglect our responsibilities as disciples and as stewards of the mysteries of God.

Too many of us have forgotten how serious this obligation is and how important it is to our identity as Catholics.

The precepts of the Church speak to Catholic identity. They provide a framework for answering the question: What is expected of me as a Catholic in good standing? In fact, these precepts are the *minimum* that is expected of us, and we are called to do much more in order to grow in holiness and live our faith in ways that are truly vibrant. But we have to begin somewhere, and we need some indication or warning sign when our practice of the faith becomes substandard.

As a result, it’s important to ask ourselves: Have we allowed our observance of the Lord’s Day to become just one option among possible weekend activities? Have we forgotten who we are (our Catholic identity) or who we are called to be as faithful disciples of Jesus Christ?

If we answered “yes” and have neglected our Sunday obligation, we have been sorely missed. Let’s return to Mass this *Corpus Christi* Sunday. Our fellow Catholics need us to help strengthen their/our identity as members of God’s family. They will welcome us back with great joy because our presence helps make the Lord’s Day holy for everyone.

Mass attendance is not the only requirement for being a good Catholic, but it is the first and most basic precept or law of the Church. This first precept makes it clear that attendance at Mass on Sundays and keeping the Lord’s Day holy are not an option or an ideal. They are a basic requirement. If we follow this precept faithfully, God’s blessings will sustain us in our efforts to live our faith more fully.

The National Eucharistic Revival is designed to invite us to a deeper, richer experience of the holy Eucharist. The Church wants us all to move beyond the “obligation” to attend Mass on Sundays and holy days to a fervent desire to participate “fully, consciously and actively” in the Eucharist.

This *Corpus Christi*, let’s make our obligation to attend the Sunday Eucharist something we do with enthusiasm and great joy.

—Daniel Conway

Reflection/Sean Gallagher

Agonized racer shows wisdom beyond his years in the Indy 500

At the end of the 108th running of the Indianapolis 500 on May 26, racer Pato O’Ward sat dejected for a long time in



his race car, his head lowered. After finally climbing out of his car and taking off his helmet, O’Ward poured a bottle of water over his head in physical relief after driving hard for 500 miles.

He would much rather have had it been the victor’s bottle of milk in his hand.

But for the third year in a row, O’Ward saw victory before him—only for it to fall out of his grasp at the end of the race.

In 2022, he raced side by side with the winner going into the final lap, but wasn’t able to complete the pass. Last year, with eight laps to go and leading, O’Ward was passed on a restart and crashed in turn 3 while making a hard charge to get back to the front.

This year, O’Ward passed leader Josef Newgarden going into the last lap. Racing down the back stretch, O’Ward swerved up and down, doing all he could to hold off Newgarden, but to no avail. The winner of last year’s race took back the lead for good in turn 3.

An agonized O’Ward told an interviewer after the race, “It’s just so painful when you put so much into it and then [end up] two corners short.”

The interviewer then asked, “It’s this place, isn’t it?” acknowledging the challenge of winning at autosport’s most revered racecourse. O’Ward agreed, adding, “It owes me nothing.”

In saying this, the 25-year-old Mexican driver showed wisdom beyond his years. Many young people (and older people, for that matter) filled with talent too often think they’re entitled to end up on top.

Each of us yearns deeply in our hearts for an ultimate, never-ending victory in this life, whatever it might be.

Some people, like Newgarden, get a taste

of it. Others, as O’Ward painfully knows, do not. In any case, it’s not promised to anyone, and even the fleeting triumphs we experience in this life are only a shadow of the eternal victory that is promised for us in heaven.

The Letter the Hebrews calls us to live in the reality that, in this life, “we have no lasting city,” and instead encourages us to “seek the one that is to come” in heaven (Heb 13:14).

At only 25, O’Ward may yet hoist the Borg Warner Trophy in Victory Lane after winning a future Indy 500. But, again showing some wisdom, he’s not taking that for granted.

“It’s always a heartbreak when you’re so close and especially when it’s not the first time. You just don’t know how many opportunities you’ll have,” he told the interviewer.

Whatever the future has in store for O’Ward, he found some consolation in the adulation of the 350,000 fans who filled the Indianapolis Motor Speedway on Sunday.

O’Ward said he could hear them cheering for him over the roar of his car’s engine as he took the lead at the start of the last lap.

“I love them. They’ve really made Indianapolis a home for me.”

Indianapolis is certainly not the eternal city that is to come. But O’Ward caught a glimpse of it in the support of thousands of race fans at the Speedway.

Whatever victories or defeats we experience in this life—and probably it’ll be a mixture of both—let us keep our eyes focused steadfastly on the never-ending triumph of sharing God’s eternal life and love in heaven.

And let’s be filled with hope. For, with God’s ever-present grace and mercy, we have been given everything we need for a victory that infinitely transcends drinking milk after winning the Indy 500.

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



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson celebrates Mass on May 26 at a trackside garage at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. Assisting him is Father Joseph Feltz, pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in New Albany and a volunteer chaplain for IndyCar Ministry. Josef Newgarden won the 108th running of the Indianapolis 500 later that day. It was his second consecutive victory in the race. (Submitted photo by Charles Schisla)

ARCHBISHOP/ARZOBISPO CHARLES C. THOMPSON



Christ the Cornerstone

As Mary did, let us live to praise God and serve others

“When Mary reaches Elizabeth’s house, an event takes place that no artist could ever portray with the beauty and the intensity with which it took place. The interior light of the Holy Spirit enfolds their persons. And Elizabeth, enlightened from on high, exclaims: Blessed are you among women.” (Pope Benedict XVI)

The publication date for this column is Friday, May 31, the feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is only right that the month of May, which is dedicated to this beautiful woman, the mother of our Lord, should conclude with a story that illustrates her role as the first missionary disciple of her Son, Jesus.

St. Luke tells us in today’s Gospel reading (Lk 1:39-56) that once Mary had accepted the angel’s message from God informing her that she was to become the mother of our Lord, she left at once to visit her cousin Elizabeth:

Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the infant leaped in her

womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, “Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled.” (Lk 1:39-45)

No one would have blamed Mary if she had stayed home, taking care of herself in anticipation of the birth of her Son.

But Mary was not concerned about herself. She trusted that God would provide for her. So, she set her own comfort aside and traveled to “the hill country” (Lk 1:39) where Elizabeth lived with her husband, Zechariah.

Mary’s trip from Nazareth to the town in Judah can be seen as the first Christian missionary journey. Its purpose was to give comfort and assistance to an elderly relative who was expecting her first child. But its effect was to announce the presence of the Incarnate Word of God to Elizabeth and to her unborn child John, who

would be the first herald of Jesus as “the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world” (Jn 1:29).

Mary carried the Son of God in her womb, but she boldly proclaimed him by her presence and by her selfless care and concern for Elizabeth.

In response to Elizabeth’s enthusiastic greeting and her acknowledgment that Mary is indeed “blessed among women” (Lk 1:42), Mary sang the canticle that is now repeated every day in the Church’s evening prayer:

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant. From this day all generations will call me blessed: the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name.

He has mercy on those who fear him in every generation. He has shown the strength of his arm, he has scattered the proud in their conceit. He has cast down the mighty from their thrones and has lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. He has come to the help of his servant Israel for he has remembered his promise of mercy, the promise he made to our fathers, to

Abraham and his children forever. (Lk 1:46-55)

Mary’s words are fully integrated with her actions. Her entire life gives witness to the Christian virtues outlined by St. Paul in today’s optional first reading:

Let love be sincere; hate what is evil, hold on to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; anticipate one another in showing honor. Do not grow slack in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, endure in affliction, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the holy ones, exercise hospitality. (Rom 12:9-13)

Mary lives to praise God and to serve others. She willingly accepts the intense suffering that comes with her role as a missionary disciple. And she believes with all her heart that “what was spoken to her by the Lord” (Lk 1:45) would be fulfilled.

As we conclude this month dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, let’s “rejoice in hope” with her. And let’s ask her to accompany us and to help us respond generously to the Lord’s call to each of us to be faithful missionary disciples of her divine Son. †



Cristo, la piedra angular

Al igual que María, vivamos para alabar a Dios y servir a los demás

“Cuando María llega a casa de Elisabet, se produce un acontecimiento que ningún artista podría retratar jamás con la belleza y la intensidad con la que ocurrió. La luz interior del Espíritu Santo envuelve sus personas y Elisabet, iluminada desde las alturas, exclama: Bendita seas entre las mujeres.” (Papa Benedicto XVI)

La fecha de publicación de esta columna es el viernes 31 de mayo, la festividad de la Natividad de la Santísima Virgen María. Es justo que el mes de mayo, dedicado a esta hermosa mujer, la madre de nuestro Señor, concluya con una historia que ilustra su papel como primera discípula misionera de su Hijo, Jesús.

En la lectura del Evangelio de hoy (Lc 1:39-56), san Lucas nos cuenta que, una vez que María hubo aceptado el mensaje del ángel de Dios que le informaba de que iba a ser la madre de nuestro Señor, partió de inmediato a visitar a su prima Elisabet:

María fue de prisa a una ciudad de Judá que estaba en las montañas. Al entrar en la casa de Zacarías, saludó a Elisabet. Y sucedió que, al oír Elisabet el saludo de María, la criatura saltó en su vientre y Elisabet recibió la plenitud del Espíritu Santo. Entonces ella

exclamó a voz en cuello: “¡Bendita eres tú entre las mujeres, y bendito es el fruto de tu vientre! ¿Cómo pudo sucederme que la madre de mi Señor venga a visitarme? ¡Tan pronto como escuché tu saludo, la criatura saltó de alegría en mi vientre! ¡Dichosa tú, que has creído, porque se cumplirá lo que el Señor te ha anunciado!” (Lc 1:39-45)

Nadie habría culpado a María si se hubiera quedado en casa, cuidándose en previsión del nacimiento de su Hijo.

Pero María no estaba preocupada por sí misma ya que confiaba en que Dios le proveería. Así que dejó a un lado su propia comodidad y viajó a “las montañas” (Lc 1:39) donde vivía Elisabet con su marido, Zacarías.

El viaje de María desde Nazaret a la ciudad de Judá puede considerarse como el primer viaje misionero cristiano puesto que su objetivo era dar consuelo y asistencia a una pariente anciana que esperaba su primer hijo. Pero su efecto fue anunciar la presencia del Verbo de Dios encarnado a Elisabet y a su hijo no nacido, Juan, que sería el primer heraldo de Jesús como “el Cordero de Dios que quita el pecado del mundo” (Jn 1:29).

María llevaba al Hijo de Dios en su vientre, pero lo proclamó audazmente

con su presencia y con su atención abnegada y preocupación por su prima.

En respuesta al efusivo saludo de Elisabet y a su reconocimiento de que María es realmente “bendita entre las mujeres” (Lc 1:42), María entonó el cántico que ahora se repite todos los días en la oración vespertina de la Iglesia:

Mi alma glorifica al Señor, y mi espíritu se regocija en Dios mi Salvador, porque se ha dignado fijarse en su humilde sierva. Desde ahora me llamarán dichosa todas las generaciones, porque el Poderoso ha hecho grandes cosas por mí. ¡Santo es su nombre!

De generación en generación se extiende su misericordia a los que le temen. Hizo proezas con su brazo; desbarató las intrigas de los soberbios. De sus tronos derrocó a los poderosos, mientras que ha exaltado a los humildes. A los hambrientos los colmó de bienes, y a los ricos los despidió con las manos vacías. Acudió en ayuda de su siervo Israel y, cumpliendo su promesa a nuestros padres, mostró su misericordia a Abraham y a su descendencia para siempre. (Lc 1:46-55)

Las palabras de María están

plenamente integradas con sus acciones y toda su vida es testimonio de las virtudes cristianas esbozadas por san Pablo en la primera lectura optativa de hoy:

Nuestro amor debe ser sincero. Aborrezcamos lo malo y sigamos lo bueno. Amémonos unos a otros con amor fraternal; respetemos y mostremos deferencia hacia los demás. Si algo demanda diligencia, no seamos perezosos; sirvamos al Señor con espíritu ferviente. Gocémonos en la esperanza, soportemos el sufrimiento, seamos constantes en la oración. Ayudemos a los hermanos necesitados. Practiquemos la hospitalidad. (Rm 12:9-13)

María vive para alabar a Dios y servir a los demás. Acepta de buen grado el intenso sufrimiento que conlleva su papel de discípula misionera y cree de todo corazón que “se cumplirá lo que el Señor te ha anunciado” (Lc 1:45).

Al concluir este mes dedicado a la Santísima Virgen María, “alegrémonos en la esperanza” con ella y pidámosle que nos acompañe y nos ayude a responder con generosidad al llamado que el Señor nos hace a cada uno de nosotros a ser fieles discípulos misioneros de su divino Hijo. †

Whiteland family has ‘amazing experience’ in journey to Catholic faith

By Natalie Hoefler

WHITELAND—When the McClains experienced Mass for the first time together on Jan. 8, 2023, it was the feast of the Epiphany of the Lord.

That Mass at SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Church in Greenwood marked a series of life-changing epiphanies for the four family members:

For Jessie, who had “always been on a search for religious truth”—and found the truth of God’s mercy in the Church.

For John, a baptized Catholic who had been away from the Church for decades and realized, “I’m just coming home.”

For their son Steven, 17, whose depression was lifted “like a huge weight off my shoulders.”

And for their daughter Jewel, 15, who says that first Mass “just felt right.”

Between January—when Jessie and Steven received the sacraments of Communion and confirmation—and the Easter Vigil Mass on March 29—when Jewel was baptized and received her first Communion and was confirmed along with her dad—the four McClains were each welcomed into the full communion of the Church at SS. Francis and Clare.

“This is home, the destination,” Jessie says of the family’s Catholic faith.

Fear ‘that I was going to hell’

John and Jessie met in February of 2005 under sad circumstances. His younger brother, a friend of Jessie’s, was killed in a car accident.

“I met her in the hospital, and she had given me her phone number to give to my mom,” John recalls. “I didn’t think anything of it.”

Two weeks after the funeral, Jessie and a friend stopped by John’s apartment “to make sure I was OK. And it was just talk, talk, talk,” he says of his connection with Jessie.

The two were married less than four months later on June 3, just after Jessie’s 18th birthday.

At the time, John was not going to church.

“I was baptized Catholic as an infant, then my mom moved away from the Church,” he says. “We went to a bunch of different churches,” including a now non-existent one in Bargersville that was “set up like a Catholic church with



The McClain family members pose with Father Stephen Giannini, pastor of SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Parish in Greenwood, and extended family members after the Easter Vigil Mass at SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Church on March 31. At far left is John’s grandmother Phyllis Long, his mother Deborah Woodard, Jessie McClain, John McClain, Jewel McClain, Father Giannini, Steven McClain and John’s stepfather Mike Woodard. (Submitted photo)

priests and altar boys, but it wasn’t really Catholic.”

Jessie was “kind of in a church, kind of not” when the two wed.

“After we got married, we went [to that church] once, and then we never went again,” she says.

Jessie was raised attending a few non-denominational Christian churches that shared the same doctrine: fear.

“It literally destroyed my entire mindset, mentality, emotionally, everything,” she

says. “I’d wake up in the middle of the night screaming and crying with anxiety and panic attacks that I was going to hell.”

John recalls her state in the early years of their marriage.

“She’d always ask me if she could be forgiven,” he says. “That was her big thing. She’d say, ‘I don’t think I can be forgiven of my sins.’ And it weighed on her a lot of years.”

For eight years, the couple did not go to church. But at home, “They still taught

us about Jesus on their own,” Jewel says. “So, we always believed that he was our Savior.”

The family eventually joined a Christian mega-church in Greenwood. But it never felt like home, says John. “They had greeters, but they never recognized you. They’d say, ‘Are you new here? Is this your first time?’ And we’d be like, ‘We’ve gone here for 10 years.’”

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RICHMOND

continued from page 1

“She is an amazing, faith-filled young woman” and “wise beyond her years,” says the parish’s director of religious education. “She loves the Lord.”

‘The baptism never happened’

At just 4-and-a-half months, Aubrey had successful open-heart surgery for her birth defect, allowing her to live a normal life.

That life included faith. With a Catholic dad and a Protestant mom, the family—including Aubrey’s younger brother—alternated each weekend between St. Elizabeth Ann Seton and a non-denominational Christian church.

Despite her parents’ active faith, Aubrey was never baptized. Around the age of 10, she decided to join her mom’s church and started attending baptism preparation classes.

“Then COVID hit, and the baptism never happened,” she says. “After that, I never thought about getting baptized much.”

But Aubrey did realize one thing about her earlier decision to join her mom’s church: “I never felt joyful. It was just something I was just doing.”

Meanwhile, Aubrey was a busy girl.

“My dad said a year after my [open-heart] surgery, the doctor said I could live an active life,” she notes.

And so she did. Tennis, cross country, basketball, 4-H—Aubrey made sure her surgeon’s words were fulfilled.

Then came the “fall” of 2022.

“During the cross country season—I think it was September—I tore my meniscus in my knee and had to have surgery,” Aubrey recalls.

She wasn’t able to run. But it was through the unplanned pause of recuperation that Aubrey began walking the path to Catholicism.

‘I got a lot closer to God’

“When I hurt my knee, I was kind of angry at God,” Aubrey admits. “I didn’t know why it happened, and I was really upset.”

But true to Roosa’s “wise beyond her years” description, the young teen moved from angry to open.

“I realized that [the injury] happened for a reason,” says Aubrey. “God put me through it for some reason, but I didn’t know why. I started praying a lot and felt like I got a lot closer to God.”

“Then I started thinking about what church I wanted to get baptized in. I prayed about it a lot, and when people brought up the Catholic Church, I just felt like, ‘That feels right.’”

God gave Aubrey special people who inspired her on her journey.

There was the classmate who “seemed so happy” after she became Catholic through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA).

There was the algebra teacher who “opened every class with a Bible verse, and we’d pray,” she says. “Sometimes he talked about saints. I liked how he did that, and so I talked to him.”

It was also that year that Aubrey’s religion teacher was on maternity leave. Deacon James Miller, a staff member of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, served as her substitute. “I felt like him teaching the class brought me closer to God, and so I asked him questions and how to join the Catholic Church.”

Aubrey started RCIA classes at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in September of 2023.

‘I couldn’t believe how happy I was!’

Around that same time—less than a year after tearing her meniscus—Aubrey sustained a concussion.

“In gym class last August, we were were passing a volleyball around,” she recalls. “A boy spiked it, and it hit me hard in the face. I was on a concussion protocol

for seven months. I was cleared in March, but I still take meds and get headaches.”

Unlike with her injury a year earlier, there was no anger with God this time.

“There were no complaints or woe-is-me’s,” says Roosa. “She just picked up her cross and carried it.”

Having been raised around Catholicism, Aubrey says she was familiar with much of the information taught in the RCIA classes.

For instance, she says, “I knew the Eucharist was the body and blood of Christ.”

“But in RCIA, it was presented in a way that I was like, ‘Whoa! God really gave his Son, and we’re really taking in his body and his blood!’”

She also appreciated those on the RCIA journey with her.

“I liked that there were a bunch of people there with the same goal of growing closer to God and joining the Church,” says Aubrey. “I liked the community. We were all going toward the same goal.”

That goal came to fruition at the Easter Vigil Mass at Holy Family Church on March 31, when Aubrey was baptized, confirmed and received her first Communion.

“When I was baptized, I felt so happy, like, ‘Whoa! I did it!’ I was so happy!” she gushes.

She speaks about receiving the Eucharist with the same exuberance.

“It was joyful, it was amazing—I was overwhelmed with emotions,” Aubrey says. “I was so happy—I couldn’t believe how happy I was! I went back to the pew and just started crying. I think that’s the most I ever cried. I’ve never cried when I was happy before, but I couldn’t stop.”

“I still get so happy when I get to go to Communion!” Aubrey says after the Easter Vigil Mass she “felt like I needed to go tell everyone that I’m Catholic!”

The young woman’s enthusiasm reflects the words of her the confirmation saint she chose, St. Catherine of Siena: “Be who God meant you to be, and you will set the world on fire.” †

DONATIONS

continued from page 2

formation at Bishop Bruté, nearby Marian University] and Saint Meinrad. Thanks to UCA and CCF donations, the archdiocese assumes that cost.

“I think back to myself, and I was blessed,” said Msgr. William F. Stumpf, archdiocesan vicar general and pastor of St. Matthew the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis, in the video. He has been a priest of the archdiocese for 39 years. “I didn’t have to pay for my seminary education. That was provided for me by the generous donors of the archdiocese, and actually that support continues throughout your priesthood.”

He went on to note there are “all sorts of support in place [for priests] because people have been generous.

“And it’s not just me getting these benefits. They’re only there to be shared,



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson smiles with Father Paul Landwerlen, who celebrates his 70th anniversary as a priest this year, during the archdiocese’s annual Circle of Giving event.

and if I have opportunities to be the best I can be, then that’s going to make a difference, I hope, in the lives of the people I serve.”

For many priests, that service continues long after they retire.

“You never stop being a priest. You can’t stop being who you are,” Msgr. Stumpf noted in the video. “[Retirement] just changes how you serve and how you give.”

Father Todd Reibe, who retired in 2022, chimed in, saying with a joyful smile that he calls himself “recycled instead of retired.

“Helping the younger priests now is a great joy. I know when I was in active ministry, the retired priests were such a gift when you needed that extra break [or] when something came up and they could fill in, which was such a gift. Now I’m able to do that for the younger priests, and I’m delighted.”

Retired priests also “have more time for people—administering spiritual direction and confession—which is great,” Father Reibe added.

He said he is grateful for all who contribute to the UCA, which “makes it possible for us to continue to live and minister. And so, I would say thank you to everyone that contributes in any way.”

‘Something bigger than one person can do’

When it comes to giving to the Church beyond the parish, Jolinda Moore told those gathered for the Circle of Giving event that, “Just like the seasons of the year, so are the seasons of generosity,” starting “as annual contributions and [moving] into more planned contributions.”

Moore, executive director of the archdiocesan Office of Stewardship and Development, used her family as an example.

“When my husband and I first started out, we both came out of school with college debt,” she said. “We would start



Attendees watch a video about the impact of United Catholic Appeal donations and Catholic Community Foundation endowments on archdiocesan seminarians and priests during the archdiocese’s annual Circle of Giving event on May 9 at the Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center in Indianapolis. (Photos by Natalie Hoefler)

with a set amount and begin giving. ... As we saw the impact of our giving, we decide to give a bit more ...”

Her parents are now at the other end of the circle, said Moore, entering “a season of determining how their hard work and savings will one day, hopefully many years from now, provide a legacy that reflects and supports the ministries they care about.”

Before offering his closing remarks for the evening, Archbishop Thompson recognized a special guest at the event—Father Paul Landwerlen, who marks his 70th anniversary to the priesthood this year.

“Father Paul, I’m grateful for the model you are of the priesthood,” he said.

The archbishop then offered “thanks to all for being faithful stewards and for your financial gifts, as well as your time and talent, that support the many ministries of our local Church here in the central and southern Indiana. ... It takes a great deal of resources to operate our Catholic Charities, provide

our Catholic education for children and to educate our seminarians.”

He noted that the archdiocese “couldn’t do this without the annual gifts that you and so many others make through the United Catholic Appeal, as well as the long-term gifts that are made through the Catholic Community Foundation and planned giving.”

As Father Augenstein noted in the video, “A lot of people doing little parts of giving are able to provide something that is much bigger than any one person can do.”

(To view the video on how the archdiocese supports vocations, seminarian formation and priests, go to bit.ly/CelebratingVocations. For more information on or to donate to the United Catholic Appeal, go to unitedcatholicappeal.org. For more information on planned giving through Catholic Community Foundation, go to storybook.link/CatholicCommunityFoundation.) †

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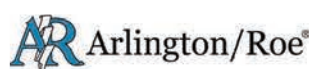
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SIMPLY CATHOLIC

Meet Jesus of the Last Supper here and now in eucharistic adoration

By F. Douglas Kneibert

(OSV News)—Suppose you were told that Jesus wanted to meet with you personally for an hour at your parish. Who would say no to such an invitation?

Me, for one. When eucharistic adoration was inaugurated at our parish several years ago, I politely declined to be an adorer, as I didn't feel the devotion suited me.

I had come into the Catholic Church late in life and with a lot to learn in a short time, including the finer points of eucharistic theology. While I believed in the Real Presence, it was mainly an intellectual assent. Its profound implications had yet to settle in my soul.

As an evangelical Protestant, I had been quick to quote John 3:7—"You must be born again"—yet skipped right over the astounding things Jesus said to his disciples only three chapters later about eating his body and drinking his blood. But Jesus made the blind see, and that included spiritual blindness as I was about to learn.

Mainly to get some very persistent women off my back, I finally consented to put in my hour every Thursday in the chapel that had been set aside for eucharistic adoration.

At first, it was just another hour in the day for me, with wandering thoughts and frequent checks of my watch. But as the weeks went by, I gradually began to use my holy hour more productively. I prayed. I read the Bible. I meditated. And, in time, I began to adore.

The list of notable Catholics devoted to eucharistic adoration is a long one. Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen saw it essentially as an act of obedience: "The only time our Lord asked the Apostles for anything was the night he went into agony. Not for activity did he plead, but for an hour of companionship."

Jesus instituted the holy Eucharist with his disciples in the upper room. I had often thought of the privilege enjoyed by those who were there that night. Then, while I was praying in the chapel one Thursday, it struck me: There is no difference. The Jesus who was in the upper room is the same Jesus who is in the chapel with me.

The Church makes no distinction. He is fully present—body, blood, soul and divinity—in the monstrance. Yes, he is in his eucharistic disguise, but he is one and the same Jesus, nevertheless.

As Pope Pius XII put it, "A holy hour of adoration testifies to the fact that the Jesus who died on the cross, is present in the Eucharist and reigns in heaven are identical."

This understanding constitutes the very heart of the Catholic faith, the distinctive dogma that sets us apart. It should be the treasure of every Catholic. Sadly, it is not. According to opinion surveys, which can vary widely, Catholic belief in the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist is on the decline, with an average of only around half or fewer holding it to be true.

Much has been written about "cafeteria Catholics" who go down the line and pick and choose what to believe and what to pass up. But not believing in the



Father Patrick Beidelman lifts a monstrance holding the Blessed Sacrament in benediction at the end of a June 19, 2022, holy hour at St. John the Evangelist Church in Indianapolis. The holy hour was the culmination of the kickoff of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis' participation in the three-year National Eucharistic Revival. (File photo by Sean Gallagher)

Real Presence isn't the spiritual equivalent of choosing the apple pie over the cherry. The late Jesuit Father John Hardon, writing on the centrality of the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, stated: "If we believe this, we are Catholic. If we do not, we are not, no matter what people may think we are."

If we lack physical strength or stamina, we can join a gym and begin working out. For those Catholics whose faith is weak in this area, I would recommend spending some time with Jesus in eucharistic adoration, even if you are among the doubters. Look upon it as a spiritual gym. I discovered that you can be theologically challenged and still reap great spiritual benefits from simply being in his presence one hour a week. Jesus meets us where we are. If we persist, he will deepen our understanding.

Two virtues that are especially needed by those beginning eucharistic adoration are humility and patience. Set aside all pride and preconceived notions. You are in the presence of the living Lord; conduct yourself accordingly.

The blessings I have received from eucharistic adoration are many and varied. Some I can define, and others remain more elusive, such as the growing sense that I am changing for the better in some important

respects. I began to perceive this change only after I became involved in adoration.

A century ago, Pope Benedict XV called eucharistic adoration "the queen of all devotions," a view shared by numerous popes and saints. However, the practice largely fell into disuse in the years immediately following the Second Vatican Council. No one is more closely identified with its revival than St. John Paul II. Here is just a sampling of his observations on the subject:

—"Jesus himself is calling you to spend one special, specific hour with him each week."

—"The love of God and neighbor, the greatest commandment, is expressed in, and the fruit of, eucharistic worship."

—"Priestly, religious and missionary vocations will stem from your holy hour."

The personal spiritual blessings that proceed from eucharistic adoration are rich and abundant.

Do you wish to deepen your prayer life? The same Jesus who taught his disciples how to pray is there to help you as well, and what better place to contemplate Jesus—the highest form of prayer—than in his presence?

The same holds true for Scripture reading. Jesus is the living Word, and a finer tutor could not be imagined, as the two men who walked the road to Emmaus with him testified.

Praying the rosary, meditating or simply resting in the quiet of his presence, eucharistic adoration enhances them all. Jesus also is there to hear your petitions, but we should guard against making it all about ourselves. Keep the focus on him and you can't go wrong.

Father Hardon saw this practice as the centerpiece of devotion, saying that we "should build the whole edifice of our spiritual life around adoration."

Of course, one does not need to be engaged in sacramental adoration to have access to Jesus. He is always available to those who come to him in faith. But the Church teaches in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* that the manifestation of Jesus in the Eucharist is "unique" and "in the fullest sense," and therefore worthy of special devotion (#1374).

Just as his disciples were transformed by being in Jesus' presence, it's impossible to spend an hour with him in eucharistic adoration and leave the same person we were when we walked in.

So, consider giving it a try. If your parish has adoration, sign up to take a time slot. If the devotion is not in place, look into what can be done to obtain it. You have absolutely nothing to lose and a treasure trove of spiritual riches to gain.

I will give St. Teresa of Calcutta, a daily recipient of the Eucharist, the final word: "Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is the best time you will spend on Earth."

(F. Douglas Kneibert writes from Missouri.) †



Bishop Edward J. Burns of Dallas carries a monstrance in a procession during an Aug. 2, 2023, gathering for U.S. pilgrims at World Youth Day at Quintas das Conchas e dos Lilases Park in Lisbon, Portugal. (OSV News photo/Bob Roller)

Faith and Family/Sean Gallagher

Facing intimidation with an unwavering faith as our forbearers did

A century ago, the Ku Klux Klan controlled the levers of political power in Indiana. The racist, anti-immigrant and anti-Catholic organization claimed hundreds of thousands of Hoosier members.



In May 1924, it sought to flex its social muscle by staging a large rally and parade in South Bend with its large Catholic population and its famous Catholic university.

But the students of the University of Notre Dame would have none of it. About 500 of them gathered in downtown South Bend, taking the white hoods off of the Klan members, meeting others arriving in trains and buses, grabbing their regalia.

The Klan's attempt to intimidate the Catholics of South Bend quickly failed.

A year later, the Klan organization across the state went quickly downhill after its charismatic leader, D.C. Stephenson, was convicted of rape and murder.

My paternal grandfather, Victor Gallagher, graduated from high school in 1924. Born into a strong Catholic farming family in rural Johnson County, he wanted

nothing more than to be a farmer himself. Being a student at Notre Dame was never something he aspired to.

But Grandpa had something of the fight of the Fighting Irish students who stood up to the Klan in 1924. I remember him telling me of fist fights he got into in high school with "Ku Kluxers."

And he remained strong in his faith in the face of Klan members burning a cross in a field across the road from his family's farm as he came of age in the early 1920s.

By the time I knew Grandpa 50 years after the height of the Klan's power in Indiana, Hoosier Catholics had achieved great success in society. They contributed much to the common good, holding political office, leading businesses and serving in many professions.

Growing up at that time, I never knew the social pressures against Catholics in the state that Grandpa faced. But I'm glad that he shared his experiences with me, experiences that I've told to my five sons.

The stories about Grandpa that I tell them go far beyond fist fights, though. They include how he prayed the rosary with my dad as they worked together on their family farm and later taught me to pray it when I was a child.

How he went to confession each week simply because, in his words, "I'm a sinner." How he anonymously helped a poor family have a good Christmas and taught my father, a child at the time, a lesson in Christian charity that stuck with him for the rest of his life.

I pray that I can live up in some small way to the example Grandpa set for me. I want to do this not only for the good of my own soul, but for my boys as well.

As good as Grandpa's stories are that they hear with their ears, my sons will benefit more from the example of faith they see in me with their eyes.

Being strengthened in their own faith by examples from my wife Cindy, me, our parents and grandparents will be even more important for my sons as they come of age.

For while the Klan may no longer be the force it was a century ago in Indiana, social pressure against living the faith publicly is on the rise again, if in different ways than it was in 1924. Then, it was related to anti-immigrant sentiment in society. Now, it has as more to do with a wide range of the Church's moral beliefs.

I pray that my sons and the Catholics of their generation will remain, like Grandpa, steadfast in their faith in the storms to come. †

Investing with Faith/Kimberly Pohovey

CCF's mission is to provide long-term financial health for organizations

"Like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house ... " (1 Pt 2:5). Peter's words are meant to encourage the whole Church. They



assure us that God is building something wonderful, and that the divine architect's blueprint includes all of us. In God's plan, there is a place for everyone. In his hands, each of us is

a precious and beautiful "living stone."

Once we are fully engaged in the project, however, the image Jesus uses is instructive. "Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and buffeted the house. But it did not collapse; it had been set solidly on rock" (Mt 7: 24-25). In other words, if we want to build a structure that serves its purpose and endures, we must be both faithful and wise.

That has been the mission of the Catholic Community Foundation (CCF) from the beginning. Since 1987, it has

worked to provide and ensure rock-solid and long-term financial stability for charitable, religious, and educational organizations within the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

Faith is our foundation

We know that what we are building isn't just—or even primarily—ours. God has entrusted his work, his mission of salvation, to the Church as a whole. As Church, we aren't just another human institution. We are the body of Christ. Everything we do belongs to him because everything we are depends on him. For CCF, that means managing the temporal resources we are entrusted with in a way that completely aligns with the faith that has been handed on to us through the Catholic Church.

We adhere to an investment policy and follow the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' guidelines for maximizing return on investments consistent with Catholic values and sound investment practices. We also work with an organization that constantly monitors the ethical practices of the companies in which we invest. In keeping with the moral position of the Church, for example, we refuse

ownership of funds that would devalue or violate human life at any stage from conception until natural death.

While some might see this as a limitation, experience has shown us that it's a blessing. As disciples of Christ, we are called to follow Jesus with integrity and fidelity. Part of CCF's task is to discover and develop new ways to fully integrate our Christian values with our financial realities.

Prudence is a virtue

Bringing faith into our money matters doesn't mean settling for less. CCF has a long track record of success because our staff has the experience and expertise smart investing requires. We currently manage more than 600 endowment and donor-advised funds, and our current assets total more than \$240 million.

According to the Wilmington Trust's 2021 report, CCF is ranked among the top 10 Catholic foundations in the U.S. Prudence and love are not at odds. Our motivation is Christ's mission of mercy and compassion here in southern and central Indiana. Through appreciation and income, the returns we generate achieve an annualized total return greater than the rate of inflation

plus any spending. This is how our assets remain adequately protected against inflation and how our goal to help sustain long-term financial stability for all our archdiocesan parishes, schools and ministries is attained.

We're happy to help

CCF's work serves people in three distinct groups: 1) generous donors; 2) administrators of our parishes, schools and ministries; and 3) professional advisors throughout the archdiocese. We offer assistance and advice to all who want to be part of sustaining the Church's mission.

For more information, please contact us at ccf@archindy.org or 317-236-1482.

(Kimberly Pohovey is the director of major and planned gifts for the archdiocese. Tax or legal information provided herein is not intended as tax or legal advice. Always consult with your legal, tax or financial advisors before implementing any gift plan. For more information on the Catholic Community Foundation, visit www.archindy.org/CCF, e-mail ccf@archindy.org, or call 317-236-1482.) †

FAMILY

continued from page 7

'Like God was talking directly to me'

Two things happened in late 2022 that led the McClains out of the mega-church and toward Catholicism.

First was an incident with a fellow churchgoer that "deeply affected" Jessie and caused John to leave the faith community entirely.

Second was Jessie's "search for religious truth."

"She had this big collection of rosaries that she loved to have around," John recalls, a remnant of her great-grandmother's Catholic faith, even though she didn't know the prayers. "And she started wearing a head cover to church. And I was like, 'You know what? You're very Catholic in your approach to religion.' She said, 'What do you mean?' and I told her she just had to go to a Mass to see."

He was surprised when she agreed, because "her family history is very anti-Catholic."

John didn't know that Catholicism was already on Jessie's radar, beyond her collection of rosaries. For several years, she had been following the late Jessica Hannah on Instagram, a Catholic whose posts addressed faith through her journey with cancer.

"She talked a lot about pain and suffering, and how it's not a punishment," says Jessie. "With the doctrine I grew up with, pain and suffering were punishments from God, and it was your fault."

"So, when John mentioned the Catholic Church, I kind of just jumped in."

So it was that the family went to Mass at SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi on Jan. 8, 2023.

"I was really surprised by the kids' reactions" after the Mass, says John. "They were super-excited. I thought they wouldn't like the kneeling and repetition, but they loved it."

As for his wife, John says she left the Mass "in tears."

Jessie tears up even as she recalls the experience.

"For the past few years I had prayed all the time, 'God, just please show me the truth,'" she says.

"The homily was like God was talking directly to me. It addressed everything that I went through since childhood. It just shattered all those decades of nightmares and fear and anxiety. I've been completely free of that ever since."

Jessie says she left that Mass with no doubt: "I finally found the truth. I'm never looking back—I'm Catholic."

'Nothing but a positive experience'

Through the parish's Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) program, Jessie became "so impressed" with the Church's history and apostolic succession.

"It was amazing to me that all of the bishops have hands laid on them going all the way back to the Jesus," she says. "He imposed his hands on Peter, who imposed his hands on others, and that just keeps going on and on until now."

And from the start, Jessie appreciated the Catholic approach to the Eucharist.

Communion at their Christian church "was just a little cup of grape juice and a little cracker," says Jessie. "And it would turn into a social time, and people would stand around talking. It didn't mean anything."

Receiving her first Communion "was everything I'd been waiting for," she says. "To think—Jesus' body and blood.

There is something so beautiful and intimate about it."

In RCIA, Jewel was drawn in by the stories of the saints.

"I'd never heard anything about them before," she says, choosing St. Cecelia as her confirmation saint "because I like music and the arts."

John, who chose St. Joseph, calls returning to the Church "freeing."

"I just felt like I'd been out wandering around," he says. "And when I finally came back home and was welcomed, it was really nice."

Jessie says perhaps the greatest impact of the journey was on their son.

Like Jessie, he struggled with fear and anxiety of condemnation by God, and that struggle led to depression.

"I was on my knees praying for him daily because I knew what he was feeling," she recalls. "God leading us to the Church was a lot for his sake, too. I've seen the biggest change in him this past year. There's so much hope and so much cheer."

The impact was almost instant for Steven.

"As soon as I walked in that first Mass, I felt every time I breathed, there was more and more weight lifted off my shoulders until it was just gone," he says.

His first sacrament of reconciliation had the same effect, leaving him feeling "really happy and joyful the whole day."

That journey from depression to joy made Steven's decision on a confirmation saint an easy one: St. Jude, a patron saint of hope.

"It's been an amazing experience for the whole family," says John. "Every one of us has had nothing but a positive experience." †

The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, *Corpus Christi* / Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, June 2, 2024

- Exodus 24:3-8
- Hebrews 9:11-15
- Mark 14:12-16, 22-26

Providing this feast day's first Mass reading is the Book of Exodus, the story of an event that occurred as the Hebrews made their way across the Sinai Peninsula in flight from Egypt and slavery.

To modern ears, the story may sound gruesome, giving the details as it does of the ritual sacrifice of a young bull. It was a long time ago, when the ritual slaying and sacrificing of animals were common.

For ancient Jewish religious ceremonies, these sacrifices had a message, the core of which is good even now to consider.

For example, the ceremony in this case required that the blood be sprinkled on the people. This gesture showed the thinking that life itself resided in a creature's blood. It is not difficult to understand how this notion originally arose. The ancient peoples had a limited knowledge of physiology, but they knew a creature would die if its blood stopped flowing; if enough blood escaped from the body due to hemorrhage, then death followed.

Offering the bull to acknowledge God's majesty made the bull holy. Its blood therefore was holy, and because of the sacrifice the blood was touched mysteriously by God's own life. By sprinkling this blood on the people, they in turn were touched by God in a special way.

From the earliest stages of revelation, God used processes and materials that people understood and could access to assist them in expressing themselves in their religious faith.

The Epistle to the Hebrews is one of the New Testament's most eloquent sources for knowledge about the person and mission of the Lord. This passage from this letter for this feast's second reading is no exception.

This particular reading stresses that Jesus is the perfect victim of sacrifice as well as the great high priest. The

sacrifice of bulls is no longer necessary. In its place is the sublime offering of the innocent Lamb of God, Jesus the Lord.

The three synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) report the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper by giving the actual words used by Jesus, "This is my body" and "This is my blood."

In this feast day's case, the reading is from St. Mark's Gospel. Before mentioning the meal itself, the Gospel says that Jesus sent two disciples into Jerusalem. He told them that they would see a man carrying a water jar. They should follow this man. The man will go to a house, Jesus said, whose owner the disciples should encounter and ask for a room in which the Lord and the disciples could gather to eat the Passover meal.

An interesting passage, it reveals that the Last Supper, and all that happened at it, were utterly within the plan of God. It was no ordinary meal. God prepared it to provide the means of human beings to unite with Jesus.

Reflection

Biblical scholars long have studied the words, "This is my body" and "This is my blood." Many Protestant scholars regard them as symbolic. Catholic scholars know them to be literal. Interpreting them literally was the way the early Church looked upon the words. Seeing them as merely symbolic came much later.

History is on the side of the Catholic interpretation. The early Christians were not far removed from the Last Supper itself.

The words are brief, direct and clear. Read them as they appear, as they were understood by the first followers of Christ. The bread and wine become the body and blood of Jesus.

The holy body and blood become part of the person who consumes them, just as the body absorbs any nourishment. The person who partakes in the Eucharist takes Christ into his being, body and soul.

Christ is God. Holy Communion literally unites us with God's life and strength. †



Daily Readings

Monday, June 3

St. Charles Lwanga and companions, martyrs
2 Peter 1:2-7
Psalm 91:1-2, 14-16
Mark 12:1-12

Tuesday, June 4

2 Peter 3:12-15a, 17-18
Psalm 90:2-4, 10, 14, 16
Mark 12:13-17

Wednesday, June 5

St. Boniface, bishop and martyr
2 Timothy 1:1-3, 6-12
Psalm 123:1-2
Mark 12:18-27

Thursday, June 6

St. Norbert, bishop
2 Timothy 2:8-15
Psalm 25:4-5, 8-10, 14
Mark 12:28-34

Friday, June 7

The Most Sacred Heart of Jesus
Hosea 11:1, 3-4, 8c-9
(Response) Isaiah 12:2-6
Ephesians 3:8-12, 14-19
John 19:31-37

Saturday, June 8

The Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary
2 Timothy 4:1-8
Psalm 71:8-9, 14-15b, 16-17, 22
Luke 2:41-51

Sunday, June 9

Tenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Genesis 3:9-15
Psalm 130:1-8
2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1
Mark 3:20-35

Question Corner/Jenna Marie Cooper

Catholics are to use a well-formed conscience in voting in elections

Q After the last presidential election, while in confession, I asked the priest a question and his response astounded me.



He said voting for a Democrat was a mortal sin because their political stance on abortion demands this. He went on to list all the party's dreadful practices he considered evil.

I always vote for the person, regardless of the candidate's party connection. I did not agree with my confessor and believe that our Church does not consider a party's stance as a reason for sin. I thought Church and state were not connected.

Am I wrong? I said I did vote for a Democrat and he continued to excoriate me for this action. I was granted absolution, but still did not feel comfortable with his reasoning. Please let me know how you think a Catholic should view this question. (Location withheld)

governments can often enact imprudent or even evil policies, there is a fundamental idea that all legitimate authority is ultimately granted by God and therefore ought to be respected.

In the United States, we have a foundational principle of religious freedom, which concretely manifests itself in what has been described as separation of Church and state. This means that the United States government is meant to be religiously neutral with no official state religion.

Yet, at the same time, Catholic legal philosophy recognized that the Church and the state often have shared goals and mutual stakes in certain aspects of civil life. Further, we believe that Catholics are not only called to remain in communion with the Church, but also to be good citizens and to take part in public life in a way appropriate to our own particular vocation and circumstances.

The upshot to this is that Catholics are called to vote according to their well-formed conscience so as to support the dignity of human life in all areas.

Thus, it would be wrong for a Catholic to vote for a pro-abortion politician specifically because of the politician's pro-abortion stance (and this would apply regardless of that politician's party affiliation).

Still, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' document "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship" acknowledges that "Catholics often face difficult choices about how to vote" (#34).

This same document goes on to observe that "there may be times when a Catholic who rejects a candidate's unacceptable position even on policies promoting an intrinsically evil act may reasonably decide to vote for that candidate for other morally grave reasons" (#35). But with the caveat: "Voting in this way would be permissible only for truly grave moral reasons, not to advance narrow interests or partisan preferences or to ignore a fundamental moral evil" (#35).

Voting for a particular Democrat who happened to be pro-life would clearly not be a sin, even if the majority of Democrats do tend to support abortion. And, on a case-by-case basis, it is morally permissible to vote for a pro-choice candidate if there are grave reasons to do so; for example, there may be no clear pro-life candidate, or, in conscience, you might discern that the pro-life candidate endorses policies that severely and unacceptably undermine human life and dignity in other areas.

(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

Light Your Candle

By John DeSantis

Light your candle—shine your life light
Light your candle—make the world bright
Light your candle—love each other more
Light your candle—give alms to the poor
Light your candle—support human rights
Light your candle—protect unborn life
Light your candle—assist a brother in need
Light your candle—do compassionate deeds
Light your candle—let your love be outpoured
Light your candle—pray constantly to the Lord
Light your candle—do these things and more
Light your candle—open heaven's door

(John DeSantis is a member of St. Pius X Parish in Indianapolis. Photo: A man lights a candle on June 12, 2018, at a shrine established for persecuted Christians in the Middle East at St. Michael the Archangel Church in New York City). (CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)



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.

ANDERSON, Mary Margaret, 83, St. John Paul II, Sellersburg, May 2. Mother of Rebecca, Bill and Ed Anderson. Sister of Irene Carlow, Sue Howard, Katy and Francis Conroy. Grandmother of two.

CABRERA, Jeffrey, 48, St. Mark the Evangelist, Indianapolis, May 3. Father of Selena, Ryan, Sheldon and Spencer Cabrera. Son of Luis and Amanda Cabrera. Brother of Diana Pero, Ken and Terry Cabrera. Grandfather of one.

COMSTOCK-CRANE, Janice (Runnebohm), 82, St. Vincent de Paul, Shelby County, May 5. Mother of Leigh Ann Mills, Aaron, Andrew, Matthew and Phillip Comstock. Sister of Margie Long, Nick and Steve Runnebohm. Grandmother of seven. Great-grandmother of 10.

DECALLIER, Patrick T., 83, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis, Jan. 5. Husband of Leonora Decallier. Brother of Donna Decallier. Uncle of several.

DENNING, Marcelline J., 83, St. Meinrad, St. Meinrad, April 20. Brother of Dorothy Fleck, Sara Heeke, Mille

Jones-Faulkenberg, Eileen Marks, Mary Ann Olinger and Albert Dennie. Uncle of several.

GETTELFINGER, Raymond L., 97, St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd County, May 4. Father of Barbara Beach, David, Dennis and Duane Gettefinger. Grandfather of four.

HORNBAACH, Cindy M., 69, All Saints, Dearborn County, May 7. Sister of Connie Combs, Dan, Dave, Joe, Ken, Ron and Tom Hornbach. Aunt and great-aunt of several.

KAHLE, Janice, 85, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Richmond, May 7. Wife of Don Kahle. Mother of Julie Morand and Cindi Sifers. Sister of Charles Gauker. Grandmother of six. Great-grandmother of five.

LARNER, Shirley A., 89, St. Mary, New Albany, April 30. Aunt and great-aunt of several.

MCDERMOTT, Glenn, 94, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Richmond, May 5. Father of Julie Marcum, Angie Parker, Kelley and Michael McDermott. Grandfather of seven. Great-grandfather of 13.

MOORE, Dana (Getz), 59, St. Luke the Evangelist, Indianapolis, May 2. Mother of Lily Hapak, Grace and Joe Moore. Daughter of Rose Getz. Sister of Shelly, Christopher and John Getz. Grandmother of one.

OFFETT, Freda J., 78, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis, March 24. Mother of Kimberly Anderson, David Hunter, Ralph Moore and Donald Offett, Jr. Grandmother of three. Great-grandmother of four.

PFEIFFER, Jr., William E., 96, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis, Nov. 28, 2023. Father of Anne Perkins, Jane Pressly, Bill and Joseph Pfeiffer. Grandfather of several.

POOLE, Monica, 97, St. Mary, Greensburg, May 7. Aunt and great-aunt of several.

POTOR, Sylvia A., 89, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis, March 14. Aunt and great-aunt of several.

PRESSEY, Madelyn A., 79, St. John Paul II, Sellersburg, April 1. Wife of Ronald Reimer. Mother of Brent and William Pressey.

RICHARDS, Loren E., 90, St. Mary, Rushville, May 5. Husband of Linda Richards. Father of Shelley Lamie, Christi Peach, Joyce Turner, Doug Lacefield, Anna Jo, Andy, Greg, Kenny, Ronnie and Stan Richards. Grandfather of 12. Great-grandfather of eight.

RICHLIN, William, 54, St. Meinrad, St. Meinrad, April 26. Husband of Denise Richlen. Father of Tessa De Smidt, Dana Lieble and Mason Richlen. Brother of Laura Pipp, Jim, John and Scott Richlen. Grandfather of five.

RIEHLE, Ruth J., 80, St. Louis, Batesville, April 4. Mother of Tammy Faulkinbury, Laura Taylor, Eric, Neal and Scott Riehle. Sister of Susie Huff, Betsy Lecher, Debbie Nobbe, Jo Ann Schoetmer, Milly Simmermeyer, Diane Wendell and James Effing. Grandmother of nine. Great-grandmother of two.

SANCHEZ, Emmanuel Apanco, 32, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis, Feb. 19. Son of Jacoba Sanchez.

SECKINGER, Loretta, 84, St. Boniface, Fulda, April 29. Mother of Doris Glenn, Kevin and Mark Seckinger. Sister of Maryetta Boehm, Albert and Leroy Berger. Grandmother of two. Great-grandmother of one.

SIMON, Janice E., 60, St. Maurice, Napoleon, May 4. Wife of Michael Simon. Mother of Paige, Tanaha and Blake Simon. Daughter of Eileen Wagner. Sister of



Rosaries for Adele

Rosaries grace the gravestone of Adele Brise on the grounds of the National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion in Champion, Wis. The Blessed Virgin Mary is believed to have appeared to Brise, who was born in Belgium in 1831, near the site in 1859. Brise's cause for canonization will be presented for consultation at the U.S. bishops' Spring Plenary Assembly in June. (OSV News photo/Sam Lucero)

Marlene Prickel, Jeff, Ken, Robert and Tom Wagner. Grandmother of two.

SIZEMORE, Ruth K., 93, St. Michael, Brookville, May 8. Wife of Lendon Sizemore. Mother of Nancy Benevengo, Bill and Scott Sizemore. Grandmother of two.

SMITH, David J., 70, St. Barnabas, Indianapolis, May 8. Husband of Mary Smith. Father of Andrew, David, Jeremy and Matt Smith. Grandfather of 11.

ST. PETERS, Donald W., 87, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis, April 24. Husband of Geraldine St. Peters. Father of

Donald, Douglas, Jeffrey and Stephen St. Peters. Brother of Darlene Watts, Danelle, Dale and Doug St. Peters. Grandfather of eight. Great-grandfather of three.

SWITZER, Ann Rose, 91, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis, March 11. Wife of Dan Switzer. †

Pope recognizes miracle needed for Church's first 'millennial' saint

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis formally recognized a miracle attributed to the intercession of Blessed Carlo Acutis, a 15-year-old Italian teenager whose birth in 1991 will make him the first "millennial" to become a saint.

In a meeting on May 23 with Cardinal Marcello Semeraro, prefect of the Dicastery for Saints' Causes, the pope signed decrees advancing the sainthood causes of Blessed Acutis, as well as one woman and six men.

The Vatican announced on May 23 that the pope had signed the decrees and that he would convene a consistory to set a date for the canonization of Acutis and other future saints: Blesseds Giuseppe Allamano;

Marie-Léonie Paradis of Québec, Canada; Elena Guerra; and eight Franciscan friars and three Maronite laymen who were martyred in Damascus, Syria, in 1860.

Blessed Acutis was born and baptized in London to Italian parents in 1991, but the family moved back to Milan, Italy, while he was still an infant.

After he started high school, he began to curate, create or design websites, including one for a local parish, for his Jesuit-run high school and for the Pontifical Academy "Cultorum Martyrum," according to the saints' dicastery. He also used his computer skills to create an online database of eucharistic miracles around the world.

He volunteered at a parish-run soup kitchen, helped the poor in his neighborhood, assisted children struggling with their homework, played saxophone, soccer and videogames, and loved making videos with his dogs and cats, according to carloacutis.com, the website dedicated to his cause for canonization.

"To always be close to Jesus, that's my life plan," he wrote when he was 7 years old.

He was devoted to Our Lady, praying the rosary every day, and to the Eucharist.

"The Eucharist is the highway to heaven," he wrote. When people sit in the sun, they become tan, "but when they sit before Eucharistic Jesus, they become saints."

When he was only 15, he was diagnosed with an aggressive form of leukemia and died on Oct. 12, 2006. He had said, "I'm happy to die because I've lived my life without wasting even a minute of it doing things that wouldn't have pleased God," according to carloacutis.com.

His mortal remains were moved to the municipal cemetery in Assisi in 2007 to fulfill his wish to be in the city of St. Francis. Then his remains were moved to the Shrine of the Renunciation at the Church of St. Mary Major in Assisi in 2019. He was buried wearing Nike

sneakers, black jeans and an athletic warmup jacket—clothes he was used to wearing every day.

In February 2020, the pope formally recognized a miracle attributed to Acutis' intercession and in October that year, the teen was beatified during a Mass at the Basilica of St. Francis. An estimated 117,000 pilgrims visited the teen's tomb in just the first year after his beatification, the Diocese of Assisi said the day before his feast day, Oct. 12, 2021.

The two miracles attributed to the intercession of the teen involved alleged miraculous recoveries for a young boy in Brazil in 2013 and a young woman in Florence in 2022.

The miracle Pope Francis recognized on May 23 that paves the way for the blessed's canonization involved a young woman who was born in Costa Rica in 2001 and moved to Florence in 2018 to study.

The woman fell from her bicycle at 4 a.m. on July 2, 2022, and suffered a serious head injury, according to the dicastery website. Even after emergency surgery removing part of her skull to reduce severe intracranial pressure, doctors warned her family she could die at any moment.

An associate of the young woman's mother began praying to Blessed Acutis the same day, and the mother went to Assisi and prayed at the blessed's tomb on July 8—the same day the young woman began to breathe on her own again. She slowly recovered basic mobility and a CT scan showed the hemorrhage was gone. After a period of rehabilitation therapy and a complete recovery, she and her mother visited his tomb on Sept. 2.

Pope Francis has urged young people to learn about Blessed Acutis, who "did a great deal of good things," despite his short life.

"Above all, he was impassioned by Jesus; and since he was very good at getting around on the internet, he used it in the service of the Gospel, spreading love for prayer, the witness of faith and charity toward others," the pope told young Italians on Jan. 29.

"Prayer, witness and charity" were the hallmarks of Blessed Acutis' life and should be a key part of the life of every Christian, he said. †

Online Lay Ministry Formation

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

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

For more information, please log on to www.archindy.org/layministry



REPORT SEXUAL MISCONDUCT NOW

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

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

Father Moriarty ends 26 years of ministry in vocations, priestly formation

By Sean Gallagher

When Father Joseph Moriarty was asked in 1998 to become the archdiocese's vocations director, he said it came as "a complete surprise."



Fr. Joseph Moriarty

"It was completely unexpected," Father Moriarty recalled in a recent interview with *The Criterion*. "I remember I said these words, 'I don't know what that work entails. But I know I love being a priest.'"

The ministry that came as a surprise in 1998 to Father Moriarty, then a priest for five years, continued for more than two decades, including 16 years of service in priestly formation in seminaries.

Now, 26 years later, Father Moriarty is stepping away from his official roles in promoting priestly vocations and in priestly formation.

He served as archdiocesan vocations

director from 1998-2005; on the formation staff of Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad from 2005-13, and on the formation staff at Bishop Bruté since 2013, including as its rector since 2016.

In reflecting on his quarter of a century of either promoting priestly vocations or serving in priestly formation, Father Moriarty looks back to the witness of his now deceased parents for the model of his approach to life in ordained ministry.

"Mom and Dad modeled for me in their 59 years of marriage, and I as their ninth child, that when the going gets tough, you don't get going. You pour yourself more into your vocation," Father Moriarty said. "It's strengthened that awareness that I help labor with God in something greater than myself. I feel a great duty to that."

When difficult times come in his life and ministry as a priest, he knows where to turn for help.

"You go to God in adoration and say, 'Here is my life. I'm not understanding, but I know this is an invitation to trust,'"

Father Moriarty said. "I love being a priest. Priesthood is the joy of my life. And I realize in the context of that, when I suffer, I will know where to go and that is to Christ in the Eucharist."

Father Moriarty recalled how he has sought on many occasions to pass on this insight to the seminarians he's helped form for the priesthood, referring to when they lay on the floor prostrate in prayer during ordination.

"Perfection is not what is required," he said. "It's fidelity. We give ourselves again and again and again to the promise that we've made."

"I say it often to the seminarians, 'Recall, men, that you lay on the floor only once. So, lay down your lives. Surrender to God and he will do everything for you.'"

Father Peter Marshall, who begins ministry on May 31 as Bishop Bruté's vice rector while continuing as pastor of St. Jude Parish in Indianapolis, answered the call to priestly life and ministry with the help of Father Moriarty.

"Over 20 years ago, Father Moriarty recruited me for the seminary when

he was vocations director for the archdiocese," said Father Marshall, who was ordained in 2009. "He continues to be a support, role model and friend for me. I am humbled to follow in his footsteps."

Similarly, Father Andrew Syberg, who succeeds Father Moriarty as Bishop Bruté's rector, benefited from his ministry in priestly formation.

"Father Joe was spiritual director at Saint Meinrad when I got there," said Father Syberg, who was ordained in 2015. "I'm going to miss Father Joe like crazy. We've lived together for seven years. He has such a good heart and a love for the guys [at the seminary]."

After stepping down as Bishop Bruté's rector, Father Moriarty will begin a sabbatical, the first he's experienced in 31 years of priestly life and ministry.

"There's been tremendous joy in my 26 years," Father Moriarty said. "It's the legacy of the men ordained. It's the legacy of the men who are faithful husbands. It's the legacy of men in spiritual direction all over the country. That's not my legacy, though. That's God's legacy through me to those people." †

BRUTÉ

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seminarians there in addition to those from the Church in central and southern Indiana.

This year, nine men who graduated from Bishop Bruté and went on to major seminary formation will be ordained priests for dioceses in Illinois, Indiana and Kentucky. Through its 20 years, 54 of the seminary's alumni have been ordained priests.

From its start, seminarians at Bishop Bruté have also been enrolled at nearby Marian University.

A few weeks before Father Syberg began his leadership of the seminary, he spoke with *The Criterion* about his experience in serving there since 2017 and how it's strengthened his hopes for the future of the archdiocese.

"The biggest thing has been and will continue to be working with the seminarians, seeing their love and devotion of the Church," he said. "We're in good shape. The guys coming down the way for the priesthood have a great devotion to the Lord. Their enthusiasm is infectious."

Father Syberg is also confident in the formation that Father Marshall and Father McCarthy can provide to the seminarians at Bishop Bruté.

"It's a big commitment by our archdiocese to the seminary," he said. "I'm very grateful that they're coming. They're both highly intelligent

and resourceful. They bring a lot of experience of being pastors."

Father Marshall also brings experience in priestly formation, serving as an adjunct spiritual director at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad from 2010-13 and at Bishop Bruté from 2018-24. He also served as Saint Meinrad's director of spiritual formation from 2013-19.

Father Marshall also earned a doctor of ministry in Catholic spirituality and spiritual formation at The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C.

"This experience and education has been a great foundation in working with seminarians over the years," he said. "I enjoy working with people, helping them to hear God's invitation to live more fully as disciples and to courageously follow their vocations."

Father McCarthy sees how his experience as pastor of parishes across central and southern Indiana, including for the last 11 years at Holy Rosary, will aid him in helping form young men for ordained ministry.



Fr. C. Ryan McCarthy

"I am hoping that my years of pastoral care in the parish and my experience in the confessional will allow me to give some very practical advice for young men hoping to discern priesthood," he said. "The practical

application of the truths of the faith to the lived-out lives of his people is the job of every pastor."

Father Marshall spoke of how St. Jude Parish, in his five years of leadership there, has had seminarians assisting in ministry on a regular basis.

"St. Jude has enthusiastically embraced our responsibility to assist in the formation of future priests," he said. "Our vocations committee is very active in promoting all vocations and has been a great support to me. I think that continuing as a pastor while working in the seminary allows me to offer our future priests a helpful perspective on the life they are preparing for."

Father Syberg said it will be good for the seminarians at Bishop Bruté to see that priests who serve on its formation staff also have other pastoral assignments in the archdiocese.

"This is part and parcel of the life as priests," he said. "You are going to be stretched and pushed. A lot of things are going to be asked of you. And that's OK. It's good for them to know even this early on [in their formation]."

Archbishop Thompson said Bishop Bruté is "a gift to our local Church," though one that still comes with "the challenges of staffing and finances."

"The formation of priests for service to the people of God is a serious

responsibility," he said. "Over the course of 20 years, several of our priests have been formed at Bruté Seminary and educated at Marian University. We are blessed to have both just down the same road from one another and, especially, with such a strong partnership and shared mission."

Father Marshall echoes the archbishop in speaking about the importance that Bishop Bruté now has in the life of the archdiocese.

"I truly believe that the presence and success of Bruté College Seminary is a sign of the vibrant faith life of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis," he said. "As a local Church, we have made a commitment to invest in the discernment and formation of young men who are serious about being Catholic and serious about listening for God's invitation to a deeper life with him. This commitment continues to bear great fruit in the Spirit as even those men who discern out of the seminary continue to live the life of prayer and discipleship that they learned at Bruté."

(For more information about Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary, including ways to support it, visit bishopsimonbrute.org. For more information on a vocation to the priesthood in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis visit HearGodsCall.com.) †

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