



The

Criterion

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Corrections Ministry

A call to help children who live in foster care in our Indiana communities, page 12.

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April 26, 2024

Vol. LXIV, No. 28 75¢



Caitlin Clark flashes a smile during a press conference on April 17 in Indianapolis, when she was introduced to the media as a new member of the Indiana Fever, the WNBA team she wanted to draft her. (Photo courtesy of NBAE/Getty Images)

As Caitlin Clark's incredible journey continues in Indiana at a feverish pace, family, faith and hard work guide her

By John Shaughnessy

As the girls' basketball coach at Dowling Catholic High School in Iowa, Kristin Meyer has continued to follow the incredible journey of one of her former players—Caitlin Clark.

In recent weeks, Meyer has seen how Clark used her creativity, fierce competitiveness, shooting prowess and trust in her teammates to lead the University of Iowa basketball team to the championship game of the NCAA's women tournament for the second straight year.

With pride and satisfaction, Meyer has also watched Clark's joy in being the first player selected in the WNBA's draft, by the Indiana Fever.

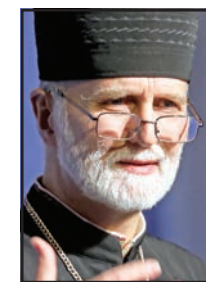
And Meyer laughed with people across the nation as the 22-year-old Clark quickly overcame her initial nervousness and showed perfect timing and poise in a comedy skit on "Saturday Night Live."

The high school coach also has viewed parts of Clark's first press conference as a Fever player, a press conference

See **CAITLIN CLARK**, page 7

'Power of prayer' behind passage of U.S. aid to Ukraine bill, say Ukrainian Catholics

(OSV News)—Ukrainian Catholics in the U.S. are breathing a sigh of relief and saying prayers of gratitude after a bill for aid to Ukraine cleared the House



Archbishop Borys A. Gudziak

of Representatives following months of delay, political infighting and even openly anti-Ukrainian sentiment among some lawmakers.

On April 20, the House approved \$61 billion in aid for Ukraine, part of a \$95 billion foreign aid package that includes assistance for Israel, Gaza, Taiwan and other U.S. allies in the Indo-Pacific region.

"Ukrainians are very grateful to people of goodwill in the global community, and in a special way to Americans who are in solidarity with [Ukrainians'] valiant struggle for God-given dignity," Metropolitan Archbishop Borys A. Gudziak of the Archeparchy of Philadelphia, head of Ukrainian Catholics in the U.S., told OSV News. "They're also very grateful to American Catholics, most of whom not only understand, but pray and help."

Archbishop Gudziak said, "Anything that keeps Russia from advancing in Ukraine is to be welcomed," since such support represents "a defense of life, liberty, and our freedom of conscience."

Those freedoms have come under intense persecution in areas of Ukraine occupied by Russian forces, whose attacks continue aggression launched in 2014 with the illegal annexation of Crimea and the fomenting of separatist factions in Ukraine's Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

Russia's invasion has been declared a genocide in two joint reports from the New Lines Institute and the Raoul Wallenberg Center for Human Rights.

See **UKRAINE**, page 8

The Fruitful Hollow offers Catholic resources to help bear cross of infertility

By Natalie Hoefler

We tend to remember dates of significance, of milestones, of moments that mark a turning point in life.

Lauren Allen remembers Jan. 21, 2021.

"I was driving, talking to God, angry about my infertility," says the Texan Catholic. "I prayed for God to take it away from me."

To her amazement, she received a response.

"God told me, 'Your cross is meant to be carried. There's a reason you have it,'" she recalls. "Then God hit me in the head with this idea. I wasn't trying to found anything, but that's how The Fruitful Hollow got started."

The Fruitful Hollow, with Allen as founder and director, is

See **INFERTILITY**, page 8

Lauren Allen poses with her husband Sean and their adopted sons Peyton (standing) and Mitchell in a recent family photo. (Submitted photo)



Reserve parking for National Eucharistic Congress now and save money

Criterion staff report

With tens of thousands of pilgrims in town for the National Eucharistic Congress (NEC) in Indianapolis on July 17-21 (as well as the Brickyard 400 NASCAR race at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway on July 21), it's highly recommended to reserve a parking spot now for the congress—and save money by doing so.

The NEC team has partnered with two major parking providers in the downtown Indianapolis area that have arranged special rates for those attending the congress. Parking passes are available to purchase for single days or for the entirety of the event.

Options include spaces for cars, trucks, large passenger vans, American Disabilities Act (ADA) vehicles, campers and buses.

Gate Ten Parking's outdoor lot accommodates all of the above. It is an open area immediately south of Lucas Oil Stadium and the Indiana Convention Center, locations where the majority of the NEC activities and Masses will take place. The lot offers free shuttle service to and from the convention center, continuously running two hours before the first event of the day until one hour after the last event of the day.

Parking passes range from \$25-\$525, depending on the type of vehicle and the number of days reserved.

Denison Parking is another option for cars and most trucks, with lots ranging from one block to a half-mile from the convention center and stadium. Some parking is outdoors, while other parking is in garages. One lot also accommodates ADA vehicles.

Prices range from \$10-\$40 per day, or \$50-\$196 for those attending the entire congress. The ADA lot costs \$35 per day or \$173 for five days.

Metered parking is also available downtown, but cannot be reserved in advance.

To reserve a parking space with Gate Ten Parking or Denison Parking for the congress, go to tinyurl.com/Parking4NEC. †



NATIONAL EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS WEEKLY UPDATE

A better world can't be built 'lying on the couch,' pope tells children

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Peace can spread and grow from “small seeds” like including someone who is left out of an activity, showing concern for someone who is struggling, picking up some litter and praying for God's help, Pope Francis told Italian schoolchildren.

“At a time still marked by war, I ask you to be artisans of peace,” the pope told some 6,000 Italian schoolchildren involved in the National Network of Schools of Peace, a civic education program designed to teach the children to care for themselves, their friends, their communities, the world and the environment.

During the gathering on April 19 in the Vatican audience hall, Pope Francis led the children in a moment of silent prayer for their peers in Ukraine and in Gaza.

“In a society still prisoner of a throwaway culture,” he told them, “I ask you to be protagonists of inclusion; in a world torn by global crises, I ask you to be builders of the future, so that our common home may become a place of fraternity.”

The pope drew the children's attention to the U.N. Summit of the Future, which

is scheduled for Sept. 22-23 in New York to draft a “Pact for the Future,” focused on promoting international cooperation and partnerships to ensure “a world that is safer, more peaceful, more just, more equal, more inclusive, more sustainable, and more prosperous.”

While government leaders and experts in a variety of fields obviously must get involved to make that hope a reality, the pope said, the pact will remain “just words on a page” without a commitment by all people of good will to take concrete steps aimed at changing harmful behavior and building communities and societies where everyone feels they are cared for and belong.

“This is a dream that requires being awake and not asleep,” he told the young people. The world can change for the better only when people are out in the world, “not lying on the couch,” using media to create connections and not just waste time, “and then—listen carefully—this kind of dream is realized by praying, that is, together with God, not by our strength alone.” †



Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

April 27–May 2, 2024

April 27 – 10 a.m.
Diaconal ordination of seminarian Liam Hosty at St. Barnabas Church, Indianapolis

April 27 – 5 p.m.
Confirmation Mass for youths of St. Pius X Parish, Indianapolis, at St. Pius X Church

April 28 – 10 a.m.
Disabilities Awareness Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis, followed by reception at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

April 29 – 5:30 p.m.
Echo, ACE and FOCUS Spring Gathering

April 30 – 9 a.m.
Judicatories Breakfast Gathering at the Archbishop's residence, Indianapolis

April 30 – Noon
Mass for Annual Catholic Center Employee Recognition Celebration at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral,

followed by lunch at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center

May 1 – 7 p.m.
Confirmation Mass for youths of Mary Queen of Peace Parish, Danville; St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower), St. Ann, St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Monica parishes, all in Indianapolis; and St. Thomas More Parish, Mooresville, at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral

May 2 – 10 a.m.
Leadership Team Meeting, Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center

May 2 – 7 p.m.
Confirmation Mass for youths of St. Susanna Parish, Plainfield, and St. Michael the Archangel, St. Mark the Evangelist, St. John the Evangelist and St. Joseph (Vietnamese) parishes, all in Indianapolis, at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral

Is your child, grandchild or student receiving first Communion this spring? Let us know what it means to you

We are now in a special time of year when children across the archdiocese will soon be receiving their first Communion.

It's a life-changing embrace of the sacrament that will be celebrated with great joy by parents, grandparents, other family members and the teachers and other faith-filled leaders who help prepare children for this momentous moment of their Catholic faith.

Hoping to capture the joy of this time, *The Criterion* is inviting parents, grandparents and the children's instructors to share what it means for them to see and experience this celebration of Christ's gift with the children, who hold a special

place in his heart.

Teachers are also encouraged to share with us what your students feel—and are anticipating—about receiving the Eucharist for the first time, in their own words.

We will also welcome any photos of this faith-filled celebration of the sacrament of the Eucharist at your parish.

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



Pope Francis' prayer intentions for May

- **For the formation of religious and seminarians**—We pray that religious women and men, and seminarians, grow in their own vocations through their human, pastoral, spiritual and community formation, leading them to be credible witnesses to the Gospel.

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



Phone Numbers:

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

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

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

Web site : www.CriterionOnline.com

E-mail: criterion@archindy.org

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

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

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

Periodical postage paid at Indianapolis, IN.
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Nationally known author to discuss evangelization at Greenwood parish

By Sean Gallagher

Every baptized person has a call to participate in the Church's mission of proclaiming the Gospel to all nations.

How that mission is accomplished can be mysterious to many Catholics because it can vary greatly, depending on the particular circumstances of life of each of the baptized.

Julianne Stanz, a nationally known Catholic author and speaker on evangelization, will be in the archdiocese at Our Lady of the Greenwood, 335 S. Meridian St., in Greenwood on May 20 and 21 to help people better understand how they can share the Gospel in their daily lives. The presentations are sponsored by the archdiocesan Department of Parish Leadership.

A native of Ireland, Stanz is the director of outreach for evangelization and discipleship for the Chicago-based Loyola Press. She also serves as a consultant for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Institute on the Catechism and the National Eucharistic Revival.

Her presentation on May 20, "Our Universal Call to Mission," will begin at 6:30 p.m. and conclude at 9 p.m. It is

geared for all Catholics in the archdiocese.

"When you look at who Jesus was, who he is today and what he's asking us to do, you realize that he chose ordinary people to do extraordinary things," Stanz said in an interview with *The Criterion*. "And I think our parishes, our schools, our places of ministry are places where ordinary people are doing extraordinary things. I want people to understand and know and feel that this is part of what God wants for them, which is to step up and share their faith."

Ken Ogorek, executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Evangelizing Catechesis, is looking forward to Stanz's visit to the archdiocese to help Catholics learn how to share the Gospel.

"Julianne is a proven leader in helping Catholics—as individuals and parishes—get comfortable with the word 'evangelization,'" he said. "Beyond that, she helps folks grow as disciples and disciple-makers."

"If you're unsure about what it means to say 'Catholics should evangelize,' or if you're clear on that and just want some practical tips for how to share the faith more effectively, it's worth the drive to Greenwood to hear Julianne in person."



'Sharing the good news of Jesus Christ means that we need to be transformed. Information is important, but an experience of being transformed by his love is more important. So, we're going to pray at this event together.'

—Julianne Stanz

Stanz noted that the session on May 20 will be more than just a time to share information about evangelization.

"Sharing the good news of Jesus Christ means that we need to be transformed," she said. "Information is important, but an experience of being transformed by his love is more important. So, we're going to pray at this event together. There's going to be an element that's going to be very retreat-like with the stories and some of the prayer experiences that we will do together."

Stanz's presentation on May 21, "Reimagining a parish culture for evangelization," will be directed more to pastor staff members and volunteers. It starts at 10 a.m. and will conclude by 1:30 p.m.

Ogorek said that following Jesus' call to all of the baptized to be disciples and to make disciples of others "can sound intimidating." But he noted that the event on May 20 and the encouragement and advice given by Stanz "can calm our nerves about evangelizing, helping us start to wade in that pool of missionary discipleship."

"Those who attend will not be disappointed and might soon find themselves to be strong swimmers in the stream of great evangelizers," Ogorek added.

Stanz's visit to the archdiocese will take place about two months before the National Eucharistic Congress will occur

in Indianapolis, at which Stanz will be a speaker.

Having tens of thousands of Catholics coming to the archdiocese for the congress, Stanz said, "heightens the intensity of the outreach that all of the parishes are doing together. It heightens the sense of connectedness that you all have in welcoming us in as pilgrims on this journey."

"Indianapolis has been put in a special spotlight," Stanz added. "And that tells me that God is moving there in a very special way. And I'm excited to see what that might look like."

"The Eucharistic Revival and Congress, ultimately, are outward-focused," Ogorek said. "Both have the purpose of equipping us to reach our friends, neighbors, relatives and co-workers with the Gospel. Julianne's ability to share how the Eucharist empowers us for ministry—including evangelization—makes the timing of this visit excellent."

(Both presentations by Julianne Stanz on May 20 and 21 are free but require advance registration. Register for the May 20 presentation at tinyurl.com/StanzMission. Parish staff members and volunteers can register for the May 21 presentation at tinyurl.com/StanzParish.) †

'The Eucharistic Revival and Congress, ultimately, are outward-focused. Both have the purpose of equipping us to reach our friends, neighbors, relatives and co-workers with the Gospel. Julianne's ability to share how the Eucharist empowers us for ministry—including evangelization—makes the timing of this visit excellent.'



—Ken Ogorek, executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Evangelizing Catechesis

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Editorial



Pope Francis talks to visitors gathered in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican on April 21, for his recitation of the "Regina Coeli" prayer. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

Jesus joins us on our journey, carrying us when needed, seeing our beauty

The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I lack. In green pastures he makes me lie down; to still waters he leads me; he restores my soul. He guides me along right paths for the sake of his name. (Psalm 23:1-3)

Last weekend, the universal Church celebrated Good Shepherd Sunday on April 21.

The beginning of King David's 23rd psalm—cited above from the Bible on the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' website—is a familiar prayer many of us have heard from Scripture on our pilgrimage of faith.

This past weekend's Gospel passage on the Fourth Sunday of Easter offered an example of how Jesus is the Good Shepherd and "lays down his life for his sheep," which was repeated three times in the reading. (Jn 10:11, 15, 17) Its repetition is meant to remind us how important the Good Shepherd is on our journey, and how we must never forget Jesus is with us—every step we take—carrying us as needed, sacrificing his life for us—as he did on that Good Friday at Calvary—and giving us his Spirit through his resurrection.

As Pope Francis reminded us during the *Regina Coeli* prayer on April 21, being a shepherd, especially in Christ's time, was not just a job, it was a way of life.

"It was not an occupation which took up a defined amount of time, but it meant sharing entire days, and even nights, with the sheep, living—I would say—in symbiosis with them. Indeed, Jesus explains that he is not a hired man who cares nothing for the sheep, but a man who knows them. He knows the sheep," the pope said. "This is the way things are. He, the Lord, the shepherd of us all, calls us by our name and, when we are lost, he looks for us until he finds us."

The tenth chapter of John's Gospel also reminds us that God is taking his people back.

Like sheep, we get lost. It could even get dangerous when we wander from the path on which Christ is leading us. In those instances—and on other occasions where our moral compass is failing us—we're in a need of a shepherd.

"This is what the Lord wants to tell us with the image of the Good Shepherd: not only that he is the guide, the head of the flock, but above all that he thinks about every one of us, and that he thinks of each of us as *the love of his life*," Pope Francis said. "Consider this: for Christ, I am important, he thinks of me, I am irreplaceable, worth the infinite price of his life. And this is not just a way of speaking: He truly gave his life for me. He died and rose again for me. Why? Because he loves me, and he finds in me a beauty that I often do not see myself."

The Holy Father also reminded his listeners that many people in today's world get too caught up thinking about goals they should achieve and worrying about their successes "in the eyes of the world, on the judgment of others" rather than keeping Christ at their center.

"Today Jesus tells us that we are always infinitely worthy in his eyes. So, in order to find ourselves, the first thing to do is to place ourselves in his presence, allowing ourselves to be welcomed and lifted up by the loving arms of our Good Shepherd," he noted.

Good Shepherd Sunday offers us a necessary reminder that we are never alone. And with that reality comes an opportunity each day, as Pope Francis said, "... to find the time for a moment of prayer, of adoration, of praise, to be in the presence of Christ ..."

"Brother, sister, the Good Shepherd tells us that if you do this, you will rediscover the secret of life: you will remember that he gave his life for you, for me, for all of us. And that for him, we are all important, each and every one of us."

—Mike Krokos

Be Our Guest/Effie Calderola

A daughter's love, a season's blessings

At Easter morning brunch, one of my daughters brought me a beautiful bouquet of tulips.



They were so welcome, and so extraordinary, that I took extra good care of them. I changed their water, recut their stems and used the little packet of powder the florist sent. I placed them where I could see them at

dinner time, and at the place where I pray in the morning.

And they began to open. One morning, I peered inside a bright yellow and orange tulip and saw the stamen reaching out toward me. At least, I think it was the stamen; not being much of a horticulturist, I had to look up what the reproductive parts of flowers are called.

The inner works of my tulip seemed to be bursting forth from the slowly opening flower. In the morning light, with the tulip nearly translucent, I suddenly saw in my tulip a tomb being opened, a little symbol of resurrection. The tomb was empty, and the stamen and pistil seemed to be radiating out from the empty tomb as if to proclaim that the Risen One, who had been held there so recently, had gone before us into Galilee.

It was a lovely, graced moment, a little gift.

But here's the thing. Easter Sunday is many days ago now, and tulips don't last forever. Mine began to open too broadly and fray a bit at the edges. They bent over and lost their lovely shape. Like our own lives on this Earth, they were finite and passing. But they had done what they had come to do, proclaim a daughter's love and provide beauty and a moment of inspiration.

Would that we can say the same about our own passing lives.

The time between Easter Sunday and Pentecost is so special, but sometimes I

fear we leave the Easter season behind us too quickly. Lent gave us something to "do." We gave something up, we tried to go to morning Mass, we experienced the incredible beauty of the Holy Thursday liturgy and Good Friday service, something most parishes do well.

Even our secular culture reminded us of Easter, with the jellybeans and bunnies popping up as soon as Valentine's Day was over. But on Easter Monday, stores immediately put the basket paraphernalia on sale. You want a discounted bunny headband? Go for it.

I think the time between Easter and Pentecost, the actual Easter season, is when the real Christian in us is challenged. Rather than "do" something, be silent. Re-read all the amazing Resurrection readings from the Gospels of John and Luke. Walk into the garden with Mary and be amazed when the person you thought was the gardener calls you by name. Take a long walk, and imagine you, too, are heading for a getaway in Emmaus. Talk with that man who walks beside you. Put your fingers, like Thomas, into the scars left on the body of Jesus. Rejoice in this incredibly tactile, bodily faith we live.

There won't be any advertisements for Pentecost baskets, or Pentecost wrapping paper. You won't be hurrying to get your Pentecost letters out to all your friends. But Pentecost comes, with its fire and wind, to inspire us with the Holy Spirit. Imagine those in that room on Pentecost morning, some of them men who had fled during the crucifixion. Imagine Peter, who denied three times knowing Jesus, and then wept bitterly, becoming a man willing to be crucified himself.

Pentecost comes 50 days after Easter—on Sunday, May 19, this year. The days, like all our passing days, will fly. Let us use them to experience the hope and glory of Resurrection.

(Effie Calderola is a wife, mom and grandmother who received a master's degree in pastoral studies.) †

Be Our Guest/Sherry Foushee

National Safe Haven Alliance eager to continue helping mothers in crisis pregnancies

We are now into the spring season with new growth and beginnings.

The month of April and new life is a very special time for the National Safe Haven Alliance (NSHA). This lifesaving nonprofit working to promote the continuing existence of the Safe Haven Laws across this country, and in Indiana, is again celebrating April as Safe Haven Awareness month.

The NSHA will continue to support mothers facing crisis pregnancies and post-birth situations, with lifesaving alternatives and solutions to prevent infanticide and newborn abandonment.

In many of these situations, a mother is considering surrendering her infant due to lack of family support and other challenges. Our goal is to walk with this mother to provide what she might desperately need—whether it be supporting her choice to parent, a need for temporary placement, adoption assistance, or Safe Haven relinquishment. We are committed to working with this mother by researching the support in her community.

Our crisis response team and our 24/7 confidential hotline are always available to provide these safe options in a crisis

situation. Please call 1-888-510-BABY (2229), or go to nationalsafehavenalliance.org for assistance.

Spreading the awareness of this lifesaving alternative is very necessary to make sure that anyone in this crisis needing help will know that they have a confidential source of support with total anonymity and without fear of prosecution.

Please help us celebrate the 4,741 newborn's lives saved in the last 20-plus years. We are thankful and very grateful for the providers that help to save many.

We at the National Safe Haven Alliance are committed to continue this lifesaving mission until there is no need. National Safe Haven Alliance cares.

(Sherry Foushee is a member of St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus and is the Indiana representative for National Safe Haven Alliance. Mothers in need can call or text 888-510-2229, where a crisis response team is available for confidential help 24/7 to provide safe options for her and her baby. For more information on NSHA, go to www.nationalsafehavenalliance.org.) †

Letters Policy

Letters from readers are welcome and every effort will be made to include letters from as many people and representing as many viewpoints as possible.

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

ARCHBISHOP/ARZOBISPO CHARLES C. THOMPSON



Christ the Cornerstone

Without Christ, we can do nothing; with him, we can flourish

“I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing” (Jn 15:5).

Without Christ, we can do nothing. This is not an exaggeration or simply a pious statement. It’s a fact. Our lives are totally dependent on God. As we read in the Acts of the Apostles, “In him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28).

Jesus makes a bold statement in the Gospel cited at the beginning of this column as he is preparing his disciples for the radical separation that will take place after his death, resurrection and ascension into heaven. Although they will no longer be together in this life, their union remains strong.

Jesus uses the image of a vineyard. “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower,” he tells them (Jn 15:1). Just as the branches of a vine are interconnected, and function as a single plant with many branches all bearing fruit, we who are disciples of Jesus receive our vitality from him.

Life is God’s original gift to us. By God’s grace, we are born into this world. It is through God’s sustaining

power that we live and breathe and function as members of the human family.

In addition, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we are baptized, reborn into Christ our Savior, and given a reason for being—to be missionary disciples who proclaim the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ to all nations and peoples.

God has given us many talents and abilities. We are intelligent, creative and caring people. We can build complex cities and develop wonderful technologies. We can create marvelous works of art and write brilliant treatises on philosophy and theology. But without Christ, we are nothing.

Christ is the vine, and we are the branches. Especially when we unite ourselves to Jesus in the Eucharist, where ordinary bread and wine are transformed into his body and blood, we receive from him all the nourishment and vitality necessary to grow and bear fruit.

United with Christ, we can flourish. We can love and serve others, just as Jesus loves and serves us. But cut off from him, we dry out

and become useless, like the branches of a dead tree. “Anyone who does not remain in me will be thrown out like a branch and wither;” says the Lord. “People will gather them and throw them into a fire, and they will be burned” (Jn 15:6).

The image of a vine and its branches was very familiar to people in Jesus’ time. They depended on the life-giving fruits of the vine, and they knew what it was like when a branch was separated from its primary source of sustenance. Jesus uses this image to help his disciples (and all of us) make the essential connection between his life-giving love and our ability to flourish as women and men made in God’s image and likeness.

Love is the nourishment we need to live well and to serve others unselfishly. Jesus tells us that his Father is the source of the love that he shares with us in order that we may love God and our neighbor in return. So, Jesus tells his disciples (and all of us):

As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have

kept my Father’s commandments and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete. This is my commandment: love one another as I love you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. (Jn 15:9–13)

The fruit that is born of love is joy. If we keep the Lord’s commandment—“love one another as I love you”—our joy will be complete. But if we allow ourselves to be separated from the love of God, we will know only the isolation and bitterness that afflicts those branches that are cut off from their only source of life.

As we continue our celebration of the Easter season, let’s pray for the grace to remember, and truly believe, that when we present the gifts of bread and wine at Mass, we also present our whole lives to God in gratitude for all that we are in Jesus Christ. He is the vine. We are the branches.

Without Christ, we are nothing. Through him, with him and in him, we give glory to God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—and we can flourish like the branches of a vine that bears much fruit. †



Cristo, la piedra angular

Sin Cristo, no podemos hacer nada; con él, podemos florecer

“Yo soy la vid y ustedes son las ramas. El que permanece en mí, como yo en él, dará mucho fruto; separados de mí no pueden ustedes hacer nada” (Jn 15:5).

Sin Cristo, no podemos hacer nada. No se trata de una exageración ni de una simple declaración piadosa sino que de un hecho. Nuestras vidas dependen totalmente de Dios. Como leemos en Hechos de los Apóstoles, “En él, efectivamente, vivimos, nos movemos y existimos” (Hch 17:28).

Jesús pronuncia una declaración audaz en el Evangelio citado al comienzo de esta columna mientras prepara a sus discípulos para la separación radical que tendrá lugar tras su muerte, resurrección y ascensión al cielo. Aunque ya no estarán juntos en esta vida, su unión sigue siendo fuerte.

Jesús utiliza la imagen de una viña. “Yo soy la vid verdadera y mi Padre es el labrador,” les dice (Jn 15:1). Al igual que los sarmientos de una vid están interconectados y funcionan como una sola planta con muchas extensiones, todas ellas dando fruto, nosotros, que somos discípulos de Jesús, recibimos la vitalidad de él.

La vida es el don original excelso de Dios. Por la gracia de Dios, nacemos

en este mundo. Es gracias al poder sustentador de Dios que vivimos, respiramos y funcionamos como miembros de la familia humana.

Además, por el poder del Espíritu Santo, somos bautizados, renacemos en Cristo nuestro Salvador, y se nos da una razón de existir: ser discípulos misioneros que proclaman la Buena Nueva de nuestro Señor Jesucristo a todas las naciones y pueblos.

Dios nos ha dado muchos talentos y habilidades: somos personas inteligentes, creativas y solidarias; podemos construir ciudades complejas y desarrollar tecnologías maravillosas; podemos crear espléndidas obras de arte y escribir brillantes tratados de filosofía y teología. Pero sin Cristo, no somos nada.

Cristo es la vid y nosotros somos los sarmientos. Especialmente cuando nos unimos a Jesús en la Eucaristía, donde el pan y el vino ordinarios se transforman en su Cuerpo y su Sangre, recibimos de él todo el alimento y la vitalidad necesarios para crecer y dar fruto.

Unidos a Cristo, podemos florecer, podemos amar y servir a los demás, como Jesús nos ama y nos sirve. Pero cortados de él, nos secamos y nos volvemos inútiles, como las ramas de

un árbol muerto. “El que no permanece unido a mí, es arrojado fuera, como se hace con el sarmiento improductivo que se seca; luego, estos sarmientos se amontonan y son arrojados al fuego para que ardan,” afirma el Señor (Jn 15:6).

La imagen de una vid y sus sarmientos era muy familiar para la gente de la época de Jesús. Dependían de los frutos vivificantes de la vid, y sabían lo que se sentía cuando una rama se separaba de su fuente primaria de sustento. Jesús utiliza esta imagen para ayudar a sus discípulos (y a todos nosotros) a establecer la conexión esencial entre su amor vivificante y nuestra capacidad para florecer como mujeres y hombres hechos a imagen y semejanza de Dios.

El amor es el alimento que necesitamos para vivir bien y servir a los demás desinteresadamente. Jesús nos dice que su Padre es la fuente del amor que comparte con nosotros para que amemos a Dios y a nuestro prójimo a cambio. Por eso, Jesús les dice a sus discípulos (y a todos nosotros):

Como el Padre me ama a mí, así los amo yo a ustedes. Permanezcan en mi amor. Pero sólo permanecerán en mi amor si cumplen mis mandamientos, lo mismo que yo he cumplido los mandamientos de mi

Padre y permanezco en su amor. Les he dicho esto para que participen en mi alegría y la alegría de ustedes sea completa. Mi mandamiento es este: que se amen los unos a los otros como yo los he amado. El amor supremo consiste en dar la vida por los amigos. (Jn 15:9-13).

El fruto que nace del amor es la alegría. Si cumplimos el mandamiento del Señor—“ámense los unos a los otros como yo los he amado”—nuestra alegría será completa. Pero si permitimos que nos separen del amor de Dios, únicamente conoceremos el aislamiento y la amargura que afligen a las ramas que son cortadas de su única fuente de vida.

Mientras continuamos nuestra celebración de la temporada de Pascua, pidamos la gracia de recordar, y creer de verdad, que cuando ofrendamos los dones del pan y el vino en la misa, también ofrendamos nuestra vida a Dios en agradecimiento por todo lo que somos en Jesucristo. Él es la vid, nosotros somos las ramas y sin Cristo no somos nada. Por él, con él y en él, damos gloria a Dios—Padre, Hijo y Espíritu Santo—y podemos florecer como las ramas de una vid que da mucho fruto. †

Events Calendar

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

May 3

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

Our Lady of the Greenwood Church, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. **First Friday bilingual celebration of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus**, Mass 6 p.m. followed by adoration until 9 p.m., sacrament of reconciliation available. Information: 317-750-7309, msross1@hotmail.com.

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

May 3-4

White Violet Center, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Spring Plant Sale**, Fri. 11 a.m.-5 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m.-3 p.m., organically grown vegetables, herbs, cut flowers. Information: spsmw.org/events, 812-535-2932, wvc@spsmw.org.

May 3-5

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Life-Giving Wounds Retreat**, 7 p.m. Fri.-5 p.m. Sun., retreat for adult children of divorce or separation, \$275 ages 18 and older, \$185 college students or ages 18-25 in need of financial assistance, includes accommodations, materials, meals, sponsored by archdiocesan Office of Marriage and Family Life. Information, registration: marriageandfamily.archindy.org/lgw, gross@archindy.org, 317-592-4007.

May 4

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

St. Anne's Golf Club, 360 E. County Road 350 N., North Vernon. **Missy's Hope Golf Scramble**, 8 a.m., benefitting Missy's Hope Maternity Home, four mulligans, 50/50 draw, lunch

provided, \$200 per four-person team, hole sponsor \$100 with your sign at choice of hole. Information, registration: 812-767-2897, peggydyerbland@yahoo.com, tinyurl.com/missyshopedonate (choose golf scramble from dropdown).

Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish parking lot, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. **St. Vincent de Paul Stuff A Truck**, 9-11 a.m., accepting clothing, household goods and linens (all in closed bags), furniture, bicycles, bicycle helmets and locks, backpacks. List of items most needed: cutt.ly/ItemsNeeded. Information: dswweeney@svdpindy.org.

May 5

Roncalli High School, 3300 Prague Road, Indianapolis. **Katie's Walk for Hope**, check-in 11 a.m., walk starts at noon, 12th annual event in memory of Katie Lynch benefitting families affected by childhood cancer, 1-mile route from Roncalli High School football field to St. Jude Parish pavilion, \$15 students, \$25 adults, \$125 family. Information, registration: 317-502-1979, tinyurl.com/katies5K2024, katies5kwalk@gmail.com.

May 7

Monthly Prayer with Sisters of Providence: "Prayer on Mary, the Mother of Jesus," for single Catholic women ages 18-42, via Zoom, 7-7:45 p.m., seventh day of each month. Information, registration: Events.SistersofProvidence.org, 361-500-9505, jluna@spsmw.org.

May 9-11

St. Joseph Parish, 228 E. Hendricks St., Shelbyville. **Spring Festival**, Thurs. 6-9 p.m., Fri. 6-11 p.m., Sat. 3-11 p.m., food, beer garden, \$2,000 raffle, rides and amusements by Poor Jack, free admission. Information: 317-398-8227, sjsshelbyville.org.

May 11

St. John Paul II Parish, 2253 W. St. Joe Road, Sellersburg. **Supporting Your Spouse's Dreams**, presented by internationally known singer Steve Angrisano and his wife Jenni, sponsored by Catalyst Catholic in New Albany Deanery, \$20 per person, includes dinner, child care available, registration required by May 5. Information,

registration: catalystcatholic.org/3dates.

May 14

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

May 15

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

May 16

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

May 18

St. Christopher Parish parking lot, 5301 W. 16th St., Indianapolis. **St. Vincent de Paul Stuff A Truck**, 9-11 a.m., accepting clothing, household goods and linens

(all in closed bags), furniture, bicycles, bicycle helmets and locks, backpacks. List of items most needed: cutt.ly/ItemsNeeded. Information: dswweeney@svdpindy.org.

May 25

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

May 27

Calvary Mausoleum Chapel, 435 W. Troy Ave., Indianapolis. **Memorial Day Mass**, noon. Information: 317-784-4439, catholiccemeteries.cc.

Our Lady of Peace Cemetery and Mausoleum, 9001 Haverstick Road, Indianapolis. **Memorial Day Mass**, 11 a.m. Information: 317-574-8898, catholiccemeteries.cc.

May 30

St. Joan of Arc Parish, 4217 Central Ave., Indianapolis. **Cor Jesu**, 7-8 p.m., night of communal prayer, adoration, Benediction and fellowship, free. Information: megt2014@gmail.com. †

Retreats and Programs

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

May 14

Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove.

Personal Day of Retreat, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., \$40, includes private room for the day and lunch; spiritual direction

available for additional \$30, must be scheduled in advance. Information, registration: benedictinn.org/programs,

317-788-7581, benedictinn@benedictinn.org.

May 17-19

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Benedictine Spirituality 101**, Benedictine Father Adrian Burke presenting, \$300 single, \$425 double. Registration: 812-357-6611, saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

Mother of the Redeemer Retreat Center, 8220 W. State Road 48, Bloomington. **The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius**, 6 p.m. Fri.-11 a.m. Sun., Franciscan Friars of the Immaculate Father Ignatius Manfredonia presenting, \$241 includes room and meals. Information, registration: 812-825-4642, ext. 1.

May 18

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **7 Keys to Unlock True Happiness**, 9:30-11:30 a.m., Catholic author and

speaker Sandra Hartlieb presenting, \$30, Zoom option available. Information, registration: 812-933-6437, oldenburgfranciscancenter.org.

May 21, June 13, July 10

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

June 3-6

Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis. **Four-Day Directed Retreat: Silence, Reflection and Transformation**, 10 a.m. Mon.-2 p.m. Thurs., includes spiritual direction, prayer sessions, accommodations,

materials and meals, \$475. Information, registration: retreatcommunications@mountsaintfrancis.org, 812-923-8817, mountsaintfrancis.org/four-day-directed-retreat.

June 14-16

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **In Sickness and in Health: Prayer, Covenant, and Healing**, Benedictine Father Lorenzo Penalosa presenting, \$300 single, \$425 double. Registration: 812-357-6611, saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

June 19

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Divine Wine and Mandala Art**, 5-9 p.m., trained art therapist and art teacher Kristin Scifres presenting, includes snacks, beverages, art supplies, \$45. Registration: archindy.org/fatima-events, 317-545-7681, lcoons@archindy.org. †

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House to host getaway weekend retreat for married couples on May 31-June 2

A Celebrate Marriage Getaway Weekend will be held at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., in Indianapolis, from 5 p.m. on May 31 to noon on June 2.

This weekend for married couples is offered and presented by Celebrate Marriage, a Catholic ministry with a mission to strengthen and enrich marriages through the transformative power of Christ's love.

The "getaway" is designed to keep the "spark alive" in marriages through engaging presentations, time for reflection, connection with other couples and fun activities that honor and celebrate the love that binds each couple

in marriage. The weekend includes Mass both Saturday and Sunday.

Tom and Marcy Renken, members of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood and the founders of Celebrate Marriage, will lead the weekend.

Early-bird registration is \$450 per couple by May 17 and \$500 per couple after that date.

Registration is required by May 30 and includes overnight accommodations, all meals on Saturday and breakfast on Sunday.

To register, go to archindy.org/fatima-events or contact Lisa Coons at 317-545-7681 or lcoons@archindy.org. †

Sisters of Providence accepting Providence Associate applications through June 30

The Providence Associate program of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, in St. Mary-of-the-Woods, is accepting applications for Providence Associates through June 30.

If you are looking for spiritual enrichment, support, a community, or a sense of mission, God may be nudging you to become a Providence Associate of the Sisters of Providence.

Providence Associates are women and men of faith, ages 18 and older, who share their own unique gifts and talents with others while walking with the Sisters of Providence.

The Providence Associate relationship with the Sisters of Providence began in 2007. Currently, there are more than 300 Providence Associates in the

United States and Taiwan.

Accepted applicants spend a year meeting one-on-one on a regular basis with a member of the Sisters of Providence or another Providence Associate companion. During the meetings, the candidates and their companions learn and share about Providence spirituality.

Accepted candidates attend an orientation at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods in November. Following the orientation, the candidate and companion usually meet once a month—in person, virtually or by phone—for the coming year.

For more information, go to ProvidenceAssociates.org or contact Providence Associate Director: Debbie Dillow at 317-250-3294 or ddillow@spsmw.org. †

Register by May 13 for Women of the Church forum at Saint Meinrad Archabbey on May 31-June 2

Women of the Church, a Catholic leadership forum, will host a regional gathering for women with the theme "Eucharistic Living" at Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., in St. Meinrad, from 2 p.m. May 31-1 p.m. June 2. All times are Central Time.

The weekend's schedule will include presentations, liturgical celebrations and opportunity for reflection, as well as space to bring one's experiences into conversations with others.

Speakers include Dr. Kimberly Baker, co-founder of Women of the Church and associate professor of patristics at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad, presenting

"Living as the Body of Christ"; Agnes Kovacs, co-founder of Women of the Church and director of continuing formation at Saint Meinrad, presenting "The Paschal Mystery as Lived Faith in Daily Life"; and Benedictine Brother Zachary Wilberding, presenting "The Grace of Gratitude."

The cost to attend is \$275, which includes overnight accommodations and meals. A commuter option is available for \$110.

Registration is required by May 13. For more information or to register, go to womenofthechurch.org or contact Baker at 812-357-6430 or kbaker@saintmeinrad.edu. †

CAITLIN CLARK

continued from page 1

in which Clark saluted former Fever great Tamika Catchings, praised the players and coaches on the Fever's current team, and shared these thoughts about playing in Indiana:

—“I feel like this is the perfect spot for me—a place that loves basketball, but more than anything, this is in the Midwest. People might think I'm crazy for wanting to stay in the Midwest, but that's just who I am, that's where my roots are. I love the people here.”

—“Like I said after I got drafted, I can't think of a better place for myself to start my career. A place that loves basketball, supports women's basketball, and an organization that really does things the right way and has a championship pedigree. So, I'm just thankful that they have a belief in me.”

—“This is a dream come true.”

As Meyer listened to Clark talk about her dream coming true, she also knew the reality of what has led Clark to this defining moment—a reality forged in her incredible work ethic, unwavering family support and the strong foundation of her Catholic faith.

‘There’s also just her joy for life’

On the day of the press conference—April 17—Meyer exchanged text messages with Clark, congratulating her on being named an Academic All-American, an honor that complemented her selection as the college women's National Player of the Year.

“I know academics have been important to her throughout her life,” Meyer says. “As a teacher, I think highlighting those successes are important for all students, especially student-athletes.”

“Her work ethic has always stood out, both on the basketball court and as a high-achieving student. There's also just her joy for life. She's the type of person that always has a positive attitude and is in a good mood and is looking to tell jokes and entertain other people.”

Meyer sees those qualities as an extension of Clark's family: her parents, Anne and Brent, and her two brothers, Blake and Colin.

“Her family is great,” Meyer says. “They really instilled a lot of great qualities that have been very important, especially these last few years as she's had more fame and success. She's very grounded. She's very appreciative of the opportunities she's had. She still stays very close to her family and doesn't take things for granted. And she knows it takes a lot of hard work to get to where she wants to be. Those are qualities and characteristics instilled from a young age.”

Clark talked about the influence of her family during the press conference.

“When I was growing up, my parents allowed me to be myself, they never told me I couldn't accomplish anything,” she said. “I grew up playing basketball with the boys, and to me, I never thought that was different or weird. It was just what I did.”

“I went out there, I competed hard. I feel like that's a lot of the reason I am who I am today. I had this constant confidence in myself, and I feel like that's a thing a lot of young girls struggle with today, just having the confidence to achieve whatever they want. That's the biggest thing. It's really the support system around them to instill that confidence.”

‘Their Catholic faith is very important to them’

One of the main gifts that Clark's family has shared with her is the strong foundation of their Catholic faith.

That foundation from the family was supported by Clark's grade-school years at St. Francis of Assisi School in the Iowa community of West Des Moines.

“I watched her grow up through the hallways of St. Francis,” says Jill Westholm, Clark's sixth-grade teacher in math and science who has taught in Catholic schools for 33 years. “Really who you see today is who we've seen for years. She was a competitive girl, but she's also very intelligent and easy going. She liked to have fun. A great sense of humor. She's just very real and very true.”

“And what an amazing family. Very supportive of each other. They did what they needed to do to help her reach her dreams. It's just so good to see a strong family unit in this spotlight. They're very faith-filled. Their Catholic faith is very important to them.”

Clark hasn't forgotten her connection to St. Francis School. In the spring of 2023, a few weeks after she and her Iowa team competed in the women's national championship game, Clark returned to the school.

“We told the students we had a surprise for them. We gathered everybody into the gym. They had no idea who they were going to see,” recalls Westholm, who has been to a number of Clark's Iowa games, including the Final Four of the past two women's national tournaments. “She was hiding behind a wall. She came out, and they just went crazy. It was really fun. I think she appreciated all the support. She's all about being a positive role model for the students.”

The influence on her faith continued at Dowling Catholic High School, also in West Des Moines.

“Faith is very important to her and her family, which is one of the main reasons she came to Dowling Catholic,” Meyer says. “Caitlin's mom went to Dowling Catholic. Caitlin's grandpa, Bob Nizzi, was a coach and I believe a counselor at Dowling. That part of it has always been very important to Caitlin and her family.”

One of the groups that Clark was involved in at Dowling Catholic is called *Ut Fidem*, which comes from “a longer Latin phrase meaning Keep the Faith,” according to the school's website. The program's goal is “to develop high school students into intentional disciples who will keep the faith for the rest of their lives, and especially through college.”

“Students get into small groups of usually five to six students,” says Meyer.

“They get paired with a mentor, and they meet once a week to talk about their faith and the things going on in their lives. We also offer a number of faith retreats for



During her time as a player for the girls' basketball team of Dowling Catholic High School in West Des Moines, Iowa, Caitlin Clark celebrates a moment of joy with her head coach, Kristin Meyer. (Submitted photo)

and faith to make a difference in other people's lives. She believes that approach will continue as Clark gets settled into Indianapolis.

‘I try to remind myself how grateful I am’

“Even through high school, she was always excited to help at our youth basketball camps or when we would bring our elementary and middle school players in for different activities,” Meyer says. “She enjoys being around young athletes and young students to impact what they do on a basketball court or just as a role model, to give them some tips and guidance.”

“She also has a foundation that she's started that helps provide resources for boys and girls to be able to participate in sports. I definitely think Caitlin will get involved in the Indianapolis community. I wouldn't be surprised if she helps develop some sort of leadership academy for female students either at the middle school or high school level. Knowing her mom, her mom would be interested in helping her create something that does have a lasting impact more than just basketball.”

For now, Clark is just thrilled to begin the next stage of her life in Indianapolis and Indiana, with the Fever beginning its regular season on May 14.

“I was hoping Indiana would get the first pick,” she said during the press conference. “When I saw that, I was pretty excited.”

“I was ready for a new challenge and something new in my life. It felt like I had done everything at Iowa that I possibly could, and we did a lot of amazing things. To be able to come here and stay in the Midwest—and it's only five hours from Iowa City, seven hours from where I grew up—you really can't script it any better.”

Amid the whirlwind of all that has happened recently and during the past year, Clark has tried to embrace two points of perspective—one about basketball, the other about life.

“For me, I just have fun playing basketball,” she said. “I know this is a team sport, it's not all about me. When I've been able to understand that, it's allowed me to play my best. I think it's just using your resources, asking questions. Not everything is going to be perfect. ... I'm a perfectionist, but I'm at my best when I allow myself a little grace and not expecting everything to go how it should. At the same time, that's what allowed me to be so great.”

There's also this perspective on life.

“The biggest thing I try to remember is how grateful I am to have this opportunity,” Clark said. “There are so many people who would kill to be in my shoes. When things seem like they're long and they're tiring, and I have to do this, I have to do that, I try to remind myself how grateful I am.”

“I'm lucky to have these moments, and it can all be taken away from you in a second. So just enjoy every single second of it, give it my best, and I think that will go well for me.”

As someone who has closely observed Clark's journey for more than eight years, Meyer is sure about one part of Clark's future.

“She's very optimistic and forward-thinking,” Meyer says. “She doesn't get too caught up in negativity. She's always looking at the next step, and she always has a smile on her face.” †



Caitlin Clark shares a fun moment with young players at a youth basketball camp in 2018 during the time she played for Dowling Catholic High School in West Des Moines, Iowa. (Submitted photo)

On the path to peace and joy: St. Thomas More woman says, ‘if not for my infertility, I don’t think I’d be Catholic’

By Natalie Hoefler

Rachel Walters has been on a journey for the last five years. Two journeys, actually—one medical, one spiritual—that were so intertwined they became inseparable.

It began with turmoil and questions surrounding her infertility. Along the way, she found peace and answers in Catholicism that led to joy this Easter as she was welcomed into the full communion of the Church at St. Thomas More Parish in Mooresville.

Walters sums up the two-in-one journey like this: “If not for my infertility, I don’t think I’d be Catholic today.”

‘Eventually I said I’m done’

Walters married her husband Braxton in 2014. They delayed having children as she worked on a master’s degree, then a near-fatal illness she suffered in 2017 pushed their decision to try having children to 2019.

“I was charting from day one, taking

my temperature every morning,” she says. “By the time we hit six months, I knew something was off.”

She took her charts to an obstetrics-gynecologist. It was discovered that her illness had affected her thyroid, causing her body temperature to be too low for conception.

“We tried medicine, but it made me feel like a train hit me,” Walters recalls. “I was worn out by everything I tried to do.”

In 2020, a surgery revealed that she had endometriosis, a common cause of infertility, in which uterine tissue develops outside the uterus.

The couple tried intrauterine insemination (IUI), an artificial form of conception Walters now understands as immoral—“My husband isn’t religious, but even he felt uncomfortable with IUI,” she notes.

“Eventually I said I’m done, I’m not putting my body through anything more.”

Then Walters began to have severe abdominal and lower back pain. She started receiving progesterone shots, and another

surgery in 2021 revealed her endometriosis had worsened.

By this time, she had started to turn to another source for help—faith.

Walters was raised in a Protestant faith tradition, “but wasn’t really attending church faithfully as I was raised to do,” she admits.

“Everything hit me all at once around January or February of 2020. That’s when I started to attend church way more regularly than I had been.

“At that point I remember telling my mom, ‘I’m so glad I’m not Catholic, because that would make this journey so much harder.’ Oh, the irony!”

‘The Catholic Church had an answer’

Despite returning to church, Walters admits that “2020 through 2022 were really hard. I struggled with God’s timing, jealousy and bitterness that [fertility] wasn’t happening for me.”

Although raised Protestant, Walters had never been baptized. She decided to “take that step” in September 2022 at the non-denominational Christian church she attended.

It was a memorable event, she says: “I felt God ask me to leave my desire for motherhood in the baptismal water.”

Walters’ sister Elizabeth in Pennsylvania was on a faith journey, too. She had enrolled in the local Catholic parish’s Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA).

“When she told me she was becoming Catholic, she was worried that I wouldn’t be accepting of that,” Walters recalls. “I said, ‘No, I don’t think you’ll burn in hell, but I don’t think I could ever join.’”

Three months later, Walters visited her sister for Christmas.

“She was watching videos to catch up on RCIA, so I took notes because that’s my habit,” says Walters. “I found I really agreed with what they presented.

“I was raised that you just don’t ask questions about God. But it seemed like every question I have had, the Catholic Church had an answer that was easily understandable.”

When Elizabeth started Father Mike Schmitz’s “The Bible in a Year” podcast, Walters joined her—and went on to listen to the priest’s “Catechism in a Year” podcast, too. She even downloaded the Hallow app to pray the rosary.

Out of curiosity, she searched the app for “anything on infertility.” That’s when she discovered The Fruitful Hollow, a Catholic infertility resource site. (See related article that starts on page 1.)

As she dove into the podcasts, The Fruitful Hollow site and other material, Walters discovered a concept that would help her redefine her struggle with infertility: redemptive suffering, the act of spiritually joining suffering to Christ’s suffering and death for the salvation of souls or other intentions.

“Redemptive suffering was huge in reframing how I saw my infertility,” she says. “God definitely used it to bring me closer to him and to bring me home to the Catholic Church.”

There was another defining concept she learned specifically through The Fruitful Hollow: spiritual motherhood.

“That was new to me, to look at nuns and observe the way they live fruitful

lives in ways that didn’t involve biological children,” says Walters. “I started to focus not on, ‘I have to have a biological or adopted child.’ Neither has to happen for me to be fruitful in the way God has commanded in Scripture.

“I felt like I had all this new deepening of faith and tradition and framework to open my eyes.”

‘It was something Jesus told us to do’

By the time the Easter Vigil arrived on March 30, Walters was more than ready.

“Not participating [in the Eucharist] was one of the hardest parts of transitioning from my non-denominational church to the Catholic Church for me,” she says. “My other church had it every week, even though it was only symbolic. It was something Jesus told us to do.

“Finally getting to participate just hit me when I got back to my seat [after receiving her first Eucharist], and I just cried. I did the same thing the two weeks after—and I’m not someone who naturally cries.”

The Easter Vigil Mass was celebrated at St. Thomas More’s sister parish, St. Ann in Indianapolis. The parish name was significant to Walters, who chose St. Ann, the grandmother of Jesus, as her patron.

“She saint-stalked me,” she says. “I credit St. Ann with bringing me—kicking and screaming at first—into the Church.”

Elizabeth was present for the Mass, as well as Elizabeth’s sister-in-law with her fiancé. Walters was thrilled to learn the couple were hoping to join an RCIA program this year at a parish in Greenwood.

“I talked with them for two hours,

sharing my story and answering their questions,” she says. “I hope she asks me to be her sponsor. It would be another call to spiritual motherhood.”

In the meantime, she is living out spiritual motherhood in other ways.

“One big moment was last year when St. Thomas was doing a drive for babies of unplanned pregnancies,” she says. “It was a gigantic deal for me to walk into the parish with a bag of baby lotion and wipes.”

Another opportunity came last fall when The Fruitful Hollow posted a need for a social media coordinator.

“I do that in my day job” as an adult education librarian for Indiana Wesleyan University, she says. She started in the volunteer role for The Fruitful Hollow in December.

“It keeps me going on days that might be hard,” she says. “They’re a wonderful group of ladies, and I really believe in what they’re doing.”

Still, Walters has some difficult days in her struggle with infertility.

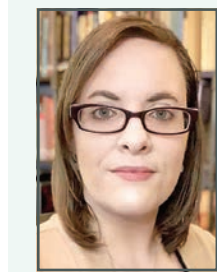
“I accept it, but it’s not easier,” she admits. “It’s like grief—after you initially accept it, there are times of the year like holidays when it comes back. It never goes away, it just changes shape. It’s an everyday surrender, at least in my experience.”

Walters did conceive twice last year, both ending in miscarriage within a few weeks.

“At this point, I know it would have to be a miracle for me to have a child,” she says. “As of right now, I don’t see it ever happening. But I know if God means for it to happen, it will.” †



Rachel Walters, a member of St. Thomas More Parish in Mooresville, receives the precious blood of Christ from Deacon Joseph Beauchamp for the first time during the Easter Vigil Mass at St. Ann Church in Indianapolis on March 30. St. Thomas More and St. Ann are sister parishes. (Submitted photo)



‘Redemptive suffering was huge in reframing how I saw my infertility. God definitely used it to bring me closer to him and to bring me home to the Catholic Church.’

—Rachel Walters

INFERTILITY

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an online resource for those bearing her same cross of infertility—women, men and couples. It offers a weekly blog post, practical and spiritual resources, mentorship and more.

The difference between The Fruitful Hollow and other online infertility resources is its foundation in solid Catholic teachings and beliefs, explains Allen, saying, “We’re never putting out anything that goes against Catholic Church teaching.”

‘To help you carry your cross with grace’

The cross of infertility cast its shadow upon Allen even before she was married. Knowing “a 58-day cycle wasn’t normal,” she began charting using the natural family planning (NFP) Creighton Method. Based on the charts and her own research, she suspected she had polycystic ovarian syndrome.

Her suspicions were confirmed by a doctor when she was engaged to her husband Sean Allen.

“He went with me to the appointment where I got diagnosed,” says Allen. “She told us to immediately start being open” to life.

The couple turned to hormone treatment through Natural Pro-creative Technology (NaProTechnology or

NaPro), which works with a woman’s natural system to ethically support reproductive and gynecological health.

The treatment didn’t work. “They suspected I had endometriosis,” says Allen. Endometriosis is another common cause of infertility, in which uterine tissue develops outside the uterus. “They recommended I have surgery. At that time, we were so emotionally and physically done. The hormone treatment had taken its toll on my body.”

Hence, Allen’s prayer on Jan. 21, 2021, and the message and idea she received from God.

“The name took a few days to come to me, but I definitely think it was inspired by the Holy Spirit,” she says. “‘Fruitful’ is the opposite of ‘barren’ or ‘hollow.’ Our name proves that even in all of our hollowness, one can still be fruitful. That’s exactly what we aim to inspire our readers to be.”

The Fruitful Hollow’s mission is “to put out [online] valid Catholic resources for infertility to help you carry your cross with grace,” she explains.

“Infertility wounds you, and you can fester in those wounds. A lot of resources focus on that. Those feelings are valid, but I think it’s important to look to God to find a purpose or what you can learn from” the cross of infertility. “I just knew I needed to start putting valid resources out there.”

Allen posted a question on a Facebook infertility support group she was a member of, asking “if anyone

was interested in maybe a website or a blog—I had no clue what it would look like. Within a week, I had a full, international team.

“Yes, I’m the founder and director of The Fruitful Hollow, but it’s the work of the Holy Spirit through and through.”

Help from women who have ‘been there’

Looking at the biographies listed on The Fruitful Hollow site, its all-volunteer operations team of eight women runs deep in professional and theological backgrounds.

But all share three things in common: the cross of infertility, deep devotion to their Catholic faith and a desire to use the first two realities to help those suffering with infertility “carry [their] cross with grace.”

The Fruitful Hollow site offers that help in many forms—blog posts, informational and Catholic-aligned resources, mentorship, an online “garden of remembrance,” relevant saints and more.

The titles of some of the blog posts speak to the site’s mission: “Fiat: drawing near to Mary in infertility”; “Infertility from a husband’s perspective”; “Why has God put this desire on my heart if he’s not going to fulfill it?”

The topics speak of a shared journey, of compassionate understanding and of hope. They come from those who have “been there,” found peace through the Catholic faith

and want to serve as a cadre of “Simones” of Cyrene to help others like them find peace, too.

Whether written by staff, featured writers or reader submissions, each post receives “vigorous screening,” says Allen. “They go through a theological edit then a professional edit before we post it.”

The same is true of the site’s resources. Outside of links to other sites and one document from the Catholic Medical Association, “All the resources on the website are created by our team,” Allen explains, whether as downloadable documents or videos.

Many of the resource topics are generated by The Fruitful Hollow’s Sisters of Hannah mentorship ministry, named for Hannah of the Old Testament whose prayers for a child were eventually heard by God.

“It was an idea we had from the very beginning,” Allen says. “We wanted a way women could be mentored or accompanied through the process of infertility. The mentors have all walked through infertility and have come to a place of peace that helps them to walk with others.

“We listen to the women who meet with Sisters of Hannah, what they’re struggling with, what they’re experiencing, and [our resource editor] creates these fabulous resources.”

Sometimes the journey of infertility includes the heartache of miscarriage. After years of infertility, one of the site’s editors was thrilled to conceive a child, whom she and her husband named Jude. They were

devastated when the pregnancy ended in a miscarriage.

From their loss, Allen had an idea for a “virtual cemetery” for miscarried babies or infant deaths. She named it “Jude’s Garden—A Place of Remembrance” in honor of baby Jude.

“It’s an open Google Doc form where anyone can submit a name [of a baby], a date of remembrance and their country,” she explains. “It allows people to stop by the garden to pray for little souls or ask for their intercession.”

A look at the “garden” proves the impact of The Fruitful Hollow beyond the United States, with entries from Canada, England, Ireland, Luxembourg, Scotland and Australia.

‘No explanation for this besides God’

The independently-run site has helped people across the globe find compassionate, ethical, Catholic-aligned resources. And in some cases, it even drew them to seek full communion with the Church.

“I know of at least three followers that said they’re coming into the Church because of The Fruitful Hollow,” says Allen. “There are Christian followers now questioning IVF [in vitro fertilization, a form of conception outside the womb that is not in line with Church teaching]. They find solid information on The Fruitful Hollow. One woman said she read our information, knew it was true, and she converted.

UKRAINE

continued from page 1

Ukraine has reported more than 130,365 war crimes committed by Russia to date in Ukraine since February 2022.

The International Criminal Court has to date issued four arrest warrants against Russian officials, including two for Russian President Vladimir Putin and his commissioner for children’s rights, Maria Lvova-Belova, for the unlawful deportation and transfer of at least 19,546 children from occupied areas of Ukraine to the Russian Federation.

As part of its invasion, Russia has brutally cracked down on religious communities in Ukraine, damaging or destroying more than 600 houses of worship, while imprisoning, torturing and killing clergy and suppressing expressions of faith.

In December 2022, Russian authorities in the occupied Zaporizhzhia region “banned” the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, the Knights of Columbus and the Catholic humanitarian organization Caritas, denouncing all three as Western-based threats to Russia.

Two Ukrainian Greek Catholic priests, Redemptorist Fathers Ivan Levitsky and Bohdan Geleta, have been in Russian captivity since November 2022 for refusing

to leave their parishioners in Berdyansk, a city in the Zaporizhzhia region. Major Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk, head of the worldwide Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, has reported both priests have been subjected to torture. According to at least one human rights watch group, Father Levitsky was recently moved to a prison in Russia.

Catholics in Ukraine are far from alone in their suffering under Russian occupation, said Archbishop Gudziak. For those American Christians who have expressed wariness about continued support for Ukraine, “understanding that evangelical Christians are persecuted together with Jews, [Latin] Catholics, Eastern Catholics, Orthodox, Jews, Muslims, is at the heart of this issue,” said Archbishop Gudziak, adding that “many people are just coming to a fuller understanding of the realities on the ground.”

One of those who may have gained greater insight into how Russia’s aggression affects Ukrainian Christians is House Speaker Mike Johnson, who had long remained reluctant to move forward with the aid package.

The lawmaker is reported to have met on April 18 in Washington, D.C., with Ukrainian citizen and fellow evangelical Christian Serhii Gaidarzhi, whose wife and 4-month-old son were killed in a March 2 Russian attack on Odessa. Gaidarzhi, who joined a number of Ukrainian and Ukrainian-American leaders in the nation’s

capital last week to rally support for the House vote, was pictured on X (formerly Twitter) with a smiling Johnson during that visit.

“Evangelical Christian Ukrainians organized, allied with Catholics and Orthodox believers, and made exactly that appeal ... to [Johnson’s] conscience,” explained Eugene Luciw, president of the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America’s Philadelphia chapter and a member of Presentation of Our Lord Ukrainian Catholic Church in Lansdale, Pa.

“I don’t know exactly what the process of Speaker Johnson’s discernment has been, but I trusted that as a man of faith and a man with a heart, he would do the right thing,” said Archbishop Gudziak.

Luciw, who regularly travels to Washington to meet with lawmakers regarding Ukraine, told OSV News that “religious institutions are not allowed to exist in occupied territories.

“They have no legal existence that’s permitted under [Russian occupation] law,” said Luciw. “There is only one state religion that is allowed to exist, and that is the Russian Orthodox Church.”

Patriarch Kirill, head of the Russian Orthodox Church, has openly blessed and encouraged Russia’s aggression against Ukraine, saying in a September 2022 sermon that those who die fighting with the Russian military will see their sins washed away.

“There’s no explanation for this besides God.”

Rachel Walters was already looking into Catholicism when she discovered The Fruitful Hollow site. The Catholic-aligned practical and spiritual information she learned there only deepened her desire to be welcomed into full communion with the Church, which she did this Easter at St. Thomas More Parish in Mooresville. (See related article.)

When Walters saw the site’s call-out for a social media director last year, she jumped at the opportunity.

“I do [social media] in my day job, and I’d been praying for ways that I could help give back,” she says. “They’re such a wonderful group of ladies.”

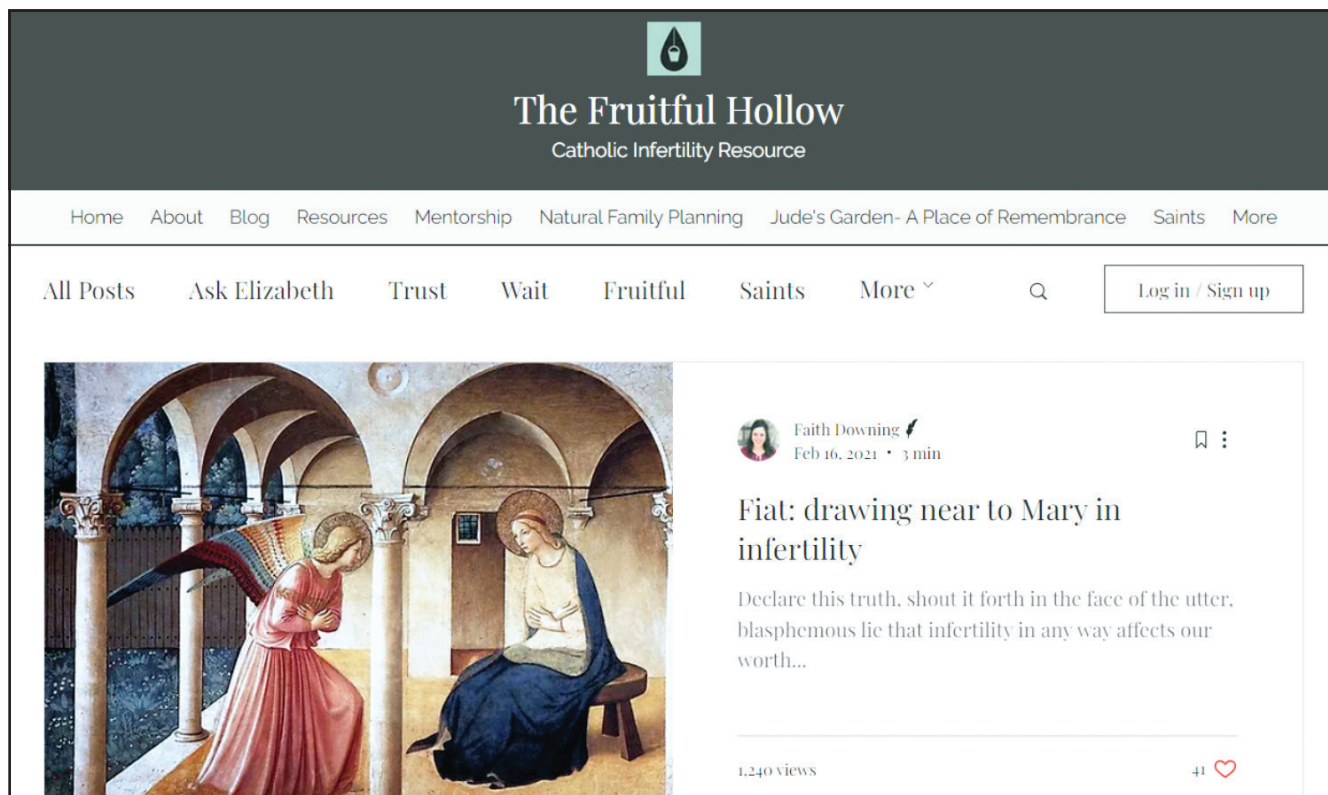
Walters observes in the site’s followers that same desire to give back.

“You see it reach people, and they go, ‘I want to help someone else.’ It’s a big inspiration to see The Fruitful Hollow reach out and help people, and those people want to reach out and help others.”

The ministry is a bit of a mystery to Allen, who with her husband is now the loving parent of two adopted boys, Peyton and Mitchell.

“There’s so much in this ministry I can’t explain,” she says. “It was the Holy Spirit working in hyper-speed. It really is amazing to see him move.”

(Visit [The Fruitful Hollow Catholic Infertility Resource site at thefruitfulhollow.com](http://TheFruitfulHollow.com).) †



This screenshot from The Fruitful Hollow site shows the ministry’s blog post page, as well as the menu bar with the Catholic infertility resource site’s different sections to help those bearing the cross of infertility.

Investing with Faith/Kimberly Pohovey

Give for as long as you live: IRAs as a source of charitable giving

Planning for retirement can be a challenge. The list of things we want to do when we finally have the time has probably grown and matured through



the years, just like we have. But there are also so many unknowns about the future as we get older, so many things we do not—and cannot—anticipate.

And yet, God is good. In every season of our lives, he gives us fresh opportunities to live by faith and deepen our trust in him. Each stage of our journey comes with unique opportunities to experience his loving care for us and respond in gratitude by sharing God's love with others.

Whether your “retirement age” is around the corner or down the pike, it's reassuring to know that charitable giving can be part of your retirement plans.

If you have already been giving to those in need, retirement doesn't have to cramp your style. And if you haven't

yet been able to share your blessings as you've hoped, retirement might just provide you with new opportunities to do so.

Is charitable giving from a traditional or Roth IRA allowed? Absolutely. And it might be one of the best ways to maintain or create a legacy of supporting the Church's mission in southern and central Indiana. Here's why:

An IRA charitable gift is always tax-free. Donations from an IRA to a qualifying cause of your choice is a tax-savvy way to give. Because your IRA donation is excluded from your taxable income, it's often a more advantageous way to give than giving cash or writing a check.

It's a simple way to give. Some charitable giving vehicles are more complicated than others. Giving from your IRA is one of the simplest. Whether you want to make a gift of \$100 or \$100,000, (the maximum allowed annually), all you have to do is instruct your IRA custodian to transfer a specific amount to the Catholic Community

Foundation (CCF) and designate the cause or causes you wish to support.

Charitable donations count as part of your required minimum distribution (RMD). You can start using your IRA for charitable gifts at age 70 ½. But the age for RMDs is now 73. Often, people don't need all the income they are required to withdraw or want to avoid income that would push them into a higher tax bracket. Using the RMD to support a ministry or institution close to your heart is one way to address that.

Donating from an IRA is a flexible way to give. As time passes, your needs evolve and some of those unknowns become known. How you use your IRA to help others can reflect those realities.

A few things to keep in mind...

—There's more incentive to give from a traditional IRA because distributions from Roth IRAs are already tax-free.

—You may not take an income tax deduction for donations from your IRA. Committing yourself to “give for as

long as you live” is a retirement goal that honors God and sets an inspiring example—not only for our own families but for younger Catholics trying to live their faith. But it doesn't have to stop there.

An IRA can also make it possible to leave a gift of compassion when we pass. Consider naming one of our parishes, schools, ministries or the archdiocese as a beneficiary of your IRA so that a portion of what remains can serve the needs of others beyond your lifetime.

Interested in exploring charitable giving from your IRA? The CCF staff is happy to help. Contact us at (317) 236-1482 or ccf@archindy.org.

(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.) †

Professor: Earth Day needs Catholics' full engagement and hopeful vision

(OSV News)—Catholic university professor Samuel Shephard suggests that Catholics can bring a unique viewpoint to Earth Day, which was celebrated on April 22, because “as Catholics, we can understand we're doing that as stewards of creation.

“When we get involved in Earth Day, we can do the same kind of things that everyone else is doing—they're talking about ... reducing use of plastics; how we think about ethical clothes purchasing; that sort of thing,” Shephard, who teaches biology at Ave Maria University in Ave Maria, Fla., told OSV News. But “when we become stewards of creation, we participate in his loving plan for salvation. So we do the same sort of practical things—but we do it in a kind of transcendent context.”

Earth Day, now a day when the world calls for environmental change and the protection of the planet, was originally envisioned as a college campus teach-in by its founder, Sen. Gaylord Nelson, D-Wis, who died in 2005.

At the time of the inaugural Earth Day, celebrated on April 22, 1970, U.S. skylines were thick with smog, gasoline contained dangerous levels of lead, and two-thirds of the country's lakes, rivers, and coastal waters were declared unsafe for either fishing or swimming. About 20 million Americans expressed the need to do something about it on that first Earth Day.

Within the same year, the Environmental Protection Agency was established by a Republican president, Richard M. Nixon, who earlier declared, “Clean air, clean water, open spaces—these should once again be the birthright of every American.”

While 72% of U.S. Catholics recently surveyed by Georgetown University's Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate believe “environmental justice is a legitimate issue that needs urgent attention,” only

one-third are apparently aware of Pope Francis' landmark 2015 environmental encyclical, “*Laudato Si'*: On Care of Our Common Home.”

Pew Research Center also reports 41% of regular Mass attendees in 2022 said there is no discussion about climate change in their parish.

Whether the reason is discomfort with the perceived political activism of the environmental movement, or concerns about possible over-divinization of nature, those numbers indicate something of a disconnect between the Catholic Church's long-standing “care for creation” teaching and the practical ecological activity of American Catholics.

For Shephard at Ave Maria, it's time that changed. A contribution to this change is a robust, hands-on, university-level course of instruction designed to equip students with the tools they need to be effective everyday environmental stewards.

“The new minor in Agriculture and Catholic Environmental Stewardship [ACES] will draw from both existing curriculum and include two new focused classes that will explore technical, theoretical and highly practical aspects of sustainable agriculture and environmental stewardship,” Ave Maria announced in a news release on April 9.

Ave Maria University was established in 2003 as a Catholic university and today boasts 1,270 students, who can choose from about 66 majors and minors, and have access to seven daily Masses and 33 faith-based clubs on campus.

Shephard explained what the new ACES minor will include, in addition to ecology, biology and environmental science.

“There's going to be a class in theology, dealing with *Laudato Si'* and all these aspects of what it is to be human and care for nature,” he said. “There's going to be a class on small business, because I want people to be able to start small enterprises, perhaps growing sustainable food or making ethical clothing.

“But,” he added, “what I'm really excited about is that, within that context, we're actually starting a farm here in Ave Maria. We've got 55 acres—and it's going to be partly a community endeavor, and partly a university process.”

Ten acres of the plot will be a “permaculture” organic farm with vegetables and eventually animals. Permaculture refers to the concept of utilizing land, resources, people and the environment in a way that doesn't produce any waste.

“It's going to [be] as absolutely natural and holistic and sustainable as we can manage,” said Shephard. “And so the students in the minor will be able to spend quite a lot of time outside, literally digging and growing vegetables and keeping hens, and then maybe selling their produce in the local farmer's market. I really hope it's going to be very hands-on,” he shared. “People so far have got quite inspired—and I think that's what's attracting them.”

Shephard's own environmental journey took him from his birthplace on a small island in the northwest of Scotland to the west coast of Ireland's commercial fishing industry, where he fished for a time with his wife's family.

Shephard became keenly aware of environmental issues during this time, which motivated him to earn both a graduate degree and a doctorate in fisheries management. The last two decades of his career have been spent working around the world on sustainability issues.

“As a secular environmentalist, I always felt a bit despairing; everything seemed like it was already lost,” Shephard recalled. “But then when I became a Catholic”—he was 23—“I really felt a lot more hope, and a lot more optimism and inspiration.”

Shephard proposes a sort of “theology of ecology,” emphasizing Catholicism's rich care for creation tradition.

“The Catholic Church has a really distinct and very beautiful understanding of care for nature,” he said. “I think secular environmentalism just says we're kind of part of nature; looking after nature—mainly for utilitarian reasons. The Church says that we're, yes, part of nature—but we're also set apart by intellect and will, and by the fact that we're made in the image and likeness of God. So, that kind of places us right in the middle, but also gives us a unique, transcendent role.

“Which is quite a terrifying responsibility, isn't it, in a way?” he reflected. “We can't just drop that,” Shephard cautioned.

“But I love this idea of creation; I love this idea of being part of God's plan. It kind of picks us up into something much bigger than ourselves—and points all of the things we do toward a kind of ultimate end point,” he added.

“So, we're not just doing this because we're flying through space with a set of resources that we have to conserve for the future, but we're actually headed toward an ultimate destination in heaven; the fulfillment of God's plan for the human person,” Shephard emphasized. “It's about as non-trivial as it could get.”

Shephard stressed that Catholic engagement with their role as stewards of creation brings extended value to Earth Day and beyond. He expanded on two foundational ideas.

One is to look to Catholics within the Church who aren't that interested in environmental issues, and say, “We can't—for reasons of our political alignment, or any other thing—pretend that we don't have a responsibility here, or/and pretend that this doesn't matter,” he explained.

“This is absolutely part of what it is to be a Catholic—to take care of the poor; to take care of creation. It's a matter of justice—of giving due to God, and to our neighbor,” he said.

The other, Shephard said, “is to look to the world and say, our [Catholic] understanding of what nature is, and what the human person is, is actually really powerful—and it can really help as perhaps a uniquely valuable mode of understanding environmental problems and responding to them in a really humanitarian, person-focused, and loving way.”

Pope Francis' environmental focus—but also that of St. John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI—has, in Shephard's view, elevated the conversation.

“I think we have something incredible to offer,” he said. “But it has, until *Laudato Si'*, gone a little bit unnoticed.” †



People hike along a trail in Sedona, Ariz., on April 14. Earth Day is an annual event on April 22 to demonstrate support for environmental protection. (OSV News photo/Bob Roller)

SIMPLY CATHOLIC

St. Joseph is a model for the often-hidden faith and love of fathers

By John Cavadini

(OSV News)—One of St. Joseph's most devoted followers, St. Peter Julian Eymard, recommends we use the March 19 feast of St. Joseph as an opportunity to seal a devotion to him, saying: "I consecrate myself to you, good St. Joseph, as my spiritual father; I choose you to rule my soul and to teach me the interior life, the life hidden away with Jesus, Mary and yourself."

This recommended spiritual practice for St. Joseph's primary feast day is also good to take up on May 1, the day on which the Church observes the feast of St. Joseph the Worker.

St. Peter Julian, a priest in 19th-century France, followed the recommendation of another faithful devotee of St. Joseph, St. Teresa of Avila, who said, "If a person cannot find anyone to teach him how to pray, let him take this glorious saint for his guide, and he will not lose his way."

But what could this possibly mean? No teaching of St. Joseph is recorded. He is silent in Scripture.

The journey to find the answer to that question has been a personal one. After years of overlooking him, I discovered St. Joseph later in life by, ironically, noticing he was not being noticed. In our parish church, there are side altars to the Blessed Virgin, to the Sacred Heart and to St. Joseph. After Mass one Sunday, I noticed that, while the first two always had many votive lights burning, there were usually far fewer before St. Joseph.

The inequity of this struck me. After all, St. Joseph was head of the Holy Family! True, his wife was the Mother of God, and his son was God incarnate—but still, I thought, he was the dad, responsible for his wife and her child, whom he had welcomed as his own, securing their safety, earning their livelihood. He seemed to deserve more respect.

I'm a dad, too—was this all projection out of a moment of self-pity? Whatever the reason, I went to light a candle at his altar so there would at least be one more. Thus, almost accidentally, began my devotion to "this glorious saint."

About A.D. 112, the martyr St. Ignatius of Antioch wrote: "Mary's virginity was hidden from the prince of this world; so was her giving birth; and so was the death of the Lord. All these three secrets, to be revealed at the appropriate time, were brought to pass in the deep silence of God."

Origen of Alexandria, in the next century, commented on this passage from Ignatius, explaining that it was primarily the presence of Joseph that preserved these three secrets until Jesus' "hour" had come.

Although the annunciation was only to Mary, it was to Mary as betrothed to Joseph.

Now we are ready to see the true depths of the mystery of St. Joseph, who, Scripture says, is "righteous" (Mt 1:18). He is not an unthinking stage prop just taking up space to make things look normal.

Betrothed to Mary, he took her into his home as his wife (probably against his better judgment) in obedience to a vision that told him that the babe in her womb was

conceived by the Holy Spirit. He gave up his own chance at natural paternity to be the father of a child about whose very existence he was not even consulted.

In other words, the working out of the virginal conception and birth of Jesus, and even his death, are "hidden" in the loving generosity of St. Joseph—hidden from the prince of this world, the devil, by the only thing he can't see—self-giving love—because he doesn't believe in it.

The generous obedience of St. Joseph to the vision of God is astonishing. No one asked him how he felt about his wife's being consulted on an intimate matter affecting their whole married life, or about raising someone else's child and giving up his own natural paternity for good.

But his sacrifice in generous obedience to the will of God became a home in this world for Jesus, his legal son, and Mary, his wife, both treasures of divine initiative.

This act submerges Joseph in the profound "silence of God," as Ignatius calls it. St. Paul says in Colossians, "For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God" (Col 3:3). There is something intrinsically "hidden" about the Christian life, and we see the form of this revealed in St. Joseph. His life, by its very structure, cannot provide an accounting of itself without undoing itself.

Joseph has no one to tell his story to, and he exercises a prudential silence about himself.

St. Peter Julian writes: "St. Joseph stands out as one of the great men of silence. He observed ... the silence of fidelity in keeping strictly secret the divine mystery of which he was the confidant. Nothing could make him break this secret of God."

A mosaic of St. Joseph, commissioned by Pope St. John XXIII and placed over the side altar in St. Peter's Basilica where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved, uniquely depicts the warmth and beauty of this saint. In the image, Joseph is outside, holding the child Jesus in his right arm. Jesus looks about 2 years old. This gives Joseph's figure a look of immense strength, because he manages to hold such a big, active child in one arm with no trouble.

In his left hand, he holds his identifying iconic sign, the staff blooming with the lilies of purity. He holds it a little stiffly, as though a neighbor had chanced upon him and asked him to pose for a picture with his son, insisting Joseph hold the staff, too.

He is in the middle of taking care of his 2-year-old and someone has asked him to pose. But he tolerantly obliges, picks up the baby and looks at the "camera." His face is calm but hardly grave; rather, even though posing for an annoying family picture, his face seems to take it in stride and seems to radiate happiness.

It's a face familiar to any dad.

Here is the hiddenness of St. Joseph, who accepts the utterly common lot of a dad holding his child, without fanfare, though he is holding the Word incarnate, and could claim glory and fame.

Jesus does not pay any attention to the imaginary photographer. He instead seems wholly delighted with



A statue of St. Joseph and the Christ Child is pictured at Jesus the Divine Word Church in Huntington, Md. St. Joseph is a powerful witness to the often-hidden life of faith and love of fathers. (CNS photo/Bob Roller)

his dad, for what on St. Joseph's side is the continuous immolation of self-gift, is on Jesus' side the brilliant radiance, comfort and charity of paternal love, that cloak of invisibility that gives even the Word of God a genuine childhood and keeps him hidden from the Prince of Darkness until it is time for him to confront him alone, armed only with the love he had learned, in part, from his earthly dad.

It is as though he was learning, in a truly human way, from his true and legal human dad, St. Joseph, the dimensions of the generosity of the Eternal One he will later call his Father in a wholly unique way. After all, just like the eternal Father, Joseph "loves the Son and has given everything over to him" (Jn 3:35).

Here is St. Teresa again: "I took for my patron and lord the glorious St. Joseph, and recommended myself earnestly to him. ... I cannot call to mind that I have ever asked him at any time for anything which he has not granted."

I believe that I can say the same thing, though in some cases I have had to grow up a little in order to see it. But isn't that the job of a dad, to help his kids grow up by seeing beyond their childish concerns, even as those concerns are warmly received and not dismissed as merely childish?

Devotion to St. Joseph has shown me why he has so few candles at his altar, comparatively speaking. It is because he wills it. He has always willed his family to shine beyond himself, deflecting attention from himself to them. Devotion to St. Joseph means that, as the genuine mystery of his person is revealed to us little by little, we grow up to accept the form of the Christian life as, in baptism, a hidden one, a death to the noise of the world and a life in the silence of God that is nothing other than his eternal love.

Thank you, St. Joseph!

(John Cavadini is director of the McGrath Institute for Church Life at the University of Notre Dame in northern Indiana.) †



A mosaic at the Coptic Orthodox Church of the Virgin Mary in the Cairo suburb of Maadi portrays St. Joseph leading the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Christ Child into exile in Egypt. Coptic tradition holds that Mary, Joseph and Jesus rested there during their flight there. The church sits a few miles outside Cairo on the left bank of the Nile River. (CNS photo/Dana Smillie)

Faith and Family/Sean Gallagher

Let Mary help to lead you into the spiritual depths of family life

May is a month traditionally dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Church.

May this year can be a good time for us to reflect prayerfully on how Mary can help families enter more fully into the profound life of grace and mission to which God has called them.



That's because so much of who we know Mary to be is woven into family relationships. Christ on the cross gave her to us as our spiritual mother. She is the mother of Christ according to the flesh, and has a special relationship with our heavenly Father.

Each day, the Church prays in Evening Prayer in its Liturgy of the Hours the most words we have from Mary spoken at one time. It's her song of praise that came forth from her heart when she visited her kinswoman Elizabeth (Lk 1:46-55). Catholic tradition calls it her "*Magnificat*" after the first word in the Latin rendering of the canticle.

Reflecting on what Mary, inspired by the Holy Spirit, said in her *Magnificat* is a way she can lead families more into the spiritual depths of their shared daily life.

Just take that first famous line of her canticle: "My soul magnifies the greatness of the Lord" (Lk 1:46). The mystery of those words jumps off the page. How can any limited human being, even one as great as Mary, "magnify" the infinite greatness of God?

Objectively speaking, they cannot. But our subjective appreciation of it can certainly grow. Even though she was conceived without original sin and was full of grace, Mary's encounter with the archangel Gabriel surely increased her awareness of the infinite greatness of God in the midst of her ordinary daily life.

And she sang her song of praise in another ordinary moment when she was greeted by Elizabeth upon arriving at her home in the hill country of Judea.

Catholic parents and children can, like Mary, magnify the greatness of the Lord when, through the eyes of faith, they see revealed before them the wondrous and yet also ordinary ways he works in the midst of their daily lives.

Mary in her *Magnificat* speaks of God working through various generations. "From this day all generations will call me blessed" (Lk 1:48). "He has mercy on those who fear him in every generation"

(Lk 1:50). "He has remembered his promise of mercy, the promise he made to our fathers, to Abraham and his children forever" (Lk 1:55).

God lets his grace flow through members of Catholic families to each other to strengthen each person's faith so that they can better see how much he loves them and works in their lives. These channels of grace can be especially effective between different generations.

Parents, of course, have the duty to form their children in the faith. But parents learn quickly how their faith can be deepened by their children. After all, Jesus taught us that "unless you turn and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 18:3).

And reflecting on how God works through the generations would not be complete without a grateful mention of how his grace flows abundantly through grandparents to the two generations that follow them—their children and grandchildren.

Mary keeps all families close to her heart and prays for them always. Let's grow in our love for her this May and let her help us to magnify the greatness of the Lord. †

Corrections Ministries/Deacon John Cord

A call to help children who live in foster care in our Indiana communities

I recently heard a technology, entertainment and design (TED) talk about the foster care system in the United States. The speaker, Sixto Cancel, is a product of the foster care system. He explained that he bounced from foster care family to family from an early age until he "aged out" of foster care when he turned 18.



Luckily, he was able to complete a college degree and is now an advocate for improving the foster care system. He now runs an organization that advocates for relatives of the children to become their foster parents. He explains

that living with relatives dramatically improves the outcomes for children, compared to those who are placed in foster care families who are not relatives.

Cancel explained that people who come from the foster care system are two to three times more likely to end up in prison. They are also two to three times more likely to end up homeless and in poverty. Foster care children are two times more likely to have severe post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) compared to people coming out of the military, which we typically think of as having the highest rates of PTSD.

This led me to look into what the foster care system in Indiana looks like. I learned that most children end up in foster care due to neglect or abuse by their parents or someone in their family. There are about 15,000 children in the foster care system in Indiana. Of these, about 42% are able to be placed with a relative or close friend of the family. Another 49% are living with a foster care family who are not a relative. About 6% are living in a foster home.

Indiana does an exceptionally good job of placing

There are about 15,000 children in the foster care system in Indiana. Of these, about 42% are able to be placed with a relative or close friend of the family. Another 49% are living with a foster care family who are not a relative. About 6% are living in a foster home.

children with relatives and friends. We are among the highest in the nation in placements with relatives.

However, Indiana is not doing so well in another category. Indiana is among the top five states for per capita foster care placement. Ten out of every 1,000 children end up in foster care in Indiana at some point in their lives. The national average is six out of 1,000 children. I am not entirely sure why we are worse off than the national average.

What we do know about children in the foster care system in Indiana is they are much less likely to graduate high school, have a much higher rate of mental illnesses, end up in poverty at a much higher rate, and have a record of incarceration at an earlier age and frequency. Children who were in the foster care system also have much higher unemployment and homelessness rates.

What can be done to change or help this issue? We do know that a great majority of foster care children come from families mired in poverty. We know that poverty is a vicious cycle. So, it would seem that focusing our attention on helping those in poverty through education, mentoring and supporting love would be a good start.

There is a great book called *Bridges Out of Poverty*. It is written by Dr. Ruby Kayne, Phillip Duvol and Teri Dreussi-Smith, and I highly recommend reading it. It will help you increase your understanding of what poverty is and why so many people seem to be stuck in it.

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

'Called to Holiness'/Jaymie Stuart Wolfe

Christ's body, blood, soul and divinity remind us 'I have seen the Lord'

If there's one thing we can learn from those who encountered the risen Lord during the 40 days between his Resurrection and Ascension, it's this: Seeing Jesus isn't the same as recognizing him.



To Mary Magdalene, distraught at the tomb, Christ looked like a gardener. To the two disillusioned disciples on the road to Emmaus, he was a clueless stranger. To former fishermen returning to Galilee uncertain of what to do next, the Master was just a man hoping to cook breakfast on the shore.

The Gospel accounts are strange—maybe even troubling—to us. When we read or hear these stories at Mass, we can't help but wonder what in the world was going on. How is it possible that the people who knew Jesus best, those who were among his closest followers, didn't know him when they saw him?

But before we take a disparaging view of those very first Christians, perhaps there is another question we ought to ask: How many times do we see Jesus and fail to recognize him?

Based on my own experience, I'll venture to guess that the answer is somewhere between countless and infinite.

By faith, I know that Jesus keeps his promises, that he is always with me and that he never abandons me. But if

I'm honest, I don't recognize Christ's presence with me most days—not even on the days when I go to adoration or Mass.

And yet, the eucharistic encounter at adoration and Mass can show us how to see Jesus and know that it is Jesus when we see him. The impact of being able to say, "I have seen the Lord" is orders of magnitude greater than simply making a credal statement like "I believe in God" or "I follow Jesus," or even "I'm Catholic." It makes us far more convincing witnesses.

The faith formation we all need most can be found at the feet of the eucharistic Lord. And like those first disciples, we also come to know him in "the breaking of the bread" (Lk 24:35). The "school of the Eucharist," as it were, teaches us where to look for Jesus, where we are likely to see him at work in our own lives.

We see him in presence, sacrifice and communion. We experience God's presence in creation, in Scripture, in silence, in the presence of others, most especially the poor. We see him in the sacrifices that are made for us, those we value deeply, but also those we easily take for granted. And we see him in the community he gathers, those who resonate with us in shared life experience and those who don't.

I think that's why St. Mother Teresa of Kolkata (Calcutta) made the daily Mass and holy hour a priority for her Missionaries of Charity. The Eucharist may well

have been the secret to how she herself was able to see Jesus in the poorest of the poor. It may also be the source of the prayer Mother so often shared, the one in which she recited the words "You did it to Me" on her fingers.

This much is clear: if we are to become Christ in our world, we must see him there first. That shouldn't be as difficult as it often seems to us because he is there. In fact, he is everywhere. Christ Jesus is cultivating life among the dead and in all the cemeteries of our lives.

He is walking along with us on the road when we are confused and disappointed. He is explaining to us the truths we thought we understood, calling out to us from the shoreline, and preparing to feed us when we are hungry. He comes to us in shame and isolation, behind the locked doors we are afraid to open. He breathes peace over our souls, forgives our sins and shows us how to forgive one another.

And yes, he is with us in the Most Holy Sacrament of the altar. And because he has never left us, because the Eucharist is his body, blood, soul and divinity, we can say with all those who came before us in faith: "I have seen the Lord."

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

Fifth Sunday of Easter/Msg. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, April 28, 2024

- Acts of the Apostles 9:26-31
- 1 John 3:18-24
- John 15:1-8

The Acts of the Apostles is the source of the first reading of Mass this weekend during the Easter season.



It highlights St. Paul. In an earlier passage—not proclaimed in this liturgy—Paul, an intensely devoted Jew, after having persecuted Christians, miraculously experiences an

encounter with the Lord on the way to Damascus.

Paul instantly converts to Christianity. Eventually, the Christian community accepts him, although understandably with some trepidation, considering Paul's record of persecuting them. He had been quite hostile to followers of Jesus.

At last accepted, in this weekend's reading he returns to Jerusalem. With his choleric personality and religious fervor, now bursting with belief in Christ, Paul openly debated with Greek-speaking Jews.

Paul himself was well-educated. From Tarsus in Asia Minor, he was not a product of the Holy Land, although he was an ethnic and religiously observant Jew. He spoke Greek, the language of the empire and of scholarship at that time.

Paul's intensity made enemies for him. The Christians took him for his own safety to Caesarea, the Roman capital of Palestine, a place now in ruins on the outskirts of modern Tel Aviv.

From Caesarea, a seaport, the Christians sent him home to Tarsus for his personal security.

An important statement in this reading is in its final verse. It says that throughout the entire area, the Church was at peace and making progress. Notice that the term "Church" is used.

For the second reading this Easter weekend, the Church offers a selection from the First Epistle of St. John. It refers to its readers as "children" (1 Jn 3:18). Obviously, adults composed the epistle's audience—or most of the audience. Still, John employs this term of endearment. Those who follow Jesus indeed are God's

"children" in their vulnerability and need for him.

St. John's Gospel supplies the last reading, part of the long discourse by Jesus given to the Apostles at the Last Supper.

This reading has a deeply eucharistic undertone. At the Last Supper, Jesus gave the Twelve the wine that became his blood through his power.

Wine, of course, is the product of grapes that grow on vines. In this reading, Jesus says, "I am the true vine" (Jn 15:1). All who love the Lord are the branches. God protects the vine, even by cutting away branches because of sin.

Thus, Jesus warns that no branch can bear fruit if it separates itself from the true vine of God.

Receiving and remaining in the blood of Christ completes and strengthens this bond between vine and branches.

Reflection

In Acts, the First Epistle of John and the Gospel of John, the Church calls us to absolute faith in and deep love for God in Jesus, risen to life after dying on the cross. He is the cornerstone of our faith and of our lives.

Part of the Lord's legacy is the Church. The Church does not (or should not) merely mean an earthly, visible and coincidental entity that we can take or leave. If we truly are with Christ, then we are part of the Church, and vice versa.

The Church is the mystical body of Christ, a phrase rich in its references to St. Paul's writings. It then also is the vine. Members of the Church are its branches.

Vines and branches involve a living relationship. The vine nourishes and holds the branches. Cut away from the vine, the branches die. This Church offers us divine nourishment—the eucharistic blood of Christ—and it unites us to the Lord.

On this weekend, the Church again invites us to celebrate the victory of Jesus over death. If faithful, if in the Church, Christ's mystical body, we are with Jesus. He is the vine. We are the branches. We live and are strong in Christ, nourished by the Eucharist. †

Daily Readings

Monday, April 29

St. Catherine of Siena, virgin and doctor of the Church
Acts 14:5-18
Psalm 115:1-4, 15-16
John 14:21-26

Tuesday, April 30

St. Pius V, pope
Acts 14:19-28
Psalm 145:10-13ab, 21
John 14:27-31a

Wednesday, May 1

St. Joseph the Worker
Acts 15:1-6
Psalm 122:1-5
John 15:1-8

Thursday, May 2

St. Athanasius, bishop and doctor of the Church
Acts 15:7-21
Psalm 96:1-3, 10
John 15:9-11

Friday, May 3

St. Philip, Apostle
St. James, Apostle
1 Corinthians 15:1-8
Psalm 19:2-5
John 14:6-14

Saturday, May 4

Acts 16:1-10
Psalm 100:1b-2, 3, 5
John 15:18-21

Sunday, May 5

Sixth Sunday of Easter
Acts 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48
Psalm 98:1-4
1 John 4:7-10
John 15:9-17

Question Corner/Jenna Marie Cooper

The Church allows the killing of animals for 'legitimate purposes'

Q What is the Church's position on the treatment of animals? My vegetarian friend believes it is immoral to kill animals, even for food. We recently hired an exterminator to eliminate rodents. This friend implied we should humanely capture them and release them, instead of killing them. This is not the company's way and it has not worked in the past. Is there a moral issue here, or just someone's opinion?



A The short answer to your question is that, while we are morally obliged to treat animals decently and avoid animal cruelty, it is morally licit to kill animals for food or certain other legitimate purposes.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* addresses this issue in paragraph 2417: "God entrusted animals to the stewardship of those whom he created in his own image. Hence it is legitimate to use animals for food and clothing. They

may be domesticated to help man in his work and leisure. Medical and scientific experimentation on animals is a morally acceptable practice if it remains within reasonable limits and contributes to caring for or saving human lives."

As we read in Genesis 1, God created everything that lives, including animals, and God's creation is fundamentally good and worthy of respect.

But, unlike animals, human beings were created as rational beings (that is, capable of intellectual thought and abstract reasoning) endowed with free will. In this way, humanity was made in God's image; and God has given us the honor of being co-creators with him in several respects.

As we read in Scripture: "God said: Let us make human

beings in our image, after our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the tame animals, all the wild animals, and all the creatures that crawl on the Earth. ... God blessed them and God said to them: Be fertile and multiply; fill the Earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all the living things that crawl on the Earth" (Gn 1:26, 28).

Among other things, God calls humanity to be stewards of his creation, which means that we are to actively care for creation and be concerned for the flourishing of even the non-human life around us. As the catechism notes: "Animals are God's creatures. He surrounds them with his providential care. By their mere existence, they bless him and give him glory. Thus, men owe them kindness" (#2416).

At the same time, we believe that all of non-human creation is ultimately meant to serve humanity, which is why we are permitted to kill animals for food and to meet other reasonable needs. While a Catholic is certainly free to adopt a vegetarian diet—either out of concern for animal welfare or for other reasons—the Church does not teach that vegetarianism is required. So, a Catholic who argues that you should become a vegetarian is simply expressing an opinion.

With respect to your question about exterminating rodents, I think, in principle, this kind of pest control is morally licit. Rodents can cause some serious and troublesome issues when they infest a home, such as the potential for spreading disease or damaging the infrastructure of a house. Although pest control is not the scientific research mentioned in paragraph 2417, pest control can still be considered part of "caring for or saving human lives."

If a "catch and release" system is not effective or practical in your specific situation, killing the rodents can be justified. Still, some means of rodent extermination are more humane than others. Since the catechism tells us that it is "contrary to human dignity to cause animals to suffer needlessly" (#2418), it would be worth considering which specific methods of rodent extermination cause the least amount of suffering for the animal.

(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

Endless Love

By Gayle Schrank

Undying hope and Endless Love
Are things we all desire
Earthly life has its limits
Divine Truth is what takes us higher
Let us seek heaven on Earth
Remember we are mind, body, and soul
Our hearts will help us to believe
There is so much more to know
Never forget the divinity of God
When ignored we cannot recall
God's inherent gifts and blessings
His unbounded goodness is there for all
Lord today I give to you
Those things that stir my soul
Trusting in your Endless Love
Your faith and peace I will know

(Gayle Schrank is a member of St Mary Parish in Navilleton. Photo: This photo shows the total solar eclipse on April 8 as seen from Indianapolis.) (Submitted photo by Jennifer Arvin, member of St. John the Evangelist Parish, Indianapolis)



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.

CLARK, Marianne, 84, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Richmond, April 10. Mother of Katie Drummond, David, Joseph, Michael and Robert Clark, Jr. Sister of Nancy Barker and Mike Gonya. Grandmother of eight. Great-grandmother of seven.

DAUGHERTY, Susan, 75, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany, March 30. Sister of Jane Buttrum, Theresa Wolfe and John Daugherty. Aunt and great-aunt of several.

DORAN, Michael J., 66, Good Shepherd, Indianapolis, April 3. Husband of Nikki Doran. Brother of Michelle Farris.

ECK, Jr., Charles H., 80, St. Roch, Indianapolis, April 8. Husband of Marsha Eck. Father of Cherie Nowacki and Kevin Eck. Brother of Janet Smith, Rebecca Worrell, Theresa and Leo Eck. Grandfather of five.

GREIN, Lawrence, 83, St. Joan of Arc, Indianapolis, April 2. Brother of Marilyn Burich, Sharron Zelinski, Joseph, Raymond and Richard Grein. Uncle and great-uncle of several.

HALBLEIB, Mary Jean, 88, St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd County, April 11. Wife of Leo Halbleib. Mother of Bridget Keating, Mary Taylor, Sharon and Tim Halbleib. Grandmother of eight. Great-grandmother of five.

HENKLE, Loretta I. (Maschino), 100, St. Ambrose, Seymour, April 13. Mother of Debbie Miller, Karen Wilson and Tim Henkle. Grandmother of 23. Great-grandmother of 52.

African sunset



Elephants walk along a dirt path at sunset on March 19 inside Chobe National Park, located in Kasane, Botswana. (OSV News photo/Sam Lucero)

HOLTZMAN, Mildred, 96, St. Boniface, Fulda, April 6. Mother of LeeAnn Rasche. Grandmother of four. Great-grandmother of seven.

KAST, Allen, 87, St. Paul, Tell City, April 8. Father of Joan Esarey and Janet Wagner. Brother of Daryl Kast.

Grandfather of six. Great-grandfather of three.

OBERHAUSEN, Meredith A., 78, St. Paul, Tell City, April 10. Mother of Christie Ensor and Kim Garrett. Grandmother of five. Great-grandmother of two.

RAY, Danny E., 72, Prince of Peace, Madison, April 11. Husband of Sarah Ray. Father of Kelli Schmidt and Daniel Ray. Brother of Linda Stangle. Grandfather of six. Great-grandfather of six.

RINCK, Mary Jo (Vogelsang), 89, St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Bright, April 8. Wife of David Rinck. Mother of Kathleen Vanden Eynden, Michelle Herling, Mary Kammer, Janet Schneiders, Andrew, Daniel and Mike Rinck. Sister of Greg Vogelsang. Grandmother of 22. Great-grandmother of 24.

RUDOLF, Dora M. (Cupp), 80, St. Mary, Rushville, April 13. Wife of Jerry Rudolf. Mother of Therese Copeland, Brian and Scott Rudolf. Grandmother of five.

SEEWER, Mildred J., 87, St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd

County, April 8. Mother of David, Dennis and Steven Seewer. Sister of Lonnie Hooe. Grandmother of six. Great-grandmother of seven.

SHATTO, Anita V., 88, St. Bartholomew, Columbus, April 5. Wife of Raymond Shatto. Mother of Janine

Anderson, Debra Armuth, Gregory, Jason and Richard Shatto. Grandmother of 10. Great-grandmother of 14.

STRONG, Stephen, 68, St. Gabriel, Connersville, March 28. Husband of Nancy Strong. Father of Erika Newell, Emily Glover and

Ethan Strong. Stepson of Helen Strong. Brother of Kaye Allen, Darryl, Jay, John and Richard Strong. Grandfather of six. Great-grandfather of one.

WATSON, Debbie L., 71, St. Michael, Bradford, March 14. †

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

Providence Sister Rosemary Eyler served in Catholic schools for 57 years

Providence Sister Rosemary Eyler (previously Sister Mary Luke), a member of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods in St. Mary-of-the-Woods, died on March 30 at Providence Health Care on the campus of her religious community's motherhouse. She was 93.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on April 4 at the Church of the Immaculate Conception at the motherhouse in St. Mary-of-the-Woods. Burial followed at the sisters' cemetery.

Sister Rosemary was born on June 16, 1930, in Crawfordsville, Ind. She entered the Sisters of Providence on Feb. 2, 1949, and professed final vows on Aug. 15, 1956.

Sister Rosemary earned a bachelor's degree in education at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College and master's degrees in education and educational administration at Indiana State University in Terre Haute.

During her 75 years as a member of the Sisters of Providence, Sister Rosemary

ministered as an educator in Catholic schools for 57 years in California, Illinois, Indiana, Massachusetts and New Hampshire. After retiring from education in 2008, she served in parish ministry in the Lafayette, Ind., Diocese, and at St. Christopher Parish in Indianapolis. In 2021, Sister Rosemary returned to the motherhouse where she dedicated herself entirely to prayer.

In the archdiocese, Sister Rosemary ministered at St. Michael School in Greenfield from 1959-66 and in Indianapolis at the former St. Bridget School from 1966-70, St. Matthew the Apostle School from 1979-93 and St. Christopher Parish from 2017-20.

She is survived by a sister, Margaret McCafferty of Crawfordsville and a brother, Thomas Eyler of Palm Key, Fla.

Memorial gifts may be sent to the Sisters of Providence, 1 Sisters of Providence Road, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN 47876. †

Haiti violence, lawlessness forces U.S. missionary priest to evacuate

(OSV News)—As Haiti’s capital spirals into lawlessness, a longtime U.S. missionary has been forced to evacuate—while Haitian Catholics in the U.S. are doubling down on prayer for their troubled homeland.

Father Thomas Hagan, an Oblate of St. Francis de Sales, returned to the



Fr. Thomas Hagan, O.S.F.S.

U.S. in mid-April after some three decades of ministering in Port-au-Prince through Hands Together, the nonprofit he founded in 1986 to provide educational, pastoral and humanitarian development to Haiti’s largest and poorest slum, Cité Soleil.

With seven campuses, the organization—one of Cité Soleil’s largest employers—features a high school, a free clinic and a senior outreach and housing program. Hands Together also operates in Haiti’s rural areas through water wells and agricultural programs, while aiding the poorest schools, clinics and parishes in the northern Diocese of Les Gonaïves.

News of Father Thomas’ departure was announced in an April 18 post to the ministry’s Facebook page.

“Haiti continues to rage in chaos and

violence,” wrote Hands Together executive director Doug Campbell in the post. “After several weeks in that environment, we knew it was time [for Father Thomas] to leave.”

The nation’s systemic kidnappings, rapes, killings and widespread civil unrest led the U.S. Embassy in March to urge its citizens to leave Haiti as soon as possible.

But even after the State Department began evacuating U.S. citizens, “obviously Father Tom stayed,” wrote Campbell.

At the same time, the Department of Homeland Security under the Biden administration has resumed deportations of Haitian migrants, flying several dozen back to that nation on April 18 in a move that has prompted outrage among several immigrant advocates.

Conditions in Port-au-Prince have continued to worsen, with gang attacks taking place throughout the city. The port itself—upon which the island nation is crucially dependent for supplies—is strangled by gang feuds, leading International Organization for Migration chief in Haiti Philippe Branchat, to call Port-au-Prince “a city under siege.”

In a March 3 livestreamed Mass, Father Thomas admitted that “probably in all the years I’ve been in Haiti, I don’t think it’s ever been as bad as it is right now.”

The accelerating risk ultimately led the priest to return to the U.S., although Campbell said in his Facebook post that

it was “remarkable” the Hands Together schools have remained open following Father Thomas’ departure.

“We continue our classes, our feeding, and our outreach,” wrote Campbell. “I don’t think there is anyone else doing this.”

Campbell noted in the Facebook post that the ministry’s “25 years of nearly daily interactions with Cité Soleil” had created “very deep roots” that enabled the priest to leave Haiti safely.

“Father Tom drove with relative immunity to the Dominican Republic bypassing many checkpoints on this precarious journey,” wrote Campbell. “Indeed, Father Tom’s popularity was reflected in the smiles and handshakes offered to him by the soldiers.”

In July 2023, Father Thomas had negotiated a fragile truce between four gang leaders, who “promise[d] our loving God ... to bring peace to all people ... to bring security to all people ... to join hands with all

people who are dedicated to making peace.”

Among the signatories of the document, a digital copy of which Father Thomas provided to OSV News, was Jimmy “Barbecue” Chérisier, who has emerged as one of Haiti’s most powerful men amid that nation’s multiple, sustained crises such as political instability, natural disasters, foreign intervention and international debt.

In July 2021, Haitian President Jovenel Moïse was assassinated; in April 2023, the head of the United Nations office in Haiti warned the nation was sliding into “a catastrophic spiral of violence.”

Speaking to OSV News shortly after brokering the gang truce, Father Thomas admitted his ministry placed him in constant danger of death.

He offered the March 3 liturgy for a former regular attendee named David, who “two weeks ago ... was kidnapped and murdered.” Also killed recently was one of the Hands Together teachers. †

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Liturgical Music Director

St. Joseph - Hessen Cassel Parish

Qualifications and Education Requirements

Candidate should be a practicing Catholic in good standing with prior experience leading a music ministry. Candidate should have a Bachelor's Degree in music or related field with a working knowledge in Catholic liturgy. Candidate should have competency in both organ and piano.

Role and Responsibilities

- Provide music for all Masses.
- Provide music for school Masses, funerals and other special Masses as may occur.
- Recruit and train cantors, choir members, and other musicians as needed.
- Have first right to funerals, weddings and other special Masses and Liturgies.
- Prepare "Liturgy Guides" when needed, keeping copyright requirements.
- Facilitate purchase and maintenance of missalettes, hymnals and other worship aids.
- Meet regularly with pastor and other ministers as needed to coordinate liturgies.
- Maintain Liturgical Calendar in accordance with all church directives.
- Support the school in planning and implementing liturgical music practices.
- Facilitate the maintenance and repair of all musical equipment and sound system(s).
- Provide input for annual budget.
- As a member of the pastoral staff, attend meetings as member and colleague.

To apply, visit diocesefwsb.org/careers.

Employment

Parish Marketing and Communications

St. Pius X Catholic Church and School in Indianapolis, IN, is currently seeking a full-time Marketing and Communications Specialist. Ideal candidate will have experience in creating content that will build and maintain a positive image for our parish and school. The Specialist will be developing and implementing communications strategies, media relations, social and digital media, article writing, video production, advertising/marketing initiatives, and other communication support as needed.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES: Creating, editing, and publishing print and electronic content, including written pieces, still photography, audio-video, and electronic newsletters. Communication vehicles include but are not limited to, the parish bulletin, Constant Contact, eCatholic website management, newsletters, and social media outlets (Hootsuite).

Maintain esthetically pleasing signage in the parish buildings such as posters, bulletin boards, and gathering space displays, and design exterior banners. Manage special projects as needed.

Proficiency in Google and Microsoft (Publisher) is needed. Adobe Cloud (InDesign, Photoshop, Illustrator, etc.) and Canva. Desire a graphic designer to help "tell our story" in compelling ways.

QUALIFICATIONS: Moral life according to the teachings of the Catholic Church. Excellent project management and organizational skills, excellent verbal and written communication.

EDUCATION: Bachelor's degree in Marketing, Communications, English, Media, or related experience.

For Immediate Consideration, Send applications or inquiries to
Kevin Sweeney: ksweeney@spxparish.org

ASL Interpreters Needed!

The Disabilities Ministry of the archdiocesan Office of Catechesis is in need of American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters for special Masses and events. ASL interpreters will be paid an hourly stipend.

It is preferred that interpreters be Catholic, but those who have a strong familiarity with the Catholic Mass and other liturgical rites are encouraged to apply. It is also preferred that interpreters have an Indiana Interpreting Certificate, though allowances can be made depending on experience.

For more information, contact Jenny Bryans, Disabilities Ministry Coordinator, at jbryans@archindy.org or 317-236-1448.

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