Men Seek to Rekindle the Flame of Christ in Their Hearts at Conference

BY ERIC PEAT

E
ev the brightest of fires cannot burn forever. Only those that are properly rekindled will blaze as beacons of light and help dispel the darkness. Fueled by this desire, 750 men from across the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend gathered at the Century Center in South Bend on Feb. 18. The 12th annual Rekindle the Fire men’s conference was an opportunity for men to refocus their lives on the Lord and strengthen the flame of Christ that burns within their hearts. To help achieve this, the conference offered an impressive lineup of internationally-renowned Catholic speakers, as well as adoration, confession, and Mass with Bishop Rhoades.

The event began with a bible enthronement and welcoming comments from the Masters of Ceremonies, Father Dan Koehl of St. Charles Borromeo in Fort Wayne and Father Stephen Felicichia of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Fort Wayne. The priestly pair mixed in both playful banter and prayerful encouragement throughout the day.

The first speaker of the conference was Paul J. Kim, a speaker, musician, and comedian. Kim told the story of his full immersion into the Catholic faith when, at age 19, he finally came clean in the sacrament of penance by confessing the sins he had been hiding for years. “A lifetime worth of sin was washed away in a single moment by the blood of Christ,” explained Kim. “Brothers, we cannot compete with the mercy of God.” Moved by the Lord, Kim then attended Mass, where he began “ugly crying” during the consecration and hid. “As I crawled out from under the pew, I realized for the first time in my life that that’s Jesus Christ,” Kim said of the consecrated host. “It was ‘game on.’” From there, Kim related the lives of several saints to the men in attendance, highlighting

Photos by Eric Peat

A gathering of 750 men unite to reignite their spark for God and their faith at the Century Center in South Bend for the Rekindle the Fire men’s conference on Saturday, Feb. 18.

Paul Kim delivers his talk to the men at the Rekindle the Fire men’s conference.

Jason Evert speaks to the men at the Rekindle the Fire men’s conference.

Chris Stefanick delivers a talk to the men at the Rekindle the Fire men’s conference.

BY ERIC PEAT

Photos by Eric Peat

A gathering of 750 men unite to reignite their spark for God and their faith at the Century Center in South Bend for the Rekindle the Fire men’s conference on Saturday, Feb. 18.
Goal to Educate 30 Seminarians for 30th Anniversary of Worldwide Seminarian Support

By Christopher Lushis

A single heartfelt prayer can change the world. John Becker, a current parishioner of St. Vincent de Paul, Fort Wayne, was living in Portland, Oregon, with his wife Patty in the 1980s. While deeply in love, this Catholic couple was struggling to conceive, in part due to Patty’s endometriosis. Together they agreed to attend a healing service led by a well-known priest, Father DiOrio. Although they had been married for seven years without any children, they continued to pray and trust in the Lord. While at the healing night, Father DiOrio announced that he believed someone in the audience there would be healed from infertility. Based on the additional specifics he shared, Patty believed that message could have been meant for her.

Sure enough, the Beckers soon discovered that they were pregnant. They rejoiced at the birth of their daughter, Bridge, followed soon after by the joyful arrivals of Benjamin, Robert, and Bernadette in future years. They are now blessed with twelve grandchildren and Robert is a seminarian in the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter. In light of these events, Patty says enthusiastically, “I am a poster child for ‘willing.’ I was willing to show up to the healing Mass. I was willing to continue to open up to God. I just kept pursuing God’s will and trusting in Him. God is so good; He is better to us than we deserve.”

In gratitude for the gifts bestowed upon his family, John Becker deeply desired to do something heartfelt for the Lord. Around the time of Robert’s birth in 1992, Father Nicholas Nilenma was the Associate Pastor of their parish, St. Therese in Portland, and a member of the Apostolic Life Community of Priests (ALCP) based in Tanzania, Africa. The ALCP had been invited to serve the diocese by then-Bishop Edward Erpelding in the Monsignor John Kuzmich Life Center following Mass offered for their 30th anniversary. From left: Johnaylor, Benjamin Becker, Joshua Burkhardt, Father Scheidt, Father Erpelding, John Becker, Monsignor Plus Ilechukwu, Bruce Cadwell, and Austin Kindig.

When Becker learned that it cost $1,000 a year to educate a seminarian in Tanzania, he made a pledge to try to raise $5,000 to fund five seminarians. On Feb. 13, 1993, the non-profit Worldwide Seminarian Support (WSS) was founded, with Becker serving as President. Through God’s grace, the organization received more support than expected and was able to fund 10 seminarians that initial year. Now, through 30 years of raising funds to educate priests in Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda, and the United States, WWS has provided the financial support for 68 men to become ordained to the priesthood, including two who are now bishops in Tanzania.

In addition, the current ALCP Superior General and ALCP Provincial Superior also received their seminary funding from WSS. Beyond the tuition payments, WSS has helped fund seminary construction projects to expand formation programs and improve living spaces in developing world countries. In total, they have been able to raise more than $1.2 million for seminary’s need since their founding in 1993.

To commemorate three decades of success, Mass was celebrated on Feb. 13, 2023, at St. Vincent de Paul Parish for the intentions of the ALCP. By Father Daniel Scheidt, consecrated by Monsignor Plus Ilechukwu and Father Edward Erpelding. In his homily, Father Scheidt emphasized the necessity of prayers, encouragement, invitation, and support for vocations to flourish. He also shared the encouragement he received from a former teacher who was a Sister of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration who had prayed for him to become a priest. Asking all the school children present to earnestly pray for one another, he implored, “Let us pray for those who will marry, for those called to the priesthood, to God’s kingdom in this way. I will never be able to adequately thank the Lord for the gifts he has given to my family! Our board at WSS likewise feels grateful simply to be able to participate in this initiative of sacrificial love for the sanctification of the world.”

Currently, WSS is sponsoring 22 seminarians in five countries. As part of their 30th anniversary campaign, they are hoping to raise enough money to support 30 seminarians. While the cost of seminarian tuition in Africa has risen to about $4,000 per year, any amount of support is appreciated. To learn more about WSS or to donate towards their ministry, please visit seminarian-support.org.
Diocesan Priests Remember and Honor Deacon Jim Fitzpatrick and His Love for the Church

BY CHRISTOPHER LUSHIS

Deacon James Kevin Fitzpatrick, known to many simply as “Deacon Jim,” passed away on Jan. 9 following many fruitful years of ministry in service to Christ and His Church.

From childhood, Deacon Jim had strong knowledge of and love for the liturgy. An altar server at daily Masses as a young boy, he at times even enlisted his siblings to act out the Mass at home. Later marrying the love of his life, Karen, in 1979, and welcoming their daughter Kristen in 1980, Fitzpatrick continued to be immersed in the liturgical life of the Church with the support and accompaniment of his family.

For more than 30 years, Fitzpatrick was honored to serve as Master of Ceremonies for Bishop John M. D’Arcy and Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades, assisting at numerous ordinations, confirmations, Chrism Masses, baccalaureate Masses, and other special liturgies. Fitzpatrick took on a new sense of identity and mission when he answered the call to serve the Church as a permanent deacon, being ordained by Bishop Rhoades on May 21, 2011. In this new vocation, he served principally at the parishes of St. Vincent de Paul, Fort Wayne, and St. Joseph, Roanoke.

Throughout these many years of ministry, Fitzpatrick left a profound impact on many in the local diocesan clergy.

At his funeral Mass, Bishop Rhoades exclaimed, “Deacon Jim has been a blessing in my life. He wasn’t only dutiful and amazingly skilled at fulfilling the responsibility of MC, it was something he truly loved. After his ordination to the diaconate, he was able to serve the liturgy even more closely. I am especially grateful for his generous commitment to our Catholic schools and for the many years he provided me great advice. I am going to miss him — not only his wise counsel, but also his friendship.”

Bishop Rhoades also emphasized, “Deacons are to be a sign of the ancient yet ever new ideal of dedicating oneself to the kingdom of God and the holy service of His Church.” In his homily at the funeral, Father Daniel Scheidt, Pastor of St. Vincent de Paul, Fort Wayne, expressed how this identity of service had been present throughout Deacon Jim’s life.

Father Scheidt stated, “From an early age, Deacon Jim came to know that the church was his home and that he was to help take care of this home. His favorite thing to do in his diaconal ministry at St. Vincent’s was baptismal preparation, to bring new souls into the family of the Church. As St. James the Apostle pointed others to Christ, so too did James Fitzpatrick point those he came in contact with toward the immensity of the divine love of God. Often arriving at a liturgy before anyone else and sometimes the last to leave, he was a servant of the joy of God.”

Adding that their last conversation was about him decreasing so that Christ could increase in him, Father Scheidt emphasized, “Deacon Jim reminded us to keep our eyes fixed on Christ, to follow Him through the waters of baptism, and to enter into His prayer to the Father that we all will be one, welcomed as His children into the home of Heaven.”

Father Scheidt also emphasized the supportive roles Fitzpatrick’s wife Karen and daughter Kristen played in his ministry to the Church and how their relationships prepared him to serve as both spiritual leader and father to many. To this was added a heartfelt reflection from Daniel Fitzpatrick, Deacon Jim’s brother, who emphasized how deeply Karen had shared in his diaconal vocation through her sacrifices, support, and participation in his ministry. He also commended Kristen for the profound care she showed to her father through his physical sufferings and final days, reflecting back to him the loving pastoral service he had provided to so many others during his lifetime.

Other priests from the diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend gratefully shared their gratitude as well, saying, “I have never met anyone else and sometimes the last to leave, he was a servant of the joy of God.”

Father Jay Horning, Pastor of St. Bernard, Wabash, offered his gratitude as well, saying, “When I first met Deacon Jim, I was a new Catholic and even newer seminarian, and he was Bishop’s MC. To say that I was intimidated by him would have been an understatement. However, that wasn’t because he was overly stern, mean, or angry. It’s because his presence demanded respect. He had such a love and reverence for the Word of God, a love that suffered for the Word to be proclaimed.”

Father Jay Horning, Pastor of St. Bernard, Wabash, offered his gratitude as well, saying, “When I first met Deacon Jim, I was a new Catholic and even newer seminarian, and he was Bishop’s MC. To say that I was intimidated by him would have been an understatement. However, that wasn’t because he was overly stern, mean, or angry. It’s because his presence demanded respect. He had such a love and reverence for the Word of God, a love that suffered for the Word to be proclaimed.”

Five years after Deacon Fitzpatrick joined Father Logan Parrish, Father Logan Parrish invited him to have the same honor at his own diaconate ordinations. He was after Parrish, Parochial Vicar at St. John’s in Goshen, emphasized, “For dozens of priests, Deacon Jim was a father figure. He was helpful but direct, he always told you what you needed to hear, even if you didn’t want to hear it. He served as a personal example of a witness, as one most focused on giving away the gifts God had given him. The words, the gifts, and even the love that God had given him, he knew it was all meant for others. He taught many of us seminarians how to serve God well at Mass, how to serve with dignity so that the people of God could pray even better. In his final years, when his health declined and he was told that he might have to give up his position to correct all the errors I did garnered respect. Deacon Jim loved the Church, the Mass, and us, through the years, serving with him brought great joy and it culminated when I was assigned to St. Vincent de Paul in Fort Wayne where he would serve as Deacon. Being alongside brought great joy, the servers saw it, the other ministers saw it, and I was fortunate enough to be there. All the times I walked into the sacristy I was met by, “Jaybird, how you doing?” which I loved. That was a nickname from my childhood and our camaraderie was something I always looked forward to. After his surgeries, I longed to serve with him, not for any other reason then to aid him as he had aided us. We had an understanding of how we worked and we were flexible with each other. My life was richer because of him and will continue to be. Thank you, Deacon Jim!”
Emotional LA Sheriff Details Arrest of Suspect in Shooting Death of Bishop O’Connell; Motive Remains Unclear

BY PABLO KAY

LOS ANGELES (OSV News) — A 65-year-old Hispanic man was taken into custody the morning of Feb. 20 by Los Angeles County Sheriff’s deputies as the prime suspect in the murder of Auxiliary Bishop David G. O’Connell of Los Angeles.

LA County Sheriff Robert G. Luna announced at a news conference on Feb. 20 at the Los Angeles County Hall of Justice in downtown LA that citizen tips led to the 8:15 a.m. arrest of Carlos Medina, the husband of a housekeeper who had worked so much at O’Connell’s home in Hacienda Heights, after an all-night search.

Bishop O’Connell, a native of Ireland who spent most of his 43 years as a priest serving in LA’s inner city, was found dead in his home on the afternoon of Feb. 18.

The next day, the LA Sheriff’s department announced that Bishop O’Connell’s death was being investigated as a homicide.

Luna established a timeline based on the work of detectives that indicated that at 7 p.m. on Feb. 19 a tip was received linking Medina to the murder.

“They were concerned he was acting strange (and) irrational, and made comments about the bishop owing him money,” Luna said of the tip from the informant.

The tipster also said Medina had left his residence in Torrance and was headed for the central California area.

After obtaining an arrest warrant, police began a search of Medina’s home. Another tip at 2 a.m. on Feb. 20 indicated that Medina had returned home, and Carson deputies were dispatched to the scene.

Medina refused to come out of his residence when asked to surrender, Luna said.

The original search warrant was amended so Medina’s house could again be searched. A tactical team dispatched again called for Medina’s surrender, and he was then taken into custody around 8:15 a.m. without further incident.

Luna said two firearms were recovered and are being tested to see if they were used in the murder.

In an emotional news conference, Luna read “my heart grieves” for the death of Bishop O’Connell, based on all the calls of support he received in the investigation over the last 48 hours.

“This man, this bishop, made a huge difference in our community,” said Luna. “He was loved. It is with great sadness that we are gathered here today about this murder.”

Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles, one of the speakers at the news conference, stopped several times during his remarks to collect himself. At one point, Luna put his arm around his shoulder to comfort him.

On behalf of our entire community, I want to share thanks for your professionalism and sensitivity,” Archbishop Gomez said of the investigation. “It is a sad and painful moment for all of us. Let us keep praying for Bishop Dave and his family, just as he prayed for law enforcement officials.”

Archbishop Gomez on Feb. 19 called on Catholics to pray for the late bishop and those investigating his death.

“We continue to pray for Bishop Dave, and for his family in Ireland, and we pray for law enforcement officials as they continue their investigation into this terrible crime,” he said at a Mass at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels that morning.

Luna confirmed a deer from nearby St. John Vianney Church in Hacienda Heights was the first to find Bishop O’Connell, making a welfare check on him after he was late for a meeting, then calling 911. Bishop O’Connell was found in his bed with at least one gunshot wound. No firearm was recovered at the home, nor were there signs of forced entry, Luna said.

After interviewing neighbors, Luna said surveillance video showed a vehicle had pulled into Bishop O’Connell’s driveway — a dark-colored compact SUV — which was later linked to the car his housekeeper had used.

Luna emphasized their investigation has not confirmed anything but a potential dispute between Medina and Bishop O’Connell, only that that information came from a witness.

“Our investigation continues ... to get a better picture of what happened here,” said Luna. “The detectives will go out and validate.”

Luna added that not all information from the investigation will be revealed yet, as “keeping the integrity of the investigation is a priority,” he said. “The next step is to present all of the evidence and try to get a criminal prosecution (filed against) Medina.”

Bishop O’Connell was originally from Breaklodge, Glannime, in County Cork, the largest county in Ireland. He studied for the priesthood at the former All Hallows College in Dublin and was ordained to serve in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles in 1979.

Bishop O’Connell was named an auxiliary bishop of Los Angeles by Pope Francis in July of 2015. Since then, he had served as pastoral vicar for the San Gabriel Pastoral Region, one of the LA archdiocese’s five regions.

During his time as auxiliary bishop in Los Angeles, evangelization, pastoral care for immigrants, and ensuring the future of his region’s Catholic schools were all top priorities for Bishop O’Connell, who believed that “parishes and schools are powerful instruments of transformation of people’s lives and of neighborhoods.”

Before being named a bishop, he was well-known for his pastoral work in south LA — where he served as pastor of four different parishes — in the years before and after the 1992 LA King riots. He played a key role, along with other local faith leaders, in bringing together communities across the city suffering from gang violence, poverty, and drugs, while working to restore trust between community members and law enforcement.

Pablo Kay is Editor of Angels News, a publication of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles.
Door Shut on Renters Suffering from Landlord Negligence

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The Statehouse has again proven to be an inhospitable place for these efforts to ensure safe and livable conditions for Hoosier renters, but advocates including the Indiana Catholic Conference vow to press on for change.

Days after a tenants’ rights rally at the Statehouse earlier this month that spotlighted untenable situations for countless Indiana apartment residents, lawmakers suddenly halted Senate Bill 202, a bipartisan measure designed to hold landlords accountable for providing their tenants with decent living conditions.

Instead, the bill was sent to a Senate judiciary committee with no guarantee of further action.

“I’m frustrated, because this is justice delayed for hundreds of thousands of Hoosiers who are experiencing negligent behaviors from unresponsive corporate landlords, specifically out-of-state landlords,” said Sen. Fady Qaddoura (D-Indianapolis), a co-author of the bill along with Sen. Greg Walker (R-Columbus).

Qaddoura has fought for several years at the Statehouse to protect tenants battling out-of-state landlords who refuse to provide the most basic services as outlined in their leases. One example is New Jersey-based JPC Affordable Housing, owner of a number of troubled apartment complexes in Indianapolis.

“In my district and in other places, these landlords took money from our tenants and then didn’t pay the utilities,” said Qaddoura, who formerly held roles at the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration. “That caused the utilities to shut off water until we intervened and filed lawsuits. The living conditions in some of these places is unbelievable: no running water, mold growing through the carpets, holes in the ceilings, and we have young kids in those households. It’s injustice.”

For the second year in a row, Qaddoura had worked on the legislation in collaboration with partners including advocates for fair housing and faith-based organizations such as the Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC).

“Landlords and tenants have an unbalanced relationship in the state of Indiana,” said Angela Espada, Executive Director of the ICC, the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Indiana. “A lease is a contractual agreement that a landlord will provide a place that’s habitable and provide certain services, and the tenant has the responsibility to pay. But if the landlord doesn’t live up to what it says in the lease — if the apartment is uninhabitable because of mold or rodents, or if the utilities or appliances aren’t working — the tenant has very little recourse.

The working poor — who often devote between 50 to 80 percent of their monthly incomes to housing expenses — are especially vulnerable in these situations and have few alternatives, Espada noted. Espada had been scheduled to testify in favor of Senate Bill 202 on the day that the bill was stripped and replaced by summer study committee topl ine. She and her advocates appeared the following day at a news conference sponsored by the Hoosier Housing Needs Coalition to present the testimony they would have given and to call on the legislature to take further action.

“The General Assembly has a duty to all Hoosiers to address these issues,” Espada said, adding that “landlords who operate in good faith have nothing to fear from Senate Bill 202.”

Renters represent more than one-third of Hoosier households, but Indiana is one of only five states that do not have strong protections for renters, according to Qaddoura and coalition members who supported his legislation.

“Every week, we receive calls from Hoosiers living in sometimes deplorable conditions,” said Amy Nelson, Executive Director of the Fair Housing Center of Central Indiana, who also brought her prepared Senate testimony to the Feb. 16 news conference. “This is a statewide problem and an overwhelming burden. These are people who pay their rent, but their landlords won’t make needed repairs despite being asked over and over again. And for an increasing number of these tenants, their landlords because it’s some out-of-state company and it’s hard to determine even whom to contact. What are people to do with them?

Qaddoura attributes the legislature’s lack of urgency on these issues to what he believes is misperception about the more than 800,000 people in Indiana who are renters instead of homeowners.

“My concern with the General Assembly, aside from their inaction, is that there is a stigma in our state that tenants do not deserve rights or protection,” Qaddoura said. “It seems that the General Assembly has forgotten that these tenants are property tax payers, just like homeowners. They pay their property taxes through their rental payments. These are people who decided to live in an apartment who may not have the ability to afford home ownership, or maybe they decided to live there because it’s their lifestyle,” he continued.

“My point is that they are humans, they are full citizens, and they deserve protections under the law,” Qaddoura insisted.

Qaddoura is dismayed to see his legislation once again relegated to a summer study committee — and advocates including the ICC are equally frustrated.

“What is there to study?” Espada said. “We know this is a problem.”

Meanwhile, the ICC did see success this month on another matter of concern to vulnerable Hoosiers. Along with other advocates for the poor, the ICC stood in opposition to House Bill 1547, which would raise interest rates for certain subprime loans and create a new loan product in the subprime market. The bill has now stalled and does not appear to have a path forward in this session.

While supporters positioned the legislation as an alternative to unregulated online and out-of-state lenders charging Hoosiers exorbitant interest rates, the ICC maintained that another high-interest loan product was not the answer. Alexander Mingus, the Associate Director of the ICC, testified against the bill at the Statehouse and noted that people seeking loans in this market are typically low-income individuals with poor credit or no credit.

As with all proposed legislation, the ICC decides to support or oppose measures based on the long history of Catholic social teachings.

“There is such a depth in the Church’s teaching on the preferential option for the poor,” Mingus said. “We always stand with the most vulnerable in our society.”

To follow priority legislation of the ICC, visit indianacc.org. This website includes access to I-CAN, the Indiana Catholic Action Network, which offers the Church’s position on key issues. Those who sign up for I-CAN receive alerts on legislation moving forward and ways to contact their elected representatives.

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Blessed Stanley Rother Shrine’s Historic Dedication Honors Martyr’s Mission to Share Jesus’ Love

OKLAHOMA CITY (OSV News) — More than 2,000 Catholic faithful from Oklahoma, other parts of the United States, and Guatemala, where Blessed Stanley Rother served, gathered Feb. 16 for the Dedication of the Blessed Stanley Rother Shrine in Oklahoma City. As the first American-born martyr — a blessed. It’s a beautiful occasion,” Theresa Hohenberger told Sooner Catholic, the newspaper of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. Once the main doors were opened, the procession began and included more than 300 participants: 37 bishops, 147 priests, 93 deacons, and 12 seminarians. Present were Archbishop Emeritus Eusebius Beltran, who launched the Rother Cause, Archbishop Christophe Pierre, Pope Francis’ Apostolic Nuncio to the U.S., as well as members of the Rother family with other invited leaders and dignitaries. “We gather here to honor the God who created all of this and the God who is glorified in His saints,” said Archbishop Paul S. Coakley in his homily: “We honor Blessed Stanley because we are giving glory to God.” Sister Raphael Marie of the Disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ Sisters from Amarillo, told Sooner Catholic she was “moved to tears” by the dedication. “(Blessed Stanley’s) a saint of the people, a saint for modern day. It’s so important to bring people into a personal relationship with Jesus and through the gifts of the Holy Spirit and that’s what Blessed Stanley Rother did: he brought people the love of Jesus.”

Ukrainian Catholics Hail Biden’s Surprise Visit to Kyiv for Bravery, ‘Amazing Boost of Hope’

KYIV, Ukraine (OSV News) — U.S. President Joe Biden’s unexpected Feb. 20 visit to Kyiv, calmly walking through the Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky as riled soldiers waited in the capital, is being hailed as a surprise and a signal to the world, Ukrainian Catholic leaders told OSV News. “We wouldn’t expect that President Biden would come to the capital. Maybe Lviv, as it’s safer, but Kyiv? It’s really an amazing boost of hope and strength for us,” Auxiliary Bishop Jan Sobilo of Kharkiv-Zaporizhzhia told OSV News. “People were shocked... somehow we all got the positive feeling that maybe war is finally coming to an end.” Biden, who is the U.S. second Catholic president, and Zelensky laid wreaths at Kyiv’s Wall of Remembrance. “One year later, Kyiv stands. And Ukraine stands. Democracy stands. The Americans stand with you, and the world stands with you,” Biden said in an address, according to report­ers present. With a renewed Russian offensive expected soon, Bishop Sobilo said Biden’s visit was “like a movie scene — and we’re hoping for a happy ending.”

Panama Bus Deaths Offer Tragic Reminder of Perils Migrants Face Traveling Toward U.S. Border

DAVID, Panama (OSV News) — Pope Francis has expressed sorrow for the victims of a bus crash in Panama, which claimed the lives of 39 migrants traveling toward the United States, a Vatican spokesman said Feb. 10. Night to Shine, a free prom for persons with special needs ages 14 and older, drew more than 500 guests to the church-hosted event in the Quad Cities region of Iowa and Illinois. The event is held around the world on the Friday before Valentine’s Day. Quad Cities Night to Shine guest Selah Bucciferro, left, takes a walk on the red carpet with her sister, Amy, at The Bend XPO Events Center in East Moline, Illinois, on Feb. 10. Night to Shine, a free prom for persons with special needs ages 14 and older, drew more than 500 guests to the church-hosted event in the Quad Cities region of Iowa and Illinois. The event is held around the world on the Friday before Valentine’s Day.

French-Trained Chef Turned Catholic Priest Raises Funds, Builds Community with Memphis King Cakes

MEMPHIS (OSV News) — Father Ben Bradshaw of Memphis really knows how to make the dough. The Catholic priest takes the concept of feeding his flock seriously, and is passionate about pastry, having been a chef in France. As his Lent approach­ing, Father Bradshaw spends a week, sacrificing some sleep, and heading over to the kitchen at St. Michael Church in Memphis, where he is pastor, to prepare nearly 700 king cakes. King cakes are a Mardi Gras tradition, where a baby figurine is hidden in the cake. That person who finds it can amount to an “adherence to antisemitism, anti-immigrant, anti-LGBTQ, and white supremacist ideology.”

Please Pray for Us’: Compassion, Communion Resonate in Syria Among Christians Affected by Earthquake

BEIRUT (OSV News) — After a devastating earthquake that hit Turkey and Syria on Feb. 6, many families, displaced from the Syrian city of Aleppo, have sought refuge in Hom’s, some two hours away from their destroyed homes, despite transportation difficulties amid already-existing fuel shortages. “I am so touched by the generosity of the people of Homes, considered one of the poorest, most damaged” from the war, Jesuit Father Tony Honsy said. He added that the whole generation of young Syrians is now going through yet another catastrophe after 12 years of war. But this, he says, doesn’t stop them from being united in brotherhood. Christians show themselves outpouring support, sharing whatever they have left, and no one has much in this war-torn country.

FBI Faces Scrutiny about Memo on ‘Radical Traditionalist Catholics’

WASHINGTON, D.C. (OSV News) — The FBI is facing scrutiny after a leaked memo suggested some “radical traditionalist” Catholics pose threats of racial or ethnically motivated violence. In a leaked memo dated Jan. 25, an analyst at the FBI’s Richmond Division said “Radical Traditionalist Catholics” are “typically characterized by the rejection of the Second Vatican Council.” The memo said the ideology can amount to an “adherence to antisemitic, anti-immigrant, anti-LGBTQ, and white supremacist ideology.” The memo also names far-right personality Nick Fuentes, who publicly identifies as Catholic and whom the memo says has ties to “white Christian nationalism.” However, the memo distinguishes radical traditionalist Catholics as “separate and distinct” from “traditionalist Catholics” who “simply prefer the Traditional Latin Mass and pre-Vatican II teachings.” Nevertheless, the leaked FBI memo generated a range of concerns from unease over its contents to outrage from some quarters alleging the FBI was labeling all Catholics a threat. The memo has since been retracted by the FBI, a bureau spokesperson told OSV News.

A Night to Shine Prom, Those with Special Needs Celebrated as Kings and Queens

OSV News photo/Barb Arland-Fye, The Catholic Messenger

Celebrated as Kings and Queens

News Briefs

February 26, 2023

TODAY’S CATHOLIC
Tour of Relics Across Diocese Ends with Votive Mass of the Holy Eucharist

BY JOSH SCHIPPER

The diocesan-wide tour of the relics of Blessed Carlo Acutis and St. Manuel González García came to an end at St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Fort Wayne, on Tuesday, Feb. 14. The first-class relics toured seven churches in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend beginning on Wednesday, Feb. 8, as part of the National Eucharistic Revival.

Parishioners of St. Vincent de Paul and surrounding parishes venerated the relics before and after Bishop Rhoades celebrated Mass at their final stop. In his homily, Bishop Rhoades talked about recognizing the Lord in the Eucharist. Both Blessed Carlo Acutis and St. Manuel González García are known for their devotion to the Eucharist, so the homily was very fitting for the end of the tour in a Votive Mass of the Holy Eucharist.

“We just heard the Gospel of the appearance of the Risen Jesus on the shore of the Sea of Tiberias to seven of His disciples. The hungry and exhausted disciples had been on their boat all night fishing but had caught nothing. From the shore, Jesus, whom they did not recognize, told them to cast the net to the other side of the boat and they caught so many fish that they struggled to pull the net into the boat.”

At that moment,” he continued, “the disciple whom Jesus loved, the disciple who rested his head on Jesus’ heart during the Last Supper, the apostle who was the only one of the 12 who did not abandon Jesus at His crucifixion, recognized that the man on the shore was Jesus. He exclaimed to Simon Peter, “It is the Lord!”

Bishop Rhoades said that, with this miraculous catch of fish, they came to the shore where Jesus had prepared breakfast for them, and that the other disciples also then recognized that it was the Lord.

“And what did Jesus do? He took the bread and gave it to them, and also the fish — the same thing that He had done at that site a year or two earlier when He had multiplied the loaves and the fish. It’s the same gesture Jesus did at the Last Supper — He took the bread, broke it, and gave it to them. Also, it was when Jesus took the bread, broke it, and gave it to them that the two disciples on the road to Emmaus recognized that the stranger who had been walking with them and explaining the Scriptures to them was Jesus, the Risen Lord.”

Spring Eucharistic Revival Events Bring Collaboration, Renewal

Revive! City Wide Mission Night

Experience a radically unique and powerful Catholic event. Join us for a regional night of transformation featuring the Damascus Worship Collective and inspirational preaching from international revivalists. You and your family will encounter a Eucharistic God who is living and active through an evening of praise, testimony, and adoration.

This event takes place on Wednesday, Apr. 12, 2023, at Bishop Dwenger High School in Fort Wayne. For more information, visit diocesefwsb.org/eucharist-events/#revive.

Good News! Nights

Good News! Nights, are being hosted at parishes around our diocese. You are invited to come and hear the Good News of Jesus Christ, learn about evangelization, what it means to be a Eucharistic Missionary, and why it is important that we share what we know about Jesus and the Holy Eucharist with everyone around us. No registration is required.

For more information, visit diocesefwsb.org/eucharist-events/#good-news.

Eucharistic Revival Palm Sunday Concert

Join Heartland Sings as they offer beautiful worship to our Lord with classical sacred music centered on the devotion to the Holy Eucharist with polyphony and harmony.

The event will be held on Sunday, Apr. 2, 2023, at 3 p.m. at St. Peter Parish in Fort Wayne. The concert is free, but an offering will be taken up as a free-will donation to Catholic Charities of Fort Wayne-South Bend.

For more information, visit diocesefwsb.org/eucharist-events/#concert.

Sacred Concerts

Two Sacred Concerts will be held with music centered on devotion to the Holy Eucharist.

The first event will be held on Sunday, Apr. 23, 2023, at 2 p.m. at St. Pius X Parish in Granger, led by Music Director Jeremy Hoy, featuring the Notre Dame Liturgical Choir and the St. Pius X Choir.

The second event will be held on Thursday, Apr. 27, 2023, at 7 p.m. at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Wayne, led by Music Director Mike Dulac.

For more information, visit diocesefwsb.org/eucharist-events/#concert.

Evangelization Trainings

Become equipped to share your Catholic faith in the Eucharistic Lord confidently and peacefully with anyone by attending one-day evangelization training offered by the St. Paul Evangelization Institute. The program includes a light breakfast and lunch.

The first training will take place on Saturday, May 6, 2023, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Fort Wayne.

The second training will be held on Saturday, May 13, 2023, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at St. Pius X Parish in Granger.

The cost is $20 per person or couple, which is waivable for financial need.

For more information, visit diocesefwsb.org/eucharist-events/#training.

All events are sponsored by the Diocesan Eucharistic Revival Team with support from our host parishes.
Learning to Lead and Serve as Saints at Pastoral Visit to St. Joseph Catholic School in Fort Wayne

BY ERIKA BARRON

Monday, Feb. 13, was a very special day for the students at St. Joseph Catholic School in Fort Wayne. Not only would Bishop Rhoades soon be arriving for a pastoral visit, but he would be bringing with him the relics of Blessed Carlo Acutis and St. Manuel González García. Students, teachers, staff, and parishioners gathered to await their arrival.

The day began with the celebration of Mass. Concelebrating with Bishop Rhoades was Father Kevin Bauman, Pastor of St. Joseph Catholic Church, with Deacon Orlando Miranda-Figueroa serving alongside.

During his homily, Bishop Rhoades spoke on the lives of the saints whose relics were present. These two saints, he said, deeply loved Jesus, present in the Holy Eucharist.

After being assigned to his first parish, Father Manuel González García found the church to be empty and abandoned. He heard Jesus speaking to him from the dusty, cobweb-covered tabernacle, asking if he too would abandon Him. Father González García knew he could not leave Jesus and dedicated his ministry to fostering the love of the Eucharist in others.

“He’s ministry had begun at an abandoned church and tabernacle and his ministry bore much good fruit everywhere he served as a priest and then as a bishop. It was a challenging time for the Church in Spain, and he led the people with great faith and love. He pointed people to Jesus in the Eucharist, like St. John pointed Peter to Jesus on the shore and said: ‘It is the Lord,’” said Bishop Rhoades, harkening back to the day’s Gospel reading.

When talking about Blessed Carlo Acutis, Bishop said, “I wasn’t surprised to read that Carlo Acutis had a close spiritual relationship with St. John, the beloved disciple who rested his head on Jesus’ heart at the Last Supper and was the first to recognize the Risen Lord at the Sea of Tiberias. Carlo lived and died as a beloved disciple of Jesus.” Bishop Rhoades went on to explain how Blessed Carlo loved the saints, went to daily Mass, and prayed a daily rosary. While Carlo was very young, people around him noticed his extraordinary love of Jesus, especially in the Eucharist. This love led him to create an online Eucharistic Miracles database, which has been seen all over the world. Blessed Carlo was also renowned for his love of the poor and suffering... often saving up his allowance to buy sleeping bags and hot drinks for the homeless. He was always a friend to the lonely.

After Carlos’ death of an aggressive form of Leukemia, the first miracle attributed to his Sainthood was the healing of a little 4-year-old boy from a disease known as Annular Pancreas. The little boy was cured after praying before the very relic present that day at St. Joseph. After Mass and throughout the day, the children were able to venerate the relics.

Bishop Rhoades began his classroom visits, escorted by principal Cristy Jordan, with the 7th-grade class. They were in the middle of their morality studies with Mr. DiFilippo. Here, Bishop Rhoades and a student looked up Blessed Carlo’s Eucharistic Miracles website database, he answered questions, and posed for a group photo with the class.

He then moved on to the 8th-graders, where he shared in a lively discussion with the students about their confirmation saints. One student shared, “I chose St. Sebastian for his bravery.” The 8th-graders also asked Bishop Rhoades about places he had traveled, meeting St. Mother Theresa, and how one becomes a bishop.

While meeting with the 6th-graders, several students asked about the clothing a bishop wears.

During his visit to the 2nd-grade classroom, Bishop Rhoades gave an impromptu lesson on gravity and the moon landing. The teacher in that class, Ms. Jones, is also the 2023 Christ the Teacher awardee for the school.

Before lunch, Bishop Rhoades met with the preschoolers and kindergarteners. After knocking on the door, Bishop asked if the students knew who he was. With sheer delight, a little boy exclaimed, “a Pirate!” Bishop Rhoades laughed and assured the little boy that he was not a pirate, but if he was, he would be a friendly pirate. Another child shared that when he is playing at home, he pretends to be the Pope. Bishop Rhoades prayed the Our Father and St. Michael prayer with the little children who were very excited to show him that they had memorized the prayers.

During lunch, Bishop chatted with students in grades 3 and 4, who were especially inquisitive, asking him about the creation of the world, Adam and Eve, and of course, dinosaurs.

St. Joseph Catholic School is located just south of downtown Fort Wayne. Home to a diverse population of students, classes sizes are limited to 24 students to maintain more one on one learning time. Both the school and the parish have a close relationship with the community around them, providing community dinners, health fairs, and even adult education. It is perfectly fitting for a school with the motto of “Learning to lead and serve as Saints.”
During his pastoral visit to St. Joseph, Bishop Rhoades visited many classrooms, answered questions, and gave impromptu lessons. The students and staff alike were very excited to share in this special day.
Indianapolis Black Catholic Parish, a Community of Firsts, Receives Recognition for Historical, Cultural Impact

BY NATALIE HOEFER

INDIANAPOLIS (OSV News) — St. Rita Parish on Indianapolis’ east side is a community of firsts and of unique contributions — starting with its founding in 1919 as the first designated Black Catholic parish in Indiana.

It was the first archdiocesan parish to offer kindergarten and accredited day care. It sponsored Indianapolis’ first interracial, parochial versus public high school football game. Its boxing club produced three-time light heavyweight world champion Marvin Johnson.

“He believed in working hard and earning your way,” said Legg, who grew up in the parish during the Father Strange years. “He told us we could have a magnificent church, but we’d have to raise the money in pennies, nickels, and dimes.” And they did. When construction was completed, the cutting edge, state-of-the-art church was paid for.

But true of any building, the cost of maintenance never ends. To help preserve the church and other campus structures built between 1919-1972, the parish sent a team from St. Rita to attend the Indiana Landmarks’ Sacred Places workshops in 2019-20.

Sister Gail Trippett, a Sister of St. Joseph of Carondelet, who was then the parish Life Coordinator and now an assistant on the parish’s preservation and grant projects, describes the workshops as “a yearlong process of teaching congregations about development, looking at facilities, looking at how to repurpose or reenergize them. They did a facilities assessment of our buildings and looked at value-assessing ways we can reach out and help in the community.”

After attending the workshops, Sister Trippett applied for and received four grants for the parish totaling $41,000 from Indiana Landmarks. By now familiar with the structures of St. Rita’s campus, Indiana Landmarks urged the parish to apply for a National Fund for Sacred Places grant to help restore its bell tower — a $450,000 project.

The organization offers matching grants to select congregations that “contribute significant value to their communities” and whose “historic and cultural significance are essential parts of our national heritage,” according to the fund’s website.

A new grant team consisting of Sister Trippett, Legg, and parishioner Linda Johnson took Indiana Landmarks’ advice and applied for the grant. Out of more than 360 applicants nationwide, St. Rita was one of only 30 to qualify. If the parish raises $300,000 by October of 2024, the grant will contribute the remaining $150,000 to restore the bell tower.

The facilities assessment found other causes for concern as well. “The church needs tuckpointing and weatherproofing,” Sister Trippett told The Criterion. “We need to renovate the Father Bernard Strange Family Life Center, upgrade the electricity and heat in the entire building. And the old preschool will need to be demolished” due to significant water damage, mold and mildew. The parish hopes to erect a small museum in its place.

The combined cost of these projects is about $1.15 million. Hence, St. Rita’s ongoing grant-seeking efforts. In January, the parish received a $100,000 Preserving Black Churches Grant through the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

“We were thrilled to be chosen,” said Suzanne Stanis, Coordinator and now an assistant on the parish’s preservation and grant projects. “I’ve researched all of his works in Europe, and I’ve researched his works here in the United States,” he said. “I can’t find a more complete collection anywhere.”

Legg has done extensive research on the faith community and its structures. Much of St. Rita’s was done for preservation grant applications, as well as for the inclusion of the parish’s campus on the list of National Register of Historic Places.

Recker’s pieces in the church include mosaics and bronze work. He also designed its stained-glass windows, tabernacle, most of the sanctuary furniture, and more.

He was very influential in Europe, and he was a person who was on the cutting edge of what was desirable at the time,” said The Criterion. “He cut his teeth (in his career) restoring the odious depiction of Christ called ‘Sol Invictus’ in the classical tomb of St. Peter under St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican. ‘You can see his inspiration from that work in the large mosaic beside St. Rita’s altar to the chariot wheels, the horses, the stylistic figure.’

Natalie Hoefer is a Reporter for The Criterion, the newspaper of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.
Late Pope Benedict’s Christian Insights Resonate at 2023 New York Encounter

BY KURT JENSEN

(OSV News) — The annual New York Encounter weekend is renowned for including the widest range of thinking possible.

From Feb. 17-19, the event, with its usual discussions of literature, art, and theology connecting faith and culture, combined a warm appreciation of the late Pope Benedict XVI with an exhibit explaining 19th-century German philosopher and polemicist Friedrich Nietzsche, who is famously remembered for his statement “God is dead” in which he denounced Europe’s Christians for having rendered belief in God as unnecessary.

With the theme of “Who Am I That You Should Care For Me?,” discussions focused on the human need for connection, Pope Benedict, renowned for his scholarship, fit easily into that.

“One people went to Rome to see Pope John Paul II, but they went to hear Pope Benedict XVI,” Cardinal Sean P. O’Malley of Boston said at the event on Feb. 17, which was held in person and livestreamed. “His homilies will inspire people for generations to come.”

New York Encounter is sponsored by the Catholic lay movement Communion and Liberation. Father Luigi Giussani, the Italian priest and educator who founded the movement — originally for students — in the 1950s in Milan, died in 2005. His cause for canonization officially opened in 2012, giving him the title “Servant of God.”

Communion and Liberation, which stresses the “experience” of Pope’s encounter with Jesus Christ and a subsequent transformation into developing a public purpose, was a particular favorite of Pope Benedict, who celebrated Giussani’s funeral Mass. Pope Benedict died on Dec. 31 in Rome.

Pope Benedict, Cardinal O’Malley said, “was always clear. Christianity is not just an idea or a moral code, but an encounter (with Jesus Christ).”

Steven Brown, Dean of Graduate Studies at The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. said that for Pope Benedict, “the hardening of our hearts is not a moral problem, but a problem of our concept of reason.”

To that end, Catholic identity is not so much about a moral code, but “about making all that you do vibrate in the ecclesiastical life of faith,” Brown said.

Father Alex Zenthofer, Rector of St. Benedict Cathedral in Evansville, Indiana, praised Pope Benedict for having “one of the most brilliant theological minds” and said his reputation as “God’s Rottweiler,” a label attached to him when he led what was then called the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, obscured the pope’s gentle demeanor and capacity for personal kindness.

Cardinal O’Malley said the pope, who wrote 66 books, could dictate extemporaneously a book of theology without need of corrections; while Father Zenthofer noted that Pope Benedict “could access those levels of reality we take for granted,” that his “childlike demeanor” with his faith scholarship “put him in front of reality in this way.”

That acceptance of reality factored into Pope Benedict’s decision to resign his papacy in 2013. His retirement was “not something that many clergy dealt with well,” Father Zenthofer observed, but there was “tremendous freedom” in the pope acknowledging, “The church needs someone else at this moment, and it’s not me.”

In a Feb. 18 discussion of a new translation of Father Giussani’s 1986 book “The Religious Sense,” Father Michael Carvill, the North American Coordinator of Communion and Liberation, praised Father Giussani’s message of “anything is possible,” which he said “removes the shadow over the whole human experience.”

There’s months in which you get lost in the small stuff,” he said. “But then there’s a work here that is, to me, extremely helpful and valuable to me in my personal journey.”

Reason, he continued, “demands openness” and “tells us that the impossible is possible.”

Addressing, in a Feb. 18 discussion, the matter of human longing, Bishop Erik Vardø, of Sør-Fron, Norway, quoted a Russian saint, St. Seraphim of Sarov: “If you acquire the spirit of peace, thousands around you will find salvation.”

He said, “We are called to enter into the life of Christ as our own Christ so we can promise that.”
A Eucharistic Word: ‘Sacrament’

T he word sacrament is as much talked about as it is misunderstood. What do I mean by that? The sacraments lie at the heart of our Catholic faith, most especially the Eucharist. But do we spend enough time trying to comprehend these sacred mysteries and the limitless ways they can shape our lives?

The Council of Trent taught in the 16th century that “a sacrament is a visible sign of an invisible grace.” What are the invisible graces that are lavished upon us by God in the sacraments for our good? The National Eucharistic Revival invites us to consider this question in light of the Eucharist. How can we come to better realize the Eucharist’s fruits and allow them to transform us and the world?

Pope Benedict XVI called the Eucharist the “sacrament par excellence” because it contains “the whole mystery of salvation.” The Eucharist makes the Church, a phrase coined by the French Jesuit Henri DeLubac, which is to say that in the Eucharist we are continually built up as Christ’s body, which is why Vatican II called the Church “the sacra body, which is why Vatican II called the Church “the sacrament of salvation.”

“Sitting at the right hand of the Father,” the council fathers continued, “[Christ] is continually active in the world that He might lead men to the Church and through it join them to Himself and that He might make them partakers of His glorious life by nourishing them with His own Body and Blood” (Lumen Gentium, No. 49).

But how often do we consider the Eucharist as a sacrament of future glory? Sure, we think about the Eucharist as a means to encourage our children’s spiritual actions two millennia ago. It’s true that at the foot of Calvary we knelt at every Mass. But Calvary lacks its meaning doesn’t it, without a view to the empty tomb, without sight of Christ ascending into glory?

Do we share the Body and receive the Eucharist with a glance toward heaven, with the desire to worship in the new Jerusalem? How might the invisible grace of the Eucharist help us keep that focus?

The council fathers, in making clear that our aim should be nothing less than to become “partakers of His glorious life,” desired for all men and women to become saints. Christ makes us members of his body, and we strive to allow Christ to become part of us by following His way. “It is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col 1:27). “Receive what you are and become what you receive,” says St. Augustine. “In the Eucharist we find the source and summit of the whole Christian life.” The grace of the sacrament gives us what we need to become saints.

With every bit of our salvation contained in the Eucharist, the sacrament is the blueprint for how our lives ought to be. When we live the Eucharist—which Pope Benedict said “reveals the true beauty of Christianity” we are mirrors of truth, charity, service, obedience. And our very hope of salvation becomes something living and tangible in us, for with St. Paul, we dare to say “I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me” (Gal 2:20).

Sure, the Eucharist is a sacrament of future glory, for it is in it the we see the only means to truly live. It’s also a sacrament of salvation. For it, in it we see the only means to live.

In our imitation of Christ, in living eucharistically, we are glorifying Christ. Then, as members of His body, as members of the Church, we truly become sacraments of Christ in a world that needs Him still. We become living witnesses of the peace of the Kingdom for which we were made and to which we dare attain.

MICHAEL HEINLEIN is Editor of Simply Catholic. Follow him on Twitter @HeinleinMichael.

One year since the Russian invasion of Ukraine

F rom the first moments of Russia’s unprovoked invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022, the Church in the United States united in praying for a swift, peaceful resolution to the conflict. Within hours of the beginning of the fighting, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops tweeted, “We join @Pontifex in calling on all people of goodwill to pray for the people of Ukraine and for an end to war.”

As the world watched in horror, we prayed the fighting wouldn’t last more than a few days or weeks. And now, the war has stretched on for a year. At the time of the war’s outbreak, the Editorial Board implored, “While this unjust war is being waged half a world away . . . we must always acknowledge that with every missile strike or artillery fire, people are suffering; lives are being displaced and lost.”

One year into the conflict, the toll across the ocean is staggering. The costs of human suffering seemingly ringing without end.

The U.N. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights recorded 17,994 civilian casualties in Ukraine from Feb. 24, 2022, to Jan. 2, 2023. Of those, 6,919 were killed; 11,075 injured; 429 of those civilian deaths were children. As of Feb. 7, the same office reports that more than 8 mil-

GUEST COLUMN

Michael R. Heinlein

Rely on the Lord’s Strength to Avoid Temptation and Sin

T he first reading from this first weekend of Lent 2023 is from the Book of Genesis. Few passages in the Scriptures are as abundant in literary technique, and in theological messages, as is this reading from Genesis. Bluntly confronting paganism and the tendency of all humans to avoid accusing themselves of fault, it goes to the heart of sin.

The heart of sin is that it is the result of a freely chosen act by humans. While in this reading the role of the tempting devil is clear, it also is clear that the devil only tempts. The devil does not force the first man and woman to sin. They sinned of their own will. They had a lesson. Rebelling against God, the perfect and the perfectly just, was foolishly. Yet, imperfect even in their pristine state of holiness, the first man and woman listened to bad advice and trusted not God but another. It is a process that has been repeated untold number of times in the lives of us all.

The second reading is from the Epistle to the Romans. In God’s doing, the entire process looks back to the incident described in Genesis. It reminds us that by the Original Sin, the first humans introduced sin and resulting chaos and trouble, into earthly existence. Thus, death and hardship are not God’s designs for us. They were not curses sent upon the human race by an angry God. Believe it or not, the first humans chose them when they sinned. Sin, voluntary and deliberate, brought such devastatingly bad results into the world.

God is the center and source of everlasting love and mercy. He did not leave humanity in the whirlpool of death and despair created by human sin. Instead, God sent Jesus, the Redeemer, the Son of God. St. Matthew’s Gospel vidies the last reading. It recalls the temptation of Jesus. It is a Synoptic tradition, not unique to Matthew. Similar stories appear in Mark and Luke.

As was the case with Genesis, this reading is heavy in its symbolism. For example, bread in the time of Jesus was made from grain and flour could be stored. This grain and flour could be transported at any distance without spoiling, but foods to consume. In the time of Jesus, the quick transportation of food meant 17,994 civilian casualties in Ukraine from Feb. 24, 2022, to Jan. 2, 2023. Of those, 6,919 were killed; 11,075 injured; 429 of those civilian deaths were children. As of Feb. 7, the same office reports that more than 8 mil-

as the only means to truly live...
Inclusion and Exclusion

I would like to follow up on an earlier article I wrote on the notions of “inclusivity” and “welcome,” which I have come to dominate the Catholic conversation in the lead-up to the Synod on Synodality. Many voices from around the world are clamoring for greater inclusion in the Church and are scoring Church leaders for maintaining, apparently, structures of exclusion. A first difficulty with this, I have argued, is that it runs afoot of the example of Jesus himself. But while one could be extremely radical in his welcoming outreach to everyone, at the same time, equally radical in his demand for conversion. To no one did Jesus ever offer welcome tout court; he always summoned them to the hard work of real discipleship.

A second problem I would like to explore in this article is the logical inconsistency involved in treating inclusivity as an absolute value. The paradox is that real inclusion positively depends upon real exclusion, and therefore, any reflection can make this clear. When someone petitions welcome or inclusion into a group or society that is not seeking entry into a collective with some sort of definition. Otherwise, the inclusion would lose any significance. But to overlook in the sometimes overly enthusiastic language with which the Church, to the expectations conforming myself to Christ’s community, into a family with all who play for the CSO have been arguing here: “All are welcome in the Church, therefore, you were not. I demand to be included, not into an amorphous collectivity, but rather into a defined community, into a family with a moral and legal structure, into the mystical body of Christ. If, therefore, you were to say, “I demand to be included, I must be conforming myself to Christ’s demands, to the teaching of the Church, to the expectations of the community,” you would find yourself in an untenable position.

It is precisely the dynamic tension between inclusion and exclusion that I fear, is often overlooked in the sometimes overly enthusiastic language of “welcome.” I would like to conclude by repeating a line of “welcome.” I would like to conclude by repeating a line of “welcome.” I would like to conclude by repeating a line of “welcome.” I would like to conclude by repeating a line of “welcome.” I would like to conclude by repeating a line of “welcome.” I would like to conclude by repeating a line of “welcome.”

In an inspiring video message redouble our efforts in prayer. But finally, and perhaps most importantly as we mark the anniversary of the outbreak of the war, we must redouble our efforts in prayer. In an inspiring video message last year, Major Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk of Kyiv-Halych said, “We survived yet another horrible night, but after night, there comes day, there is morning. After darkness, there comes light, just after death, there comes resurrection.” We are Christians. We are people of hope. Our continued faith and prayer, for peace are an expression of hope, that longing for light which drives every human being.

The situation in Ukraine is dire and worsening. The people of Ukraine and our brother Knights in that nation need our help, Supreme Knight Patrick Kelly wrote. The Ukrainian Solidarity fund was launched to support those efforts, and to date has raised more than $20 million. Knights and volunteers joining their efforts have distributed more than 100,000 care packages to Ukrainians in need.

In six months alone, Malteser Ukraine served more than 365,000 hot meals to refugees at locations throughout Ukraine. “Fear has become a constant companion of the people. But as long as it is possible, we will continue our humanitarian work and care for the injured, sick, and refugees who need help,” Pavlo Titko, Head of Malteser Ukraine, said in a statement. The Knights of Malta have supplied ambulances, medicine, tents, camp beds, blankets, food, field kitchens, and more to people in need in Ukraine.

These are just three Catholic humanitarian organizations that have been present in Ukraine since Day One.

And for the rest of us? Last month, Pope Francis reiterated his call for an end to this war, which he denounced as a “crime against God and humanity.” Noting the global impact of the conflict, the pope also called for us to remember that “war particularly affects those who are most fragile — children, the elderly, the disabled — and leaves an indelible mark on families.” And while we cannot ourselves end a global conflict, we can ease the suffering of the most vulnerable.

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Bishop Robert Barron is the Bishop of Rochester, Minnesota, and the Founder of Word on Fire Catholic Ministries.
**Woman Enraged by Killing of Relative Comes to Forgive Murderer and Gives Him Proper Funeral**

**BY JOHN SHAUGHNESSY**

INDIANAPOLIS (OSV News) — When 94-year-old Winnie Harman was raped and stabbed to death by Stephen Todd Booker in Feb. 1977, no one could have imagined that such a horrific crime would eventually lead to a remarkable promise made by a relative of Harman’s — Booker would receive a proper funeral when he died.

The promise was fulfilled recently inside a parish church in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

Back in 1977, the thought that anything even remotely positive could come out of that tragedy was especially impossible to consider for Page Zyromski, the great-niece of Harman, a woman whom Zyromski loved deeply and viewed as her surrogate grandmother.

When Zyromski learned in a phone call that Harman had been brutally murdered on Nov. 9, 1977, the then-young great-niece was so overwhelmed by wave after wave of shock and sorrow that her three small children rushed to hug and comfort their mom.

In the days that followed, a feeling of rage also consumed her.

“I had never been that enraged,” she recalled. “I hated that feeling in myself, but I really understood how the family members of a murder victim say, ‘I want to pull the switch.’”

Yet on Jan. 16 of this year, with that rage long ago faded and replaced by a feeling of peace, the 80-year-old Zyromski walked up the aisle of Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Indianapolis to sit with her husband, two of their children, and their six grandchildren for a funeral Mass for Booker that Zyromski had requested and planned.

As she looked at the vessel filled with Booker’s cremated remains, she recalled the letters and visits that connected her to him for 45 years, the friendship they eventually formed, and the promise she made to give him a proper funeral.

A great-aunt in 1977.

“An Episcopal priest buried her,” Zyromski said. “One thing he said was, ‘One day, at the eternal banquet, we and St. Vincent Booker and she would all be enjoying the heavenly communion together.’ I hadn’t forgiven him yet.” Her thoughts mostly focused on Harman.

Zyromski’s mom, Mary, lost her mother when she was 8-years-old. So, Harman raised her and her younger sister. “We had no family to claim his remains,” she said. “I’ve been thinking a lot about Harman, how what her great-aunt meant to her and a few comments about Christian forgiveness.

Booker sent a letter back to her immediately. From then on, they wrote weekly to each other for 45 years before he died at age 69.

Through those letters and the six or so visits that she made to him on death row, she learned details of his life, including his youth in Brooklyn, New York. “He was a Christian. He was a Baptist. When he was younger and in school, he won a prize for French. His mother died when he was 15. He dropped out of high school. He hit the streets and did drugs. He lied to get into the Army. And he did a lot of bad things.”

Three times he was scheduled to be executed, said Zyromski.

Zyromski said Booker told her that “he did not want to be buried in ‘the yard’ — the prison cemetery as the prisoners call it.”

He had no family to claim his body, so “I made the promise to bury him,” she said. After Booker died on death row, Zyromski arranged with the Florida prison system to claim his remains. She also began making plans for a funeral Mass for Booker, whom she had come to view as a friend.

She relied upon Father Sims, a priest of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, to give a fitting homily. In his 51 years as a priest, Father Sims has never had a request like the one that Zyromski had made of him — to celebrate a Mass and share a homily for someone who had spent most of his life on death row.

Father Sims thought about how “very touching” and “generous” Zyromski’s efforts were toward Booker.

So, he shaped his homily around a story of generosity from World War II that has always touched him: about a Russian woman giving a starving German soldier some bread as he and his fellow soldiers were paraded through town, after Germany eventually lost the Battle of Stalingrad to Russia. As townspeople booed, hissed, and spat at the soldiers, this woman gave one some bread. Moved by her generosity, other women reached into their baskets of bread and did likewise.

Zyromski was modeling that great challenge of generosity and forgiveness “for all of us, in terms of dealing with whoever in our life we need to forgive.”

Father Sims said, but he added, “It’s an act of will. We just don’t snap our fingers and forgive somebody. We really need to work at it. It’s a process.”

For Zyromski, forgiving someone means to remember what someone’s done, especially when it has caused tremendous suffering. While she forgive Booker long ago, she has not forgotten the horror of his crime toward a woman she loved dearly.

“I think what I did is expected of any Catholic Christian,” she said. “If I can get one other person to think about forgiving, it will be good.”

John Shaughnessy is Assistant Editor at The Criterion, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

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**Catholic Pastoral Care Associate:**

FT & PT (8 a.m.-4 p.m. or 8 a.m.-noon) with every other weekend off. Experience in a clinical pastoral care setting preferred. Must be Catholic.

**Long-Term Care Billing Specialist:** FT 1st shift

**Activities Specialist:** FT/PT 2nd shift

**Cook/Dining Server:** FT/PT 1st/2nd shift

**Nursing:** FT/PT openings for CNAs, MQMs, LPNs, and RNs

Apply at sacwf.org or call 260.399.3265 to speak to Scott Tomkinson.

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**Direction of Music and Liturgy**

St. Anthony de Padua Parish, a vibrant community in South Bend of nearly 600 families with a school serving more than 210 children, is seeking a full-time Director of Music and Liturgy. The primary mission for the Director of Music and Liturgy is to establish a culture of vibrant music and enthusiastic liturgical participation in the life of the parish.

- This is a full-time (40 hours a week), exempt position.
- Experience is preferred but not required.
- Benefits offered according to diocesan and parish policies.
- Background check and safe environment training are required of all parish employees and volunteers.
- Scheduled hours include Saturdays, Sundays, school Masses, and all Holy Days and other days as needed.
- The Director of Music and Liturgy reports to the pastor.
- The position is available March 2023.

Interested applicants should apply online at dioceseofsb.org/careers.
WHAT’S HAPPENING?

WHAT’S HAPPENING carries announcements about upcoming events in the diocese. View more Catholic events and submit new ones at www.todayscatholic.org/event. For additional listings of that event, please call the advertising sales staff at 260-399-1449 to purchase space.

St. Pius X Knights of Columbus Fish Fry
GRANGER — The St. Pius X Knights will have a fish fry on Friday, Feb. 24, from 4-7 p.m. in the auxiliary gym, 52553 N Fir Rd. Dine-in prices are $14 for adults 12 and older, $8 for children 5-11. Meal includes fish, fries, rolls, coleslaw, applesauce, and mac and cheese. Carryout price is $12. Contact J.R. Buison at jr.buison@gmail.com for information.

Fish Fry in New Haven
NEW HAVEN — The Holy Name Society of St. John the Baptist Parish, 945 Powers St., will have a Lenten drive-thru fish fry on Friday, Feb. 24, from 4-7 p.m. The price is $12 for adults and $7 for children.

St. Gaspar Hosts Lenten Fish Fry
ROME CITY — St. Gaspar del Bufalo Parish will have a Lenten Fish Fry on Friday, Feb. 24, in the hall, 10871 N St Rd 9, from 4-7 p.m. to support the parish.

Dine-in/Carry-Out Fish Fry
WALKERTON — A dine-in or carry-out fish fry will be prepared by Tyner IOOF Lodge 821 at St. Patrick Church, 111 Tyler St., on Friday, Feb. 24. Dine-in fish, two sides, drink, and dessert for $12 for adults. Children 6-10 are $8. Children younger than six are free for dine-in only. There will be no all-fish carry outs. Contact Nancy Kochanowski at 574-586-7152 or info@saintpatricks.church.

St. John Fort Wayne Fish Fry
FORT WAYNE — St. John the Baptist Parish, 4500 Fairfield Ave., will have a Fish Fry on Friday, Feb. 24, from 4-7:30 p.m. All you can eat in the gym or drive-thru carry-out in the cul-de-sac. Menu includes Dan’s Fish Fry, Hall's mac and cheese, Hall's scalloped potatoes, Hall's green beans, Hall's coleslaw, applesauce, dinner roll, and homemade dessert. Tickets are adults: $12; children 13 and younger: $7; 2 and younger, free. Contact Karen Eckrich at 260-744-4593 or parishsecretary@saintjohnfortwayne.com.

Knights of Columbus Council 9460 Annual Fish Fry
FORT WAYNE — The St. Therese Knights of Columbus will have a fish fry on Friday, Feb. 24, from 4:30-6 p.m. at St. Therese Church, 2304 Lower Huntington Rd. Meal includes all-you-can-eat fish, six pieces for to-go orders, home-made mac and cheese or fresh cut potato wedges, coleslaw or baked beans, and endless beverages. Tickets are $8 for adults, $6 for children 12 and younger. Contact Amy Carsten at 260-747-9139 or secretary@sttherese-sfelw.org.

Immaculate Conception Church offers Fish Fry Fridays
AUBURN — Immaculate Conception Church, 500 East Seventh St., will host a fish fry on all Fridays from Feb. 24 through March 24. Stations of the Cross will be at 6:30 p.m.

in the church and fish fry is from 5-7 p.m. Dine-in or carry-out with drive-thru available. Tickets are adults 12 and older $12; children 12 and younger $6.

Ladies’ Bunco Night
YODER — St. Aloysisius Catholic School will be hosting the second Annual Ladies “Bunco” Night on Saturday, Feb. 25, in the Parish Activity Center, 14623 Bluffton Rd. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. and Bunco begins at 7 p.m. This FREE event is open to all ladies 21 and older and includes Bunco, an oversized charcuterie board of snacks, and prizes! Feel free to bring your own beverage.

St. Joseph - Hissen Cassel Notre Dame Football Smoker Fundraiser
FORT WAYNE — A stag-only event with door prizes, casino, tip boards, food, and drink will be held on Sunday, Feb. 26, from 12:30-5:30 p.m. at the school, 1337 US 27 South. This fundraiser benefits the school’s gymnasium improvements and upkeep. Entry fee is $25, which can be paid at the door or pre-sale tickets are available at Nine Mile Restaurant.

Weekly Study on the Mass and the Holy Eucharist
MISHAWAKA — A five-week study on the Mass and the Holy Eucharist presented by various priests will begin on Tuesday, Feb. 28 from 7-8:30 p.m. at Queen of Peace Church, 4508 Vistula Rd. Attend one session or all. Contact Judi LaViolette at 574-255-9674 or parishoffice@queenofpeace.cc.

Exodus Lent for Young Adult Men
FORT WAYNE — Young adult men (age 18-30s) may consider joining Exodus Lent, one of the spiritual exercises offered by Exodus 90. Based on the pillars of prayer, asceticism, and fraternity, Exodus Lent will strengthen your detachment from worldly things in order to grow in relationship with God and the people around you. It will be a challenge, but well worth it. This spiritual exercise includes prayer, reading, and reflections; abstaining from screen time and certain foods; and weekly check-ins with our men’s group for support and accountability. Visit ablazemission.org/groups.

Make a legacy gift to the
Saint Mother Theodore Guerin FOUNDATION

You make an irrevocable gift of $10,000 or more.

You receive payments for life based on your age; a portion of those payments are even tax free.

You receive a charitable deduction; you are building the future of the sisters through a gift to the Sisters of Providence.

In exchange for a gift of cash or appreciated stock, you will receive immediate tax savings and a guaranteed, partially tax-free income stream for life. Best of all, while you’re doing something good for yourself, you’ll be doing something wonderful for our sisters.

Your gift today will have an impact on the Sisters of Providence for years to come! Please call us for two-life or deferred gift annuity rates.

To request a free proposal, contact Connie Gualano, manager of planned giving, at 812-535-2811 PlannedGiving.SistersofProvidence.org

In addition to helping support the Sisters of Providence, you can:

> Make a legacy gift to the Foundation
> Make a planned gift of cash, securities, or other assets to the Sisters through a gift

**REST IN PEACE**

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<th>Name</th>
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**Planned Giving**

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Rates Subject to change based on the ACCGA.

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<td>Mary Craighead</td>
<td>St. Joseph</td>
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<td>Cristobal Jordan</td>
<td>St. Joseph</td>
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<td>Gerald Semensheim</td>
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**St. Patrick, Arcola**

**Fish Fry**

**Drive-thru ONLY**

**Friday, March 10**

4-7 p.m.

Tickets are $13 dinner, $16 all fish
Bishop Shepherds His Flock at Rekindle the Fire

BY ERIC PEAT

Every Bishop is called by the Lord to shepherd his flock, serving God’s people humbly and leading them to Christ. The Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend has such a shepherd in Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades, who spent his after- noon on Saturday, Feb. 18, with the men of Rekindle the Fire. By educating men on the significance of Christ, answering questions on faith and morals, and celebrating the sacrifice of the Mass, Bishop Rhoades effectively provided his flock with spiritual nourishment for the road ahead.

In his opening remarks, Bishop Rhoades provided an update on the National Eucharistic Procession and Festival last June, is focused on equipping leaders at the diocesan level. Although only the first year of the three-year event, which began in our diocese with the Eucharistic Procession and Festival last June, is focused on equipping leaders at the diocesan level. This will be followed by a Parish Year, which kicks off this June and is designed to foster Eucharistic devotion at the parish level. These two years culminate in July of 2024 with a National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis.

For Bishop Rhoades, the Eucharistic Revival reinforces what has been at the core of his being the Eucharist — not only to be devoted to the Eucharist, but to also live the Eucharist, living lives of sacrificial love.

Bishop Rhoades addresses the men at the Rekindle the Fire men’s conference at the Century Center in South Bend on Saturday, Feb. 18.

“If those who actively promote the killing of the unborn — should they be admitted to Holy Communion? No,” Bishop Rhoades is here,” said Travis Dexter, a parishioner at St. Mary’s of the Lake in Culver. “It’s important that he makes himself available for us to ask him questions. I find that refreshing. “It shows he’s putting his personal stamp of approval on this comp way,” agreed Deacon Joe Dietz of Christ the King Parish in South Bend. “It is important that he makes himself available for us to ask him questions.”

That evening concluded with Bishop celebrating Mass with the men in attendance. As his flock departed and dispersed across the diocese, many reflect ed on the selfless and steadfast nature of their shepherd.

“I think it’s important that Bishop Rhoades is here,” said Travis Dexter, a parishioner at St. Mary’s of the Lake in Culver. “It’s important that he makes himself available for us to ask him questions. I find that refreshing.”

Eric Peat