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# TODAY'S CATHOLIC

Volume 96 No. 30

TODAYSCATHOLIC.org

# Catholic School Mission Days Focus on Eucharist, Education



Scott Warde

Father Agustino Torres delivers a keynote address during Catholic School Mission Day on Thursday, September 7, at Bishop Dwenger High School in Fort Wayne.

BY KASIA BALSBAUGH

Throughout the span of two days – Thursday, September 7, in Fort Wayne, and Friday, September 8, in Mishawaka – more than 1,000 teachers, faculty and staff of the Catholic schools in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend were inspired to remain firm in the Church's mission to educate their students' minds and nurture their souls. In the opening prayer to kick off the day of formation, the teachers invoked the help of the saints and asked that Christ be an "ever-present teacher in our schools and classrooms."

Catholic School Mission Day is an annual event bringing together all the schoolteachers in the diocese for a day of prayer and talks about the mission of Catholic education.

Father Agustino Torres, an internationally known speaker, delivered the keynote address in packed gymnasiums at both Bishop Dwenger High School in Fort Wayne and Marian High School in Mishawaka to begin the day of prayer and formation about the mission of Catholic education.

In Mishawaka, Father Torres began by talking about places

MISSION DAY, page 8



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BY NICOLE HAHN

ach year, the Catholic Media Association (CMA) invites members of the Catholic media to enter submissions for consideration in the Catholic Press Awards. The awards honor the outstanding work of members of the CMA in their efforts to further the mission of the Church.

This year, two members of the staff of the Secretariat for Communications were recognized individually for their work in their specific positions, two members were recognized for work on a specific project, the entire staff was recognized for work on a specific project, and three journalists with Today's Catholic were honored for work on specific stories.

Nicole Hahn, Director of the Secretariat for Communications for the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, received an Honorable Mention as



**NICOLE HAHN** 

Communications Director of the Year. In early August, Hahn celebrated her second anniversary in her position at the diocese.

Joshua Schipper, Video, Digital, and Graphic Design Producer in 7th Floor Productions in the Secretariat for Communications, was awarded an Honorable Mention as Social



**JOSHUA SCHIPPER** 

Media Professional of the Year. Schipper has been in his current position at the diocese for a little more than a year and a half.

Schipper also received an award for Third Place for Best Facebook Account for a Diocesan Bishop for his work on the Facebook Account of Bishop Rhoades. The bishop's account can be found at facebook.com/ BishopKevinCRhoades.

Francie Hogan, Graphic Designer for Communications at the diocese, was awarded Third Place for Best Annual Report in Diocesan Finances for her work



**FRANCIE HOGAN** 

on the Catholic Community Foundation of Northeast Indiana Annual Report. Hogan has been with the diocese for 31 years.

The entire staff of the

Secretariat for Communications at the diocese was awarded an Honorable Mention for the Best Diocesan Fundraising Appeal for the 2022 Annual Bishop's Appeal: The Eucharist – The Sacrament of Charity.

Today's Catholic Freelance Writer Christopher Lushis received a Third Place Award for Best In-Depth News/Special Reporting in a



**CHRISTOPHER LUSHIS** 

weekly news-paper for his story titled, "Two Parishes Debt-Free Thanks to Efforts of Parishioners, Diocese." His story can be found at todayscatholic.org/two-parishesdebt-free-thanks-to-efforts-ofparishioners-

diocese/. Today's Catholic Freelance Writer Eric Peat was awarded Second Place for Best Writing on Regional



**ERIC PEAT** 

Event in a weekly newspaper for his story titled, "Eucharistic Festival a Multicultural Celebration." His story can be found at todayscatholic.org/eucharistic-festival-a-multicultural-celebra-

Joshua Schipper earned a third award, also taking on the role of journalist for Today's Catholic, receiving Third Place for Best Reporting on Catholic Education for his story titled, "St. Vincent de Paul Šchool Offers Unique Education Experience." His story can be found at todayscatholic.org/stvincent-de-paul-school-offers-

unique-education-experience/.
With these awards, the Catholic Media Association recognizes the outstanding quality of work Today's Catholic and the Secretariat for Communications produce in serving the faithful of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.



# Scott Warden Named Editor-In-Chief for Today's Catholic

BY NICOLE HAHN

Secretary for Communications Nicole Hahn has announced the hiring of Scott Warden as Editor-In-Chief for Today's Catholic, the official newspaper of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-

South Bend.

Warden brings more than 25 years of experience in writing, editing, and communications to the position, serving most recently as Senior Managing Editor for Periodicals at Our Sunday Visitor in Huntington.

"The diocese is grateful to have been able to hire someone with so much experience and expertise, specifically in Catholic writing and editing," said Hahn. "Scott will be central to the continued evangelization of Today's Catholic through sharing the stories of the parishes, schools, and other the parishes, schools, and other Catholic entities in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend."

In his position, Warden will be responsible for editing and managing the production of Today's Catholic and increasing local Catholic content that is contributed to the Office of Communications, recruiting and training freelance writers and photographers to support the content of Today's Catholic, expanding the reach of news from the Office of Communications, and helping to advance the mission of Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades



**SCOTT WARDEN** 

"It's an honor and privilege to join the team producing one of the best and most well-respected diocesan newspapers in the country." SCOTT WARDEN

throughout the territory of the

diocese.
"It's an honor and privilege to join the team producing one of the best and most well-

respected diocesan newspapers in the country," Warden said. "I'm excited to help in the important mission of my home-town diocese and share the message of Bishop Rhoades. At a time when media too often sows division or focuses on the peratives in our communication. the negatives in our community, I'm eager to help Today's Catholic continue to bring readers the stories of the people and places in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend who are living the Gospel call and bringing Christ to those around

A native of Fort Wayne, Warden's career began in 1996 as a sportswriter for the News-Sentinel in Fort Wayne. He then spent a year as a sportswriter in Florida before returning to Fort Wayne to take a job as a Copy Editor and Désigner at the Journal Gazette. In 2014, he was hired as Associate Editor at Our Sunday Visitor in Huntington. In 2016, he became the Managing Editor of The Priest magazine and The Deacon magazine at OSV. He was named Managing Editor for Our Sunday Visitor newspaper in 2019 and was promoted to Senior Managing Editor for Periodicals in 2022

Warden converted to the Catholic faith in 2006. He lives in Fort Wayne with his wife and six children, and they are active members of St. Louis Besancon Parish.



## Public schedule of **Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades**

Monday, September 18: 11 a.m. - Groundbreaking and Blessing, Divine Mercy Funeral Home, Huntertown Tuesday, September 19: 6 p.m. – Mass with Christ Child

Society, St. Joseph Church, Fort Wayne
Wednesday, September 20: 2:30 p.m. – Holy Hour, Meeting, and Vespers with Recently Ordained Clergy, Archbishop Noll Center, Fort Wayne
Thursday, September 21: Noon – Meeting of Diocesan Finance Council, Notre Dame Investment Office,

University of Notre Dame

Thursday, September 21: 7 p.m. – Confirmation Mass, St. Matthew Cathedral, South Bend

Sunday, September 24: 2 p.m. – Confirmation Mass, Sacred Heart Church, Warsaw



## Parishes are Listed in Order by Date

#### **SEPTEMBER**

St. Patrick, Arcola: September 17-19 St. Matthew Cathedral, South Bend: September 17-19

St. Michael, Plymouth: September 17-19

#### **OCTOBER**

Sacred Heart, Warsaw: October 1-3

St. Louis, Besancon, New Haven: October 1-3

St. Therese, Little Flower, South Bend: October 1-3

St. Therese, Fort Wayne: October 8-10

St. Jude, Fort Wayne: October 15-17

Holy Cross, South Bend: October 15-17

St. Joseph-Hessen Cassel, Fort Wayne: October 15-17

St. Paul of the Cross, Columbia City: October 22-24

#### **NOVEMBER**

St. Dominic, Bremen: November 5-7

St. Aloysius, Yoder: November 5-7

St. Stanislaus Kostka, New Carlisle: November 9-11

St. Gaspar del Bufalo, Rome City: November 19-21

St. Joseph, Bluffton: November 26-28

Christ the King, South Bend: November 26-28

#### **DECEMBER**

Most Precious Blood, Fort Wayne: December 3-5 St. Augustine, South Bend: December 3-5 Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception and St. Mary Mother of God, Fort Wayne: December 3-5 St. Mary of the Annunciation, Bristol: December 3-5 Immaculate Conception, Ege: December 6-8

# Pope Offers Prayers After Quake Kills 2,500 in Morocco

BY MARIA-PIA NEGRO CHIN

(OSV News) – Rescuers continue to search through the rubble in the hopes of finding survivors after a powerful earthquake struck Morocco the night of Friday, September 8, killing nearly 2,500 people and causing widespread destruction.

Search and rescue teams

Search and rescue teams continued their attempt to reach those in isolated villages closer to the earthquake's epicenter. Previous attempts to help had been delayed by fallen rocks covering the roads leading to the hard-hit rural communities.

The deadly quake's epicenter was reported to be in the High Atlas Mountains, about 44 miles southwest of historic Marrakech, a city of about 840,000 people. The villages in these areas were reported to have suffered the worst destruction, with buildings falling and killing many of the villagers while they were asleep.

The September 8 earthquake struck shortly after 11 p.m.

local time, according to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), which said its preliminary magnitude was 6.8, and it lasted several seconds, with a 4.9 aftershock hitting the area minutes later. The quake was the strongest to hit that part of the North African nation in 120 years, according to USGS. On Monday, September 11, Morocco's interior ministry confirmed the earthquake had killed 2,497 people. The ministry said there are more than 2,400 people injured, with at least 1,404 in critical condition. According to the Associated Press, the ministry also confirmed that most of the dead – 1,351 people – were in the Al Haouz district in the High Atlas Mountains.

Soon after news of the devastation spread, officials with the Archdiocese of Rabat – which has churches in Marrakech and Ouarzazate that suffered minor material damage – urged prayers for those affected through a message posted on social media. "Let us

pray with Our Lady of Morocco for the victims and their families," the archdiocese officials

In a telegram sent Saturday, September 9, Pope Francis expressed his sorrow and "deep solidarity" with the people of the North African nation, praying for those who perished, healing for the wounded, and consolation for those mourning the loss of their loved ones and homes, Vatican News reported.

The pope continued expressing his proximity to the Moroccan people "stricken by a devastating earthquake" after the Angelus prayer on Sunday, September 10. He also thanked "the rescue workers and those who are working to alleviate the suffering of the people. ... May concrete help on the part of everyone support the population at this tragic time:

Morocco!" he said. With roads damaged or

Let us be close to the people of

For the complete schedule, visit diocesefwsb.org/eucharist. **EARTHQUAKE**, page 5

# Pope Hails Beatified Family as 'Ray of Light in the Darkness'

BY PAULINA GUZIK

MARKOWA, Poland (OSV News)

— In one of the most significant
moments in Polish post-war
history, the Ulma family was
beatified in Markowa on Sunday,
September 10, becoming the first
complete family in the history of
the Church to beatified together.

"I think it will only get me
at night when Learne back

"I think it will only get me at night, when I come back home, because now I still can't believe it," Jerzy Ulma, nephew of Blessed Józef Ulma, told OSV News.

His uncle, Józef, along with wife Wiktoria and seven children: Stanislawa, Barbara, Wladyslaw, Franciszek, Antoni, Maria, and a child without a name born during the martyrdom of their mother were declared blessed by papal envoy Cardinal Marcello Semeraro in Markowa, where the Ulma family lived and tragically died on March 24, 1944. They were killed by German

occupants of Poland for giving shelter to eight Jews in their house.

"It would be a mistake if the day of the Ulma beatification would be used only to remember the terror and atrocities committed by the perpetrators," Cardinal Semeraro said in a homily. "We would like this day to be a day of joy," he said

In 1942, Wiktoria and Józef accepted a Jewish family into their home. "Today, along with the new blessed, we would like to remember their names," Cardinal Semeraro said. "They were: Saul Goldman with sons Baruch, Mechel, Joachim, and Moses, as well as Golda Grünfeld and Lea Didner with little daughter Reshla," he listed.

"The gesture of Józef and Wiktoria was a sign of obedience to God's commandment," the cardinal said. "It was a 'yes' to God's will," added said, emphasizing that a man



OSV News photo/Polish Bishops Conference

A beatification image of the Ulma family is seen in a Sunday, September 10, photo in Markowa, Poland, at the beatification Mass. Józef and Wiktoria Ulma with their seven children were beatifited as martyrs. They helped a Jewish family during World War II in their home, were denounced and killed by German Nazis on March 24, 1944.

"despised, rejected, and mortally wounded" was welcomed to their home.

During the Angelus prayer on September 10 at the Vatican, Pope Francis praised the newly beatified as "an entire family exterminated by the Nazis on 24 March, 1944, for having given shelter to some persecuted Jews."

"They opposed the hatred and violence that characterized that time with evangelical love," the pope said. "May this Polish family, which represents a ray of light in the darkness of the Second World War, be for all of us a model to imitate in the zeal for goodness and service to those in need," he said before asking the faithful to applaud for the family.

The beatification altar included multimedia elements. Pictures taken by Józef Ulma were displayed throughout the beatification Mass to illustrate who was being beatified – "saints from the neighborhood." Before and after the liturgy, the images could be seen as a slideshow.

"This beatification is an emphasis on the importance of married and family life in unity and fidelity in everyday life," Archbishop Wojciech Polak of Gniezno, Primate of Poland, told OSV News. The Ulmas "took up their vocation very concretely, being faithful to the end to what is the basic reality of man, which is love of life, fidelity to life, and also love toward other people. This is something amazing that we can pass on from this beatifica-

tion to the whole world," he said.

Manuela Tulli, author of the book "Martyred and Blessed Together: The Extraordinary Story of the Ulma Family," written with Polish Father Pawel Rytel-Andrianik and published by Our Sunday Visitor, said she discovered the Ulmas only in December of 2022 when she passed through Poland on her way to Ukraine. "I didn't look for the Ulma story, the story found me," she said.

Tulli said the Ulmas were "an ordinary family like many others, with work-related problems associated with such a large family, with the joy of the little ones who arrived in just a few years. An ordinary family deciding to do an extraordinary thing, which was to open the doors of their home to eight Jews, risking their lives," she said.

For U.S. priest Father Michal Niemczak, being in Markowa for the beatification of his family members was something for which he was "very grateful." Father Niemczak's greatgrandfather, Jan Niemczak, was Wiktoria Ulma's cousin. The priest of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, New Mexico, who is now forming seminarians at Mount Angel Seminary in St. Benedict, Oregon, came to Poland carrying his tablet with 1,156 intentions shared with him through a Google doc by his parishioners in New Mexico, family and friends, but also people from around the United States and Poland.

"So far I got 423 of them," he told OSV News before the beatification regarding how many intentions he had already gotten through. "I wish that our family in heaven grows, because now we have an example.

"Many families are going through difficulties in their lives, but there is so much hope I see in these intentions that the Ulma family will intercede," he said.

Along with Cardinal

Along with Cardinal
Semeraro, Cardinal Gerhard
Müller and Cardinal Robert
Sarah arrived from the Vatican,
accompanied by Cardinal
Stanislaw Dziwisz, longtime
personal secretary of Pope St.
John Paul II, Cardinal Kazimierz
Nycz of Warsaw, and Cardinaldesignate Grzegorz Rys of
Lódz. More than 70 bishops
and 1,000 priests joined in the
celebration of the beatification
Mass.

Rabbi Michael Schudrich, head of the Jewish faithful in Poland, participated in the outdoor Mass, celebrated at the football stadium in Markowa.

He said the Ulmas should be seen as "mentors."

"We ask ourselves, what does God want from us? How do we know what we should do?" he said in an interview with Vatican News. "Of course, we have many verses in the Bible that are clear. But it's very helpful to see someone who lives the way God wants us to live," he said.

A separate ceremony conducted on September 10 by Cardinal Semeraro, Archbishop Adam Szal of Przemysl, and Rabbi Schudrich accompanied the beatification at the nearby Jagiella-Niechcialki war cemetery, where the eight murdered Jews lie buried.

President Adrzej Duda of Poland, First Lady Agata Kornhauser-Duda, and Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki also were present, along with several members of the Polish government. Delegations from Israel, the United States, and Germany arrived as well to celebrate the heroic family that showed mercy to their persecuted neighbors.

"I truly thank God today where he had led me," Urszula Niemczak, a family relative, told OSV News. Her father-inlaw was WIktoria's brother. Her husband, Franciszek, said that "the sun rose early today, this is a good sign," he said, smiling.

Jerzy Ulma recalled, "More than 20 years (ago), someone asked my father whether he would like the Ulma family to be beatified. He said: 'God willing! I wish my brother that he rests in peace, because what else can I wish him?"

Paulina Guzik is international editor for OSV News.





OSV News photo/Hannah McKay, Reuters

A woman grieves on Sunday, September 10, during a funeral in Moulay Brahim, Morocco, for two victims of a deadly magnitude 6.8 earthquake. An aftershock rattled Moroccans that day as they mourned victims of the nation's strongest earthquake in more than a century on Friday, September 8, killing nearly 2,500 people, a number that is expected to rise.

#### EARTHQUAKE, from page 3

blocked, rescue teams had difficulty reaching the hardest-hit areas. The Associated Press reported that authorities were working to clear roads in Al Haouz province to allow passage for ambulances and aid to those affected. But large distances between mountain villages meant it will take time to learn the extent of the damage, said Abderrahim Ait Daoud, head of the town of Talat N'Yaaqoub. CNN reported that the Moroccan army cleared a key road from Marrakech to the mountains early on September

Ayoub Toudite, from the mountainside village of Moulay Brahim, told the Associated Press that his village was inhabitable after the earthquake. "We felt a huge shake like it was doomsday," he said. In 10 seconds, he said, everything was gone. "We are all terrified that this happens

again," Toudite said.
Social media videos from September 8 showed buildings collapsing, and there were reports of people trapped amid the rubble in the city. "People were all in shock and panic. The children were crying, and the parents were distraught,' when the deadly earthquake hit, Abdelhak El Amrani told officials with the Agence
France-Presse news agency.
The BBC reported that many

Moroccans "spent the night out in the open as the Moroccan government had warned them not to go back into their homes" in case of severe aftershocks. Those whose homes were destroyed by the earthquake slept outside again on September 9, CNN reported. Media reported that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi opened the G20 summit on September 9, with "heartfelt condolences" to everyone affected by the quake. Other world leaders expressed their condolences and offered support, with many countries including France, the United States, Germany, and Turkey

saying they are ready to assist Morocco following the disaster. Algeria, which severed diplomatic ties with Morocco in 2021, offered to open its airspace to allow humanitarian aid or medical evacuation

flights, according to reports.
On September 9, U.S.
President Joe Biden shared multiple messages expressing sadness at the loss of life and devastation following the earthquake and stating that the United States stands by Morocco" during this difficult time. "My administration is ready to provide any necessary assistance for the Moroccan people," he said on X, previously known as Twitter.

Biden also addressed the deadly earthquake as he began

his news conference in Hanoi, Vietnam, where he is on a diplomatic visit following his attendance at the G20. "I want to express my sadness by the loss of life and devastation caused by the earthquake in Morocco," Biden said.

Our thoughts and prayers are with the people in Morocco," Biden said, adding that he is also working with Moroccan officials to ensure U.S. citizens in Morocco are

On September 9, officials with the Royal Palace announced three days of national mourning following the disaster. Morocco's King Mohammed VI has mobilized the country's military for search and rescue missions as well as a surgical field hospital, according to the Associated Press. King Mohammed also ordered water, food rations, and shelter to be sent to those who lost their homes because of the earthquake.

Media has reported that aid and rescue teams from different countries have started to arrive in Morocco, and some countries, such as Spain and Qatar, have been asked to help. Other countries such as France are waiting for Morocco's formal request to immediately

On September 10, the

Associated Press reported that, according to Rescuers Without Borders, teams totaling 3,500 rescuers registered with a U.N. platform and were ready to deploy in Morocco when asked.
The news agency added that,
even as some international
help is arriving, the Moroccan government has not made an international appeal for help like Turkey after a massive quake devastated the country in February.

"The next 2-3 days will be critical for finding people trapped under the rubble, Caroline Holt, Global Director of Operations for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, told Reuters.

A September 9 statement from the Archdiocese of Rabat expressed solidarity with the victims, "especially for those Moroccan families who are mourning or who have injured family members," and urged the faithful to pray and to help those affected.

"We are appealing for emo-tional and effective solidarity with those in distress at this time," said the statement posted on the archdiocesan website, adding that Caritas will be working to make aid available to help where the need is most urgent. The director of Caritas Rabat will visit sites affected, and initial emergency aid is being prepared, according to a Caritas statement posted on the archdiocesan website. Cardinal Cristóbal López

of Rabat planned to preside over a September 10 Mass in Marrakech for all the victims. He also encouraged all communities to pray, express compassion to local authorities, and organize solidarity.
"May God help us to draw

positive consequences from this painful event, by transforming our hearts into hearts of mercy, solidarity, and tenderness toward our brothers and sisters in distress," the archdiocesan statement said.

Maria-Pia Negro Chin is Spanish editor for OSV News.

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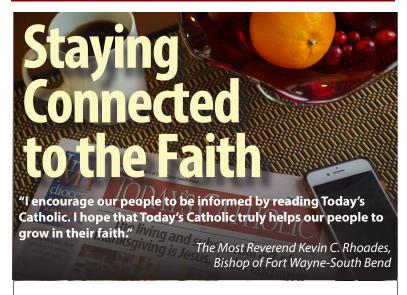
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### Data Shows Abortions Rise in States Where Procedure Is Legal

(OSV News) – Legal abortions most likely increased in the United States in the first six months of 2023 compared with 2020, according to a New York Times analysis of data from the Guttmacher Institute, which opposes abortion restrictions. The data from Guttmacher, based on what it calls a representative sample of legal abortion providers, is from the first half of 2023; it follows the U.S. Supreme Court's 2022 decision in Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization that overturned prior rulings by the high court making abortion access a constitutional right. Following the Dobbs ruling, 22 states have moved to ban or restrict abortion, although not all of those efforts are currently in effect amid court challenges. Due to a court ruling on Monday, August 21, abortion is effectively banned in Indiana. The analysis found that about 511,000 abortions were estimated to have occurred in states or territories where the procedure was legal within the first six months of 2023, an increase from about 465,000 abortions nationwide in a six-month period of 2020.

### British Teen Wants to Fight for Her Life, but Court Denies Her Wish

LIVERPOOL, England (OSV News) – A Catholic bioethics News) – A Catholic bloethics institute has criticized a court for denying an "alert and conscious" teenager the legal right to fight a move to put her on end-of-life care against her will. The Anscombe Bioethics Center, an Oxford-based institute serving the Catholic Church in the United Kingdom and Ireland, said the ruling by the Court of Protection in the case of a woman, named only as "ST" for legal reasons, represented a "lethal form of paternalism." The 19-year-old student has been in an intensive care unit in an English National Health Service hospital since last year after she suffered respira-tory arrest while infected with COVID-19. She also suffers a progressive mitochondrial illness and is now entirely reliant on a ventilator to breathe, a tube to receive nutrition, and a hemodialysis machine. Doctors at the hospital want to move her from intensive care to palliative care, in which the woman will be sedated and denied hemodialysis, resulting in her death from kidney failure within days. The patient has instructed her lawyers to oppose the plan and to press for permission to go to either the United States or Canada to take part in clinical trials for experimental "nucleoside bypass therapy," a treatment for her mitochondrial illness that might give her an improved

# NEWS BRIEFS

# **Pope Francis Meets Sylvester Stallone**



CNS photo/Vatican Media

Pope Francis greets actor Sylvester Stallone, known for his role in the "Rocky" movie franchise and other films, and his brother, Frank Stallone, during a private audience at the Vatican on Friday, September 8.

chance of survival. She told a psychiatrist who examined her: "This is my wish. I want to die trying to live. We have to try everything." But in a written judgment issued at the end of August, the judge in her case ruled that the woman is "unable to make a decision for herself in relation to her future medical treatment ... because she does not believe the information she has been given by her doctors."

## Pope: Don't Spread Gossip or Point Fingers When Wronged

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – Rather than engage in petty gossip that leads to scandal, Christians are called by Jesus to be direct yet loving in offering help to an errant friend, Pope Francis said. Fraternal correction is "one of the highest expressions of love, and also one of the most demanding," the pope said before praying the Angelus with some 20,000 people in St. Peter's Square on Sunday, September 10. Unfortunately, when someone makes a mistake, one of the first things that follows is gossip, he said, through which everyone but the person concerned comes to know the details of the incident. "This is not right, broth-

ers and sisters," Pope Francis said. "Gossip is a plague on the life of people and communities because it leads to division, it leads to suffering, it leads to scandal; it never helps anyone improve or grow." Alternatively, the pope recalled the day's reading from St. Matthew's Gospel in which Jesus says to tell someone of their fault "between you and him alone." He explained that "pointing the finger is not good," and underscored the need to condemn the mistake while being "close to the person with prayer and affection, always ready to offer forgiveness, understanding, and to start over."

## Trust Is Needed for Lasting Peace, Says Holy See Diplomat at U.N.

NEW YORK (OSV News) – Without trust, "you can't build a lasting peace," said Archbishop Gabriele Caccia, the Holy See's Permanent Observer to the United Nations. The archbishop shared his thoughts with The Good Newsroom, the New York archdiocese's online news outlet, at an annual vespers prayer service on Tuesday, September 5, for the opening of the 78th U.N. General Assembly. The assembly commenced that day

with a theme of "rebuilding trust and reigniting global solidarity." The service, which drew some 350 participants, took place at Manhattan's Holy Family Church, dubbed the "United Nations parish" for its work in serving the spiritual needs of the U.N. community. The Holy See's mission has hosted the event since 1986 as part of its overall commitment to promote "peace, justice, human dignity, and humanitarian cooperation and assistance." The archbishop said the Holy See's mission at the U.N. flows from "the principle of the Incarnation," since "where people are, the Church is there, because the God of love is for every people, and in this place especially."

### Vatican Offers Details on How Synod Will Work, Media Access

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – Any limitations and rules regarding media access and communications during the upcoming Synod of Bishops are rooted in the "essence" of a synod and meant to help participants in their process of discernment, said the head of the synod's communication committee. "The way in which we are going

to share information about the synod is very important for the discernment process and for the entire Church," Paolo Ruffini, Prefect of the Vatican Dicastery for Communication, told reporters at a Vatican news conference on Friday, September 8. Some of the "few rules regarding communication" stem from "the essence of the synod," he said, which Pope Francis has repeatedly underlined is not a "parliament" or convention but a journey of listening and walking together in accordance walking together in accordance with the Holy Spirit. However, Ruffini said, some portions of the synod will be livestreamed and appear to Vatican accordited and open to Vatican accredited reporters, including: Mass in St. Peter's Square on Wednesday, October 4, to open the assembly of the Synod of Bishops; the first general congregation, which begins that afternoon with remarks by Cardinal Mario Grech, Secretary-General of the synod, Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich, Relator General of the synod, and Pope Francis; the moment of prayer beginning each general congregation; the opening sessions of each of the five segments or "modules" into which the synod will be divided.

### California's Rising Assisted Suicide Rate Alarms Catholics

SACRAMENTO, California (OSV News) – When California in 2021 relaxed its physician-assisted death rules - easing access to the lethal means for residents to take their own lives – several lawmakers behind the change cited a desire to aid the terminally ill, invoking a sort of legislative altruism. The result – profiled in the California Department of Public Health's "End of Life Option Act 2022 Data Report," released this past July – was a 63 percent increase in requests for life-ending drugs, and 853 eventual deaths. Between 2016-22, 5,168 people were prescribed lethal medication under the law, with ultimately 3,349 individuals, or 64.8 percent, ingesting the lethal drugs and dying. But it's not simply the higher statistics that concern Catholic ethicists, advocates, and doctors. It's the acceleration of trends contributing to a cultural – and potentially medical – shift away from the preservation of life. "Legalizing physician-assisted suicide is just the first step of putting into law the lie that there is such a thing as a life not is such a thing as a life not worth living," said Father Tad Pacholczyk, Senior Ethicist at the National Catholic Bioethics Center and a frequent contributor to Today's Catholic. The California Catholic Conference, however, is concerned that the officially reported numbers may not give an accurate picture of legalized physician-assisted sui-cide's impact and is working with a broad coalition to demand greater data transparency.

# AROUND THE DIOCESE

# **Parish Formation Leaders Gather in Fort Wayne**



Provided by Chris Langford

Jason Shanks, President of the OSV Institute and a member of the National Eucharistic Revival team, speaks at a training for parish leaders on Thursday, September 7, at St. Jude Church in Fort Wayne. Coordinated by the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, each parish has identified a point person to assist priests and administrators with fostering community outreach and serving as their parish's primary contact with the diocese for the National Eucharistic Revival.

### Sign up to Stay Informed

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We as Catholics have a duty to bring morality into the public forum. The Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC) works to bring morality into the public forum by educating policy makers and politicians on Catholic Social Teaching and the impact it can have on proposed laws. While the ICC had some successes during the most recent Indiana General Assembly session with expanding school choice and curbing predatory lending, we need assistance. Those who stay informed on local and national issues can help the ICC help the Church. Signing up to receive information on matters of importance to the Church from the ICC is a small first step. After receiving information, you can prayerfully discern which matters you want to share with family and friends, or which matters move you to engage in some way with your local or national representatives or senators.

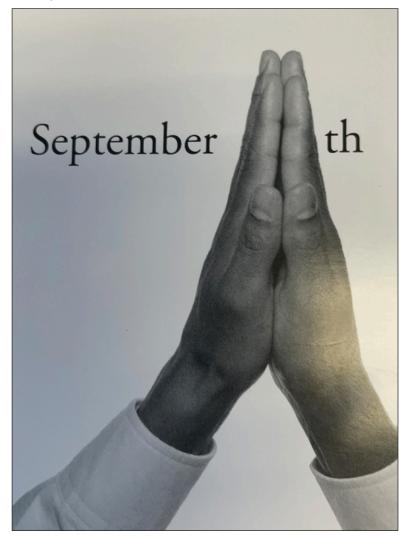
Sign up via email icc@archindy.org or by calling 317-236-1458.

Thank you for your consideration.



The Indiana Catholic Conference

# **Prayers for Peace on September 11**





Nicole Hahr

Knights of Columbus Council #1014 in Huntington joined councils around the world on Monday, September 11, for a World Day of Prayer for Peace service at St. Mary Parish. It was in 2004 when the Supreme Council of the Knights of Columbus resolved that September 11 be observed each year as a World Day of Prayer for Peace. The prayer service at St. Mary included the singing of hymns and the recitation of the Rosary.



Scott Warden

Teachers, faculty, and staff members of Catholic schools in and around Fort Wayne look on as Father Agustino Torres gives a keynote address during Catholic School Mission Day on Thursday, September 7, at Bishop Dwenger High School. Father Torres, an internationally known speaker and one of 50 priests appointed as a National Eucharistic Preacher, spoke to the audience on the importance of the Eucharist in their mission as educators.

#### MISSION DAY, from page 1

he had recently visited – including a taqueria in Goshen – that were unashamed to put up pictures of saints or live their Catholic faith in their business. "It's amazing to see how the Faith is lived every day," said Father Torres, who joked, "I realized that tacos are going to be the meal at the heavenly banquet."

More seriously, Father
Torres shared a story with the
teachers about a family he met
in Poland who had been willing to offer catechism classes
under great risk during communist rule. While our current battles are different than
theirs, Father Torres said, we
are still living in difficult times.
He told the educators: "Look
at the person right next to
you and say, 'I'm a warrior!'...
Go into the fray of the confusion of these times and battle
for the hearts of these young
people." He added, "And you
thought you were just here to
teach math!"

Father Torres continued:
"Our mission is great, and we are indeed battling for human hearts, for human souls, where there are so many contrarian narratives that go against the mission with which we are entrusted." Father Torres, one of 50 priests chosen to be a National Eucharistic Preacher during the ongoing National Eucharistic Revival, also emphasized the importance of the Eucharist in the mission of Catholic educators. "The Eucharist and our ministry of teaching is part and parcel,



Scott Warde

Following his keynote address, Father Agustino Torres answers questions from the audience related to their mission and ministry as Catholic educators.

goes together hand in glove; we cannot do it without either one "he said

one," he said.

After recalling an experience of saying Mass near the border in northern Mexico, with children huddled around the altar and people weeping as the Eucharist was celebrated, Father Torres said: "This is what the Church has to offer in these times. We can think of arguments to all the contrarian narratives, and there's a place for that, but bring the people to Jesus. I invite you

to recapture wonderment. ...
Recapture this wonder, this
lavishness of faith that we've
learned from the saints, so
that we may evangelize." He
added, "We may not have to
host catechism classes at the
risk of our lives, but if we do,
I'll see you guys in prison!"
Father Torres' keynote

Father Torres' keynote address on both days was followed by a Mass celebrated by Bishop Rhoades, who focused on the importance of the Blessed Virgin Mary as it pertains to the mission of

Catholic schools. The mission day in Mishawaka happened to coincide with the Nativity of Mary, a connection that Bishop Rhoades made in his homily. Bishop Rhoades reflected especially on the title of Mary as "Seat of Wisdom." He said: "Mary thought with God's thoughts and willed with God's will. That's what true wisdom is."

Further drawing connections between true wisdom and the mission of Catholic schools, Bishop Rhoades said:

"Our schools are to be communities not of worldly wisdom but of divine wisdom - communities of truth and of love. We see education as a unified enterprise, the goal of which is not to communicate knowledge of isolated 'subjects' but an integrated curriculum so that the students grasp the relationships between different areas of learning and the relationship of everything to God and His eternal wisdom. We seek to form students who have the wisdom to be able to see the good, the holiness to love what is good, and the eloquence and skill to be able to share the good with others. What an amazing mission that

After awards were presented to teachers who were celebrating milestone anniversaries with the diocese, various breakout sessions focused on other specific ways to carry out this mission. Among more practical talks about caring for mental health and supporting English learners were others focused on Eucharistic adoration or the saints.

tion or the saints.

Catholic speaker and writer
Meg Hunter-Kilmer led one
of the breakout sessions in
Mishawaka on "Using the
Saints to Draw Kids to Jesus."
She recommended telling stories of many kinds of saints
and said kids have asked
her if she knew about saints
who had limb differences or
saints who didn't have fathers
in their lives. "The power of
these stories is undeniable ...
just watching the way [the
kids] light up when they see
there is a place for them in this

Church," Hunter-Kilmer said. She suggested telling children, "The Lord can move in your heart and do incredible things while also using the talents that He gave you."

Tom Kostielney, a 10-year theology teacher at St. Joseph High School in South Bend, shared with teachers in both Fort Wayne and Mishawaka during his breakout session about how Catholic virtues, ideals, and doctrines can be integrated into any subject and any class. "The Congregation for Catholic Education says the weaving of our reason and our Catholic faith needs to be 'the heart of the individual subjects. Kostielney said. He added: "We want to give them a Catholic education that shows them 'why.' Each student will have to critically think about, 'What does the Catholic worldview actually teach? What do I actually believe?'

Other breakout sessions in Mishawaka included information about Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, the mission of Catholic Charities, the importance of Eucharistic adoration, and the Eucharist and Black Catholics.

Lindsay Jeffres, Principal of Christ the King School in South Bend, said this was her fourth year attending Catholic School Mission Day. "I feel like the biggest point of today is to bring the South Bend side of the diocese together, celebrate what we do as educators, invigorate new staff, and revive older staff," Jeffres said.

Teaching is a difficult calling, and teachers need that revitalization. As Father Torres said, "You teachers are examples of self-sacrifice. Work-life balance is hard for teachers!" Yet in a different part of his keynote, when thinking about the profound humility of the Lord coming down to us in the guise of bread, Father Torres observed, "This is, if you will, the Eucharistic model: hold back nothing of yourself for yourself."

To end his talk to teachers at Bishop Dwenger, Father Torres told a story from when he was recently ordained. About 15 years ago, he said, he traveled to Europe to participate in a Catholic youth festival with 20,000 youths and young adults. The event was to culminate with a sunrise Mass on the top of a mountain that the pilgrims had hiked up the evening before. Father Torres said he got caught up hearing confessions and, without having slept, arrived for Mass just as the sun was rising. While he and other priests were spreading out to give Communion to the faithful, he was carefully carrying the ciborium with consecrated hosts while trying to navigate his steps down the mountain. "I'm walking

down these steps, and I'm thinking, 'Oh, they look kind of slippery. It'd be horrible if I slipped, but that's not going to happen." And then it happened. "I was walking down with Jesus, and I slipped. .. The moment turned into slow motion, and I was thinking, 'What do I do? Do I try to break my fall?'" In that split second, he said, he pictured the hosts flying through the air and rolling around on the ground in the cracks and crevices at the top of the mountain. "Then out of nowhere, all these Italian grandmas just reached through the crowd and grabbed me as I held onto Jesus.

He implored the teachers: "Hold on to Jesus, and He is going to sustain you. Hold on, because He will lift you up so that you can bring Jesus to others."

Scott Warden contributed to this report.



Scott Warden

Bishop Rhoades looks on as Sister Genevieve Raupp receives a standing ovation from the crowd after the Assistant Principal of St. Charles Borromeo School in Fort Wayne was recognized for serving in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend for 40 years.



Kasia Balsbaugh

Teachers, faculty, staff, and women religious congregate during Catholic School Mission Day at Marian High School in Mishawaka on Friday, September 8. The annual event brings together those who work in diocesan schools for a day of prayer and talks about the mission of Catholic education.



Kasia Balsbaugh

Monsignor William Schooler, Pastor of St. Pius X Church in Granger, gives a talk on the Eucharist during a breakout session on Friday, September 8, at Marian High School in Mishawaka.



Kasia Balsbaugh

Speaker and author Meg Hunter-Kilmer talks during her presentation on "Using the Saints to Draw Kids to Jesus" at Marian High School in Mishawaka on Friday, September 8.

# St. Joseph Parish Embraces Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

BY JILL A. BOUGHTON

The didn't remember it until she began learning to be a catechist herself, but Halee Williams participated in Catechesis of the Good Shepherd as a preschooler. Her parents, Steve and Kristi Burkins, ran the program at St. Dominic in Bremen. Now, Williams works full-time as a catechist for the program at St. Joseph Church in South Bend.

Several diocesan parishes provide this opportunity for young learners to encounter Jesus in Scripture and the lit-

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd utilizes the developmentally appropriate Montessori approach for children ages 3-6 (Level I) and 6-9 (Level II). Ten or 12 students at à time visit what is called the "Atrium" – a term used in Catechesis of the Good Shepherd to denote the space between the sanctuary and the outside world. It is a beautiful, calm, orderly space where children move deliberately and speak quietly. Each "work" is introduced to a group of children, pri-

marily through the reading of Scripture. They also learn about Biblical geography to help make children aware that Iesus lived in a real time and place with a specific landscape. In the

Atrium, each child is free to choose what "work" he or

she wants to use and for how long. At St. Joseph, Josephine, 4, encapsulates the method perfectly, saying: "You kind of

Photos provided by Sean Kennedy

Students at St. Joseph School in South Bend learn while playing during their time spent participating in the parish's Catechesis of the Good Shepherd program, which is directed by full-time catechist Halee Williams.

play, but you kind of work. It is basically like prayer, but you are playing."

The children use their senses prayerfully to enter into the meaning of Scripture and the Mass. That may involve smelling oil scented like the chrism used in baptism, helping Jesus the Good Shepherd find and gather figurines representing his sheep, moving the figures in

a diorama of the Last Supper, or holding a minuscule actual mustard seed from the Holy Land on their fingertip and marveling

World Apostolate of Fatima, U.S.A. Fort Wayne-South Bend Diocesan Division

"I love enabling young children

to encounter Jesus

in a personal way."

HALEE WILLIAMS

## **Holy Mass and Breakfast** Saturday, October 7

7:30 a.m.: Sacramental Confession 8 a.m.: First Saturday Devotions

9 a.m.: Holy Sacrifice of the Mass with Father Glenn Kohrman, Father Robert Garrow, and Father Stephen Felicichia at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception

11 a.m.: Breakfast with Guest Speaker Father Stephen Felicichia

Tickets: Adult \$20 - Children 3-12 \$14 2 and younger FREE RSVP @ FatimaFWSB.org



that it can grow into a large bush. St. Joe parishioners Katie Ball-Boruff and Lisa DeLorenzo began Catechesis of the Good Shepherd when Holy Cross Father Kevin Russeau was pastor, but it was limited to the Sunday CCD hour. After St. Joseph School opened its preschool 11 years ago, Joanie Rymsza trained Halee Williams at Christ the King in South Bend. Williams now oversees a program where every student in St. Joseph School from preschool through second grade gets to spend one "special" a week in the Atrium for 45 minutes to an hour. Preschool-age parishioners not enrolled in the school can also be signed up for a weekly session on Monday morning or afternoon. There are several trained catechists in the parish, including Director of Religious

Education Sean Driscoll.

"This is a beautiful program," Williams said. "I love enabling young children to encounter Jesus in a personal way, hopefully the beginning of a lifelong relationship with Him. Through repetition, the children become familiar with Scripture and are able to enter into what they see happening at Mass." They learn the meaning of gestures like "epiclesis," "offertory," and the names of the vessels on the altar. The program is easily

photos are available at www.todayscatholic.org adaptable to the abilities of children on the autism spectrum and other special learners.

Williams has worked with some children for six years and delights in watching their understanding and faith grow over time. Children in Level II love to plan prayer services using the hymnal and other resources they find on the prayer table. Although they still work individually, there can be collaborative efforts at this age.

At St. Joseph, student Dylan said he likes learning his prayers and "processing" during his time at Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, while Pierre, 4, says, "I like that we do prayers and stuff." Second-grader Remy explains. "I learn grader Remy explains, "I learn about Jesus, God, and Mary." Classmate Molly said: "You can pray there. There are things that you can play with that can help you think about stuff that happened, like Jesus talking about the Kingdom of God." Another second grader, Ezra, summarizes the most important thing he's learned: "I know that the Good Shepherd would risk His life for the lost sheep.'

#### September 17, 2023

# Former USCCB Staffer Offering 'Vatican 101' at St. Charles

BY BETHANY BEEBE

on Clemmer wants to bring Rome a little closer to home.

This is the motivation behind an upcoming presentation, which he calls "Vatican 101," he'll be giving at 7 p.m. on Thursday, September 21, at St. Charles Borromeo Church in Fort Wayne. Clemmer will give attendees a bit of background attendees a bit of background about the papacy today, the College of Cardinals, and the Roman Curia.

While these are terms with which many Catholics are familiar, many are quick to dismiss these important institutions as irrelevant to their own faith. However, Clemmer said, "These structures have a bigger impact on the daily lives of Catholics than people might think. They also offer helpful bictory, scattering and incipate." history, context, and insight.'

His presentation will also give more information about the 21 new cardinals Pope Francis will create at a consistory at the end of September. "Their backgrounds and biographies offer insights into the pope's ongoing priorities and how they might shape the future," Clemmer said.

Future decisions will impact Catholics around the world, and changes happen frequent-

and changes happen frequent-ly – necessary reaction to a

changing world.

When you stand back and reflect on even a relatively short time span like the last 180 years, a person of faith can see the slow but teccan see the slow but tectonic movements of the Spirit through history," Clemmer said. "Developments like global Catholic relief organizations, Vatican diplomacy, and Catholic social teaching show the power of the Church responding to the world. What world. What

happens in Rome eventually finds its "When you stand back and reflect way into the day-to-day experience on even a relatively short time of the local Church, even if it takes span like the last 180 years, a decades or centuries. We might as well person of faith can see the slow engage in that process intentionally." but tectonic movements of the

Clemmer became a **'Vatican** watcher" when, at the

beginning of
his Catholic media career, Pope
St. John Paul II died – the only
pope he had ever known. The
death of the pope and the conclave in Rome that followed
created a new level of undercreated a new level of understanding of the Church for him.



On March 11, 2013, just two days before Pope Francis was elected, Catholic journalist Don Clemmer, a Fort Wayne native, took this photograph of himself in front of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome during his travel as part of the communications contingency of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Clemmer brings extensive career experience within the Church. Ĥe began with Today's Catholic in 2005 after graduating from Bishop Luers High

School and the University of Saint Francis. From 2008-16, he worked in communications for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) in Washington, D.C.

While the home of the papacy will remain in Rome, and it is unlikely that the next pope will be from the United

States, Clemmer said the needs of the Church and world dictate the selection, so anything is

"The rest falls into place from there. So even if they

Spirit through history."

pursue a continuation of Pope Francis' distinctly Latin American vision or elect a pope from a growing region such as Asia or Africa, those details are not the starting point.
"The conventional wisdom,"

he said further, "is that the Church wouldn't want to give the papacy to a superpower such as the United States."
Clemmer pointed to Cardinal
Sean P. O'Malley, the archbishop of Boston who, to his own relief, was not elected pope in 2013, despite drawing attention from the media and other cardinals. Clemmer said, how-ever, that "the man they chose [Pope Francis] had a similar background and style."

Back in his hometown of Fort Back in his hometown of Fort Wayne since 2016, Clemmer has used his journalistic abilities to write and edit for a number of Catholic organizations.

To learn about the history, institutions, and personalities that shape the life of the Church all are encouraged to

Church, all are encouraged to attend his September 21 presentation at St. Charles, which will be held in the Hession

It only takes a

## Weekend



#### to fall in love all over again.

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\* Parish-based experiences allow you to return home overnight.

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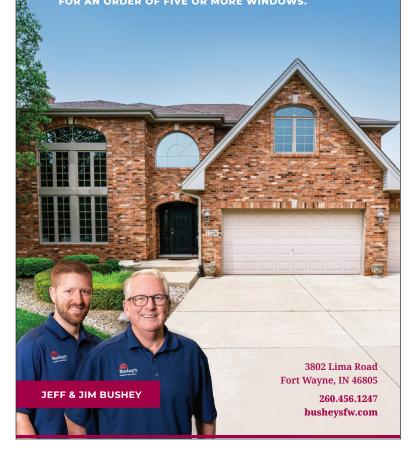


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# Teresa of Avila, Good Pope John and ... Jimmy Buffett?

**▼**oo often lately, it feels like the offices from which we've historically taken our cues – our political and community leadership, the punditry, local authorities, and even some church groups – are populated with unserious people who can't rise to a moment. Those who aren't peddling pure boilerplate and calling it constructive thought are offering endless scolds about how we should live, think, and speak, and how, if things aren't getting better, it's because we're not doing enough of the right things. We should constantly be doing ever more of all these right things, it seems, until the world is saved and humanity perfected, and then, finally, we may rest.

These exhausting harangues have become as penetrating (and authentic) as prop knives. They fall upon our ears like an approaching storm we've heard for too long – an over-familiar sound and fury, often signifying nothing

Which is why the Jimmy Buffetts of the world are important to have around, and why it is worth a respectful pause and some consideration when they

pass

There was something poignant in Buffett's passing at the start of Labor Day weekend, when the days are growing shorter and the flip-flops and Hawaiian shirts must be put away along with our fantasies of living on a beach, responsible

for nothing beyond bringing dessert to the next get-together. Sweaters come out in the evening, and time seems suddenly too valuable to waste away searching for misplaced meaning, too fleeting to reclaim the misspent days that, valued too late, are forever lost.

Some dismiss the laid-back

Some dismiss the laid-back island-escapism of Jimmy Buffett as being something hedonistic or uncaring. The world is heavy with material and spiritual misery on every continent – we see it daily in the headlines – and from that perspective, he might seem to have been just another fizzy artist, part beach bum, part vagabond, rolling easily between a beer keg and a few cocktails capped with frivolous little umbrellas while singing of hazy nights and strange tattoos (how it got there, he hadn't a clue!).

Buffett's biggest hit,
"Margaritaville," celebrates a life
lived in meandering dissipation;
its plaintive chorus sounds only
mildly regretful as the narrator
wonders who is to blame for
his under-achieving days until,
in the final refrain, he comes
clean:

"Some people claim that there's a woman to blame / But I know it's my own damn fault."

If you didn't know that Buffett was raised Catholic, the last line is a dead giveaway.

That nearly everything in our lives will eventually reveal a component of self-accountability



GUEST COMMENTARY

**ELIZABETH SCALIA** 

at its core is something every Catholic can identify with. Such recognition is a gift that comes to us not from so-called "Catholic guilt" but from a formed Catholic conscience.

Buffett, like so many, journeyed away from his childhood Catholicism, although he still sang of belief and of prayer. But as any revert to the Faith will tell you, the Church "stays with you." Even after walking away, the potency of its sacramental graces – starting with baptism, wherein we are claimed for Christ – means the conscience is always nudged to wakefulness, and then to action, even if we'd prefer the sleep of oblivion.

Buffett was stirred to action after Hurricane Katrina, according to one man. "I worked at the New Orleans Margaritaville (while) in college," tweeted John Veron. "I ended up in Austin, Texas, with the clothes on my back and little else. ... Margaritaville cut us all \$3,000 checks immediately after the storm, no questions asked. ...

SCALIA, page 13

# The Reliable, Comforting Presence of Our Lady of Protection

t was 10:30 at night when the beeping started. The kids were all sound asleep, and we were, naturally, on the 32nd of 33 floors. Only the restaurant with a view and the birds were higher than us.

An announcement was made. The fire alarm had been activated, the firefighters were on their way. We could stay or we could go – the option was ours. Looking at the three sleeping heads, there was no option. The "what ifs" drowned out even the relentless droning of the alarm.

31, 30, 29, 28. Down, down, down. What's going on? I'm scared. Why is this happening? 27, 26, 25, 24. Little legs. Little curls. Little voice. Should we pray?

Yes, we should pray. To

Yes, we should pray. To whom shall we pray? To Mary, of course.

"And a little child shall lead them" (Is 11:6).

The Hail Mary got us down another flight of stairs. By the time we reached the seventh floor, we got the all-clear. Construction dust, not flames, was the culprit. All was well.

An elevator ride brought us back up to 32, back to our temporary home in the sky overlooking the rushing water of the Canadian Niagara Falls. As we tucked the kids back in bed – or at least tried to – we remembered the little figure



NO GREATER IOY

**GRETCHEN CROWE** 

standing on the nightstand in the shadows of the room. It was a small plastic replica statue of Notre Dame de Protection (Our Lady of Protection), which we had picked up during our recent stop in Quebec City only a few days before.

The statue had been provided by the Centre-Catherine-de-Saint-Augustin, where we had learned how the original Notre Dame de Protection statue had been brought to New France by Blessed Catherine de Saint-Augustin, an Augustinian Hospitaller Sister of the Mercy of Jesus, in 1648. Catherine was only 16 years old when she arrived in Quebec, and she was deeply determined to serve the sick and suffering in the French colonies in present-day Quebec.

It was thanks to Our Lady that she even arrived in the colonies at all, though, after Catherine had contracted the plague aboard the ship headed west from France. She is said

CROWE, page 13

# Why We Must Keep God as Our Top Priority



SUNDAY GOSPEL

**MONSIGNOR OWEN F. CAMPION** 

# Twenty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

The Book of Sirach is the source of this weekend's first biblical reading. Sirach's author was Joshua, the son of Sirach. (He should not be confused with Joshua, active centuries earlier as a disciple of Moses and leader of the Hebrews as they passed into the Promised Land.)

Written in Jerusalem, originally in Hebrew, Sirach lost the right many years ago to be regarded as sacred Scripture because some very strict and conservative scholars presumed it to have been written first in Greek, instead of Hebrew. In fact, its Hebrew original was later translated into Greek.

Evidently Joshua, son of Sirach, operated a school in Jerusalem for young men. (Young women received no formal education.) His great interest was to teach ethics to his students. Thus, this book is very much a testament of Jewish belief in God, and of Jewish belief in right and wrong.

Composed less than 200 years before Christ, Sirach indicates the intellectual environment in which it appeared. It was an environment affecting even pious Jews, filled with regard for human logic, a circumstance taken from the Greeks whose military exploits had overtaken much of Asia Minor, including the Holy Land.

The reading frankly calls upon its audience to forgive the faults of others and to trust in the merciful God. Wrath and anger are hateful things, the reading insists. No one who succumbs to these faults should expect mercy from God.

St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans provides the second reading

Probably the great majority

of Christian Romans, to whom this epistle first was written, were among the poorer classes, tempted to look longingly at the rich and aristocratic, assuming that the privileged controlled their own destinies.

Instead, Paul insists, God controls the lives of all. All belong to the Lord.

For its last reading this weekend, from the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus answers the question of how often, and to what extent, must disciples forgive wrongs done them. Although 2,000 years ago, people hurt each other. Roughly, and generally speaking, they also lived as we live. We owe debts, material or otherwise, to others. We yearn. We suffer. We despair

We despair.

How should we react to hurts? The Lord answers that disciples must forgive, not "seven" times, but "seventy times seven." The number meant complete, absolute, and total

True Christian forgiveness, however, must in all things take account of, and resemble, God. Those stingy with forgiveness are not of God.

Christian forgiveness, so powerfully noted here, but also elsewhere in the Gospels, reveals the essence of the Redemption, that in Christ we as sinners are forgiven. In turn, this reveals again that "God is love," and that always God's will for us is that we should live eternally.

#### Reflection

St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans was written when life could not have been worse for Christians, certainly not for Christians residing in Rome, the great imperial capital and center of the world.

of the world.
By calling the Christian
Romans to hold fast to their faith
in God, Paul in effect reminded
them that first things matter.

The people of Maui feel that life could not be worse, as they try to rebuild their lives after the destructive fires. First things are first – their own survival, the survival of loved ones, the firture

God loves us. His love is proved by the fact that we still

hold the things that matter most. Think about them. Thank God for them.

The Church observes a particular feast day to remember the Christian Romans who died rather than repudiate Christ. They put first things first. They were rewarded.

For all believers, visited by disaster or not, life makes sense when first things are acknowledged, and when in all things they see an avenue to discover and to meet God.

#### **READINGS**

**Sunday:** Sirach 27:30–28:7; Psalms 103:1-4, 9-12; Romans 14:7-9; Matthew 18:21-35

**Monday:** 1 Timothy 2:1-8; Psalms 28:2, 7-9; Luke 7:1-10

28:2, 7-9; Luke 7:1-10 **Tuesday:** 1 Timothy 3:1-13;
Psalms 101:1-3, 5-6; Luke 7:11-17 **Wednesday:** 1 Timothy 3:14-16;
Psalms 111:1-6; Luke 7:31-35 **Thursday:** Ephesians 4:1-7, 11-13;
Psalms 19:2-5; Matthew 9:9-13 **Friday:** 1 Timothy 6:2c-12; Psalms 49:6-10, 17-20; Luke 8:1-3

**Saturday:** 1 Timothy 6:13-16; Psalms 100:1-5; Luke 8:4-15

# A Salute to the Noble Work of Catholic School Teachers

have been married to my wife for 22 years, and for each of those 22 years, I've worked as a journalist in some capacity or another. Whether it was the nearly 15 years I spent in the secular media or the almost 10 in Catholic media, whether I've been a writer or an editor, I've always seen it as important work. A mentor of mine who could turn a phrase with the best once called journalism "a noble profession ... perhaps the most noble after archer." While it's not near the truth, I always liked the phrase.

My wife, on the other hand, is a teacher. After graduating from college just before we were married, she immediately began teaching at St. Louis Besancon, the parish where she was raised, where we were married, and, later, where are oldest children were baptized also, as of recently, the parish to which we've returned. Like me, though, she's spent chunks of her career working in and out of the Church.

But that's where the similarities ended, as far as our careers have gone. When we left for work in the morning, Erin went her way, and I went mine. As Rudyard Kipling wrote, "Oh, East is East, and West is West,

and never the twain shall meet." Until recently.

On Thursday, September 7, she and the rest of the teachers at St. Vincent de Paul School in Fort Wayne - and all other teachers, faculty, and staff from all the Catholic schools on the south end of the diocese gathered at Bishop Dwenger High School for Catholic School Mission Day. And in my new role as editor of Today's Catholic, my first assignment in the field was to report on the

As I was parking, I felt my phone buzz – a text from my wife. "Right side, second row from the back," it said. She saved me a seat.

It was a good thing, too, because the gym at Dwenger was packed as we listened first to Father Agustino Torres, a well-known Franciscan Friar of the Renewal, talk about the vital role Catholic teachers play in passing on not only the knowledge their students need to succeed academically, but also how necessary it is for them to share their love of God and their passion for the Faith.

In his homily during Mass at Bishop Dwenger, Bishop Rhoades reiterated this sacred mission of Catholic teach-



#### SCOTT WARDEN

ers, lifting up Mary, Seat of Wisdom, as an example for all who work in Catholic education. It is Mary, he said, who "teaches us teachers to share [the truth of her Son] with our students through our words and example." Sharing the mystery of the Word made flesh, Bishop Rhoades added, "is our central conviction as Catholic school educators. It is only in Christ that we discover our incomparable dignity, our vocation, our ultimate fulfillment as human beings, and eternal joy and

What profession can be more important? Not a journalist, certainly – nor even an archer. And for 22 years, it's been an honor to sit next to my wife and watch her and her colleagues do the most noble of work.

Scott Warden is the Editor-In-Chief of Today's Catholic.

#### CROWE, from page 12

to have been healed through the intercession of the small statuette and the powerhouse intercessor that it depicted.

While visiting the center, we got to know Catherine's story of great works and even greater faith – and about the little statue that earned a huge reputation for the miraculous. Numerous other miracles and healings have been attributed to the statue over the centuries, including the protection of a home from a rapidly spreading fire in a village near Quebec in 1866 after an image of Our Lady of Protection had been attached to the door of the home that was

So it was this statue that was sitting on the nightstand in our room during our fire alarm drama on the last night of our Canadian vacation.

Now, I'm not saying there was a miracle. We know there was just some drywall dust that triggered the fire alarm at our hotel that prompted our long descent with three little people in our arms and at our side. But, my goodness, it was certainly comforting to parents to see her stalwart self standing there in our room when we returned.

There she was, Our Lady, Notre Dame de Protection, holding her infant Son and looking at us as if to say: "I got you. I know what it's like to be a parent, what it's like to love our children, and what it's like to fear for them, especially when facing the unknown. You can

count on my protection today and always. And so, we shall.

Our family will never forget our journey down 25 flights of stairs that night. As someone has already told us, "At the very least, you have a story to tell." And believe me, our kids are telling it! We will never forget the young nun who carried the Marian statue with her from France to the New World, and who has inspired widespread veneration. And we will never forget, either, as our son reminded us, to turn to Our

Gretchen R. Crowe is Editor-In-Chief of OSV News.

Lady for help – the one who protects us and always, always

carries our needs to her Son.

#### SCALIA, from page 12

They also let employees know that if any of us could get to ANY other Margaritaville, there was a job waiting for us.

Employees who ended up in Orlando were "set up with clothes, jobs and housing,' Veron continued. "Jimmy Buffett showed up for us when we needed it. He took care of me and my friends. I'll always be grateful."

Anyone surprised by the story would do well to remember what St. Teresa of Avila said when a critic disapproved

of her unedifying enjoyment of a roasted partridge at dinner.

There is a time for partridge and a time for penance," the great reformer rightly replied. Knowing how to strike a balance between rest and action is a very Catholic thing, for we are a both/and Church, part Mary and part Martha. Jimmy Buffett knew how to recognize when to take action and when to relax and enjoy the life he'd been given. This speaks to the value of a conscience formed and sustained by sacramental graces, whose effects the Holy Špirit tends.

"To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose unto heaven" (Eccl 3:1). There is a time to work hard for a weary world, but also a time to kick off the shoes, settle back, and take our cues from Teresa, or from Jimmy Buffett. It is good, and perhaps the better part of wisdom, to riff off of the prayer Pope St. John XXIII was said to have prayed each night: "It's your (world), O Lord. I'm going to bed."

Elizabeth Scalia is the Culture Editor for OSV News.

## **SCRIPTURE SEARCH®**

Gospel for September 17, 2023

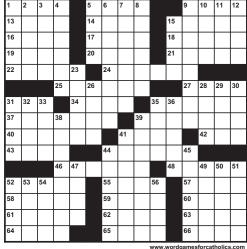
Matthew 18:21-35

Following is a word search based on the Gospel reading for the 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle A: The story of mercy and the lack of mercy. The words can be found in all directions in the puzzle.

AGAINST ME **OFTEN FORGIVE SEVEN TIMES** KING **SETTLE ACCOUNTS** SOLD **PAYMENT** WIFE CHILDREN PAY YOU **REFUSED** THE DEBT SUMMONED **WICKED ANGER BROTHER HEART FATHER** 

#### WHAT'S OWED

EHTORBEDLOS 0 M MUSK W Ν D E A N G E G Ρ L T Н Т Ε Υ М Ν M D Ε Ρ S ٧ М Ε Ε Ε Т Н Ε Н Ε М E F U S E D X R



#### **ACROSS**

- Gospel that has no parables
- Liquid secreted by the
- 9 Poet
- 13 Musical instrument
- 14 Notion
- 15 Portable papal throne, Gestatoria
- 16 Soft lambskin leather
- 17 Dives for apples
- 18 In front
- 19 USA
- 20 Narrow strip of wood
- 21 Staggers
- 22 Abode of the dead
- 24 Hemoglobin deficiency
- of the Church
- 27 Mild oath (slang) 31 Dashboard Itrs.
- 34 Mend
- 35 St. Katherine's surname
- Structure for prayer and the celebration of Mass
- Certain Sunday
- 40 Patron saint of librarians

- 41 Athlete Ty 42 Nominative "her"
- 43 Pundit's page
- \_ People 44 The\_
- 46 Served (with "out")
- 48 Saintly priest-explorer
- 52 It's on your head
- 55 Start of some characteristics of God
- 57 Undesirable plant 58 The Archdiocese of
- Canberra and Goulburn are in New South
- 59 Medieval piper
- 60 Hybrid
- 61 Jetson canine
- 62 "This \_\_\_\_ sudden!" 63 On the double, initially
- 64 Low in pitch
- 65 Promontory 66 Immediately following

#### **DOWN**

- Fish food?
- 2 The Audacity of Hope author
- "Faith is the realization of what is \_\_\_

- (Heb 11:1) Approached
- Baby shower gifts
- Worship of a false god
- The cedar trees used in building a temple to the Lord came from here
- The day of the Resurrection
- Fate of John the Baptist
- 10 Chick's tail?
- 11 Monetary unit of Iran
- 12 Pops
- 15 Worn by women in
- India 23 City destroyed in
- Genesis
- 26 Concern
- 28 Wood chopping instruments
- 29 Home of The Hague (abbr.)
- 30 Exultation
- 31 Voodoo amulet
- 32 Get ready
- 33 Fabled loser
- 35 Pats gently
- 36 Hicks
- 38 Young children
- 39 Fruit of the Holy Spirit 41 Woman's
- undergarment
- 44 Catholic Polish composer and pianist
- 45 Cardinal who wrote "Lead, Kindly Light"
- \_ facto 49 Employ again
- 50 Make less tense
- 51 Proficient
- 52 Large mop
- 53 Juanita's house
- 54 Mtn. stats
- 56 Engagement enders?

# Eliot's 'The Wasteland' at 101: A Guided Glimpse of the Abyss

BY KENNETH CRAYCRAFT

**◄**he Wasteland," arguably T.S. Eliot's greatest poem, was originally published in 1922, 100 years ago last year. But this month marks another important centenary anniversary of the publication of Eliot's great reflection and critique of modernity. In September of 1923, Leonard and Virginia Woolf published an edition of "The Wasteland" for their private publication company, Hogarth Press. Virginia Woolf personally designed the layout of the Hogarth edition, reflecting her graphic interpretation of the substance of the great poem. Thus, two artists whom many regard as the personifi-cations of modernist literature - Woolf for prose fiction; Eliot for poetry - combined to pro-duce a volume that is a work of art in itself. In an age in which we sometimes read more on an electronic device than in an object of paper, glue, and cardboard, the 100th anniversary of the Hogarth edition of "The Wasteland" is an occasion to reprise the celebration of Eliot's great work.

great work.

I have long considered "The Wasteland" to be the poetic inspiration of such novels as Ernest Hemingway's "The Sun Also Rises," Evelyn Waugh's "Vile Bodies" (among others), Frich Maria Remarque's "All Erich Maria Remarque's "All Quiet on the Western Front," Woolf's "To the Lighthouse," and similar between-the-wars novels. Each of these works of literature are portraits of the disillusion and unmoored debauchery of post-World War II Europe. They are not celebrations of what the modern has



OSV News photo/Anja Coco Parisienne

A stylized image of a desert and a denuded tree bring to mind images of T.S. Eliot's "The Wasteland," which was published in December of 1922.

wrought, but rather observations of the disaster and diagnosis of what it portends. All are "modernist" works, but only in the sense that the modern ought to make us shudder in anxious perplexity. We have lost our way, they all seem to say, and we haven't the foggiest idea of how to find it again. Written before any of these novels, "The Wasteland" might be seen as the blueprint for all of them.

Indeed, Waugh used a line from "The Wasteland" as the title of another of his novels from that period, "A Handful of Dust." If you know the novel, you can see how it was inspired by these lines from Eliot:

"You cannot say, or guess, for you know only / A heap of broken images, where the sun

And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief, / And the dry stone no sound of water. / Only / There is shadow under this red rock, / (Come in under the shadow of this red rock), / And I will show you something different from either / Your shadow at morning striding behind you / Or your

shadow at evening rising to meet you; / I will show you fear in a handful of dust.'

And in Waugh's most famous (if not his best) novel, "Brideshead Revisited," the stuttering character Anthony Blanche delivers from memory a pas-sage from "The Wasteland,"

at the window of lodgings at Oxford, in order to scandalize the earnest undergraduates passing by in the quad: "In languishing tones [Anthony] recited passages from 'The' Wasteland' to the sweatered and muffled throng that was on its way to the river. 'I, Tiresias, have foresuffered all,' he sobbed to them from the Venetian arches; 'Enacted on this same d-divan or b-bed, / I who have sat by Thebes below the wall / And walked among the l-l-lowest of the dead."

"The Wasteland" is not merely a great example of modernist poetry. It is, rather, an image of the human race as it has wandered ever further from the Edenic paradise that is its proper home. The desolation and ruin of the poem is a cry of desperation. It is not simply a glimpse into the abyss but rather a guided tour through it. It is

er a guided tour inrough it. It is Eliot's Inferno without Paradiso. "'That corpse you planted last year in your garden, / 'Has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year? / 'Or has the sudden frost disturbed its bed? / 'Oh keep the Dog far hence,

that's friend to men, / 'Or with his nails he'll dig it up again! /
'You! hypocrite lecteur! – mon
semblable, – mon frère!"
But perhaps the poem was
also Eliot's dark night of the

soul that led to the dawn of resurrection. Some five years after the publication of Wasteland," and to the mocking chagrin of none other than Virginia Woolf, Eliot left the empty, arid Unitarianism of his ancestry and converted to the florid liturgical tradition of Anglo-Catholicism. In the wasteland, there "is no water but only rock / Rock and no water and the sandy road / The road winding above among the mountains / Which are mountains of rock without water / If there were water we should stop and drink / Amongst the rock one cannot stop or think /

Sweat is dry and feet are in the sand / If there were only water amongst the rock. ...

In Christianity, he found the

Eliot's conversion makes "The Wasteland" more, not less important. For it demonstrates that he did not embrace the death and decay of the world of the poem but rather was on his journey out from it to the glory of resurrection. Despite Woolf's dismissal of Eliot's conversion, her edition of "The Wasteland" is a lasting contribution to Christian art.

Kenneth Craycraft is an associate professor of moral theology at Mount St. Mary's Seminary and School of Theology in Cincinnati. He wrote this for OSV News.



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# WHAT'S HAPPENING?

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

#### **Elkhart County Catholic Open Golf**

ELKHART – A fundraiser for the St. Vincent de Paul Elkhart Cemetery will be held on Sunday, September 17, from 2-6 p.m. at the Bent Oak Golf Club, 3610 Bent Oak Trail. The fundraiser will benefit the new columbarium and meditation garden project in the St. Vincent de Paul Cemetery. Visit catholiccemeteryelkhart. org. Cost is \$400 per foursome. Contact Jeff Kendell at 574-320-2566 or Jeff.Kendell@ comcast.net for information.

#### **Fall Rummage Sale**

KENDALLVILLE – Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, on the corner of Oak and Diamond Streets in Kendallville is hosting a fall rummage sale on Friday, September 22, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Saturday, September 23, from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. \$3 bag sale will be held on Saturday beginning at

#### A Mother's Hope 6th Annual Diamond Gala

FORT WAYNE - A Mother's Hope will host the 6th Annual Diamond Gala on Thursday, September 21, at the Allen County War Memorial Coliseum Conference Center, 4000 Parnell Ave. Doors open at 5:30 p.m.

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The evening kicks off with a cocktail hour and games. You'll have plenty of time to try your luck at winning gift cards, wine, whiskey, and, of course, diamonds. Tickets are \$100 per person and include drinks and dinner. Sponsorships are also available. Learn more at go.amhfw.org/Gala23 or by emailing natalie@amhfw.org.

#### St. Joseph Parish Festival / Kermes

FORT WAYNE – The St. Joseph Parish Festival / Kermes will be held on Saturday, September 16 and Sunday, September 17, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the school parking lot, 2213 Brooklyn Ave. Tacos and other food will be for sale along with kids' games, silent auction, beer tent, piñatas, and more. The beer tent will be open from 6:30-9:30 p.m. for those 21 and older on Saturday with a live band.

#### Blessing of Mary's Glen Spiritual Healing Chapel

FORT WAYNE - Mary's Glen Spiritual Healing Chapel provides a place of prayer for people to heal. Father Patrick Hake will offer Mass, bless the chapel, and dedicate it to the Holy Family, who are an integral part of the spiritual healing on Saturday, September 24, from 9:30-10:30 a.m. at 2514 Reynolds St. Visit

marysglen.com for information or contact Madeline Nugent at 260-739-6882 or bspenance@ outlook.com.

#### **Most Precious Blood 125th Anniversary** Celebration

FORT WAYNE - All alumni, families, friends, past and current parishioners, and staff will celebrate 125 years with festivities on Saturday, September 16, at 10 a.m., with pickleball at Hamilton Park continuing to Most Precious Blood School and Church, 1529 Barthold St., at noon with kids' games, food trucks, music, and an alumni tent full of class pictures and memorabilia. Bingo, a silent auction, and school and bowling alley tours will be offered. Dinner, drinks, and a DJ will begin at 6 p.m. in the school gymnasium. On Sunday, September 17, Bishop Khoades will celebrate the 10:30 a.m. Mass at Most Precious Blood. Following Mass, a breakfast will close out the celebration. Visit preciousblood.org for information.

#### St. Vincent de Paul Stores Need Donations

FORT WAYNE — Donations are always accepted for cars, trucks, and vans. Donations are tax deductible. Call 260-456-3561 for pick up or drop off at the store, 1600 S. Calhoun St.

#### CROSSWORD SOLUTION





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#### Granger

Christian Delgado, 66, St. Pius X

Helen Medina, 95, St. Pius X

#### Huntington

Rex D. Gordon, 81, SS. Peter and Paul

#### **New Haven**

Eugene Frecker, 92, St. Louis Besancon

#### **South Bend**

Janice Trethewey, 87, Holy Cross

Richard Kuczmanski, 89, Holy Family

Dorothy Lindorf, 101, **Holy Family** 

Joe Schopmeyer, 82, **Holy Family** 

Patricia Ann Gault, 89, St. Anthony de Padua

Carol E. Ruff, 88, St. Anthony de Padua

Leonard Shiprek, 88, St. Anthony de Padua

James W. Zielinski, 85, St. Anthony de Padua

Gerald Kozuch, 78, St. Casimir

Beverly Ditsch, 18, St. John the Baptist

Joshua Ditsch, 47, St. John the Baptist

Josephine Menting. 91, St. Jude

Send obituaries to obituaries@diocesefwsb.org.

## SUBMIT EVENTS at

TodaysCatholic.org/event

## **CAREER OPPORTUNITY**



### **Diocesan Safe Environment** Coordinator/ **Human Resource Assistant**

The Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend in Fort Wayne is seeking a part-time (29 hour per week) Diocesan Safe Environment Coordinator/Human Resources Assistant. The primary function of this position is to coordinate, implement, and support all diocesan entities in their compliance with the diocesan Safe Environment Program (SEP) and to assist the diocese in its full response to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishop's Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People. In addition, this position supports the general human resource function to include processing new employee paperwork and leave of absence requests.

The ideal candidate will have excellent communication skills and have a positive, solutionoriented approach to helping the schools and parishes that we serve. Previous experience working in a position that is highly data driven and utilizes human resource information systems and/or Microsoft Office 365 products is preferred. A high level of confidentiality is required for this role. This employee serves as member of the Human Resource team and reports to the Director of Human Resources.

**Come join our team!** Interested applicants should apply online at diocesefwsb.org/careers.

16 September 17, 2023

# Surviving 9/11 Attacks Left 'No Questions about the Reality of God'

BY GINA CHRISTIAN

(OSV News) – On a September morning 22 years ago, now-Deacon Paul Carris of the Archdiocese of Newark, New Jersey, settled into his cubicle in a New York skyscraper – the iconic World Trade Center 1, also known as the North Tower.

Six weeks earlier, the civil engineer – a 46-year-old layman at the time and a self-described "compartmentalized" Catholic, whose faith was neatly segmented from other areas of his life – had left his private consulting work to rejoin the staff of his former employer, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

If skies were clear, the 70,000 tourists and employees on site each day at the North Tower and its sister South Tower could see 45 miles in every direction from the top floors. The vista was no less stunning down on the 71st floor, where Deacon Carris had a window view.

"I hadn't even opened all my boxes yet," Deacon Carris told OSV News in an interview on Thursday, September 7. "And I was in a new department. So ... I knew maybe one or two people, but most of the people were all new to me."

Yet on that cool, pictureperfect morning of September 11, 2001, he was moments away from several life-changing meetings – with a fellow North Tower worker, with God, and with himself.

"I'd just gotten off the phone with my manager, and I heard a huge, loud roar and then (an) impact to the building," he said.

At 8:46 a.m., American Airlines Flight 11, which had been hijacked by five terrorists from the Islamic terrorist group



OSV News/Archdiocese of Newark

Deacon Paul Carris, left, assists at Mass with Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin of Newark in this undated photo.

al-Qaida, crashed into floors 93 through 99 of the North Tower. The 76 passengers and 11 crew members on board were killed instantly, along with hundreds in the building. Above the 91st floor, hundreds remained trapped.

Minutes later, another five hijackers from al-Qaida flew United Airlines Flight 175 into the South Tower, immediately killing 51 passengers, nine crew members, and an undetermined number of building occupants. Another 50 to more than 200 of those in both towers are believed to have jumped to their deaths after the impacts.

Horror gripped the nation as the coordinated attack continued to unfold: Al-Qaida hijackers slammed American Airlines Flight 77 into the Pentagon, and then a fourth plane, United Airlines Flight 93, which was initially headed to Washington, D.C., plunged into a field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania, after passengers thwarted the hijackers.

In total, the four attacks spanning some 77 minutes would kill 2,977 people that day. They would not be the only victims of those September 11 attacks. More than 4,600 first responders and survivors have since died from cancers and other ailments incurred by toxic dust, fumes, and fibers from the debris; thousands more continue to suffer.

Deacon Carris told OSV News that it "literally took three or four days after the event" to process the sequence of events that led to his escape from the North Tower.

"The building ... tilted so far that it almost felt like it was going to keep going over," he said. "And then it just rocked back and forth into place."

As flaming debris cascaded across the windows, Deacon Carris and his co-workers began to evacuate. But one middle-aged floormate lagged behind: Judith Toppin, who suffered from a number of health issues – a compromised heart that required a defibrillator, poor lungs, and swollen legs.

"Three or four people were standing around her trying to figure out what to do, because she was a very heavy woman; she was probably over 300 pounds," Deacon Carris said.

He strode over to her and simply said, "Stay calm, and get up. We are going to walk out of this building together."

Strangely, the exodus through the stairwells was for the most part "incredibly calm," and "everybody was so cooperative with each other," Deacon Carris said.

During the laborious journey, punctuated by brief rests and pauses to allow others to pass, with the smell of jet fuel choking the air, "my focus was totally on getting her down a step at a time," said Deacon Carris, admitting that he "hadn't even thought about praying," since he was intent on "making sure she got down without falling."

But "at some point ... (Judith) started praying Psalm 23 out loud," he recalled. "I said, 'Oh yeah, I'd better start praying to God myself.'"

At one point, Toppin's defibrillator "went off and lifted her an inch" off the steps, said Deacon Carris.

About 30 floors from the exit, they felt another impact as

the South Tower was struck. For the final 10 floors, Judith's limbs had become "kind of numb" from exhaustion," Deacon Carris said.

The pair were among the last to make it out from the building, which collapsed at 10:28 a.m. after burning for 102 minutes.

For Deacon Carris, though, the real battle for survival began once he'd reached the ground. A written reflection by

A written reflection by Toppin, who became a dear friend and likened him to an angel in her tribute, "made me dig deep and realize ... I'm anything but a perfect person," said Deacon Carris.

"Anger and rage issues" after the attacks led him to seek therapy, he said. "It wasn't about 9/11, so much as (Judith) had described this person whom I did not recognize. ... Part of what contributed to the anger is I realized something was missing in my life, and I had no idea what it was."

The answer came during a Cursillo retreat he attended.

"I realized that what was missing was a really true relationship with God," he said. "I'd been a Catholic all my life, but it was the first time I actually understood what a relationship with God was about."

Soon "this hunger took over me for learning and study," said Deacon Carris, who sought to assuage it by entering a threeyear faith formation program offered by the Archdiocese of Newark.

Later, he found himself volunteering to help local women religious build a food pantry for a large Guatemalan community in Fairview, New Jersey.

"That volunteering effort sort of got my focus on getting out of my comfort zone and doing service," he said.

Other new doors began to open in his life: a transfer to a different department at the Port Authority that enabled him to avoid a layoff, work in Newark, and his application to the archdiocese's permanent diaconate program, to which he was accepted in May of 2007.

Ordained in May of 2011, Deacon Carris – now assigned to Corpus Christi Parish in Hasbrouck Heights, New Jersey – said 9/11 gave him "a rock of a foundation, knowing that God is here"

"I have no questions about the reality of God and the reality of God in everybody's life," he said. "But unfortunately, we sometimes have to go through tragedy to wake us up to open that door. If there's a theme to my preaching, it's 'get out of your comfort zone, and you'll find the Holy Spirit.""

Gina Christian is a national reporter for OSV News.

