

TODAY'S CATHOLIC

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Faith in the Face of Tragedy

After the deaths of his two daughters and his brother, Deacon Jim Tighe found peace in the presence of Christ

BY DAN STOCKMAN



Dan Stockman

Deacon Jim Tighe, who serves his diaconal ministry at St. Jude Church in Fort Wayne, was recently named pastoral administrator of St. Mary Mother of Church.

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Pro-Life Supporters March in Fort Wayne, South Bend

BY SCOTT WARDEN AND PHIL NISWONGER



Joe Romie

The annual March for Life in Fort Wayne celebrated its 50th anniversary on Saturday, January 27, as hundreds of people gathered at the downtown Saint Francis Performing Arts Center on Berry Street for a pre-march rally.

After an opening prayer and a roll call of elected officials and candidates who were participating in the march, attendees

heard the testimony of Bettina Herrmann, who found herself in an abusive relationship and had two abortions. She told the audience that only through forming a relationship with Christ was she able to heal the wounds caused by her abortions. Now, Herrmann works at the pro-life Cleveland Pregnancy Center and helps other post-abortive women through the Deeper Still ministry.

Indiana State Senator Liz Brown delivered the keynote address at the rally and noted

the significance of the 50th anniversary of the local March for Life, which was sponsored by Right to Life of Northeast Indiana.

"The late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg once said, 'I think, generally, in our society, real change, enduring change, happens one step at a time,'" Brown said, adding, "You didn't think I'd start with a quote from Justice Ginsburg, did you? But here's the thing,

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JIM TIGHE, from page 1

That spirit was hard won.

On March 14, 1999, his two children, Shelley and Megan, were killed in a car accident. Ask him how old they were, and he explains that Shelley was 19, home from college, and Megan was 16, a sophomore at North Side High School. And then he is silent for a long time.

Suddenly, he and his wife, Pat, were alone.

"I remember that first night at home," he says. "We were sitting in bed, and we realized we had nobody but ourselves."

But that feeling didn't last long.

"I felt the presence of Christ, and so did Pat," he says.

"Nothing we owned mattered anymore, but Jesus was with us."

People offered well-meaning advice, but it often only served as a reminder.

"They'd say, 'Don't worry, they're with God.' And I'd say, 'Yeah, but I'm in Fort Wayne,'" he says. "People asked me afterward why we stayed here. I tell them the kids are here, and we're not going anywhere without them."

But the grief wasn't finished.

On September 11, 2001, Deacon Tighe's brother, Stephen, died in the terror attacks on the World Trade Center in New York. Stephen worked for Cantor Fitzgerald, as did Stephen's brother-in-law, Timothy O'Brien – Stephen's wife, Kathleen, lost both her husband and brother that day. Stephen, 40, left behind Kathleen and four children; Timothy, 41, had a wife and three kids.

Both lived in Rockville Center on Long Island, where Deacon Tighe grew up, one of five children. Rockville Center lost dozens of people in the attack.

"I think that in the long run, what that has done for me is the recognition that life is a journey. It's a constant transition," Deacon Tighe says. "We all have two choices: We can either curl up in a corner or come face to face with what happened."

That doesn't mean there won't be raging emotions.

"Was I mad at God? Oh yeah," he says. "It was like, 'We've had enough of this. What are you doing to us?' Especially after losing Stephen, it was like, 'Why us?'"

Father Tom Shoemaker, Pastor of St. Jude at the time, said he remembered visiting Tighe on 9/11, along with



Nate Proulx

Deacon Jim Tighe poses with Bishop Rhoades following his diaconal ordination in 2011.

Mary Pohlman, who was the Pastoral Associate at St. Jude.

"Mary and I went to Jim and Pat's home, where the four of us sat and prayed," Father Shoemaker told Today's Catholic. "Every time the phone rang, Jim jumped. There was no good news. As the day wore on, it became more clear that Stephen would not be calling. In the middle of tragedy, Jim and Pat talked about their daughters and remembered the

terrible day of the previous tragedy. Strong in their faith, both were able to focus on the gift of their loved ones, the grace of God that had never left them, and the Kingdom of Heaven."

One night, he was alone in the darkened sanctuary of St. Jude Parish, locking up for the night. But

instead of leaving, he knelt in front of the Tabernacle and began to pray.

"And I found myself yelling at Him. 'Why? This make no sense! Why did this have to happen?'" he says. "Eventually, I calmed down, and just sat with the presence of Christ. I realized I wasn't

looking for clouds to open up and to hear God's voice. This isn't Hollywood, it's an ongoing conversion experience."

Deacon Tighe knows our entire lives, with all their twists and turns, are an ongoing conversion experience.

As a young man, he was considering a vocation to the priesthood, and even began attending seminary in New Jersey, but he realized the priesthood wasn't right for him. After college, he wanted to break into the broadcasting industry and took a position through the Jesuit Volunteer Corps at a radio station in Nome, Alaska. Pat, who was from Chicago, was also volunteering in Nome with the Jesuit program as a registered nurse.

In 1974 they were married, despite her being a Cubs fan and him rooting for the Mets, and moved to Anchorage. Jim's radio career took them to California's Bay Area, then Sacramento, and eventually Fort Wayne's 101.7 FM, at the time an easy-listening station. He would go on to spend a decade working at WOWO, where he was known as "Jim Tighe the Weather Guy." Area Catholic listeners might remember him from his stint as the host of the morning show on Redeemer Radio.

After Shelley and Megan died, Deacon Tighe and Pat were regular attendees at a grief support group – eventu-

ally they became grief support group leaders. Losses that might have shattered their marriage instead gave them new understanding.

"We saw a Jesus we didn't necessarily know from grade school," he says. "I saw in Jesus the presence of God with us – personally, not distant. ... I think we both just understand that God is with us."

Four or five years after Stephen died, then-Bishop John D'Arcy was beginning a permanent diaconate program for the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, and Father Shoemaker nominated Tighe.

"I think at that time we were both looking for ways to deepen our faith," he says of himself and Pat.

The program was formation for both of them: All the married candidates' wives attended every session, so they knew what their husbands – and they – were getting into. "They learned as we learned," he says.

He was ordained in 2011, and he says the vocation is much more than just a job.

"It is who you are now," he says. I pray the surrender prayer every day – I am the servant, and the servant doesn't get to discuss what he's going to do that day. He goes and does it."

At the same time, being a husband is also who Deacon Tighe is.

"You don't do this without your wife," he says. "(Bishop Rhoades) has been great. He says, 'If Pat doesn't want it, we won't do it.'"

Now, much of his day is spent keeping the busy St. Mary Mother of God parish running.

"Every parish is unique," he says. "But it's like a family reunion – everyone's different, but we're all connected in Christ. I just want to keep (the parish) in good shape until the next guy comes along."

When Deacon Tighe gives homilies, he focuses on the fundamentals and often talks about the four pillars of the church: the teachings of the faith, the sacraments, living out our faith, and prayer.

"I figure my job is to make some of these things clearer," he says. "I try to avoid theological terms."

He's well-versed in the details – "Pat says, 'All you read is theology!'" – but centers his ministry on being pastoral, because in the end, he says, everything but the presence of God in our lives falls away.

As Deacon Tighe told Our Sunday Visitor in 2021 for a feature on the 20th anniversary of 9/11: "There came a point after our daughters' deaths when we realized that Christ alone was our way through this. Everything else didn't mean anything. That's the whole essence of Eucharist. The presence of Christ in our lives is our way out."

Deacon to Bring 'Hope and Purpose' to Servus Omnium Lecture

BY SCOTT WARDEN

Because of the dedication and mission of three Catholic organizations, members of the Fort Wayne community will have the opportunity to be formed and inspired as they begin their Lenten journeys, as Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, the University of Saint Francis, and the Catholic Community Foundation of Northeast Indiana have teamed up to host the Servus Omnium Lecture on Tuesday, February 13 (Fat Tuesday), at 7 a.m. at the Saint Francis Performing Arts Center in downtown Fort Wayne.

Founded in 2013 by former Saint Francis colleagues Matt Smith and Lance Richey, the event was canceled in 2021 because of COVID-19, but Smith, now the Chief Development Officer for Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, said he and Richey, the Interim President of Saint Francis, saw a desire to resume the annual Mardi Gras breakfast event.

"We'd had some folks in the community ask if we were planning on brining the event back," Smith told Today's Catholic. "It's such a great way to kick off Lent and provides attendees with an inspiring message. So we got together and invited the Catholic Community Foundation to be part of it, too. We thought, what a great partnership among three of the leading Catholic apostolates in the diocese to show a bit of thought leadership."

Smith added: "We see it as a way to help people, especially leaders of businesses and nonprofits to see how they can integrate their faith life with their professional life. Oftentimes, we've sort of siloed those two things, especially in the business world, but that doesn't need to be the case, regardless of what faith tradition someone practices."

Smith and the other organizers of the event invited internationally renowned speaker and author Deacon Larry Oney to give the lecture. Deacon Oney is the co-founder of Hope and Purpose Ministries, which aims to be a missionary-centered apostolate with the goal of expanding the Kingdom of God on earth through dynamic preaching and teaching.

Seeing a desperate need for the culture to have a deeper engagement with faith, Deacon Oney and his wife, Andi, founded Hope and Purpose Ministries six years ago.

"We thought, what do people really need?" Deacon Oney



CNS file photo

Deacon Larry Oney, founder of Hope and Purpose Ministries, will offer the keynote address on Tuesday, February 13, at the Servus Omnium Lecture at the University of Saint Francis Performing Arts Center in Fort Wayne.

SERVUS OMNIUM LECTURE

Date:
February 13, from 7-9 a.m.

Where:
USF Robert Goldstine Performing Arts Center, 431 W. Berry St., Fort Wayne

Tickets:
\$20 in advance, \$25 at the door, or \$150 for a table

Register:
bit.ly/ServusOmnium

Agenda:
7 a.m., Blessing by Bishop Rhoades and Opening Prayer

7:10 a.m., Mardi Gras Breakfast

7:45-8:45 a.m., Deacon Larry Oney, "Called and Sent for Such a Time as This"

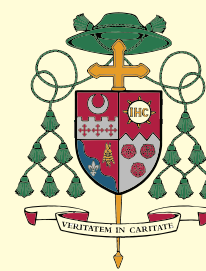
told Today's Catholic. "Where are we with people, even people of faith, and how do we encounter people who don't have any faith?" They key thing people today are lacking, they discovered, is hope. And then "once you get your hope in the person of Jesus Christ," Deacon Oney said, "then you need to be asking the next question: What is my purpose? What is my divine mission upon the earth?"

Rooted in Scripture, the focus of Hope and Purpose Ministries is threefold, Deacon Oney shared: First, to expand the Kingdom of God (cf. Mt 10:7); second, to remind those

he serves that God wants us to have an abundant life (Jn 10:10); and third, that God desires our good – that He has "plans for your welfare and not for woe, so as to give you a future of hope" (Jer 29:11). The last one, Deacon Oney explained, "is really the essence of our ministry." He paraphrases what God is saying in Jeremiah: "I plan to bless you, not to curse you. I plan to build you up, not to tear you down, but I plan to give you a future full of hope," Deacon Oney said. "And He says this: When you call on to me, I'll hear you. When you look for me with all of your heart, I'll let you find me, and I will change your life, and I will change your situation, says the Lord."

At the Servus Omnium Lecture, Deacon Oney will challenge those in attendance with his presentation, "Called and Sent for Such a Time as This," during which he will speak about "going into the breach with excellence."

He said, "the spirit of excellence is waning now, but business people, and all of us, we have to do whatever it is that God is calling us to do in an excellent way, and I believe there's power there, because when people see excellence, they realize something. Now you can give your witness to your faith in Jesus Christ. But do the work that God has called you to do. You're satiated in life in an excellent way, so now go into the breach in an excellent way."



Public schedule of Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades

Saturday, February 10: 10 a.m. – Meeting of Diocesan Pastoral Council, Westminster Hall, Grace College, Winona Lake
Sunday, February 11: 10 a.m. – Mass at St. Gaspar del Bufalo Church, Rome City



Priest Assignment

The Most Reverend Kevin C. Rhoades, Bishop of Fort Wayne-South Bend, has made the following assignment:
Reverend Quang Duc Dinh, SVD, to Administrator at St. Patrick Parish, Fort Wayne, effective January 27, 2024.



Forty Hours Devotion



FEBRUARY

St. Joseph, Garrett: February 11-13
Immaculate Conception, Auburn: February 18-20
St. Charles Borromeo, Fort Wayne: February 25-27

MARCH

St. Joseph, Garrett: March 2-4
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Fort Wayne: March 3-5
St. Casimir, South Bend: March 3-5
St. Joseph, Fort Wayne: March 10-12
St. Joseph, South Bend: March 17-19
St. Joseph, Mishawaka: March 17-19
St. John the Evangelist, Goshen: March 17-19
Queen of Angels, Fort Wayne: March 17-19

APRIL

St. Vincent de Paul, Fort Wayne: April 14-16
Blessed Sacrament, Albion: April 14-16
Our Lady of Good Hope, Fort Wayne: Apr 21-23
St. Adalbert, South Bend: April 21-23
St. Robert Bellarmine, North Manchester: April 21-23
Sacred Heart, Notre Dame: April 28-30

MAY

St. Joseph, LaGrange: May 12-14

For the complete schedule, visit diocesefwsb.org/eucharist.

Christ Child Society Kicks Off 10th Baby Bottle Campaign

BY MICHELLE CASTLEMAN

As thousands gathered to march for life in our nation's capital last month, members of the Christ Child Society of Fort Wayne were busy preparing to distribute approximately 5,400 empty baby bottles to the congregations of 28 parishes in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. This year marks the organization's 10th annual Baby Bottle campaign, which raises money for at-risk children in the Fort Wayne and surrounding areas. The Christ Child Society of Fort Wayne has high hopes to surpass last years' total of nearly \$70,000.

The Christ Child Society is a philanthropic organization dedicated to child welfare. Its mission is to express the love of Christ by serving children and youths, regardless of race or creed, to honor the childhood of Christ. The annual Baby Bottle campaign, in which Catholics from across the diocese generously fill the provided bottles with bills and loose change, is the lifeline to



Michelle Castleman

Bishop Rhoades has filled his baby bottle with loose change for the Christ Child Society, have you?

the ongoing, year-round efforts of the nearly 200 members of the Fort Wayne chapter.

The signature program of Christ Child is to provide local agencies and hospitals with layettes for babies in critical need. These newborn bundles contain diapers, blankets, clothing, and toiletries. The pocket change and bills donated also fund items donated for the "baby stores" of the Women's Care Center Crib Clubs, where expectant mothers can pick out items during and after their pregnancies. Through partnerships with local schools and other service agencies, the society also distributes free backpacks full of educational supplies at back-to-school time and hundreds of new coats, hats, and gloves during the cold winter months. Christ Child Society volunteers also serve the community through tutoring services and a sewing committee that partners with homeless facilities.

Filled bottles from the Baby Bottle campaign will be collected and counted the weekend of February 10-11.

Geri Boyden, President of

the Christ Child Society of Fort Wayne, said, "Very simply, the goal of the Christ Child Society is to find a need and fill it." Checks and online contributions are also welcome to assist the organization in meeting these goals. To learn more or make a donation, go to christchildsfw.org.

The Baby Bottle campaign was the brainchild of the family of Amy Dimberio Urban, who brought the program to Fort Wayne in 2014.

"It was my mom's idea," Urban told Today's Catholic in 2019. "At the time, we were looking for creative ways to raise money, and my mom went to Mass in Chicago with my brother, and they passed out baby bottles." Urban, who has been a member since 2004 and currently presides as the chapter's Vice President of Communications, took it to Bishop Rhoades, spiritual adviser of the society, and he was supportive of the idea.

Ten years later, Bishop Rhoades continues to embrace the hard work of the CCSFW by faithfully filling his baby bottle.

Attorney Retires After 37 Years of Service to the Diocese

BY SCOTT WARDEN

Scott Hall was no stranger to the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend before graduating law school. The Fort Wayne native was raised in a Catholic family, attended St. John the Baptist Catholic School on the city's south side, then graduated from nearby Bishop Luers High School. This background in the faith laid the foundation for a career serving the Church in northeast Indiana.

"After 37 years of dedi-

cated service as attorney to the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Scott Hall has announced his retirement," Father Mark Gurtner, Vicar General of the diocese, said in a letter to priests and diocesan employees. "We are most grateful for all the years of generous and skillful work for the diocese and wish him all the best and God's blessing in his retirement."

After graduating from Bishop Luers, Hall earned his bachelor's degree from New College of California in 1977. He graduated from the Indiana



SCOTT HALL

University School of Law in December of 1985. In February of 1986, he was hired by the Fort Wayne law firm Gallucci, Hopkins, and Theisen, which had been retained by then-Bishop John D'Arcy to provide legal services.

"The lead diocesan legal counsel was Gallucci, Hopkins, and Theisen's founder, and

my mentor, Frank Gallucci," Hall told Today's Catholic. "As best as I can recall it, Frank assigned me to do work on diocesan matters from the very beginning of my career, and the level of my involvement continued to grow through the years. Ultimately, after Frank Gallucci's retirement, I morphed into the diocesan legal counsel role."

Hall said it's been a blessing to have the opportunity to intertwine his work life and spiritual life.

"I've always considered my legal work for the diocese to be a form of ministry, doing what I am able in the legal arena to help facilitate the diocese's ability to undertake the salvation of souls," he said. "As an 'insider,' I have been blessed with the opportunity to have worked with both Bishop D'Arcy and Bishop Rhoades on a personal level. My interactions through the years with legal counsel for some other dioceses around the country

gives me a unique understanding of just how lucky our diocese is, and how much easier my work for the diocese has been, due to the guidance of Bishops D'Arcy and Rhoades. Having the benefit of being able to work with them, other dedicated members of our diocesan clergy, and many of the diocese's employees through the years has been very rewarding – so many wonderful people all dedicated to the same cause."

Hall, a parishioner at Queen of Angels in Fort Wayne, said retirement will afford him a chance to spend more time with Andy, his wife of 42 years, and their five adult children.

"Nothing specific is planned," he said about his immediate future, "which is a little scary having been in a structured work mode for most of my adult life. On the other hand, the prospect of having the opportunity to find things to do and go places without constantly checking for emails and taking calls is exciting. I believe that Andy and I will enjoy it."

Hall said that representing the diocese throughout his career provided a little extra motivation in his work. "You don't want to have dropped the ball on something you are doing for the Church when you are later looking to gain entry through the pearly gates," he joked.

The **Servus** Omnium Lecture
February 13, 2024

Enjoy a Mardi Gras breakfast and receive a blessing from Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades to kick off the Lenten season. Deacon Larry Oney to present "Called and Sent for Such a Time as This."

For More Info & to Buy Tickets: bit.ly/ServusOmnium



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Catholic Lawmaker Aims to Help with Disaster Relief

INDIANA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

BY VICTORIA ARTHUR

A catastrophic tornado outbreak in Indiana last spring hit close to home for a new Hoosier lawmaker who now has set her sights on changing the way the state responds to disasters.

State Senator Cyndi Carrasco of Indianapolis witnessed the destruction caused by the March 31 twisters not far from her southside Indianapolis home and her parish of SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi in Greenwood. At the time of the tornado outbreak, which devastated multiple areas of Indiana, she was not even a State Legislator yet.

But when she was chosen in an October caucus to represent Senate District 36 following the sudden passing of Senator Jack Sandlin, the impact of those spring storms remained in the forefront of her thinking. Now the first-time state senator has introduced her first piece of legislation at the Indiana General Assembly – Senate Bill 190, which would ease access to disaster relief and offer more resources for individuals and communities to rebuild now and in the future.

“Those images stick in my mind,” said Carrasco, whose district includes portions of southern Marion County and northern Johnson County. “In times of crisis after a disaster, the last thing you need is a very complicated formula to determine whether or not you’re going to be eligible for dollars. You need to be able to access help easily.

“We’ve got the dollars, and we want to be able to help people quickly and efficiently.”

More than two decades ago, the State Disaster Relief Fund (SDRF) was established to assist individuals and local governments in the aftermath of tornadoes, floods, and other disasters. The SDRF is

funded by sales of fireworks in Indiana and is administered by the Indiana Department of Homeland Security.

But officials with the department have identified roadblocks in state law that make accessing disaster relief funds difficult if not impossible for many families and communities. They have provided input to Carrasco – an attorney and former Inspector General for the state of Indiana – to help address these issues through her proposed legislation.

“The intent of Senate Bill 190 is to fix the statutory limits of the program to better serve Hoosiers,” Carrasco told lawmakers during a January 16 meeting of the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Transportation, which resulted in the committee’s unanimous support of the measure.

Senate Bill 190 would simplify the formula used to calculate how much funding communities can receive from the SDRF following a disaster. With respect to individual assistance, the legislation would help Hoosiers by giving the state of Indiana autonomy over the program, which currently can be accessed only when the U.S. Small Business Administration declares a disaster for an impacted community.

Importantly, Senate Bill 190 would also increase the maximum amount of assistance a household may receive from \$10,000 to \$25,000.

“This will go a long way in helping Hoosiers who encounter catastrophic disaster damages,” Carrasco said.

Streamlining and bolstering the state’s disaster relief program is a priority of Indiana Governor Eric Holcomb. The legislation also has a strong ally in the Indiana Catholic



CYNDI CARRASCO

Conference (ICC), the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Indiana.

In testifying on Senate Bill 190 at the January committee hearing, Alexander Mingus, Associate Director of the ICC, reinforced the numerous ways the legislation would benefit Hoosiers. In doing so, he was also speaking on behalf of Catholic Charities in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, whose Disaster Preparedness and Response office serves the entire state in times of crisis.

“When a disaster strikes in Indiana, Catholic Charities is one of the first to arrive on the scene and one of the last to leave,” Mingus told lawmakers.

He outlined many of the challenges and constraints that Catholic Charities and others encounter in providing help following a disaster, including dramatically increasing construction costs. Catholic Charities often steps in to cover the gap between government assistance and insurance coverage for individuals and families whose homes have been damaged or destroyed by a natural disaster.

In one example, Mingus noted that Catholic Charities

replaced a roof on a three-bedroom, 1,200-square-foot house for \$8,000 in 2018. Just five years later – in the aftermath of COVID-19 and rapidly escalating inflation – the cost to replace a roof on a comparable home was \$23,000.

Jane Crady, the longtime coordinator of Disaster Preparedness and Response for Catholic Charities in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, deals with these realities every day.

Almost a year following the spring 2023 tornadoes, Crady is still working with families and mobilizing support in the hardest-hit areas. That includes Sullivan, Indiana, where an EF-3 tornado with peak winds of 155 mph killed three people and destroyed 200 homes on the night of March 31.

“What people don’t understand is that it’s not only the houses that are damaged or destroyed,” said Crady, a member of St. Joseph Parish

in Shelbyville. “It affects the whole community.”

“This is where Senate Bill 190 comes in,” she continued. “We could do so much more now. If families were only getting \$10,000 (under the current state framework), they couldn’t even put a new roof on their house. Passage of this bill is going to make a big difference for people, and that’s the bottom line.”

At press time, the measure was awaiting consideration by the Senate Appropriations Committee.

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

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Chris Padgett



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Ohio Lawmakers Veto Governor Over New Gender Law

COLUMBUS, Ohio (OSV News) – Ohio lawmakers voted on Wednesday, January 24, to override Republican Governor Mike DeWine's recent veto of legislation that bans certain types of medical or surgical gender reassignment procedures for minors who identify as transgender and also prohibits athletes from competing on sports teams corresponding with their self-perceived gender identity opposite their biological sex. The Ohio Senate voted on January 24 to override DeWine's veto of House Bill 68 after the state's House did so on Wednesday, January 10. The bill will become law, scheduled to go into effect in April, but it has a grandfather clause for youth already undergoing transgender treatments. Officials with the Catholic Conference of Ohio said on January 24 it provided testimony in support of HB 68 in both the House and Senate, "emphasizing that experience of gender incongruence among young people are serious and individuals must be met with compassion, charity, and personal accompaniment without resorting to medical interventions that harm a developing body." The officials added, "We are grateful to the Ohio House and Senate for prudently addressing these concerns through HB 68 and ensuring it becomes Ohio law."

Bishop Flores to Lead Webinars on Scripture and Synodality

WASHINGTON (OSV News) – An upcoming webinar series hosted by a U.S. bishop explores synodality through the prism of Jesus Christ's words to His disciples at the Last Supper. Bishop Daniel E. Flores of Brownsville, Texas, leads "John 14 and Synodality," with the four sessions taking place on Zoom on February 14 (Ash Wednesday) at 4 p.m. EST, Wednesday, March 6, at 3 p.m. EST, and Tuesday, March 19, at 4 p.m. EDT. Participants can obtain more information about and register for the sessions at uscgb.org/synod. Bishop Flores, who serves as Chairman of the USCCB's Committee on Doctrine, has shepherded the synodal process in the U.S. Launched by Pope Francis, the first session of the 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on synodality took place October 4-29 in Rome. Ahead of the concluding session of the synod, which will take place in Rome this coming October, dioceses across the U.S. have been asked by the Vatican officials to hold additional listening sessions in the next few months.

NEWS BRIEFS

Our Lady, Pray for Us!



OSV News photo/Victor Aleman, Angelus News

A woman holds a banner with an image of Our Lady of Guadalupe as pro-life activists gather for the 10th annual OneLife LA event in Los Angeles on Saturday, January 20. Nearly 7,000 people attended the event titled "10 Years Together as ONE" under a steady rain that participants said only made them more determined to speak out for and celebrate the dignity of life.

Another Bishop Ordained in China

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – For the second time in less than a week, a Chinese bishop was ordained with the approval of both Pope Francis and the Chinese government. Vatican officials said Father Anthony Sun Wenjun, 53, was ordained to the episcopacy on Monday, January 29, in Weifang, about 320 miles south of Beijing. On the day of his ordination, it was announced that the pope had erected the Diocese of Weifang on April 20, designating the Church of Christ the King in the Qingzhou district of the city to be the new cathedral. April 20 also was the date that Pope Francis nominated Bishop Sun Wenjun "in the framework of

the provisional accord between the Holy See and the People's Republic of China," the Vatican officials said. On Thursday, January 25, Bishop Thaddeus Wang Yuesheng was ordained the bishop of Zhengzhou, also in accordance with the Vatican-China agreement, which was originally signed in 2018 and has been renewed every two years since.

Haiti Archbishop Says Six Nuns Freed from Captivity

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (OSV News) – The six nuns kidnapped in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, on Friday, January 19, have been freed, and the archbishop of the capital was overjoyed and thankful at the news. "We

give thanks to God! Thank you for your support," Archbishop Max Leroys Mésidor of Port-au-Prince, President of the bishops' conference in Haiti, told Vatican News on Thursday, January 25, the day their release was announced. Officials with the archdiocese confirmed to Aid to the Church in Need that the nuns were freed on Wednesday, January 24. Released with the sisters were those who were with them on the bus and the driver. The release followed the pope's January 21 appeal for the release of the sisters and for "social harmony" on the troubled island. The Latin American bishops' council, CELAM, had announced January 24 as a day of prayer for the release of the nuns, who are members of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Anne. The women, along

with other passengers, were abducted by armed men while traveling on a bus in Port-au-Prince, according to the Haitian Conference of Religious.

Proper Use of AI Requires Human Wisdom, Human Heart, Pope Says

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – While artificial intelligence can be a formidable tool to facilitate communication and exchange information, it cannot provide the uniquely human wisdom needed to promote the good of people and their communities, Pope Francis said. "No doubt, machines possess a limitlessly greater capacity than human beings for storing and correlating data, but human beings alone are capable of making sense of that data," the pope wrote in his message for World Communications Day, which will be celebrated on Sunday, May 12. Using artificial intelligence for the good of humanity is "not simply a matter of making machines appear more human, but of awakening humanity from the slumber induced by the illusion of omnipotence, based on the belief that we are completely autonomous and self-referential subjects, detached from all social bonds and forgetful of our status as creatures," the pope said. The theme for the 2024 World Communications Day is "Artificial Intelligence and the Wisdom of the Heart: Toward a Fully Human Communication." The pope's message was released on Wednesday, January 24, the feast of St. Francis de Sales, patron saint of journalists.

Pope Calls for Global Cease-Fire

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – Today's wars and conflicts have put humanity on the brink of the abyss, Pope Francis said, calling for a worldwide cease-fire. "I will never tire of reiterating my call, addressed in particular to those who have political responsibility: stop the bombs and missiles now, end hostile stances" everywhere, the pope said in an interview with La Stampa, an Italian newspaper, published on Monday, January 29. "A global cease-fire is urgent: either we do not realize it or we are pretending not to see that we are on the brink of the abyss," he said. Asked specifically about the situation in Israel and Palestine, the pope said that the Oslo Accord is "very clear with the two-state solution. Until that agreement is implemented, real peace remains distant." The pope also called for peace after praying the Angelus with visitors in St. Peter's Square on Sunday, January 28.

AROUND THE DIOCESE

Seven Sisters Apostolate Meet for Weekend Retreat



Nicole Hahn

More than 60 members of the Seven Sisters Apostolate from throughout the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, along with founder Janette Howe from Minnesota, gathered for a weekend retreat at St. Felix Catholic Center in Huntington on Friday, January 26, and Saturday, January 27. On Saturday, Bishop Rhoades joined the group to celebrate Mass and then enjoy dinner with the women. The mission of the Seven Sisters Apostolate is a call to strengthen the Church by ensuring that a Holy Hour is prayed every day of the week for the sole intention of a specific priest or bishop. At the closing of Mass, Bishop Rhoades thanked the members for their prayers, telling them that he can feel those prayers working for him.

Most Precious Blood



Facebook photo via Jacob Bloom

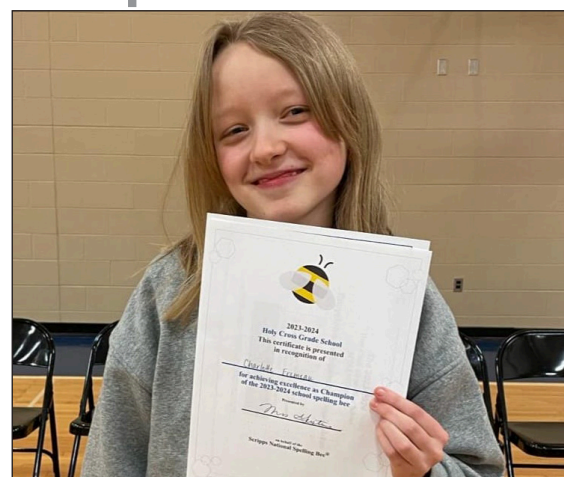
Teenagers at Most Precious Blood Parish in Fort Wayne gathered after Mass on Sunday, January 21, to participate in an afternoon of "Teen Trivia." The game was a close call, with the team "The Geniuses" winning by only one point.

St. Matthew Cathedral School



Facebook photo

Holy Cross Spelling Bee Champ Crowned



Facebook photo

The fifth grade students at the Cathedral School of St. Matthew, above, made the most of the extremely cold weather during a field trip to Howard Park in South Bend on Tuesday, January 23, where they enjoyed a day of ice skating. For 11 students, this was their first time on the rink.

The fourth through eighth grade students at Holy Cross Grade School in South Bend participated in the school's annual spelling bee on Tuesday, January 23. Charlotte, the school champion, pictured at left, will represent Holy Cross in the upcoming regional spelling bee.

At Holy Cross, 'Dynamic Deacon' Offers a Response to Racism

BY JILL A. BOUGHTON

"The Catholic Church is not racist," declared Deacon Harold Burke-Sivers in a talk as part of the Heart and Mind Series at Holy Cross College on Monday, January 22, "but people in the Church are racist. Individuals have often been tempted to follow civil [Jim Crow] law and attitudes rather than God's law of love. We're all broken, fallen, and in need of the salvation Jesus Christ came to bring."

Ordained to the diaconate on November 23, 2002, Deacon Burke-Sivers, a well-known Catholic speaker and author, who is known as the "Dynamic Deacon," identifies himself as a Catholic person of color rather than a "Black Catholic," and he'd like to abolish the term "minority." Born in Barbados, he's proud of his heritage but sees himself primarily as a son of God. Although "overcoming racism is a demand of justice," only love can change hearts, he said – a far more fundamental mission than changing institutions or behavior. The only kind of love that can overcome racism is God's unconditional love, he told the audience – a love that is based on a covenant of self-gift between persons rather than a contract regarding obligations and possessions.

In introducing Deacon Burke-Sivers, Marco Clark, President of Holy Cross College, compared two "passionate prophetic voices" – Martin Luther King Jr. and Blessed Basil Moreau, founder of the Congregation of Holy Cross. Members of that order, who established Holy Cross College, are celebrating the 150th anniversary of his "entrance into heaven" this year. Both men addressed the needs of their times, Clark said, by advocating Christian witness and Christian education as essential solutions.

Before the talk, LaDonna Flynn led the choir from St. Augustine Parish in South Bend in singing "You Can't Beat God Giving" and "O Happy Day" with audience participation. Deacon Mel Tardy, who was a former classmate of Deacon Burke-Sivers' at the University of Notre Dame, was the accompanist. Deacon Burke-Sivers spoke warmly of the personal welcome he experienced at Holy Cross College.



Deacon Harold Burke-Sivers hugs Deacon Mel Tardy after being presented with an image of Our Lady of Kibeho during his talk at Holy Cross College on Monday, January 22.

Photos by Evan Cobb

rienced at Holy Cross College.

As he spoke, Deacon Burke-Sivers demonstrated his own passion and evoked a congregational call-and-response. He peppered his presentation with Scriptural citations and memorable anecdotes from his own experience, like a parishioner assuming he had come to church to seek assistance from St. Vincent de Paul rather than

to give a talk, and the way he became friends with his white roommate at Notre Dame beginning in 1984. He made a distinction between prejudice and racism; the latter categorizes a whole group of people as inferior or even less than human.

By contrast, he said, the Book of

Genesis asserts that all human beings bear God's image. In Numbers 12, Aaron and Miriam are punished for objecting to Moses' marriage to an Ethiopian (Cushite) – "God's response to racist attitudes," he said. In that story, Aaron begs for mercy, admitting that their racism is "foolish and sinful." Although other kinds of slaves are mentioned in the Bible, the Book of Leviticus categorically forbids chattel slavery, based



on the Israelites' experience as slaves in Egypt.

"No one is born racist," Deacon Burke-Sivers reminded his audience. "And if racism is learned, it can be unlearned." He outlined several steps for doing that, such as seeing past stereotypes, appreciating the gifts of others' cultural identities, and deliberately entering into dialogue – for example, studying together the Church's official documents on racism, such as the pastoral letter "Open Wide Your Hearts" by

the U.S. bishops.

He gave many practical examples from his service as a deacon at Immaculate Heart of Mary in Portland, Oregon. Since that church was built near the shipyards to serve successive groups of immigrant workers, Deacon Burke-Sivers found that it was composed of ethnic "silos," people who seldom interacted. Things began to change when choirs swapped Masses and people came together for a potluck featuring foods and

testimonies from members of different groups. Adding images of patron saints from other cultures to the worship space was another helpful step. Deacon Burke-Sivers advocates that Catholic educational institutions expand beyond commemorating November as Black Catholic History Month to incorporating Black saints and Black history into the entire curriculum.

Sounding at times like an enthusiastic evangelist, Deacon Burke-Sivers promoted fasting as well as prayer, and he returned often to the importance of falling in love with Jesus Christ. "People aren't leaving the Church over issues," he asserted. "They're leaving because they haven't encountered in the Catholic Church a way to know and love Jesus. The Catholic Church should be taking the lead on issues like racism."

Deacon Burke-Sivers spent some time talking about Venerable Father Augustus Tolton, listed on his baptismal record as the "property" of his owner. Father Tolton had to go to Rome to study for the priesthood after being rejected by every American seminary. Deacon Burke-Sivers is the author of "Father Augustus Tolton: The Slave Who Became the First African-American Priest" (EWTN Publishing, 2018). His other books include "Behold the Man: A Catholic Vision of Male Spirituality" (Ignatius Press, 2015), and a new book that gave its title to the lecture at Holy Cross, "Building a Civilization of Love: A Catholic Response to Racism" (Ignatius Press, 2023).

Besides writing and speaking, Deacon Burke-Sivers hosts regular programs on Mater Dei Radio and EWTN Television, as well as "Walk by Faith Wednesday Webinars" on YouTube. He is scheduled to give one of the keynote talks at the National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis this July.

During a question-and-answer session following his talk, a student in the audience who is the son of a permanent deacon, said he sometimes resents how busy his father's ministry keeps him. Deacon Burke-Sivers spoke about the importance of having clear priorities: "God, then family, then everything else," he said. Although he travels 250,000 miles a year to give talks and retreats, after 30 years of marriage, his own family is his first priority, he said.

Holy Cross College presented to both Deacon Burke-Sivers and to the representatives from St. Augustine Parish an image of Our Lady of Kibeho (Rwanda) surrounded by other Black saints.

"No one is born racist.

And if racism is learned,

it can be unlearned."

DEACON HAROLD BURKE-SIVERS

'Nuanced Nones' Challenge Parishes to Be More Outward Facing

BY GINA CHRISTIAN

(OSV News) – A new study offers a more nuanced take on the nation's religiously unaffiliated, and the findings show that Catholic parishes need to become more "outward facing" to reach those beyond the pews, an evangelization expert said.

"This is the managing of the journey out of Christendom," Sherry Anne Weddell, Co-founder and Executive Director of the Colorado-based Catherine of Siena Institute, told OSV News. "And what we're struggling with is, what does it mean now to function missionally outside of Christendom? That's the transition."

"Religious 'Nones' in America: Who They Are and What They Believe," released on Wednesday, January 24, by the Pew Research Center, found that about 28 percent of U.S. adults are religiously unaffiliated. Of that group, which has been dubbed the "nones," 63 percent described their religion as "nothing in particular," with 17 percent saying they were atheist and 20 percent saying they were agnostic.

Weddell, author of the 2012 book "Forming Intentional Disciples" and a consultant for hundreds of parishes worldwide, said the study was "really fascinating" and "fits everything else" she is seeing in the field regarding the "nones."

"It's not a surprise, but it's wonderful to have it all documented in this way," she said.

The Pew data reveals a more complex view of "nones," exploring their views of God, religion, morality, science, and spirituality.

Broadly, researchers found that most "nones" believe in the God of the Bible (13 percent) or another higher power (56 percent), but few attend religious services regularly: 90 percent said they "seldom" or "never" do.

Pew researchers noted that "nones" are "not uniformly anti-religious," allowing that religion can do either equal amounts of harm and good (41 percent) or more good than harm (14 percent), although most "nones" maintain that religion does more harm than good (43 percent).

Gregory A. Smith, Associate Director of Research at the Pew Research Center and primary researcher for the study, told OSV News that "one of the most important factors in understanding the growth of the nones over time is that this is a generational thing."

During the last few decades, said Smith, "quite religious" older Americans have aged and passed away."



OSV News file photo

According to a recent study by the Pew Research Center, 28 percent of U.S. adults are religiously unaffiliated. Of that group, which has been dubbed the "nones," 63 percent described their religion as "nothing in particular," with 17 percent saying they were atheist and 20 percent saying they were agnostic.

The Pew study found that the top reason "nones" cited for their stance was doubt about religious teachings themselves (60 percent), with 32 percent naming a lack of belief in God or any higher power.

In addition, 47 percent of "nones" listed dislike of religious organizations, and 30 percent pointed to negative experiences with religious people. In total, 55 percent of the "nones" said religious organizations, religious people, or both were key reasons for being nonreligious. In 44 percent of the "nones," a lack of need or time for religion was cited.

Smith told OSV News that while "there are a number of trends that suggest the U.S. is growing less religious ... it's also important to remember that in many ways the U.S. remains a very religious place, and most Americans identify as Christians."

For Catholics, the challenge is now to focus on "two big starting points" for recalibrating their pastoral outreach to "nones" – those who may be in the pews and those beyond the church doors, said Weddell.

"We want to break the silence about the reality of a living relationship with God; we want to break the silence about Jesus," she said. "The Church teaches that when we name His name, He is present; we're invoking His presence."

The second "crucial" step is "serious, intercessory prayer for a change in the local spiritual climate," joining with Christ, who is "interceding for every human being, and for the purpose of God in the fulfillment of the Father's plan

of salvation," Weddell said.

Such prayer lifts the "secular haze" that "makes it very difficult for people to see and experience the presence of God," she said.

Amid the National Eucharistic Revival – a three-year, grassroots initiative of the U.S. bishops to enkindle devotion to the Real Presence – parishes can offer Eucharistic adoration to seekers, inviting them to encounter Christ and pursue a deeper relationship with Him through the Catholic faith.

"The great high priest intercessor is dwelling in our tabernacles ... pouring out His Holy Spirit," Weddell said. "When we intercede (for souls), we will see a lot more of these sovereign sort of actions of God that we don't have in our five-year plan, that we never even dreamed of, and that we don't even have concepts for."

Gina Christian is a national reporter for OSV News.



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MARCHES, from page 1

true enduring change does take time. Changing laws, overcoming core challenges, and more importantly, changing hearts and minds takes time. It may take generations. It may even take 50 years. But when something is worth it, it's worth staying in the fight. And that's why you're here today. You're here because unborn children matter. You're here because women matter. You're here because life matters."

Brown noted that the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* in 2022 would have been impossible without those who so strongly advocated for life in the womb throughout the last 50 years.

"We in the Pro-Life Movement knew we were in for the long haul when the Supreme Court declared a so-called right to abortion, even through nine months, over 50 years ago in 1973," she said. "The pro-life movement got its footing early on with these marches, literally one foot in front of the other, every year, and the marches grew, and our movement grew. Incredibly, here we are, for the 50th annual march in Fort Wayne. ... Thank you to all of you here today for refusing to accept the status quo, for fighting to prove every life has worth – 50 years of declaring all life matters."

Brown touted the pro-life laws the State Legislature has passed since the Supreme Court's 2022 *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* decision that allowed individual states to regulate abortion



Photos by Joe Romie

Above, pro-life supporters march past the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in downtown Fort Wayne during the 50th annual March for Life on Saturday, January 27. At left, children stand outside of the E. Ross Adair Federal Building in Fort Wayne, which is where the march concluded.

practices within their own borders.

"If it hadn't been for our strong culture of life, all the hard work to pass all those pro-life bills, and tireless efforts of all of you in this room, we would never have been able to become the first state in the nation to pass a near total ban on abortion," she said. "We are seeing lives being saved. In the month before the bill went into effect, there were 698 abortions in Indiana that month. In the month after, 14 – a 98-percent drop."

Brown reminded those in attendance that still more needs to be done to advocate for all human life.

"We need to continue to march ... and others will follow, because we are a beacon for other conservative states, providing a model to follow as we work toward changing hearts and minds," Brown said. "When you step outside these doors today and make your way to the Federal Building, know that each step you take is part of a long journey, one that has required the dedication of generations. Each step takes us one step closer to changing hearts and minds and saving every mother and child. Because real change, enduring change, happens one step at a time. Others will follow if you are willing to lead. Now let's take this first step and another and another for the 50th year and counting and lead on this March for Life."

Dinner & Discussion

5:30 p.m. Check-in
5:45 p.m. Discussion
6 p.m. Dinner

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400 Brave the Cold in South Bend

Despite below-freezing temperatures and threat of heavy snow in the area, around 400 pro-life supporters gave witness to the sanctity of all human life, especially the unborn, by participating in the annual March for Life in downtown South Bend on Friday, January 19.

Many attended the preliminary rally at the hall of the Knights of Columbus, Council 553, where Reverend Sylvester Williams Jr., founder of the South Bend gospel radio station WUBS and pastor of ICU Ministries, gave the keynote speech. Williams encouraged people to “not back down in our efforts to stand for the dignity of life” and urged them to support moms and babies in need. The rally also included prayer for our country in its remaining challenges to support life in wake of the reversal of the 1973 *Roe vs. Wade* decision.

“Although we are grateful for the strides made in Indiana since the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, we continue to march in solemn remembrance of more than 65 million lives lost to abortion in our country and to advocate for love and support of moms and babies in our community,” said Antonio Marchi, Executive Director of Right to Life Michiana, which helped to organize the event.

Williams and Marchi each encouraged pro-life supporters to continue to accompany mothers and their children who are facing difficult times. To that end, attendees of the rally and march collected “hundreds of thousands of diapers, wipes, and other products to help moms and babies in need at local pregnancy centers,” Marchi said.

Marchi added that groups from several schools from the area attended the march, including Mishawaka Catholic School, St. Jude School, Cathedral School of St. Matthew, and others.



Scott Warden

Members of Students for Life hold the March for Life banner outside of the Saint Francis Performing Arts Center in Fort Wayne at the beginning of the 50th annual march, which was held on Saturday, January 27.



Joe Romie

State Senator Liz Brown holds up a sign during her keynote address at the March for Life Rally at the Saint Francis Performing Arts Center on Saturday, January 27.




Photos provided by Right to Life Michiana

Reverend Sylvester Williams Jr. speaks during his keynote address at the South Bend March for Life Rally on Friday, January 19.



Above, young people carry the Right to Life Michiana banner at the South Bend March for Life on Friday, January 19. Below, pro-life supporters trudge through snow-covered sidewalks during the march in South Bend.



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All-Girls Robotics Team Competes at State Finals

BY DENISE FEDOROW

In the past, the fields of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) tended to be more of a male-dominated pursuit, but don't tell the all-girls robotics team at St. Vincent de Paul Catholic School in Elkhart that; they're excelling in robotics and coding and recently competed in the robotics state finals on Saturday, January 20, at Westfield High School near Indianapolis.

The girls finished 28th out of 36 teams for their robots' performance at the competition, but according to the coaches, that was only 25 percent of the team's final score, which they were to receive later. The trio of girls are coached by two female teachers at St. Vincent de Paul – Jen Howe, Assistant Principal and fifth grade teacher, and Natalie Camren, a middle school science and math teacher. When asked how unusual it was to have female coaches, the teachers said they could think of only one other team with only female coaches.

It wasn't planned to have an all-girls team, it just worked out that way. According to team members Xochitl (pronounced "so-shee") Sanchez (in eighth grade), Audrey Wallach (seventh grade), and Lilly Giglio (sixth grade), there were boys on the team previously, but they left for various reasons.

This is the seventh year St. Vincent's has had a robotics team for sixth through eighth graders. Camren told Today's Catholic she became interested in bringing robotics to St. Vincent after seeing a presentation about robotics at a teacher's conference. "I came back and told Jen and [Principal Tara Lundy] ... 'this is happening!'"

The coaches are the first to admit that they don't do much to help the girls. "The coaches do nothing; we're just here to supervise and be the adults in the room," Camren said. "And chauffeur!" Howe added.

The name of the team is Guardian of the Legos – a take on the name of the movie "Guardians of the Galaxy" and because their school mascot at St. Vincent is the Guardians. The Lego robot is named "Groot," a character in the Marvel film.

The girls had to win a qualifying round in November with 25 teams, 18 of which advanced to the semistate round. At semistate, the Guardians competed against 47 other teams and were one of 18 to advance to the state finals. At the qualifying round, the team won an Innovative Project Award, and at semistate, they were given a Core Values Award. To win the Innovative Project Award there has to be

"a lot of research and evidence," Audrey said. To win the Core Values Award, teams must display discovery, innovation, impact, teamwork, inclusiveness, and fun, Audrey explained.

During a competition, they must program their robot to complete a given mission in 2 minutes and 30 seconds, Audrey said.

"We're also judged on how it looks and moves," Lilly added.

When asked why they chose robotics, Xochitl said she joined because of the fun people and said she's not athletic and likes "to build as a hobby." Audrey responded that she enjoys science and felt that because all her siblings had hobbies, she wanted one of her own. "And the eighth graders were fun to hang out with," she said. Lilly said her older sister was in robotics and talked about how much fun practice was. "It looked like so much fun, so I wanted to see what it was about. I like coding and building. I want to work in coding when I grow up."

The girls shared that a lot of judges "think it's really cool" that they're an all-girls team. "We've been complimented on it," Audrey said.

Howe said that working with the three girls on the team has been "amazing." They've made it their own and taken it beyond what I thought. It's a lot of fun to watch them grow, fun to watch how they get past frustrations, because it doesn't always work."

At the state competition, the team was given one of



Denise Fedorow

The trio of girls that make up the St. Vincent de Paul (Elkhart) robotics team practices at school before their state competition. From left are Lilly Giglio, Xochitl Sanchez, and Audrey Wallach.

three Breakthrough Awards, which "celebrates a team that made significant progress in their confidence and capability in both the Robot Game and Innovation Project and are a shining example of excellent Core Values. They demonstrate that they understand that what

they discover is more important than what they win."

Beginning in the fall, the robotics team practices twice a week through January. In March, they begin again by introducing new members to the basics. Audrey said, "That's when we introduce

new kids to coding and mentor them."

Howe shared that the coaches never had to check on the girls' grades to make sure they were keeping up academically. "We've never had a team this strong," Camren added.



Photos provided by St. Vincent de Paul Catholic School

From left, Audrey Wallach, Xochitl Sanchez, and Lilly Giglio pose for a photo with the Breakthrough Award trophy they won at the state competition in Westfield, Indiana, on Saturday, January 20. At right, members of the robotics team compete at the state finals.



From the Classroom to the Newsroom: Students Learn the Importance of Journalism

BY KASIA BALSBAUGH

While the modern landscape of journalism continues to change, many Catholic schools in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend are engaging with media that both entertain and inform the communities they serve – whether through clubs or electives, through print newspapers or broadcasts where students are able to be reporters and news anchors.

In February, the Church celebrates Catholic Press Month, designated by the Catholic Media Association to honor the work being done by Catholic journalists across the United States and abroad to inform and inspire. The Catholic press has a long history in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, beginning in 1912, when Father John F. Noll purchased a printing press and founded the national Catholic newspaper *Our Sunday Visitor* to correct misinformation about the Church that was rampant at the time. As bishop of Fort Wayne, in 1926, Bishop Noll oversaw the establishment of the newspaper that is now *Today's Catholic*.

At schools across the diocese, students and their advisers continue to carry on this legacy.

Phil DePauw, an alumnus of Saint Joseph High School in South Bend, remembers the days when there was a student-run print newspaper, *The Highlight*. After DePauw returned to Saint Joseph as a teacher, he began a student media class focused on video production. When DePauw came across a way to publish stories online, he told *Today's Catholic* that “going printless



Photos by Kasia Balsbaugh

Jakayla McKeel, left, a junior at Saint Joseph High School in South Bend, and Vivian Glavich, a sophomore, edit videos for their media class on Monday, January 22.

was a good way to go. And then the pandemic happened, and I really thought it was a good idea.” His class founded and now operates *The Square*, a website for student-written articles and musings.

DePauw's students rotate assignments, giving everyone a chance to write articles, take videos and photos, and broadcast morning announcements. Daily announcements at Saint Joseph High School are 10-minute affairs broadcast to the whole school informing classmates of assignment deadlines, club events, sports highlights, announcements from the principal, and a joke of the day.

“I kind of wanted to be on the announcements,” sophomore Vivian Glavich said when asked why she took the elective class. Many



Bishop Dwenger sophomore Nicholas Kleber works on a project in media class on Wednesday, January 24, as copies of *The Golden Trumpet*, the school's newspaper, hang on a wall behind him.



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of DePauw's students had similar motivations for joining the class. Senior Sara Prokop, for instance, said she loves anchoring, and this is her second time taking the class she initially signed up for on a whim. Speaking in front of a camera, Prokop said, is “easier” than speaking in front of people.

At Bishop Dwenger High School in Fort Wayne, English teacher Greg Jones' student media class runs similarly to DePauw's. Jones' class, however, is more print-focused. Though the class does audio and video announcements, its main productions are the yearbook and the school's monthly newspaper, *The Golden Trumpet*.

A common theme among media students in both schools

was interest in covering sports. At Saint Joseph High School, junior Berkley Zache, who has committed to play softball for the collegiate powerhouse University of Oklahoma, told *Today's Catholic* she joined the class because she was interested in learning to cover the softball team. Bishop Dwenger junior Mason Voglewede said he took the class to gain experience in sports broadcasting. Voglewede said he has been involved in sports broadcasting since age 8. His favorite sports to cover at Bishop Dwenger are basketball and hockey. “They're fast paced,” Voglewede said, “and it's fun to talk fast.”

Saint Joseph High School alum Jacob Morris is currently a sports reporter for television station KNWA in Fayetteville,

Arkansas, where he primarily covers the University of Arkansas Razorbacks. “As my mom describes it, I've been obsessive about sports from a very young age,” Morris said. “My first memory I have is watching the national championship game at age 5 with my dad. ... From that point on, it was kind of my life, for better or worse.”

Morris never thought his love for sports broadcasting could become a career until his mother encouraged him to attend a sports media camp during high school. He graduated from Syracuse University with a journalism degree in 2023. Morris is still in disbelief that he gets to do full-time

CATHOLIC PRESS, from page 13

what he loves so much, saying that it's "quite ridiculous that it's something I can do for work."

Morris credits his time in DePauw's class at Saint Joseph. "I loved it so much I took it both semesters," Morris said. "That was phenomenal."

"As a 17-year-old, a large part of what made it so memorable was the way it was taught," Morris remembered, saying that no other class afforded him the opportunity to edit video, or run an audio board, or "go to this basketball game and interview these players to air in the morning announcement."

Morris said he was grateful for DePauw and his class. "He was always pushing to find a new way to go about things, pushing students in the class to pursue passions, which is kind of the best quality a teacher can have," Morris said.

While sports and broadcasting may still be alive, many teachers and students made note of the decline in other forms of journalism. "There are students in high school now who have never picked up a newspaper in their life," Morris said. However, Morris said, "Telling a story and getting somebody's story out there is kind of what journalism is supposed to be at its core. It's important that we don't entirely lose that."

Teachers see this playing out in their high school media classes. At Bishop Dwenger, Jones pointed to the decline of print journalism as to why he left his 28-year newspaper career to begin teaching.

"I love doing it," Jones said of his journalism career. "What I got tired of doing was walking in every day and not knowing whether I was going to have a job or not." After serving as a student-teacher at Bishop Dwenger, Jones said, "My backup plan became my primary plan."

Librarian Mary Dlugosz, who oversees the journalism club at Marian High School in Mishawaka, has also noticed a difference in the way students have engaged with journalism through the years.

"I think of myself with social media, they express themselves that way now," Dlugosz said. Her club is responsible for producing Marian's student newspaper, *The Lance*, which is published online for members of the school community. "I try to tell them that the yearbook, something of that caliber, it's a historical record, you want that in print," Dlugosz said.

Dlugosz also said she has seen declining interest in long-form story writing, or even interest in writing news stories. She remembered past students being more interested in writing on serious topics such as world politics. "Now, there are more fluff pieces,"

said Dlugosz, who doesn't blame this lack of interest solely on social media. Some of the lack of commitment, she said, is because of testing and "academic pressures" kids are under today. "There are lots [more] demands on students and their time nowadays than when I was in school," Dlugosz said.

Jones has seen this in his class as well. He said his media class is mostly sophomores, and he credits busier, more career-focused schedules in junior and senior years for that. He pitches his class extensively throughout the year to keep students signing up.

However, Jones' student editors-in-chief have stuck around for their junior and senior years. Junior Catherine Hill, one of the co-editors, hopes to go into restorative architecture as a career, but said she very much enjoys the media class. Her responsibilities are many: Besides working on articles and page layouts, she and her co-editor delegate tasks to other students in the class. Students go through her first, Hill said, before going to Jones with questions or assignments.

Besides the fact that she enjoys the work, Hill said the class has provided her with helpful knowledge. "It's improved my communication skills and pushed me out of my comfort zone," said Hill, who added that she's had to get used to talking to students she doesn't know, as well as making phone calls, writing emails, and taking photographs.

Other classmates enjoy journalistic work as well. Bishop Dwenger sophomore Mady Smith said she really wants to be an archivist, but that journalism is "something I would definitely consider."

Sophomore Samantha Ondecker also said she enjoys experiencing different activities such as graphic design and



Provided by St. Louis Academy

Students at St. Louis Academy in New Haven work on the upcoming issue of The Crusader Credit, the school's newspaper, which began this year under the direction of middle school English teacher Elaine Smith.



The front page of the November 2023 edition of The Lance, Marian High School's student newspaper.

photo editing. "It's giving me more options with what I

want to do with my future," Ondecker said.

"Whether they're going into journalism or not, this class has a lot of skills that they can utilize in other professions or majors or job situations," Jones said, giving the examples of "work ethic, organization, responsibility."

As Dlugosz sees it, the benefits of journalism classes include having students work under deadlines and "produce something themselves." But the habits journalism inculcates have an even broader significance.

"We want them to be informed citizens, not only of the earth but also of heaven," Dlugosz said. She added, "When they go to college, we

don't want them to say, 'They were hiding this from us.'"

Dlugosz sees the critical thinking and truth-seeking skills used in journalistic work to be "compatible" with spiritual growth and with examining personal questions and Church teachings.

"Our job is to help kids see," Dlugosz said.

And even though interest in journalism careers may be waning, some school programs are just beginning. Elaine Smith, middle school English teacher at St. Louis Academy in New Haven, began a student newspaper club this academic year because of student interest. Her students, ranging from fifth to eighth grade, put out their first issue of *The Crusader Credits* just before Christmas. They covered stories from the parish picnic to the school's fall fundraiser to a student reporter favorite: student and teacher spotlights. "I enjoy seeing them get excited about writing," said Smith, who added that the students buy in partly because "they get some choice in what articles they write about."

For Smith, the benefit of engaging Catholic school students with journalism involves helping them focus on the right things. "I think it's important for them to be able to write about their faith and write about what is important to our school and our community," Smith said.

In media classes and clubs, the students are learning how to write and communicate clearly, the importance of being accurate and truthful, of prioritizing deadlines. They are entrusted with technology, interviews, and school publications – even information itself.

"We have everything a journalist would need," Jones said. "These kids do a lot; they design, they write, they take pictures," Jones added. "While they're in this class, they're student journalists."

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A Retreat for Couples During National Marriage Week

As the Church and the world prepare to celebrate National Marriage Week (February 7-14) and National Marriage Day (Sunday, February 11), the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' initiative For Your Marriage aims to help "couples at all stages of life to understand and live God's plan for happy, holy marriages by providing educational and spiritual resources." Among those resources for 2024 is a one-week retreat for couples that provides inspiration through daily reflections, discussions, and prayers that focus on the theme of this year's National Marriage Week, "Love Beyond Words." Below is an excerpt from Day 1. For the full retreat, visit foryourmarriage.com.

Prelude

Should we begin with the obvious?
Marriage is a sacrament.
Before skipping this section

to get on to the real stuff, take a moment to consider what this statement actually means: Marriage is a sacrament. Your marriage is a sacrament. A profound, unseen spiritual reality made tangible through outer signs – namely, through the daily life of your vocation.

On your wedding day, you – bride and bridegroom – conferred the Sacrament of Marriage upon one another. You made your vows, professing your love and fidelity through the spoken word, and later through the language of your bodies: "This bond, which results from the free human

act of the spouses and their consummation of the marriage, is a reality, henceforth irrevocable, and gives rise to a covenant guaranteed by God's fidelity" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 1640). Encompassing all other areas of a shared life along with your physical relationship, that which is intangibly expressed takes on a tangible reality. That reality begins at the altar on your wedding day and echoes through the years to come.

This weeklong retreat will dive deeper into the divine mystery of this tension between the inner and the outer, the spoken word and its real-life effects. It will examine the words that make up the Sacrament of Marriage, and the experience of living them out. Calling our Catholic faith a mystery doesn't mean there are no answers, or that a door is closed to our further contemplation. Rather, a mystery invites us to open the door ever wider, in pursuit of the Lord who so lovingly pursues us. The Holy Spirit is always at work, whispering insights and graces anew.

Love reaches beyond words, yet it also begins with words. On Day 1, you'll reflect on the nature of words made flesh: just as Jesus embodies this truth in His incarnation, so is marriage an incarnate love. Days 2-6 dive deep into the promises expressed in your marriage vows, looking at ways the words of these promises can be fully lived out in your daily life. Finally, Day 7 invites you to appraise your communication habits as a couple, knowing that love does require countless exchanges of words and offering a productive path forward. Each day concludes with questions for

deeper discussion and a prayer for your marriage.

Your wedding day was your first beginning; each of you made in the image of the Creator, your love for one another mirroring His own love. Every day offers another beginning, another opportunity to live out the words of this holy sacrament.

Reflect

Throughout the days and years of married life, some seasons feel like a deep unity between you and your spouse in body, mind, and spirit. Others feel more like a season of division, or of ships passing in the night – whether by circumstance or by our choices. While, of course, every aspect of life is never within our control, it's worth examining parts of your life in which you can freely make choices that benefit your union.

Just as we can return to the Word Himself – Jesus Christ – and to the words of Scripture, the Mass, and the sacraments when in need of a reset, so can we return to the words of our wedding vows even months and years after we first spoke them. Each new day together is the words of your vows brought to life.

Discuss

Consider that heaven and earth meet in the body of Jesus, in God's loving and humble willingness to come to us fully divine, yet fully human, like us. Read Luke 1:26-56 and 2:1-35, which chronicle the Annunciation and the birth and presentation of Jesus. Share the phrases and passages that spark your imagination or lead to new insights.

As husband and wife, your bodies speak the language of your marriage vows. List several ways you can each love and revere the body of the other, in your sexual relationship, in expressions of affection, and in how you care for one another in times of physical weakness or struggle.

Pray

Father, we give You thanks for the gift of our vocation. We kneel before You in humility, in hope, and in openness, desiring to embody Your incarnate love and live out the words of our wedding vows. Grant that this time of reflection strengthen us, stretch us beyond comfort and beyond words, and draw us closer to Your love.

Jesus, You suffered, died, and redeemed us on the cross. May we imitate Your sacrifice of love, pouring ourselves out in body and spirit. In our thoughts, words, and actions, may our love be like Yours, resurrecting that which is dead in us and bringing forth abundant life.

Spirit, come down. Inspire, guide, and bless our conversations and the whole of our married life. Fill us with the grace to sanctify one another, to live in the sacraments, and to lead one another to the heavenly feast. Amen.

Prayer for Married Couples

Almighty and eternal God, You blessed the union of married couples so that they might reflect the union of Christ with His Church: look with kindness on them. Renew their marriage covenant, increase Your love in them, and strengthen their bond of peace so that, with their children, they may always rejoice in the gift of Your blessing. We ask this through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Source:
foryourmarriage.com



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How Deep Are Our Political Divisions?

The movie, musical, and now musical movie “Mean Girls” is a reminder of one of the more miserable sides of adolescence: in groups and out groups, the cool kids and the losers, the nerds and the jocks.

Unfortunately, however, in groups and out groups don’t just exist in grammar schools and high schools. Social scientists say this kind of group identity is hard-wired in us. We seek the protection of our tribe, and we view outsiders with hostility.

This is one way to understand our highly polarized and politicized world today. Americans increasingly identify with one political group and react with hostility or fear to those who are not in their group. Political identity has become a “meta-identity,” impacting not just our politics but where we live, how we pray, who we associate with. Communities are becoming more politically homogenous as we seek like-minded people and avoid those who do not think like us.

That is one of the intriguing insights of Father Robert Aaron Wessman, the author of “The Church’s Mission in a Polarized World” (New City Press). In an effort to understand the harsh divides that are separating Americans, including Catholics, Father Wessman explores the power of groups, looking at the sociological and psychological research that shows how important group identity is and how easily it can pit us against one another.

Surveys show that when our political identity is more and

more central to how we see ourselves as members of a group, the less likely we are to want to associate with or socialize with people who are not in our group. This is most obvious this year in our presidential politics, where a Trump voter in a red state is unlikely to socialize with Biden supporters, and a Biden supporter in a blue state is unlikely to socialize with Trump voters.

Surveys suggest that as we grow more polarized, we even view these political differences the way we once viewed religious differences. Today, parents are more likely to be concerned about their child marrying someone from another party than someone from another faith tradition.

In “mean girl” terms, we identify our group as the “in group” and the other side as the “out group.” Most disturbing is that often the punishment or defeat of the out group becomes our primary driver. Rather than looking for areas of agreement or compromise, we look for annihilation. “Rage motivates,” Father Wessman wrote, and politicians are incentivized to stimulate this rage.

“There exists an ‘us versus them’ competition taking place where winner takes all, and where the common good is rarely considered,” Father Wessman wrote.

For Christians, this environment is spiritually deadly. It divides us not just into warring camps but hate-filled ones.

Nor is the Church immune to this polarization. On a political level, red Catholics and blue



AMID THE FRAY

GREG ERLANDSON

Catholics are tempted to pick and choose which parts of the social gospel they highlight – a kind of cafeteria polarization. Pastors tell horror stories of how these political divides can impact parish harmony. Parishes themselves are at risk of becoming ideologically homogenous as Catholics seek out spaces where they will find others who think like them.

None of this is compatible with our baptismal bonds. “Baptism makes us members of the Body of Christ,” the Catechism reminds us. “Therefore ... we are members one of another” (No. 1267). The Catechism describes this as our “sacramental bond of unity” (No. 1271).

Perhaps when the Church is done with the Eucharistic Revival, it could mount a baptismal revival. Its mission would be to help Catholics understand that their baptismal bonds transcend class, gender, and most certainly political affiliation. Such a revival would be good for the Church. Good for the nation, too.

Greg Erlandson is an award-winning Catholic Publisher, Editor, and Journalist whose column appears monthly at OSV News.

Cold Water, Warm Heart: How to Feel Alive

One after another, influencers are taking the plunge. The cold-water plunge.

I couldn’t help but follow along when Elizabeth Ries, a lovable TV personality from Minneapolis, joined the trend this week, heading to Duluth, Minnesota, to dip into Lake Superior. It was zero degrees, and the mother of three was multi-tasking: filming for TV while sharing the experience on Instagram stories.

“This is the true Duluth experience,” said Elizabeth, donning a knit cap and plaid jacket, her dimples flashing. “Let’s do this!”

Next, you see Elizabeth in her black-and-white gingham swimsuit, perched in a sauna floating over Lake Superior. Then she climbs down a ladder and immerses herself into the hole in the ice, dunking her head underwater. She pops back up, yelps, and high fives the man across from her.

“This was the best!” she concludes, back in her jacket and hat. “The best! I can’t even stand it.”

The Nordic tradition sweeping the country is called *vinterbadning* by the Danish, which means “winter bathing.” The Vikings, renowned for their resilience, often followed a sauna session by a plunge into icy waters to boost their *livskraft* (“life force”). Now suburban moms are following suit.

Brother Matt Wooters, 36, Vocations Promoter for the



TWENTY SOMETHING

CHRISTINA CAPECCHI

Jesuits’ Midwest Province, understands their motivation. He’s turned cold-water swimming into a sunrise ritual, logging nearly 30 different bodies of water in 2023. When he relocated to Detroit last summer, he scouted out a new swim spot before unpacking. He landed on Belle Isle, an island in the Detroit River, and enjoyed a long run of daily swims until the recent sub-zero snap forced him to pause.

“If it’s in the low 20s, I’ll still go,” he said.

On the coldest days, he swims about 3 minutes, steadily increasing that length as the weather warms.

“I go in really slow – ankles, knees, hips, chest, then all the way up,” he said. “Your first response is to clench and hyperventilate. But you can re-set your nervous system. Then you feel bliss. Your brain is flooded with happy chemicals. It happens every time.”

He’s not surprised so many Americans – numbed by non-stop exposure to screens – are taking the plunge. “There’s

CAPECCHI, page 17

In Choosing to Follow Christ, We Are Called to Serve Others



THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

MONSIGNOR OWEN F. CAMPION

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

The Book of Job is the source of this weekend’s first reading. This book furnishes few details about the identity of Job. It nonetheless is one of the great literary works in the Old Testament, and one of the best remembered (if not always exactly remembered).

Misreading Job has led to a phrase that has gone into English common speech, the “patience of Job.” Clearly, Job was not always so patient with God.

For instance, in this weekend’s reading, Job vents his impatience. Each human being, Job writes, is a slave.

Personally, Job says he has been assigned “months of misery.” “I shall not see happiness again,” he writes drearily.

St. Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians provides the second reading.

It has been the same source of other second readings in weekend liturgies earlier this winter. In this passage from First Corinthians, Paul insists that he was free to accept the call to be an apostle or to spurn the call. He chose to accept the call.

So, he proclaims the Good News. He explains the identity and mission of Jesus. It is an act of service and of love given for people who otherwise would not know Jesus. Paul sees nothing as more important than bringing people to the knowledge of Christ and to loving Christ.

For its final reading, the Church offers us from St. Mark’s Gospel the story of the Lord’s curing of Peter’s mother-in-law.

The story’s point is clear. Merely by touching her hand,

Jesus cured the woman. She was so fully cured, in fact, that she immediately rose from her sickbed and began to wait on Jesus and the disciples. She was healthy again, but she used her health to care for others.

Lest it appear that this woman simply resumed routine domestic chores, it should be noted that the verb used by Mark in this reference is the same verb used to describe the ministry of the angels while Jesus was in the desert, an event soon to be told. For Christians, serving others, even in their physical needs, is holy and a product of union with Christ.

(This miracle long has fascinated Christians. Indeed, in the ruins of Capernaum is a site pious pilgrims identified many centuries ago as the place where the house of Peter’s mother-in-law stood.)

The story continues. Jesus heals the sick and drives demons away. Then, alone, Jesus went to a distant place to pray. Simon and the oth-

ers pursue Jesus, longing to be near the Lord, needing the Lord.

At last, they find Jesus. He reminds them that the messianic mission is to reach all people.

Reflection

The Church continues to introduce us to Jesus, the Lord, the Son of God, reminding us of our need for Jesus, by putting before us, in this Liturgy of the Word, the images of Job, the apostle Paul, Peter’s mother-in-law, and the apostles accompanying Jesus.

Paul very obviously gave his life to the vocation to which Jesus called him, that of being an apostle, of bringing to all people the Lord’s message and mercy. It was the mission of all the apostles, as Jesus told them. It is the mission of all Christians.

Peter’s mother-in-law, cured by Jesus, did not simply return to life as usual, but, as Mark’s use of a particular verb shows, she served others, as Jesus

served.

Job reminds us of who and what we are – namely, limited human beings whose limitations often test us, render us helpless, but the Lord is with us as our strength, our model. The apostles realized that no other model surpasses Jesus, none possesses greater wisdom, or shows greater love for us.

READINGS

Sunday: Job 7:1-4, 6-7; Psalms 147:1-6; 1 Corinthians 9:16-19, 22-23; Mark 1:29-39

Monday: 1 Kings 8:1-7, 9-13; Psalms 132:6-10; Mark 6:53-56

Tuesday: 1 Kings 8:22-23, 27-30; Psalms 84:3-5, 10-11; Mark 7:1-13

Wednesday: 1 Kings 10:1-10; Psalms 37:5-6, 30-31, 39-40; Mark 7:14-23

Thursday: 1 Kings 11:4-13; Psalms 106:3-4, 35-37, 40; Mark 7:24-30

Friday: 1 Kings 11:29-32, 12:19; Psalms 81:10-15; Mark 7:31-37

Saturday: 1 Kings 12:26-32, 13:33-34; Psalms 106:6-7, 19-22; Mark 8:1-10

The Thin Line Between Joy and Sorrow Amidst Loss

St. Philip Neri is widely known as “the joyful saint.” Famously, he encouraged joy as the way of Christian perfection, saying, “A joyful heart is more easily made perfect than a downcast one.” And, of course, in many modern images of the saint, he is pictured laughing and smiling. But does this leave any room for sorrow in the Christian life? All of us on this side of Eden know that sorrow will come for us at one time or another. So how do both sorrow and joy go together? Let’s examine St. Philip’s heart.

As mentioned in my last column, after St. Philip experienced the infilling of the Holy Spirit while praying in the catacombs of Rome, his heart physically expanded to such a degree that he literally cracked two ribs from the inside.

From this, we can see both joy and sorrow simultaneously abiding in the holy heart of St. Philip.

On the one hand, the infilling of the Holy Spirit was the cause of St. Philip’s abiding joy. Through the indwelling presence of the Holy Trinity, Philip was capacitated to have the Triune love of God constantly abiding in his soul. This means that Philip was constantly in the presence of Love Himself. At the same time, we know that Philip’s heart (and ribs) experienced great pain from the infilling of the Spirit. To his friends, he would say, “I have been wounded by love!” while also admitting that the love of God was too great for him to bear, and he feared he would die from it!

We can see in the heart of

St. Philip that the line between joy and sorrow is razor thin. The two are held simultaneously in the heart, which overflows with love. This is most true in Our Lord’s Most Sacred Heart. There, we see the burning furnace of Divine Charity as the source of all joy, which was pierced on account of our sinfulness. Our Lady, mirroring her divine Son, shows this as well. At the same time her Immaculate Heart was experiencing the sword of her Son’s crucifixion, she remained the spouse of the Holy Spirit and experienced the joy of the Spirit’s abiding presence.

A few weeks ago, I experienced this same simultaneity of both joy and sorrow in the depths of the human heart. I went to a funeral for the father of a dear priest friend of mine.

As you can imagine, there was real sorrow at the loss of this priest’s father. And for a priest, the loss of his parents is particularly piercing since he has no physical family of his own. Yet, before the funeral began, my friend invited me and a dozen or so other priests to come back with him to pay our final respects at his father’s casket – saying that we were his “immediate family.” In that moment, joy began to glow amidst the cloud of sorrow. While mourning the loss of his father, this priest was abiding in the presence of his beloved brother priests. The result was that our priestly hearts were concurrently pierced by both joy and sorrow.

At the cemetery, this same phenomenon repeated itself. As the father of this priest was receiving military honors, one



TWO CRACKED RIBS

FATHER BRIAN ISENBARGER

of the military personnel leading the ceremony led a prayer for the deceased and his family. During that time, I locked eyes with my friend, and a smile came to both of our faces. Both of us knew the irony of the moment. More than a dozen priests stood near our beloved friend, having just offered the greatest possible gift for his father in the saving sacrifice of the holy Mass, while a stranger was offering a prayer hoping to bring some semblance of consolation. While this stranger’s words of prayer could certainly bring a sense of consolation, they could not bring joy. Joy can only result from being with the beloved – that is, from real friendship. And for our priest friend, it was clear his friendships with his brother priests was the real sense of joy amidst the loss of his father.

For St. Philip, he recognized this need for friendship in order to persevere in joy in the midst of life’s sorrows. In part, that is why he began the Oratory – so that brother priests could abide in friendship with one another as they ministered in the Church. In our current age, so often plagued by isolation and loneliness, I think the way of St. Philip offers a model of heavenly joy – by fostering a life of communion now so that we can abide in heavenly communion forever.

Father Brian Isenbarger is Parochial Vicar at St. Vincent de Paul Church in Fort Wayne.

CAPECCHI, from page 16

something to having a thrill. And there’s a certain playfulness to it. We’re going swimming – we’re not working on a spreadsheet. We’re doing cannon balls!”

His daily swim keeps him attuned to the shifting of seasons, which feels “liturgical,” he said. It reminds him of how monks adjust the time of their morning and evening prayer to the daylight. “We’re connected to water and air and seasons, even though we’re quite air-conditioned and heated and comfortable these days.”

Though high-profile influencers may not articulate it, there’s

a spiritual underpinning to a cold-water plunge. “There’s a seeking,” Brother Matt said. “And there’s a finding. They’ve had an experience with something wonderful and wild and mysterious, and they go back to it. Almost always, we’re trying to fill a God-shaped hole in our heart. We crave to live with God forever. I’m hungry for that, I want more of that.”

The joy of cold-water immersion is a guidepost, he believes, calling to mind a statement from St. Ignatius: That which makes you feel most alive, that’s where God is.

“There’s an alignment with our God-given gifts and talents, and also a sense of God’s

closeness,” Brother Matt said. “Consolation fills us with an increase of faith, hope, and love. St. Ignatius tells us to go back to those moments.”

He finds them, invariably, while swimming.

“It’s baptismal,” he said.

“How you go into the baptismal font is different from how you leave. Not only are you physically wet, but you’re drenched in grace. I feel the same. And whatever worries or fears you had going into it are gone when you’re done.”

Christina Capecchi is a Freelance Writer from Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota.

SCRIPTURE SEARCH®

Gospel for February 4, 2024

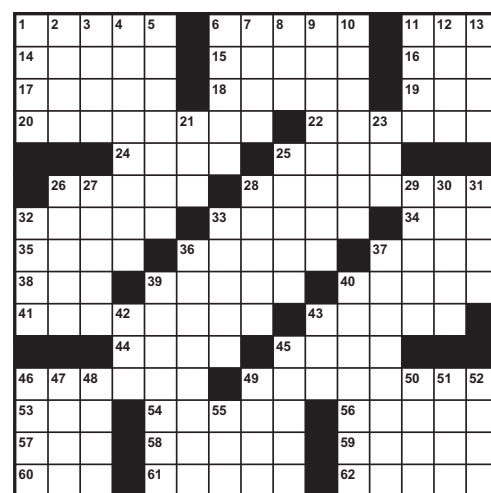
Mark 1:29-39

Following is a word search based on the Gospel reading for the fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle B: Healing at Simon’s house. The words can be found in all directions in the puzzle.

HOUSE	SIMON	ANDREW
JAMES	JOHN	A FEVER
HAND	LEFT HER	EVENING
SUNSET	SICK	GATHERED
DISEASES	DROVE OUT	DEMONS
SPEAK	EARLY	PRAYED
LOOKING	LET US GO	PREACH

BY THE HAND

F R E D R O V E O U T K
K W N G B D S P E A K S
J A E P R E A C H C H U
H O Y R E M D S I M O N
O J H Y D O G S L W U S
G N G N I N E V E K S E
S A N A I S A E D M E T
U C H K A U R F B G A D
T V O E D T L F E O I J
E O S P R A Y E D V B N
L I V B R R E H T F E L
D E R E H T A G F B D R



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ACROSS

- 1 Holy water font
- 6 Sister suit
- 11 Tennis shot
- 14 Tropical plant used in cosmetics
- 15 Chemical compound
- 16 Old Testament animal of sacrifice
- 17 Upright
- 18 St. Elizabeth
- 19 Poetic expression
- 20 Overcame
- 22 Thrashing
- 24 Bone that parallels the radius
- 25 ____ of milk and honey
- 26 Stringed instrument
- 28 Locked down
- 32 Though Portuguese, Anthony is associated with this Italian city
- 33 St. Martin of ____
- 34 Priest of I Samuel
- 35 Marriage vows
- 36 Like a rat’s eyes
- 37 Sir’s complement
- 38 Diamond ____
- 39 Gross
- 40 Arranges in groups
- 41 Writer
- 43 Suckle
- 44 Church section
- 45 Transmit
- 46 District adjacent to a city
- 49 Sebastian is their patron saint
- 53 Vane reading
- 54 John’s symbol
- 56 Nanette’s school
- 57 Airport letters
- 58 Genesis villain
- 59 Zippy dip
- 60 Speck
- 61 Flower-part
- 62 Paul’s companion during his missionary travels

DOWN

- 1 Ark passenger
- 2 Trillion (pref.)
- 3 Singles
- 4 Excessively smug
- 5 Kneecap
- 6 First of the twelve Minor Prophets
- 7 Chopped

- 8 Mouthpiece of a bridle
- 9 Worship of a false god
- 10 Parable of the wicked ____
- 11 Pope during Attila’s time
- 12 Catholic actor Wilson who did the voice for Marmaduke
- 13 Ocean obstacle
- 21 Cell “messenger”
- 23 Alphabet string
- 25 Prayer time
- 26 “Quo ____?”
- 27 in Acts, Paul was upset because of the number of these in Athens
- 28 Brag
- 29 Approaches
- 30 Bring up?
- 31 Dulls
- 32 Heap
- 33 Tantalize
- 36 Archdiocese in Queensland Australia
- 37 In the Book of Esther, Haman plotted to kill him
- 39 Coniferous tree
- 40 Dismal
- 42 Non-pro sports org.
- 43 OT historical book
- 45 Refined iron
- 46 Faith is like a mustard ____
- 47 Golden Rule preposition
- 48 “They shall ____ their swords into plowshares...” (Isa 2:4)
- 49 Seltzer start
- 50 Some roads
- 51 Actress Lancaster
- 52 Galilee, and others
- 55 Breach

Answer key can be found on page 19

Rekindle the Fire Returns to Inspire Men on Faith Journey

BY CLAIRE KENNEY

The Rekindle the Fire Catholic Men's Conference, an annual one-day event designed to help men grow in their Catholic faith, returns to the Allen County War Memorial Coliseum in Fort Wayne on Saturday, February 24. Each year, the event incorporates speakers, opportunities for prayer, reconciliation, Mass, and more.

Mike Savieo, Executive Chairman of Rekindle the Fire, has attended the conference for years, telling Today's Catholic that the event continues to inspire his own faith and remains an important event in his life.

"I look forward to this event every year, when 700 to 1,200 men meet and discuss and learn more about the Catholic faith," he said.

Each year, the men who attend the conference – which alternates between being held in Fort Wayne and South Bend – span ages, backgrounds, and callings. Savieo said Rekindle the Fire helps men learn to lean into their faith life.

"We have so many opportunities as men, sons, husbands,

and fathers to impact the world with God's love," explained Chris Padgett, a nationally recognized Catholic author, musician, and speaker, who will give one of the keynote addresses at Rekindle.

The event is not only designed to inspire men in different walks of life but also in different stages in their faith journey, Savieo said.

Along with Padgett, who

"We have so many opportunities as men, sons, husbands, and fathers to impact the world with God's love."

CHRIS PADGETT

has spoken previously at Rekindle the Fire, this year the lineup of speakers includes Bishop Rhoades, Father Chris Alar, and Father Dwight Longenecker. "Every year that I have been involved with the conference, I have seen men moved by wonderful speakers, a chance for reconciliation, and to attend Mass celebrated by Bishop Rhoades," Savieo said. Padgett will present on the

role his faith plays in his life as a husband and father of nine. "I am excited to be a part of such a blessed event," Padgett said. "I believe it is going to be an amazing opportunity for men to be challenged to grow in their faith and find encouragement in their faith."

Following each talk, the men are encouraged to participate in small-group discussions with their tablemates. Savieo said this time allows men to open up about their faith lives and support other men in theirs.

"Men are able to grow and speak with other Catholic men," Savieo said. "It is a chance to open up without judgment."

Savieo said he has seen men leave past Rekindle the Fire events "with burdens lifted by Mass, adoration, or rec-

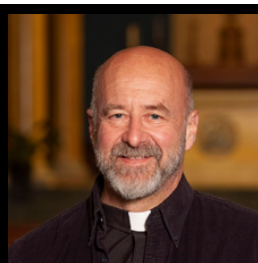
onciliation. Men leave with a renewed love of Christ and the Catholic faith."

In a recent letter encouraging men of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend to attend the conference, Bishop Rhoades wrote: "I am looking forward to a large turnout from throughout our diocese for this conference of Catholic men, brothers in Christ, seeking to grow our relationship with God and as disciples of His Son. The Church needs men of faith whose focus is the Lord and His Gospel, witnessing to the faith in the family, at work, in our parishes, and in our culture. Many in our society try to relegate faith to the private sphere. This is the aim of secularism: the exclusion of God from culture and from public life. God thus becomes superfluous. We need men to be leaders in the great task of the new evangelization. ... Please come to the Rekindle the Fire Conference to experience Christ anew as our Teacher, Friend, Brother, and Savior."

Rekindle the Fire begins at 9 a.m. and will conclude with Mass celebrated by Bishop Rhoades at 4:30 p.m. To learn more and to register, visit rekindlethefire.net.



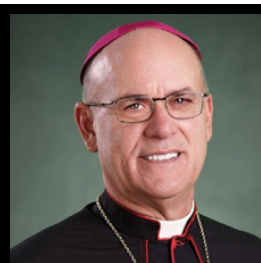
Chris Padgett



Father Dwight Longenecker



Father Chris Alar



Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades

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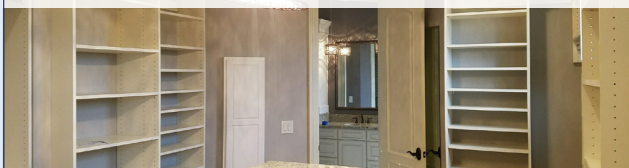
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WHAT'S HAPPENING?

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.

Cookies and Canvas

GARRETT –A first of it's kind board and brush Eucharistic Art event will be held on Sunday, February 4, at 2 p.m. at St. Joseph Church. Attendees will be guided in using watercolor paint to create their own masterpiece of faith. Registration required. Seating is limited. There is a \$10 charge for this event, payable at the door. Contact Eileen Sarrazine at 260-750-3706 or register at stjosephgarrett.com.

St. Stanislaus Bishop and Martyr Trivia Night

SOUTH BEND – The annual St. Stanislaus, Bishop and Martyr

Parish trivia night will be held on Saturday, February 10, at M.R. Falcons, 3212 Keller St. Doors open at 5:45 p.m. and play starts at 6:30 p.m. There will be a cash bar. Bring your own food to share with your tablemates. Cost is \$10 per person with 10 people per table. Contact Nancy Bakos at pastor@ststanparish.com for information.

St. John, Fort Wayne, Fish Fry

FORT WAYNE – St. John the Baptist will host a fish fry on Friday, February 16, from 4-7:30 p.m. in the gym, 4500 Fairfield Ave. Drive-through

carry out is available in the cul-de-sac or in the gym for dine in. Adult tickets are \$12, children 13 and younger are \$7, and children 2 and younger are free. Contact Karen Glotzbach at 260-744-4393 or parishsecretary@stjohnsfw.org for information.

St. Paul Chapel's Fish Fry

FREMONT – St. Paul Chapel, 8780 E. 700 N., will have a fish fry on Friday, February 16, from 5-7 p.m. Dine in and carry out available. Tickets are \$12 for adults, \$5 for children 6-12, and children 5 and younger are free. Contact katie@stpaulcatholicchapel.org or call 260-665-2259.

REST IN PEACE

Donaldson
Sister Mary Kay Leuschke, 82, Ancilla Domini Chapel

Elkhart
Pat Harman, 88, St. Thomas the Apostle

Michael Jozwiak, 78, St. Thomas the Apostle

Fort Wayne
Lilia T. Caruso, 96, St. Joseph

Doris Profeta, 77, St. Joseph

Rita Carboni, 96, St. Vincent de Paul

David Ferro, 75, St. Vincent de Paul

Rita Freiburger, 72, St. Vincent de Paul

Karen Holly, 58, St. Vincent de Paul

Marley Malinowski, 12, St. Vincent de Paul

Granger
Joseph Salzgeber, 82, St. Pius X

New Haven
Rebecca Kawiecki, 70, St. John the Baptist

Stanley Spieth, 64, St. Louis Besancon

Notre Dame
Sister Amalia Marie, CSC, 93, Church of Our Lady of Loretto

South Bend
Helen Mersits, 87, Holy Cross

Walter Anthony Bartkowiak, 89, St. Jude

Elva Gable, 86, St. Jude

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Knights of Columbus Remain Steadfast in Ukraine

BY GINA CHRISTIAN

(OSV News) – As Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine reaches the two-year mark, the Knights of Columbus remain steadfast in bringing relief to vulnerable Ukrainians living in some of the hardest hit areas, one of the organization's leaders told OSV News.

"Our members are doing heroic work, and they are willing to risk their lives to bring aid to people in places like Avdiivka and ... other villages that (are) close to the front line," said Szymon Czyszcz, Director of International Growth in Europe for the Knights of Columbus.

The global Catholic fraternal organization established its first council in Ukraine in 2012 and now counts some 10,000 members in Ukraine and neighboring Poland, said Czyszcz, who spoke amid another massive Russian attack on Ukrainian cities. Air strikes hit Kyiv, the capital, and Kharkiv, among other places, on Tuesday, January 23, local officials said, killing 10 people and wounding more than 70 as Moscow's war approaches the beginning of its third year. Video from Ukraine's police showed emergency workers helping residents of apartment buildings as another video showed a body of a 9-year-old girl pulled from under the rubble. Her mother also died in the attack.

Among the first six members of the Knights in Ukraine were Major Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk of Kyiv-Halych, Head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, and Roman Catholic Archbishop Mieczyslaw Mokrzycki of Lviv, said Czyszcz, noting that the "beautiful ceremony" during which both were inducted was "a great symbol of the unity (between) both rites, (which) the Knights want to bring together to work to support the Church, the people, and families."

With the support of more than 67,500 donors, the Knights as a whole have provided Ukraine with close to \$22.1 million in aid through the Ukraine Solidarity Fund, which the organization established within hours of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022. To date, the Knights have sent more than 7.3 million pounds of supplies and goods, more than 250,000 care packages, and 400 wheelchairs to Ukraine, helping upward of 1.4 million people.

Czyszcz told OSV News the Knights "can be defined as men who courageously respond to the needs of people" – especially in places like Avdiivka, located about 15 miles north of Russian-occupied Donetsk



OSV News/Sofia Gatilova, Reuters

Emergency personnel treat a wounded resident of an apartment building in Kharkiv, Ukraine, that was heavily damaged in a Russian missile attack on Tuesday, January 23. In late February, Russia's ongoing war with Ukraine will reach its third year.

and site of some of the most intense clashes between Ukraine's defense and invading Russian troops along the estimated 808-mile front line.

Czyszcz told OSV News that some Knights have had "bombs explode in front of them" as they travel to ensure aid reaches such areas, where "people are very often forgotten and have nowhere to go."

During the Christmas season, Knights hosted several dinners across Ukraine for families of fallen soldiers, even as Russia unleashed its largest missile barrages since the beginning of its full-scale invasion in February of 2022. At a December 30 gathering in the western city of Ivano-Frankivsk, women and children braved a missile alert to pray for the men they have lost to the war, and to share a dinner catered by the Knights.

In occupied areas of Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia region, the Knights – along with the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and Caritas, the official humanitarian arm of the universal Catholic Church – were banned by Yevgeny Balitsky, the Kremlin-installed head of the area's military-civil administration.

An order signed by Balitsky in December of 2002 denounced the Knights as "associated with the intelligence services of the United States and the Vatican."

Czyszcz said the order serves as "a confirmation" of the power of the works of the



OSV News photo/courtesy Knights of Columbus

Residents of Avdiivka, in eastern Ukraine, hold aid packages on Sunday, January 7, that were delivered by members of the Knights of Columbus to the town, which was under heavy bombardment as the year began. Since the start of the war in Ukraine, Knights have assisted those affected by the Russian aggression.

Catholic Church and its ministries – one that also "tells you something" about those behind the ban.

"It's a sign that people who

want to bring (this aid) are driven by Christian love," said Czyszcz, adding that "we see again" the "tactics of banning the Church."

At the same time, the Knights are taking "appropriate measures to make sure that we do reasonable things," he said. "We are of course very careful about our actions, because we don't want our members to die in the work of doing these (charitable works)."

Russia's invasion, which continues attacks launched in 2014, has been named a genocide in two joint reports from the New Lines Institute and the Raoul Wallenberg Center for Human Rights. Ukraine has reported some 123,685 war crimes committed by Russia in Ukraine since February of 2022.

In March of 2023, the International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Commissioner for Children's Rights, Maria Alekseyevna Lvova-Belova, for the unlawful deportation and transfer of 19,546 children from occupied areas of Ukraine to the Russian Federation.

The effects of Russia's war – which has intensely targeted civilian housing and infrastructure – have been devastating, Czyszcz said.

"It's just a difficult reality, when you see the pictures, the conditions," he said. "They live in apartment buildings with no windows in the middle of winter."

Through their ministry, the Knights seek to reassure those they serve that the Lord has not abandoned them, he said.

"Many of these people are asking, 'Where's God in this; where's God?'" said Czyszcz. "And the work that we are doing is to really show to people that amid the suffering, God is present. So every care package that we deliver or generator or clothing ... we just want to show people that God has not forgotten them, and they are not alone. And we just want to be instruments of God's mercy."

Czyszcz urged supporters of the Knights to live out Pope Francis' call to global solidarity by "being aware" and not "forgetting about the people of Ukraine."

He also highlighted that the Knights' work is "possible only because of the generosity of so many people."

"And the last thing that we ask people is pray," said Czyszcz. "Prayer has this power to transform the hearts and minds of those that we can't convince with the strength of our argument. Prayer is the response that we can offer, wherever we are. This is a spiritual gift that we can offer to people who suffer in Ukraine."

Gina Christian is a multimedia reporter for OSV News.