

TODAY'S CATHOLIC

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Scott Warden

Bishop Rhoades blesses students as he proceeds out of Mass during his pastoral visit to Marian High School in Mishawaka on Wednesday, April 14.

BY SCOTT WARDEN

For students throughout the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, it's always a special day when Bishop Rhoades makes a pastoral visit to their school. But for four students at Marian High School in Mishawaka, his visit on Wednesday, February 14 – Ash Wednesday, and also the feast of St. Valentine – was especially sweet.

During Mass, Bishop Rhoades confirmed Jack Elliott, Kaydence Erlacher, Charlie Leinen, and Patrick Monnier, with Elliott being brought into full communion with the Church, and he and Erlacher also receiving their first holy Communion.

"It is rather unusual to celebrate the sacraments of initiation on Ash Wednesday, the beginning of the Lenten season,

since normally these sacraments are received at Easter, at the end of the Lenten season," Bishop Rhoades said during his homily. "But since my annual pastoral visit to Marian is today, we are celebrating the confirmations on Ash Wednesday." Bishop noted that having these sacraments celebrated on Valentine's Day "makes it easy for you in the future to remember the date of your confirmation, the date you were fully initiated in the Catholic Church. May the martyr, St. Valentine, intercede for you today!"

In his homily, Bishop Rhoades urged the students at Marian to use the 40 days of Lent as a time of preparation to win the battle over sin and temptation, focusing especially on turning away from the capital sins. He reminded them: "If we find ourselves tempted by a particular capital sin, then we must do battle with it. But

we need some weapons for the battle. Lent gives us some good weapons – specifically, prayer, fasting, and almsgiving."

"Our whole life is a spiritual battle – a battle against sin and evil," Bishop Rhoades preached. "When we were baptized, we were cleansed of original sin, but we were not delivered from the weakness of our human nature. We all know this because we experience temptations to sin. ... We need to fight against this inclination and fight against temptations. We pray in the Our Father, 'and lead us not into temptation,' which means: 'help us to not yield to temptation.' We need to do battle against evil desires within us, as well as against outside forces that entice us to sin – for example, temptations from the father of lies, the devil, as well as temptations from the world that is tainted by sin."

Bishop Rhoades concluded

his homily by reminding the students that "the most important thing we will receive at this Mass is not the ashes, but the Body and Blood of the Lord in holy Communion. The ashes we receive are a symbol of our repentance and a reminder of our mortality," Bishop Rhoades said. "The Eucharist is not merely a symbol. It is Jesus, the Bread of Life and the medicine of immortality. What a joy that Jack and Kaydence will receive today, for the first time, this great sacrament of Christ's love, the food that makes us live forever in Christ. We rejoice with them and with Charlie and Patrick that they will receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit in Confirmation and will be strengthened by the Holy Spirit for the battle I've been talking about in this homily."

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Staying Tender, Strong, and True
in the Modern Workplace*The following is the text of
Bishop Rhoades' speech to the
MBA Association and the St.
Thomas More Society at the
University of Notre Dame on
Thursday, February 15.*

BY BISHOP KEVIN C. RHOADES

I was very happy to accept the invitation from the MBA Association at Mendoza and from the St. Thomas More Society at the Law School to speak to you this evening on a topic inspired by the words of Notre Dame's alma mater. The topic is "Staying Tender, Strong, and True in the Modern Workplace." I imagine you all know the words of the alma mater, which is sung so often here at Notre Dame: "Notre Dame, our Mother, tender, strong, and true, proudly in the heavens gleams thy gold and blue." I imagine that many, when they sing these words, think of the university as the mother they are addressing, which is true in a secondary way, but primarily the mother being addressed is Notre Dame, which in French means "Our Lady," this university's heavenly patroness, our Blessed Mother. The gold and blue gleaming in the heavens is not primarily the golden dome on top of the Main Building. Gold symbolizes Christian victory over death in Christ, and the blue symbolizes peace. Mary assumed into heaven shares in her Son's victory, and she is the Queen of Peace. So, yes, proudly in the heavens gleams her gold and blue. And, yes, golden is her fame. As she herself said in the Magnificat, "all generations will call me blessed."

With this background, I will talk about staying tender, strong, and true in the modern workplace, starting from what those adjectives describing Notre Dame, Our Lady, our Mother, mean in relation to her – the tender, strong, and true Mary of Nazareth, the one chosen by God to be the Mother of his Son, the one Jesus then gave to us as our spiritual Mother. Mary, like her Son, teaches us what it means to be tender, strong, and true. She was her Son's first and greatest disciple, and we can learn from her what it means to be tender, strong, and true – virtues of authentic Christian discipleship. And not only can we learn from her, we can be helped by her – by her maternal intercession for us in heaven, where her Son's glory cloaks her. As we sing to her in the alma mater, "Glory's mantle cloaks thee, golden is thy fame, and our hearts forever praise thee, Notre Dame."

The alma mater was written



Wikipedia

"The Virgin Eleousa" is a tempera painting attributed to Angelos Akotantos. The famous icon was cited by Bishop Rhoades for the tenderness Mary shows.

at a time of adversity here at Notre Dame, when the community was devastated by the death of their beloved football coach, Knute Rockne, in a plane crash in 1931. The community came together to support one another and to ask for Notre Dame, our Mother's, strength and consolation. And so the alma mater was written, words that honor not only the university but, more importantly, honor our Mother in faith, the Blessed Virgin Mary. Like the ND community back then, we turn to Our Lady, who was truly "tender, strong, and true" to help us to stay tender, strong, and true, especially in times of trouble, temptations, and hardships – to be faithful like she was faithful to her Son and to her vocation and mission.

Notre Dame, our Mother, is tender. Her motherly tenderness has been beautifully expressed in Christian art through the ages. Her loving tenderness has captured the hearts of Christians, especially Catholics and Orthodox, through the centuries. In Eastern Christian art, there is a beautiful icon of Mary that is called the "Eleousa" or "Tenderness" icon. It shows the Christ Child's cheek resting on His Mother's cheek. You can almost feel the warmth of Mary's love for her Son. Our hearts are naturally drawn to Mary as our Mother because we are drawn to her tender love. We turn to her for her help and intercession because we believe in her love for us. We experience being embraced in her tender arms, like Juan Diego and so many other saints were. We believe that Mary our Mother welcomes us and cares about us

as her beloved sons and daughters, like she welcomed and cared for her Son, Jesus. We trust in her love. Tenderness is the warmth of love, a love that is close and real. We naturally turn to Mary for consolation in our suffering. One of her many titles is Our Mother of Consolation.

Many of you might be thinking, well, the tenderness of Mary's motherly love is certainly a great model for women and mothers, but for men and fathers? And what about for lawyers and businesspeople? We need to look more closely at Mary's tenderness. It is not disconnected from strength and courage. In fact, Mary, who held her Son tenderly in her arms following His bitter crucifixion, first stood courageously at the foot of the cross. Tenderness is a virtue for both men and women, in complementary ways.

Pope Francis has preached a lot about tenderness and has called for a "revolution of tenderness" in the Church and in the world. I think the Holy Father has spoken even more about the tenderness of St. Joseph than he has spoken about the tenderness of Mary. Tenderness is sweet, yes, but it is also strong. It involves strength in the heart. "Notre Dame, our Mother, tender, strong, and true." Mary's strength of spirit, her courageous resolve in saying yes to be the Mother of God, is connected to her maternal tenderness. Women may be more drawn to look to Mary as an example of tenderness, and men may be more drawn to look at Joseph as an example

of tenderness. In both Mary and Joseph, we encounter a tenderness that is strength, not weakness. Tenderness, Pope Francis says, is a virtue of the strong, not the weak. Perhaps it is best for us to recognize that the tenderness of Mary and of Joseph are both icons of the tenderness of God, who is infinite tenderness. It's the tenderness expressed in the Hebrew word *hesed*, which means "loving kindness," and is often translated in Scripture as "mercy." St. John famously wrote that "God is love." God's love and mercy was revealed in various ways in the Old Testament and then fully revealed in the life of His Son, the Word Incarnate. The cross of Jesus, Pope Francis has taught, is the seal of divine tenderness. Why don't we just speak of this virtue as love or mercy rather than as tenderness? Because the divine love and divine mercy can too often be seen as abstract principles. God's love is not merely an abstract principle. It is personal and concrete. To be tender is to pour forth love. It's not sentimentalism. One who is tender gets close to others, is compassionate, and seeks to do the works of mercy. Jesus was infinitely tender in His love – it was real. It was concrete. He healed. He expelled demons. He forgave sinners. He fed the hungry. He gave us His very life. He suffered and died for us.

There was great tenderness in the hearts of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. Their love was real, not an abstraction. We are all called to take up this posture of tenderness. Christian legal and business professionals are also called to take up this posture.

One who is tender is disposed to reach out to love others and especially to care for those most in need, like Jesus did. Like Mary reached out to her elderly cousin, Elizabeth, and helped her in her pregnancy. And like Mary reached out with tender love to her Son during His Passion. And like Mary has reached out to countless others, her spiritual sons and daughters through the ages, like Juan Diego, Bernadette, and the children of Fatima. And she reaches out with her tender love to us, who have not seen her but believe in her love for us. We see this posture of tenderness also in Joseph who, in a complementary way, with love, guarded and protected Mary and Jesus, and through the ages guards and protects the Church.

You, as future lawyers and businesspeople who are disciples of Jesus Christ, are called to extend Christ's tenderness, His love and goodness, in your professions. For example, really caring about your clients, helping them, especially those in most need. Showing loving kindness in the worlds of business and law may seem like a tall task, but it basically means being a faithful disciple of Jesus in the workplace, treating others with respect, kindness, and compassion. It means witnessing to Christ and His goodness at work, as well as at home. It may include things like leading and organizing among co-workers charitable projects and outreach and doing some pro-bono work for the less fortunate. This helps to bring about the revolution of tenderness that our Holy Father is calling for.

Tender, strong, and true. I've talked about being tender. Christian discipleship is also about being strong. I've already mentioned how Mary's tenderness did not mean being weak. True tenderness requires a strength of spirit. Mary was strong in faith. She faithfully did what God asked her to do and courageously followed her Son on the way of the cross. She had the strength of faith to stay the course, even when there was great opposition to her Son and His Gospel. Filled with God's grace, Mary never sinned. That takes strength! She always stayed open to the grace of the Holy Spirit. She had the virtue of fortitude, one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit we all receive in baptism and confirmation. She did not succumb to fear, discouragement, or cowardice.

The Blessed Virgin Mary is our pillar of faith. She helps us to be strong in faith, to persevere when things get tough,



OSV News file photo

to carry out our duties at work without compromising our commitment to the Lord and His Church. It takes increasing strength and courage and fortitude to be faithful disciples of Jesus in our culture today, and this includes in the cultural world of business and law. I encourage you to be strong in your faith and to bear witness to your faith in the workplace, especially by your example of goodness. You may be one of few practicing Christians in your places of work and may even be criticized for your faith and moral convictions. These days, we all need to call upon the Holy Spirit for His gift of

fortitude. We need fortitude to live our faith authentically in the world today, like the early Christians needed fortitude in the midst of a culture where they were criticized and even persecuted for their faith and moral convictions. When difficulties arise, it is good to call upon

Mary, our pillar of faith, to ask her to give us strength. Think of those famous words of St. Paul to the Philippians: "I can do all things in Him who strengthens me." We can learn from Our Lady, Notre Dame, our Mother, to be strong – not to give in to laziness or sloth when it comes to our faith; not to give in to discouragement, and, as St. Paul taught, to endure hardships for the sake of the Gospel.

I mentioned Mary's strength at the Annunciation in her "yes" to God and her vocation. I mentioned her strength in enduring her own agony at the foot of the cross. I also wish to mention Mary's strength at the wedding feast of Cana, the strength of her confidence in Jesus when she told her Son that "they had no wine." Her tender love for the married couple moved her to intercede for them with her Son whom she believed could help them. Her strong confidence moved Jesus

to perform His first miracle, thus beginning His public ministry. And with great strength of will, she boldly instructed the waiters to do whatever Jesus told them to do, and they did. Mary teaches us to have this same strong confidence in her Son and to obey Him. Her strength continues. We can rely on the strong intercession of our Blessed Mother for us. We can have confidence in her prayers for us and, through her, have confidence in her Son as our Savior.

The alma mater calls upon Notre Dame, our Mother, as tender, strong, and true. What does it mean to say that Mary is true? Certainly, Mary was truthful. To be true to someone is to be sincere, genuine, and authentic toward them. It can also mean to be loyal to them. The Blessed Mother was true to God. She sincerely said "yes" to His call. She was an authentic disciple of her Son. She was loyal to Him to the end. She was His most perfect disciple. She was true to her vocation and cooperated fully in her Son's mission.

When thinking about what it means to be true to someone, I thought of the marriage vows at a Catholic wedding. The spouses promise each other: "I will be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honor you all the days of my life." Similarly, in the baptismal promises, we promise to be true to God, to reject Satan and all his works and empty promises. We profess our faith in the Most Blessed Trinity and in the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ. We promise to be true, genuine, and authentic disciples of the Lord all the days of our life. To be true disciples, not only with part of our lives, but with all of our lives, including in our work or professions. To be true to the Lord in the legal profession includes being faithful above all to His law – the eternal, divine law. It means pursuing and promoting true justice. Like for St. Thomas More, this requires courage and fortitude in the face of opposition or even persecution. Thomas More was

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Public schedule of Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades

Monday, February 26, to Wednesday, February 28:
Symposium for Bishops on "The Place of Episcopal Discernment in the Synodal Journey," University of Notre Dame
Tuesday, February 27: 5:15 p.m. – Mass, Basilica of the Sacred Heart, University of Notre Dame
Wednesday, February 28, to Wednesday, March 6: Episcopal Ordination of Bishop-Elect Wimal Jayasuriya, Chilaw, Sri Lanka



Forty Hours Devotion



FEBRUARY

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: April 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

JUNE

St. Anthony of Padua, Angola: June 2-4
St. John the Baptist, South Bend: June 23-25

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



RHOADES, from page 3

a man of deep faith and a man of prayer. He looked to God as the ultimate source of truth and light. He lived an authentic life and refused to separate his professional life from his faith. He would not be disobedient to God and His law even though it meant martyrdom. He remained true, true to God. Though he was true to the king, the king's loyal servant, as he said, he was God's servant first.

What about being true in the business professions? Certainly, it means being honest in all business dealings. It means following Jesus' counsel: "You cannot serve both God and mammon" and to obey His command to "avoid greed in all its forms." As you may know, the patron saint of businessmen and women is St. Homobonus. He was a tailor and became a very successful cloth merchant in 12th-century Italy. He was a devout Catholic and looked at his employment as a gift from God. He was scrupulously honest, very hard-working



Michelle McDaniel

Bishop Rhoades speaks to students at the University of Notre Dame on Thursday, February 15.

tax collector to follow Jesus. To be true to Jesus and His teachings, he could not continue to participate in government-sanctioned larceny.

Business and law school students, I pray that, with the example and prayers of Notre Dame, our Mother, you will stay tender, strong, and true in your professional lives. Remember the teaching of the Second Vatican Council about the unique character of the lay vocation: "to seek the Kingdom of God engaging in temporal affairs and ordering them according to the plan of God." Be disciples of Christ in the workplace by living the Gospel and being good examples of the Christian virtues. You will be living and working "in the world," but do not be "of the world." I pray you will follow Jesus' exhortation to His disciples to "seek first the Kingdom of God." At the end of Mass, we are exhorted to go in peace, to glorify the Lord by our lives. You can glorify the Lord through your tenderness (i.e., your loving kindness), through your strength in witnessing to the faith, and through being true to your Christian vocation, in the workplace. Your example of faith, hope, and charity in the workplace is also a means of evangelization by witness. And it is a means for your own sanctification. Remember that this is your prime and fundamental vocation: the vocation to holiness. May our Blessed Mother, Mary most holy, intercede for you! May glory's mantle that cloaks her one day cloak you, her spiritual sons and daughters!

and industrious, and enjoyed great commercial success. He was a great entrepreneur. His faith and his love for God led him to use his financial blessings in a socially responsible way. He donated the majority of his profits to the poor. The more his business grew and prospered, the more he gave his money away to the needy. It is said that he loved God through his job.

Another saint for our MBA

students is St. Matthew, the patron saint of the financial profession, of bankers, accountants, money managers, etc. As you know, the apostle Matthew was a tax collector, serving the Roman occupiers who preyed on the Jewish people through their unjust taxation. Tax collectors also often cheated people and kept money for themselves. St. Matthew is patron saint of financial professions because he left behind his occupation as a



Dinner & Discussion

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5:45 p.m. Discussion

6 p.m. Dinner

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Advocates Shed Light on Benefits of Solar Programs

INDIANA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

BY VICTORIA ARTHUR

Although legislation supporting community solar programs will not see the light of day in Indiana this year, advocates gathered at the Statehouse recently to promote this clean energy system that is gaining momentum nationwide.

At the state's sixth annual Renewable Energy Day on Tuesday, February 13, lawmakers heard from a broad coalition of Hoosiers who want Indiana to join more than 20 states in adopting community solar projects. Community solar refers to a solar energy system in which multiple customers, ranging from households to small businesses, churches, schools, and local governments, can subscribe to receive a credit on their utility bill for a share of the power produced by nearby solar panels.

Community solar provides an alternative for those who want to tap into the benefits of solar energy but are unable to place solar panels on their property themselves due to cost or other constraints. House Bill 1193, authored by Representative Carey Hamilton, was the primary measure introduced in this legislative session authorizing community solar programs, but it did not receive a hearing.

Despite the lack of movement at the Statehouse this year, advocates for the environment, including the Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC), say they will continue to illuminate this topic.

"The Church's interest in this policy is twofold: caring for creation and respecting subsidiarity, which is the social doctrine principle that decisions should ideally be made by the people closest to and most affected by an issue or concern," said Alexander Mingus, Associate Director of the ICC, the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Indiana. "The capacity to generate energy at a smaller scale, whether it be a neigh-

borhood, township, county, or business, can be an opportunity for neighbors to better love one another through collaboration to meet energy needs.

"Pope Francis reminds us of the ever-greater need to look toward sources of renewable energy as an integral part of caring for our common home."

For nearly a decade, the Catholic Church has viewed environmental issues through the lens of *Laudato Si'* (On Care for Our Common Home), the groundbreaking 2015 encyclical on the environment by Pope Francis, which echoed concerns previously raised by Pope St. John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI. In this pivotal teaching document, Pope Francis called for dialogue and swift action worldwide to protect the environment, curb irresponsible development, and respect God's creation.

Just months ago, Pope Francis expressed even greater urgency on these issues with the publication of *Laudate Deum*, an apostolic exhortation calling for immediate action on climate change.

"With the passage of time, I have realized that our responses have not been adequate, while the world in which we live is collapsing and may be nearing the breaking point," Pope Francis wrote, urging adoption of renewable forms of energy as one solution to the climate crisis.

Among those heeding the pope's call is Sister Jean Marie Ballard, a member of the Sisters of St. Benedict in Ferdinand, who traveled to the Statehouse for Renewable Energy Day.

"The majority of the Church's social teachings encompass respect for all life," said Sister Jean Marie, who chairs her religious community's *Laudato Si'* action plan. "The teachings discuss our responsibility in society and seeking together the common good for all, especially the vulnerable and the poor. We know that the vulnerable and the poor are greatly affected by poor air quality and poor water quality, and the use of fossil

fuels affects air and water."

Sister Jean Marie says she is heartened by the growing interest in renewable energy across the state, including community solar programs.

"There are families and organizations that are not able to make the total investment of installing solar panels on their homes and businesses, but community solar allows an affordable way to participate in solar energy," she said.

Michael Jefferies, Regional Coordinator for the statewide group Citizens Climate Lobby, also was encouraged by the turnout and the enthusiasm at the Statehouse on February 13.

"We have a growing number of activists concerned about renewable energy and climate issues," said Jefferies, a political science and theology graduate of Marian University in Indianapolis. "In fact, it was the largest group to show up for Renewable Energy Day, and we didn't even have a live bill that we were lobbying on."

Jefferies said that he and other advocates want Hoosiers to know that renewable energy is both the cleanest power source and the cheapest. He also expressed hope that legislation pertaining to community solar and other forms of sustainable energy will move forward in the coming years.

"The climate on these issues at the Statehouse is complex," Jefferies said. "But we hope that the energy for action on these issues will translate into action from legislators."

ICC Gives Warning on Banking Bill

As the General Assembly is well past the midpoint of this short legislative session, there are active bills on numerous other areas of interest to the ICC and its allies. Among the measures they oppose is House Bill 1284, which would allow banks and other financial institutions to change the terms of contracts without consent from their customers.

"While we understand that banks want and need to protect their financial interests, they should still try to serve their customers – the citizens of Indiana – in the best way possible," said Angela Espada, Executive Director of the ICC. "This bill as written does not do that."

The measure passed the House by a large margin and now is making its way through the Senate, with consumer advocates sounding alarm bells at every opportunity.

Erin Macey, Director of the Indiana Community Action Poverty Institute, urged lawmakers to "add consumer guardrails" on a bill that she expressed gives "unprecedented" power to banking institutions.

"Nothing in this bill prevents the written notice (of changes) from being buried somewhere a consumer would be unlikely to notice it," Macey said. "Nothing in this bill puts a timeline on

how long the customer has before the change becomes effective, so you could literally make a change effective one day after notice and customers would have to scramble to close their accounts and change banks on a day's notice."

Macey called on lawmakers to add language requiring banks to exercise their power in good faith and not to the unfair disadvantage of the consumer. At press time, House Bill 1284 was scheduled for its second reading in the Senate.

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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Dates for Second Synod Assembly Announced

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – The second assembly of the Synod of Bishops on synodality will meet October 2-27 and will be preceded by several formal studies coordinated by the Synod General Secretariat, Vatican officials announced on Saturday, February 17. Bishop Rhoades, who is serving as a synod delegate and was in Rome for the first assembly, will return to Rome to participate in the second session. He and other members will join a pre-synodal retreat from September 30 to October 1. In response to a formal call by members of the first assembly of the synod, Pope Francis has agreed to the establishment of “study groups that will initiate, with a synodal method, the in-depth study of some of the themes that emerged.” However, the papal note did not list the topics to be studied nor the members of the groups. Officials within the General Secretariat of the Synod said they hope the approved groups and their members could be announced by mid-March.

Rapid City Bishop Dies from Cancer

RAPID CITY, South Dakota (OSV News) – Officials with the Diocese of Rapid City, South Dakota, announced “with sorrow” that their shepherd, Bishop Peter M. Muhich, died on Saturday, February 17. “Bishop Peter, 62, was in hospice care after suffering from esophageal cancer. Please continue to pray for the soul of our shepherd,” the diocesan officials said in a statement. Funeral arrangements were pending as of Monday, February 19. On Wednesday, February 14, Bishop Muhich announced he was moving into hospice treatment and planned to offer his suffering from cancer to increase devotion to the Eucharist. “I have reached another step along my journey with cancer. Despite the best efforts of my health care team, all treatment options have been exhausted, and there is no more that can be done without causing greater harm to my system,” Bishop Muhich said.

Bishops Offer Prayers for Victims of Shooting at Super Bowl Parade

Kansas City, Missouri (OSV News) – Two bishops offered prayers for victims after a shooting left one person dead and more than 20 people injured, 11 of whom are children, at the conclusion of the Kansas City Chiefs’ Super Bowl victory parade in front of Union Station on Ash Wednesday. “Let’s offer our prayers for the victims of today’s shooting after

‘Remember You Are Dust’



OSV News photo/courtesy Previs Marketing

Actors Mark Wahlberg, left, and Jonathan Roumie, right, received ashes from Father Mark-Mary Ames, a Franciscan Friar of the Renewal, on Wednesday, February 14, in New York City. The actors recently starred together in an advertisement for the Hallow app that aired during the Super Bowl.

the parade and rally and their loved ones,” Bishop James V. Johnston of Kansas City-St. Joseph, Missouri, wrote in a message shared on Facebook. Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kansas, called for unity in prayer following the shooting. Lisa Lopez-Galvan, a Catholic mother of two and beloved disc jockey for the KKFI radio station in Kansas City, Missouri, was the lone person killed in the shooting. Lopez-Galvan was an active parishioner at Sacred Heart-Guadalupe Parish in Kansas City, Missouri, where she was fondly remembered by her fellow parishioners. Ramona Arroyo, Director of Religious Education at the parish, told OSV News that Lopez-Galvan’s family is “devoted to the Church” and that the loss was “devastating” to the community.

Indiana Parents Ask Court to Correct ‘Dangerous Precedent’ on Parental Rights

WASHINGTON, D.C. (OSV News) – Jeremy and Mary Cox, Catholic parents in Anderson,

Indiana, petitioned the U.S. Supreme Court on Thursday, February 15, to hear their case involving parental rights and a state social service agency’s removal of their child in a dispute in their home over the child’s gender identity. Any decision on the petition submitted to the high court won’t result in the teen – named in court filings as A.C. and identifying as a transgender girl – being returned to the family home because their child is now legally an adult. Rather, the Coxes’ arguments pertain to their rights regarding their younger children as well as their decisions about A.C. The Coxes lost custody of the then-16-year-old in 2021 in a directive from the Indiana Department of Child Services alleging the teen was in danger of physical and mental abuse by the Coxes as parents who believe that children should be raised based on their biological sex. Ultimately, an Indiana court agreed the Coxes were fit parents but upheld the removal of their child. An appeals court upheld the removal. After the Indiana Supreme Court declined to intervene, the Coxes took their appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Mass of Reparation Offered at St. Patrick’s Cathedral

NEW YORK (OSV News) – Two days after St. Patrick’s Cathedral in New York City was filled with mourners for an irreverent “homecoming” funeral for a prominent activist who identified as transgender, the cathedral’s rector acknowledged that many people “have let us know they share our outrage over the scandalous behavior” that took place at the service. Father Enrique Salvo said in a February 17 statement that, at New York Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan’s “directive, we have offered an appropriate Mass of Reparation.” “The Cathedral only knew that family and friends were requesting a funeral Mass for a Catholic and had no idea our welcome and prayer would be degraded in such a sacrilegious and deceptive way,” Father Salvo said. According to The New York Times, hundreds packed the cathedral on Thursday, February 15, to mourn the passing of Cecilia Gentili, 52, an Argentinian-born activist who identified as transgender and worked to decriminalize sex

work. The funeral’s organizer, Ceyenne Doroshow, Founder and Director of Gays and Lesbians Living in a Transgender Society Inc., told the Times that she had not advised cathedral pastoral staff that Gentili identified as an atheist and transgender, saying, “I kind of kept it under wraps.”

Archbishop Warns Catholics Are in Russia’s Crosshairs

WASHINGTON, D.C. (OSV News) – As the U.S. House left for a recess on Thursday, February 15, without first bringing a Senate-passed bill providing military and humanitarian aid to Ukraine and other allies facing conflict to the floor for a vote, Metropolitan Archbishop Borys A. Gudziak of the Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia warned that failing to aid Ukraine will have a vast impact on religious freedom in the region, as well as on global security. “It’s really quite amazing, because there’s so much devastation, there’s so much death, there’s so much displacement, and yet the people are pretty clear in their resolve,” Archbishop Gudziak told OSV News ahead of the two-year anniversary of Russia’s February 24, 2022, invasion of Ukraine. He warned that a Russian victory would lead to the liquidation of the Ukrainian Catholic Church and other Christian groups not aligned with the Russian Orthodox Church, in addition to millions of more Ukrainians becoming refugees. The Senate recently passed an approximately \$95 billion aid package for Ukraine, Israel, and Taiwan, following months of a stalemate in Congress.

Theme for World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly Set

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – Pope Francis has chosen a line from Psalm 71 – “Do not cast me off in my old age” – as the theme for the 2024 celebration of the World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly. In a note announcing the theme for the day, which will be celebrated on Sunday, July 28, Vatican officials said the choice was “meant to call attention to the fact that, sadly, loneliness is the bitter lot in life of many elderly persons, so often the victims of the throwaway culture.” Pope Francis celebrated the first World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly in 2021 and decreed that it be observed each year on the Sunday closest to the feast of Sts. Joachim and Anne, Jesus’ grandparents. As the Catholic Church prepares for the Holy Year 2025, Pope Francis has asked Catholics to focus on prayer, which is why he chose the prayer of an elderly person from the Psalms for the theme, Vatican officials said in a statement released on Thursday, February 15.

AROUND THE DIOCESE

40th Anniversary of Ordination to the Priesthood Celebrated at St. Gaspar



Photos provided by St. Gaspar del Bufalo Church

On Sunday, February 11, St. Gaspar del Bufalo Church in Rome City surprised Bishop Rhoades by throwing a parish-wide party to celebrate the 40th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood, which Bishop Rhoades marked in 2023. A potluck followed a Mass celebrated by Bishop Rhoades.



Diocesan Schools Honored for Strong IREAD Scores

On Thursday, February 15, 14 schools of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend were honored by state leaders for having scores of 95 percent or higher on the 2023 IREAD assessment at a ceremony at the Indiana Statehouse. In all, 241 schools across the state were lauded for their marks on the state's standardized reading test.

The schools from the diocese included: St. John the Evangelist, Goshen; Christ the King, South Bend; Sacred Heart, Warsaw; St. Joseph Grade School, South Bend; St. John the Baptist, Fort Wayne; St. Jude, Fort Wayne; St. Vincent de Paul, Fort Wayne; St. Mary of the Assumption, Avilla; St. Rose of Lima, Monroeville; St. Joseph - Hessen Cassel, Fort Wayne; St. Thomas the Apostle, Elkhart; Mishawaka Catholic, Mishawaka; St. Anthony de Padua, South Bend; and St. Pius X, Granger.

Representatives from three area schools - St. John the Evangelist, Christ the King, and Sacred Heart - made the trip to Indianapolis, where they were recognized by David Mangel, Superintendent of Schools for the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, and Katie Jenner, Indiana Secretary of Education.



Photos provided by the Catholic Schools Office, Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend

Representatives from Sacred Heart School in Warsaw (above), St. John the Evangelist School in Goshen (bottom left), and Christ the King School in South Bend (bottom right) pose with Katie Jenner, Indiana Secretary of Education, and David Mangel, Superintendent of Schools for the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, during an event at the Indiana Statehouse on Thursday, February 15.



Ash Wednesday Comes to All of Us



Photos by Joshua Schipper

Immaculate Conception Parish, Auburn.

St. Mary School students, Avilla.

St. Joseph in Garrett to Host Eucharistic Art Show

BY MATT GETTS

St. Joseph Parish in Garrett will be linking artistic expression with the ongoing Eucharistic Revival through a unique Holy Eucharist Art Show to be held Friday, March 1, through Monday, March 4.

The goal of the art show, St. Joseph Pastoral Associate Eileen Sarrazine told Today's Catholic, "is to help people know Christ in the Eucharist."

Submissions for the art show have come from parishioners and those outside of the St. Joseph community and will include drawings, paintings, clay sculptures, collages, papier-maché, abstract paintings, poetry, crayon drawings, and music. The deadline for submitting works is Sunday, February 25. Email Sarrazine to arrange submission of these works at sarrazine@stjosephgarrett.org.

The parish is inviting



Photos provided by Andy Boyden

Local artist Andy Boyden's painting, "The Light for All to See," will be displayed at the Holy Eucharist Art Show at St. Joseph School and Parish from March 1-4.



ANDY BOYDEN

those from other churches throughout the region to attend. Those who do can take part in an interactive painting created by local artist Andy Boyden. Everyone will be welcome to add their own

ART SHOW, page 9

Garrett Artist Shares Conversion Story

BY MATT GETTS

God has come to Elly Tullis in a special way through art.

And now Tullis, 40, is sharing her gift with St. Joseph Catholic Church in Garrett in a very personal way.

Tullis will be displaying one of her paintings during St. Joseph's Eucharistic Art Show from Friday, March 1, through Monday, March 4, in the school gymnasium. The painting will be auctioned off on Good Friday, March 29, with proceeds benefitting the church and school.

Her story, which she will share at 7 p.m. on March 1 to begin the event, is as inspiring as her art.

Like many stories of God interceding in the lives of His faithful, hers was born of pain.

It was winter of 2018. Her newborn daughter refused to sleep. This went on for weeks. Tullis was at her wit's end.

"I was begging for sleep – and praying," she said.

She grew up in a house without organized religion. Her single mother still enrolled her in St. John's Catholic School in Fort Wayne. She eventually graduated from Bishop Luers High School.

Being one of the few who were not Catholic, she said her experiences left her feeling like an outsider.

"I turned my back on the Catholic Church," Tullis said.

She attended Indiana University in Bloomington, majoring in art, and she took several classes that introduced



ELLY TULLIS

her to early Christian art.

While she said she was "really against organized religion" as an adult, she still prayed, fervently even, as a mother with a newborn and a toddler. In her sleepless nights, she began to save artistic images of Mary on her phone. She began to wonder what Mary really looked like. Who was she praying too? She needed a face to associate with the prayers.

On New Year's Day in 2019, she had an epiphany of sorts. She said she immediately "just needed to paint." Tullis created a painting of Mary, which she showed to the president of the Fort Wayne Museum of Art. He liked it, and she painted another. He suggested she do a series of paintings of God's Mother and offered her a show at the museum.

She set to work. And God continued to work on her.



Photos provided by Elly Tullis

Local artist Elly Tullis's painting of Mary and Jesus will be on display at the art show in Garrett.

On May 13, 2019, she felt inspired to begin praying the Rosary. She didn't own a rosary at the time, so she drew one she could follow along with. In June of that year, she began to consider joining the Catholic Church.

"I just wanted to be as close to Jesus as possible," she said. "I felt

this magnetism toward Jesus – I couldn't turn away."

In August of 2019, she and her husband began going to Mass again, and later, she inquired about joining the Church. She credits Mary's intervention in her life.

"She woke me up," Tullis said. "I was so lost. I had no idea."

From January 1, 2019, until November of that year, she created 31 paintings of Mary. Obstacles kept popping up. She pushed through them all.

The show at the Fort Wayne Museum of Art was held from November of 2019 until COVID shut down the museum in early 2020.

In June of 2020, she formally joined the Catholic Church.

Today, she looks back in wonder at the gift of faith, at the presence of God when she didn't even recognize it. She pointed to something that happened at her home years before. In 2017, her husband, Michael, was putting an addition on their home as the couple expected their first child. A hickory floor had been laid, and as she went into the new room for the first time, a board caught her eye right under a window. She said she saw an image of the Madonna with her Child in the grain of the wood – wood that was more than 100 years old.

God had been with her this whole time, she realized. Had a plan for her even before she was conceived.

And now, her work has inspired countless people. Attendees of her art show on the series of Mary have written her letters of thanks, telling her how one painting or another had gotten them through tough times.

She paints for herself and her family, mostly. But this latest work, which will be on display at the Eucharistic art show at St. Joseph in Garrett, is meant to be shared.

"Sometimes God calls for me to share my work and what He's done for me," she said.

ART SHOW, from page 8

brushstroke to Boyden's work, entitled "The Light for All to See," throughout the weekend's art show.

Boyden has poured hours upon hours into the work, but he told Today's Catholic that he has no qualms with letting others contribute.

"It's really for the kids, for the community," Boyden said. "It's their painting. It'll be fun."

Once completed, the 5-foot by 7-foot painting will be hung in the stairwell of St. Joseph Catholic School.

Boyden, who runs his own ad agency, came up with the theme for the painting, which includes several key locations important to the parish and school, after consulting with school and parish leaders. Prints of Boyden's work will be available for pre-sale.

Artist Elly Tullis, who had a show at the Fort Wayne Museum of Art with her series of paintings of the Virgin Mary, will begin the event at 7 p.m. on Friday, March 1, as she shares her conversion story to Catholicism and will unveil her work of art that will be auctioned off on Good Friday, March 29.

Other artwork, produced by schoolchildren and other members of the community, will also be on display.

The Holy Eucharist Art Show, held in the school's gymnasium, will continue for an hour following each of the weekend masses. The hours will be: 5:30-6:30 p.m. on Saturday, March 2; 9-10 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Sunday, March 3. A closing reception will be held from 7-8 p.m. on Monday, March 4.



Shutterstock

Christ Never Forgets He Loves Us

BY FATHER MARK HELLINGER

"Remember your compassion, O Lord, and your merciful love, for they are from of old."

We must call to mind the promises of God for us and our promises to Him – and then act.

Though there are two rich options for the entrance antiphon this Second Sunday of Lent, we will take the one from Psalm 25 for reflection. The other option, from Psalm 27, certainly connects to the Gospel of the Transfiguration – "of you my heart has spoken: Seek His face." But Psalm 25 points us to a deeper reflection because of how odd it appears at first to ask God to remember anything. Doesn't an omniscient God have a better memory than an elephant? Isn't it a little disingenuous to ask God to remember something, since it accuses Him, in the very question, of forgetting?

We must consider the actual meaning and use of "remember" – both here and elsewhere in the Scripture. There is a slight, though admittedly subtle, distinction between the act of remembering and the memory itself. We can see this on a linguistic level, but also with our own experiences. The act of calling someone or something to mind is distinct from the instrument we use. Thus, asking God to "remember" here is not asking Him to exercise the instrument of His memory as much as it is begging God to act. Another way we could translate the psalm above could be, "make known your compassion, O Lord" – that is, bring it into action here and now.

We see this play out throughout the Old Testament. Memory and action are tied intimately together. For example, in Exodus we hear that God heard the cry of His people from Egypt and remembered the covenant He made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Immediately after God remembers, He meets

Moses in the burning bush – a divine intervention to act on His promises. This is confirmed later in Exodus (6:5ff) when God gives His instructions to Moses, saying, "I have heard the groaning of the people of Israel ... and I have remembered my covenant." God then goes on to spell out exactly what He is going to do.

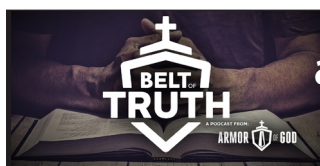
Thus, this antiphon reminds us of what this time of Lent is meant to do in us. This process of remembering works both ways. Here we call on God to remember His compassion and mercy in the particular circumstances of our sinfulness so that He will act to forgive them, heal them, and bring us back to Him. We, for our part, must also remember. We must call to mind the promises of God for us and our promises to Him – and then act. This can also be seen in the logic of God's word in the Letter to James that faith without works is dead – memory without action is not memory at all, it's a detached fantasy. It is also emphasized in Christ's command at the Last Supper to "do this in memory of Me."

What, then, might this all have to do with the Transfiguration? We see the connection of memory and action on display in the clear typology presented by the first reading this Sunday and the Gospel. We are told that God spared the beloved son of Abraham according to Abraham's faith – his trust that the God who made His promises through covenant would keep them. And in the Gospel, we discover the fulfillment of the words spoken by Abraham: "God will provide Himself the

lamb for a burnt offering, my son." God, in showing forth the glory of Jesus surrounded by Moses (the Law) and Elijah (the prophets) demonstrates that He has completely and consistently remembered His promises and His compassion. And it is the memory of this event that will help the apostles make sense of all that will occur in the Passion as they act on its power.

Thus, when we beg God, with the psalmist, to remember His compassion and mercy and to forget our sins and transgressions, we enter into the ancient dynamic of our relationship with God – not one where we worry that God will somehow not remember, but rather that He will act in the present according to the promise He has made in the past. For us, then, this antiphon is not only a reference to God's compassion throughout the Old Testament but a call for Christ's glory, shown to the apostles on the mountain to – as the collect prays – nourish us inwardly that we may rejoice (as adopted sons and daughters in the Son) to behold God's glory, the glory of being shown mercy and raised to new life, the very life of God, through our continued journey through the purification of the Lenten season – where memory and action become united perfectly in the Paschal Mystery of Christ.

Father Mark Hellinger is Parochial Vicar at St. John the Baptist Parish in Fort Wayne. He will write weekly reflections throughout Lent for Today's Catholic.



armingmen.com/podcast

MARIAN, from page 1

Bishop Rhoades also spoke about the need to regularly frequent the Sacrament of Confession – something the students regularly have access to at Marian thanks to the availability of the school's co-Chaplains, Father Daniel Niezer and Holy Cross Father Cameron Cortens. Father Niezer told Today's Catholic that nurturing the students' sacramental life is one of their key responsibilities. "With confessions offered twice a week, an all-school Mass about twice a month, a homeroom Mass every week, and all-day adoration twice a month, we are praying that in these sacraments, the Lord is breaking through to our students, faculty, and staff," Father Niezer said.

Following Mass, Bishop Rhoades dropped in on a number of classrooms and finished his visit by eating lunch with members of Marian's Student Council.

The first classroom Bishop Rhoades visited was that of David Rosenbaum, Department Chair of the school's World Languages program, who was teaching a freshman German class. Bishop Rhoades told the students that the first four bishops of the diocese were German. Being that it was Valentine's Day, Rosenbaum's students were sharing what they liked – and loved – in German. Bishop Rhoades told the class that he took four years of German in high school, "but I've forgotten most of it, so I hope you can refresh my memory."

Next, he spent time in the classroom of World Languages teacher Tom duToit, who was teaching a split class – half of the students were learning Greek, while the other half was learning Classical Mythology. April Weisser's freshman English class was in the middle of reading William Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet."

Students in Theology teacher Joel Decker's class, titled Christ's Mission Continues in the Church, were reading Acts of the Apostles. They impressed Bishop Rhoades by reciting from memory the words of Jesus before His ascension. Bishop also visited a class of senior girls learning about the Dignity and Vocation of Women, taught by Lauren Meyers, Chair of the Theology Department, and then Dan Tryniecki's English class, which was reading Paulo Coelho's classic novel "The Alchemist."

The final classroom Bishop Rhoades visited was Theology teacher John Holloway's class, Life in Jesus Christ, in which the students were studying the seven deadly sins. Bishop quizzed the students on the virtues that combat these sins.

Throughout his visit to Marian, Bishop Rhoades com-

mented about how impressed he was with both the students and the staff – a sentiment that was echoed by Marian Principal Mark Freund, who noted that the teachers and staff at Marian model the practice of the faith in their own lives, giving them an authenticity with the students. Freund added that "the skills that our team members bring to the young people entrusted to their care are significant. Our teachers, coaches, and moderators are well-qualified, they are authentic, they are passionate, and they continue to value the kinds of ongoing education and personal faith development that helps model responsible adulthood to our students."

Freund highlighted several successful academic programs, including Marian's dual credit program that he said has some students graduating with more than 60 college credits. He cited the school's robust language program that features classes in French, Spanish, German, Greek, and Latin. Freund also acknowledged Marian's excellent fine arts and music programs, the growing opportunities in computer science that pair well with "already outstanding programs in biology, chemistry, physics, engineering, and environmental science" and "new pathways for students in business and entrepreneurship."

Most importantly, Freund said he is struck by "the reality that everyone is always willing to work harder to meet the ever-changing needs of the young men and women entrusted to us. That commitment makes Marian an outstanding school that truly calls its students to, as we say, learn, serve, and lead."

Freund also complimented Bishop Rhoades' commitment "to the ministry of Catholic education, specifically our Catholic schools, is powerful," adding that "he has a unique ability to connect with both students and staff, to listen to them, and to lead in a way that is rooted in the Gospels and in the traditions of our Church."



Photos by Scott Warden

In his homily, Bishop Rhoades urges students to use the 40 days of Lent to fight a battle over sin and temptation.



Bishop Rhoades joins the assembly at Marian High School in applauding for the four students who received the Sacrament of Confirmation during Mass. They are, from left to right, Jack Elliott, Kaydence Erlacher, Charlie Leinen, and Patrick Monnier.



Bishop Rhoades visits German class with Marian Principal Mark Freund, left.



Bishop Rhoades greets members of Marian's Student Council before joining them for lunch.

ABOUT MARIAN

Address:
1311 South Logan St.,
Mishawaka

Phone number:
574-259-5257

Founded: 1964

Number of students:
735

Nickname: Knights

Principal:
Mark Freund

Website:
marianhs.org

Theology on Tap Winter Series Ends with Mass, Mardi Gras

BY JOSHUA SCHIPPER

Mardi Gras parties marked the end of the Theology on Tap Winter Series on both ends of the diocese on Tuesday, February 13. Before the party in Fort Wayne, Bishop Rhoades celebrated Mass at the University of Saint Francis. In discussing the readings in his homily, Bishop Rhoades called them a “good prelude” to the season of Lent that began the following day.

He said the collect of the Mass – the prayer that concludes the opening rites of Mass – for Ash Wednesday speaks of “taking up battle” against spiritual evil and said Lent is a special time to pursue holiness by means of self-denial, penance, and sacrifice.

Focusing on the first reading, which came from the Letter of St. James, he said the saint “explains the dynamics of temptation and its possible results.”

“He speaks of the reward coming to a person who perseveres in the midst of temptation, and that reward is the crown of life – the crown of life if we persevere in fighting temptation.”

Bishop Rhoades summarized that, in the cases where people persevere through temptation, they follow the path of Jesus’ love that leads to eternal life, and in cases where people “choose the way of sin, which results in the total separation

from God.”

“James’ teaching shows that the battle to overcome evil is fought deep within the human heart.”

He then cited a passage from the teachings of the Second Vatican Council: “The whole of man’s history has been the story of our combat with the powers of evil, [which stretch] ... from the very dawn of history until the last day. Finding himself in the midst of the battlefield, man has to struggle to do what is right, and it is at great cost to himself, and aided by God’s grace, that he succeeds in achieving his own inner integrity.”

He said that the antagonist of these spiritual battles against temptation is “the Father of Lies, the devil,” and that he wants to “kill our souls.”

“We read sometimes about the temptations of the world – those enticements to sin, for example, from our culture. But we also read about temptations that come from within ourselves as what St. James is talking about in the reading today.”

He said that St. James writes about sin that comes from within oneself as “desires” or “disordered passions and appetites” in our hearts that are the result of original sin, or what the Church calls “concupiscence.”

“The root of sin is in our hearts, in our own free will, when we give into disordered desires,” Bishop Rhoades



Photos by Joshua Schipper



On Tuesday, February 13, Bishop Rhoades celebrated a special Mass and attended a reception at the University of Saint Francis to close the Theology on Tap Winter Series in Fort Wayne.

added.

Alec DeVries, one of the organizers of the Fort Wayne installment of Theology on Tap, attributed the success of this season to hard work of the planning team, diocesan offices, and partners like

2TomsBrewing Company and the University of Saint Francis. He also said he believes this series had the highest turnout, at least since the pandemic.

This series also saw the introduction of four hangout nights on Fridays in Fort

Wayne, which gave young adults another opportunity to build interpersonal relationships and strengthen the local Catholic community. DeVries said having these socials three days after every talk helped to maintain the momentum of the series through each week.

DeVries added that while many pointed to the speakers as highlights of the winter series, the conversations he had with participants indicated that “young adults are really craving this community – these types of spaces and these types of events – and want to do more and want to continue to grow their faith and continue to build better relationships with other young adults across the diocese.”

Details about the upcoming Theology on Tap Summer Series can be found in the coming months at diocesefwsb.org/tot.



Cardinal Mario Grech

“The Role of a Synodal Bishop”

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 26

7:15-8:00 p.m.

McKenna Hall
Reyes Family Board Room 215/216

Response by Bishop Kevin Rhoades, Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend

FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC



Riley Gaines Speaks 'Biblical Truth' About Men Competing Against Women

BY NICOLE HAHN

It was standing room only at the event center in South Bend located near the University of Notre Dame and Saint Mary's College on Friday, February 16. The crowd was gathered to hear from Riley Gaines, 12-time All-American swimmer and Director of the Riley Gaines Center at the Leadership Institute. Gaines travels to college and university campuses across the country as part of the Speak Louder Campus Tour sponsored by the Leadership Institute.

A championship swimmer from the University of Kentucky, Gaines first gained national attention when she spoke out after being forced to compete against a man, William Thomas, a transgender athlete going by the name Lia Thomas, at the 2022 NCAA Division I Women's Swimming and Diving Championships. Gaines said she waited for someone to stand up for her and her teammates against this injustice. When that didn't happen, she said she had to speak out. Gaines, now 23, said she believes there is a sense of urgency to spread the truth to people of her generation, that they are desperate to hear the truth, and she wants to "inspire them and equip them with the tools and the resources they need to be able to stand firm and help spread that truth."

In an interview before her speech, Gaines told Today's Catholic: "I'm standing for objective truth – more importantly, I'm standing for biblical truth. God created men and women perfectly in His image, and He does not make mistakes. It's really as simple as that. There are only two sexes. Men are men and women are women." She also said that it was not by chance that she was speaking in South Bend. "I am strategically here



Photos by Nicole Hahn

Former collegiate swimmer Riley Gaines speaks on the dangers of gender ideology in South Bend on Friday, February 16.

because of what happened at Saint Mary's College. I know how hard it is to be faced with a situation like this."

Gaines was referencing the email that went out to the student body at Saint Mary's College on November 21, 2023, from college president Katie Conboy advising students and staff that there would be a change in the admissions policy and that applicants who identified as transgender would be considered for admission in 2024. The Board of Trustees had approved the change in June of 2023 to open undergraduate admission to "applicants whose sex is female or who consistently live and identify as a woman."

Following considerable public backlash, students saying they would not return,

donors saying they would pull funding, and a published statement from Bishop Rhoades against the decision, the Board of Trustees of Saint Mary's College announced in December that the school would return to its "previous admission policy," which limited enrollment to women.

Gaines told Today's Catholic: "I am incredibly grateful for the leadership of Bishop Rhoades. I have seen his support and his great leadership in response to this issue. I was so excited when I saw his willingness to speak the truth." She also thanked Bishop Rhoades as part of her speech to those in attendance at the Friday night event, a statement that was met with a large round of applause.

Madelyn Stout, President

of the student organization Network of Enlightened Women at Notre Dame, was asked to introduce Gaines. "Riley Gaines is a leader in defending women's single-sex spaces, advocating for equality and fairness, and standing up for women's safety, privacy, and equal opportunities."

Gaines began her speech by thanking everyone for the overwhelming amount of support she felt in coming to South Bend. She said it was "certainly more support than she felt a few months back in San Francisco." Gaines said she was in a classroom on the campus of San Francisco State University speaking like she was at this event about her views opposing transgender athletes in women's sports. It was toward the conclusion of her speech when she said, "I was ambushed. I was attacked. Protesters from the outside rushed into the room, turned the lights off, and stormed to the front. I was being punched and jostled and hit. They ended up holding me for ransom through the night demanding that if I wanted to make it home safely to see my family again, that I had to pay them money." The San Francisco Police Department eventually sent officers to break up the crowd and free Gaines, but no arrests were made.

Gaines talked about how she has things thrown at her, is called every bad name you can think of, is threatened, has people show up at her house, has drones flying over her house, and more. When asked in the interview with Today's Catholic about how she keeps going through all the violence, she said simply: "Well, truthfully, my faith. I don't know how people do anything without their faith. It's what keeps me grounded. It's what keeps me going."

Gaines went on to talk about her swimming career, how she began swimming at age

4 and dedicated 18 years of her life to the sport, about the time and dedication, and the sacrifices that athletes make to compete and be successful at the highest level. "You don't get to go to prom. You don't get to have sleepovers on Friday nights with your friends because you have to be up at 6 a.m. for practices. You don't get to go on vacation with your family."

Though she always thought she would be a Florida Gator, she said when she visited the University of Kentucky, she fell in love with the team, the coach, the campus, the resources, the academics, and the stewardship in the community.

"I thought I worked hard before," Gaines said. "This was a different kind of working hard." She explained how they were practicing six hours a day some days. "So, you practice from 5 a.m. to 8 a.m., you go to class, you come back and practice again from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. You eat dinner at old people time of 4:45 p.m. because you are starving. Then you ice your shoulders, you do your homework, you go to bed, you wake up, and you do it all again the next day."

Gaines moved forward to her junior year. The University of Kentucky won its first ever Southeastern Conference title in the history of the program. She won her first individual SEC title and ended the season placing seventh in the nation.

Her goal for her senior year, Gaines said, was winning the national title, which would mean becoming the fastest woman in the country in her event. "I'm right on pace to achieve this goal. About midway through my senior season, I was ranked third in the nation behind one amazing female swimmer, trailing her by a few 100ths of a second. The girl in second I knew very well because like in most sports, your top-tier athletes

know each other regardless of where you compete in the country because you've grown up competing against each other."

Gaines went on to say that the swimmer who was leading the nation "by body lengths" was a swimmer that no one had ever heard of before. "That is the first time that I became aware of a swimmer named Lia Thomas." She said all they knew was that a senior from the University of Pennsylvania, which is not a school that historically produces fast swimmers, was leading the nation by body lengths in events ranging from the 100 freestyle, which is a sprint, and all of the freestyle events in between, through the mile, which is long distance.

For those in the audience who don't know swimming, Gaines compared this to an Olympic runner, that it was like saying that your best 200-meter runner was your best marathon runner. "It doesn't happen. They are two totally different systems, and so, I'm scratching my head."

It wasn't until she read an article, Gaines said, that "briefly disclosed that Lia Thomas is formerly Will Thomas and swam three years on the men's team at the University of Pennsylvania before deciding to switch to the women's team. And then the article carried on as if we weren't supposed to have just read that." Gaines said it was her coach who sent her the link, because he knew her goals and how hard she worked every day. She said she read the article three times because she was so shocked, but then she felt a sense of relief because now it made some sense.

Gaines said she looked up Will Thomas to see if this was a lateral move, someone who went from ranking among the best of the men to now continuing to rank among the best of the women. "We saw this was a mediocre man at best, ranking 462nd in the nation the year prior when competing against men to now first in the women's category, dominating the entire nation of women."

Gaines continued: "But really, that's why I felt relieved, because I thought that the NCAA would see it how I saw it, and how my teammates saw it, and how my family saw it, and how my coaches saw it, and how anyone with any amount of brain activity would see it. Nothing opinionated about it. Nothing hateful about it. The facts were on the paper in front of us."

Gaines said it was three weeks before the national championships in March of 2022 when it was announced that Thomas' participation in the women's category was non-negotiable. She said the female athletes were all told there was nothing they could



do about it, nothing they could say, and they had to accept the decision with a smile on their faces.

Gaines said that before the national championships, they had to go to training and practice answering interview questions at the university using she/her pronouns. If they didn't answer correctly, they had to do it again and redo the training. She said they were told that if they spoke out, they would never get a job because future employers would look them up and see they were transphobic, or that they would never get into grad school, that they wouldn't keep their friends, and they would lose their scholarships and playing time if they spoke out. Gaines said she was told specifically: "You signed a scholarship, and when you signed that scholarship, you gave away your rights to speak in your own personal capacity. You represent us. Remember whose name is across your chest and across your cap, because it's not your own. It's ours, and we have already taken your stance for you."

Gaines then talked about the feelings of injustice and the effects on her, her teammates, and her female competitors. She talked about the tears from the moms in the stands watching as their daughters were being obliterated by a man in a sport they once loved. She talked about the tears from the girls who place ninth and 17th, missing out on being named All-American by one place that was taken by a man.

She talked about the extreme discomfort in the locker room as they were forced to dress and undress with a man without being forewarned that they would be sharing a changing space. There was no time to make other arrangements. "When you turn around, there's a 6-foot-4, 22-year-old man who is fully intact with his male genitalia exposed just inches away from where you are simultaneously undressed." She said that it was awkward, uncomfortable, embarrassing, and that every single girl tried to find some way to cover themselves. "I think the best way to describe this experience was an utter violation of our right to privacy. It felt like betrayal. It was traumatizing, and not just because of what

we were forced to see or how we were forcibly exploited; it was traumatic for me to know just how easy it was for those people who created these policies to totally dismiss our rights without even a second thought, without a forewarning."

Gaines said that she watched the 500 freestyle from the side of the pool on the first day of the national championships because that wasn't her event. "Thomas swam to a national title, beating out Olympians, beating out American record holders. These are the most impressive females the world has ever seen, and he beat them all by body lengths."

Day 2 was the 200 freestyle, where Gaines raced Thomas. She said they dove off the blocks, swam the eight laps, touched the wall, and "almost impossibly enough, I look at the scoreboard and we have tied, which is incredibly embarrassing for a 6-foot-4 man, might I add. But we had gone the exact same time down to the 100th of a second. You can't tell me that's not divine intervention."

Gaines said she and Thomas got out of the water and went behind the awards podium. "The NCAA official looks at both Thomas and me – again, Thomas towering over me – and this official says, 'Great job you two, but you tied, and we only have one trophy, so we are going to give the trophy to Lia. Sorry, Riley, you don't get one.'"

Gaines said her heart rate was still high, and her adrenaline was still pumping, and she said the first thing that came to her mind. "Isn't this everything that Title IX was passed to prevent from happening? What do you mean you are going to give the trophy to a man in the women's 200 freestyle?" She said the official had no answer and finally gave Gaines what she called an honest answer. "His voice changed, and he looked at me and said, 'Riley, we have been advised that when photos are being taken, it is crucial that the trophy is in Lia's hands. You can pose with this one, but you have to give it back. Lia takes the trophy home. You go home empty-handed. End of story.'"

Gaines said that was the moment – when the official reduced everything these women worked their entire lives for to a photo op – that

she was no longer willing to wait for someone else to stand up. "It's like it hit me. How in the world could we as women, as female athletes, expect someone to stand up for us if we weren't even willing to stand up for ourselves."

Gaines moved on to say that the issue is much bigger than just women's sports. She reiterated what she told Today's Catholic. "The premise of the issue and why it matters is that we are being asked to deny objective truth, and not just objective truth, biblical truth for that matter. Understand that there are no limits if we are willing to deny man and woman, the sheer essence of humanity."

All hope is not lost though, said Gaines. "As of January of this year, 24 states have enacted some sort of fairness in women's sports bill, which is huge considering that just three years ago, only one state had. A bill that I have helped implement and been working on in different states is called the 'Women's Bill of Rights,' and

I can't even believe it's necessary that we have to codify and define the word 'woman' in law, but here we are. So far, it has been passed in Kansas, Tennessee, Oklahoma, Nebraska, and Iowa."

Gaines added: "There is also lots of movement at the federal level to combat the illegal administrative rewrite of Title IX that the Biden administration is pursuing and lots of work being done in each specific sport governing body. I've involved myself in these conversations."

Gaines finished her speech by telling people in the audience to trust God's calling for them. "If each and every one of us waited until we were directly impacted to take a stand, it's far too late. There is so much more value to being proactive rather than reactive. It's never too late to find your voice and be bold."

To learn more about the Riley Gaines Center at the Leadership Institute and how you can get involved, visit rileygainescenter.org.

Employment Opportunities

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Bishop Implores Nursing Students to Fully Live Their Faith

BY JILL A. BOUGHTON

Just before the Liturgy of the Word, incense being used in the Holy Spirit Chapel at LeMans Hall at Saint Mary's College triggered loud smoke alarms, emptying the dorm of its occupants, including Bishop Rhoades, who was celebrating the Mass on Friday, February 16. Members of the Catholic Nurses Association (CNA) had begun meeting this academic year, but Mass and a special blessing from the local bishop was their first major event. It turned out to be more memorable than anticipated.

Bishop Rhoades warmly thanked Rick Becker, club sponsor, for inviting him and said he was delighted to be able to pray with the nursing students. He began his homily by sharing the important role of nurses in his own life, including the encouragement of a nurse during therapy after a heart procedure, as well as his sister, "who's always after me about taking care of my health." He also expressed the highest esteem for his aunt, a "classic" nurse who raised money and served as chief nurse for a pilgrimage to Lourdes. "She was a model of self-giving love for the sick," Bishop Rhoades testified. He also recalled that he himself worked as an orderly in a nursing home more than one summer as a high school and college student.

Beginning with Jesus' healing ministry, the Catholic Church has always taken a leading role in health care, Bishop Rhoades said. "In the United States, the Church has been renowned for its health care ministry, with religious sisters – including the Sisters of the Holy Cross – founding hospitals, serving especially the poor and disadvantaged, and serving in times of great



Photo Credit

Bishop Rhoades poses with members of the Catholic Nurses Association following a Mass on the campus of Saint Mary's College on Friday, February 16.

need, like the Civil War. All this was motivated by their faith, not separated from their faith." Bishop Rhoades urged the students fully to integrate their lives of faith with their calling to be nurses, despite the current threats to conscientious health care workers posed by a culture that promotes abortion and euthanasia. He quoted a Catholic nurse and bioethicist who said: "We won't kill you, even if you ask us to. We won't kill your unborn child, even if you ask us to. We won't mutilate you or destroy normal, healthy functions, even if you ask us to."

He pointed out that nurses' direct relationship with their patients provides a channel to administer not only medicines and procedures but also courage, hope, and trust. "You show your patients the closeness of God the Father by the tenderness you show them," he said.

The previous evening, Bishop

Rhoades had spoken to Notre Dame law and MBA students about being "tender, strong, and true," in the words of the Notre Dame alma mater. That description certainly applies to nurses. "I can't emphasize enough the importance of tenderness in the nursing profession," Bishop Rhoades said. "Here at Saint Mary's, you have the greatest model of tenderness: your patroness, the Blessed Virgin Mary."

Before offering a special blessing for nursing students and other health care workers, Bishop Rhoades concluded: "All the lay faithful are called

to work in the vineyard of the Lord. Your particular area of the vineyard is the care of the sick, the suffering, the disabled, and the dying. When you finish your studies, you will be going into that vineyard. I encourage you to develop a good prayer life, to actively participate in the liturgical and sacramental life of the Church, so that you will not be living a double life, and your life as a nurse will not be separated from your life as a Catholic."

Saint Mary's senior Molly Martis, President of the Catholic Nurses Association, began the Mass with a word

of welcome. When Bishop Rhoades found out she was a senior, he invited her to come work at St. Anne Communities. Martis said: "CNA is working to foster an environment in which [Saint Mary's College] students can build upon the foundation of the Catholic faith as we prepare for a lifetime vocation of care for the sick and suffering. Our focus is on bringing Christ's love to others in the context of nursing. We also strive to embody the examples of the saints and the legacy of the Sisters of the Holy Cross as we become professionals in the health care field. We hope to strengthen fellowship, promote positive patient outcomes, and pursue the common good through our mission." Club members have discussed reflecting on the lives of the saints, community service events, guest speakers, and prayer opportunities. "It is such an honor to celebrate the Eucharist with Bishop Rhoades," she added.

On a more personal note, Martis said: "My interest in nursing has grown out of my faith because I see it as a vocation in which I can show Christ's love to others. As a health care professional, I strive to uphold human dignity and provide compassionate care for the mind, body, and spirit of those I encounter."

At a reception after Mass, Bishop Rhoades had further opportunity to interact informally with nursing students and other Mass attendees.



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Deacon Urges Servus Omnium Crowd to 'Cry Out to God'

BY SCOTT WARDEN

After a three-year hiatus, the annual Servus Omnium Lecture returned to the University of Saint Francis Performing Arts Center in downtown Fort Wayne on February 13, where attendees began Fat Tuesday by feasting on a Mardi Gras breakfast and being nourished spiritually as they prepared for their Lenten journey.

The event began in 2013 and was held annually until 2021, when it was canceled because of COVID-19. The founders of the event – Matt Smith, Chief Development Officer at Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, and Lance Richey, Interim President of the University of Saint Francis – felt a call to bring it back this year, and their organizations partnered with the Catholic Community Foundation of Northeast Indiana to sponsor the lecture.

With a crowd of around 200 gathered for the 7 a.m. start time, Bishop Rhoades offered the opening blessing and joked that while the event was held on Fat Tuesday, “I feel like this is more like Lent getting up this early for this breakfast.”

Deacon Larry Oney, a permanent deacon of the Archdiocese of New Orleans, offered the morning's lecture, which was titled, “Called and Sent for Such a Time as This,” in which he challenged those in attendance to lead with faith-filled excellence. With Bishop Rhoades sitting front and center, he opened with a joke. “You probably heard the story about the young man who didn't want to go to church on Sunday morning,” Deacon Oney said. “His mother was a good Catholic woman, and finally the young man said, ‘Well, give me three good reasons to go to church.’



Photos by Joshua Schipper

Deacon Larry Oney delivers his talk at the Servus Omnium Lecture at the University of Saint Francis Performing Arts Center in Fort Wayne on Tuesday, February 13.

And the mother, quick on her feet ... she said, ‘One, you're getting older, you need to go to church. Number two, I'm your mother; I want you to go to church. And three, you're the bishop, you have to go to church.’” The crowd, including Bishop Rhoades, roared with laughter.

Throughout his lecture, Deacon Oney kept the audience on its toes as he both entertained and challenged, joked and preached. While the event was billed as a lecture, Deacon Oney said he came to Fort Wayne to preach in the vein of St. Augustine, who said “whenever you have a ministerial moment before the People of God, you should be preaching, and when you

preach, you should give a little bit of teaching, delighting, and persuasion to the truth of the Gospel.”

Throughout his 40-minute talk, Deacon Oney did just that, saying that the world right now is at an inflection point. “There's something powerful happening,” he said. “There's a hunger in the land, and there's a thirst, but also there's a great falling away at the same time. ... We need something to inspire us forward. And I believe that the body of Christ is looking for something more. And I believe, I can see now prophetically, that the Lord has called me here to Fort Wayne. Not to Indianapolis ... not to Chicago, but to this community. And I realize that I'm coming back to this state again in July for the Eucharistic Congress. I've been to your

state once before for the SEEK Conference. There were 15,000, 16,000 gathered. Something is going on in Indiana. ... I don't know what, but something is going on.”

Throughout his time on stage, Deacon Oney preached about the specific moment of time in which God has placed us and the challenges and opportunities he has set before us.

“The question is, what will we do with these times?” Deacon Oney asked. “What do we do at this moment? This moment is not like other moments. Some people say, ‘Well, it's always been like that.’” Deacon Oney shot back, ‘Never like this!’” He cited the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic that society is still feeling today, especially, he said, in our young people, who were isolated at a critical time in their development. He cited the plague of social media and the identity crisis among today's youth.

The answer to these problems, he said, lies with God and His Church. Catholics, he said, “have a body of social justice teaching. We have a body of faith. We have great saints of God. And God is saying, ‘I called you for this particular moment.’ ... The question is, what will we do? Will we cower back, or will we stand up and say, like Isaiah said, ‘Lord, here I am; send me, use me. God has raised us up for such a time as this. We can't let the moment go by and say, ‘Lord, I didn't do anything at the moment. I didn't know what to do.’”

Deacon Oney didn't just raise questions; he offered solutions.

“The principal role that all of us are called to be a part of is to participate in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly mission of Jesus,” he said. “Not the ministerial priesthood, but the common priesthood. What was Jesus' principal ministry? Preaching, teaching, and healing. You said, ‘Wow, I don't have a healing ministry.

You do. When you give a word of encouragement to somebody, you heal. When you give a smile to someone who's down, you begin to heal. When you give a word of encouragement to a businessperson who might be struggling, you're building up.

“God called us to open our mouths. We can't just all be a silent witness. Pope St. John Paul says that unless the life, the death, the burial, the resurrection, the name of Jesus is mentioned, there's no real evangelization. ... I'm exhorting you this morning. I'm encouraging you. I'm preaching to you. ... I'm testifying that Jesus Christ is King over the universe, despite what some people say. The Lord is not nervous because the stock market is up and down. He's the Lamb of God. He's the Prince of Peace. He's the Great I Am. ... Nothing shakes Him. You and I ... we serve a King who is King over an unshakable Kingdom. And you and I are sons and daughters of the King as well. ...

“But God is saying, there's something for you to do now. I need you to cry out. ... Remember, we need a deep groaning for souls for the Kingdom of God. And God is calling and asking us, ‘Will you spend some time on your face?’ That's the message I have for Fort Wayne, Indiana, today. Will you cry out? You say, ‘It's just me; it's just me and my wife.’ You can do great things. You can touch another nation. You can raise up your community. You can raise up your family. ... So, what do I have to do? Do I need to write a bigger check? Yeah, do that too. ... But mainly what you do is get on your face in your own home and cry out to God. Can anybody say amen?”

And the early morning crowd, wide awake at this point, said, “Amen!”

To learn more about Deacon Oney and his ministry, visit hopeandpurpose.org.



Guests look on during Deacon Oney's talk, which was entitled, “Called and Sent for Such a Time as This.”



Deacon Oney poses with Catholic leaders and businesspeople following his talk at the Servus Omnium Lecture.

Lenten Advice from Padre Pio: 'Pray, Hope, and Don't Worry'

During this Lenten season, many parishes offer the traditional devotion of the Stations of the Cross, which recalls the last hours of the passion of Jesus as he was condemned to death, carried His cross to Golgotha, was crucified, died, and was buried. This devotional practice has a long history. Twelfth-century chronicles written by Christian crusaders in Jerusalem mention praying along the "Sacred Way," stopping for prayer at various points along the streets Jesus walked on His way to His death.

By the 15th century, the Franciscan friars who were (and remain today) the custodians of the Christian sites in the Holy Land were building outdoor shrine paths at churches across Europe that replicated the Way of the Cross for those who could not make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Today, most Catholic churches throughout the world feature artistic representations of the stations in sculpture or painting, spaced throughout the nave of the building so pilgrims can pray as they walk around the church. Some parishes have outdoor stations as well, and I've known a few laypeople who have the stations placed in their own gardens. Not too far west of our diocese, in St. John, Indiana, there is the Shrine of Christ's Passion, which fea-

tures full-size statues depicting the stations along a half-mile walking path.

The devotion itself typically features a procession with 14 individual stops, beginning with the condemnation of Christ and concluding with the burial of His body. In the most common version prayed in parishes, attributed to St. Alphonsus Liguori, each station begins with a versicle and response, then offers a brief reflection describing the action at the station, and concludes with a prayer of reparation in which each participant spiritually unites himself or herself to Jesus' sacrifice.

In addition to Jesus, as we pray the stations, we encounter Mary, Mother of Our Lord, whose own heart was at that moment being pierced by a sword, as Simeon had prophesied. We encounter the veil-bearer, Veronica, offering her corporal work of mercy, and Simon of Cyrene, the unwilling cross bearer, and the women of Jerusalem, weeping in sorrow. Praying the stations immerses us in the historical, very real humanity of Jesus, fully on display as He fulfills the purpose for which He, in the fullness of time, emptied Himself of His Godhood, took flesh, and became obedient to death, even death on a cross (cf. Phil 2:5-8).

Earlier this month, I prayed



KEN HALLENIUS

HUMOR IN THE MIX

the stations at a New York City church that is staffed by the Capuchin Franciscan friars. St. John the Baptist Parish, located near Penn Station, has a beautiful shrine devoted to St. Pius of Pietrelcina (more commonly known as "Padre Pio," 1887-1968), who himself was a Capuchin friar. In his own time, he was a very well-known priest and confessor, famously gifted with the ability to read the souls of the faithful who came to him in confession so that he might assure his penitents of the great gift of God's mercy. A young Father Karol Wojtyla, the future Pope St. John Paul II, traveled to visit Padre Pio in 1947; he later presided over the saint's beatification and canonization.

Padre Pio was particularly renowned for bearing in his own body the stigmata – the wounds of Christ's passion. Like his spiritual father St. Francis of Assisi, the first

HALLENIUS, page 17

Elmo and the Challenge of Lent

For two or three days in January, a furry red Muppet's concern for the well-being of his followers became news, dominating Twitter, now "X," and sparking discussions from National Public Radio to cable news.

When the commotion died down just before Ash Wednesday, I was left thinking about how this strange little episode had something to say about Lent.

On Monday, January 29, Elmo from "Sesame Street" posted a simple tweet: "Elmo is just checking in. How is everybody doing?"

What followed was a deluge of replies, a lot of jokes, but such a large volume of cries of despair and angst that the official "Sesame Street" account felt compelled to tweet out mental health resources.

A lot of people made it plain they were doing very badly.

Elmo has been a staple of "Sesame Street" since the 1980s. My children grew up with Elmo as a backdrop to childhood. Elmo is perpetually 3 1/2 years old, and apparently the "and a half" is important, because toddlers like to use that half to make them feel older, sort of the reverse of their grandparents being "60ish" for years.

It would never occur to me to follow Elmo on Twitter, but it didn't take long for the responses to Elmo to explode



EFFIE CALDAROLA

GUEST COMMENTARY

in my feed. My kids sent me funny replies, but then I began to notice the sad and troubled ones.

As the uproar subsided, I continued my annual quest for what to do for Lent. We all know the trilogy: fasting, almsgiving, prayer. But those expressions of anguish kept calling me.

"Fasting" may mean, for some, giving up a food item. For me, I like the idea of "attachments" of which St. Ignatius of Loyola spoke. What am I attached to that prevents me from giving myself wholeheartedly to God? Money? Security? My appearance? Selfishness with my time? Gossip? Obsessive scrolling on my phone? There are endless attachments from which we could fast during Lent.

Almsgiving is a little more clearcut. Give more to the poor, sacrificially. If you combine this giving with fast-

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Allow Jesus to Transfigure Our Lives, How We See Others



THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

MONSIGNOR OWEN F. CAMPION

Second Sunday of Lent

The Book of Genesis is the source of this weekend's first reading. Often, Genesis is associated with its creation narratives. Much else is included in Genesis. A major figure is Abraham. Historians and biblical scholars agree that Abraham lived long ago. He was not a myth or the product of imagination.

Historically, Jews have regarded Abraham as the first of their race. In a theological sense, Christians see Abraham as the first of their race, since Christianity flows from the revelation initially given by God to the ancient Hebrews.

This weekend's reading is very familiar. Abraham leads his beloved son, Isaac, to the

top of a high mountain, there to kill him as a sacrifice to God. As it well known, God intervenes and orders that Isaac be spared.

The story has several lessons. One lesson, usually overlooked, is the repudiation of human sacrifice by none other than God. Beyond this detail, this reference shows that paganism in any form is a human invention.

God illumined the people, rescued the people, by drawing them away from paganism and leading them to the truth. Abraham was God's instrument. Abraham's faith made him worthy of being God's instrument.

For Christians, Isaac symbolizes Jesus, since Jesus was the victim of the ignorance and viciousness of humans, of pagan humans. Jesus lived, however.

St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans furnishes the second reading. This reading simply says that if the power of God, and the light of God, are with us, nothing can prevail against us.

The Gospel of Mark provides

the last reading. It is the story of the Transfiguration.

Jesus takes Peter, James, and John to the summit of a high mountain. There, in an overwhelming, stupendous, even terrifying appearance, Jesus is transfigured, visible to the apostles as the Son of God.

Light is everywhere. In the Old Testament, God is associated with light. Indeed, we associate darkness with danger and the unknown. Light is from God, as are security, strength, genuine awareness, and perception.

Mountaintops were the places on earth nearest to heaven. In a hopeful, awkward attempt to come as close as possible to God, humans went to the tops of mountains. Indeed, the Temple in Jerusalem was at the summit of Mount Zion. Jesus was crucified on a hilltop. He ascended from a hilltop.

In this reading, Jesus appears in the reality of divinity. In this divinity is eternal life itself. God never dies. God never changes. Nothing daunts God. Nothing threatens God. These notions about God per-

tained in the hearts and minds of Jews contemporary with God as they do for us in modern times and in modern theology.

The presence of Moses and Elijah is important. Their places on either side of the Lord indicate that Jesus stands in the historic train of God's communication with, and salvation of, God's people, a process in salvation history in which Moses and Elijah were vitally important.

Reflection

Lent continues. The Church leads us in this period to prepare us for Holy Week and Easter.

Its message is simple. We humans are utterly limited, and we can never overcome our limitations, but God provides for us just as God long ago provided for Abraham, whose faith was unflinching.

Gifted with faith, we can see God, in Jesus, just as the apostles saw Jesus in the Transfiguration. See Jesus as the shining example – the unfailing, everlasting light of

our personal world.

Allow others to be transfigured. See the Lord in every human being.

Faith brings us wonderful, revealing, inspiring insight. We see God in the life of Jesus, in the mercy of Jesus. We see in all others cherished brothers and sisters of Jesus, blessed by God, redeemed by Jesus, due our respect and love.

READINGS

Sunday: Genesis 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18; Psalms 116:10, 15-19; Romans 8:31b-34; Mark 9:2-10

Monday: Daniel 9:4b-10; Psalms 79:8-9, 11, 13; Luke 6:36-38

Tuesday: Isaiah 1:10, 16-20; Psalms 50:8-9, 16bc-17, 21, 23; Matthew 23: 1-12

Wednesday: Jeremiah 18:18-20; Ps 31:5-6, 14-16; Matthew 20:17-28

Thursday: Jeremiah 17:5-10; Psalms 1:1-4, 6; Luke 16:19-31

Friday: Genesis 37:3-4, 12-13a, 17b-28a; Psalms 105:16-21; Matthew 21:33-43, 45-46

Saturday: Micah 7:14-15, 18-20; Psalms 103:1-4, 9-12; Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

Let Lent Be Lent

Two items came across my radar screen as we began the holy season of Lent. The first was a short video of a disco rave that took place (I'm not making this up) in Canterbury Cathedral in England. The clip showed hundreds of young people gyrating to throbbing dance music, cups of beer in their raised hands, as lights flashed all around them. You could plainly see above them the gorgeously decorated ceiling of the cathedral and receding into the background the hauntingly beautiful gothic nave. Having visited Canterbury Cathedral a number of times, I knew that not at all far from where this nightclub scene was playing out was the site where St. Thomas Becket was murdered by agents of King Henry II in 1170. In other words, the present-day managers of the cathedral felt it was just fine that very near the place where one of England's greatest saints gave his life for the faith a disco should break out. The dean of the cathedral, Dr. David Monteith, said, "Whether people choose to come to Canterbury Cathedral primarily as worshippers, sightseers, or attendees at our events – which include classical concerts, light and sound installations, and craft workshops – it's always joyous to see them discover this incredible place anew and on their own terms." For Pete's sake.

The whole point, of course, is that cathedrals are not meant to be experienced "on our terms." They are meant to draw us out of ourselves into the contemplation of a higher world. They are designed to disorient us and to compel us to see things differently. When we allow a disco celebration to take place inside a sacred space, we, quite literally, desecrate the place; we render it un-holy – for "holy" means "set apart." The thousands

upon thousands of pilgrims who came to the Canterbury Cathedral throughout the centuries to visit the tomb of St. Thomas Becket were seeking access to the mystical dimension that lies beyond this world. They came from the ordinary realm of shopping, farming, entertainment, and family, and they knew that they would return to that realm after their pilgrimage. But they also knew that the church was something else, something strange and alluring, and they most certainly did not want it transformed into farm fields or village streets or a bawdy dance hall.

Not everything has to be chirpy and upbeat in the religious order. St. John of Damascus said that prayer is "raising the mind and the heart to God," and the Church teaches that Lent is, par excellence, a time of prayer. So let us, during this holy season, cultivate "cathedral space" in our lives; please let us not permit the secular and the ordinary to dominate that space.

The second item that I chanced upon was an advertisement in a Catholic Church for Ash Wednesday. Next to a symbol representing ashes in the sign of the cross, it said, "Ashes say you belong." Now, don't get me wrong. I'm sure those who put up that ad had nothing but good intentions, and there is certainly nothing in the world wrong with making people feel welcome. But once again, for Pete's sake. ... When the priest or minister applies the ashes to someone's forehead, he says either, "Remember you are dust and to dust you shall return," or "Repent and believe the Good News." In other words, the ashes are not meant as a sign of welcome. They are meant to be the starkest possible reminder that we will die and that our bodies, even if they are young and beautiful, will



BISHOP ROBERT BARRON

WORD ON FIRE

inevitably return to the dirt of the earth and that we are sinners who have rebelled against God and who need to radically turn our lives around. In a word, the ashes are dark, alarming, somber – and meant to be so.

The Church in which I came of age – which is to say, the Church of the immediate post-conciliar period – was, if I can put it this way, relentlessly positive. Joy, peace, God's love and forgiveness, the goodness of all things, eternal life – these were what we exclusively talked about, sang about, insisted upon. And all of those are indeed central to the Bible and the great spiritual tradition. But so are suffering, loss, God's judgment and demand, the fallenness of the world, deep and painful resistance to God, etc. I would challenge you to read any two pages of the Bible – Old Testament or New – and not encounter this darker side of our religion. Lent is a privileged time during the liturgical year when we are encouraged to come to grips with our sin, our mortality, our moral frailty, and our need for forgiveness. I guess I found that advertisement so off-putting because it obfuscated the message of Lent and interfered with the proper spiritual dynamic of the season. Not everything has to be chirpy and upbeat in the religious order. In point of fact, I believe that one reason so many have opted out of the Church is that our presentation of the faith has become superficial, unreal, nicey-nicey.

So, as we continue in these 40 days, I say, "Let Lent be Lent!"

Bishop Robert Barron is the Bishop of Winona-Rochester, Minnesota, and the Founder of Word on Fire Catholic Ministries.

CALDAROLA, from page 16

ing, all the better. Love those fancy coffee drinks? Love to buy clothes? Give them up and give every dime saved to Catholic Relief Services or Catholic Charities.

Prayer? Make it a priority, not something you do when you find time. Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, "Be silent at the beginning of the day, because God should have the first word."

So where does Elmo fit in?

As I studied my Lenten to-dos, I realized that much of them were inward-looking. Maybe I should also look outward, to the way Jesus led His life amid the crowds, being aware of the needs of others, the need for healing, right up until He gave His very life for me.

Maybe it's my turn to think of someone each day to turn to and say, "Just checking in. How are you doing?" And then, most importantly, listen to the response. People are anxious about war, climate

change, ruptures within our political life and within our own families. People have lost faith and lost heart.

There's a broken world out there this Lent. Just ask Elmo.

Effie Caldarola is a wife, mom, and grandmother who received her master's degree in pastoral ministry from Seattle University.

SCRIPTURE SEARCH®

Gospel for February 25, 2024
Mark 9:2-10

Following is a word search based on the Gospel reading for Second Sunday of Lent, Cycle B: The change on the mountaintop. The words can be found in all directions in the puzzle.

PETER	JOHN	LED THEM UP
HIGH	MOUNTAIN	BEFORE THEM
CLOTHES	WHITE	BLEACH
ELIJAH	MOSES	RABBI
IT IS GOOD	LET US	THREE
A CLOUD	VOICE	LISTEN TO
SON OF MAN	RISEN	THE DEAD

IT IS GOOD

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

HALLENIUS, from page 16

recorded saint to receive the stigmata, Padre Pio's hands, feet, and side were marked with red spots that recalled the nails and lance with which Jesus was pierced. Though he was quite shy about it and covered his hands with gloves to hide the wounds, the sometimes painful marks in Padre Pio's hands, feet, and side were external signs of his spiritual closeness to Christ.

The New York shrine, which features reliquaries containing a glove and a sock worn by Padre Pio to hide his stigmata, is located along the side of the church among the Stations of the Cross, placed immediately between the 11th (Jesus is nailed to the cross) and 12th (Jesus dies on the cross). As I was praying with the congregation, it struck me how beautifully appropriate this placement is. The wounds Padre Pio bore in his body are the same wounds Jesus, our Savior, bore in his body for the salvation of souls. The saint commemorated in this little church in the heart of Gotham is a modern-day public witness to the outpouring of mercy that

flows from the side of the crucified Lord Jesus. In his priestly ministry, Padre Pio was a conduit of that same divine mercy, freely offered to the world most especially in the holy Eucharist and in the Sacrament of Confession.

One of Padre Pio's most famous quotes is a fantastic piece of advice: "Pray, hope, and don't worry. Worry is useless. God is merciful and

will hear your prayer." As we continue our Lenten journey, it is good to be reminded that the work of our salvation is already accomplished. Jesus, the Lamb of God, has taken away the sins of the world. The mercy that

flowed from His pierced side is always on offer, we need only ask for it. Let us approach the throne of Jesus' cross in devotion and trust, praying together, "We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you, because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world!"

Ken Hallenius is a syndicated radio host and podcaster living in South Bend.

Bishop Luers to Host 50th Annual Show Choir Invitational

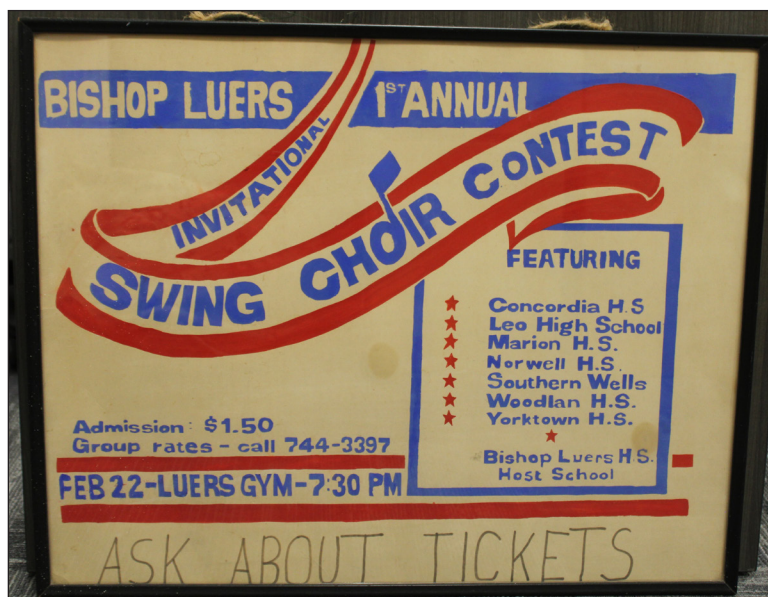
BY GEORGIA LIEB

On February 22, 1975, the first show choir invitational in the United States was hosted by Bishop Luers High School. This year, the school of 528 students on the south side of Fort Wayne, will host the 50th edition of the annual competition as 25 choirs will perform in the Bishop Luers gymnasium on Friday, March 1, and Saturday, March 2.

Franciscan Father Fred Link formed and directed the Bishop Luers swing choir in 1974, originally called the Minstrels of the Knight, which was shortened to simply "the Minstrels." The following year, Father Link decided to plan and host a swing choir competition, inviting schools from the surrounding area. The premise of beginning a swing choir invitational was that the experience would allow choirs to improve by receiving feedback from judges. Less than two months later, judges had been contacted, rules were established, trophies procured, and invitations extended. The first Bishop Luers Swing Choir Invitational consisted of seven choirs invited to perform in the tarp-covered gymnasium, and the 26th Street Singers from Marion High School were named the first ever grand champions! At the second Invitational in 1976, more choirs attended, a stage was built, and WBGU-TV from Bowling Green, Ohio, taped the show for later broadcasts. The 26th Street Singers took home the grand champion title for the second time. Father Link acted as the Contest Director and continued in this role until 1984.

Here are some notable milestones during the past 50 years. In 1979, the concept of Olympic scoring (the highest and lowest scores disregarded) was introduced. PBS News broadcast WBGU-TV's tape of the show choir invitational in 1980 to all 50 states. In 1994, a raging snowstorm didn't stop the 20th Annual Invitational! Bishop Luers High School was the first school in Indiana to add the Outstanding Performer Award in 2001. In 2003, a record number (at the time) of show choirs performed, 18 in total. Findlay "First Edition" won grand champion for the eighth time at the Luers Invitational in 2010 – a feat that is still the record. The invitational expanded in 2011 to include a "Friday Knight" Middle School Competition.

This is the seventh year current Bishop Luers Show Choir Director Kris Andorfer will be leading the invitational. Andorfer is a Bishop Luers alum from the Class of 2010.



Photos provided by Bishop Luers High School

The original, hand-painted sign for the First Annual Bishop Luers Swing Choir Invitational still hangs in the building.



WBGU-TV from Bowling Green, Ohio, taped the program for later broadcasts.



The invitational was the idea of Father Fred Link, show choir director at Bishop Luers High School.

When asked his thoughts on this being the 50th invitational, Andorfer said, "It's crazy. It's hard to explain how unique that is. When I was in school, there were only about 100 (show choir) competitions, now 15 years later, there are around 400 competitions. It's an honor to be at the helm. I'm glad I'm here as an alum to guide it, but there are a lot of other alumni helping as well. ... This event has come a long way. It couldn't be what it is now, of course, without the hard work and setting the stages, literally, 50 years ago. A lot of things have changed."

Judges now use iPads as tools for collecting scores instead of pencil and paper scoring. They will use Carmen Scoring, a web-based scoring system that is used by the

judges to input scores and to tabulate the results from the ballots. The orientation of the stage has changed. Tony Schaab (Bishop Luers Class of 1996) is the current Master of Ceremonies, following Larry Bowers, who served as Master of Ceremonies for 39 years.

"I think people that come, that have been in the past, I think they will be shocked how grand it is, how really classy we make our gymnasium look," Andorfer said.

Current Bishop Luers Performing Arts Department Chair Karlene Krouse served as Show Choir Director for 19 years prior to Andorfer. Krouse appreciates the learning experience provided by the invitational. "Even though this is a competitive competition, the concept that was established is that it is an educational opportunity for students to learn, and improve, and perform with professional judges," she said.

As this event is a big milestone, Andorfer said "I would like to invite all alumni to come back and join us for the show!" Alumni are also invited to volunteer. Organizers encouraged those who would like to attend to visit the school's website, bishoplurers.org, for ticket information. Contact Kris Andorfer with any questions at 260-456-1261 ext. 3122 or kandorfer@bishoplurers.org. To donate, visit bishoplurers.org/page/show-choir.



Bishop Luers Minstrels in 2024.

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.

The Role of a Synodal Bishop

NOTRE DAME – A presentation by Cardinal Mario Grech, speaking on "The Role of the Synodal Bishop" will be held on Monday, February 26, from 7:15-8 p.m. at McKenna Hall, Reyes Family Board Room 215/216 at the University of Notre Dame. This talk will include a response from Bishop Rhoades and is free and open to the public. This event is sponsored by the McGrath Institute for Church Life at the University of Notre Dame.

Lenten Vice Series

FORT WAYNE – A six-week Lenten series on vices will be held on Thursday evenings at 7 p.m. at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church, 4500 Fairfield Ave. Speakers will be Father Paolo Degasper, Father Mark Hellinger, and Sister Benedicta Duna. For more details, visit saintjohnfortwayne.com or call Karen Glotzbach at 260-744-4393 or email parishsecretary@stjohnsfw.org.

Made for Such a Time

NOTRE DAME – To conclude Black History Month, join authors and podcasters Marcia Lane-McGee and Shannon Wimp Schmidt at Remick Commons on the University of Notre Dame campus on Tuesday, February 29, from 7-8:30 p.m. They will share lessons the Black Church can teach everyone about what it means to be a witness to Christ in America today. A reception will follow. This event is sponsored by the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, the Black Catholic Advisory Board, and Campus Ministry of the University of Notre Dame. Contact Wendy Summers at 574-360-9930 or wendy.summers86@gmail.com.

Queen of Angels Lenten Fish Fry (Drive-Thru)

FORT WAYNE – Queen of Angels Parish, 1500 West State Blvd., is serving Big Eyed Fish on Friday, March 1, for drive-through pick-up from 4-7 p.m. or until the fish runs out. Come early and guarantee your generous portion of fish, Big Eye's signature tartar sauce, chips, applesauce, and a cookie. Cost is \$12.50 per carryout box.

St. Paul Chapel's Fish Fry

FREMONT – St. Paul Chapel, 8780 E. 700 N., will have an

all-you-can-eat fish fry on Friday, March 1, from 5-7 p.m. Dine-in and carryout available. Tickets are \$12 for adults, \$5 for children 6-12, and children 5 and younger are free. Contact Katie Waltke at 260-665-2259 or katie@stpaulcatholicchapel.org.

Fish Fry at St. John, New Haven

NEW HAVEN – St. John the Baptist, 943 Powers St., will have a fish fry, sponsored by the Holy Name Society, on Friday, March 1, from 4-7 p.m. During Lent, the fish fry is drive-through only. Cost is \$12 for adults and \$7 for children (5-12). Dinners include fish, potato wedges, coleslaw, apple-sauce, and cookies.

St. Vincent Boy Scout Fish Fry

FORT WAYNE – A fish dinner will be held on Friday, March 1, at St. Vincent de Paul School, 1502 E. Wallen Rd., from 5-8 p.m. Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$7 for children. Drive-up or carryout are available. Contact Jan Moore at 260-489-1763 or

svboyscouts@svboyscouts.org.

St. Joseph Knights Fish Fry

FORT WAYNE – The St. Joseph Knights of Columbus will have a fish fry on Friday, March 1, from 5-8 p.m. in the school gym, 2211 Brooklyn Ave., Door #3. Tickets are \$14 for dine-in, \$12 for carryout, and \$7 for children 4-12 years old. Contact Valentin Vasquez for more information at 260-432-5113 or lsilva@saintjosephfw.org.

Knights of Columbus Fish Fry

MISHAWAKA – Queen of Peace Church, 4508 Vistula Rd., will have a fish fry on Friday, March 1, from 5-7 p.m. with fried pollock, homemade potato salad, cole slaw, mac and cheese, bread, and a drink. Dine-in tickets are \$15 for adults, \$10 for ages 6-12, and kids 5 and younger are free. All drive-through dinners are \$15. This event is followed by Stations of the Cross at 7 p.m. Contact 574-255-9674 or parishoffice@queenofpeace.cc.

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Scott Warden
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