

# TODAY'S CATHOLIC

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# Evangelium Vitae Medal Recipient Honored for Pro-Life Work

BY CATHI KENNEDY

“Every Mass is a proclamation of *Evangelium Vitae* – the Gospel of Life,” Bishop Rhoades said in his greeting at the annual Evangelium Vitae Mass, which was held at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart at the University of Notre Dame on Saturday, April 27.

During the Mass, Bishop Rhoades recognized this year's winner of the Evangelium Vitae Medal, Dr. Elvira Parravicini, who has dedicated her career to caring for preborn and newborn children with complex, often life-threatening conditions. In 2008, she founded the Neonatal Comfort Care Program at Columbia University Medical Center, where she is a professor of pediatrics.

“In his encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*, Pope St. John Paul II in writing about the ‘countless grave threats to life present in the modern world,’ said that ‘at such times, the People of God, and this includes every believer, is called to profess with humility and courage its faith in Jesus Christ, the Word of life,’”

Bishop Rhoades said.

The medal, named after Pope St. John Paul II's 1995 encyclical, is presented annually by the university's de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture to an individual whose “outstanding efforts have served to proclaim the Gospel of Life by steadfastly affirming and defending the sanctity of human life from its earliest stages.”

Parravicini lives out her faith in her work in perinatal palliative care by ensuring the sanctity and dignity of the lives of the mothers and infants who come to the Center for care. “The NCCP provides each child with an individualized plan to create ‘a safe and loving space for bonding, attachment, comfort, and joy for them and their families,’” according to a statement released by officials with the de Nicola Center. “Aspects of care typically include a medical evaluation and plan to alleviate pain; comfort measures such as holding, skin-to-skin contact, and feeding; memory-making activities such as handprints, footprints, photographs, and

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Provided by the de Nicola Center for Culture and Ethics

Dr. Elvira Parravicini speaks to a crowd at the University of Notre Dame on Saturday, April 27. Parravicini was awarded the Evangelium Vitae Medal for her work in the field of perinatal palliative care.

# Social Doctrine, Policy Positions, and Heavenly Citizenship

BY ALEXANDER MINGUS

*In the leadup to Indiana's primary elections on Tuesday, May 7, and the general elections in November, the bishops of the United States, including Bishop Rhoades, are urging the faithful to examine and carefully consider their recently updated document on how Catholics are called to participate in political life, Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship. This is the third of three articles outlining key issues and information for the faithful to consider.*

The bishops of the United States, in their role as pastors and shepherds, are responsible for promulgating the social doctrine of the Church and teaching it to the faithful. In Parts 2 and 3 of their document Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, they show how the Church's teaching applies to various social issues.

The bishops begin Part 2 by reminding the faithful of the importance of this guidance, stating: “Some issues involve principles that can never be abandoned, such as the fundamental right to life and marriage as the union of one man and

one woman. Others reflect our judgment about the best way to apply Catholic principles to policy issues. No summary could fully reflect the depth and details of the positions taken through the work of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). While people of goodwill may sometimes choose different ways to apply and act on some of our principles, Catholics cannot ignore their inescapable moral challenges or simply dismiss the Church's guidance or policy directions that flow from these principles” (No. 63).

In this article, I'm going to avoid spelling out the bishops' positions in all the areas listed in Forming Consciences

for Faithful Citizenship because I want this series of articles to pique your interest in reading this short document in its entirety. (You can find the document and other resources at [faithfulcitizenship.org](http://faithfulcitizenship.org)).

That said, to give a sense of the breadth of policy positions covered in the document, I list them here in the order they appear: human life; promoting peace; marriage and family life; religious freedom; preferential option for the poor and economic justice; health care; migration; Catholic education; promoting justice and countering violence; combatting unjust discrimination; care for our

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## POLITICS, from page 1

common home; communica-  
tions, media, and culture; and  
global solidarity.

The temptation in American political life is to assume that we must look at this list with voting in mind. We are tempted to think about these issues only insofar as how they inform our choice of candidate. The right to vote, an undeniable privilege of the U.S. citizen, is a very important aspect of participation in public life, but voting only fulfills part of our political responsibility.

Before we even think about voting, it would do us much spiritual good to reflect on the multitude of social issues facing our country in the light of the Gospel and to first focus on forming our consciences well before we begin to consider the candidates presented to us during an election. But how do we begin? When participating in public life, what does Christ and His Church ask of me?

We should begin reflecting on these social issues with this question in mind. For example, Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship states: "Social and economic policies should foster the creation of jobs for all who can work with decent working conditions and just wages" (No. 73). Let's focus on the concept of a "just" wage for a moment.

In his 1891 encyclical *Rerum Novarum* – considered the Church's first modern document on social doctrine – Pope Leo XIII began to articulate the idea of a just wage as a wage that would adequately support a worker, the worker's family, and allow for some savings over time. Leo did not prescribe an hourly rate nor simply acquiesce to the idea that the market would adequately meet human needs of its own accord. In this area and in many others, the Church has some wisdom to offer us, but too few of us know that this guidance exists.

Catholics and people of goodwill may take the principles Leo lays out and come up with different conclusions. However, if we are mutually committed to the fundamental principles expressed by the Church, we have a foundation upon which we can have robust policy discussion. Mutual commitment to fundamental principles is the bed in which the seeds of civic friendship are sown.

In Part 3 of *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, the bishops provide what they call "goals for political life: challenges for citizens, candidates, and public officials." This brief list of goals begins with a reminder to protect the weakest in our midst, turn away from violence to address fundamental problems, protect and strengthen marriage and family life, achieve comprehensive immigration

**FORMING  
CONSCIENCES  
FOR  
FAITHFUL  
CITIZENSHIP**

A Call to Political Responsibility from the  
Catholic Bishops of the United States

*with New Introductory Note*

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

reform that protects workers, families, and our nation's borders, provide economic security, education, care for creation, comply with moral limits of military force, pursue peace, and protect religious freedom.

These goals are well worth studying during national election years and beyond. Every year holds an opportunity to deepen our understanding of the Church's teaching as part of the lifelong task of forming our conscience.

After reading these reflections on pressing social issues, it may be easy to accuse the bishops of having a myopic obsession with fixing social issues rather than focusing on spiritual goods.

In response to that possible criticism, it is important to see this teaching in the context of the whole of Christian life. I often like to draw parallels

between the bishops' call to form our consciences and the universal call to holiness. The moral life is intertwined with our pursuit of forming a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ, who instructed us to love God and love our neighbor. Pope St. John Paul II also reminded us that "the teaching and spreading of her social doctrine are part of the Church's evangelizing mission" (*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, No. 41).

Charity, the theological virtue, is at the heart of the Church's social doctrine. Through our teaching and spreading of this doctrine, our neighbors, family, and friends may begin to see that our worldview is underpinned by a current of love that emanates from Christ rather than being informed by the overused and divisive partisan tropes of American politics.

In the humble opinion of this author, it is time to reclaim the moral vision that Christ offers to us through His Church. It is time to encourage a deeper and more widespread reflection on the teaching of *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* and ultimately the whole corpus of the social doctrine of the Church.

We recognize that our citizenship here is fleeting and that our promise of heavenly citizenship is just on the horizon. We are called to be faithful citizens here as we hope for eternal citizenship in our heavenly home.

*Alexander Mingus is the Associate Director of the Indiana Catholic Conference, which is the public policy arm of the Catholic bishops of Indiana.*



Provided by the de Nicola Center for Culture and Ethics

**Pictured at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart at the University of Notre Dame, from left, are O. Carter Snead, Director of the de Nicola Center for Culture and Ethics; Holy Cross Father Robert Dowd, President-elect of Notre Dame; Dr. Elvira Parravicini, recipient of the 2024 Evangelium Vitae Medal; Bishop Rhoades; Jennifer Newsome Martin, Director-elect of the de Nicola Center; and Anthony J. de Nicola, Executive Advisory Committee Co-chair of the de Nicola Center.**

**EVANGELIUM VITAE, from page 1**

personalized keepsakes; and emotional, psychological, and spiritual care, including both short- and long-term bereavement support.”

In his homily, Bishop Rhoades said, “St. John exhorts us: ‘Children, let us love not (just) in word or speech but in deed and truth.’ Those who are truly the children of God display love in concrete ways. Tonight, we honor a person in the medical profession who has done so in a beautiful way. Dr. Elvira Parravicini’s care for mothers, their preborn and newborn children, and their families is an inspiration to us all.”

Upon the announcement last fall of Parravicini being named the recipient of the Evangelium Vitae Medal, Dr. O. Carter Snead, professor of law and Director of the de Nicola Center, said: “Dr. Parravicini’s work perfectly embodies the goods of unconditional love, radical hospitality, and *miser cordia* (taking on the suffering of another as your own) that constitutes the foundation of a culture of life. Her care for mothers, babies (born and unborn), and families is a prophetic witness to the self-emptying love that the Evangelium Vitae Medal was created to honor and celebrate.”

According to a release by officials with the de Nicola Center, Parravicini, a native of Milan, Italy, completed her pediatric residency and neonatal fellowship at the University of Milan, as well as a certification in palliative medicine at Harvard University. After moving to the United States in 1994, she established the Neonatal Comfort Care Program (NCCP) at Columbia University Medical Center in 2008 to

address the complex medical and non-medical needs of infants affected by life-limiting or life-threatening conditions.

“I think of the love Dr. Parravicini has for the little babies who may only have minutes, hours, or just days or weeks to live after their birth, and the fruits of her love and medical expertise,” said Bishop Rhoades. “Through the Neonatal Comfort Care Program she founded, and its care-giving team, parents and families are able to see and hold their babies and show their love for them – moments or days that they will treasure for the rest of their lives.”

Snead, the outgoing Director of the de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture, attended the Mass at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart, as did Dr. Jennifer Newsome Martin, a professor at the university’s Program of Liberal Studies and Theology, who will take on her new role as director of the de Nicola Center on July 1. Snead has been the director of the de Nicola Center since 2012. Bishop Rhoades acknowledged Snead and Martin and the Center’s work to honor individuals in the pro-life movement, saying, “I am deeply grateful that the de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture here at Notre Dame does so much to proclaim and serve the Gospel of Life.”

At the dinner and reception following the Mass, the Evangelium Vitae Medal was presented to Parravicini by Snead and Margaret Cabaniss, Senior Associate Director of the de Nicola Center.

In her speech accepting the award, Parravicini thanked her family before offering those in attendance a look into how she came to take on such important work.

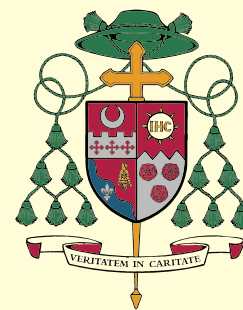
“During med school, I was

fascinated by the moment of birth,” Parravicini said. “If you think about it, a certain number of people enters the delivery room and then, after birth, there is one more person. Four people entered, and five are coming out. Amazing, the miracle of life. Moreover, I was fascinated by the incredible promise for happiness and the expectation for something great that happens in front of every newborn, regardless of who they are. This promise and expectation are so much more than in other stages of life.

“So, when I realized that there were babies born with severe conditions, I decided right way that I needed to care for them and heal them to sustain that promise and expectation. And for a while, I thought I was going to be able to heal ALL babies; I was going to fight for them, and I would succeed. This sentiment and this decision did not last long, because I learned sooner than later that I am not God, and He – not me – is in charge.”

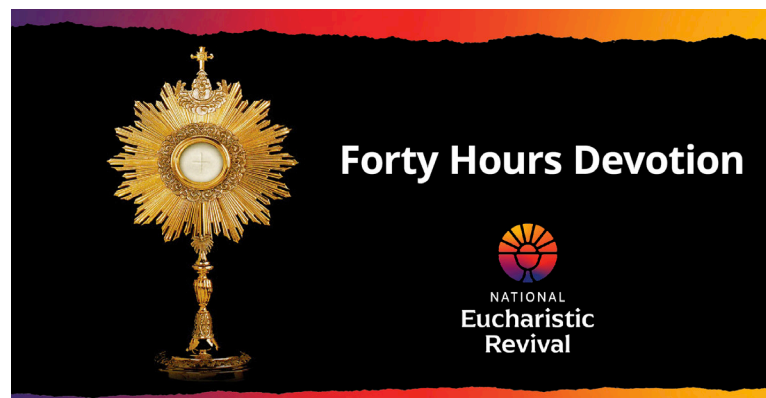
She continued: “With time, I realized that ‘to save’ their life was ‘to serve’ their destiny as it is. So I started taking care of these babies addressing their special needs with my medical knowledge, my experience, and all the resources available in my hospital. ... With help of many friends and supporters ... we have been serving hundreds of families, I started with 13 in 2008 and last year we met many families in more than 800 encounters.

“As I always say to parents when I meet them prenatally, my mission is to save your baby’s life, but no matter what, I am walking with your baby, you, and your family, and I will not abandon you, and I make sure that we walk together toward your baby’s destiny.”



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

- Monday, May 6: 5 p.m. – Mass with Blessing and Sending of Graduates of Notre Dame’s Masters of Divinity Program, Moreau Seminary, University of Notre Dame
- Tuesday, May 7: 8 a.m. – Meeting of Indiana Bishops and Major Religious Superiors, Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, Indianapolis
- Tuesday, May 7: 3:30 p.m. – Meeting of Bishops of Indiana, Archbishop O’Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis
- Wednesday, May 8: 8 a.m. – Meeting of the Board of Directors of Indiana Catholic Conference, Indianapolis
- Thursday, May 9: 9 a.m. – Meeting with Diocesan High School Principals, Oakwood Inn, Syracuse
- Thursday, May 9: Noon – Meeting with Council of Teachers, Oakwood Inn, Syracuse
- Thursday, May 9: 6 p.m. – Meeting with Diocesan School Board, Oakwood Inn, Syracuse
- Friday, May 10: 7 p.m. – Confirmation Mass, Most Precious Blood Church, Fort Wayne
- Saturday, May 11: 10 a.m. – Confirmation Mass, Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Fort Wayne
- Sunday, May 12: 3 p.m. – Confirmation Mass, St. Joseph Church, Fort Wayne



**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](http://diocesefwsb.org/eucharist).

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# The Call to Be 'Guardians and Servants of Human Life'

BY BISHOP KEVIN C. RHOADES

*The following is the text of Bishop Rhoades' homily for the Fifth Sunday of Easter, given on Saturday, April 27, at the annual Evangelium Vitae Mass at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart on the campus of the University of Notre Dame.*

**"G**od's commandment is this: We should believe in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another just as he commanded us." These words from the second reading are a concise summary of the whole First Letter of St. John that we have been hearing on these Sundays of the Easter season. Basically, the message is "believe and love!" Faith and love together are the heart of the Christian life: They are inseparable.

First, faith. We are to believe in the name of Jesus. To believe in Jesus' name is to believe that He is the Christ, the Son of God, come in the flesh for our salvation. St. John is insisting on this in the context of the situation of the community to whom he was writing, where some Gnostics were rejecting the reality of the Incarnation. At the very beginning of his letter, John confesses that Jesus is the Word of life that he and others have heard, seen, and touched. In his encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*, Pope St. John Paul II, in writing about the "countless grave threats to life present in the modern world," said that "at such times, the People of God, and this includes every believer, is called to profess with humility and courage its faith in Jesus Christ, 'the Word of life.'"

Following St. John, Pope John Paul II insisted on the

centrality of faith in Jesus. He wrote that "the Gospel of life is something concrete and personal, for it consists in the proclamation of the very person of Jesus. ... Jesus is the Son who from all eternity receives life from the Father, and who has come among (us) to make (us) sharers in this gift." Jesus Himself said, "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." "In Jesus, the Word of life, God's eternal life is thus proclaimed and given," John Paul wrote. "Thanks to this proclamation and gift, our physical and spiritual life, also in its earthly phase, acquires its full value and meaning, for God's eternal life is in fact the end to which our living in this world is directed and called." Life is thus always a good. This is what we celebrate in a special way at this *Evangelium Vitae* Mass. We gather in faith at this Eucharist, believing in Jesus as the Word of life, believing in His name, that He is indeed the Christ, the Son of God, come in the flesh for our salvation, as St. John teaches. And what better way to celebrate this belief than participating in the banquet where we receive His life-giving flesh and blood.

In his letter, St. John insists not only on the centrality of faith but on its inseparable connection to love for one another. The call to love one another is a central theme of the First Letter of St. John. Time and again, John calls us to love one another as God who is love has loved us. Displaying genuine love for another is an essential mark of the Christian. St. John exhorts us: "Children, let us love not (just) in word or speech but in deed and truth." Those who are truly the children of God display love in concrete ways. Tonight, we honor a person

in the medical profession who has done so in a beautiful way. Dr. Elvira Parravicini's care for mothers, their pre-born and newborn children, and their families is an inspiration to us all. She exemplifies St. John Paul's call to health care professionals to be "guardians and servants of human life." We are called to have and to show reverence and love for every human life, entrusted to us by God, the Lord of life. Thank you, Dr. Parravicini, for your witness to the Gospel of life through your professional service motivated by your faith and your love for God and your love for the little ones!

The reading today from St. John's first letter ends with this sentence: "Those who keep God's commandments remain in Him, and He in them, and the way we know that He remains in us is from the Spirit that He gave us." The idea of remaining or abiding in God is a recurring theme in St. John's letters and in his Gospel. We remain or abide in God through faith and love through the Holy Spirit, who graciously imparts divine power and life to us. The Gospel today of the vine and the branches speaks of this remaining or abiding in Jesus. In fact, we find the word "remain" or "abide" 10 times in today's Gospel. Jesus is the vine, and His disciples are the branches. Jesus teaches that we, the branches, must remain on the vine in order to bear fruit. Our Lord says to us: "Remain in me, as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you remain in me. ... Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing."

Brothers and sisters, we were grafted onto the vine

when we were baptized. We were united to Jesus. It's vitally important that we remain united to Him and His love. When we do, we let the sap of the vine, the grace of the Holy Spirit, the love of God, enter into us and animate our life. There are so many things that can tear us from the vine, separate us from the Lord. There's selfishness and greed, anger and hate, lust and power, all kinds of temptations in a culture of death that can draw us away from the Lord and His life in a way that we become withering or dead branches. And remember: St. John wrote that "those who keep God's commandments remain in Him." God's commandments include "Thou shalt not kill."

How do we remain in Jesus as He teaches us so insistently? We need perseverance in faith, through daily prayer, through listening to His Word, and through participation in the sacraments, especially the holy Eucharist. If we find ourselves as branches becoming less firmly attached to the vine because of our sins, we need the remedy of the Sacrament of Reconciliation to reconnect us more strongly to the Lord. We also need the humility to admit that, as branches, we need some pruning if we are to bear good fruit. For example, if we become too big for ourselves, too filled with pride, we need to be cut back, to be brought back to the simplicity and poverty of the Lord Himself. It's only by dying to self (that's the pruning process) that fruitfulness will endure and renew itself. As a result of the pruning process, the fruits grow, the fruits of the Holy Spirit, the first and greatest of which is love, followed by joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. These are the

fruits of communion with Jesus and living the gifts of the Holy Spirit we have all received in baptism and confirmation. The life of Christ becomes our own. This is what happened to the saints. Pope Francis says that "this is the secret of the saints: abiding in Christ, joined to Him like branches to the vine, in order to bear much fruit." The Holy Father teaches that by remaining united to Jesus, "we receive a new way of being, the life of Christ becomes our own: We are able to think like Him, to act like Him, to see the world and the things in it with the eyes of Jesus. And so we are able to love our brothers and sisters, beginning with the poor and those who suffer the most, as He has done, and to love them with His heart, and so bear fruits of goodness, of charity, and of peace in the world" (*Regina Coeli*, May 3, 2015). I think of the love Dr. Parravicini has for the little babies who may only have minutes, hours, or just days or weeks to live after their birth, and the fruits of her love and medical expertise. Through the Neonatal Comfort Care Program she founded and its care-giving team, parents and families are able to see and hold their babies and show their love for them, moments or days that they will treasure for the rest of their lives.

Finally, I am deeply grateful that the de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture here at Notre Dame does so much to proclaim and serve the Gospel of life. I cannot thank Dr. Carter Snead enough for his great leadership these past 12 years, and I am very happy that he will be succeeded by another wonderful director, Dr. Jenny Martin. I am grateful to all of the staff and benefactors of this center and to the Sorin Fellows who are such an important part of this university.


The strongest and most beautiful branch united to the vine is the one in whose honor this university is named, Our Lady, the Blessed Virgin Mary. The sap from the vine, from her Son, ran through every fiber of her being. She was indeed full of grace. Let us entrust ourselves and this university to her so that we remain in her Son as living branches in the Church, firmly united to Christ the vine, the Head of the Church.


The branch which was Mary did not need to be pruned since she was without sin, but she holds our hand in the pruning process. May she help us to be open to the pruning that we need so that we may bear good fruit in our service of life and our service of the Church! And may the holy Eucharist nourish our souls with the love of Christ that we are called to spread in the world!



## ST. THOMAS MORE

A C A D E M Y

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# Bishop Rhoades Confirms Dozens of Notre Dame Students

BY PAULA LENT

Live with the beauty of blossoming trees and blooming flowers, the campus of the University of Notre Dame displayed the glory of God's creation on Sunday, April 28. Fittingly, inside the Basilica of the Sacred Heart, a special Mass celebrating the glory and abundance of life in Christ was being held, as Bishop Rhoades presided over a Mass during which he confirmed members of the Notre Dame community.

The Mass readings included an excerpt from Acts of the Apostles displaying the first fruit of Paul's conversion, a passage from the First Letter of John, and Jesus' metaphor of the vine and the branches, taken from John's Gospel.

"What a great Gospel for this Mass in which seven members of the Notre Dame community will be received into full communion in the Catholic Church and, together with 32 other members of the community, will receive the Sacrament of Confirmation," Bishop Rhoades said. "Through confirmation, they will be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit and more firmly united as branches to the vine, more firmly united to Christ and His Church."

"The parable of the vine and the branches is a beautiful expression of the mystery of Jesus and the Church. Jesus identified Himself as 'the true vine,' and His disciples as 'the branches,' Bishop Rhoades said. "We were grafted onto Jesus, the vine, when we were baptized. We were grafted onto Jesus so that we might have life – life in abundance, eternal life."

Bishop Rhoades continued: "As branches on the vine, we are tasked to bear fruit. What is the fruit we are called to bear? If we turn to the second reading today from St. John's first letter, we learn that the principal fruit we are to bear is love. St. John wrote: 'Children, let us love not (just) in word or speech but in deed and truth.' St. Paul teaches us the same thing in his letters. Recall his teaching in First Corinthians that love is the most excellent gift, the greatest of the virtues of the Christian life. St. Paul also lists love as the first of the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit in his Letter to the Galatians. Our mission, therefore, is to bring the love of Christ to the world. What attracted so many pagans in the cruel world of the Roman empire 2,000 years ago to embrace Christianity? They marveled at the way the early Christian lived, saying 'See how these Christians love one another.'"

In the first reading, taken



Paula Lent

**Bishop Rhoades offers the Sacrament of Confirmation to members of the University of Notre Dame community during Mass at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart on Sunday, April 28.**

from Acts of the Apostles, the newly converted Paul joins the Christian community in Jerusalem and becomes an apostle hard-bent on sharing the Good News. Having received the Holy Spirit, he preached boldly before leaving for Tarsus, and at that time, the Church "was being built up and walked in the fear of the Lord, and with the consolation of the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers."

Referencing the power of the Holy Spirit in the early Church, Bishop Rhoades underscored the power and the mission the 39 candidates would be receiving as well. "In the Acts of the Apostles, we see clearly the powerful presence of the Holy Spirit in the primitive Church after Pentecost," he said. "It's the same Holy Spirit these candidates will receive in the Sacrament of Confirmation today, the Spirit who fills us interiorly with His gifts, strengthening us like He strengthened the early Christians to witness to Christ through our words and deeds," he said.

"Think again of the image of the vine and the branches. I like to think of the grace of the Holy Spirit as the sap of the vine. When we stay united to Jesus, we let the sap of the vine – the love of God poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, as St. Paul teaches – enter into us and animate our

life."

"Candidates for confirmation," Bishop Rhoades implored, "you are being called to live by the Spirit whom you receive today and so bear these wonderful fruits in your lives as disciples of Jesus. Think of the sacred chrism that I will anoint you with. It has a beautiful fragrance because of the balsam that is mixed with the olive oil. This matter of the Sacrament of Confirmation reminds us of this exhortation of St. Paul to the early Christians: 'You are to be the fragrance of Christ in the world.' How so? By spreading His goodness and love in a world that so desperately needs it, a world where there is a lot of bad odor. We build up God's Kingdom in the world when we spread the fragrance of Christ, when we live and spread His Gospel, which the Holy Spirit strengthens us to do."

Bishop Rhoades underscored the importance of being active in one's faith in order to remain connected to Christ, the true vine, as well as the importance of allowing for necessary pruning in order to bear fruit in the Lord.

"There are many things that can tear us from the vine, that can separate us from the Lord," he said. "There's selfishness and greed, anger and hate, lust and power, all kinds of temptations that draw us away from the Lord. How do we remain

in Jesus? How do we stay connected to the vine? We need perseverance in faith, especially through daily prayer, through listening to God's word, and through participation in the sacraments, especially the Holy Eucharist," he said.

"We rejoice today that our seven brothers and sisters entering into full communion in Christ's Church will be receiving the holy Eucharist for the first time. Jesus gave us the gift of His body and blood so that we will remain in vital communion with Him. Our union with Jesus the vine and with the other branches on the vine, our brothers and sisters in Christ, is nourished and grows through our participation in the Eucharist, which makes us one body in Christ," Bishop Rhoades added.

Finally, before conferring the sacraments, Bishop Rhoades fittingly encouraged the Notre Dame candidates to look to Our Lady as an example of life in the Spirit.

"The greatest of all the saints, the Queen of All Saints, was the Blessed Virgin Mary, the patroness of this university. She was the strongest and most beautiful branch united to the vine, her Son," he said. "The sap from the vine, the Holy Spirit, ran through every fiber of her being. She was indeed full of grace. The branch which was Mary did not need to be pruned since she was without sin, but she holds our hand in the pruning process. May she help us to be open to the pruning that we need so that we may bear good fruit in our lives and thus grow in holiness. And may she who is the Mother of the Church intercede for all those entering into full communion with the Church today and for all who will receive the Sacrament of Confirmation! May you discover ever more deeply the joy of being united with Christ in the Church and bear the fruits of the Holy Spirit throughout your lives!"

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## Pier Giorgio Frassati's Canonization Reportedly 'on the Horizon' in 2025

During an assembly of the Italian Catholic Action in late April, Cardinal Marcello Semeraro, Prefect of the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints, reportedly told those gathered that "the canonization of Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati is now clear on the horizon and looming for the next jubilee year" of 2025. According to the Italian newspaper *Avvenire*, the declaration was met with resounding applause by the thousands of members present, marking a momentous occasion for devotees of Frassati and the wider Catholic community. An official declaration on the matter has yet to come from the Vatican. Pier Giorgio Frassati, born in Turin in 1901, has inspired countless young people. During his life he was known for his zealous love of God and dedication to serving the less fortunate. Though brief, his life was vibrant with activities ranging from mountaineering to serving the poorest through the St. Vincent de Paul Society, showcasing his dynamic approach to faith and charity. He was also a lay Dominican. He died at the young age of 24 and was beatified in 1990.

## CBS to Air Pope Francis Interview

NEW YORK (OSV News) – In an exclusive interview with "CBS Evening News" anchor Norah O'Donnell that took place on Wednesday, April 24, Pope Francis addressed the conflicts in the Middle East and Ukraine, the plight of children in these areas, climate change, and the decline in the number of U.S. Catholics. He told O'Donnell that "there is always a place" for people in the Church, even if a particular priest or parish is not welcoming. A clip of the interview aired the day it took place, and CBS officials said it will air more of the interview on "60 Minutes" on Sunday, May 19, and in a primetime special on Monday, May 20. The interview takes place ahead of the Vatican's first World Children's Day, scheduled for May 25-26. The CBS interview marks the first time a pope has given an in-depth, one-on-one interview to a U.S. broadcast network, according CBS officials.

## Pope Asks Lay Catholics to Prepare for Synod's 'Prophetic' Stage

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – The most important outcome of the current Synod of Bishops on synodality is the synodal process itself and not the hot-button topics discussed, Pope

## 'AI Priest' Draws Online Backlash



OSV News screenshot/Catholic Answers

On Tuesday, April 23, the apologetics apostolate Catholic Answers debuted an AI chatbot it named "Father Justin," which aimed at answering questions about the faith. After the launch of this "AI priest" drew intense backlash online, Catholic Answers executives told OSV News that they are not discouraged from pursuing AI projects following the release of "Father Justin," who was "laicized" hours later. Father Justin's preference for addressing users as "my child" and his statements indicating he could actually give absolution and preside at the Sacrament of Matrimony drew howls of condemnation in Catholic cyberspace.

Francis said. With the second synod assembly scheduled for October, the pope said the synod process is approaching its "most challenging and important" stage – the point at which it must become "prophetic." At this point in the synodal journey "it is a matter of translating the work of the previous stages into choices that will give impetus and new life to the mission of the Church in our time," he told members of the Italian Catholic Action lay association in a packed St. Peter's Square on Thursday, April 25. But he noted that "the most important thing of this synod is synodality, the subjects and topics (discussed) are there to advance this expression of the Church that is synodality." In March, Pope Francis decided that some of the most controversial issues raised at the first synod assembly "requiring in-depth study" will be examined

by study groups; the groups are to issue preliminary reports to the synod assembly in October and give their final reports to the pope by June of 2025.

## Italian Leader Says Pope Will Join G7 Discussion on AI

ROME (CNS) – Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni announced that Pope Francis would participate in a G7 "outreach" discussion on artificial intelligence when the leaders of the world's leading industrialized nations meet in southern Italy in mid-June. "This is the first time a pontiff is participating in the work of the Group of Seven, and this can only bring prestige to Italy and the entire @G7," Meloni wrote on X on Friday, April 26, in a posting that included a video announce-

ment. Meloni, U.S. President Joe Biden, and the leaders of Canada, France, Germany, Japan, and the United Kingdom, along with top officials of the European Union, are scheduled to meet June 13-15 in Puglia. Matteo Bruni, Director of the Vatican Press Office, confirmed Pope Francis' intention to participate and told Catholic News Service he believed the pope would attend the meeting, not just send a message.

## Kenyan Archbishop Appeals for Aid as Floods Devastate the Country

NAIROBI, Kenya (OSV News) – Amid severe floods, a leading Catholic archbishop in Kenya appealed for humanitarian support to aid thou-

sands of displaced people as he expressed the Church's closeness to the affected populations. By Monday, April 29, rescue operations were continuing as the death toll surpassed 120 people due to excessive rains and floods linked to the continuing El Nino phenomenon in East Africa. Floodwaters have submerged homes and public installations, and bursting rivers have swept into villages, making roads temporary riverbeds throughout the last several weeks. Many roads have been cut off as dams burst because of the heavy rains that began in mid-March. On April 29, a dam collapsed in western Kenya, killing at least 45 people, including 17 children, after a wall of water swept through houses. "We want to be very close to you as you go through the pain of loss and as you feel the weight of these floods," Archbishop Anthony Muheria of Nyeri said in a recorded appeal on Sunday, April 28. Archbishop Muheria said God was calling on Christians and people of goodwill to help – in all ways – the people who have been affected by the devastating floods.

## New York Court Rules Insurer Doesn't Have to Pay Out Abuse Claims

NEW YORK (OSV News) – A New York state appeals court has found that an insurer for the Archdiocese of New York is not required to cover costs for settling hundreds of sex abuse claims – a ruling the archdiocese has called "extremely disappointing" and "wrongly decided." On Tuesday, April 23, the First Judicial Department of the New York Supreme Court's Appellate Division overturned a lower court's December 2023 order that would have compelled a group of Chubb insurance entities – who had issued more than 30 liability policies to the archdiocese and several of its parishes, schools, and entities between 1956 and 2003 – to pay out for more than 1,500 abuse cases. Those claims against the archdiocese were brought under the state's Child Victims Act of 2019 and Adult Survivors Act of 2022, both of which opened the door to hundreds of previously time-barred suits. "If allowed to stand, the decision will permit insurance companies to evade the contractual obligations of the policies they issued," Joseph Zwilling, Director of Communications for the archdiocese, told OSV News in an April 23 statement. In recent years, insurers have pushed back on paying out for such claims, alleging that dioceses were aware of – and failed to take action against – abuse. Zwilling indicated the archdiocese will appeal, but will first "consider and determine what is the best way to further policyholders and plaintiffs interests."

# AROUND THE DIOCESE

## Retirement for Michael Shade



Joshua Schipper

On Thursday, April 25, the Catholic Community Foundation of Northeast Indiana hosted a retirement open house at The Citadel in downtown Fort Wayne for outgoing CEO Michael Shade, who greeted guests throughout the evening, including Thomas Skiba, pictured above. Shade, who assumed the top role at the foundation in 2017, passed the torch to new CEO Mackenzie Ritchie earlier this year.

## Catholic ChariTEA Promotes Mental Health for Women



Provided by Catholic Charities

The first Catholic ChariTEA was held on Sunday, April 28, at the Fort Wayne Country Club to honor woman and promote Catholic Charities' counseling services. The Mother's Day event included raffles and donations to benefit the counseling services, which provides mental health services to 13 Catholic schools, as well as therapy, group addiction counseling, and clinical navigation to all those in need throughout the diocese. Lesa Rae Vartanian, Ph.D., spoke about the strength of women in the many roles they find themselves and navigating those roles through life.

## 'Be Our Guest' at Luers Knight



Photos by Georgia Lieb

On Friday, April 26, Bishop Luers High School in Fort Wayne hosted its annual fundraiser Luers Knight. The theme for the event this year was "Be Our Guest," which tied into the school's spring musical, "Beauty and the Beast." The musical cast performed two numbers during the evening, and greeted guests, including Bishop Rhoades, in full costume.

# Catholic School Teachers Ho

BY TODAY'S CATHOLIC

Each year, local teachers and administrators are honored for their outstanding work in the academic and spiritual formation of children at Catholic schools across the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend at the annual You Can Lend a Hand Luncheons.

Sponsored by Quality Dining Inc., a hospitality group based in Mishawaka that has donated more than \$12 million dollars to local Catholic schools through its coupon sales, the luncheons were hosted on Thursday, April 18, in the Discovery Ballroom at Century Center in South Bend and on Wednesday, April 24, at the Grand Wayne Center in Fort Wayne.

"The purpose of today is to share fellowship but more importantly to celebrate the success of our Catholic schools, and in particular, the excellence displayed by our teachers and administrators," said Dan Fitzpatrick, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Quality Dining Inc., in his opening remarks in Fort Wayne. "As you well know, Catholic schools are much more than a place to learn the basics of just old-fashioned reading, writing, and arithmetic. Our schools do more – much more. Our schools are building and developing a moral foundation for our children, continually shaping, as it were, our students' minds, bodies, and souls."

In 1982, Fitzpatrick and his brother, Jim – the late Deacon Jim, who passed away last year – created the You Can Lend a Hand program to provide financial assistance to local Catholic schools. This program provided "a meaningful lifeline" for many area schools, Fitzpatrick said.

"We are here today because we are convinced of the great ideal of Catholic education," Fitzpatrick said. "We honor our Catholic school educators who serve this ideal with faith and devotion, by word and example. Why do they do so? It is because they believe in the mission of Catholic education, the mission of communicating Christ, forming our children and young people as disciples of Christ, and helping them to arrive at the fullness of Christian life. All of us are here today because we believe in this mission. We share the desire that the Gospel of Jesus will take root in the hearts and minds of our children and young people."

Along with the Christ the Teacher awards given to educators from schools across the diocese, at the luncheon



South Bend Photos provided by Quality Dining

## CHRIST THE TEACHER AWARD WINNERS

### South Bend

**Christ the King School, South Bend: Corinne Gries**  
**Corpus Christi School, South Bend: Trisha Perry**  
**Holy Cross School, South Bend: Bixis Colina**  
**Holy Family School, South Bend: Emily Farris**  
**Our Lady of Hungary School, South Bend: Marie Bubelenyi**  
**St. Adalbert School, South Bend: Kevin Joyce**  
**St. Anthony de Padua School, South Bend: Alexis Turnock**  
**St. John the Baptist School, South Bend: Ryan Brandt**  
**St. Joseph School, South Bend: Christina Venner**  
**St. Jude School, South Bend: Charlene Weber**  
**St. Matthew Cathedral School, South Bend: Kathy McMillen**  
**Queen of Peace School, Mishawaka: Lora Mulstay**  
**Mishawaka Catholic School, Mishawaka: Lauren Bonadies**  
**St. Thomas the Apostle School, Elkhart: Elizabeth Yeakey**  
**St. Vincent de Paul School, Elkhart: Not Participating**  
**St. John the Evangelist School, Goshen: Ruth Newell**  
**St. Pius X School, Granger: Katie Sater**  
**St. Michael School, Plymouth: Angela Reese**  
**Marian High School, Mishawaka: Elaine Desmarais**  
**Saint Joseph High School, South Bend: Dan Mentock**  
**St. Thomas More Academy, South Bend: Kaitlyn Brown**  
**St. Mary's School, Niles (Diocese of Kalamazoo): Lisa Bentley**  
**Our Lady of the Lake School, St. Joseph (Diocese of Kalamazoo): Dane Whipple**  
**St. Mother Theodore Guerin Administrative Assistant Award: Annie Borjas, Holy Cross School**  
**Poster Contest Winner: Abilene Navarrete, Holy Cross School**

in South Bend, Jerry and Judy Kearns were presented with the Monsignor William J. Lester Award. In Fort Wayne, the award was given to Lois Tippmann. Each of these individuals was honored for their longtime service to – and support of – Catholic education in the diocese.

In his keynote address at the luncheon in Fort Wayne, Bishop Rhoades echoed Fitzpatrick's emphasis on the mission of Catholic school and applauded those who take up this vital work.

"Our age and culture are marked by a certain confusion about the nature and purpose of education, often arising from

conflicting understandings of the human person and of life's meaning and final end," Bishop Rhoades said. "We are clear about these things, for we recognize Jesus of Nazareth, the Incarnate Son of God, as the truth of God and the truth of man. ... Our schools help our students to know, love, and follow Christ, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. To do so, we need educators, like those we have honored today, whose hearts and souls are shaped by the Spirit of Christ, educators who think with the mind of the Church, educators who look upon and love their students as part of the flock of Christ."



Superintendent David Mangel presents the Monsignor William J. Lester Award to Judy and Jerry Kearns.

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# Honored at Annual Banquets



Fort Wayne Photos by Joshua Schipper

Bishop Rhoades reminded those in attendance in Fort Wayne of St. Peter's words that call us to always be ready to give a reason for the hope within us to anyone who asks. "That's what we do in our Catholic schools," Bishop Rhoades said. "We seek to instill hope in our young people. Nourished by our own personal prayer and our participation in the sacraments, in the holy mission of Catholic education, we seek to bear witness to Christ our Hope, Christ the Teacher, Christ the Savior of the world! May those we educate go forth from our schools as hope-filled young people who have encountered Christ and are equipped to spread the Good News of His Gospel and the truth that sets us free! Thank you all for your attention and may the Holy Spirit guide and strengthen you and all who serve in or support our Catholic schools!"

## CHRIST THE TEACHER AWARD WINNERS

### Fort Wayne

- Huntington Catholic School, Huntington: Amy Ball
- St. Bernard School, Wabash: Angie Benner
- St. Therese School, Fort Wayne: Brianne Bohnstedt
- Most Precious Blood School, Fort Wayne: Andrea Buday
- St. Louis Academy, New Haven: Darlene Carey
- St. John the Baptist School, New Haven: Jay Crisp
- Bishop Luers High School, Fort Wayne: Joe Davis
- St. Vincent de Paul School, Fort Wayne: Anna Dowty
- St. Joseph School, Fort Wayne: Jessica Elward
- St. Rose of Lima School, Monroeville: Krystle Harless
- Queen of Angels School, Fort Wayne: Jill Henderson
- St. Jude School, Fort Wayne: Christine Hudson
- St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School, Fort Wayne: Jennifer Kleber
- Sacred Heart School, Warsaw: Andrea Komorowski
- St. Joseph School, Hessen Cassel, Fort Wayne: Joy Marquardt
- St. Mary of the Assumption School, Avilla: Jill Marshall
- St. Joseph School, Decatur: Michelle Miller
- St. Charles Borromeo School, Fort Wayne: Emily Reeves
- Bishop Dwenger High School, Fort Wayne: Theresa Roberts
- Our Lady of Good Hope School, Fort Wayne: Elizabeth Sorg
- St. John the Baptist School, Fort Wayne: Laura Sturm
- St. Aloysius School, Yoder: Dawn Wyss
- St. Joseph School, Garrett: Bradley Yarnall
- St. Mother Theodore Guerin Administrative Assistant Award: Beatrice Royal, Our Lady of Good Hope School



Bishop Rhoades presents the Monsignor William J. Lester Award to Lois Tippmann.



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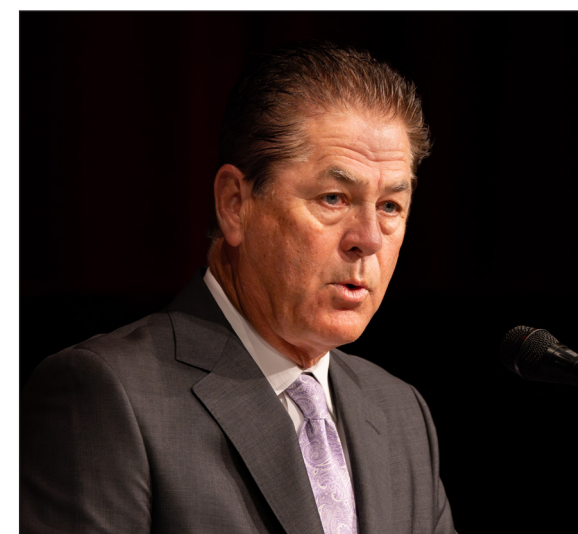
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Superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, David Mangel, introduces the Christ the Teacher honorees.



Dan Fitzpatrick, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Quality Dining Inc., shares his opening remarks in Fort Wayne.

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# Holy Cross Valedictorian's Journey Guided by Faith

BY LISA KOCHANOWSKI

**C**armen Stephanie Nuñez of South Bend has put her Catholic faith and family at the forefront of her life choices. Graduating from St. Adalbert Catholic Grade School and Saint Joseph High School, the Holy Cross College senior has been named the valedictorian for the class of 2024.

"To be valedictorian is a great honor for my parents, for those who are also first-generation Latinos, and it is



CARMEN STEPHANIE NUÑEZ

also an opportunity for me to give glory to God for everything He has given me," Nuñez told Today's Catholic. "School is not easy, but so are many things in life. As a freshman, I never would have imagined myself having the opportunity and willingness to speak in front of so many people."

Recipient of the Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades Scholarship at Holy Cross, she comes from a family of six. Her older sister, Merari, graduated from Saint Mary's College in 2022 and will be graduating from the Echo Program at the University of Notre Dame this year. Her sister Aurora is a freshman at Holy Cross College, and her brother, Jesus, is in sixth grade at Holy Family School in South Bend.

"As Mexican immigrants, my parents did not have an opportunity to pursue a college education, but it is a value that they've instilled in us," Nuñez said. The family is active in the Catholic faith, as her parents are members of St. Adalbert and St. Casimir parishes. "Growing up, the church community was like a second family," she said.

Nuñez is majoring in visual arts with a concentration in the studio art track. She has a minor in elementary education.

"My decision to study art was made in my junior year of high school when I made the decision to pursue art instead of other AP classes I was recommended to take," Nuñez

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said. "For me, art was what I enjoyed the most and allowed me to put all my thoughts, values, faith, and culture together into a cohesive whole. I was not super outgoing or social in high school, and many times I doubted if Saint Joe was a fit for me coming from an under-represented background, but I was able to gain confidence in my voice through my work and under the instruction of the art department at Saint Joe. Art was also a way to put everything I was learning in all aspects of my life together in a multi-disciplinary approach," Nuñez said.

During her freshman year of college, she took 20 credit hours per semester.

"Looking back at it now, I don't know how I survived," she said. "My plan was to explore all my interests and knock out many of the core or prerequisite courses. The field of elementary education was one of the interests I investigated and even considered double majoring in education and art, which I later found out was not possible with the intensity of the education program. I wanted to continue pursuing education as a minor because I imagined myself teaching in the future, and having that background can only be beneficial," Nuñez said.

Throughout her personal and scholastic journey, Nuñez said she has been influenced by many people.

"My parents will always be my biggest influence in my academic journey. They supported me in school and funded my education through grade and high school. My older sister was also a great influence for me. She was always a step ahead preparing me for school and helping me transition into high school and college," Nuñez said. "I am also grateful for my teachers at St. Adalbert and Saint Joe who pushed me to grow and made

learning enjoyable, and I am also thankful for my friends and classmates who made going to school engaging."

In spite of the emphasis she placed on her academics at Holy Cross, Nuñez keeps active on campus and in the local community.

"I am a Visual Arts Club Board Member, a member of the First-Gen Club, and a member of the Saints for Life Club," she said. "Additionally, I work various jobs around campus, including in the President's Office as a student associate, in the dining hall as a student worker, and at the Pfeil Center gym at the front desk," Nuñez said. She also painted a mural in the St. Adalbert Parish office basement and was part of a two-person exhibition at South Bend Brew Werks in the month of February.

She has had many memorable moments but pointed to one in particular as having a profound effect on her life.

"Going on pilgrimage to Mount Sinai in Egypt was one of the most impactful experiences," she said. "I saw an abundance of stars in the sky and was able to trust in God's plan for my life like Abraham in the Bible did. It was such a beautiful, surreal experience. Since then, I have begun to see God's presence in my life."

Her plans for the future are not set, but she hopes to get accepted into a Master of Fine Arts program and has applied to University of Notre Dame and Claremont Graduate University.

"I was also encouraged to apply last-minute to the ACE Teaching Fellows program at ND, and I would be honored to follow that path if it is God's will for me. I have had many teachers who have graduated from the ACE program who have been an influential part of my education," Nuñez said. "I am open to God's will for me in the steps to come."



Photos by Cindy Black

## 'Popes on a Rope' Offers Visual Lesson on Church History

BY CINDY BLACK

A project that Father Tom Shoemaker calls "low tech" has been making a big impact on his audiences across the diocese for decades.

"It's quite simple – just string, index cards, a marker, scissors, and staples," Father Shoemaker told the audience of around 130 people who came to his latest "Popes on a Rope" talk, which was held on Tuesday, April 23, at the Monsignor Kuzmich Life Center on the campus of St. Vincent de Paul Church in Fort Wayne. The lesson explores Church history through the unbroken chain of the successors of St. Peter, with each of the 266 popes – from Pope Peter to Pope Francis – represented on a rope that spans more than 60 feet in length.

Twenty-five years ago, when Father Shoemaker came up with this visual aid to teach Church History to fourth graders, he had no idea he would receive so many requests to present it to adults across the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. According to Father Shoemaker, the key to its success is that people find it easier to grasp how ancient the Catholic Church is by seeing the timeline rather than just hearing random dates.

"It's interesting to see when the U.S. was born in comparison," Father Shoemaker said. "We're a baby country when you see the long history of Christianity."

What surprises people the most is just how long the rope is. Events that seem so long ago can be fairly modern developments in the life of the Church.

The printing press doesn't come along until about 1450, which is way closer to Pope Francis on the timeline than to



Father Tom Shoemaker, Pastor of St. Charles Borromeo Church in Fort Wayne, explains Church history as the crowd looks on during his "Popes on a Rope," in which he has each name of the 266 popes – from Peter to Francis – written on an index card that is attached to rope. His latest talk was held at St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Fort Wayne on Tuesday, April 23.

St. Peter. Before the invention of the printing press, Father Shoemaker said, even churches did not have complete Bibles because they took a lifetime to pen. Father Shoemaker added that without individuals having access to a Bible, Martin Luther's idea of *sola scriptura* – the belief held by many Protestant churches that the Bible is the sole authoritative source for the Christian faith and its practice – is unreasonable.

Even though the list of popes include holy saints and scandalous sinners, having a clear leader has been necessary to have clearly defined doctrines, said Father Shoemaker, Pastor of St. Charles Borromeo Church in Fort Wayne.

"With more than a billion Catholics, there needs to be someone in charge," Father Shoemaker said. "Think of large corporations' need for a CEO, or countries' need for a president."

Throughout the engaging journey through history, Father Shoemaker repeated, "As Catholics, we ought to know this." For example, Catholics need to know that the Mass is older than the New

Testament. Those who penned what became the Gospels were gathering for the Sunday liturgy from the beginning.

Other notable facts in the presentation included the messy connection between the Church and state, including the Roman Emperor Constantine, who made the persecution of Christians illegal in the fourth century; the split between the churches of the East and West in 1,054 – halfway through timeline; and why most popes have been Italian (something that has changed given advancements in communication and transportation).

Stephan Klingler, who came into the Church this past Easter, told Today's Catholic that she was impacted by the fact that "sponsors" date back to the beginning of the Church when Christians were being hunted and persecuted. Those seeking baptism needed someone to vouch for them that they were truly converted and not just trying to persecute the underground Body of Christ.

Jim and Linda Fraley, who have been devout Christians throughout their 50 years of marriage, are also new Catholics. Linda remarked: "Again and again, I come back to this deep, rich texture of the Catholic faith. During [OCIA], I began reading the Catechism and found such deep wisdom connected to holy Scripture, [and] now the rich tradition of the Church led by 266 popes without interruption, consistent and enduring over centuries. Everyone should know this; it is the story of the love and protection Christ has given to His bride."



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## To Meet Jesus in Heaven, We Must Meet Him Now

It's that time of year when everything seems to be in transition. The weather is moving from spring into summer. The flowers and trees are back to life. Graduations are coming, and this spring, two new priests and a deacon will be ordained for our diocese. Naturally, it gives us an opportunity to dream a little – to step back and imagine what the future holds. And while none of us knows exactly what is in store for the adventures that lie ahead, we do know the One who holds the future in His hands.

St. Philip Neri had a little phrase he used frequently throughout his ministry: “*e poi!*” – Italian for “and then!” He would use this phrase especially when talking with young people who were seeking to move up in the world. Whether it was a businessperson seeking the next venture or investment or members of the clergy seeking higher ecclesiastical offices, Philip was fond of asking each of them, “*e poi!*” Inevitably, they would all come to the same conclusion: We all will eventually come to the end of our earthly journey. We all have an expiration date, so to speak. In the end, there are only two options: heaven or hell.

While hope springs anew each year, Philip's admonition gives us an opportunity to place our upcoming adventures on an eternal horizon. After graduation, we may find ourselves in

a new job or at a new level of education – and then? Perhaps, we find ourselves on the other end of the spectrum looking forward to retirement – and then?

Whatever the situation, we can miss much of the joy hidden in our lives if we keep looking forward to the very next thing to come. Certainly, there is a hope that should come with looking toward the future. But it should never overshadow the encounter with the living God who wants to meet us in the current moment.

When God first reveals His name to Moses in Exodus 3:14, He calls Himself “I AM WHO AM.” In other words, God reveals Himself to be the One whose essence is His existence. He is Being itself. Properly, therefore, the place where we encounter God is not so much in the future or in the past; rather, it is in the present moment.

In part, this is the reality of the sacraments. They are efficacious signs of grace for the present moment. They actually dispense divine life in the very moments in which they are celebrated. The same is true in every celebration of Mass. Mass is not simply a looking back at what Jesus did in history, nor is it only looking forward to His glorious return; rather, it is the summation of all of Christ's saving work poured out upon us in the present moment.

As our schools let out for summer and the temperatures



### TWO CRACKED RIBS

FATHER BRIAN ISENBARGER

(hopefully) rise, perhaps we can take the opportunity to slow down and encounter Jesus exactly where He is at: in the present moment. Maybe this summer is the perfect time to mix in daily Mass during the week. Maybe it's time to finally sign up for that Holy Hour of Eucharistic adoration at your local parish that you've been meaning to do. Or, perhaps, this summer gives you the opportunity to go on a retreat to simply be with the Lord in solitude.

Whatever the case, meeting Jesus today is the best way to prepare to meet Him in eternity. In fact, the same Jesus present in the Eucharist is the same One who is already reigning in glory. The same One who will judge us at the moment of our death is the same One who now sits in the tribunal of mercy in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. To look at Jesus now is to look into heaven.

No “*e poi!*” can top that!

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

## Stop Scrolling, Begin Creating: A Wake-Up Call for Catholics

The latest admonition comes from a 60-year-old social psychologist whose book hit the No. 1 spot on The New York Times' hardcover nonfiction best-seller list.

Using a smartphone threatens a child's mental well-being, Jonathan Haidt believes, and he makes the case in his book “The Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood Is Using an Epidemic of Mental Illness.” His advice: No smartphones before high school, no social media before age 16.

Because social-media platforms design “a firehose of addictive content” that prods kids to forgo the social for the solitary, Haidt writes, they have “rewired childhood and changed human development on an almost unimaginable scale.”

Adults are also addicted, which means we, too, must take a long, hard look in the mirror.

I speak from experience. I dropped my iPhone on Thanksgiving, and it landed with an ominous thud. The blinking neon in the upper-right corner looked like blood at a crime scene.

My phone was mostly dead. Periodically, I could coax it back to life with an unrepeatable series of taps and a certain angle on the charger,



### TWENTY SOMETHING

CHRISTINA CAPECCHI

but it never lasted. I limped along in this state for more than a month as I ensured it was properly backed up on iCloud.

Meanwhile, I learned to live without a smartphone.

Being excused from text messaging brought surprising relief. I missed other functions of my phone: the flashlight, the alarm, the navigation. (I borrowed my parents' GPS a few times. What a dandy!)

But the biggest void was the lack of aimless online scrolling. When I climbed into bed at night, I stared at the ceiling. My mind went blank. And though the quiet masqueraded as boredom, I soon recognized it for what it was: a safe space.

I learned to accept the emptiness, trusting it to renew me, to lead me down interesting new paths. This is what it feels like to clear your mind! This is how you evaluate your day and talk to God and

CAPECCHI, page 13

## Loving God Means Following His Commandments



### THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

MONSIGNOR OWEN F. CAMPION

### Sixth Sunday of Easter

The Acts of the Apostles once more provides an Easter season liturgy with its first reading.

In this reading, Peter goes to the house of Cornelius, who attempts to pay homage to Peter. Peter stops him, protesting that he is only human. Peter is not God, but he obviously represents Christ. The Lord had commissioned him. The Holy Spirit has empowered him.

Cornelius is a gentile. His name suggests that he may have been a Roman. Likely, the relatives and guests of Cornelius present in the house were gentiles. Probably some or many were Romans.

For devout, loyal Jews, if anything was worse than being a gentile, and of pagan stock, it was being a Roman. After all, Jews at the time were living under the crushing heel of Rome. They despised representatives of the Roman occupation.

Yet, Peter went into the home of Cornelius. The gentiles present understood what he was saying. They became part of the Christian community, or the Church. They became brothers and sisters of Christ, heirs to eternal life.

Through Peter, God reached out to gentiles, even though their backgrounds were in paganism and probably in sin.

The First Epistle of John is the source of the second reading. This epistle calls upon followers of Jesus to love one another. It states that God is love. God's love for humanity was revealed in the gift of Jesus, and in the salvation achieved by Jesus for all who turn to God.

St. John's majestic, compelling Gospel furnishes the last

reading. It is a reservoir of theology, presented in the most eloquent language.

This reading's message is frank and direct. If anyone truly loves God, then this person will keep the Commandments. By observing the Commandments, people live in God's love. They imitate Christ. Living in God's love produces joy. It creates union with God in Christ.

As the reading concludes, Jesus declares that no love exceeds the love that impels a person to surrender life itself so that a friend may live. “You are my friends,” Jesus says.

In the sequence of John's Gospel, this passage is not post-Resurrection. The crucifixion looms ahead. Jesus awaits Good Friday. For us, on Good Friday, Jesus willingly submitted to death on the cross. He chose to die for us, that we might live and live eternally. He loved us with a perfectly unselfish love.

Then, as the reading closes, Jesus instructs us “to love one another.”

### Reflection

The second reading makes quite clear the theological fact that that God is love. What does this mean? It means that God is alive, active, and reaching to us, excluding no one. So, God forgives, God empowers, God transforms – all products of divine love.

God is our Father, and therefore humans should resemble God, just as children bear the genetic imprint of natural parents.

When Christians are called to love one another, they are asked to be what they should be if sin did not distort circumstances. Created by God, redeemed by God, Christians properly should mirror God.

We are humans. This is our species, and as humans, we are God's children. We should resemble God, and we humans can resemble God, in all the goodness implied, because we can love God and love one another.

Love is much more than warm-heartedness or kind

gestures, more than imprecise, half-hearted good intentions. The Lord explained in the Gospel reading. It is keeping the Commandments. By obeying the Commandments, we acknowledge and show our love for God.

Where is the strength to keep the Commandments?

Christ is in the Church, offering us the sacraments and God's word, to show us the way and give us strength.

### READINGS

**Sunday:** Acts 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48; Psalms 98:1-4; 1 John 4:7-10; John 15:9-17

**Monday:** Acts 16:11-15; Psalms 149:1b-6a, 9b; John 15:26-16:4a

**Tuesday:** Acts 16:22-34; Psalms 138:1-3, 7c-8; John 16:5-11

**Wednesday:** Acts 17:15, 22-18:1; Psalms 148:1-2, 11-14; John 16:12-15

**Thursday:** Acts 18:1-8; Psalms 98:1-4; John 16:16-20

**Friday:** Acts 18:9-18; Psalms 47:2-7; John 16:20-23a

**Saturday:** Acts 18:23-28; Psalms 47:2-3, 8-10; John 16:23b-28

# No, the Resurrection is Not a Wonderful Symbol of Hope

Last Epiphany, my wife and I had our annual debate about whether to take down the Christmas tree. She has a weird dislike of finding pine needles on the floor. I don't understand it.

She invokes the tradition of Christmas lasting through Epiphany. I argue that grace overflows the traditional rules, and that keeping up the Christmas tree beautifully symbolizes that truth, and that even as it loses its needles the lights still shine, which is a beautiful symbol of Christ living in us and shining through us even in our wretchedness.

You will be shocked and saddened to hear that she did not accept either argument.

I thought about this when I came across some reflections and sermons on Easter that spoke of the events reported in the Gospels as symbols of hope and happiness. These symbols seem to have moved the preachers, but they didn't move me.

I first heard this kind of thing in my youth in churches where pastors and people had given up on dogmatic Christianity but not on Christian spiritual experience. I then ran into it a lot in my Episcopalian days, and then, disconcertingly, though for a different reason, after we entered the Church.

Some of them believed that the dead Jesus came alive again, others didn't seem to, but they all treated the Resurrection less as a historical reality than as a symbol that pointed to what we might call existential hopes. They spoke of the Resurrection as a wonderful symbol of new life (just like spring flowers), of hope for better days, of the need to persevere under trial, of God's love for us.

The ones who didn't believe Jesus left the tomb that Easter morning had to say something like this or they wouldn't have had an Easter sermon. For them, the symbol gives the story what value it has.

The ones who did believe in the Resurrection felt, I think, that they had to say something. They effectively, though unintentionally, treated the event as a symbol by focusing on what they think it means and not what it is. (My suggestion to these priests would be to take their insights from the Catholic Tradition and testify to what the Resurrection means to them.)

Good symbols affect us because they point us to realities in a way that makes the realities feel more real. They do this in a way that mere description doesn't. They're not like road signs that point you to the exit but more like the car that brings you home.

But — and here's what too many pastors forget — we have to believe in the realities for the symbols to move us. I can't see why some people find symbols of unreality so compelling. The minister says that the dead guy stayed dead, but we have this story about Him suddenly appearing to His friends and even having dinner with them, and of course He's still dead, but doesn't that story make everything OK?

No, it doesn't. We see this a lot in the way some people try to avoid the scandalous reality of the Eucharist. Even some Catholic priests speak of it as an act of the community and not as an encounter with the living God. They may well believe the Church's teaching, but they don't preach as if they do.

The Eucharist is the same sort of event as the Resurrection: Jesus really



## LIFE IN THE WORLD

DAVID MILLS

shows up. Not as a symbol, but as Himself.

There's a famous story about Flannery O'Connor, when young and unknown, at a literary dinner with the major writer Mary McCarthy. "She departed the Church at the age of 15 and is a Big Intellectual," O'Connor wrote in a letter to a friend some years later.

O'Connor had been quiet all evening, until in the early hours the group began talking about the Eucharist, "which I, being the Catholic, was obviously supposed to defend." McCarthy said that as a child she thought of the host "as the Holy Ghost, He being the 'most portable' person of the Trinity; now she thought of it as a symbol and implied that it was a pretty good one."

That forced O'Connor to speak. "I then said, in a very shaky voice, 'Well, if it's a symbol, to hell with it.' That was all the defense I was capable of, but I realize now that this is all I will ever be able to say about it, outside of a story, except that it is the center of existence for me; all the rest is expendable."

Jesus Christ is risen today: That changes the world. Equating the story of Jesus' resurrection to spring flowers? That does not.

David Mills is a columnist for OSV News. He writes from Pennsylvania.

experimenting with rhyme. I'm doodling with a pencil. And I created a folder on my desktop titled "Imagination File" for fresh ideas untethered to paychecks or deadlines.

If Christians are called to imitate the Creator, then we are called to create. This means we must guard our sense of wonder, filling up on beauty like heaping bouquets of lilacs. We must open our eyes and use our hands, making something out of nothing — with words, with a paintbrush, with a half-empty fridge.

Pope St. John Paul II issued this summons in his 1999 letter to artists, writing, "You are invited to use your creative intuition to enter into the heart of the mystery of the Incarnate God and at the same time into the mystery of man."

That's as epic as it gets. But it can't happen if you're busy watching TikTok.

Earlier this spring, I spotted the perfect bench in Lower Manhattan's Washington Square Park. It was beneath a cherry-blossom tree in full bloom. I sat down and gazed upward, absorbing the outstretched pink. Then I noticed the woman beside me, a 60-something clasping a Danielle Steel paperback and beaming. We smiled and congratulated each other on our good fortune at finding the premiere seat in the house and our good sense to embrace it.

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

### CAPECCHI, from page 12

come up with ideas!

The black space held infinite potential.

I had been freed from an onslaught of videos, images and text, and I was returning to the driver's seat. Shouldn't I be the one who gets to decide what I think about? Am I willing to let their algorithm become my agenda?

Mostly I thought about the imagination. Do I want to create or consume? So often we have to pick one. Though I'm a writer by trade with a host of creative interests, I'd been defaulting to consumption day after day, shackled to a small glowing screen.

Now I'm writing fiction, which feels like swinging a bat with my left hand. I'm

## SCRIPTURE SEARCH®

Gospel for May 5, 2024

John 15: 9-17

Following is a word search based on the Gospel reading for the Sixth Sunday of Easter, Cycle B: Complete love. The words can be found in all directions in the puzzle.

THE FATHER	LOVED ME	LOVED YOU
MY LOVE	YOU KEEP	COMPLETE
ANOTHER	NO ONE	GREATER
LAY DOWN	FRIENDS	LONGER
MASTER	DOING	EVERYTHING
HEARD	I CHOSE YOU	TO GO
BEAR FRUIT	REMAIN	MY NAME

### FRUIT THAT LASTS

```

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

## EUGENE DE MAZENOD

FEAST MAY 21  
1782-1861



Eugene and his family fled France during the French Revolution, staying in Italy for 11 years. When he returned and saw the disastrous state of the French church, he felt called to the priesthood and was ordained in 1811. After ministering to the neediest in Aix-en-Provence, in 1816 he founded the Missionary Society of Provence, which later became the Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate. In addition to being the order's superior general, in 1837 he succeeded his uncle as bishop of Marseilles, where he was a reformer and built new churches for the growing immigrant population. A towering figure in the French church, he was canonized in 1995. Oblates today serve in nearly 70 countries worldwide.

# Pope Implores Young People to 'Walk Together with Others'

BY CAROL GLATZ

VENICE, Italy (CNS) – Visiting a lagoon of tiny islands, canals, and narrow walkways for one day, Pope Francis moved around Venice by boat, bridge, and electric golf cart.

The pope's early morning touchdown by helicopter from Rome on Sunday, April 28, brought him first to a women's prison, then by wooden motorboat to the Basilica of St. Mary of Health, a 17th-century church built to honor Mary, invoking her protection and intercession to end a devastating plague that killed nearly one-third of the population in the 1630s.

About 1,500 young people were in front of the basilica singing and cheering to greet the pope as he arrived waving from the boat decorated with a small Vatican flag. He took his place on a chair near the steps looking out onto the turquoise-blue water.

"Arise and go!" he told them. "Open your heart to God, thank Him, and embrace the beauty that you are; fall in love with your life."

"Walk together with others, color the world with your creativity, and paint the streets of life with the Gospel," he said.

Young people must resist inertia and discouragement,

he said, "because we are made for heaven." Tell God, "Here I am!" and recognize and welcome the gift of being made "precious and irreplaceable."

No one is ugly, and everyone carries a priceless treasure inside that is meant to be shared with others, he said. "This is not self-esteem, it is reality! Recognizing this is the first step we should take in the morning when we wake up: get out of bed and accept yourself as a gift."

"Remember that, for God, you are not a digital profile," he said, but "a child of heaven."

But, just like Venice, the pope said, people are beautiful and fragile at the same time. Take care of these fragilities and recognize that God always extends a hand, not to blame or punish, but to heal and lift people back up.

Never become isolated, even when one's friends are stuck at home behind screens and video games, he told the young people.

This is not easy, he said, but take advice from Venetian wisdom that says one can only go far by consistently and steadily rowing.

It is tiring, he said, especially when one must go against the tide, but perseverance brings rewards, and it is better done together and with God's



CNS photo/Lola Gomez

Pope Francis greets people as he leaves St. Mark's Square in Venice in a golf cart during his visit on Sunday, April 28.

guidance.

More than 10,000 people packed St. Mark's Square for Mass and to pray the *Regina Coeli*. In his homily, the pope said Jesus' metaphor of being the grapevine while believers are the branches "expresses God's loving care for us; it also warns us that if we sever this connection with the Lord, we cannot produce fruits of good life and risk becoming dry branches, which will be cast aside."

"This is what matters: to

remain in the Lord, to dwell in Him," which does not mean standing still or being passive. "Indeed, it invites us to move, because to remain in the Lord means to grow in relationship with Him."

"As we gaze upon this city of Venice today, we admire its enchanting beauty. Yet, we are also concerned about the many issues that threaten it: climate change, which impacts the waters of the lagoon and the land," he said.

After Mass and the *Regina Coeli*, the pope greeted the faithful in the square and went into St. Mark's Basilica to venerate the relics of St. Mark the Evangelist. He also greeted local volunteers who assisted with the visit and then returned to Rome by helicopter.

Before the Mass, Pope Francis visited some 80 detainees, staff, and volunteers of the Giudecca women's prison in Venice, whom he told he wanted to meet them first on his one-day visit to the city, adding, "You have a special place in my heart."

Rather than being a stiff, formal affair, he said, he wanted their moment together to be a chance to "give each other time, prayer, closeness and fraternal affection."

"Today we will all leave this courtyard richer – perhaps the one who will leave richer will be me – and the good we will exchange will be precious," said the pope, who has visited more than a dozen prisons during his 11-year pontificate.

Pope Francis urged the women to be brave, never to give up, and always look to the future with hope. "I like to think of hope as an anchor that is anchored in the future, and we have the rope in our hands, and we go forward with the rope anchored in the future."

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# WHAT'S HAPPENING?

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

### O Beautiful Mother

FORT WAYNE – Join the Ecce Young Adult Choir and Father Ryan Timossi on Saturday, May 11, from 1-2:15 p.m. at the outdoor Marian grotto of Catholic Cemetery, 3500 Lake Ave., for the Rosary, prayers, and Marian hymns to honor the Blessed Mother and to pray for all mothers, living and deceased. Bring blankets and chairs for sitting on the lawn, and you may bring flowers to place before the statue of Our Lady. There will be parking near the grotto for the handicapped. In case of rain, the event will be held in the Resurrection Mausoleum on site. Contact Jessica Schuster [jessica.schuster.155@gmail.com](mailto:jessica.schuster.155@gmail.com) for information.

### K of C Blood Drive in Garrett

GARRETT – Knights of Columbus Council 1790 is sponsoring a Red Cross Blood Drive on Tuesday, May 7, at St. Joseph Church, 300 W. Houston St. Appointments are available from 1-6 p.m. To schedule an appointment, visit [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org) and enter code kofc1790. You can also call 1-800-733-2767.

### Christ Child Society Diaper Drop

MISHAWAKA – The Christ Child Society wants to help keep babies dry by donating diapers at the Sixth annual Diaper Drop on Wednesday, May 8, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Christ Child Society Clothing Center, 2366 Miracle Lane, located in the Town and Country Shopping Center. All diapers will be shared with local partner agencies who serve children. Just drive up and drop off your donation. Contact Lisa Smessaert at 574-288-6028 or [info@christchildsb.org](mailto:info@christchildsb.org) for more information.

### Called and Gifted Workshop

SOUTH BEND – The Called and Gifted Discernment Process is designed to help Christians discern the presence of charisms in their lives. Charisms, or spiritual gifts, are special abilities given to all Christians by the Holy Spirit to give them power both to represent Christ and to be a channel of God's goodness for people. Join St. Therèse, Little Flower Parish, 54191 Ironwood Rd., for a Pentecost Called and Gifted Workshop on Friday, May 17, from 7-9 p.m.,

and Saturday, May 18, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Breakfast and lunch are included. Discounted rates are available for young adults and parishioners. Contact Brenda McDonald at 574-272-7070 or [brenda@littleflowerchurch.org](mailto:brenda@littleflowerchurch.org) for more information.

### Diaconate Ordination

SOUTH BEND – With praise and thanksgiving to almighty God, the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend announces the ordination of Andrew Daniel Barnes to the Sacred Order of Deacon on Saturday, May 18, at 11 a.m. at St. Matthew Cathedral, 1701 Miami St., South Bend.

### Priesthood Ordination

FORT WAYNE – With praise and thanksgiving to almighty God, the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend announces the ordination of Oscar Duarte and Caleb Kruse to the Sacred Priesthood of Jesus Christ on Saturday, June 1, at 11 a.m. at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, 1105 S. Calhoun St., Fort Wayne.

## REST IN PEACE

**Fort Wayne**  
Phyllis Hamrick, 81,  
St. Vincent de Paul

Carol Weaver, 80,  
St. Pius X

Roger L. Mathia, Sr.,  
94, Sacred Heart of  
Jesus

**Goshen**  
Patricia McCourt,  
79, St. John the  
Evangelist

**Huntington**  
Michael J. Regan, 63,  
St. Mary

Richard Kasznia, 76,  
St. Adalbert

**Granger**  
Cindy Doyle, 75,  
St. Pius X

**Mishawaka**  
Charles K. Redman,  
90, St. Monica

Richard Kil, 93,  
St. Jude

Peggy Frick, 85,  
St. Pius X

**New Haven**  
Michael T. Farina, 86,  
St. John the Baptist

**Wabash**  
Herbert James  
Anderson, 92,  
St. Bernard

Jack Mead, 82,  
St. Pius X

**South Bend**  
Pasquale Rulli, 92,  
Holy Cross

David McKernan, 82,  
St. Bernard

Send obituaries to [obituaries@diocesefwsb.org](mailto:obituaries@diocesefwsb.org).

### Courage Chapter to meet in Fort Wayne

FORT WAYNE – The Fort Wayne Chapter of Courage – a ministry outreach for people with same-sex attraction – announces its May meeting for Friday, May 10, at 6:30 p.m. in

the lower level (Garden Level) of the Archbishop Noll Catholic Center, 915 S. Clinton St. Free parking is available in the garage. Contact Father William Kummer at 260-639-3748 for information.

## First Saturday Devotion

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[PatronessOfAmerica.org](http://PatronessOfAmerica.org)

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2021 John Taylor, Louisville, KY  
2019 Barry Thorsby, Montrose, MI  
2018 Jackie Kirby, Louisville, KY  
2017 Greg Huber, Borden, IN  
2016 Richard Bergman, Marathon, WI

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# Holy Cross Jubilarians Celebrate Bringing Hope to Many

BY LISA KOCHANOWSKI

The sun's rays pierced through the stained-glass windows of the Basilica of the Sacred Heart on the campus of the University of Notre Dame on Saturday, April 27, illuminating the Midwest Province of the Brothers of Holy Cross jubilarians. It was a moment of joy, thanksgiving, prayer, and love as the men joined others within the Congregation to celebrate a lifetime of dedication to making God known, loved, and served to all they encounter.

Officiated by Holy Cross Father Thomas Zurcher, Brother Robert Mosher, celebrated 75 years, Brothers Douglas Roach and Thomas Rock commemorated 70 years, Brothers Francis Boylan, David Martin, Donald Morrison, Peter Nault, and Carlos Parrilla observed 60 years, and Brother Michael Amakyi was honored for his 40 years with the Congregation.

"Brother Kent, Provincial Superior, jubilarians, families, friends, we're here to celebrate ... the ruby jubilee of 40 years for Brother Michael, the diamond jubilee of 60 years for Brother Douglas and Brother Thomas, and a bigger diamond, the 75th jubilee of Brother Robert," Father Zurcher said at the beginning of his homily. "These precious jewels, that precious medal, describe for us the beautiful lives, the sacred lives of these men. As youngsters, years ago, they came before the altar to profess the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience in the Congregation of Holy Cross. Now, as elders of the community, they are dear to us, tested and found to be true holy brothers. Like you, they inspire me. We applaud them, we thank them, and we steer them ever forward and onward."



Photos by Lisa Kochanowski

Jubilarians of the Midwest Province of the Brothers of Holy Cross are celebrated during a special Mass at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart on the campus of the University of Notre Dame on Saturday, April 27. Officiated by Holy Cross Father Thomas Zurcher, the brothers performed a renewal of vows with Brother Kenneth Haders, the Provincial of the Midwest Province. Pictured from left to right are Brothers Robert Mosher, Thomas Rock, Douglas Roach, Donald Morrison, David Martin, Carlos Parrilla, and Michael Amakyi.

Father Zurcher talked about how wonderful the moment and celebration of a jubilee is to the people, noting that Pope Francis has recently declared the year 2025 as a jubilee year for pilgrims of hope for a discouraged world that weeps for hope, something the Holy Cross Congregation brings to the community.

"As we heard in the first reading from Mass today, Isaiah nailed it," Father Zurcher noted. "He aptly said what can be applied to these jubilarians, all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed. Father Jacques-François Dujarié initiated this



Brother Douglas Roach prays the universal prayer during the Midwest Province of the Brothers of Holy Cross jubilee Mass at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart on the campus of the University of Notre Dame.

for us, creating the Brothers of St. Joseph. He encouraged them as he encourages us now with tender and thoughtful words. He said, with a little goodwill you will succeed in doing things well and becoming good and holy. But you must renew your courage. Never look back. Always walk ahead until you are in possession of the glory of God. Do you ever wonder how old Father Dujarié was when he said, 'never look back'? ... For us third-agers,

meaning no longer youngsters but elders, looking back comes easily, almost automatically. Not looking back seems practically impossible."

Father Zurcher noted how the men at the altar had various journeys. Some organized banquets, some were teachers in high school (teaching the grandchildren of their peers), some oversaw business offices in parishes and schools, directed Hispanic ministry, or worked at the diocesan level as

the director of stewardship.

"There's only one problem with looking back," Father Zurcher continued. "It's one little word: 'was.' We come to understand ourselves as 'was-ies.' Was-ies have a hard time celebrating the present moment, and an even more difficult time moving into the future. Father Dujarié was right: Never look back, just be yourself. Be a brother. In his letter *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis wrote to the people of the world, and especially to us, about fraternity, being brothers, and being sisters. He spoke about *benevolentia*, an attitude that wills the good for others, an inclination toward all that is fine and excellent, and a desire to fill the lives of others with what is beautiful, sublime, and edified. And then he wrote, 'A miracle of a kind person appears.' They are with us here today. Those kind people put aside their anxieties in order to pay attention, to give a smile, to say a word that stimulates, to enable a space for listening in the midst of so much indifference," said Father Zurcher.

Pope Francis wrote that life exists where there is bonding, communion, and fraternity, Father Zurcher said, adding that Father Dujarié said to never look back, but he also said to stir up your courage and always walk forward.

"Today, we pray that these brothers may continue to do that," Father Zurcher said. "In their presence, not to be rude, we can confirm that St. Paul was correct when he said that God calls the foolish, the weak, the lowly people in order that all may know that the source of our sanctification, our brotherhood, and our sisterhood is Jesus Christ. In this jubilee, we are invited into the future – a future that we all long for at the deepest level of our being, and will only get there by leaving behind our fears. In doing so, in our vulnerability as brothers and sisters, the words of Jesus will become our reality. Father, the glory that you have loved them even as you have loved me. Father, the glory that you have loved them even as you have loved me. You are our brothers."

During the ceremony, the jubilarians were invited by the Provincial of the Midwest Province, Brother Kenneth Haders, to renew their vows. Jubilarians also had the opportunity to actively participate in the ceremony as readers. The chalice and paten used for the liturgy were presented to Holy Cross Father Edward F. Sorin, the first President of the University of Notre Dame du Lac, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of his ordination as a priest on August 15, 1888.



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