Every family needs a father.” In his plainspoken way, Pope Francis summed up the Church’s teaching on fatherhood in five simple words spoken during one of a series of catechetical talks he gave on the family in 2015.

He expounded on that one sentence, of course, reflecting on a verse from Proverbs that beautifully states the desire of all fathers: “My son, if your heart is wise, my heart also will rejoice; and my inmost being will exult, when your lips speak what is right” (23:15–16). Of this verse, Pope Francis said, “Nothing could better express the pride and emotion a father feels when he understands that he has handed down to his child what really matters in life – that is, a wise heart.”

Fatherhood in all its forms – including biological fathers, adopted fathers, grandfathers, godfathers, spiritual fathers, and more – is a vocation meant to mirror the love of God the Father. “That he be close to his wife, to share everything, joy and sorrow, hope and hardship,” Pope Francis said. “And that he be close to his children as they grow: when they play and when they strive, when they are carefree and when they are distressed, when they are talkative and when they are silent, when they are daring and when they are afraid, when they take a wrong step and when they find their path again.”

As we celebrate Father’s Day this year, let us be reminded to serve our families – like God, but also like St. Joseph. “Each of us can discover in Joseph – the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet, and hidden presence – an intercessor, a support, and a guide in times of trouble,” Pope Francis wrote in Patris Corde, his 2020 apostolic letter marking the Year of St. Joseph. The pope noted that Joseph “found happiness not in mere self-sacrifice but in self-gift. In him,” Pope Francis continued, “we never see frustration but only trust. His patient silence was the prelude to concrete expressions of trust. Our world today needs fathers.”

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Fathers Called to Mirror Love of God the Father

BY SCOTT WARDEN

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BY SCOTT WARDEN

Caleb Kruse, Oscar Duarte Say ‘Yes’ to the Priesthood

BY KASIA BALSBAUGH

On Saturday, June 1, Bishop Rhoades ordained two men – Father Oscar Duarte and Father Caleb Kruse – to the priesthood for the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.

The ordinations took place at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Wayne. Parents of both priests were in attendance, as well as siblings, extended family, and friends. Father Duarte’s grandmothers were watching the livestream from their homes in Colombia, and Bishop Rhoades greeted them and other family members in Spanish at the beginning of Mass.

Father Kruse was born and raised in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, where he grew up as a parishioner at St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church in Fort Wayne. He’s also spent most of his life considering the priesthood. “I can’t remember not thinking about it, to be honest,” Father Kruse told Today’s Catholic. He remembers watching Mass as a child and said, “I remember seeing the priest, thinking, ‘If God’s real, whatever he’s doing, up there is super important.’”

Father Duarte was ordained

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Fathers Called to Mirror Love of God the Father

BY SCOTT WARDEN

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Richey Inaugurated as 11th President of the University of Saint Francis

BY SCOTT WARDEN

On Friday, June 7, the solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Dr. Lance Richey was inaugurated as the 11th president of the University of Saint Francis during a ceremony held in the Fort Wayne campus’ North Auditorium.

Richey, who has worked in various roles during his 13-year career at the university, had been serving as interim president since May of 2023. University officials announced on March 21 of this year that the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration – the university’s sponsoring congregation – had appointed Richey as the school’s next president, succeeding Father Eric Albert Zimmer, who announced his resignation on April 5, 2023.

The festivities on campus marking Richey’s inauguration began with a Mass at the university’s chapel, the Oratory of St. Francis on the campus of the University of Saint Francis, which was dedicated on March 21 of this year that Richey’s inauguration as the school’s next president, Richey acknowledged the contributions to this university to our community.

Dr. Richey embraced the Christian spirit of service of the University of Saint Francis Board of Trustees Chair Richard Ponsart conducted the installation ceremony, and Bishop Rhoades gave the benediction and joined others in offering statements of congratulations and encouragement.

Dr. Richey acknowledged the support of the university’s faculty and staff, who welcomed him as the school’s new leader.

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The University of Saint Francis contributed this report.
Following a history-making tenure as Executive Director of the Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC) – the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Indiana – Angela Espada will retire next month and be succeeded by current Vice President and General Counsel for the University of Indianapolis. "It's hard to encapsulate the many allies of different faiths who believe in solidarity and worked with the ICC to help improve the quality and dignity of life for Hoosiers," she stated.

Espada reflects on her ICC tenure with deep appreciation. "I tried to retire in 2018," said Carrasco, who serves as President and General Counsel for the University of Indianapolis. "It's hard to encapsulate the many allies of different faiths who believe in solidarity and worked with the ICC to help improve the quality and dignity of life for Hoosiers." As she pondered the future, Espada looks forward to spending more time with her family. Since becoming Executive Director of the ICC, she has embraced a cherished new role: that of grandmother, or "Mimi." Her daughter, Maya, and son-in-law, Winston, who reside in the Boston area, are now parents to sons Dorian, 3, and Camden, 5 months.

"I tried to retire in 2018," Espada jokes. "But now, grandchildren and my husband retiring at the same time will make this retirement stick." Espada reflects on her ICC tenure with deep appreciation. "I tried to retire in 2018," said Carrasco, who serves as President and General Counsel for the University of Indianapolis. "It's hard to encapsulate the many allies of different faiths who believe in solidarity and worked with the ICC to help improve the quality and dignity of life for Hoosiers." As she pondered the future, Espada looks forward to spending more time with her family. Since becoming Executive Director of the ICC, she has embraced a cherished new role: that of grandmother, or "Mimi." Her daughter, Maya, and son-in-law, Winston, who reside in the Boston area, are now parents to sons Dorian, 3, and Camden, 5 months.

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After Years Apart, Afghan Refugee Reunites with His Family

BY NICOLE KURUT

Last year, Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend reported on Ahad, an Afghan Second Lieutenant Aviation Officer with a bachelor’s degree in science. After the fall of the Afghan government in August of 2021, he was forced to flee from his country without his pregnant wife. Resettled by the Refugee Department at Catholic Charities, Ahad quickly began working with the Immigration Department to file for asylum for him and his family.

As soon as the immigration team at Catholic Charities received the asylum approval for Ahad, they began to focus on helping him reunite with his wife and child. Working together, the team filed for the Asylee Relative Petition. They were told the processing time for the initial part of the petition could take close to two and a half years to then be transferred to the U.S. Consulate abroad. With the chaos facing those in Afghanistan, the application was sent with a hope and prayer that the petition would be approved quickly for Ahad’s family.

“This was the best chance I had to reunite with my family safely in the United States,” Ahad said. “I didn’t know how long it would take, but I hoped I would see my wife and baby soon.”

Ahad spent almost two years separated from his family before he received the news that his relative petition had been approved and he would soon be contacted by the U.S. Embassy for his family’s interview details.

“When I called my wife to tell her the news, she could not believe it,” Ahad recollected. “After living through so much turmoil after left, having her rights stripped away for being a woman and managing to give birth to our child alone without me there, she never thought I would have the chance to see my son while he was still a baby. She hoped that maybe when he was 5 or 6 the dream of being reunited would be possible. She was overwheclmed when I told her she needed to go to Pakistan for the visa interview.”

To file for an Asylee Relative Petition in the case with Afghans when the petition is approved by USCIS, the family members have to go to another country for their interviews. Therefore, his wife, Damsa, had to go to Pakistan, which has the closest U.S. Embassy. After many barriers, she was finally allowed passage with her father and son.

“I had to act fast,” Damsa said. “Once in Pakistan, I had to secure a medical exam for my son and me prior to the interview. Once at the interview, I was told we could not receive our visas because I did not have my original marriage license with me. Ahad had taken it with him to the United States.”

“I anxiously waited and waited for the phone call from Damsa to hear the news about the interview,” recalled Ahad. “When she called me and told me they had denied her visa because they were requesting our marriage license, I contacted Catholic Charities Immigration Department. We worked together to find the best solution to make sure my wife would receive the marriage license. I knew we were so close to being back together as a family. I can not give up. We mailed the documentation, and within a few days, Damsa returned it to the embassy. I wouldn’t be able to go, I would check the status on her visa, and it showed no change. Finally, my wife called me to say that she had received the visa.”

Ahad was finally able to reunite with his family in Chicago.

“I flew up to Chicago to meet them. When I saw them at the airport, it was an unforgettable moment. It didn’t feel real. I finally was able to hug and kiss my baby. I had seen him in video calls, but nothing compared to holding your son in your arms and truly being there with him. I truly happy now that my family is here and joined together. When they were in my country, I was always worried about them. It was hard to be alone here, and to miss the birth of my child. I am happy now my family is together in Fort Wayne.”

When asked about the future, Damsa answered, “We can make anything work now that we are together, we can face any challenges.”

She hopes to continue her schooling and become a licensed midwife.

Celebrate Religious Freedom Week June 22-29

BY TODAY’S CATHOLIC

From Saturday, June 22 (the feast of SS. Thomas More and John Fisher), to Saturday, June 29 (the feast of SS. Peter and Paul), the Church marks the annual observance of Religious Freedom Week. The theme of this year’s celebration is “Called to the Fullness of Dignity.”

Throughout the week, the faithful are called to pray, reflect, and act on daily topics related to religious freedom both here in the United States and abroad. The daily topics are:

- Friday, June 23: Respect for Sacred Spaces
- Sunday, June 25: Blasphemy and Apostasy Laws
- Monday, June 26: Freedom to Speak the Truth
- Tuesday, June 27: Service to Immigrants
- Wednesday, June 28: Pray for India
- Thursday, June 29: Faith at Work

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) helps guide the faithful through the week, offering prayers, reflections, and ways to take action at usccb.org/religionalfreedomweek. The resources show the breadth of religious liberty issues of concern to the bishops of the United States.

Domestically, a major area of concern continues to be freedom for Catholic institutions, such as schools, hospitals, and child welfare service providers, to carry out their missions with integrity. In particular, the bishops are concerned about Catholic health care, as the Biden Administration proposed a cascade of changes to federal regulations throughout the past year that remove conscience protections from health care institutions and individuals.

In January, spearheaded by Bishop Rhodes, Chairman of the USCCB’s Committee for Religious Liberty, officials with the U.S. bishops published a new annual report that identifies five top threats to religious liberty in the United States. In the first annual “State of Religious Liberty in the United States,” published on January 16, officials said potential threats to religious liberty in the United States largely come in the form of federal regulations or cultural trends.

Five key areas of concern, the 48-page report said, include attacks against houses of worship, especially in the aftermath of the Israel-Hamas conflict; the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Executive Order from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which the report says “will likely change, for the worse, the landscape for medical, religious, and faith-related organizations; threats to religious conscience rights, such as current and expected changes to the Affordable Care Act’s contraceptive mandate; and threats to religious liberty on the campus of public universities and colleges, including the First Amendment rights of religious speech “on marriage and sexual difference”; and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission’s Pregnant Workers Fairness Act regulations, which the report said “aim to require religious employers to be complicit in abortion in an unprecedented way.”

In January, Bishop Rhoades, who oversees the report, told OSV News that the committee began this annual project in order to “educate the faithful” and “mobilize the opportunity to get involved in protecting and promoting religious liberty.”

Through prayer, education, and public action during Religious Freedom Week, the faithful can promote the expansion of religious freedom for Catholics and for those of all faiths. To connect with the USCCB’s Committee for Religious Liberty, text FREEDOM to 84576 and sign up for “First Freedom News,” the Committee for Religious Liberty’s monthly newsletter.

OSV News and the USCCB contributed to this report.
Pilgrim Journeys Toward a Deeper Intimacy with God

BY MASON BAILEY

As I’m writing this, I’m at SS. Peter and Paul Catholic Church in Wisconsin Rapids, located in the Diocese of La Crosse, Wisconsin. We had an eventful morning in Sparta, Wisconsin, with a beautiful (but windy) outdoor Mass in Spanish and a procession with the Latino community, followed by a delicious lunch of burritos and horchata. Bishop Mark Bartosic, Auxiliary Bishop for the Archdiocese of Chicago, celebrated the Mass.

Since my last column, I’ve journeyed through six dioceses, visited dozens of parishes, and spent many, many hours in Eucharistic adoration, both in churches and in our van, which is retrofitted with a simple tabernacle and a secure stand for the monstrance.

While in prayer, I have often reflected on a question a reporter asked me after a long procession only a few days into our tour through the Diocese of Duluth, Minnesota. The reporter asked, “How do you think this experience will shape your eventual [God-willing] priestly ministry?” I think the answer to these questions – and the one posed to me by the reporter in Duluth – are deeply related. In short, I think the answer is intimacy.

The etymology of intimacy is helpful to get at the crux of what I mean. It goes back to the Latin word intimus, which means “a close friend.” I desire to grow in intimacy with Christ in the Eucharist. I want to be a close friend of Him who takes away the sins of the world. There is no doubt, too, that Christ desires that closeness from each of us, and perhaps especially of His ordained ministers. I’ve been blessed to have had dinner with many bishops on this pilgrimage thus far, and each of them has exemplified a deep companionship with God. I want to be able to echo the declaration of the disciples on the road to Emmaus, who spoke the words, “Were not our hearts burning within us while He spoke to us on the way?”

This mutual desire, this prayer for intimacy – a close friendship between the Lord and myself – is already in the process of being fulfilled during this pilgrimage. As a result, my priesthood [again, God-willing] will be richly Eucharistic. A book that I would recommend to anyone discerning the priesthood is “Distributed Like Bread: Hans Urs von Balthasar Speaks to Seminarians,” by Jonathan Ciraulo, who is one of my professors at St. Meinrad Seminary. In this short book, Ciraulo summarizes von Balthasar’s life and thoughts on the priesthood. In a nutshell, the priest must be like an ordinary loaf of bread, which is taken, blessed, broken, and given to his people. The priest does not merely confect the Eucharist at each Mass, but lives Eucharistically. The only way the priest is able to do this is through the profound graces flowing from Christ’s Real Presence in the Eucharist. All of you continue to be in my prayers! I look forward to coming through our diocese in early July.

Pax Christi,
Mason Bailey

—— CONGRATULATIONS TO ——

DR. LANCE RICHEY

ON HIS INAUGURATION AS
THE ELEVENTH PRESIDENT OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF SAINT FRANCIS

The Saint Francis community looks forward to continued growth and success under his leadership in the years ahead!
**U.S. Ambassador to Holy See to Step Down in July**

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See Joe Donnelly will leave his post in July, embassy officials announced.

The ambassador will step down from his role and return to his native Indiana on Monday, July 8, representatives of the U.S. Embassy to the Holy See said in a post on X published on Thursday, May 30.

“It has been an honor and a privilege to serve my country in this unique way,” Donnelly was quoted as saying in the post.

The former Indiana senator assumed his role in Rome in April of 2022 when he presented his letters of credential to Pope Francis. His posting coincided with the 40th anniversary of the United States establishing formal diplomatic relations with the Holy See in 1984.

In a March interview with Catholic News Service, Donnelly said that when interacting with Vatican officials his job was “to try to make sure that where the United States stands, it’s understood.”

As an example, when Pope Francis said the Russian invasion of Ukraine may have been “facilitated” in part “because NATO is barking at Russia’s doors,” Donnelly said, “We tried to let them know, well, here’s what’s actually going on” in the various parts of Ukraine and “here’s the plans that Russia actually had to invade Ukraine based on that they just wanted to take Ukraine back.”

Embassy officials announced that Laura Hochla, a career diplomat who has served as deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy to the Holy See since July of 2023, will serve as charge d’affaires of the embassy.

**OSV’s Jason Shanks Named CEO of National Eucharistic Congress Inc.**

FORT WAYNE (OSV News) – Jason Shanks, Executive Director of the OSV Institute for Catholic Innovation, has been named the next CEO of the National Eucharistic Congress Inc., the organization implementing key elements of the U.S. bishops’ National Eucharistic Revival.

Shanks, who, with his family, lives in Fort Wayne, has served as NEC President since August of 2023 to help the organization prepare for the upcoming five-day National Eucharistic Congress, which is being held July 17-21 in Indianapolis.

The NEC board approved Shanks taking the role on Tuesday, June 4. For Shanks, 48, the position merges professional expertise with a personal passion, and a desire to see the revival’s work continue well beyond the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ 2022-2025 National Eucharistic Revival initiative.

**Pope to Hold Consistory July 1 on Canonization of Carlo Acutis, Others**

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – Although Pope Francis usually takes the month of July off, he will hold a consistory with cardinals in Rome on Monday, July 1, for the final approval of the canonization of several sainthood candidates. In late May, officials with the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints said Pope Francis would be convoking the meeting of cardinals to vote on approving the canonizations of Blessed Carlo Acutis, an Italian teen and computer whiz; Blessed Giuseppe Alfonso, founder of the Consolata Missionaries; eight Franciscan friars and three Maronite laymen who were martyred in Syria in 1860; Canada-born Blessed Marie-Léonie Paradis, founder of the Little Sisters of the Holy Family; and Blessed Elena Guerra, an Italian nun who founded the Oblates of the Holy Spirit. The date or dates for the canonizations could be announced during the ceremony.

**On D-Day Anniversary, Pope Says Attacking Peace Is a Grave Sin**

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – Marking 80 years since some 4,400 Allied troops “heroically gave their lives” to the cause of freedom by storming the beach in Normandy, France, D-Day commemorations remind the world that disrupting peace in pursuit of worldly interests is a grave sin, Pope Francis said. To pursue “ideological, nationalist, or economic ambitions” at the cost of peace “is a grave fault before humanity and history, a sin before God,” he wrote in a message to Bishop Jacques Habert of Bayeux and Lisieux, France, whose diocese includes the beaches where Allied troops landed on June 6, 1944. The pope’s message was read on Wednesday, June 5, during an ecumenical prayer service at the cathedral of Bayeux. While the memory of the war previously bolstered people’s determination to avoid provoking another global conflict, “I note with sadness that this is no longer the case today and that humankind has a short memory,” the pope wrote. “May this commemoration help us to recover it!”

**Bishops Congratulate Mexico’s First Female President**

MEXICO CITY (OSV News) – Mexico’s bishops congratulated Claudia Sheinbaum, who overwhelmingly won Mexico’s presidential election to become the country’s first female president, as a historic agreement overshadowed by the killing of candidates and questions about the future of the country’s democratic institutions.

In a June 3 statement, the Mexican bishops’ conference described the previous day’s voting as “a great citizen celebration, despite the obstacles and problems that arose during the electoral process, especially due to criminal violence and interference with legality by some authorities.”

Sheinbaum’s ruling Morena party and its allies took majorities in both houses of Congress. The bishops alluded to the prospect of supermajorities in Congress by pledging “a commitment ahead to care for and improve our democratic institutions.” Sheinbaum begins her six-year presidential term on October 1.

**Peace Is a Grave Sin**

The faithful depart the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception on Saturday, June 8, as more than 1,200 people follow the Blessed Sacrament in procession through the streets of the Brookland neighborhood of Washington, D.C. The procession was held as the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage’s Seton Route made a stop in the Archdiocese of Washington as it makes its way to Indianapolis for the National Eucharistic Congress in July. During a Mass on Sunday, June 9, Cardinal Wilton D. Gregory of Washington said the Eucharist reflects God’s steadfast friendship and “journey of love” with his people. “In this sacrament, God himself comes close to each one who receives this gift,” Cardinal Gregory said.
Local Family’s Story Featured at Women’s Care Center Bingo

BY KASIA BALSBAUGH

A local family’s story will be featured at the Women’s Care Center’s annual Luxury Bingo event on Wednesday, June 5. From left to right are Kevin Fink, Abby Fink, Brooke Kostielney, Joy Kostielney, Bishop Rhoades, Andy Kostielney, Reid Pittard, Tommy Kostielney, and Madelyn Pittard. Provided by the Kostielney family

The Kostielney family and Bishop Rhoades attend the Women's Care Center Luxury Bingo event on Wednesday, June 5. From left to right are Kevin Fink, Abby Fink, Brooke Kostielney, Joy Kostielney, Bishop Rhoades, Andy Kostielney, Reid Pittard, Tommy Kostielney, and Madelyn Pittard.

Saint Joseph Girls Tennis Captures Elusive State Championship

BY ERIC PEAT

As his team waited to play for a state title after inclement weather forced the championship match indoors, Saint Joseph girls tennis coach Bill Mountford found some extra time on his hands — and he didn’t waste it.

“About an hour and half before we took the court, I got everyone back on the bus, and we went around and told our favorite memories and funniest moments,” Mountford said. “It was a really nice team bonding moment.”

That was so much fun, because a lot of us have been through this for three or four years together,” senior standout Molly Kostielney told Today’s Catholic.

With so many responsibilities on his plate, Mountford found a way to relax and make us remember why we do what we do before we played our last match.

Bella and her teammates made their last match count, as the top-ranked Huskies beat No. 2-ranked Fishers 2-1 to capture the IHSSA Girls Tennis State Championship at the Purdue Automotive Tennis Club on Saturday, June 1. The Huskies won at all three singles spots — Bella at No. 1, Ashi Amalathian at No. 2, and Anni Amalathian at No. 3 — to secure the program’s third state title after coming up short in the state finals the past three years.

“I guess the lesson is that there’s value in perseverance,” Mountford said, referencing the four trips to state by his senior class. “When we walked away last year, it hurt and we knew we’d come to make it happen, we immediately dedicated ourselves to coming back and making it happen in 2024. We knew the team had to do it, but we had to put down our heads and work hard for a year to finish the job.”

That hard work was on display all year for Saint Joseph. After a loss to six-time defending Kentucky state champion Sacred Heart Academy to open the season, the Huskies reeled off 19 straight wins to reach the state finals. That included regular season and semistate victories against Carmel, the team that had ended Saint Joseph’s season the past three years.

“This year, for sure, we were the favorites all year, and that’s a different kind of pressure,” Mountford said, continuing the experience to his team’s somewhat unexpected state title in 2010, his second year at Saint Joseph. “I thought the girls responded really well. It’s hard to be that person who’s always hunted, but they were able to perform and make sure to get the wins they needed to.”

Rain forced the championship match indoors, and both teams had to wait several hours for available courts, prompting Mountford’s nostalgic team exercise on the bus. When Saint Joseph (22-1) and Fishers (19-1) finally took the court, Bella had to move past her defeat in the semifinals and focus on the opportunity at hand. Straight-set wins by Ashi and Anni Amalathian gave Bella the chance to claim the deciding point, which she did convincingly in a 6-1, 6-3 victory against Michala Briggs of Fishers.

Molly is such a special competitor and such a special kid,” Mountford said. “It was really important that she was able to shake off that loss and be in the right mindset for the final match, and as it turned out, she was our clincher.”

Of any kid I’ve ever coached, I don’t think there’s someone I’d rather have in that position to have to win a match to secure victory.”

For Bella, capturing the state championship as a team was even sweeter than winning the individual state title she did earlier. “Both were absolutely incredible experiences,” Bella said. “Getting the team title was always my dream, and it was the most special moment because I got to share it with others, with all my friends.”

After the match, Bella was named the Mental Attitude Award winner, given to a senior in each class who has “demonstrated excellence in mental attitude, scholarship, leadership, and athletic ability.”

With so many responsibilities devolving on her attention, Bella said it’s her Catholic faith that keeps everything in order. “I think my faith is the center that helps me balance it all,” Bella said. “It helps put things in perspective that these are things that I do, not who I am. I think that helps center me and remind me what is most important in the moments of failure, faith is in the center and the most important.”
Congratulations, Monsignor Robert Schulte on your retirement.

Thank you for all your years of service to the Church and all of those you ministered to.

St. Francis Xavier Parish Community

Best wishes on your retirement, Monsignor Schulte.

We will miss you!
St. Jude Fort Wayne
Father Kummer, Monsignor Schulte Leave Witness of Pastoral, Prayerful Priesthood

BY DON CLEMMER

Being classmates can forge friendships that connect people for life. But in the case of Father William Kummer and Monsignor Robert Schulte, that connection also intertwines deeply with the life of the Catholic Church in northeast Indiana. Friends since the first grade at St. Peter Parish in Fort Wayne, these two members of the ordination class of 1975 enter retirement together this month, capping 49 years of priestly ministry.

Their retirements carry the milestone of their being the last priests ordained by Bishop Leo Pursley, who led the diocese from 1956-76, as well as their being the last of the “lifers,” priests who went straight from eighth grade to Our Lady of the Lake High School Seminary at Wawasee, and then all the way to ordination.

The pastoral imprint they have made on the diocese since that time exemplifies how the qualities of a good priest – kindness, humility, wisdom, prudence, joy – are not abstract concepts but concrete realities lived out in human encounters, as their many friends and collaborators can attest.

Pastors in Formation

Robert Schulte was the youngest of two children – his sister is seven years his senior – of a German family at St. Peter. The Polish parish, St. Hyacinth (now long closed) was closer to their home, but they made the trip to the German parish. He recalls loving music and getting involved in grade school band as well as developing leadership skills from his years in the Boy Scouts.

William Kummer was also the youngest, but with two older sisters – and now tons of nieces and nephews, as well as great nieces and great nephews. He recalls that, in his boyhood, Fort Wayne was more like a cluster of ethnic villages where, when a mom called out the back door for a kid to come home, neighbors would say, “Wasn’t that your mother? You’d better get home.” The dairy where Kummer’s father worked took over the Pioneer Ice Cream company, and as a young boy on his way home from school, the future priest would occasionally stop at his dad’s office, where the production people would give him a taste of the raw ice cream.

Monsignor Schulte cites as “big influences on me” priests at the parish, including his boyhood pastor, Monsignor John Bapst, and later Father Eugene Koers, Father Bob Yast, and Father Larry Kramer. He also cites Pope St. John XXIII, a “pivot, humble guy,” as a major spiritual influence, someone “always surprised by the way God works in your life.”

Assigning seminarians to parishes in the summer was a novelty in those days, and Monsignor Schulte was among the first in the diocese to have such an assignment. As the reforms of the Second Vatican Council were unfolding at that time, he found himself coming home and fielding questions about these changes from relatives and friends.

The two men parted ways after Wawasee, with Monsignor Schulte going to study at St. Meinrad’s in southern Indiana and Father John Bapst, and later Father Eugene Koers, Father Bob Yast, and Father Larry Kramer. He also cites Pope St. John XXIII, a “pivot, humble guy,” as a major spiritual influence, someone “always surprised by the way God works in your life.”

The transition to seminary came naturally for both Schulte and Kummer. “Every priest has a vocation story. ... I have none,” Father Kummer told Today’s Catholic. “It just seemed like a good thing to do.” And as he progressed from high school seminary onward, he notes, “I never thought of any reason why I shouldn’t continue.”

“You go to the seminary to kind of make a decision,” Monsignor Schulte says of the prevailing thinking of the time. “I knew I wanted to serve people,” he says. And he did so with summers at St. Joseph Hospital in Fort Wayne and Boy Scout camps. Finally, after his first year of theology, he decided the priesthood was his path “unless God put a major roadblock in my way.”

Thank you for ALL you have done for us at St. Joseph - Hessen Cassel.


We look forward to having you as our “newest parishioner!”

Congratulations on your retirement, Father Bill! Thank you for your devoted service to the Church!
June 16, 2024

RETIRE, from page 9

Kummer attending Mount St. Mary’s Seminary and School of Theology in Cincinnati. While at St. Meinrad’s, Monsignor Schulte found his spiritual life deepened by the monastic practice of the Benedictines, their example alone having a profound influence. Meanwhile, Father Kummer’s liturgical education came from Jesuits at Xavier University, with one of them counseling him. “When you’re celebrating Mass, that is a real joy about you.”

The ordination class of 1975 was the largest in years for the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, with five men ordained, and it would remain the largest for decades to come. Monsignor Schulte recalls the hype at the time about the “Five for God,” but views it in context today: “There was a big push in guys going to the seminaries in the 1980s and ’90s,” he says. “We were a residual of that.”

‘Priest of the Streets’

Father Kummer’s first assignment was at St. Joseph Parish on Brooklyn Avenue in Fort Wayne, where he found himself appointed as the parish’s administrator only 10 months after ordination. The situation only steepened a learning curve that formed him as a pastor.

“You might come out of the seminary a little bit naïve,” he says of his early days in ministry. While he knew intellectually that the Church contains all kinds of people, he was still confronted head on with the reality that “God doesn’t have a cookie cutter.”

“If that’s true for the priest, it’s way truer for the people you serve,” he says. Also factoring into his experience was his nature as a fairly shy and introverted person now living a very public life.

“I learned to take preaching more seriously than I might have done in the seminary education days,” he says of his early years and his intentionally developing a homiletic style, “I don’t go to the ambo without some preparatory work.” This began as a typed manuscript and progressed to notecards and later to an “outline in my brain.”

He adds, “I don’t preach at the wall.”

And making eye contact isn’t the only way he has found to serve God’s people, a job he characterizes as “to take all of this wisdom and put it into the context of people’s real lives.”

In that regard, he sees every new day as an opportunity and has relished how he can’t plan every moment of every day, because he never knows who he’s going to run into or who is going to walk in the door.

“That’s a blessing of parish ministry – that we don’t know,” he says.

He also finds joy in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, loves weddings, and tries to meet the needs of grieving families at funerals. “That’s what we’re here for,” he notes. “I seriously try always to identify people’s strengths and their goodness. I don’t focus on people’s problems or their mistakes.”

But Father Kummer is quick to note that, personally, “I have no particular talent. I just smile a lot,” and that he’s “just a priest of the streets. That’s what I do.”

Throughout the course of his priesthood, those streets have included Wabash, Huntington, the Southwood Park neighborhood of Fort Wayne around St. John the Baptist Parish, which he served as Pastor from 1990-2002, and Plymouth, where he was Pastor of St. Michael Parish from 2002-13. He still has many friends in these places.

“He was enjoyable to be with,” recalls Kathy Girres, who worked at St. Michael for the entirety of Father Kummer’s time as pastor. She says he was a boss “who kept everything calm and running smoothly. It was joyous to have him.”

Kathy and her husband, Ray Girres, have kept in touch with Father Kummer and still get together with a group from across the diocese to play cards. “One of his rules is ‘don’t trump Father’s ace.’ But we ignore that usually, and he doesn’t get too upset,” Ray jokes. He adds: “I’ve always enjoyed his homilies. He would make a very good point, and I think his rule was ‘about seven minutes,’ which I appreciated.”

Mary Glowaski, who now serves the diocese as assistant to the bishop in pastoral care, worked in ministry with Father Kummer for more than eight years at St. John the Baptist.

“In him I found one of the kindliest, most humble men I have ever known,” she says. “In our 30-year friendship, I have never heard him say an unkind word about anyone, and his witness of goodness and generosity both challenge and inspire me. He is truly one of the finest human beings I have ever met.”

Mary Keefe, who taught language arts and religion at St. John while Father Kummer was Pastor, calls him “the quintessential example of a priest: He is kind, he is a gentleman. He represents Christ to our Catholic community.” In addition, she says, he is available. “He always shows up!”

Keefe adds: “I relish the years that Father Kummer spent at St. John the Baptist. He is a good man.”

Nadya Scepkowski, who organized the bulletin for Father Kummer at St. Michael in Plymouth, describes him as devout and well read, with a wonderful sense of humor and a love of cars.

“He liked to ride around on all the country roads, and that’s when he would compose his homilies,” she recalls. But even more than cars, she notes, “He loves the Lord more than anyone I ever knew,” and “he loves people.”

Father Kummer’s last assignment, as administrator
Congratulations,

MONSIGNOR ROBERT SCHULTE

on your retirement

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church and School

Thank you for being our first Pastor.

Congratulations, Monsignor Robert Schulte on your retirement.
Officer of the diocese, recalls how some people were intimidated at first by Monsignor Schulte’s quiet demeanor and tall stature, but that they quickly found him to be “very intelligent” with “a sense of humor once you got to know him. And when you were in his presence, he always made you feel special.” Ryan also credits Monsignor Schulte with the smooth and well-coordinated consolidation of six diocesan office locations into the Archbishop Noll Catholic Center in downtown Fort Wayne in 2005.

Monsignor Schulte’s time as Vicar General and Chancellor also coincided with the sexual abuse crisis. Głowaski recalls Monsignor Schulte as “a man of great integrity and faithfulness” as the diocese developed the structures for an ongoing, long-term response.

“I was privileged to witness the many demanding ways he shepherded our diocese through one of the most painful times in our Church,” she says. “His steady, reliable, compassionate presence and leadership was so important for all of us. I personally counted on him and his counsel in innumerable ways, and I will always be grateful.”

One of seven priests of the diocese made a monsignor by Pope Benedict XVI shortly before Bishop D’Arcy’s retirement in late 2009, Monsignor Schulte had only planned to stay in the chancery through Bishop D’Arcy’s tenure, but he ended up serving an additional eight years under Bishop Rhoades. In 2018, he once again asked to return to parish ministry and was named Pastor of St. Jude in Fort Wayne, a parish he found to be flourishing with active laypeople thanks to the groundwork laid by previous pastors.

Mary Pohlman, who spent 32 years as the Pastoral Associate at St. Jude – the last four with Monsignor Schulte – says the parish staff benefited fromways he was grateful. “He could make the Eucharistic Prayer come alive, and his homilies certainly shared that pastoral wisdom,” she says. “If we ever brought an idea or a problem to him, you always knew that he’d listen, and his calm and patient demeanor always let you know that things were going to work out OK.”

Jessica Heis, St. Jude’s new Pastoral Associate, says Monsignor Schulte has been a great mentor in showing her what parish ministry means. “His humility and leadership have been amazing,” she says. “His whole person really shows what the Catholic Church is all about.”

Looking Back, Looking Forward
As Father Kummer and Monsignor Schulte retire, their paths converge once more as each of them prepares to move into his own apartment in Fort Wayne. Father Kummer admits to some “separation anxiety” of his own housekeeper. “I love Jesus. I love His Church. At this point in my life, there’s nothing else that I think I should have done,” he says. “You just try to love the Lord and do your job.”

Free Exhibit

**Eucharistic Miracles from the Vatican with 60 Quotes from Blessed Carlo Acutis**

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Contact the Confraternity of Penitents to schedule this free exhibit for your parish, school, group, or event.

The exhibit works well in a parish center after weekend Masses.

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Amoris Officium
(‘an office of love’)
finds its root in Christ, in the Eucharist

ORDINATION, from page 1

alongside Father Kruse, had a more circuitous route to the priesthood. He moved from Colombia to the Orlando, Florida, area with his family as a teenager. In high school, he and his brother began performing with bands. In a few years, Father Duarte was working for big names such as Disney and Universal Studios. But once Father Duarte achieved everything he had set out to do with his musical career, he felt it wasn’t enough.

“When I reached the top of what I was doing musically, that was when it hit me – the sense of emptiness, this spiritual void,” Father Duarte said. So he went on retreat, and in his words, “everything changed.” Father Duarte said, “God made Himself very much known on this retreat.”

“God made Himself very much changed.” Father Duarte said, and in his words, “everything said. So he went on retreat, sense of emptiness, this that was when it hit me – the

After the retreat, Father Duarte decided to go on another retreat with the Franciscan Friars Minor in Fort Wayne. After a couple years’ discernment, Father Duarte transferred into diocesan seminary with Bishop Rhoades’ help.

Much of Bishop Rhoades’ homily at the ordination was spoken directly to Father Duarte and Father Kruse. The bishop referenced St. Augustine’s calling the priesthood amoris officium (or “an office of love”) and quoted Pope St. John Paul II’s words about pastoral charity, the priest’s loving gift of self. This love, Bishop Rhoades said, finds its root in Christ, in the Eucharist.

“The Second Vatican Council taught that pastoral charity gives unity to the life and ministry of the priest, and this pastoral charity ‘flows mainly from the Eucharistic sacrifice, which is therefore the center and root of the whole priestly life,’” Bishop Rhoades said, pointing out how fitting it was that the new priests would celebrate their first Masses on the feast of Corpus Christi the next day.

Bishop Rhoades added: “Pope Benedict XVI once said that ‘this is the profound meaning of being a priest: becoming the friend of Jesus Christ.’ Caleb and Oscar, friendship with Jesus must be the solid root of your life if you are to be good and holy priests.”

Bishop Rhoades then identified key parts of being a friend of Jesus, including repentance, service, and of course prayer. “Good friends don’t do all the talking. They also listen,” Bishop Rhoades reminded the two.

Bishop Rhoades also reminded Father Duarte and Father Kruse of the solemnity of this moment and of all their celebrations of Mass as priests. “The Holy Spirit who descends on you today will descend upon the bread and wine every time you say the words of consecration, transforming them into the body and blood of Christ,” Bishop Rhoades said.

Father Duarte and Father Kruse both told Today’s Catholic that they were excited to celebrate their first full Masses as priests the next day. Father Duarte had incorporated his “first love,” music, into the Mass, as he planned to sing the whole rite. “The more I get to know the missal, the more I discover different parts and music that I don’t think I’ve ever heard before,” Father Duarte said.

Father Kruse added that he is also looking forward to hearing confessions, considering “how to call [people] higher, how to guide them without shaming them, bring them the Lord’s mercy without saying sin isn’t sin.”

At the end of the ordination Mass, Bishop Rhoades made a surprise announcement. While acknowledging that he doesn’t usually announce priestly assignments at the ordination Mass, “I can’t resist,” he said. Father Duarte will serve at St. John the Evangelist Parish in Goshen, and Father Kruse is assigned to St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Fort Wayne – the parish in which he grew up. Father Kruse will also be serving as chaplain for Bishop Dwenger High School.

“Thank you, Father Oscar and Father Caleb, for your ‘yes’ to the Lord today.” Bishop Rhoades said before the end of Mass.

When speaking to Today’s Catholic, Father Kruse expressed his deep gratitude for the diocese and the group of priests, as well as his peace about the priesthood. “The Lord has reminded me that it’s all Him,” Father Kruse said.

And, in the words of Father Duarte, “When you come to a place when you’re pretty sure God wants this for you, how can you not do it?”

Joshua Schipper
Thank you for your ‘YES’ to the diocese and may God be with you as you serve the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.

Father Oscar Duarte, left, and Father Caleb Kruse wait for the ordination Mass to begin outside of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Wayne on Saturday, June 1. It was announced following the Mass that Father Duarte would be assigned to St. John the Evangelist Parish in Goshen, while Father Kruse would be assigned to St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Fort Wayne.

Holy Cross Catholic Church rejoices with the occasion of the ordination of Oscar Leonardo Duarte Saavedra to the Sacred Priesthood of Jesus Christ.

Oscar was ordained on Saturday, June 1, in Fort Wayne.

“IT was not you who chose me, but I who chose you.” John 15:16

Father Esaú Nel García, Pastor
Father Caleb Kruse and Father Oscar Duarte
as you enter the priesthood.

The Serra Club of South Bend
offers heartfelt congratulations to Father Caleb Kruse and Father Oscar Duarte as you enter the priesthood.

Congratulations!

Joshua Schipper

Bishop Rhoades and Father Oscar Duarte clasp hands during the ordination Mass, which was held at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Wayne on Saturday, June 1.

Left: Bishop Rhoades clasps hands with Father Caleb Kruse during the ordination Mass.
SS. Peter and Paul Parish, Huntington

The SS. Peter and Paul Community

Congratulates

Father Caleb Kruse
and Father Oscar Duarte

on their ordination to the Holy Priesthood.

Go and Serve Faithfully.
The people of Holy Family Parish thank the Lord boundlessly and forever for Father Oscar Duarte as he is ordained to the priesthood.

Congratulations!

HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC PARISH
SOUTH BEND

Congratulations
to Father Caleb Kruse!

from St. John the Baptist,
New Haven
Catholics, Protestants Worship Together at Unity Night

BY ERIC PEAT

D

uring his final night on earth, Jesus spent time praying with His disciples for unity among all believers. As John 17 reads: “I pray not only for them, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, so that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me.”

On Thursday, May 30, two church communities in southwest Fort Wayne offered a glimpse of what the fulfillment of this idyllic vision might look like. St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish joined up with Sonrise Church for Unity Night, hosted by Sonrise. The night of prayer and worship connecting Catholics and Protestants was led by Shema Culture, a music ministry based in Fort Wayne, and emceed by Pastor Caleb Stayton of Sonrise and Father Jake Schneider of St. Elizabeth. Father Schneider said both communities had been invoking the Holy Spirit for several months as they planned the event.

“It’s giving a place for the Spirit to work in the hearts of believers to acknowledge the greater Body of Christ,” Father Schneider told Today’s Catholic. “Being able to pray together will tear down some walls of hostility that many naturally have for the other community and also bring a sense of having the same end goal: unity with Christ and reaching heaven one day. Hopefully, that will be expressed through our prayer and knowledge that we’re working together, not against each other.”

Pastor Caleb of Sonrise expressed similar sentiments in his opening remarks to those gathered. “What’s unique about tonight is that when we get to come together and worship the Lord, we’re gathering two congregations with two different backgrounds,” Pastor Caleb said. “And though we might not normally worship together, we’re putting aside the differences to come together on the thing that we are certain of: that Jesus Christ is alive, He is the reigning King of Kings, He’s the Lord of Lords, and He’s deserving of the highest praise. And so, we’re putting ourselves aside to lift Jesus higher, amen?”

He then invited Lead Pastor Sonrise Church’s Lead Pastor Fred Stayton addresses those gathered at Unity Night.

Fred Stayton to share some comments. “Many times, I’ll say to our congregation, ‘In this City of Churches, how many churches are there in Fort Wayne?’ said Pastor Fred, to which the congregation responded “One!” in unison. “Yeah,” Pastor Fred agreed. “I’m beginning to believe that a little bit more tonight.”

Acknowledging the unique nature of the night, Pastor Fred challenged those in attendance to “embrace the awkward” and not simply be a “watcher of worship” but to participate. “God, we pray tonight that we could be unified under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, that we could lift Him high, that we could praise His name, that we could see the holiness of God and declare the holiness of God in this place,” prayed Pastor Fred. “Enter into this room; may you be welcome by our worship.”

For the next 20 minutes, the entire auditorium swelled in song, with Shema Culture’s passionate praise echoed by the congregation. After a handful of worship songs, two witnesses – one Catholic, one Protestant – shared their own spiritual journeys, describing how they grew in relationship with Jesus and ultimately with each other. They stressed that holy friendships are based on the love of Jesus and embrace each other’s identities as brothers and sisters in Christ. As the worship music

“...manifestation in His people...”

reminded them, “I honestly was super shocked at how many people showed up,” Frazier told Today’s Catholic. “I thought it was super cool to fill this whole room – it’s a pretty big room, and it’s been a while since I’ve seen it that full. At the very start, when the first song started playing and all the voices came in, I was just in awe of how awesome it is, kind of angelic. It was amazing. I loved it.”

Retta Kohrman, a parishioner at St. Charles Borromeo in Fort Wayne, also recognized the significance of the night. “It’s important today with all the division that’s out there,” Kohrman said. “I see the love of God and the full manifestation in His people who love one another. We can’t love one another when we’re divided. Love is not divided; love multiplies.”

Photos by Eric Peat

Shema Culture leads those gathered in song during the Unity Night event on Thursday, May 30.

There was standing room only at Sonrise Church in Fort Wayne as members of Sonrise and St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish joined to worship Jesus at Unity Night on Thursday, May 30.
Marian, Saint Joseph Graduates Mark ‘Last Mass Together’

BY KASIA BALSBAUGH
AND SCOTT WARDEN

As the month of May came to a close, so, too, did the high school careers for the graduating seniors at Saint Joseph High School in South Bend and Marian High School in Mishawaka. The classes of 2024 marked their final week together with separate baccalaureate Masses, each celebrated by Bishop Rhoades, and each held at St. Pius X Church in Granger – Marian’s on Thursday, May 30, and Saint Joseph’s on Friday, May 31.

More than 150 Marian High School seniors participated in what Bishop Rhoades noted was their “last Mass together as a class.” In his homily, Bishop Rhoades referenced the Gospel reading from Matthew on building one’s house on rock.

“You will all be building a house: the house of your life,” Bishop Rhoades said. “The most important thing in the construction process is building a strong foundation, and that’s what a Catholic education is meant to teach.”

He exhorted the seniors to continue building their lives on the solid foundation of Jesus Christ, “basing all our desires, aspirations, dreams, ambitions, and plans on His will. And this is the foundation of authentic humanity.”

Bishop Rhoades noted that it may be easier to build a house on sand, which he characterized as prioritizing such things as fame, money, power, and secular culture. “However we build our house, whether on rock or on sand, we won’t be spared the storms in our lives,” Bishop Rhoades said, adding, “Our lives won’t collapse if we build our lives on the Lord and His Gospel.”

Bishop Rhoades also thanked everyone involved in the education of the seniors: school chaplains, teachers, staff, and in a special way, parents. “Your first school is your family,” Bishop Rhoades said.

Marian High School’s principal Mark Freund also recognized the parents and grandparents whose children and grandchildren had gone on to attend Marian High School. And Bishop Rhoades recognized a special Marian High School graduate who was helping to serve Mass that day: Monsignor Michael Heintz, who will assume pastorship of St. Pius X Parish this summer.

Bishop Rhoades mentioned how many of the diocese’s seminarians like Monsignor Heintz have come from Marian High School. He said, jokingly, “Guys, any of you who are thinking about it, I’ll be in the courtyard after,” adding that young women could talk to the religious sisters in attendance as well.

Holy Cross Father Cameron Cortens, Parochial Vicar at Christ the King Parish in South Bend, serves Marian High School as one of two chaplains. During his once-a-week visits, Father Cortens hears confessions, celebrates Mass, and helps with sacramental preparations and occasional retreats. Of the baccalaureate Mass, Father Cortens said, “I think it’s only fitting to end the high school careers of the graduates this way, given that the whole of the mission of Marian High and its vision stems from the Eucharist, stems from the love Christ offers.”

The next day, also at St. Pius X Church, Bishop Rhoades celebrated the baccalaureate Mass for the graduates of Saint Joseph High School on the feast of the Visitation, and he urged the students to “think of the joy of Elizabeth when Mary visited her, a joy that even extended to her unborn infant son, John the Baptist, who, as the Gospel tells us, leaped for joy in his mother’s womb.”

Bishop Rhoades asked, “Isn’t this our joy as Christians? Joy in the truth that God has visited us, that He became flesh and dwelt among us, suffered and died out of love for us, and promises us a share in His resurrection?”

Bishop Rhoades stressed to the graduates that Mary’s “yes” should serve as inspiration to all Christians, noting that “if our faith is genuine, if our ‘yes’ to God is authentic, then it is manifest in charity. You have learned that at Saint Joe’s through the many acts of service you have done as part of your Christian education.”

“You’ve gained a lot of knowledge in high school,” Bishop Rhoades continued, adding that “love must direct our knowledge: love of God and love of others – in particular, the weak, the poor, the sick, the unborn, the immigrant, and the refugee. The formation you have received at Saint Joe’s hopefully has enabled you to see that knowledge is not enough, that virtue, especially the greatest virtue, love, is necessary and leads to true human fulfillment.”

Congratulations
co-salutatorian for Marian High School,
Samantha Legge

St. Matthew Cathedral Parish and School

Congratulations, Renee Rosswurm!

Marian High School
Class of 2024
Co-Salutatorian

“The Lord bless you and keep you!
The Lord let his face shine upon you,
and be gracious unto you!
The Lord look upon you kindly
and give you peace!”
Numbers 6:24-26
-Your Queen of Peace Family
National Eucharistic Pilgrimage Brings Jesus to NYC

We stepped carefully down the labyrinth of gangplanks and docks in New York Harbor, a misty rain and clouds obscuring the city’s magnificent skyline as we made for the boat. I arrived in New York the day before to participate in this stretch of the Seton Route, one of the four legs of the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage. Six dedicated young pilgrims, called “perpetual pilgrims,” are currently accompanying the Blessed Sacrament from New Haven, Connecticut, to Indianapolis. During Memorial Day weekend, the pilgrims joined events and processions throughout Manhattan.

On Monday, May 27, when I caught up with the pilgrimage, we made our way across Brooklyn in a joyful procession to the interest of local residents. Windows were occupied with well-wishers as we processed with the Eucharist. We prayed, and we sang.

The last of the boroughs to receive the Blessed Sacrament during the Seton Route offered a warm welcome. The parishes where we stopped along Fourth Avenue enthusiastically greeted the procession – churches were full of the faithful who gathered to join in adoration. But for me, the most moving part was the boat. Bishop Robert J. Brennan of Brooklyn, whose joyful and fatherly presence throughout the day said more than any words, accompanied us to the pier. Waving gently goodbye, the perpetual pilgrims wept as we embraced. Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York, and New York Auxiliary Bishops Gerald J. Colacicchi and Edward W. Marlow loaded into a boat, and we headed out for Liberty Island.

On the boat, we held a Holy Hour, which was clergy-free. We were, in New York Harbor – busy even on the misty holiday evening – singing hymns of praise to the Lord of the universe, present before us, hidden under the guise of bread.

As wild as it all sounds, it was all so fitting. How many times did Jesus pass along the shores of the Sea of Galilee with His disciples? As our boat was tossed by the waves of the larger ferries and cruise ships, I immediately thought of Jesus asleep in the boat, while the boat was tossed in the storm. I thought, too, of Jesus walking across the water and encouraging the disciples, saying, “Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid” (Jn 6:20-27). And I remembered Peter’s hesitant steps and his cry to Jesus when he began to sink: “Lord, save me!” (Mt 14:30).

Cardinal Dolan spoke movingly to us in an impromptu reflection he offered during our pilgrimage. “I thought, too, of Jesus looking out at the foot of our nation’s crossroads, seeing the need for a national Eucharistic Pilgrimage. Not only do we look on the Lord, but also He looks upon us. By bringing the Eucharist down streets and over bridges, on boats and across ways, we are calling Catholics across our land to encounter Jesus and to realize that, in meeting Him, we find true freedom.”

There, at the base of the Statue of Liberty, Cardinal Dolan blessed New York City. At the foot of the American flag, the nation’s greatest symbol of freedom, true freedom stood revealed. Only in Christ do we find the freedom for which our hearts yearn.

This is what we are proclaiming in the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage. The Lord is good. He is alive. He is at work in our lives. And His love alone will set us free!

Father Patrick Briscoe is Editor of Our Sunday Visitor.

How to Have Tough Conversations During Pride Month

In June, Catholics often face challenging discussions stemming from the LGBTQ+ community’s celebrations and the arguments that ensue concerning the Church’s teaching on homosexuality.

Jason Evert, an international youth speaker, has faced his fair share of difficult conversations about same-sex attraction, LGBTQ issues, and pride month. In an interview with Our Sunday Visitor, Evert shared his thoughts on these topics, explaining that Catholics must think of June, not foremost as pride month, but rather a month devoted to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

“The first thing we need to remember is that Catholics is that June is the month of the Sacred Heart of Jesus above anything else. If we come to June and want to talk about having a talk, it’s about having a relationship conversation,” Evert said.

Evert continued by sharing that the Church should respond to pride month events and criticize the Catholic Church within the LGBTQ community with an invitation to encounter Christ and the Church’s call to live a chaste life, not with rejection.

“To those who experience same-sex attractions, I think the Church’s response should be that we see these individuals and God loves these individuals,” Evert said. “Although the world will give them the option of basially gay pride or gay shame, the Church is extending a different invitation of chastity, a different invitation of partnering with them, a different invitation to each of us.”

Jack Figge

Get Over Insecurities

“Parents need to get over their insecurities when it comes to talking to their kids about these things. The parent is the primary sex educator, not the priest, not the youth minister. Many of them aren’t sure where to begin with this conversation,” Evert said. “This idea that you wait until they’re 13 and then you drop ‘the talk’ on them is wrong. This is not about having a talk, it’s about having a relationship conversation.”

Evert proposes that parents

As Death Awaits, Are We Choosing to Live in Union with God?

The first reading for this weekend’s liturgy is from the Book of Ezekiel, who is regarded as one of the great Hebrew prophets. Not interested in themselves but only in imparting the revelation of God, the prophets rarely left one biographical detail about themselves. This does not mean, however, that their mystery surrounds them all.

For example, Ezekiel was active as a prophet during the Hebrew’s captivity in Babylon. Apparently born in Judah, he was in Babylon as one of the original exiles rather than being descended from an exile who came earlier.

It is interesting to imagine the psychological state in which the exiles lived in Babylon, and how their mental frame of mind affected the fervor of their religious belief and practice. Since they were humans as are we, despite all the difference between their time and our own, basic human feelings persisted for them as they would for us.

Ezekiel encountered great faith, without doubt, but he must surely also met despair, anger, and disbelief in the power and fidelity of the One God of Israel.

In preceding verses, the prophet bemoans the unfaithfulness of the kings of Judah and their people, never God’s infidelity or indifference. In this reading we see that God will restore security to the people. God is faithful, People must be faithful as well to God.

St. Paul reflects to the Corinthians the source of the second reading. In the background is an obvious interest in earthly death and its consequences. By the time Paul wrote and preached, Christians were already being held in suspicion by the culture and, even more ominously, by political authorities.

The apostle urges the Corinthian Christians to see heaven as “home” and prepare for an end of earthly existence when they will have to answer before the judgment throne of Christ.

For the last reading, the Church presents a parable from St. Mark’s Gospel. It is familiar. It is the story of the mustard seed. The Lord likens the Kingdom to the growth of a mustard seed. The Lord likens the Kingdom to a plant into a mighty bush. The implication for us is that we may grow in our place in the kingdom if we follow Jesus.

This story confronts us with our own potential and with our responsibility as disciples. The growth of the mustard seed from the moment of baptism to budding, to budding, to full maturity is inevitable. It is God’s will and God’s plan, unfolding in nature. Belonging in Christ, we are called and are called to be gathered by God in the great harvest that will come at the Last Judgment.

Reflection

The Church brings us to face that event common to all things living but rarely acknowledged and always feared – namely, death, loss of life, and the coming of an ominous and unwelcomed unknown.

According to death or the event of eternity.

Confessing our mortality or the bemoaning the human condition to survive, the Church, as the teacher of genuine truth, places this context, death, and survival, presenting its teaching in these readings.

Earthly life is not the be all and end all, whether we believe it or not. Life shall endure after physical death, but what will this mean precisely? It presents a question to be answered personally, deep from within each heart. It will mean everlasting life – if we live now with God. The choice to experience eternity with God belongs individually to each of us.

READINGS

Sunday: Ezekiel 17:22-24; Psalms 92:2-3, 13-16; 2 Corinthians 5:6-10, 18; Mark 4:26-34
Monday: 1 Kings 21:1-16; Psalms 5:2-3; 40-6; Matthew 5:38-42
Tuesday: 1 Kings 21:17-29; Psalms 51:4-5, 6, 11, 16; Matthew 5:43-48
Wednesday: 2 Kings 2:1-6, 14; Psalms 31:20-21, 24; Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18
Thursday: Sirach 48:1-14; Psalms 97:1-7; Matthew 6:7-15
Friday: 2 Kings 11:1-4, 9-18, 20; Psalms 132:11-14, 17-18; Matthew 6:19-24
Saturday: 2 Chronicles 24:17-25; Psalms 89:4-5, 29-34; Matthew 6:24-34
A Pilgrimage to Where Beauty Lies: The Eucharist

I recently returned from a pilgrimage to Rome and Assisi with a wonderful group of folks from the University of Saint Francis in Fort Wayne. Several students, staff, and three Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration were part of the 10-day adventure through central Italy to follow in the footsteps of St. Francis and St. Clare. Twelve years prior, I had made another pilgrimage while I was a student at the university, so this trip kind of brought things full circle for me.

It was a beautiful time of prayer and renewal. We were able to pray and have Mass in a number of extraordinary sites. We visited all four major basilicas in Rome, prayed in the places where St. Francis received the stigmata and also where he heard the San Damiano crucifix give him his mission: “Francis, rebuild my Church.” And, of course, there was plenty of gelato and cappuccino consumed along the way!

But there was one unexpected place I found myself spending most of my time in prayer – Santa Maria Maggiore in Assisi. It was there that the Church’s first martyr saint – Blessed Carlo Acutis – is entombed. It is quite striking to see his 15-year-old body on full display as he wears blue trousers, Nike sneakers, and a North Sails sweatshirt. Quite literally, it looks as if he is sleeping and could awake at any moment.

Along with several other pilgrims, I sat down on a pew in front of his tomb and spent some intentional time in prayer. I think I got out my rosary and began to pray some of the mysteries. But then, in the depths of my heart, as I looked at Blessed Carlo, I heard these words: “Go spend time in front of the tabernacle. I’m glad you have come to see me, but Jesus in the Eucharist is way more important!”

And how true were those words that struck right to the heart! Blessed Carlo spent his life always pointing back to the Eucharist. Famously, he called the Eucharist his “highway to heaven.” He also created an entire website detailing the various Eucharistic miracles throughout the history of the Church. In short, he was a young man whose most profound love was for the mystery of Jesus Christ living and present in the most holy Eucharist – and that love is what made him a saint.

After my experience with Blessed Carlo, I found myself with a deepened perspective on the meaning of our pilgrimage. Certainly, it is beautiful to see so many places that are foundational to the Church and to walk in the very places where so many saints have trod. But Blessed Carlo made it clear that the most powerful and treasured gift that the Church has is not the relics of the saints nor the splendor of her churches, but the Most Blessed Sacrament – because it is Christ Himself.

For the remainder of the pilgrimage, I allowed that insight to deepen within me. Instead of going from church to church primarily to admire the beautiful art and architecture, I sought out the One who is Beauty Himself living and present in the tabernacles of every church. In a certain sense, there was a sadness I felt as so many thousands of tourists passed through the various churches admiring the works of the world’s finest artists but never stopped to say hello to the Divine Artist hidden away in the tabernacle.

May it not be so for us, Blessed Carlo’s words and example should give us all of us an opportunity to reclaim the greatest possible treasure we have in the Eucharist. During this time of Eucharistic revival in our diocese, the greatest pilgrimage we can make is not to another country or to a beautiful shrine. The greatest pilgrimage we can make is to a Person – the Eucharistic Jesus. The greatest (and only) source of holiness is Him, and He is available in even the most humble of our parish churches.

Once when Blessed Carlo was given an invitation to visit the Holy Land, he asked the question, “Why would I want to go to the place where Jesus lived when I can go to the place where Jesus lives in the tabernacle across the street?” That love for Jesus in the Eucharist is what made Carlo a saint in the short 15 years of his life here on earth.

That same highway to heaven is open to all of us every time we go to Mass or Eucharistic adoration – and that is truly the most important pilgrimage we will ever make!

Father Brian Isenbarger is Pastor at St. Joseph Parish in Garrett.

JACK FIEGGE

FIGGE, from page 20

look to Pope St. John Paul II’s landmark Theology of the Body in order to educate their children on the dignity of the human person and the gift of their sexuality.

“Theology of the Body is a timeless teaching. It isn’t just sexual ethics, it’s about human dignity,” Fiegge said. “It’s who I am, and how should I live? And it’s essential to understand what it means to be human. And the core teaching there is this spousal meaning of the body, which means that we’re made in the image and likeness of God. And of God is love. So, we’re made in the image and likeness of love.”

To help parents and teachers facilitate and guide these critical conversations, Fiegge has partnered with Ascension Press to update the “Envision” workbook, a Theology of the Body education program for middle school students that includes readings and videos discussing human sexuality.

“Envision” is versatile; it can be used in either the classroom or at home,” Fiegge said. “If the parents and teachers do not speak up on the subject, the world will fill the void of silence with a very contrary message. These kids are battling this worldview on a daily basis. If we’re not equipping them with the best possible tools, we’re just leaving them to the world to be decertified.”

Don’t Dodge the Question

Despite its contrary message, pride month can be a great opportunity for parents to begin having some of those conversations within the house, Fiegge said. Instead of dodging a child’s question about homosexuality or the pride flag, parents should instead see it as a teaching opportunity.

“All of the pride messaging is overwhelming,” Fiegge said. “But instead of hiding in a bununker until July 31st, we’ve got to realize that these are teachable moments, and we need to be able to speak into this with our kids in an age-appropriate manner. We cannot simply condemn the misuse of God’s gift of sexuality, but parents should put before kids a vision of human love that’s true, good, and beautiful.”
**Christian Family Movement Celebrates 75 Years of Family Ministry**

Christian Family Movement (CFM) grew out of the Young Catholic Students movement initiated by Holy Cross Father Louis J. Putz at the University of Notre Dame that used the Jocist method of “observe, judge, and act.” CFM has become an international movement with Action groups from coast-to-coast in the United States and on virtually every continent in the world. This OJA method encapsulated Cardinal John prospects that “For me, laymen are not formed through books, purely theoretical teaching, or spoken lectures however magnificent, or even through discussion. Laymen are formed first of all by the discovery of facts, followed by a Christian judgment, resulting in the actions they plan, the plans they carry into effect, and the responsibilities they shoulder.”

Putz inspired two Notre Dame graduates (Pat Crowley ND ‘33 and his wife Patty, and Burnie Bauer ND ‘38 and his wife Helene) to expand this Catholic Action to include husband-wife relationships and broader social justice issues. Two CFM groups emerged in Chicago and in the early 1940s, one in South Bend (led by Burnie and Helene Bauer) and one in Chicago (led by Pat and Patty Crowley). Burnie and his wife Helene expanded their group to include couples. They applied the Jocist OJA method to the common problems of young married couples, and to broader social justice issues. They hosted the first CFM-like meeting at their home on St. Patrick’s Day in 1947! Burnie liked to tell the story of how one couple in their group never volunteered to host a meeting. They discovered the reason was that the couple had a Downs Syndrome child! A quick search identified no existing support resources for children with disabilities in South Bend, a clear call for Action! They gathered these needed resources and this social justice action grew to become the Logan Center, which is still operates today meeting the needs of adults and children with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

In February of 1942, seven men including Pat Crowley began meeting in a Chicago law office, arguing and theorizing about the role of the laity in the church. They too used the Jocist method, and in time moved into issues of husband-wife relationships. In 1943, they sponsored a day of recollection for husbands and wives, the beginning of the Cana Conference. The Crowleys, as president couple, actively worked to expand both in the United States and across the world in the 1950s and 1960s, including involvement in Pope John XXIII’s Vatican Council. Pat and Patty were awarded the Notre Dame Laetare Medal in 1966 (the first CFMers to receive the Medal in its 83-year history) for founding CFM and its expansion across nearly every continent in the world! Notre Dame continues to play an important role in CFM with Father Karl Romkema, CSC, (Director of the Old College Undergraduate Seminary program) serving as CFM National Chaplain.

Examples of CFM work at the local level include beginning a migrant workers’ Spanish Center in Joliet, Illinois, and numerous local food banks throughout the country. The idea for La Leche League emerged at a 1956 CFM picnic. All but one of the founders of the League were members of CFM. In 1966, the International Confederation of Christian Family Movements (ICCFM) was formed to coordinate CFM in some 50 nations. Two years later, in 1968, CFMers hosted Spanish CFMers who brought Marriage Encounter to the United States. These examples of action in response to what members observed and prayerfully discerned. Titles for recent CFM program guides, which include Families Whole and Holy. Catholic Diocese of Joliet as the Office of Family Ministry of the Catholic Diocese of Joliet, which still operates today meeting the needs of adults and children with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

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**Director of Mission Advancement**
Bishop Luers High School

**Primary Purpose:** To support and promote the mission of Bishop Luers High School by implementing and overseeing development activities necessary to grow the organization and expand the base of financial support from a broad range of sources.

**Responsibilities in this Role:**
1. Strategic Plan Implementation
2. Grants and Giving
3. Fundraising
4. Database Management
5. Public Relations
6. Professional Development

**Required Education:** B.S. or B.A., 3-5 years of development experience with 1-3 years emphasis in non-profit or church fundraising preferred. Strong skills in communication, organization preferred. Prefer an active Catholic with demonstrated understanding of parishes and Catholic schools; proficiency in oral and written communication and computer literacy.

See full job description and apply at dioceseofswsb.org/careers.
WHAT’S HAPPENING?

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

Catholic Young Adult Recreation: Kickball
FORT WAYNE – Young adults ages 18-35 are invited to register for the summer kickball league. The league is hosted by Catholic Young Adult Recreation, which collaborates with the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry. Sign up individually or as a team of 11 players. The games will be hosted at Indiana Trails Park, 10313 Aboite Center Rd., every Wednesday in June at 6:30 p.m. The cost is $15 per person and includes four weeks of regular play. Learn more and register at diocesefwsb.org/cyar.

St. Aloysius Parish Rummage Sale
YODER – The St. Aloysius Rosary Sodality will be hosting a rummage sale in the Activity Center located at 14623 Bluffton Rd., on June 21-22, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. to support ongoing St. Aloysius Parish projects. A portion of the proceeds will benefit St. Henry’s Parish outreach programs. For more information, visit stalyoder.org.

Queen of Angels Parish Garage Sale
FORT WAYNE – Queen of Angels Parish will have a garage sale June 27-29 in the Monsignor Faber Activities Center (gym), 1600 W. State Blvd. The sale will be open Thursday from 4-8 p.m., Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Saturday from 8 a.m. – noon.

Join Bishop Rhodes During Congress
Bishop Rhodes and the staff of OSV cordially invite you to a reception at the National Eucharistic Congress on Friday, July 19, at the Indiana Convention Center Exhibit Hall, OSV Booth No. 506 from 4-5 p.m. Spend time with friends and staff from the diocese while enjoying light refreshments.

Holy Smokes 2024
FORT WAYNE – Support A Mother’s Hope at the Men’s Bourbon and Cigar Benefit on Tuesday, June 25, at The Charles, 3127 Carroll Rd., from 5:30-8 p.m. Tickets are $75 and include dinner, soda/beer, two bourbon tastings, and one cigar. For information, visit go.amhfw.org/HolySmokes24 or contact Kristy Carillo at 260-444-4975 or kristy@amhfw.org.

Raffaella Ballet
SOUTH BEND – Raffaella Ballet is a fairytale ballet commissioned by the Stroik Family in memory of their daughter, Raffaella. Raffaella was a ballerina with St. Louis Ballet when she died tragically in 2018. Her simple motto, “beauty will save the world,” inspired this original production. The original story will premiere in South Bend on June 29-30 at 7 p.m. at the Morris Performing Arts Center, 211 N. Michigan St.

Crossword Solution

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Crossword Solution

St. Thomas More Academy
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Even before he converted to the faith, Stanley Amuchaka was fascinated by Catholic priests – and the Catholic priesthood – in his home country of Nigeria. “I had a Catholic friend in my neighborhood who attended Catholic high school seminary,” Amuchaka told a few dozen people gathered in South Bend for an event to support seminarians in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. “I started attending morning Masses with him,” Amuchaka continued, “and the priests would give us candy after Mass.”

Little did he know at the time, but God had something much sweeter in store for Amuchaka – and for the diocese.

Amuchaka shared his vocation story on Tuesday, June 4, at The Armory Kitchen in South Bend during Our Shepherds, Our Future – an evening hosted by the Catholic Community Foundation of Northeast Indiana for members of the community called to support the formation of the community called to support seminarians in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.

Church, I became interested in everything about it. … However, I was afraid to share my desire to join the seminary with my family, as we were not yet Catholic at the time. I confided in my mother about my interest in joining the Catholic seminary high school to learn more about the Catholic Church and the priesthood, but she was hesitant. “Nevertheless,” Amuchaka said, “God’s plan prevailed, and I was eventually enrolled in a high school seminary. But there were still barriers to overcome. The process to join the seminary for his diocese in Nigeria was a competitive one, he said – there were only 15 available spots for the 74 students in his high school class – and his struggle in math class prevented him from being accepted. He was encouraged to discern joining a religious congregation or find another diocese willing to sponsor him. Amuchaka was accepted into an order of religious men, but soon after joining, the order was suspended by the Nigerian bishop overseeing the congregation.

After college, Amuchaka accepted a one-year position at a Catholic mission high school to teach theology. In July of 2022, with his time at the school winding down – and his future uncertain – the Holy Spirit stepped in. And He wasn’t alone.

“Two weeks before my contract ended, Bishop Rhoades showed up, and my future uncertain – the Holy Spirit stepped in. In And He wasn’t alone.”

Afterward, Father Chukwuma facilitated a meeting between Amuchaka and Bishop Rhoades, who told the young teacher that “it would take a lot to bring a seminarian from Nigeria to the U.S.” but that he would try.

“[Amuchaka] called me a new life,” Amuchaka said, “and renewed my desire to serve God and His people.” In the fall, Amuchaka will begin his first year of seminary for the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend at St. Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in southern Indiana, “This is my vocation story,” he concluded – “a testament to the power of faith and perseverance.”

After Amuchaka shared his discernment journey, he was greeted by a hug from Bishop Rhoades.

The night also included a question-and-answer session moderated by Deacon Andrew Barnes, who was ordained to the diaconate in mid-May. Deacon Barnes presented questions asked by the audience to his fellow seminarians, who included Michael Hickey, Thomas Bundy, Johnpaul Adizao, and Michael Florin.

Mackenzie Ritchie, CEO of the Catholic Community Foundation of Northeast Indiana, capped off the night by sharing how the organization is helping donors meet the great needs of diocesan seminarians through the St. John Paul II Endowment Fund – one of 282 funds the foundation holds for parishes, schools, apostolates, and other ministries within the diocese. Through its donors, the St. John Paul II Endowment Fund provides $50,000 annually to support seminarians.

To learn more about the foundation and how to permanently support Amuchaka and each of the diocese’s 16 seminarians, visit ccfnei.org.