Bernadette Scholars ‘a Blessing’ for Marian Community

BY JILL A. BOUGHTON

During the 2019-2020 school year, officials at Marian High School introduced a new program aimed at providing a well-rounded Catholic education to members of the school community with special needs. Since that pilot year, which began with five students, the Bernadette Scholars initiative has soared at Marian.

“We knew the program would benefit our entire community, but we had no idea how great a blessing it would be,” said Mark Kirzeder, the former principal at Marian, who helped institute the program at the diocesan high school in Mishawaka. Kirzeder is now the school’s Director of Technology and teaches physics.

When the vision for this initiative was taking shape, the Learning Strategies Program at Marian was already engaged in accommodating students with unique and varied abilities, but there were families in the area who longed for a Catholic education for all of their children, including those with Down syndrome or other intellectual or developmental conditions. Kirzeder and Annie Ganser, Director of the Bernadette Scholars program, believed the school had the faculty, the facility, and the funding to offer more. When these families heard that Marian was considering fully incorporating their differently abled teenagers into the Marian community, these families responded enthusiastically.

When Ganser worked in a public-school setting, which was the only place funded to provide special education services at the time, she said she had the “pipe dream” of serving all students in a Catholic school setting. “I prayed and prayed,” she told Today’s Catholic. Ganser even had a name for the program before it existed, in honor of St. Bernadette, who many believe had cognitive challenges. Tradition holds that in 1858 Our Lady appeared to St. Bernadette Soubirous in Lourdes, France. When Bishop Rhoades named Our Lady of Lourdes as the patroness of Marian High School, Ganser approached Kirzeder with her dream. Marian’s board and other community members made it part of the school’s strategic plan.

Entering its sixth year, Ganser is thrilled with the way Marian’s students have opened up to the Bernadette Scholars, who enable especially the boys to display their tender side. “These students add an openness, their own special flavor to our school,” she said.

Ganser told Today’s Catholic that the biggest surprise she’s experienced – besides watching other Marian students rise to the challenge of befriending the Bernadette Scholars – is that even in the COVID-19 pandemic, the Bernadette Scholars program has grown and developed, “and we’re still learning,” according to Kirzeder. In the spring, officials at Marian estimated that there would be nine students in the program this year, including two freshmen.

Ganser points out that while Marian was able to provide a structural framework, adapting to the needs, strengths, and interests of each Bernadette Scholar has been a little like designing a plane while it’s already in the air. Flexibility remains key.

In the spring of 2023, when the first cohort was ready to graduate, Ganser said she was “delighted” and “overwhelmed” that they were graduating and ready to embrace the world as Bernadette Scholars. “Bernadette Scholars is an experience that everyone should have,” she said.

Marian High School sophomore Eli Majewski greets a customer at Knight Time Coffee, the Bernadette Scholars’ coffee bar that serves the school community on Friday mornings. The Bernadette Scholars program, which accommodates students with special needs, is entering its sixth year at Marian.
Two Daughters of the Diocese Profess Final Vows as Franciscan Sisters

BY KASIA BALSBAUGH

On Friday, August 2 – the feast of Our Lady of the Angels, which is of special significance to the Franciscan order – two women professed their perpetual vows to the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration. It was a particularly special day for the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, because both Sister M. Fiat Staley and Sister Marie Thérèse Lolmaugh are not only daughters of the diocese but also daughters of the same parish: St. Pius X Catholic Church in Granger.

“All throughout the liturgy, I just felt so at peace and present to every moment happening at the liturgy,” Sister Fiat told Today’s Catholic. “In the saying of my vows, I felt the conviction of every word.”

Sister M. Magdalena Schmitz, General Superior of the order, received the professions of both sisters in their Mishawaka convent. Bishop Rhoades celebrated the Mass with many other priests from the diocese, which Sister Marie Thérèse said was also special because of Bishop Rhoades’ encouraging presence in her vocation journey.

The profession of perpetual vows, which is the commitment to be a lifelong member of the community and the bride of Christ, comes for each sister after eight years of life in the community and an even longer spiritual journey.

For Sister Marie Thérèse, her journey to her vocation began in third grade, when she was picked to play the Blessed Virgin Mary in her school Christmas pageant. “I fell in love with Our Lady at that age and wanted to be just like her,” Sister Marie Thérèse said. Sister Marie Thérèse remembered that in prayer as a child, “the Lord put on my heart that sisters are just like Our Lady.”

Just a couple years later, in fifth grade, some of the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration taught Sister Marie Thérèse at the Cathedral School of St. Matthew, and later at Marian High School. Looking back, Sister Marie Thérèse is grateful for the sisters’ gift of “spiritual motherhood” to her, remembering “growing up thinking of them as my role models, an image of where I wanted to come. Now I live with them every day.”

Sister Marie Thérèse began postulancy in the community a year after graduating high school.

On the other hand, in elementary school, Sister Fiat didn’t plan on being a sister. She wanted to be a mom, describing herself as “the baby hog kid” and spending her time nannying. In high school, Sister Fiat “fell in love” with her relationship with the Lord and eventually took a year after graduation to serve with NET Ministries. Sister Fiat said she learned the importance of three main things during NET: daily prayer, community, and preaching the Gospel to the young – all three of which she has found in her religious community. During college, Sister Fiat worked part time at the convent and gradually became more and more convinced that this was where she was meant to be – and the Lord’s calling to her became stronger and more frequent. She began postulancy after graduating college.

While the Sisters of St.
Catholic Public Policy Directors Gather in Indianapolis

INDIANA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

BY VICTORIA ARTHUR

H ours after 50,000 people experienced the closing Mass of the National Eucharistic Congress in downtown Indianapolis, a smaller gathering of the Catholic faithful was just beginning a few blocks away.

Dozens of Catholic public policy directors from across the United States converged in Indianapolis’ capital July 21-24 at the annual summer meeting of the National Association of State Catholic Conference Directors (NASCCD). Indianapolis was chosen as the site for this year’s gathering to give the directors the opportunity to attend the Eucharistic Congress before reconfirming their mission to represent the Catholic Church in the public arena nationwide.

The timing was significant for the Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC) in hosting the meeting, as its leadership was in the midst of a transition.

Alexander Mingus had officially become Executive Director of the ICC – the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Indiana – the week before welcoming his counterparts to Indianapolis.

“We were happy to host the NASCCD meeting this year, particularly because it gave some of our members a chance to experience all that the Eucharistic Congress has to offer,” said Tebbe, who led the ICC for 16 years. “I always appreciated the chance at the end of the year to bring our directors to Indianapolis to greet and check in with their colleagues around the country.”

Throughout the meeting, Catholic conference directors shared experiences and strategies and attended workshops led by subject-matter experts on issues of common interest and importance. School choice is one of those topics, and attendees heard directly from Robert Enlow, President and Chief Executive Officer of EdChoice, an Indianapolis-based advocacy group that is one of the nation-wide leaders in the movement.

They also nominated new leadership for the NASCCD, which was formed in 1968 and now includes members from the majority of states and the District of Columbia.

Michael Sheedy, Executive Director of the Florida Catholic Conference, was elected the organization’s new president. A graduate of the University of Notre Dame, Sheedy said he was thrilled to return to Indiana both for the annual meeting and the Eucharistic Congress that preceded it.

“My wife and I both went to the Eucharistic Congress; it was spectacular,” said Sheedy. “We were so glad we made the trip.”

Both Sister Fiat and Sister Marie Thérèse Lolmough were present for that and to see just how much Angela meant to the conference directors who had hired (as Catholic Conference directors) at Alexander’s age, and how much good she did.”

Like his counterparts across the country, Brower represents the ICC as its membership grows in number and in matters of public policy. He said he especially appreciated attending Mass at St. John the Evangelist Church and hearing from Archbishop Charles C. Thompson of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis about the ICC’s impact under the leadership of Espada and Mingus, who had served as Associate Director for four years prior to being promoted.

Espera provided the providential timing of events last month as she reflected on her tenure with the ICC.

“Indianapolis was fortunate to have so many of the faithful in town,” said Espera, who was the first woman to lead the ICC and the first woman of color to hold a Catholic conference directorship in the nation. “First there was the Asian and Pacific Islander Catholic Encounter Meeting, then the Eucharistic Congress. These gatherings prior to the Catholic Conference directors’ meeting served as a reminder of why the directors work across the country to make sure that the Church has a voice. Representing the faithful on issues of dignity of the person, respect for life, care for creation and the common good continue to be incredibly important.”

Tebbe and his wife, Laura, were on hand for the July 21 conference opening at the Crowne Plaza in downtown Indianapolis to greet and check in the attendees, many of whom were accompanied by their spouses and children.

“It’s like a family reunion,” Laura Jo Tebbe said of the summer meeting, always held in a different city and combining business, social, and spiritual elements. “Many people get hired as Catholic Conference directors at Alexander’s age, and we really get to know their families over the years.”

Illustrating that point, Mingus, the 28-year-old new leader of the ICC, greeted conference participants at the opening reception with his wife, Emily, and their two young children, Cecilia and Gabriel, close by.

His counterpart from Texas, Jennifer Allmon, was also in attendance at her husband’s first ICC meeting and looking forward to a productive and meaningful few days with her colleagues from around the country.

“Catholic moral and social teaching is at the foundation of everything we do,” said Allmon, Executive Director of the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops. “We engage in proactive social justice and speak the truth in love to our many audiences, from legislators to the general public.”

Thursday, August 15: 10:45 a.m. – Mass with Our Lady of Victory Missionaries of Charity, Carmel, Warren

Friday, August 16: 9:30 a.m. – Mass, St. Robert Bellarmine

Saturday, August 17: 9:30 a.m. – Mass for the Sick, St. Felix Catholic Center, Huntington

Sunday, August 18: 9:30 a.m. – Mass, St. Robert Bellarmine

Monday, August 19: 10:30 a.m. – Meeting of Bishop’s Cabinet, Archbishop Noll Center, Fort Wayne

Tuesday, August 20: 10:30 a.m. – Presbytery Council Meeting, Sacred Heart Rectory, Warsaw

Wednesday, August 21: 10:30 a.m. – Hispanic Ministry Priests Meeting, Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, Warsaw

Wednesday, August 21: 6:30 p.m. – Mass, St. Pius X Church, Granger

Thursday, August 22: 11 a.m. – Meeting with Catholic Legislators and Indiana Catholic Conference Directors, St. John Paul II Center, Mishawaka

Friday, August 23: 5 p.m. – Mass and Presentation for Ministers of Divinity Students and Seminarians, Sacred Heart Parish Center Chapel, University of Notre Dame

Sunday, August 25: 9 a.m. – Mass, St. Francis Xavier Church, Pierceton

SUMMER PRINT SCHEDULE

Aug. 18: Digital Issue

Aug. 25: Print Issue

Sept. 1: Digital Issue
Fathers, Sons Grow Closer to Christ at Fraternus Ranch

BY ERIC PEAT

High in the wooded hills of southeastern Tennessee, nearly 600 young men spent the better part of five days growing in brotherhood and striving for manhood – not just through the whitewater rafting, zip-lining, and paintball that dotted their schedules, but through daily Mass, praying the Rosary, and spending time with Jesus in Eucharistic adoration.

This is the core of Fraternus, a national organization that aims to instill virtue in young men from sixth through 12th grade via the mentorship of men and fathers. The Catholic brotherhood is rooted in the teachings of the Church and points to Christ as the ultimate model of authentic manliness.

Fraternus chapters meet weekly throughout the school year, but for five days each summer, more than 20 chapters from across the country converge for what is known simply as Ranch – a physically challenging, socially deepening, and spiritually enriching experience.

Ranch 2024, which was held at Ocoee Ridge Camp in Tennessee from July 10-14, was no exception. The Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend counted for nearly 10 percent of the entire assembly, as the Fraternus Chapter from St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Fort Wayne brought its largest-ever group of 53 individuals, easily surpassing its previous record of 44.

Tony Gray, Chapter Commander and a parishioner of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, said the increased turnout is a byproduct of the chapter’s consistent growth of 20 percent a year throughout the past three years.

“We’re also very fortunate that we receive a lot of generous financial contributions from individual people or corporations, and that allows us to maybe expand people that can go and offer a lot of financial assistance to give everyone the experience that we had,” Gray said. “I want to continue opening this up to as many as we can, and we’re blessed because of the funding that we’ve been able to obtain.”

This funding helped 41 young men, or “brothers,” as Fraternus tabs them, and 12 adults, or “captains,” from the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton chapter to make the trek to Tennessee. There, they grew in relationship not only with individuals from other chapters but with brothers and captains from a handful of other states, along with seven priests and seven seminarians who were part of the week at Ranch, including Father Jake Schneider, Parochial Vicar at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton.

“To me, the biggest thing that I love is the brotherhood-building and the opportunity to know a lot of the young men that went with us,” Gray said. “You get to learn about them in a more intimate way. That allows you to maybe change how you interact with them in the future, since you know them a lot deeper.”

This year’s Ranch featured a packed daily schedule, with groups breaking off for fun activities ranging from rafting to paintball, from wave pool to waterslides, and from ropes courses to zip-lining. The activities culminated with the Warrior Dash, a combination of 10 physical challenges completed as a group on the final full day of Ranch.

However, the schedule revolved around the spiritual components of Ranch, including daily Mass, praying the Rosary, and Eucharistic adoration, with confession available throughout the week. Ranch 2024 even featured a Latin Mass – a first for many of the attendees. Each night, everyone would also gather for the King’s Message, a featured talk on a particular theme, followed by Squad Time, or small group discussions by grade, with captains guiding the conversations and survivors.

While brothers from the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton chapter voiced many favorite activities from the trip – including whitewater rafting, the wave pool, and making new friends – they were unified in what brought them closer to Christ.

“My favorite part of Ranch was adoration and the Latin High Mass,” said John Paul Landrigan, an 11th-grader who was attending his fifth Ranch. “I definitely grew spiritually during adoration, kneeling the whole year, and growing with my brothers, just being able to pay attention to God and sacrificing my body to Christ.”

Ranch attendee Jamie Lai, who is entering 10th grade, told Today’s Catholic that his favorite part was attending Mass “and seeing the Eucharist held up, and the transubstantiation…just being there in that moment… it gets better every time.”

While some fruits from Ranch were readily apparent for these young men upon their return home, other seeds were planted – such as the influence of spending a week in the presence of priests and seminarians – that may take time to fully develop.

“The hope is that for Fort Wayne-South Bend diocese, the more that we can give this event, the more they can see all the seminarians that were there that participated in these highly reverent Masses,” Gray said. “The hope is that we are growing vocations because of it.”
Father Jake Schneider delivers a King’s Message at Fraternus Ranch.

“The same path, that same greatness of St. Peter, is for every single one of you.”

FATHER JAKE SCHNEIDER

Part 2 dove into the weaknesses that Simon still carried and how “the Rock” at times becomes instead a stumbling block to Christ, his brothers, and himself. “Here’s our reality check: We've all got weaknesses, and regardless of what they say, you can't change your weaknesses into strengths—thats not how it works. They remain with us,” said Father Schneider, who urged the young men to own their own weaknesses and to beware of living contrary to the revealed truth by “rationalizing our own sinfulness,” to beware of their own forgetfulness, and to avoid isolation.

In the third part of the King’s Message, Father Schneider highlighted the weaknesses of St. Peter as a new creation who renewed all things in Christ. “Christ is the perfect human person,” said Father Schneider, “and if everyone can be a part of His life, living with, in, and through Him, you are part of that new creation.” In St. Peter’s Pentecost speech, he embraced his new responsibilities by putting himself under Christ’s authority. Father Schneider counseled the young men to act with Christ through regular prayer, develop their gifts for the glory of God, and remember Christ through Scripture to have a “grace-filled eyesight” of each day.

Part 4 focused on St. Peter’s perseverance, refusing to be defined by his misfortunes but instead striving for the goal of salvation. When Christ places a weight in front of us, Father Schneider said, we can either think of it as an impediment or as the impetus to propel us forward. Like St. Peter, we must find the inner strength to not be crushed by our weaknesses but to use our gifts for the Church. “The same path, that same greatness of St. Peter, is for every single one of you,” Father Schneider said. “Remember this Ranch, for you have been chosen by Christ to achieve that same imperishable crown of glory.”

Finally, in his fifth King’s Message, Father Schneider stressed that while renewing all things in Christ takes a lifetime, the week of brotherhood and prayer revealed a glimpse of how it feels to be a part of the new man. He sent the young men forth, imploring them to “let Christ tell you who you are. Let Christ speak to you through every experience, every challenge going forward, and follow that voice all the way to heaven.”

At the conclusion of his King’s Message each night, Father Schneider received a raucous applause and countless high-fives from the Fraternus brothers, who walked away with much to reflect upon. “I thought the King’s Messages were very intriguing,” said first-time Ranch attendee Vincent Brindel, an eighth grader with the St. Joseph chapter. “It was quite cool knowing that our chapter’s priest was the one giving such an important talk.”

“Remember this Ranch,” Father Jake Schneider said, “for you have been chosen by Christ to achieve that same imperishable crown of glory.”

“Just being at RanchME,” said eighth grader Levi Munch, who was attending his second Ranch. “[St. Peter] can be a model because if you have a bad start in life, you can still grow into a faithful life.”

However, Father Schneider said he benefited from the experience just as much from the young men. “Just being at Ranch surrounded by men pursuing Christ was refreshing,” he said as if at the home even more rooted in my own masculinity,” Father Schneider reflected. “By crafting and giving these messages, I was drawn closer to the life of St. Peter and his encounter with Christ, which gave me a rich background to help internalize my own life with Christ. I, too, have failed the Lord, but He hasn’t rejected me and given me moments of reconciliation. I feel also a deep sense of love for the Lord as His priest, and I have to remember that it’s for His kingdom and His glory.”

Father Jake Schneider
Parochial Vicar at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Fort Wayne, received such a call when he was asked to deliver the King’s Message as the featured speaker at Fraternus Ranch 2024. The opportunity arose when Regional Sage Day Landrigan was out with the Fraternus leadership team in late 2023, and Executive Director Jason Craig asked for suggestions for the upcoming year’s speaker.

“Father Jake had been at the parish at that point for about five months, and I’d heard him preach a lot already on Sundays and at daily Masses,” recalled Landrigan, a parishioner at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton. “In my heart, I knew he was going to be perfect for it.”

Landrigan asked Father Schneider if he would speak under his name and after prayerful discernment, Father Schneider agreed. He was quickly offered another opportunity to speak for Ranch 2024 itself. Father Schneider settled on St. Peter to Inspire Youths, a parochial with much to reflect upon.

The famous words of Jesus, “Tu es Petrus,” – the words Christ spoke to St. Peter when establishing His Church. “It was quite cool knowing that our chapter’s priest was the one giving such an important part of the day.”

“They were very good,” agreed fellow eighth grader Levi Munch, who was attending his second Ranch. “[St. Peter] can be a model because if you have a bad start in life, you can still grow into a faithful life.”

However, Father Schneider said he benefited from the experience just as much from the young men. “Just being at Ranch surrounded by men pursuing Christ was refreshing,” he said as if at the home even more rooted in my own masculinity,” Father Schneider reflected. “By crafting and giving these messages, I was drawn closer to the life of St. Peter and his encounter with Christ, which gave me a rich background to help internalize my own life with Christ. I, too, have failed the Lord, but He hasn’t rejected me and given me moments of reconciliation. I feel also a deep sense of love for the Lord as His priest, and I have to remember that it’s for His kingdom and His glory.”

The Fraternus leadership team for Ranch 2024 itself. Father Schneider highlighted the foundations of the old man, and Peter, being the expression of the new man – was the image I needed for the concept to stick for the men. The famous words of Jesus, ‘Tu es Petrus,’ is a title that requires a lifetime of embracing and living it up to.

Utilizing video clips to introduce each session, Father Schneider launched into a five-part talk on the transformative nature of discipleship and how that played out in the life of St. Peter.

The first part established the foundations of the old man Simon, and how Jesus used all that was good in his life when changing him to a new man. Father Schneider emphasized that the brothers – the term Fraternus leaders use for the organization’s young men – to make themselves “radiantly available to Christ” in their daily routines, examine the way they relate to others, and contemplate whether they are living as mere believers or as true disciples.

August 11, 2024

TODAY’S CATHOLIC

5

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Sister M. Fiat Staley and Sister Marie Thérèse Lolmaugh on their profession of final vows as Sisters of Saint Francis of Perpetual Adoration.

Join us in giving thanks for their “yes” to the Lord’s call to religious life.
Vatican Officials ‘Saddened’ by Olympics’ Opening Ceremony

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – More than a week after the opening ceremony of the Paris Olympic Games, Vatican officials joined others who complained that a segment of the show featuring drag performers offended Christians. “The Holy See was saddened by certain scenes in the opening ceremony of the Olympics in Paris and can only join the voices that have been raised in recent days to deplore the offense caused to many Christians and believers of other religions,” said the statement published by the Vatican Press Office on Saturday, August 3. The statement did not specifically identify the July 26 performance, which featured drag performers, including one wearing a crown, seated at a table in a scene that reminded many of Leonardo da Vinci’s famous painting of the Last Supper. “In a prestigious event where the whole world gathers around common values, there should be no allusions that ridicule the religious convictions of many people,” the statement said.

Pope Pleads for Restraint in Middle East after Killing of Hamas Leader

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – As fears of a widening war in the Middle East grew again in early August, Pope Francis pleaded with the region’s leaders to exercise restraint and engage in dialogue. “Let us have the courage to resume dialogue so that there is an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and on all fronts, the hostages are freed, and the people are helped with humanitarian aid,” the pope said on Sunday, August 4, after leading the recitation of the Angelus prayer. “Attacks, even targeted ones, and killings can never be a solution,” the pope told thousands of people gathered in the midday heat to pray with him. The pope’s remarks came after the July 31 killing of a top Hamas leader in Iran.

Attacks and killings, the pope said, never promote “the path of justice, the path of peace, but never promote ‘the path of hatred’ and can only join the voices that have been raised in recent days to deplore the offense caused to many Christians and believers of other religions,” said the statement published by the Vatican Press Office on Saturday, August 3. The statement did not specifically identify the July 26 performance, which featured drag performers, including one wearing a crown, seated at a table in a scene that reminded many of Leonardo da Vinci’s famous painting of the Last Supper. “In a prestigious event where the whole world gathers around common values, there should be no allusions that ridicule the religious convictions of many people,” the statement said.

Pope Appoints Rhode Island Bishop to Succeed Cardinal O’Malley in Boston

BRAINTREE, Massachusetts (OSV News) – Ending months of speculation about the future leadership of the Archdiocese of Boston, Pope Francis has accepted the resignation of Cardinal Seán P. O’Malley and appointed Bishop Robert J. McClory of Gary, Indiana, a Detroit native, to the position of archbishop of Boston. In a July 12 letter, Father Stechschulte apologized for his resignation and stated that he would continue to serve as pastor. In a July 12 letter, Father Stechschulte apologized for his resignation and stated that he would continue to serve as pastor. In a July 12 letter, Father Stechschulte apologized for his resignation and stated that he would continue to serve as pastor.

Ohio Pastor Resigns for Destroying Evidence

MASON, Ohio (OSV News) – A pastor of an Archdiocese of Cincinnati parish has resigned from his post following complaints from parishioners regarding his admitted effort to destroy evidence of a fellow priest’s possession of pornographic images, including material that possibly involved the sexual abuse of children. In a letter dated August 11, 2024, Archbishop Dennis M. Schnurr of Cincinnati told members of St. Susanna Parish in Mason, Ohio, that he had accepted the resignation of Father Barry Stechschulte and appointed retired archdiocesan priest Father Jeff Kemper as temporary administrator of the parish. In a July 12 letter, Father Stechschulte apologized for his resignation and stated that he would continue to serve as pastor. In a July 12 letter, Father Stechschulte apologized for his resignation and stated that he would continue to serve as pastor.

New Ohio law requires public schools to ‘reasonably’ accommodate students’ religious beliefs

COLUMBUS, Ohio (OSV News) – On Wednesday, July 24, Ohio Governor Mike DeWine signed the Religious Expression Days Act into law, which requires public schools to create a policy that reasonably accommodates the sincerely held religious beliefs and practices of students. The new law also allows students in K-12 to be absent for up to three school days for religious expression per school year, in order that they may celebrate major religious holidays that are not school holidays, without having those days count against their attendance record. The Catholic Conference of Ohio did not take a position on the law, HB 214, but the group did testify previously during the legislative session as proponents of a similar bill that would have also made accommodations for students in public schools to be excused for holy days. Brian Hickey, Executive Director of the Catholic Conference of Ohio, told OSV News the group “welcomes the provisions of the Religious Expression Days Act that recognize the importance of holy days for Catholic families in Ohio.”

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – While bishops around the world are asked to designate their cathedrals or other significant churches as special places of prayer and the Holy Year 2025, Vatican officials are not asking them to dedicate a local Holy Door but saying the only holy doors will be at the basilicas of St. Peter at the Vatican, St. John Lateran, St. Mary Major, and St. Paul Outside the Walls in Rome and, perhaps, at a prison. In Spes Non Confunditur (“Hope Does Not Disappoint”), the papal bull officially proclaiming the Holy Year, Pope Francis wrote that “in order to offer prisoners a concrete sign of closeness, I would myself like to open a Holy Door in a prison, as a sign inviting prisoners to look to the future with hope and a renewed sense of confidence.”

Celebrating the Feast of Blessed Solanus Casey

People pray at the tomb of Blessed Solanus Casey before Mass at St. Bonaventure Monastery in Detroit on Tuesday, July 30. During his homily at St. Bonaventure, Bishop Robert J. McClory of Gary, Indiana, a Detroit native, told the faithful that Blessed Solanus serves as a role model for offering disappointments up to God and bearing wrongs patiently. The July 30 Mass marked the feast of Blessed Solanus, who served at St. Bonaventure for years before he was assigned to St. Felix Friary in Huntington.
Ahead of New School Year, Diocesan Principals Spend Time in Professional Development

Three New Catholic School Principals Introduced

BY NICOLE HAHN

Bishop Rhoades celebrated Mass for principals of the Catholic schools in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend as part of a professional development day that was held at the St. Felix Catholic Center in Huntington on Monday, July 29.

The day included prayer, presentations, workshops, study, talks by Bishop Rhoades and Superintendent David Maugel, and the introduction of the three new principals in the diocese.

Today’s Catholic spoke with each of the three women taking on this important new role.

Michelle Dellinger, Principal at St. Therese School, Fort Wayne

Today’s Catholic: What are you looking forward to as a new principal?

Dellinger: I am looking forward to all the programs that we did not have in place coming back after COVID. We’re still working on bringing all those programs back, like the science fair, student government, the theater program, all of those things. It will be nice to see those programs come back. I’ve also been a parishioner there for the past 20 years, and my kids all went through the school.

Today’s Catholic: What is it like to be a principal in a Catholic school?

Dellinger: I came from a public school, so I am very looking forward to actually having faith being the center of everything again. I felt like I was losing myself in the public school system, and now I can actually be excited again about my faith and being able to actually talk about it again. I’m very much looking forward to that.

Fernanda Becker, Principal at St. Joseph School, Fort Wayne

Today’s Catholic: What are you looking forward to as a new principal?

Becker: I am looking forward to meeting the children and the families and getting to know their journeys and just being able to enjoy our community life. I was a teacher at Bishop Dwenger, a Spanish teacher, for 18 years, and I did not pursue a principal position right away because I wanted to be closer to my children while they were little.

Today’s Catholic: Why did you choose now to become a principal?

Becker: My children are now a little older, and they attend St. Joseph. I was also very kindly, warmly welcomed by Father Kevin Bauman and the hiring committee there. The entire community has been very welcoming. It just felt like the right time to do this.

Francisca Flores, Principal at Our Lady of Hungary School, South Bend

Today’s Catholic: What are you looking forward to as a new principal?

Flores: So many things, but I’m so excited to work with the community and the students and families over there, especially because it’s a Hungarian community, and Mexican, Hispanic, Latino, and the amazing people over there. I was in San Diego for four years teaching Spanish to my wonderful kids. I will miss them so much!

Today’s Catholic: Why did you choose now to become a principal?

Flores: Since I started in education, I was always looking for a place to make more impact on our families, and teaching is a great way to impact students and families. When you are the principal, though, you have a chance to touch so many hearts and so many people with all these kids coming to the school. That’s my most exciting thing … touching hearts and making them take the way to becoming saints one day.
Unity, Joy Come from Knights’ Charity Softball Game

BY CLARE HILDEBRANDT

The Knights of Columbus from two Fort Wayne parishes stepped up to the plate recently to help multiple charities.

On Saturday, August 3, Knights from St. Elizabeth Ann Seton and Queen of Angels played a charity softball game at the diamond at Queen of Angels. The Knights also prepared various activities for children, including face-painting, bounce houses, and balloon animals. With the Knights serving up hamburgers, hot dogs, and cold sodas, families were able to enjoy typical stadium snacks.

Instead of cheering for their favorite Major League Baseball stars, children rooted for their parish priests. Both Father Terry Coonan, Pastor of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, and Father Spenser St. Louis, Pastor of Queen of Angels, stepped up to bat for their respective teams.

“It’s fun seeing a priest come out, enjoying time with his people,” said attendee Greg Diss. Watching beloved priests play next to fathers and sons brought about a sense of unity between the parishes.

Diss told Today’s Catholic that the presence of Bishop Rhoades, who celebrated Mass at Queen of Angels before the game, also contributed to the sense of camaraderie. Organizers of the event hoped the festivities would not only bring the community together but also highlight the mission of the Knights of Columbus.

“Some people believe the Knights are just a bunch of guys, doing guy things,” Diss said. “They are really here to be with families.”

Michael Shane, who planned the event, agreed with Diss. Shane said the idea for a softball game and picnic originated with him looking to his childhood. Growing up, he said, he would accompany his grandfather to picnics and community sporting events. He noticed these events were not occurring as frequently today, giving families and communities fewer opportunities to come together.

Shane decided to take it into his own hands with the help of his wife. “He wanted to bring back old times,” Valerie Shane said.

Valerie Shane assisted Michael with the planning of the event, particularly in organizing the charity donations. The Knights chose Cancer Services of Northeast Indiana and Gibault Children’s Home and Services to receive the proceeds of the game.

With Valerie fighting pancreatic cancer, Cancer Services of Northeast Indiana provided much solace amid the tumult of cancer. She advocates for the organization.

Gibault Children’s Home and Services gives “safe shelter” to children in need, Valerie said. Gibault has two campuses in Indiana – one in Terre Haute and another in Schererville. For decades, Knights of Columbus councils throughout the state have made Gibault a primary recipient of their generosity.

By the end of the game, which Queen of Angels won, the Knights raised $5,294, which will be split between the two charities. Assisting these charities comes with surprises, Valerie said – good surprises.

While out and about, Michael and Valerie met a man and shared information about the event. After hearing about the cause, the man wanted to join – not as an attendee but as a player.

“I was just telling him about the events, and he goes ‘Oh I would really love to play!’” Valerie told Today’s Catholic.

Looking to the future, the Shanes have big plans for the annual game. Instead of one softball game, they plan to have multiple, turning the event into a city-wide tournament. With the support of other councils of the Knights of Columbus, they hope to include as many parishes around the area as possible.

With the goal of growing the event and giving back to charities in the community, Shane hopes to “show the parishes that the Knights do more than pancake breakfasts and fish fries.”
'Lake Week’ Offers Seminarians a Chance for Rest, Fellowship

BY CLARE HILDEBRANDT

There comes a time when young men need to get away and spend time with their friends, and the seminarians of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend are no different. Because most had recently finished their summer assignments, ranging from serving in local parishes to spending a portion of their summer in Guatemala working on their Spanish, the young men were in need of rest. “Lake Week” provided an opportune time for rejuvenation.

Throughout the week that straddled the end of July and the beginning of August, diocesan seminarians gathered at Noll Hall, the diocese’s residence on Lake Wawasee in Syracuse, for relaxation and leisure. Daily prayer was coupled with watching movies, boating, cooking, and other leisure activities. On Wednesday, July 31, seminarian Nicholas Monnin, who is studying at the Pontifical North American College in Rome, made Italian food—a pesto dish, caprese salad, and bruschetta. The lunch followed a Mass at St. Martin de Porres Church in Syracuse on Wednesday, July 31.

Full of much conversation and laughter, Noll Hall provides the perfect location for seminarians to reunite and take advantage of the limited time they have together.

“Having a whole week to grow in relationships is really fruitful,” Bundy said.

Father Jonathan Norton, Director of Seminarians for the diocese, agreed and said, “My personal goal is … getting to know them even more, on a deeper level, sharing the camaraderie and facilitating some of it.”

A perfect example was his plan for the young men to tell more about their lives with Christ. “There will be an evening where all the guys sit down and share vocation stories,” he said.

“Lake Week” has occurred annually for the last 20 years or so, and through the decades, there have been many memories made.

Father Norton told Today’s Catholic that, at one point, the diocese owned a small boat—until it sank during “Lake Week.”

“They had guys who were too heavy on the front of the boat. When they slowed down, [the boat] tipped and sank.”

Now, friends and family will lend the young men pontoons to take out into the water for the week. Thankfully, it has quite literally been smooth sailing since the previous boat accident.

“Lake Week” serves to “carry on the tradition and character of strong fraternity” among the clergy in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, according to Bishop Rhoades. It provides the fulfilling connection so needed during the formation process.

Bishop Rhoades is an advocate of “Lake Week,” during which he celebrated Mass for the seminarians on July 31—the feast of St. Ignatius of Loyola. In his homily, he urged the young men to adopt the “holy indifference” of the Spanish saint.

“Ignatian holy indifference is a beautiful spiritual attitude and disposition, but it’s tough,” Bishop Rhoades said in his homily. To be spiritually indifferent requires a surrender of well-being to divine provision and a manifestation of trust, Bishop Rhoades said, explaining that it takes great discipline to trust in divine providence to the point of material detachment. Catholics ought to use created things “only if they help us reach heaven” and thus for “the greater glory of God.”

“Lake Week” serves to “carry on the tradition and character of strong fraternity” among the clergy in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, according to Bishop Rhoades. It provides the fulfilling connection so needed during the formation process.

“When you offer your whole lives to God as a sacrifice,” Bishop Rhoades said.

Hickey said he appreciated the spiritual guidance given during “Lake Week.”

“The guys here really take you under their wings and show you there is nothing to be afraid of.”
As School Year Begins, Superintendent Urges Students to ‘Open Their Hearts’ to Christ

BY JOSHUA SCHIPPER

A head of the opening of the new academic year, David Maugel, Superintendent for the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, sat down with Today’s Catholic to reflect on his first year in the role of superintendent and offered advice to students as they head back to school.

Uniting both sides of the diocese for Mass accompanied by Pueri Cantores, Maugel said, marked the highlight of his first year, and he noted the beauty of recognizing “Christ’s love for us” at this diocesan celebration. Maugel also cited the willingness of school principals across the diocese to grow in areas of spiritual and educational leadership as particularly encouraging in his first year.

“We embedded a whole new teacher observation system, we embedded a different way of looking at professional development,” Maugel said, applauding teachers’ willingness to take that and grow in those areas, because it was new to them. And to see, I think, some success that we had with growing teachers, which obviously then aligns to student understanding in both those areas of spiritual growth and educational growth.”

That growth will continue this academic year with the introduction of more fully developed social studies and science curricula, with a goal to have a completely published K-12 curriculum that “not only identifies academic standards but also identifies a Catholic identity for each lesson.”

For students who step into a Catholic school for the first time this month, Maugel said that they can look forward to the commitment that teachers and principals have for their students to grow spiritually and academically, and not putting each of these tenants in separate boxes but being intentional in finding Christ in each academic discipline.

“I think one of the words that I heard quite often that I connected with at the Eucharistic Congress was the word ‘receive,’” Maugel said. “I would encourage our students to open their hearts to receive Christ calling to them in their academic studies, in their spiritual formation, in their interactions with one another, and as they grow into young adults.”

Maugel encouraged teachers, administrators, the staff of the Catholic Schools Office, and even himself to receive Christ in this way.

“That word of ‘receiving’ Christ – we spend a lot of time asking Christ for things or wanting things from Christ, but opening our hearts to receiving what it is He’s willing or wanting us to have or guiding us to: That’s a whole different mindset.”

Students of each generation have faced new challenges, Maugel said, and current students are still dealing with the effects on their education from the COVID-19 pandemic. Maugel also pointed to an epidemic of teenagers who are vaping. Also, Maugel said, the teacher shortage crisis in the United States is “at a critical point,” and students will have teachers who are in the process of growing their skill set rather than already having the pedagogy and analysis skills that many teachers in the past had.

“There’s going to be some growing pains, I think; the students are going to experience that, but I do think that we have a committed group of teachers and administrators that are excited about that opportunity. Because with that, I think there’s a new opportunity for us to … embed our Catholic faith in everything that we do because there isn’t any predetermined framework that says, This is how you do this, this is how you do that.”

“Ther’s going to be some authentic growth with the formation of our teachers and our principals to bring our Catholicism in every lesson and every opportunity that we have in our schools.”

When he’s not navigating new challenges at the helm of Catholic education in the diocese, Maugel enjoys building things out of reclaimed wood, “dumpster diving” for wood to frame a building, and tearing out bleachers to repurpose and recycle the material. From this, he has made charcuterie boards and cheese boards, even the majority of a small cabin out of reclaimed wood.

“I’ve torn down dilapidated decks that had several boards that were still good. But by tearing it down, I got the wood for free and then repurposed it into things like small furniture items like tables, bookshelves … a variety of things.”

While Maugel’s handiwork with repurposed wood and Catholic education shows significant tact, the ability to provide a quality education, he said, also comes from the willingness of his two associate superintendents – Jeff Kieffer and Julie Williams – and their “joy that they have in education,” adding that their readiness to help principals grow has had a positive impact on education in the diocese.

“I feel totally blessed to have the current staff at the Catholic Schools Office,” Maugel said. “They’re well educated, they love Christ. It’s a joy to come to work and work in peace on the things that we have to problem solve, but also celebrate the different events throughout the school year that we get opportunities to do so.”

**Prayer to Begin a School Year**

Blessed are you, Lord God, Creator of body and mind and heart;

You have sent the Spirit of wisdom and knowledge to guide your people in all their ways.

At the beginning of this new school year, we implore your mercy:

Bless the students, teachers, and staff, that together we may grow in faith, hope, and love as we learn from you and one another how to follow your Son, Jesus.

Expand the horizons of our minds, that we may grow in wisdom, understanding, and knowledge;

Deepen our commitment to seek the truth of your ways; and enliven our faith to reach out to those in need.

Glory and praise to you, Lord God, in the Church and in Christ Jesus forever and ever.

Amen

Bernadette Scholars at Marian High School in Mishawaka pose during a break from helping customers at the school’s Knight Time Coffee. The students, from left, are Eli Majewski, Keelin Kelly, Keely Quinn, Tommy O’Callaghan, and Mary Helfrich.

Marian sophomore Keelin Kelly serves customers at Knight Time Coffee.

Eli Majewski, a sophomore at Marian High School, and Keely Quinn, a senior, prepare the coffee cart they take around the school as part of Knight Time Coffee, which is staffed by the school’s Bernadette Scholars.

Mary Helfrich, left, a “super senior” and Bernadette Scholar, poses with a Marian staff member as she pushes the coffee cart through the school halls.

Keely Quinn, right, serves a customer at Knight Time Coffee.

SCHOLARS, from page 1

graduate, Marian learned that the state of Indiana was willing to continue funding for young adult transition services until the year any student who wanted to remain at Marian turned 22. There are currently three of these “super seniors,” also known as Lourdes Scholars. Nicholas Stecker and Leo Vesprini’s education has taken a somewhat more vocational turn, including internships such as Nick’s with Redeemer Radio. Mary Helfrich is pursuing a Core 40 diploma, with a combination of online learning and intensive help from teachers and aides. Last spring, she earned a medal of excellence in biology.

Alisha Fransted, a veteran teacher who had previously taught at St. Joseph High School and at Riley High School, both in South Bend, came to Marian in the fall of 2023 to coach volleyball and teach English, then began tutoring “Bernies” when her schedule opened up to do so. Fransted said: “I love the school culture that surrounds the Bernadette Scholars. The work is so rewarding.”

For each student in the Bernadette Scholars program, an individualized pathway is tailored to their interests and abilities. Much of their academic time is spent in the school’s resource room, but they also take mainstream classes, both as observers and as active participants. Practical living skills are also emphasized. Social studies work includes recognizing community signs and differentiating wants from needs. In math, they record saving and spending, and they practice “McDonald’s math” with a field trip that involves ordering, calculating costs and nutritional values, and counting change. Reading comprehension is emphasized, building from each student’s current level. Like all Marian students, the “Bernies” value the service component of their education. They go to the nearby Hellenic Living Center weekly to run bingo games. For several years, their Friday mornings have been spent setting up, serving, and cleaning up after the very popular Coffee Cart, which draws not only Marian students and staff but guests including residents from the Hellenic Center. There is even merchandise for sale with a “Knight Time Coffee” logo the students themselves designed. As their gift to Marian, the 2023 graduating class gave a donation that helped the coffee shop with its expenses and advertising.

Bernadette Scholars are involved in every aspect of the Marian community, from student government to extracurricular activities to community prayer and sports. As they move through the hallways, many typical students warmly greet them by name.

Senior Keely Quinn previously attended St. Anthony School and is excited to have a sibling coming to Marian this fall. She said she works hard in all her classes and received last year’s Bernadette Scholars award. She enjoys art and weightlifting. When instructional aide Cynthia Spalding told Quinn and Kelly that she had a challenging worksheet for them, Kelly exclaimed, “I like challenging.” Quinn admitted, “I don’t.”

Throughout the past five years, Kirzeder said, the Bernadette Scholars program has enriched not only those students participating in the program, but the school community as a whole. “It gives our students practice in loving people who may not look or act like they do,” Kirzeder said. “And they have certainly risen to the challenge, not only accepting but accompanying these students, learning from them as well as teaching them, and growing in friendship. Isn’t that the Gospel in a nutshell?”
New Heritage and Resource Center Will Share Histories of Women Religious at Saint Mary’s College

BY TODAY’S CATHOLIC

On Friday, July 26, officials from Saint Mary’s College and several orders of women religious broke ground on the college’s new Heritage and Research Center (HARC), which will house the rich histories and collections of nine women’s religious congregations and Saint Mary’s College.

A news release sent ahead of the groundbreaking ceremony by officials with the Sisters of the Holy Cross said the Heritage and Research Center will be a vital asset to the tri-campus (Saint Mary’s College, the University of Notre Dame, and Holy Cross College), highlighting the lives and ministries of thousands of religious sisters who launched and grew institutions of education, health care, and public outreach that became the standard and backbone of development within these fields in the United States. The collection will highlight these efforts and institutions, many of which still thrive today, and the lasting impacts of sisters’ presence and service.

Along with Saint Mary’s College, the Heritage and Research Center will include cooperation from the following religious congregations:
- Ladysmith Servite Sisters (Sister Servants of Mary), Ladysmith, Wisconsin
- Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters, Huntington
- Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Dubuque, Iowa
- Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross, Merrill, Wisconsin
- Sisters of Saint Agnes, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin
- Sisters of St. Francis of the Holy Cross, Green Bay, Wisconsin
- Sisters of St. Casimir, Chicago
- Sisters of the Holy Cross, Notre Dame
- Sisters of the Most Precious Blood, O’Fallon, Missouri.

“We are excited about this collaboration that will deepen and advance the continued research and stories of women religious who have brought so much to the communities in which they served,” said Holy Cross Sister Suzanne Brennan, General Councilor and Treasurer of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Cross.

Though supported by each of the participating congregations, HARC will operate as an independent entity, employing an executive director, archivists, and curators to manage the center’s collections, exhibits, and programming. Part of the National Archives Project for Women Religious, HARC will share a technology platform with three other archival hubs – in Cleveland, at Santa Clara University in California, and at Boston College – allowing users access to all four repositories.

“HARC is a significant new archives institution bringing together the historical records of nine Midwestern congregations of women religious,” said Monte Abbott, Chair of HARC’s Board of Directors and Director of Archives for the Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd in St. Louis. “More than just a repository, HARC will actively share the heartwarming stories of sisters in service to those in need over the past two centuries.”

Images provided by Saint Mary’s College

Attendees of the groundbreaking view digital renderings of the new facility.

Free and Open to All
We woke up at the crack of dawn, itching to head to Lucas Oil Stadium to attend Mass and listen to our favorite speakers. From July 17 to 21, Catholics from around the country met in Indianapolis to bear witness to Christ in the Eucharist, and I was fortunate to attend (even if only for a day).

Before recently graduating from college, most of my time was spent with my peers, but I now live with a friend’s family, consisting of five children. Least to say, my daily interactions are much different than before.

As a family, we attended the National Eucharistic Congress in hope of spending time with Jesus. What I did not expect were the fruits that stemmed from this desire—particularly, the overwhelming joy within a family, the Church, and those in religious life.

The level of excitement resembled less a daily trip to Mass and more a family trip to an amusement park.

"Mom, I just have to see the Hillbilly Thomists," I heard. Also, "The line is short for the Shroud of Turin exhibit, we have to go now!"

Each of us was filled with joy, having full access to the Church in all her glory: Adoration, confession, Mass, speakers, and relic exhibits were all at our fingertips. We were Catholic kids in a Catholic candy store.

Seeking Jesus in our activities allowed for the fruit of joyful family time to blossom. Listening to favorite speakers, exploring the exhibits, and attending adoration gave us the gift of spending time with one another.

In this way, the Eucharistic Congress was unique. It was not one-dimensional; it served as an outlet to bear witness to Christ in the Eucharist and also receive gifts like joy within a family unit.

Praying with the multitudes also produced the fruit of joy. I was struck by the thousands of faces all actively seeking the Lord. They were my brethren, most of whom I had never seen before, being fed with the same bread as myself and my family. The love in their eyes renewed me, as it was clear that they loved Him enough to travel hundreds of miles to give witness. The Church was animated by the Spirit, joining together for worship and song.

Within the multitude of believers were those in religious life, bearing witness to Christ with lives of prayer and service. With a rainbow of orders present, religious were recognizable from a mile away and seen in unexpected places.

As I was purchasing food in the local mall’s food court, I could not help but giggle. At the various vendors were priests and nuns enjoying lunch. There were Dominicans at Sbarro and Franciscans at Burger King. The workers looked a bit perplexed as they served Taco Bell to Benedictine nuns. I felt joy at seeing these Christ-like figures in such great numbers in the local food court. While eating, I could not help but smile at their devotion to the faith.

When seeking Christ, He fills His children with joy, and He did exactly that at the National Eucharistic Congress.

Clare Hildebrandt is a staff reporter for Today’s Catholic.
Experts Offer Advice on Navigating End-of-Life Planning

BY BETHANY BEEBE

According to the old cliche, the only two certain things in life are death and taxes. A program offered at the University of Saint Francis on Thursday, July 28, armed attendees with information to make the inevitable go more smoothly, with the goal of saving money and acknowledging personal wishes at the forefront in this process.

Justin Tockey, Director of Gift Planning for the University of Saint Francis, who is a Certified Financial Planner, guided attendees through the maze of estate and legacy planning with the help of three local experts. Janell Sprinkle represented Beers Mallers Law Firm in Fort Wayne to handle legal questions. Mackenzie Ritchie, CEO of the Catholic Community Foundation of Northeast Indiana, offered her perspective on legacy giving and endowments, and Nate Hoeffel of Divine Mercy Funeral Home discussed funeral and memorial planning.

Tockey said two main reasons people shy away from advanced planning are the complexity of the legal requirements and not wanting to think about our own deaths, citing that more than half of Americans have neglected to plan for their own passing.

“When we pass away,” he said, “all of our responsibilities have to pass on to other people and, in most cases, there are financial and legal obligations that must be satisfied to accommodate that transition. Our estate plan, either a will or a trust, grants the proper authority and guidance to the people we’ve chosen to assume stewardship over the gifts we leave in their care.”

Tockey encouraged attendees to not only pre-plan for their own passing, but also to think about our own deaths, especially important for those who have someone set up a trust that can go to an individual or charity.

He explained that working with a will, however, the legal recognition of a person’s death is made, and property is smoothly transferred to the new, rightful party.

“Planning for the future is not limited to a will. Tockey also encouraged a plan for incapacity. Documents such as a medical power of attorney, advanced medical directives, and durable financial power of attorney assure the individual’s desires are met regardless of the legal safeguarding of the state; with a will, however, the legal recognition of a person’s death is made, and property is smoothly transferred to the new, rightful party.

Experts can also help someone set up a trust that can address an individual’s needs for medical treatment, and who takes care of finances in case one is unable to make decisions for their last wishes.

We appreciate that the experts at the Saint Francis event pointed to another way to leave a legacy. Leaving letters or surprises for those you love can help them in their time of grief and give you a chance to acknowledge how much they meant to you, making your well-organized deceased faith a little easier on the hearts of those still here.

The program will be offered again on Thursday, October 24, from 5:30 to 7 p.m. at the University of Saint Francis. Contact Justin Tockey at jtokemy@sf.edu or 260-399-7806 for more information.
TODAY'S CATHOLIC

Do Not Abandon Our Lord … in the Tabernacle!

Fort Wayne Cathedral Hosts Mass, Veneration of Relics in Honor of St. Manuel González García

BY CHRISTOPHER LUSHIS

Throughout the ongoing National Eucharistic Revival, several saints have been highlighted as special patrons who showed exceptional love for Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. One of these heroic figures is St. Manuel González García, known as the Bishop of the Abandoned Tabernacle. To foster increased knowledge of and devotion to St. Manuel, the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Wayne hosted a special presentation, exhibition of relics, and votive Mass celebrated by Bishop Rhoades to honor St. Manuel on Tuesday, July 23.

As a young priest in 1902, Father Manuel was assigned to a church in Palmares del Rio, Spain, and was eager to address the sacramental needs of his flock. However, he soon discovered that very few came to church, as the local community was splintered by political factions, manual labor was prioritized over Sunday Mass, and the sanctuary was dirty and in disrepair. Knowing before this forgotten tabernacle, wondering how he could ever hope to have an effective ministry there, he felt the Lord speak to his heart in a way that changed his life. Reflecting upon the agony, abandonment, and rejection that Jesus experienced in His earthly life, the saint said: “All of this sadness was there in that tabernacle, oppressing and crushing the sweet Heart of Jesus and drawing bitter tears from His eyes. Blessed tears from those eyes!”

The gaze of Jesus in that tabernacle was a gaze that pierced the soul, and one can never forget it. I was trying not to cry, so as not to make Jesus even more sad. His gaze expressed the sorrow of One who loves, but who does not find anybody who wants to receive that love. For me, this turned out to be the starting point – to see, understand, and feel what would consume the whole of my priesthood ministry.

He continued: “What did that tabernacle teach me? I do not think that our religion could ever have a more powerful stimulus for gratitude, or a more efficient principle of love, or a stronger motivation for action than that abandoned tabernacle.

Perhaps a weak faith would be scandalized by it, but a faith that meditates and a heart that searches deeply will discover in that tabernacle the Heart of Jesus, who remains there accompanied by only the cobwebs. He stays there day and night, year after year, without ever leaving that tabernacle. He continues to send His sun in the morning, His water to quench our thirst, and bread to feed us, as well as strength and life to all those people who treat Him so badly.”

St. Manuel, who was eventually named bishop of Palencia, Spain, not only offered his own prayers of repARATION before the Blessed Sacrament but also established communities aimed at rekindling Eucharistic devotion in the hearts of Catholics. He founded lay movements, including the Three Marys (in reference to the women who stood with Our Lord at Calvary), the Little [St.] Johns of the Tabernacle (in reference to St. John the Apostle), and the Reparation of Eucharistic Children. On May 5, 1921, he also founded a religious community, the Eucharistic Missionaries of Nazareth.

Two of these Eucharistic Missionaries of Nazareth, Sister María Cecilia Appendino and Sister Mónica M. Cordiviola, traveled to Fort Wayne to provide detailed explanations about the life of St. Manuel and offer opportunities to venerate his relics. Sister María Cecilia led a presentation on St. Manuel in Spanish, while Sister Mónica presented in English. They also explained their own personal calling to adore Jesus in the tabernacles in the example of those who faithfully stayed by the Lord in His suffering and loneliness on the cross.

Those in attendance for the events were invited to take holy cards and to touch them or other personal devotional items to the relics of St. Manuel. First-class relics included hair, blood, and a piece of his bone, while second-class relics – wood from his coffin, as well the tabernacle. We can rest in the stillness and silence of the tabernacle. We can rest in His love, like St. John did at the Last Supper, resting His head on the breast of His beloved Lord.

After Mass, Alicia Guzman, a parishioner at St. Patrick Parish in Fort Wayne, who also attended the National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis, said that she “was inspired by these experiences to learn more about the Eucharist, what it means to us and our faith, and by what Bishop Manuel said: to not leave Jesus alone in the tabernacle. It is very important – I want not to leave Him alone!”

Before he died, St. Manuel said: “I ask to be buried next to a tabernacle, so that my bones, after death, as my tongue and my pen during life, can say to those who pass by: Jesus is there! There He is waiting for you! Do not leave Him abandoned!”

The Immaculate Tabernacle in Fort Wayne to provide detailed explanations about the life of St. Manuel and offer opportunities to venerate his relics. Sister María Cecilia Appendino and Sister Mónica M. Cordiviola, traveled to Fort Wayne to provide detailed explanations about the life of St. Manuel and offer opportunities to venerate his relics. Sister María Cecilia Appendino and Sister Mónica M. Cordiviola, traveled to Fort Wayne to provide detailed explanations about the life of St. Manuel and offer opportunities to venerate his relics. Sister María Cecilia Appendino and Sister Mónica M. Cordiviola, traveled to Fort Wayne to provide detailed explanations about the life of St. Manuel and offer opportunities to venerate his relics.
The Moment Revival Found Me

I saw it. The Church in the United States has witnessed the defining moment of a generation. There’s no other way to describe it. I had high hopes for the National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis, but it simply, our Lord brought me to my knees in Indianapolis.

In the months leading up to the congress, I joined hundreds of other volunteers in planning meetings, beginning to do my part to make this gathering possible. Our first major benefactor, pledging a million dollars to support the congress when it was first announced. It was important for us as an organization. But it was important for me personally. I’ve spent the past year and a half traveling across the country supporting the National Eucharistic Revival as a Eucharistic Preacher. I believe in the call for revival and discouraged. He even asks me to turn away from my people to turn away from the Eucharist. He was at work among us. He was at work among us. Drawing us near. And, to my delight, He did something for me.

It wasn’t that I doubted what Jesus taught about the Eucharist. But I had hedged my bets, not quite believing about Him. He would be at work at the congress. I was withholding, not fully surrendering. I had been writing articles and critical. I had been under the impression that everything I had been working for was for someone else. I joined in the enthusiasm of all the congress attendees. But Jesus took all that from me when He arrived. And He showed me. He was there — present, body, soul, and divinity. I heard Him speak to me. And finally, I could surrender all of this work to Him.

My experience at the congress was electrifying. And I wasn’t alone. Tens of thousands joined me in silent prayer on our knees in an NFL stadium. Tens of thousands will go forth from Indianapolis, sharing what God has done for us, each of us personally.

The 10th National Eucharistic Congress wasn’t an event. It wasn’t a celebration or festival. It was the defining encounter of a generation. It was the decisive moment when the Church in the United States, through the Eucharist, was going to be something new and critical.

Father Patrick Briscoe is Editor of Our Sunday Visitor.

Going Forward by Making a Retreat

My wife and I are preparing for our summer vacation, a weeklong road trip to Colorado to attend her uncle’s 90th birthday party. We’re taking our two golden retrievers along with us for the 2,496-mile ride, and my mother will join us in Denver for the return trip, which means all the pieces are in place for our own make of the classic comedy “National Lampoon’s Vacation.”

Vacations are a chance to break out of your daily routine, to temporarily leave your work and home responsibilities, to pursue some out of the ordinary adventure, and ideally to get some rest and relaxation. Getting away from your regular life allows you to realize who and what you really miss when you’re away. This helps you refocus on who and what are really important to you. “Absence makes the heart grow fonder,” the popular proverb says. Planning vacation, you always find new things to do and enjoy, from foods and drinks to even toothpaste.

In our faith life, the analogy to vacations are spiritual retreats. We read in the Gospels that Jesus himself took periods of retreat. In the 40 days after his baptism (cf. Mark 1:12) are the most familiar, but at various other times, He also took quiet places to pray. For example, after He healed Peter’s mother in Capernaum, Mark tells us that Jesus went out early the next morning on His own while Peter and the other town was seeking Him (cf. Mark 1:35). Later, after learning that John the Baptist had been beheaded, “He withdrew in a boat to a deserted place by Himself” (Matthew 14:13). He sent the disciples to the Sea of Galilee after feeding the multitudes to pray in solitude, and then walking on the water to join the Twelve in the boat (cf. Mark 6:45-52). Jesus also exhorted His disciples to spend time in recollection and prayer. After sending them out two-by-two to heal the sick and preach the Gospel, as they returned, He invited them to “Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while” (Mark 6:31).

It’s notable that our seminarists, priests, and deacons are required by canon law to make a spiritual retreat before their ordination, and priests thereafter, in accordance with HALLENIUS, page 17
The Eucharistic Congress and the Primacy of the Supernatural

Having just returned from the magnificent National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis, I must say that several days constituted one of the greatest moments in my 38 years as a priest. To see more than 50,000 faithful laity, thousands of priests, more than 150 bishops, armies of habited religious (both men and women), and hundreds of seminarians all gathered together to celebrate and commune with their Eucharistic Lord was splendid beyond words.

I have spoken to some large crowds in my time – including 26,000 in an arena in Krakow for World Youth Day and 10,000 in the Anaheim Convention Center for the L.A. Congress – but I have never faced 50,000 before. The experience was overwhelming. But the most moving part of the Indy celebration for me was the public procession on Saturday afternoon. As thousands upon thousands of bishops, priests, nuns, and seminarians marched through the streets of downtown Indianapolis, we were cheered by thousands upon thousands of lay faithful, and all of us were simply part of a great symbolic pilgrimage in honor of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Will I ever forget the silence that fell upon the assembly as the procession reached the massive park at the base of the cathedral? Will I ever forget the silence that fell upon the massive park after the festive procession, we that all knelt to venerate the Lord Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

As you spend time with God in prayer and contemplation, He will pour graces into your heart and perhaps even reveal His face to you. As you do so, what God has not heard, what God has not seen, eye has not seen, ear has not heard, and the human heart, what has not been generated in the heart of energy and enthusiasm that I saw in Indianapolis.

I may put this in a broad, metaphysical context, the problem with liberalism is that the natural cannot contain or adequately bear the supernatural. When we pretend to do so, we end up with, at best, a simulacrum of the supernatural. However, the supernatural can be properly grasped only in the metaphysical context of the supernatural. It exuded the spirit of the supernatural. It ordered us toward the infinitely fascinating world that we know as the world of the angels and saints and the Creator God. At the heart of the entire event was the unnerving mystery of the Eucharist, that Jesus – body, blood, soul, and divinity – is really present under the forms of bread and wine. No merely earthly or natural category could possibly account for this. It makes sense only from a supernatural perspective.

The problem with liberalism is that the natural cannot contain or adequately bear the supernatural. And this moves to make a provocative claim: liberal Catholicism could never have pulled off what happened in Indianapolis. I understand that the Christian faith, as is slippery, so, I will define it precisely. By “liberalism” in religion, I mean the tendency to reduce the supernatural to the natural. Liberal Catholicism was regnant when I was going through school, and it took the form of expressing orthodoxy.

A little later in life, if you had asked me the same question, I might have said, “becoming a well-adjusted and genuinely human being.” Obviously, there isn’t one little thing wrong with social justice, being well-adjusted, or orthodoxy. The problem is reducing religion to these concerns and its purpose to these results. When we do so, the faith becomes, at best, a faint echo of justice, especially racial justice.”

Jesus’ instruction to His disciples to rest a while. But spiritual retreats are for every Christian, not just clergy. I’ve taken several private retreats through the years, usually going away to a secluded place such as a monastery or dedicated retreat center, spending time in private prayer and quiet contemplation, going to confession, and joining in daily Mass and common meals with other retreatants. I usually manage to also make sure I get some extra nap time, which always contributes to the restful experience. On retreat one year with the Trappists, I volunteered to help the monks bake fruitcakes, which they sell to support their common life. I think I gained five pounds in three weeks.

Many retreat centers offer group retreats based on a particular theme, such as learning how Scripture, prayer, and the Eucharist should be handled in the world of Milan, Francis of Assisi, Elizabeth of Hungary, Dorothy Day, and Mother Teresa of Kolkata.

Three enthusiastic choirs for all those who planned and participated in the Eucharistic Congress. And God bless them for allowing the spirit of the supernatural to breathe through the proceedings.

BISHOP ROBERT BARRON

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

LIVING BREAD

BREAD OF JOSEPH UNLESS WRITTEN BELIEVES THEY DIED

HEAVEN MURMURING DRAWS HIM TAUGHT EXCEPT ETERNAL FOREVER

JESUS COMES TO ME ON THE LAST DAY FROM GOD MANNA FLESH

HALLENIUS, from page 16

Jesus’ instruction to His disciples to rest a while.

Following is a word search based on the Gospel reading for the 19th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle B: The Bread from Heaven. The words can be found in all directions in the puzzle.

WORD OF FIRE

BISHOP ROBERT BARRON

Gospel for August 11, 2024
John 6: 41-51

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

Spark, Graham Greene, and Evelyn Waugh.

There are also “busy people’s retreats” for people who can’t take dedicated time away. For example, the very popular Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola are usually experienced in the context of an intense 30-day retreat featuring seclusion, solitude, and silence, but there are versions that offer the same content delivered in more accessible formats for anyone who can’t get away from responsibilities such as family life or work. One version of the Spiritual Exercises is offered as an eight-week online retreat featuring directed readings and video reflections from an experienced Jesuit spiritual director, which has the added bonus of also being more affordable than traveling to a secluded retreat center.

One final word of warning: Spending time face-to-face with God can be a daunting proposition. “Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, what God has not ready for those who love Him,” according to the famous song. As you enjoy time with God in prayer and contemplation He will pour graces into your heart and perhaps even reveal His plans for your future. And the spiritual director you have prepared for you is an adventuress who can navigate even the screenwriters at National Lampoon could never imagine.

Ken Hallein is a syndicated radio host and podcaster living in South Bend.
When Smartphones Make Gender Unbearable

EUGENICALLY FOR ETERNITY
BRETT SALKELD

T
he past 10 years have seen an unprecedented rise in people identifying as something other than their biological sex. Such a phenomenon seems to require an explanation. There are, of course, many factors at play, far more than can be investigated in one column. But surely it is significant that these increases become noticeable around the time when smartphones come onto the scene. And, as young people’s social lives have moved more and more online, cases of gender dysphoria and the adoption of novel gender identities has skyrocketed. What’s going on here? Perhaps the most obvious issue is the content young people can access online, cases of gender dysphoria and lives have moved more and more...
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.

Feria Guadalupana XV Anniversary

WARSAW – The Feria Guadalupana festival will mark its 15th year of celebration on Saturday, August 10, from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, 225 Gilliam Dr. The festival is a fun, family-friendly atmosphere with live music, entertainment, authentic Mexican dishes, and so much more. Visit facebook.com/feriagualupana or call 574-267-5324 for more information.

St. Vincent de Paul Parish Festival

ELKHART – St Vincent de Paul Parish Festival will be held on Saturday, August 10, from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m at the parish, 1108 South Main St. There will be food, games, a bounce house, a bake sale, music, and fun for the whole family. Contact Pat Kile at 574-596-4860 or patjkile@gmail.com to learn more.

St. Aloysius Festival and Chicken Dinner

YODER – The St. Aloysius Parish Festival will be held on Saturday, August 10, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the parish, 14625 Bluffton Rd. There will be a chicken dinner from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. for $14, and kids meals are just $5. Other activities include a farmers market, a petting zoo, bingo, a silent auction, snacks, children’s games, a rummage sale, and a raffle drawing with tickets available for purchase the day of the festival. Contact Amanda Freiburger at 260-622-4491.

Forever Learning Institute 50th Anniversary Gala

SOUTH BEND – Forever Learning Institute’s celebration will kick off with a 50th Anniversary Gala on Thursday, August 22, from 6-9 p.m. at the Morris Park Country Club, 2200 McKinley Ave. The event will feature a reception and dinner, music by the Jazz Assemblage, a silent auction, and a dance performance with Forever’s own Solid Silver Dancers. Contact Eve Finnessy at 574-282-1901 or even@foreverlearninginstitute.org for more information.

St. Patrick and St. Hedwig Summer Festival

SOUTH BEND – St. Patrick and St. Hedwig Summer Festival will be held on Sunday, August 25, from noon to 4 p.m. at the Hedwig Memorial Center, 531 S. Scott St., and will offer a variety of food, including Vietnamese, Polish, or pulled-pork dinners; hot dogs, Polish sausage, or pulled-pork sandwiches, corn on the cob, pizza slices, ice cream, adult beverages, pop, and water. There will be entertainment for the family with children’s games and a cornhole tournament, plus live music from the CMR Band. For more information, contact Karen Horvath at 574-339-2375 or khorvat1650@yahoo.com.

Miss Virginia’s Food Pantry Volunteers Needed

FORT WAYNE – Miss Virginia’s Food Pantry, 1512 S. Hanna St., is looking for volunteers to support the food pantry operation on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Help is needed with bagging and distribution of food to those in need. Help is also needed with light warehouse work, restocking, and pre-bagging food items. Contact Greg Witte, Pantry Director, at 260-450-3575 or slicker1951@gmail.com.

St. Felix Catholic Center Mass and Stations of the Cross Blessing

HUNTINGTON – Bishop Rhoades will celebrate a Mass for the sick and troubled on Saturday, August 17, at St. Felix Catholic Center, 1280 Hitzfeld Rd. There will be recitation of the Holy Rosary at 12:30 p.m., Mass at 1 p.m., and blessings with a first-class relic of Blessed Father Solanus Casey. Afterwards, walk across the grounds for a blessing of the new Stations of the Cross (sponsored by the Tippmann Foundation and the St. Felix Catholic Center), with a reception following. The building is handicapped accessible. Visit sfclatholiccenter.com or contact Gabby Mayo at 260-443-9700 or sfcl@tippmanngroup.com.

Free Parking in the Garage
Graphics Specialist/Website Coordinator

The Secretariat for Communication is seeking a Graphics Specialist/Website Coordinator. The candidate will be a skilled and gifted visual storyteller for the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. This person is responsible for the overall layout, production design, and graphic creation for a multi-platform team that engages the Catholic community in the diocese and better connects them to their priests, their parishes, the bishop, and the entire diocese.

Working closely with members of the content and digital team under the leadership of the Secretary for Communications and guidance by the Editor-in-Chief, the person in this position creates the layout for the diocesan traditional print media outlet, Today’s Catholic, the official weekly newspaper for the diocese, as well as the digital version of the newspaper, and is responsible for the layout of content on the newspaper website. This person also produces content for a wide range of mainstream and digital platforms and mediums throughout the diocese, including graphics and advertisements for print materials, websites, email, social media, and more.

As a member of the Secretariat for Communications, the Graphics Specialist/Website Coordinator strives to connect individuals to the truth and beauty of the Catholic Church and the amazing work being done in the diocese through first-class content and innovative, artful storytelling.

For information, visit diocesefwsb.org/careers

Marketing Specialist/Website Design and Content Creator

The Marketing Specialist/Website Design and Content Creator is responsible for articulating the zeal with which the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend desires to evangelize by helping to formulate a clearly articulated message, consistent with branding for diocesan communications as well as the secular media.

This position is responsible for researching, writing, and editing a variety of diocesan and marketing communications materials for the Office of Communication and Today’s Catholic, as well as the official websites of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend and Today’s Catholic. This person is also responsible for working collaboratively to create marketing collateral for other diocesan departments, newsletters, and employee communications.

This position will also be instrumental in strengthening the official marketing brand of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend by reviewing marketing collateral and modifying as necessary to clarify meaning and to conform to corporate style guidelines and editorial policy.

Working closely with members of the content and digital team under the leadership of the Secretary for Communications, the Marketing Specialist/Website Design and Content Creator produces content for a wide range of mainstream and digital platforms and mediums throughout the diocese, including graphics and advertisements for print materials, websites, email, social media, and more.

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