

Bishop Expresses 'Strong Opposition' to Notre Dame Appointment



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

**Remembering
Father Bob
Van Kempen**

PAGE 3

**Lawmakers
Aim to Protect
Teens Online**

PAGE 4

**Grow Closer to
Christ this Lent**

PAGES 8-9

**Sorin Fellows
Merge Faith,
Academics**

PAGE 16



Nick Meyer

Bishop Rhoades preaches during the Jubilee Mass at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart on the campus of the University of Notre Dame on September 24, 2025.

BY TODAY'S CATHOLIC

On Wednesday, February 11, Bishop Rhoades issued a statement in which he strongly urged the University of Notre Dame to rescind its appointment of a pro-abortion professor to lead one of the school's academic institutions.

In early January, officials from the University of Notre Dame announced that Susan Ostermann, associate professor of global af-

fairs at the Keough School of Global Affairs, will become the university's next director of the Liu Institute for Asia and Asian Studies as of July 1 of this year.

Bishop Rhoades noted that the appointment has been met with considerable pushback from the Notre Dame community. Ostermann has been an outspoken advocate for abortion and a critic of the Church's stance against it.

In the days following the publication of Bishop Rhoades' state-

ment, OSV News reported that bishops, former faculty, and other Catholic intellectual leaders had expressed their support for Bishop Rhoades' call to rescind Ostermann's administrative appointment.

As of February 13, at least nine bishops, including Archbishop Paul S. Coakley, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, had expressed their support. "I fully support Bishop Kevin Rhoades in his challenge

to Notre Dame to rectify its poor judgement in hiring a professor who openly stands against Catholic teaching when it comes to the sanctity of life, in this case protection of the unborn," Archbishop Coakley said on February 13.

In a statement provided to OSV News, Ostermann said her "primary focus is to serve as a steward for the Liu Institute mission in the context of the University's larger

NOTRE DAME, page 2

Sacraments Highlight Bishop's Visit to Marian High School

BY KASIA BALSBAUGH

On the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, Marian High School's gym was filled with chairs, and two special banners hung on the bleachers.

"Thanks for coming to celebrate with us Bishop Rhoades!!! Happy feast day of Our Lady of Lourdes! Marian loves you!" read

the first one, embellished with a marked image of Our Lady. The other banner bore symbols of baptism, the holy Eucharist, and confirmation, with congratulations to six students who would be receiving sacraments of initiation that morning: Mariana Carlson, Maize Mathiak, Gracee Sandoval, Madeline Seymore, Alice Talbott, and Graeme Wise.

Carlson, Sandoval, and Talbott were receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation, while Mathiak, Seymour, and Wise would be receiving all three sacraments of initiation.

Bishop Rhoades celebrated an all-school Mass and conferred these sacraments during his annual visit to the school in Mishawaka on Wednesday, February 11.

"Baptism is not a mere formality, and it's not like joining an organization or a club," Bishop Rhoades said in his homily. "Baptism is a holy mystery, a sacrament. It is a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit. ... Through baptism, one receives the blessings that flow from the dying and

MARIAN, page 10

TODAY'S CATHOLIC

(ISSN 0891-1533)
(USPS 403630)

Official newspaper of the
Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend
P.O. Box 11169
Fort Wayne, IN 46856

PUBLISHER: Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades

Editorial Department

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: Scott Warden
PAGE DESIGNER: Chelsea Alt

Business Department

BOOKKEEPING/CIRCULATION:
circulation@diocesefwsb.org
ADVERTISING ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE:
Erika Barron: ebarron@diocesefwsb.org

Website: todayscatholic.org
260-456-2824

Published weekly, except for the last Sunday in December and every other week from the fourth Sunday in May through the last Sunday in August by the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, 915 S. Clinton St., P.O. Box 390, Fort Wayne, IN 46802. Periodicals postage paid at Fort Wayne, IN, and additional mailing office.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: Today's Catholic, P.O. Box 11169, Fort Wayne, IN 46856-1169 or email: circulation@diocesefwsb.org

MAIN OFFICE: 915 S. Clinton St., Fort Wayne, IN 46802. Telephone 260-456-2824. Fax: 260-744-1473.
BUREAU OFFICE: 1328 Dagoon Trail, Mishawaka, IN 46544. Telephone 260-456-2824. Fax 260-744-1473.

News deadline is 10 days prior to publication date. Advertising deadline is nine days before publication date.

Today's Catholic may be reached at:
Today's Catholic,
P.O. Box 11169, Fort Wayne, IN
46856-1169; or email:
editor@diocesefwsb.org



The
Diocese of
Fort Wayne-South Bend

All Christians are earnest to speak the truth in charity and join with all peace-loving people in pleading for peace and trying to bring it about.
— *Gaudium et Spes*, 78

 Find us on Facebook
facebook.com/todayscatholicFWSB

 Follow us on X
[@diocesefwsb](https://twitter.com/diocesefwsb)

 Follow us on Instagram
[@diocesefwsb](https://www.instagram.com/diocesefwsb)

NOTRE DAME, from page 1

mission, and a facilitator for our world-class faculty," adding that she is "fully committed to maintaining an environment of academic freedom where a plurality of voices can flourish."

On February 13, Notre Dame officials released a statement to EWTN saying Ostermann "is a highly regarded political scientist and legal scholar whose insightful research on regulatory compliance ... demonstrates the rigorous, interdisciplinary expertise required to lead the Liu Institute." Calling Ostermann a "deeply committed educator," the school said she is "well prepared to expand the institute's global partnerships and create impactful research opportunities that advance our dedication to serving as the preeminent global Catholic research institution." The university also stressed its "unwavering" commitment "to upholding the inherent dignity of the human person and the sanctity of life at every stage."

The following is the full statement from Bishop Rhoades:

"There has been much news coverage, controversy, and outcry in response to the recent appointment of Associate Professor Susan Ostermann to director of the Liu Institute for Asia and Asian Studies at the University of Notre Dame. Having now read many of the op-ed pieces co-authored by Professor Ostermann, I must express my dismay and my strong opposition to this appointment that is causing scandal to the faithful of our diocese and beyond. Professor Ostermann's extensive public advocacy of abortion rights and her disparaging and inflammatory remarks about those who uphold the dignity of human life from the moment of conception to natural death go against a core principle of justice that is central to Notre Dame's Catholic identity and mission.

"In nearly a dozen op-eds (co-authored with another abortion activist, former Notre Dame Professor Tamara Kay), Professor Ostermann has attacked the pro-life movement, using outrageous rhetoric. I need not repeat it all here since it has been widely covered in the media, but a few examples stand out. She wrote that the pro-life position has "its roots in white supremacy and racism," and has misogyny "embedded" in the movement. She has attacked pregnancy resource centers as deceptive "anti-abortion propaganda sites" that harm women. She also argued that the Catholic social



Photo provided by the University of Notre Dame

Bishop Rhoades speaks at the graduation ceremony at the University of Notre Dame on May 17, 2025.

doctrine of "integral human development" supports abortion because it enhances freedom and flourishing for women. These are all outrageous claims that should disqualify her from an administrative and leadership role at a Catholic university. I hope that Professor Ostermann will explicitly retract these claims, and I pray that she will have a change of mind and heart that will lead her to affirm the innate dignity of unborn babies as well as that of their mothers.

"Pope Francis spoke strongly about the "false compassion which holds that it is a benefit to women to promote abortion" (Address on November 15, 2014). He told bishops: "Abortion compounds the grief of many women who now carry with them deep physical and spiritual wounds after succumbing to the pressures of a secular culture which devalues God's gift of sexuality and the right to life of the unborn" (Address on April 25, 2014). The Church here in our diocese and around the world serves mothers before and after birth, providing spiritual, emotional, and material care to moms in need. The Church stands for the inalienable right to life of mothers and their unborn children.

"Notre Dame has publicly committed as a Catholic institution to the life and dignity of the human person. It affirms the Church's teaching that "human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception" (Catechism of the Catholic Church #2270). I am proud of Notre Dame's pro-life commitment, manifest in the large number of students and faculty who promote a culture of life through many campus organizations, programs, and activities. They witness to the sanctity of life at every stage, with special attention to the lives of the vulnerable, including the

unborn, the poor, immigrants, the elderly, and the infirm. Through these actions and witness, Notre Dame takes seriously our call from the Lord to care for the poor, welcome the stranger, visit the imprisoned, clothe the naked, heal the sick, and love our neighbor as ourselves.

"The Catholic Church upholds a consistent ethic of life. Respect for the intrinsic equal dignity of all human life born and unborn is of paramount importance to the Church. In an address just two weeks ago, Pope Leo XIV reminded us, quoting Saint Teresa of Calcutta, that "the greatest destroyer of peace today is abortion," and stated, in his own powerful words that "no policy can genuinely serve the people if it denies the unborn the gift of life, or if it neglects to support those in need whether in their material circumstances or in their spiritual distress" (Address on January 31, 2026). And this pro-life principle is not merely affirmed by Catholics; it is embraced by many people of good will of diverse backgrounds and commitments around the world.

"The Liu Institute at Notre Dame is housed in the Keough School of Global Affairs, which endorses "integral human development" as the most important Catholic social teaching principle for its work. Professor Ostermann has written – ludicrously – that this Catholic principle actually supports abortion on demand. To the contrary, the Holy See, in statements to the United Nations, continues to defend the "right to life" as one of the core "pillars of integral human development" (e.g. Note regarding the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 2016). Professor Ostermann's opposite view thus clearly should disqualify her from holding a position of leadership within the Keough School.

"Also disqualifying is Professor Ostermann's work as a consultant for the Population Council. For those who have never heard of it, this is an organization dedicated to the promotion of abortion around the world. It has been linked to China's population control policies that have resulted in hundreds of millions of abortions of baby girls. It was also instrumental in securing approval of the abortion pill by the FDA, which is responsible for the majority of abortions in the United States.

"Some may claim that this appointment should be protected by academic freedom. Academic freedom concerns the liberty of faculty to conduct research according to their own professional judgment and interests. This appointment, by contrast, concerns the official administrative appointment to lead an academic unit. Such appointments have profound impact on the integrity of Notre Dame's public witness as a Catholic university.

"This appointment understandably creates confusion in the public mind as to Notre Dame's fidelity to its Catholic mission. Many faculty, students, alumni, and benefactors of Notre Dame have reached out to me to express their shock, sadness, confusion, and disappointment. I share their feelings as well as their love for Notre Dame. I can testify from my personal experience and active presence at Notre Dame that the faith is alive there and continues to be nurtured by committed students, faculty, staff, members of the Congregation of Holy Cross, and members of the extended Notre Dame family. Let us ask Our Lady of Lourdes, whose feast the Church celebrates today, to intercede for the Notre Dame community and its leaders during these days. I invite you to say a prayer or light a candle at her grotto, invoking her prayers that Notre Dame will always stand firm in her commitment to the Gospel of her Son, the Gospel of Life.

"Because I have the particular responsibility as Bishop of Fort Wayne-South Bend "to promote and assist in the preservation and strengthening" of the Catholic identity of Catholic universities within my diocese (cf. *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, No. 28), I call upon the leadership of Notre Dame to rectify this situation. The appointment of Professor Ostermann is not scheduled to go into effect until July 1, 2026. There is still time to make things right."

Father Bob Van Kempen, Pastor of St. Mary of the Annunciation, Dies at Age 66

BY LISA KOCHANOWSKI

A few days short of his 67th birthday, Father Robert Van Kempen, pastor of St. Mary of the Annunciation parish in Bristol, passed away on Thursday, February 12, with his family by his side at St. Joseph Regional Medical Center in Mishawaka.

Father Van Kempen was born on February 25, 1959, in South Bend to Henry and Mary Grace Van Kempen. He was baptized, received his first holy Communion, and was confirmed at Christ the King Church in South Bend.

He attended seminary at St. John's Theology Seminary in Boston, Massachusetts, from 1989 to 1993, was ordained a deacon on January 2, 1993, at St. Matthew Cathedral in South Bend, and was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend on November 27, 1993, at St. Matthew Cathedral by Bishop John M. D'Arcy.

During his ministry, he served the faithful in parishes across the diocese, including at St. Jude in Fort Wayne, St. Joseph-Hessen Cassel and St. Matthew Cathedral. He has been pastor of St. Mary of the Annunciation Parish in Bristol since 2004.

Known fondly as "Father Bob," he was diagnosed with kidney disease in 2016 and, in 2020, was told he needed a kidney transplant and began dialysis. The last few years were wrought with health issues, but Father Van Kempen didn't give in to the pain and continued to minister to the Bristol community.

Bryan Finkelstein, director of sacred music at St. Mary of the Annunciation, met Father Van Kempen in 2007 when he inquired about the position as musical director.

"I had very little liturgical experience at that time but had decades of musical experience in the secular world of restaurants, hotels, and bars. Long story short, Father Bob took a chance and hired me, a liturgical gatecrasher," Finkelstein told Today's Catholic. "Over the years ... he always gave me a great deal of creative freedom, which made it a joy to work for him."

While past retirement age at 74 years old, Finkelstein has continued to work with joy and enthusiasm because of the supportive and loving environment created by Father Van Kempen.

"Over the past two decades, St. Mary's and Father Bob have



become synonymous," Finkelstein said. "It's difficult to imagine one without the other. Everywhere you look at our parish you can see Father's influence, whether it's the holy artwork on our walls, the beautiful Christmas decorations, the fabulous dinners that he organized, the many events offering opportunities to grow in faith, or the people and their love for one another. The people of this parish have had the privilege of being the recipients of his love, fathomless generosity, and strong leadership. We love him, and he will be missed."

Father Van Kempen influenced those he encountered with a heart that was full of love. He had a wonderful sense of humor and a hearty laugh that brought joy to everyone who heard it. Generations of families have been inspired by his faith, received Sacraments under his guidance, and smirked at his love of snow.

"Father Bob was the kindest, most generous individual," said Becky Monnin, a close friend of Father Van Kempen's, who met the priest in the late 1990s while he was serving as associate pastor at St. Matthew Cathedral. "He was an amazing parish priest, and everyone he met loved him. He absolutely loved Christmas and snow and even kept a Christmas tree up year-round in the rectory. He loved to take annual bus trips from St. Mary's to Frankenthum to collect more Christmas decorations. He made the best monster cookies and made sure we had plenty to take home after a get-together at the rectory. He kept totes of candy in the sacristy for the servers and made sure he never ran out," Monnin added.

For years, Monnin and her husband, Tom, have shared travels with Father Van Kempen, includ-

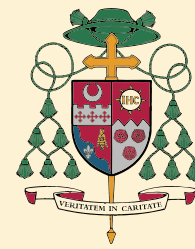
ing on several cruise vacations. Their first cruise was aboard the Liberty of the Seas in 2010, a tradition that continued for 14 years.

"I have so many memorable moments with Father Bob, but one of the most memorable was when we cruised the Hawaiian Islands in October of 2019 to celebrate Tom and my 25th anniversary," Monnin shared. "Although he would have preferred snowy Alaska, he enjoyed seeing the people and culture of Hawaii. ... Every minute I spent with Father Bob was memorable, and I will miss our weekly chats and dinners together. Father Bob was a faith-filled servant of God and displayed this on a daily basis. He was nonjudgmental and served as a mentor for the seminarians of the parish. He taught us how to carry the cross without complaining, as he suffered many health issues throughout his life."

Father Van Kempen is survived by his sisters, Linda Fleese of South Bend and Kathryn Belich of Granger; nephews Nick Belich, Ian (Amanda) Belich, and Matthew Fleese; and his niece Amy (Scott) Czarnecki; great nieces and nephews, Madison, Logan, Ethan, Anthony, Eli, and Aidan. He was preceded in death by his mom, Mary Grace (Scott) McCaw, and his father Henry (Margaret) Van Kempen.

A visitation and vigil service was held for Father Van Kempen on Monday, February 16. Mass of Christian Burial was held on February 17 at Christ the King Catholic Church.

Memorial donations in memory of Father Van Kempen may be made to the church, the retired priest fund of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, P.O. Box 390, Fort Wayne, IN 46801, or the American Diabetes Association.



PUBLIC SCHEDULE OF
BISHOP KEVIN C. RHOADES

Veritatem In Caritate
(Truth in Charity)

- ◆ **Monday, February 23, to Wednesday, February 25** – Symposium for Bishops on "The Relation Between Science and Faith as a Pastoral Issue in an Age of Disaffiliation," University of Notre Dame
- ◆ **Tuesday, February 24, at 5:15 p.m.** – Mass, Basilica of the Sacred Heart, Notre Dame
- ◆ **Thursday, February 26, at 6:30 p.m.** – Mass with Belles for Life, Holy Spirit Chapel, Le Mans Hall, Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame
- ◆ **Saturday, February 28, at 8:30 a.m.** – Mass for "Brunch with His Brides" event, Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Fort Wayne
- ◆ **Sunday, March 1, at 9 a.m.** – Mass and Pastoral Visit, Culver Academies, Culver

Join us in welcoming two providers to our team!

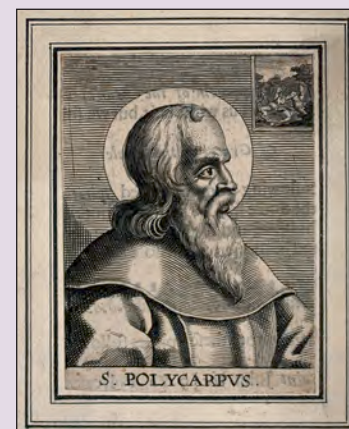
Dr. Julie Funfrock, DO
Cassie Herber, FNP-C

Dr. Julie A. Funfrock, DO Nicholas M. Lesch, PA-C Cassandra E. Kaiser, PA-C
Dr. Emily M. Krach, DO Cassandree A. Herber, FNP-C Dr. Andrew J. Mullally, MD

CREDO
FAMILY MEDICINE

(260) 4-FAMILY • credofamilymedicine.com • Fort Wayne, IN

SAINT OF THE WEEK



ST. POLYCARP

Feast Day: February 23

This disciple of St. John the Apostle was appointed bishop of Smyrna (now Izmir, Turkey), perhaps by John. Representing the Asia Minor churches, he went to Rome about 155 to discuss when to celebrate Easter. The result was that the Eastern and Western churches continued to calculate the date as

before. Shortly after his return, Polycarp was arrested and urged to renounce God. He refused and was sentenced to be burned alive. When the flames did not harm him, he was killed by a sword, as recounted in an early Christian document.

Advocates Sound Alarm on Teens and Social Media

BY VICTORIA ARTHUR

Parents, educators, and other advocates are imploring state lawmakers to put safeguards on social media and other technology for young people amid what they call a growing crisis that threatens their well-being and their very lives.

The high-profile case of Fishers teen Hailey Buzbee, who was found dead in Ohio in January after allegedly leaving home with a man she had been communicating with online for a year, brought immediacy and urgency to a recent hearing on key legislation at the Statehouse. The 17-year-old's father was among those who addressed lawmakers on a proposed amendment to Senate Bill 199 – a wider education bill – that would place greater restrictions on social media use for children and teens, including stricter parental consent.

With his wife, Ronya, by his side, Beau Buzbee described how they are “living every parent's worst nightmare.”

“From the perspective of a Hoosier family who lost our most precious gift from God, I assure you that the decisions you are considering today have the power to save children's lives,” Buzbee said during a February 9 hearing on the bill in the House Education Committee.

In his emotional testimony, which took place just days before his daughter's funeral services, Buzbee called on committee members to address the “glaring gaps” in oversight of minors' use of social media. His daughter had reportedly been communicating via an online gaming platform and a secure chat app with the 39-year-old man now facing federal charges in her death.

“We are in the midst of the greatest crisis of our time,” Buzbee said. “We are losing the fight to protect our children. The internet and social media are the devil's and predators' playgrounds, and it's on this front that we must fight. I beg of you, please do not let this opportunity slip away.”

The education committee voted two days later to adopt the proposed amendment to Senate Bill 199 – an otherwise multi-faceted education bill – sending the entire measure to the full House for consideration. Among other provisions, the amendment would require parental consent for children younger than 16 to

create or maintain social media accounts and place new requirements on social media companies to ensure age and identity verification.

Additionally, the amendment aims to restrict social media companies from using algorithms on children's accounts that push personalized content intended to increase users' time on the platforms.

These types of practices fuel young people's increasing addiction to social media, according to a longtime school guidance counselor who testified at the hearing. Amy Klink, director of counseling at Guerin Catholic High School in Noblesville, spoke of what she believes is a strong correlation between social media overuse and mental health issues among children and teens.

“The number of students seeking mental health services has increased exponentially during my time as a counselor,” said Klink, who has served in that capacity at both public and private schools for 26 years. “A large part of this can be attributed to social media.”

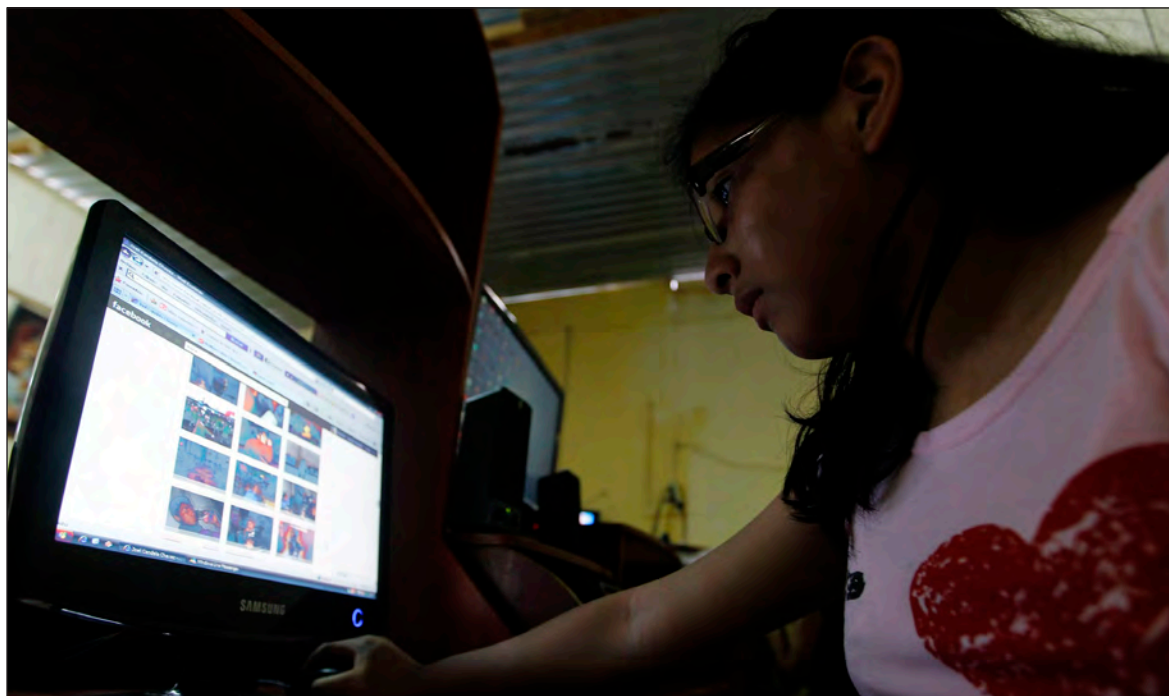
“We need to do more to protect our children's mental health and their safety,” Klink continued. “Our parents are asking for help. The children in their own way are asking for help, and I'm asking for help. Please give parents more say in what their children have access to, and please help us in fighting this mental health crisis.”

An earlier version of Senate Bill 199 included language prohibiting anyone in Indiana younger than 14 from having a social media account and requiring those between the ages of 14 and 18 to have parental consent. That language was later stripped from the bill due to legal and enforcement concerns.

The new amendment, which reintroduced key elements of that original version, has the support of the Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC) and the Indiana Non-Public Education Association (INPEA).

James McNeany, the INPEA's new executive director, spoke on behalf of both organizations during his testimony before the House committee.

“Educators across Indiana are seeing a clear connection between excessive social media use and declining student well-being,” said McNeany, most recently principal of Guerin Catholic High School before taking the helm of the INPEA, which



OSV News photo/Mariana Bazo, Reuters

represents the state's more than 400 nonpublic schools, including Indiana's 175 Catholic schools.

“Over the past decade, rates of anxiety, depression, self-harm, and suicide among teenagers have risen sharply, and suicide is now one of the leading causes of death for adolescents nationwide,” McNeany added. “This trend closely parallels the rise of smart phones and social media.”

McNeany said he favored the original language of the bill but is pleased to see some elements of it moving forward.

“While I prefer a complete ban for our youngest and most vulnerable students, this is a meaningful step in the right direction that restores parental authority and introduces common-sense safeguards,” he said.

A related measure that advocates are closely following is Senate Bill 78, which would ban cellphone usage for students from “bell to bell” – that is, for the entire school day from the moment they enter the building until final dismissal. Current Indiana restrictions apply only to instructional time, not lunch time or passing periods.

The House Education Committee voted unanimously in support of the bill on Wednesday, February 11, the same day it passed the revised Senate Bill 199. Although Senate Bill 78 would only directly affect public school corporations and charter schools, members of the INPEA spoke to the benefits of this sort of policy during the recent hearing in the education committee.

Some nonpublic schools have already adopted complete cellphone bans during the school day, including Brebeuf Jesuit Pre-

paratory School in Indianapolis.

“The results have been transformative,” said Brebeuf principal Greg VanSlambrook, who addressed education committee members both about Senate Bill 199 and Senate Bill 78 in his February 9 remarks. “We find that students are more engaged in their lessons. We see more eye contact and real conversation in our hallways and our cafeteria. There is, quite simply, more human interaction, and we are seeing some positive effects on mental health.”

The INPEA and ICC were closely following both bills as they awaited final action in the House at press time.

“There are just so many things that happen in the school day that are magnified because of phones and social media,” McNeany said. “So, we are hoping that these two bills together will have a positive effect on our young people.”

The ICC – the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Indiana – had supported similar legislation last year that ultimately stalled at the Statehouse.

“The Church usually leans more to the side of the state having a compelling interest in protecting kids and their well-being and giving parents the tools they need,” said Alexander Mingus, executive director of the ICC. “We are very interested in seeing this legislation cross the finish line.”

The ICC and the INPEA are hailing another development in the realm of education. Indiana recently opted into the federal tax credit scholarship program, part of President Donald Trump's “One Big Beautiful Bill.”

Indiana Governor Mike Braun made the announcement in late January during a visit to St. Philip Neri Catholic School in Indianapolis. The program will offer Indiana residents a dollar-for-dollar, nonrefundable tax credit of up to \$1,700 annually for donations to qualified Scholarship Granting Organizations (SGOs) that serve students from kindergarten through high school.

SGOs provide K-12 scholarships for nonpublic school tuition and other educational expenses. Mingus said that opting into the federal tax credit scholarship program is another positive step for Indiana, which passed universal school choice in the 2025 legislative session.

“We are certainly blessed in Indiana to have a robust school choice program in addition to this new federal program, which complements what we already have in place,” Mingus said.

Now, the ICC is hoping for a successful conclusion to the 2026 Indiana General Assembly, set to wrap up by the end of February.

“We ask for everyone's prayers for a smooth and positive conclusion to this legislative session, which has the potential to advance the common good in many areas,” Mingus said.

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

SCHOOL SPIRIT

YOUR SCHOOLS, YOUR STORIES

This academic year, Today's Catholic is partnering with the student media programs at all four Catholic high schools in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. Each week, student writers, editors, and photographers from Bishop Luers and Bishop Dwenger in Fort Wayne, Saint Joseph in South Bend, and Marian in Mishawaka will share their work on this new page, School Spirit, dedicated to telling the stories of their school communities.

Serving Christ by Serving Others

Bishop Dwenger High School Students Experience the Gospel Call on a Mission Trip to Pittsburgh

BY MILES KNEPPER

This past Christmas break, while many students were home celebrating the season's festivities with family and friends, 21 students from Bishop Dwenger High School in Fort Wayne chose to spend their break in a different way.

Along with students from other schools, they traveled to Pittsburgh to participate in a mission trip organized by St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Fort Wayne. What they encountered there was not only harsh poverty and homelessness but also a profound experience of faith and prayer.

The mission trip centered on serving the poor and homeless of Pittsburgh through organizations such as Red Door Ministries, which provides meals and clothing to those living on the streets, and Gift of Mary Ministries, which supports women affected by domestic violence.

Each day, students spent hours serving, sometimes outdoors in bitter cold that fell well below freezing, and other times behind the scenes working to prepare meals, clean facilities, and organize supplies. Though the work was demanding, students quickly realized that even the smallest acts of service could have a lasting impact.

For many, the most powerful moments came through personal encounters with those they served.

"I got to speak with and pray over many women of various ages and walks of life," said Bishop Dwenger junior Elizabeth Hill. "I realized how life-changing one conversation can be for someone, how much joy it can give them, and how loved they can feel."

Hill said listening to the stories these women shared and praying with them helped her see Christ present in each person she met.

Senior Caleb Keister shared a similar sentiment, explaining how the trip changed his perspective on homelessness.

"These people were all home-



Photos provided by Bishop Dwenger High School

A group of students, including from Bishop Dwenger in Fort Wayne, pose for a photo during a mission trip to Pittsburgh.

less for different reasons, but simply interacting with them and meeting them where they were at was a blessing," Keister said.

Keister said one especially meaningful experience came in helping throw a New Year's celebration for men transitioning off the streets.

"They were really thankful that we came and hung out with them," Keister said, noting how much joy such simple companionship brought.



Students pose for a photo during a mission trip to Pittsburgh.

Throughout the week, service was deeply intertwined with prayer. Students spent hours each day in personal prayer, communal worship, attending Mass and Holy Hours before the Blessed Sacrament. Many described these prayer times as moments of healing and renewal.

"Times of worship were very healing and holy," senior Sarah Koors said. "We all pressed in to encounter God, and His

presence fell so heavily upon all of us."

Several students also witnessed what they described as extraordinary movements of the Holy Spirit. Junior Rebecca Gillett recounted praying for a man named William who suffered from severe cataracts.

"When we first started talking to him, his eyesight was so terrible that he couldn't read the large, painted sign above the door. We prayed over him four



Students pray with a man outside of Divine Mercy Parish in Pittsburgh.

times," she said, "and after we prayed for him, he could once again see and read. He was in awe, and so were we."

Other students shared testimonies of physical, emotional, and spiritual healings, including moments where language barriers seemed to disappear during prayer and ministry.

Keister said one of the more amazing moments on the trip came when he was interacting with a man who spoke little English. "The man asked me for a large coat with a hood, but when he said it in Spanish, I understood it perfectly. The best part is that I don't speak Spanish at all."

These experiences reminded students of the signs and wonders found in the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. Beyond these special moments, students learned important lessons about what it truly means to live on mission.

"I learned mission isn't just about going to another country or even another state necessarily, but doing the small acts of service with love," junior Hannah Thurber said.

Whether serving meals or cleaning facilities, students came to see even these moments of hidden work done with love often make the biggest difference.

As the trip concluded, many students expressed a desire to bring this spirit of mission back to Bishop Dwenger.

Koors shared her hope to integrate service more deeply into school clubs and organizations, while others spoke of living the Gospel through simple acts such as offering kindness in the hallway, praying for classmates, and witnessing to their faith through words and actions.

As these Dwenger students return to their daily lives, they carry with them a renewed call to live out their faith in the halls of Bishop Dwenger High School, and all students are called to live on mission, empowered by the ardent love of the Holy Spirit within them.

Miles Knepper is a sophomore at Bishop Dwenger High School.

Pope Leo XIV Explains Why Catholics Fast During Lent

VATICAN CITY (OSV News) – Pope Leo XIV is calling Catholics to rediscover the power of fasting this Lent, saying the ancient practice can shake us out of complacency and teach us to “hunger” for God. In his 2026 Lenten message, released on Friday, February 13, ahead of Ash Wednesday, the pope described abstaining from food as an “ancient ascetic practice” that helps believers refocus their lives on the Lord. Lent, he said, is a time to “place the mystery of God back in the center of our lives, in order to find renewal in our faith and keep our hearts from being consumed by the anxieties and distractions of daily life.” He added, “Abstaining from food is an ancient ascetic practice that is essential on the path of conversion.” Fasting, he said, helps order our “appetites” and keeps our “hunger and thirst for justice alive and freeing us from complacency.” Drawing on St. Augustine, Pope Leo also urged Catholics to fast from hurtful speech and to embrace Lent as a shared journey of conversion, grounded in humility, Scripture, and grace.

Portland Archbishop: Pope Affirms Solidarity with Immigrants in U.S.

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – All Catholics are called to stand together by reaching out to their brothers and sisters in the faith of all ethnicities, especially those of Hispanic heritage, Archbishop Alexander K. Sample of Portland, Oregon, said. “They are our brothers and sisters, we love them, and we stand with them in these difficult times,” he told Catholic News Service on Wednesday, February 11, during a visit to Rome and the Vatican, which included a private meeting with Pope Leo XIV on Monday, February 9. “Our Holy Father has been a great source of encouragement and support for the United States bishops, I think, to be very strong in our statements and in our support for the immigrant community back home,” he said. “Our Holy Father feels very strongly about this. I had the opportunity to speak with him, and I can say in the conversation, you could see that this was a matter of great concern for him,” said the archbishop. Launching a call for unity, peace, and mutual support, the archbishop said Catholics of every ethnicity need to “see themselves as one and to really reach out to our brothers and sisters in the Hispanic community, especially right now ... just get to know them, welcome them, help them, know that they are loved and very much a part of the Body of Christ.”

NEWS BRIEFS

CANADIAN BISHOP: MASS SHOOTING ‘HAS TRAUMATIZED US ALL’



OSV News photo/Jennifer Gauthier, Reuters

A woman becomes emotional during a vigil on Wednesday, February 11, the day after a deadly mass shooting at Tumbler Ridge Secondary School in British Columbia. An 18-year-old suspect opened fire at the school on February 10, killing at least eight people and wounding dozens more. Police said the suspect was found dead inside the school with a self-inflicted injury. Bishop Stephen Jensen of the Diocese of Prince George called the people of northern British Columbia to prayer and penance following the shooting. “The unimaginable tragedy that struck the community of Tumbler Ridge yesterday has traumatized us all,” Bishop Jensen said in a statement.

Ave Maria University Battles Measles Outbreak

AVE MARIA, Florida (OSV News) – A Catholic university in Florida is battling an outbreak of measles among its students, including several who have been quarantined. Ave Maria University reported on its website that it first became “aware of suspected cases” on its campus on January 28 and “promptly reported” them to the Florida Department of Health. In a February 11 update, the school said “since the start of the semester, 50 nurse-assessed students have progressed beyond the contagious period and now have natural immunity.” Local CBS News affiliate WINK said the university had reported a total of 57 cases since the start of the current semester, a number that appeared to include the 50 post-contagious cases plus seven individuals who were in quarantine. Ave Maria said that it continues “to provide care for all students regardless of test results” and that it is “closely monitoring” the situation along with the Florida Department of

Health. Ave Maria also stressed that “the vast majority of the Ave Maria University community is vaccinated.” Measles was declared eliminated in the U.S. in 2000, following extensive childhood vaccinations. However, declining vaccination rates have correlated with a resurgence of measles. For the year 2025, the Centers for Disease Control confirmed 2,280 cases, with 910 cases confirmed as of February 12 for the current year.

Pope Leo: A True Parish Welcomes All, Spreads Respect, Harmony

OSTIA LIDO, Italy (CNS) – An authentic Christian community knows how to sincerely and joyfully welcome everyone: Catholics, non-Catholics, and people of no faith at all, Pope Leo XIV said during a February 15 visit to the Roman parish of Santa Maria Regina Pacis in Ostia Lido – his first visit to a parish in his Diocese of Rome. “A true parish” is where “we all learn to say ‘Welcome,’ not only with words, but with a spirit of hospitality, opening the door and welcoming everyone,” he said. The

pope also celebrated Mass during which he encouraged the faithful to cultivate humble and peaceful hearts that are open to Christ, because “the evil we see in the world has its roots precisely there, where the heart becomes cold, hard, and lacking in mercy.” He encouraged the parish community to continue its courageous efforts with other organizations “to spread the good seed of the Gospel in your streets and in your homes.” He added: “Do not resign yourselves to the culture of abuse and injustice. On the contrary, spread respect and harmony, beginning by disarming language and then investing energy and resources in education, especially for children and young people.”

UK Catholic Lawmakers Fight to Stop Bills on Assisted Suicide, Abortion

LONDON (OSV News) – As the U.K. Parliament debates controversial legislation to allow assisted suicide and abortion up to birth, the country’s Catholic politicians are striving to defend pro-life

values. Sir Edward Leigh, a member of the House of Commons, who is the U.K.’s longest-serving member of Parliament, said he and other Catholic MPs had tabled “practical objections” to the bill, along with legislators of other faiths, and said it would be “totally inappropriate” to use emergency powers to force its final enactment. The bill cleared the House of Commons in June 2025. Leigh spoke as the “assisted dying” bill was being debated in the neighboring House of Lords, amid threats by supporters to use a rarely invoked 1949 Parliament Act if it risks being delayed beyond a spring deadline. Leigh told OSV News that members of the upper house were doing a “constitutionally appropriate job” in carefully scrutinizing the bill, which was “far too complex” to be rushed through. An independent Catholic member of the House of Lords, Baroness Nuala O’Loan, a former law professor and police ombudsman for Northern Ireland, said the bill was “extremely badly drafted.” “As a Catholic, I believe we should be doing all we can to support life – our National Health Service exists to help people live, not to kill themselves,” she said.

Trump Administration to Repeal EPA Regulation on Greenhouse Gases

WASHINGTON, D.C. (OSV News) – The Trump administration will repeal a landmark scientific finding that was the legal basis for federal greenhouse-gas regulation, President Donald Trump said on Thursday, February 12. Catholic theologians and environmentalists who spoke with OSV News expressed concern about the announcement, arguing the regulation helped prevent ecological damage in accordance with Catholic teaching, such as that laid out in the late Pope Francis’ landmark environmental encyclical *Laudato Si’*. The president’s announcement was expected, as officials previously indicated they would repeal the Environmental Protection Agency’s 2009 “endangerment finding,” which concluded that six greenhouse gases were a threat to public health. The action would reduce the EPA’s ability to regulate such gasses. “Scientists have been warning that the burning of fossil fuels and the release of other greenhouse gases will warm the planet which, in turn, will impact human health and future generations,” said Dan Misleh, founder and executive director of the Catholic Climate Covenant, a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit. The U.S. bishops helped to form in support of care for creation.

Book Helps Women Find Fruitfulness Amid Infertility

Local Author Wants Readers to Know, 'It's OK When the Story Doesn't End in Pregnancy'

BY KATIE YODER

(OSV News) – Leigh Fitzpatrick Snead wanted to write the book she wished she had as a young woman struggling with infertility.

"Most infertility books ended in pregnancy that I was reading," said Snead, the author of "Infertile but Fruitful: Finding Fulfillment When You Can't Conceive." "That's not always the story you need to hear."

Now, she said, she wants women to know "it's OK when the end of the story isn't a pregnancy." She wants them to know that they are not alone – and that they are still called to fruitfulness.

Snead, a writer, speaker, and Catholic mother of four through adoption,

is sending this message by sharing her own struggle with infertility in "Infertile but Fruitful." In her new book from Sophia Institute Press, Snead greets readers with an approachable, sincere tone as she details the sorrows and the joys experienced by her and her husband, O. Carter Snead, a professor of law and concurrent professor of political science at the University of Notre Dame.

Along the way, Snead draws from her story to discuss fertility treatment options, Church teaching on sexuality and marriage, emotional and spiritual challenges, and adoption as a vocation. Each chapter in the nearly 150-page book concludes with a section listing practical advice and encouragement.

The book by Snead, a fellow for the Catholic Association and co-host of the nationally syndicated radio show *Conversations with Consequences*, comes at a time when infertility is common. Around 1 in 5 U.S. married women ages 15 to 49 with no prior births struggle with infertility or are unable to get pregnant after one year of trying, according to the U.S.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"You're enough. God loves you so much," Snead said she wants women struggling with infertility to know. "The day you said, 'I do,' you became a family with your husband."

"Turn your eyes towards Christ, ask the saints for interventions, allow people to pray for you," she added. "Understand that you're made for love and for fruitfulness – and that's

not limited to your ability to conceive biological children."

Snead saw a need for her book after writing an open letter to couples struggling with infertility that was published by the National Catholic Register in 2023. She remembered being surprised by the response: The widely shared

piece sparked a flurry of messages and conversations.

When her mentor encouraged her to write a book and someone offered to publish it, Snead realized the timing was right.

"I was ready personally ... being able to say, 'I'm never going to be pregnant,'" she said, adding that she was approaching 50 when she began her book.

In addition to writing for younger women, Snead said she wrote for women her age who have lived through the struggle of infertility. Going beyond that, she wanted it to serve as a resource for the loved ones of women struggling with infertility and the priests who minister to them.

While her book focuses on her own story, Snead stressed that there is more than one way to live through infertility.

"There's a real need to talk about couples who get married and they're Catholic and they're infertile, but they don't adopt," said Snead, who also serves on the board of Springs in the Desert, a Catholic infertility ministry. "They're not called to

it for whatever reason."

In her book, Snead tells the stories of different couples who struggle or have struggled with infertility and how each couple embraced fruitfulness in their own way.

"This is about infertility and that you're not less than or less whole because of this one thing," Snead said of her book. "Your marriage is able to be fruitful. Your life, you dedicate it to God, you pick up your cross, you carry it. There's lots of fruits that are born out of that."

Snead begins her book by dedicating it to her four sons and her husband. "I wouldn't change a thing," she writes.

"There was this whole world of people, and I found my husband and then my four kids," she told OSV News. "None of that was guaranteed."

She wants her children never to think that she settled or that they are a second choice, she said. "No, I just want them."

In her book, Snead writes that her goal is to encourage dialogue. Women, she said, should be able to talk about their infertility the way other women talk about their pregnancies and births.



OSV News photo/Sophia Institute Press

Leigh Fitzpatrick Snead is the author of "Infertile but Fruitful."

"Because we're not used to talking about it, because there's so much secrecy and shame that women feel around it, it's a lot of suffering in silence," she said.

For her part, Snead revealed what she learned about Jesus Christ's cross through her own cross of infertility.

"The tests, maybe the injections, the constant self-monitoring for signs that new life may be growing inside you all serve to remind you that

you are an embodied being," Snead said in a follow-up email to OSV News. "When God became man, He suffered as a man. And we know that in that suffering is the good news of our salvation."

"When I sought comfort from Christ and brought my suffering to His feet, he drew me closer, and I felt His love," she added. "It humbled me and led me to forget about any ideas I might have of control and give it all over to Him."

SLAINTE TO ST. PATRICK

THE 2ND ANNUAL CELEBRATION OF CHEERS & CATHOLIC CHARITIES



JOIN US FOR AN INDOOR ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARTY TO BENEFIT OUR MISSION:

- Live Irish Entertainment
- Authentic Irish Cuisine & Drinks
- Exciting Auctions in Benefit of Catholic Charities' Mission
- VIP Saints & Spirits Cocktail Tasting

WHEN:

March 14
5:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

WHERE: Mirro Center

10622 Parkview Plaza Dr, Fort Wayne, IN 46845

LEARN MORE:

ccfwsb.org/stpatrick

10 Tips for a Christ-Centered Lent

Focus on the Theological Virtues, Gifts of the Holy Spirit to Grow Closer to Jesus Over These 40 Days

BY TOM HOOPES

(OSV News) – We sell our faith short, and so we sell our Lent short. At least I do.

I have spent most of my life thinking of the faith as a series of rules I have to live in conformity with. Don't get me wrong: I knew that the rules themselves were not the goal – they were a path to God's will, and therefore to God's love, and therefore to happiness.

But our faith is not just about union with God's will, it's also about union with Jesus Christ – “For the Son of God became man so that we might become God,” as St. Athanasius put it. God is love, a love so powerful He wants to be one with us. He became man to make that possible – and He made the sacraments, especially baptism, to make it happen.

I used to live Lent as a way to build my spiritual muscles to be able to do God's will better. Now I do exactly the same things I always did, but with a new intention: to become one with Jesus Christ.

Baptism guarantees that this is possible. If we cooperate with baptismal grace, the sacrament guarantees that we can “participate in the divine life of the Trinity” first of all by receiving the theological virtues: faith, hope, and love.

1. Pray with Christ in the Desert to gain His Faith

Be explicit about it: Imagine yourself next to Jesus in the desert; or imagine Him joining you wherever you pray. Jesus is God, so He is outside time and space. Spiritual masters like St. Ignatius of Loyola say we are free to use our imaginations not because it's helpful to pretend Jesus is with us but to help our minds acknowledge what is true.

One of the points Father Mike Schmitz has stressed several times in his “Catechism in a Year” podcast is that Christianity is not a “religion of the book” but a “religion of the Word.” Faith isn't merely an assent to a proposition; it's a relationship with a person – Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh.

Think of Him this way:

God is goodness, truth, and beauty itself, such that God's light shines through all we see, as if the surface of the world were a stained-glass window aglow with the presence of God who stands behind it all. Jesus Christ is the light of the world who collects in one place all the greatness we see elsewhere. Spend time next to Him in the desert, where He shines brighter than the desert sun.

Pray: Lord Jesus, give us the faith that will allow us to see your presence, essence, and power everywhere in all the things that you made.

2. Fast with Jesus Christ in the Desert to Learn Hope

It is the Holy Spirit, the consolator, that leads Jesus into the desert in the Gospel for the first Sunday of Lent. This reveals what real consolation looks like. The Holy Spirit doesn't console us by telling us that our life here on earth is just fine. He consoles us by telling us that we have a deeper relationship that keeps us rooted and steady as storms rage.

Lent consoles us the same way. It's true that fasting helps build our self-control while weakening our appetites, and that's good. But the ultimate reason we fast is to connect us with that deeper hope, said Pope Benedict XVI.

“When we attempt to avoid suffering by withdrawing from anything that might involve hurt,” he wrote in *Spe Salvi*, his encyclical on hope, “we drift into a life of emptiness, in which there may be almost no pain, but the dark sensation of meaninglessness and abandonment is all the greater. It is not by sidestepping or fleeing from suffering” that we find hope (No. 37).

Fasting takes away our desire to say, “Everything is awesome!” and teaches us to say, instead, “Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me” (Ps 23:4).

Pray: Lord Jesus, as we sit with you in the desert, give us a share in the spiritual hope that only grows as our false, material hopes wane.

3. Give Alms to Grow in Love for the Suffering Jesus

One thing you learn as a parent is how unfairly partial you

are to your own children. You see your children as more special than others, more beautiful, and more deserving of the good things offered in life. This happens because they are yours and share in your image.

The same thing happens with God.

Everyone you see is someone He made, in His image and likeness – someone He would become man for; someone He would die for. He loves them each and loves to see you love them, too.

Therefore, to become like Jesus, you have to see Christ in others. Mother Teresa, the saint of charity, shared what she called “The Gospel on five fingers”: You. Did. It. To. Me.

This was the criteria Jesus the Judge will use at the end of time: “Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me” (Mt 25:40).

Pray: Lord Jesus, as we give alms this Lent, help us console you in the people you identify so closely with that in serving them we serve you.

4. Pray the Stations of the Cross to See with Jesus' Wisdom

In addition to the three theological virtues, baptism guarantees we will receive the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The priest who confirmed me said that if I don't receive faith, hope, and love, I should demand them from God. “God promises you these graces,” he said. “Hold Him to it.” It's the same, he said, with wisdom, understanding, knowledge, counsel, fortitude, fear of the Lord, and piety.

To remember the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, I think in terms of my body, starting with the eyes: Wisdom is the gift of

seeing things as Christ sees them.

The Via Crucis (“Way of the Cross”) celebration in your parish is a great way to gain this grace. Again, use your imagination. Yes, you are standing in the back of a church, craning your neck to see each station, looking from your book to the tabernacle to the altar server holding the crucifix. But you are also standing in the crowd at Jerusalem that came to see a spectacle. Pray to have the vision they lacked, the vision to see through the spectacle to its deepest meaning. And pray to realize you aren't just watching Christ; He is gazing with love on you.

When Jesus Christ sees Pilate on the way of the cross, He sees his dignity and appeals to that. When He sees His mother, He is encouraged by her fidelity. When Simeon is seen by Christ, it changes the trajectory



Photos by Unsplash



If we cooperate with baptismal grace, the sacrament guarantees that we can “participate in the Trinity” first of all by receiving the theological virtues: faith, hope, and love.



OSV News

words of C.S. Lewis, Fulton Sheen, or Bishop Robert Barron. We can deepen our understanding starting now, through a podcast or a spiritual classic.

Pray: Lord Jesus, fill our minds with your understanding through our relationship with you and those who came before us in the Faith.

6. Attend Mass to Imbibe Christ's Knowledge

The purpose of life is to know, love, and serve God. To know Him means to know things about Him, but it also means to "have knowledge" of Him in the Biblical sense: to unite with the body of Christ. That means that the Catholic Mass's Liturgy of the Word and Liturgy of the Eucharist are a summing up of one of our whole life's tasks.

There are two remarkable passages in the Bible recounting mystical visions of sharing in Christ's knowledge. In one, the prophet Ezekiel is given a scroll to eat; in another, St. John the Evangelist is given the same. We have this gift not in a vision but in reality through Scripture and Communion at each Mass.

Pray: Lord Jesus, give us the gift of receiving you deeply at each Mass, through our ears and on our tongues.

7. Give Something Up So that Your Heart Grows in Christ's Fortitude

Giving something up is a Lenten tradition for a reason. I was deeply convicted by a friend's Facebook post three years ago that asked: "What is it that you won't give up, even for God?" We all have something in our life – eating, drinking,

shopping, entertainment, social media – that we rely on for comfort and meaning, something we are afraid to live without.

Think of all the things lovers give up to make their beloved first in their lives: their own preferences, their personal time, and the money they would have spent on themselves. Think of all the things parents give up because their children become first in their lives: their days and nights, their travel plans and their future plans. They give them up gladly for the person their heart loves most.

Pray: Lord Jesus, love gives us the fortitude to give things up for those we love. Give us the fortitude to give up that thing that most keeps us from you.

8. Live Fridays to Walk in Christ's Counsel

Think of counsel as the Holy Spirit's GPS system. It allows you to judge where to go and how to act almost by intuition. This doesn't happen magically; it happens by building the habit of following God's will, which is expressed in His Church. The precepts of the Church are here to help give us that habit: Fast with Jesus as the Church asks on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, abstain from meat on Fridays in union with His sacrifice, and more.

To see how powerful the Church's life is, think of the deep nostalgia Catholics feel every year not just at Christmas but also at Lent. Maybe we remember wearing ashes to school as a kid. Maybe we remember fish sticks, rice, and ketchup on Fridays. We remember the strangeness of the empty tabernacle in church on Good Friday and the mystery of the candles at Easter Vigil. That nostalgia is the Church's life moving into my soul, telling me I belong to Jesus and that I can rest in Him through the life of the Church.

Pray: Lord Jesus, you gave us your Church as a way to train us to walk in your path. Give us the grace to walk in fidelity to your church and to you.

9. Pray the Rosary to Join Christ in His Fear of God and Piety

If we are going to share in the life of the Trinity through Christ, the two final gifts of the

Holy Spirit are indispensable. Jesus prays, "Father, glorify your name!" to show us fear of God, awestruck respect for His majesty (Jn 12:28). He also prays "Abba, Father!" calling God "papa" or "daddy" to show us piety, the sweet consolation of closeness with God.

The person who best exemplifies life in Christ is Our Lady, who carried Christ in her womb. In the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary, she makes Christ the center of her life and brings Him to others. In the final Glorious Mysteries, she is given the awe-inspiring gifts of being welcomed at Christ's side in heaven as a queen. In between are the Sorrowful Mysteries.

The Lenten song that for me best demonstrates fear of the Lord and piety is *Stabat Mater*: "At the cross her station keeping." The song shares the awe and gratitude at the great act of majesty and closeness that Christ made on the cross.

Pray: Lord Jesus, let me kneel with your mother in awe at your majesty and fold my hands with her in appreciation at your closeness.

10. Recommit to Your Baptism on Easter

Spoiler alert: At the end of Lent, you will be renewing your baptismal promises at Easter Mass. It turns out that renewing your baptismal graces is what Lent was about all along.

"All Christ's riches 'are for every individual and are everybody's property,'" says the Catechism of the Catholic Church (No. 519). The more we give to Lent, the more it will conform us to Christ, and that is truly the greatest happiness available on earth or heaven.

To live Lent better, you don't have to do anything extraordinary, you just have to live Lent's practices with this end in mind.

Pray: Lord Jesus, every year I renew my baptismal promises at Easter. This year I want to be more prepared for that moment than ever before. Kindly give me the graces in Lent that will unite us at Easter.

Tom Hoopes, author of "The Rosary of Saint John Paul II" and "The Fatima Family Handbook," is writer in residence at Benedictine College in Kansas.

The more we give to Lent, the more it will conform us to Christ, and that is truly the greatest happiness available on earth or heaven...

You don't have to do anything extraordinary, you just have to live Lent's practices with the end in mind."



of his life. When Veronica is seen by Him, He leaves His image with her. *Pray: Lord Jesus, help us enter into the Stations of the Cross deeply so that we see with you and are seen by you.*

5. Do Spiritual Reading to Think with Christ's Understanding

The gift of understanding is the holy insight that lights up your brain. If a passage of the Bible has ever jumped out at you and convicted you, if a homily's words have ever cut you to the heart, if you ever felt like you finally "got" what life is all about for one fleeting moment, you have experienced the Holy Spirit's gift of understanding.

A shortcut to this gift is to share in the understanding of others through spiritual reading.

Catholics in the 21st century have a gift that our predecessors in the faith never even dreamed of: Almost any book we can think of can be delivered to our door this week or appear on our phone in electronic form instantly. We can summon Thomas Aquinas to our hand; at any time, we are moments away from reading or listening to the

MARIAN, from page 1

rising of Jesus, including the forgiveness of sins. One is united with the crucified and risen Jesus.”

As Bishop Rhoades reminded the students, “People can’t baptize themselves – they can’t make themselves Christians.” He continued, “Baptisms, like all the sacraments, are actions of God. It is Christ who baptizes through His body, the Church, and the Church’s minister. Now, this doesn’t mean that Madeline, Graeme, and Maize will be merely passive recipients of baptism. Baptism presupposes faith. They must freely accept the gift of new life in Christ.”

Part of this acceptance meant the students responded with an audible “no” to Satan and the works of evil and their “yes” to God in the Holy Trinity, which

Bishop Rhoades framed as, “They will be saying ‘yes’ to life and ‘no’ to the anti-culture of death.”

Speaking on the confirmations that were to take place following the baptisms, Bishop Rhoades said, “Like the apostles on Pentecost, those being confirmed will be clothed with power from on high so that they may be Christ’s faithful witnesses, like the saints they have chosen as their confirmation patrons: Thérèse of Lisieux, Thomas Aquinas, Dymphna, Kateri Tekakwitha, the archangel Raphael, and Mary, Our Lady of the Holy Rosary of Chiquinquirá,” said Bishop Rhoades.

After Mass, Bishop Rhoades encouraged the six students who received their sacraments of initiation to turn to face the school community for congratulations. Due to the whistles

Marian High School

Address: 1311 South Logan St., Mishawaka

Phone: 574-259-5257

Website: marianhs.org

Principal: Mark Freund

Founded: 1964

Number of students: 780

Nickname: Knights

and applause, the bishop remarked that the school must be very proud – or trying to stay out of class longer, he joked.

As Marian High School principal Mark Freund told Today’s Catholic, the students are prepared for their sacraments by working with the school chaplain and campus ministry. Part of the preparation process is helping them find parish communities of their own in the area. “But again, it’s our

folks who are honored to be able to walk with them in this journey,” Freund said.

In looking forward to the bishop’s annual visit, Freund said that “we’re polishing the handrails and making sure the floor is shined.”

“At Marian, we talk about a corporate mission, an institutional mission for young men and women to learn to serve and lead,” Freund said. “Having the bishop with us is a great reinforcement of our emphasis.”

Father Andrew Barnes, along with Holy Cross Father Cameron Cortens, is in his first school year serving as a chaplain at Marian. He is consistently present during the day on Wednesdays – celebrating homeroom Mass, hearing confessions, visiting classrooms, meeting with students one on one. He also makes an effort to go to school sporting events. “I’m try-

ing to do my best to be present as much as possible and let the Lord work in that,” he said.

Father Barnes said he was “pleasantly surprised” at the existing culture of faith among students at Marian High School, noting that several come to Mass or pray in the school chapel when they can during the day. Father Barnes termed it an “openness of a lot of the students to the faith,” and called high school “a really critical time” when students often “choose the faith or walk away from the faith.”

“Seeing the buy-in from the spiritual father of the diocese can be an inspiration for them, especially the intentionality of coming every year,” Father Barnes remarked. “Even if it doesn’t affect them in the moment, it can be a seed-planting experience where it can blossom in the future.”



Photos by Derby Photography

Bishop Rhoades poses with Marian students who received sacraments of initiation during his pastoral visit on Wednesday, February 11. The students, from left, are Maize Mathiak, Madeline Seymore, Graeme Wise, Mariana Carlson, Gracee Sandoval, and Alice Talbott.



Bishop Rhoades baptizes Maize Mathiak during Mass at Marian High School. Mathiak also received the sacraments of baptism and holy Communion.



Bishop Rhoades baptizes Madeline Seymore, who was also confirmed and received her first holy Communion.



Mariana Carlson is confirmed by Bishop Rhoades during an all-school Mass on Wednesday, February 11.



Members of the choir at Marian High School sing during a Mass celebrated by Bishop Rhoades, who was making his annual pastoral visit to the school in Mishawaka.



Marian student John Loesch lights candles at the altar before an all-school Mass on Wednesday, February 11.



Bishop Rhoades greets a group of Marian students during his pastoral visit to the high school in Mishawaka.



Marian Principal Mark Freund stands near the desk of student Mitchell Fimbel during a math class on February 11.



Sister Mercy Briola, chair of the mathematics department at Marian High School, passes a paper to student Lucy Weston while Bishop Rhoades and Marian Principal Mark Freund, back left, look on.



Marian student Samantha Agostino plays the saxophone as the school band plays during an all-school Mass.



World Youth Day SNEAK PEEK



March 12, 2026 at 7:00pm EST

Discover more about World Youth Day 2027 in Seoul! Join Verso Ministries and the Diocese of Fort Wayne–South Bend on Zoom for a preview session to meet the team, walk through the itinerary, and ask questions about this exciting trip.



Scan to Register



Blessed-to-Be Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen: The Great Evangelizer



GUEST COMMENTARY

MONSIGNOR ROGER J. LANDRY

(OSV News) – The history of the Church in the United States is a chronicle of evangelization.

Most of the Americans in the eternal hall of fame are distinguished as great missionaries: Jogues, Goupil, Lalande, Serra, Cabrini, Duchesne, Neumann, Guerin, De Veuster, Cope, Drexel, Seelos, Rother, Casey, James Miller, and the soon-to-be beatified martyrs of Georgia.

Some heroically left home to evangelize the indigenous and immigrants, Protestants and poorly catechized Catholics, slaves and ex-slaves, lepers and yellow fever victims. Some risked and gave their lives as missionary martyrs abroad.

Recently, we joyfully received news that there will soon be another American added to this great elenchus of disciple makers, arguably the most effective evangelist of them all: Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen, who will be beatified on a date still awaiting confirmation.

The most celebrated American Catholic of the middle of the 20th century, Sheen's pioneering radio program "The Catholic Hour" and Emmy-award winning television program "Life is Worth Living" reached millions of Catholics and non-Catholics alike each week. His 66 books and three newspaper columns a week likewise informed the minds, hearts, and lives of millions.

Sheen is not just a figure of the past. He is immensely popular among young Catholics today, who watch his videos on YouTube and EWTN, listen to podcasts and clips of his preaching, pray his eloquent Way of the Cross, read his classic "Life of Christ" and his autobiography "Treasure in Clay."

Seminarians and young priests nourish their vocations by reading his books on the priesthood, listening to recordings of his famous retreats, and pondering his meditations on the seven last words of Christ on the cross, perhaps the best ever given.

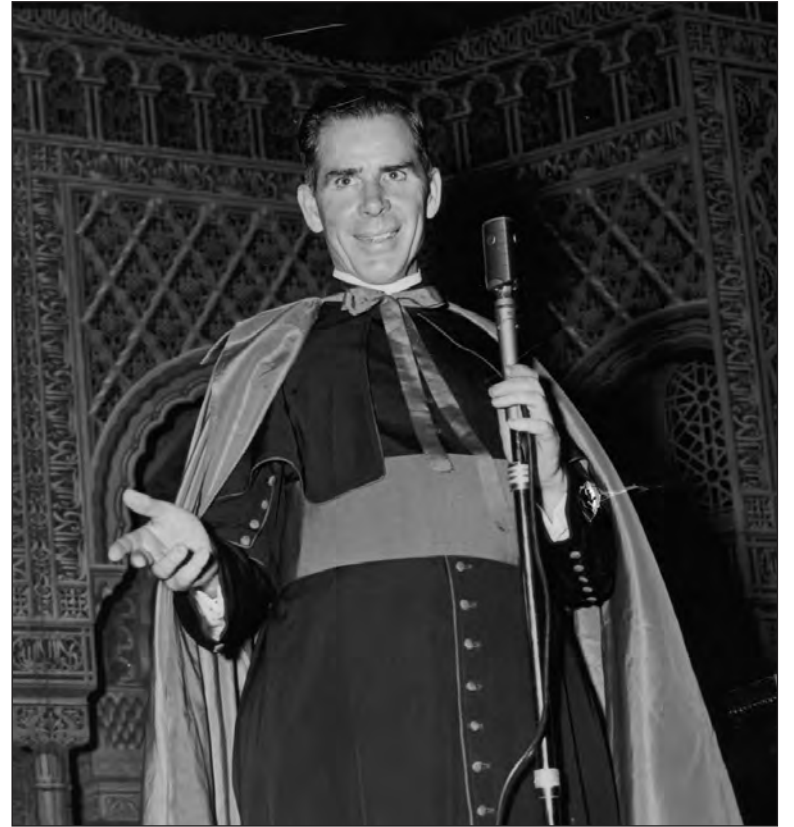
Sheen's popularity stems not just from the eloquence that gives him an evergreen impact like his contemporaries Lewis, Chesterton, and Knox. It's

because he symbolizes the type of shepherd so many young Catholics desire their bishops and priests to be: courageous and compelling heralds of the faith, unafraid to use modern means of communication – in addition to traditional ones – to propose and defend the faith in any and all audiences.

He's popular today for the same reasons that Bishop Robert Barron and Father Mike Schmitz are – and the young eventually discover that Barron and Schmitz are intentionally following in Sheen's trailblazing footsteps.

To understand Archbishop Sheen, and why the Church is beatifying him, we need to get beneath his fame to his motivations.

He was, first and foremost, a devout disciple of Jesus. He not only knew about Jesus – something one can't miss in his many books and preaching – but he likewise knew Jesus personally, nourished by his more than 60 years' worth of consecutive daily Eucharistic Holy Hours. Sheen is the greatest apostle of the Eucharistic Holy Hour in Church history; without a doubt his writings and example have helped spawn the revival



OSV News file photo

of Eucharistic adoration and the explosion of perpetual adoration chapels in the U.S.

That leads to the second point: Sheen wanted everyone to come to know that same Jesus.

That's what drove his studies in philosophy and theology, so that he could pass on effectively the truth Christ proclaimed,

something that overflowed in his work in his packed classrooms at The Catholic University of America, over the radio and television, in his prodigious writings, and from the pulpit and dais.

LANDRY, page 13

Sin Is a Choice, and So Is Following Christ



THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

MONSIGNOR OWEN F. CAMPION

Few passages in the Scriptures are as abundant in literary technique and in theological message as is this reading from Genesis. Bluntly confronting paganism and the tendency of all humans to avoid accusing themselves of fault, it goes to the heart of sin.

The heart of sin is that it is the result of a freely chosen act by humans. While in this reading the role of the tempting devil is clear, it also is clear that the devil only tempts. The devil does not force the first man and woman to sin. They sinned of their own will.

The temptation has a lesson. Rebelling against God, the perfect and the perfectly just, was foolhardy. Yet, imperfect even in their pristine

state of holiness, the first man and woman listened to bad advice and trusted not God but another.

It is a process that has been repeated untold number of times in the lives of us all.

The second reading is from the Epistle to the Romans.

In this reading, the epistle looks back to the incident described in Genesis. It reminds us that by the Original Sin the first humans introduced sin, and resulting chaos and trouble, into earthly existence.

Thus, death and hardship are not God's designs for us. They were not curses sent upon the human race by an angry God. Believe it or not, the first humans chose them when they sinned. Sin, voluntary and deliberate, brought such devastatingly bad results into the world.

God is the center and source of everlasting love and mercy. He did not leave humanity in the whirlpool of death and despair created by human sin. Instead, God sent

Jesus, the Redeemer, the Son of God.

St. Matthew's Gospel provides the last reading. It recalls the temptation of Jesus. It is a Synoptic tradition, not unique to Matthew. Similar stories appear in Mark and Luke.

As was the case with Genesis, this reading is heavy in its symbolism. For example, bread in the time of Jesus much more obviously represented survival than bread would today.

Modern refrigeration and quick transportation of food products have given us in our day a great variety of possible foods to consume. In the time of Jesus, the selection was considerably less. Bread was a principal food. So, as the devil tempts Jesus, bread is a familiar symbol of life and strength.

Then, the devil takes Jesus to the top of the Temple to survey the world. It is diversion, to think of the earthly and not the heavenly.

The final, most powerful message is that Jesus commands the devil. Jesus is God.

Reflection

Watching the terrible events unfold recently in Minneapolis, the everlasting war in Ukraine, and in Gaza, someone exclaimed, "Why doesn't God stop it?!"

Well, God has given us the way to stop all brutality and evil. He sent us Jesus, but we have a choice. Hear Jesus, follow Jesus, or not.

This is the first weekend of Lent. The Church uses the opportunity of this weekend to teach us that deliberate sinful human behavior is real, removing us from God, bringing disaster in its wake.

A very deadly effect of Original Sin was to leave humanity with the mind that sin somehow is not voluntary, and that we are without the power to resist sin.

In these readings, the Church calls us to wake up, be strong, and then always follow the Lord. It insists upon our own personal role in sin. It gives the alternative, the path to life and peace, the path that

follows the Lord and leads to Him.

Following Jesus is the purpose of Lent.

READINGS

Sunday: Genesis 2:7-9; 3:1-7; Psalms 51:3-4, 5-6, 12-13, 14, 17; Romans 5:12-19; Matthew 4:1-11

Monday: Leviticus 19:1-2, 11-18; Psalms 19:8-10, 15; Matthew 25:31-46

Tuesday: Isaiah 55:10-11; Psalms 34:4-5, 6-7, 16-17, 18-19; Matthew 6:7-15

Wednesday: Jonah 3:1-10; Psalms 51:3-4, 12-13, 18-19; Luke 11:29-32

Thursday: Esther 4:12, 14-16, 23-25; Psalms 138:1-3, 7-8; Matthew 7:7-12

Friday: Ezekiel 18:21-28; Psalms 130:1-8; Matthew 5:20-26

Saturday: Deuteronomy 26:16-19; Psalms 119:1-2, 4-5, 7-8; Matthew 5:43-48

Lessons From a Birmingham Jail



FEELING IT

EFFIE CALDAROLA

In April 1963, the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. sat in jail in Birmingham, Alabama.

Famously committed to nonviolence, King was arrested after leading a peaceful march of Black protesters who were urging a boycott of white-owned stores in the deeply segregated city.

His offense? He had not been granted a permit and marched without one. As he languished behind bars, a group of eight local clergymen wrote an editorial saying the protest, in their words, was “unwise and untimely.”

King’s 7,000-word response, “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” written in the margins of a newspaper and smuggled out by his attorney, has become a classic of the Civil Rights Movement and a good reread during Black History Month.

You can understand King’s frustration. It had been nearly a century since Black Americans had been freed from slavery, and yet they were still denied the most basic American freedoms, even the freedom to order a cup of coffee at a white man’s lunch counter. Underscoring these denials were decades of voter suppression and dehumanizing violence.

Was this protest “untimely?” When, I wonder, would these

clergymen have agreed that the time was right?

Now, we find ourselves once again embroiled in dark times.

Yet I increasingly find hope in the faith response of the Catholic Church to our present crisis. Our wonderful pope, Leo XIV, has been speaking out on human dignity, the rights of the immigrant, the unborn, and the need for dialogue in international relations. He decries “diplomacy based on force.”

In conjunction with our pope, the three American cardinals, Blase J. Cupich of Chicago, Robert W. McElroy of Washington, D.C., and Joseph W. Tobin of Newark, issued a joint statement reminding us that “the common good” is bedrock Catholic moral teaching.

They mention “the need for international aid to safeguard the most central elements of human dignity” at a time when our country has drastically reduced foreign humanitarian aid, causing untold suffering and death.

Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio of the Archdiocese for the Military Services, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, spoke out unequivocally against using our military against Greenland, and he supported the right of military personnel to obey their conscience in refusing to participate.

And all across the U.S., we see bishops, priests, congregations of religious women, and Catholic laypeople speaking out in opposition to ICE actions, indiscriminate deportations, and the killings of protestors in Minneapolis. The chorus of bishops

protesting ICE action only grows louder.

But are American Catholics hearing this message?

How many know that we can receive alerts from the U.S. Catholic bishops on issues that are important to our faith? That we can be directed to a site where we can easily reach out to our elected representatives?

Simply go to uscbb.org, click on “issues and action,” then “take action.” Sign up to receive alerts in your email box on the topics you choose. We all want to “do something” in these troubled times – here’s a way to do just that. Perhaps parish bulletins could share this information weekly.

After reading King’s letter, I wondered, who were these eight clergymen? King wrote that he knew they were “men of genuine goodwill.”

Were any of them Catholic? Yes, I discovered that a broad range of denominations was represented, including a rabbi and a Catholic auxiliary bishop, whose obituary would later call him “a civil rights advocate.”

Perhaps their words to King represented a misguided reluctance to make their faith political.

But the issues faced, then and today, are not Democratic or Republican issues – they are issues of human life and dignity, war, racism, and the future of our planet.

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

as intercessors but to propose them as models. While few will emulate Archbishop Sheen’s erudition and eloquence, everyone can strive to imitate his love for the Lord Jesus and his zeal to help others come to know, love, and serve Him in return.

Therefore, the best way for us to prepare for Archbishop Sheen’s upcoming beatification is to follow his example of prayer before the Eucharistic Jesus and his zeal to use whatever opportunities we have to help others come to know Jesus, both here in the U.S. and in the missions across the globe that were his great love.

Monsignor Roger J. Landry is a successor of Archbishop Sheen as the National Director of The Pontifical Mission Societies in the USA.

In his lifetime, Sheen donated more than \$10 million of his media earnings to the missions, raised \$200 million for the missions (the equivalent of nearly \$2.1 billion today), and left 40 percent of his estate and the royalties of his books and all his audio for the ongoing work of spreading the faith.

It would be almost impossible to enumerate the Churches, schools, seminaries, convents, and monasteries that exist today because of his work, not to mention the amount of dioceses sustained and programs underwritten because of his efforts.

With the possible exception of Pope Pius XI, no Catholic in the 20th century did more for the missions than Archbishop Sheen.

The Church raises people to the altars not only to invoke them

LANDRY, from page 12

That’s what accounts for the priority and time he gave to helping people become Catholic, running huge classes in New York and Washington, D.C., making time for individual instruction for those in special circumstances, allowing others to listen to the recordings of his classes with his secretaries and then meet with him to ask questions.

It’s what explains his famous work, for 16 years, as the national director of the Society of the Propagation of the Faith, one of the four Pontifical Mission Societies, during which he sought to form American Catholics in missionary spirituality and identity and help raise funds to spread the faith and build the Church across the globe.

SCRIPTURE SEARCH®

Gospel for February 22, 2026

Matthew 4:1-11

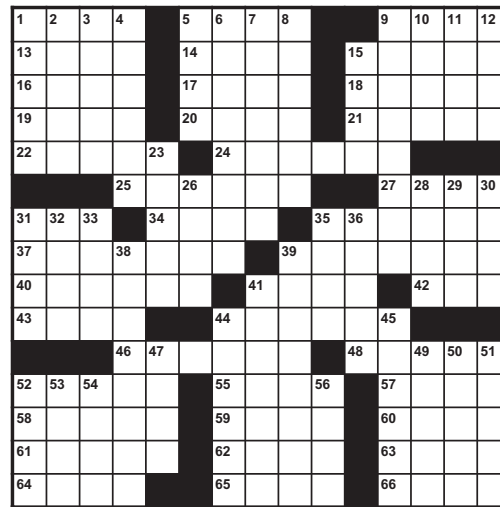
Following is a word search based on the Gospel reading for the First Sunday in Lent, Cycle A: Jesus’s challenge against the tempter. The words can be found in all directions in the puzzle.

- | | | |
|---------------|--------------|-----------|
| BY THE SPIRIT | BE TEMPTED | FASTED |
| FORTY DAYS | HUNGRY | TEMPER |
| SON OF GOD | THESE STONES | BREAD |
| IT IS WRITTEN | MOUTH | HOLY CITY |
| COMMAND | ANGELS | HANDS |
| DASH | STONE | TEST |
| WORSHIP ME | SATAN | SERVE |

FORTY BEGINS

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

© 2026 TRI-C-A Publications; tri-c-a-publications.com



- 57 Ancient Egyptian life-giving force (var.)
- 58 Query found in Matthew
- 59 Sled
- 60 A way to fly
- 61 Tide target
- 62 Word after Bay or gray
- 63 Margarine
- 64 Ice cream flavor (abbr.)
- 65 Exploit
- 66 Immediately following

DOWN

- 1 Article of clothing or bone of a saint
- 2 *The Audacity of Hope* author
- 3 Like some panels
- 4 Tooth covering
- 5 Dracula author Stoker
- 6 Jesuit who proposed the Big Bang Theory
- 7 Sluggishness
- 8 Blanket-like cloak

ACROSS

- 1 Saint of Lima
- 5 Radar screen warning
- 9 Author of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*
- 13 Black
- 14 Nevada diocese
- 15 Not clearly stated
- 16 Refrain syllables
- 17 Last word
- 18 Alpha and ____
- 19 Officiating priest of a mosque
- 20 Artist Chagall
- 21 Got one’s feet wet
- 22 Was concerned
- 24 NT epistle
- 25 ____ Divina
- 27 Catholic family conference
- 31 “Without further ____.” (2 Macc 6:17)
- 34 Certain something
- 35 The act of administering or receiving the Eucharist
- 37 Member of the Girl Scouts
- 39 Member of the band
- 40 Woman’s close-fitting hat
- 41 Gift bearers
- 42 Father of Jehoshaphat
- 43 Something you shouldn’t put on
- 44 Sequence
- 46 Teeth deposit
- 48 “...the Spirit of glory and of God ____ upon you.” (1 Pet 4:14)
- 52 “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and ____ destroy” (Mt 6:19)
- 55 On the double, initially
- 9 City to which Paul was traveling when he was blinded
- 10 Like good cheese
- 11 Enormous
- 12 “...and ____ us not into temptation...”
- 15 Members of orders take these
- 23 Wages of sin, according to Paul in Romans
- 26 Pleasingly pretty
- 28 Paul preached in ____ Minor
- 29 Promontory
- 30 The Archdiocese of Edmonton province (abbr.)
- 31 Bishop saint whose feast day is October 20
- 32 Catholic Surrealist painter
- 33 Scent
- 35 Ology that is the study of the lives of the saints
- 36 Willow
- 38 Deliriously happy
- 39 Barriers
- 41 Ascertain dimensions
- 44 German military camp
- 45 Liturgical ____
- 47 16th letter of the Hebrew alphabet
- 49 Vestment made of a narrow strip of cloth
- 50 Two-way teletypewriter service
- 51 Snob
- 52 Flat circular plate
- 53 OT historical book
- 54 Goodbye in Roma
- 56 Heating fuel

Answer key on page 15

Pope Leo Visits Vatican Grotto to Mark World Day of the Sick

BY COURTNEY MARES

(OSV News) – Pope Leo XIV prayed with the sick at the Lourdes grotto in the Vatican Gardens on Wednesday, February 11, asking Our Lady of Lourdes to accompany all those who suffer in the world.

Shortly after his Wednesday general audience, the pope lit a candle in the Marian grotto and knelt in prayer before the statue of Our Lady of Lourdes on the World Day of the Sick. He was joined by about a dozen people in wheelchairs accompanied by their caregivers who sang “Immaculate Mary,” the popular Lourdes hymn.

The pope thanked those present for joining him in prayer and reflected on Mary’s role in accompanying people through suffering.

“It is a very beautiful day that reminds us of the closeness of Mary, our mother, who always accompanies us and teaches us so much: what suffering means, what love means, what it means to entrust our lives into the hands of the Lord,” Pope Leo said.

He prayed for God’s blessing on the sick and all those who care for them, including doctors, nurses, and others who provide support in difficult moments.

The Catholic Church marks the World Day of the Sick each year on February 11, the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes. The world day was instituted by Pope John Paul II in 1992, a year after he had been diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease.

The feast day marks the anniversary of the first apparition of Our Lady of Lourdes to St.



Pope Leo XIV lights a candle as he prays at the Lourdes Grotto at the Vatican Gardens on the World Day of the Sick, Wednesday, February 11.

OSV News photo/Simone Risoluti, Vatican Media

Bernadette Soubirous in 1858 in Lourdes, France. The 14-year-old girl saw the Blessed Virgin Mary standing in a small grotto. During a total of 18 apparitions over the course of six months, thousands of people gathered around Bernadette to witness these events. A new spring surged where Bernadette had been instructed to drink, and many miraculous healings occurred. Today, Lourdes is a Marian shrine visited

by millions. The Lourdes grotto in the Vatican Gardens dates back to Pope Leo XIII, who decided near the end of his life to install a reproduction of the Lourdes grotto in France. It was solemnly inaugurated in 1905 by his successor, Pope Pius X. In his message for the 2026 World Day of the Sick, Pope Leo urged Catholics to embrace a “Samaritan spirit” and to give of

themselves “for the good of all who suffer, especially our brothers and sisters who are sick, elderly, or afflicted.” The pope also imparted an apostolic blessing to all who are sick, to their families, and to those who care for them, including pastoral and health care workers.

Pope Leo’s message concluded with the following prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Health of the Sick: “Sweet Mother, do not part from me. Turn not your eyes away from me. Walk with me at every moment and never leave me alone. You who always protect me as a true Mother, obtain for me the blessing of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.”

Prayer to Mary, Health of the Sick

“Sweet Mother, do not part from me. Turn not your eyes away from me. Walk with me at every moment and never leave me alone. You who always protect me as a true Mother, obtain for me the blessing of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.”

– Prayed by Pope Leo on Wednesday, February 11



Pope Leo XIV greets a child at the Lourdes Grotto at the Vatican Gardens on the World Day of the Sick, Wednesday, February 11.

OSV News photo/Simone Risoluti, Vatican Media

WHAT TO BRING

TAX TIME!

SOCIAL SECURITY OR ITIN CARDS AND BIRTH DATES
Bring information for you, your spouse, and any dependents you are claiming.
NO PHOTO COPIES ACCEPTED

VALID PICTURE ID
*If married and filing jointly both spouses must be present and both must bring a picture ID.

TAX FORMS
This includes W-2 forms, Unemployment form (1099 G) and 1099 forms for ALL jobs held in 2025.

DO NOT COME UNTIL YOU HAVE ALL DOCUMENTS FOR THE YEAR!

Scan the QR Code for a complete list of what to bring!





FREE TAX PREPARATION

JANUARY 26TH - APRIL 8TH, 2026
INCOME UNDER \$69,000

ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH
1101 S. LAFAYETTE STREET | FORT WAYNE, IN 46802

MONDAY: 1:00PM - 6:30PM
TUESDAY & WEDNESDAY: 1:00PM - 5:30PM
SATURDAY: 9:00AM - 12:00 NOON

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL: 





WHAT'S HAPPENING?

WHAT'S HAPPENING? highlights upcoming events from around the diocese. Discover more Catholic events or share your own at todayscatholic.org/event. To feature your event and gain more exposure, call us at (260) 399-1449 to learn about space options.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21

Rekindle The Fire Men's Conference

8 a.m. – 6 p.m.

SOUTH BEND – The Rekindle the Fire Men's Conference is a one day gathering designed to renew and strengthen men in their Catholic faith. Featuring nationally recognized speakers including Father Larry Richards, Robert Rogers, Dom Quaglia, and Bishop Rhoades, the event offers prayer, reconciliation, adoration, fellowship, and concludes with Mass celebrated by Bishop Rhoades. Visit rekindlethefire.net for more information.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22

30th Annual St. Joe-Hessen Cassel

Notre Dame Football Smoker

12:30 – 5:30 p.m.

FORT WAYNE – Join us for the 2026 Notre Dame Smoker at St. Joe-Hessen Cassel, 11337 US-27 S. Doors open at 12:30 p.m. This is a STAG-ONLY fundraising event. Tickets are available at Nine Mile Restaurant (at the bar), or by calling Jay at 260-445-6054. This is a fundraising event benefitting the St. Joe-Hessen Cassel School athletics program and Knights of Columbus Council 12379.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23

"Perfect Prayer: The Mass" Video Study Series

6 – 8 p.m.

FORT WAYNE – Are you distracted at Mass? Struggling to engage fully in the worship and prayer of this sacred time? Do you want to learn more about this incredible gift? Join us for a small group on the power of the Mass! Study the wisdom of the Church with Father Boniface Hicks, OSB, Christopher Carstens, and Dan Burke as we learn how the symbols, gestures and prayer of the Mass invite us to experience Heaven here on earth. The group will meet in the Queen of Angels School, 1500 W.

FOR A COMPLETE LIST OF AREA FISH FRIES, VISIT TODAYSCATHOLIC.ORG/EVENTS

State Blvd., on nine consecutive Mondays, beginning the first Monday of Lent. All are invited to this free series! Email or call the parish office with questions.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24

Theology On Tap - Fort Wayne

6:30 – 9 p.m.

FORT WAYNE – Join us for our final Theology on Tap talk at Classic Cafe, 832 Hillegas Rd., as Sister Joesetta Rose will be exploring what radical hope and trust look like daily. This talk is inspired by the radical hope and trust of our Blessed Mother Mary, who bore witness at the foot of the cross. Sister Joesetta Rose will also focus on how we are to encounter hope in our ordinary lives. The Lord calls us daily to have hope in Him – choosing to trust in God each day through prayer, even when circumstances feel overwhelming.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27

Autism Parents Support Group

9:30 – 11 a.m.

MISHAWAKA – Everyone is invited to Great Harvest Bread Company, 227 W. University Dr., even if you have never come before. Grandmas, moms, aunties, sisters, and caregivers of children and teens on the autism spectrum are welcome. Babies and toddlers are welcome.

St. Aloysius Fish Fry

4:30 – 7 p.m.

YODER – St. Aloysius parish will be hosting a fish fry in the Parish Activity Center, 14623 Bluffton Rd. The all-you-can-eat fish dine-in menu includes Dan's fried fish, scalloped potatoes or chips, coleslaw or applesauce, a roll, and dessert. Carryout is also available (Dan's fried fish, scal-

loped potatoes, coleslaw, a roll, and dessert). Adults are \$15, Kids 6 to 12 years are \$7, and ages 5 and younger eat free. Carryout meals are \$15.

Our Lady of Good Hope Fish Fry

4:30 – 7 p.m.

FORT WAYNE – Sponsored by Knights of Columbus Council 12417, 7215 St. Joe Rd., this fish fry features all-you-can-eat Famous Fish by Dan's of Huntington. Dinner includes baked potato, applesauce, dinner roll, and desert. Dine in is \$15 per adult, \$10 ages 6 to 10, and kids under 5 are free. Carryout is available for \$15.

St. Vincent's Boy Scout Fish Fry

5 – 7:30 p.m.

FORT WAYNE – All-you-can-eat fish fry at St. Vincent School, 1502 E Wallen Rd. Dinner includes potato, mac and cheese, cole slaw, roll, and dessert. Adults are \$15, children 6-11 years old are \$7 (dine-in only). Drive-up entrance is off of Auburn Road. Dine-in at school door 11.

Theology On Tap Fort Wayne Social

7 – 9 p.m.

FORT WAYNE – Theology On Tap will be hosting a social event at Kekionga Craft Company, 7328 Maysville Rd.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28

Catholic Medical Guild Lenten Retreat

8:15 a.m. – 2 p.m.

FORT WAYNE – The Catholic Medical Guild in Fort Wayne invites anyone in health care to come to our annual Lenten Retreat at St. Vincent, 1502 E Wallen Rd. Spouses are welcome. The topic will be "Man's Final End: Morality, Happiness, and Beatitude." Please RSVP as breakfast and lunch are included and the cost is \$10. See fortwayne.cathmed.org or 260-222-6978 for details.

Trivia at St. John the Evangelist

6 – 9:30 p.m.

GOSHEN – Blessings and Beads Trivia Night at St. John the Evangelist takes over the parish center, 422 S. Main St. Doors open at 6 for table-gating. Decorate to win. Trivia starts at 7 with 10 rounds, prizes included. \$10 per player. Bonus games and silent auction offer extra chances to win cash. This is a 21-and-older event.

REST IN PEACE

Auburn

Marie Mitchell, 79, Immaculate Conception

Joan Myers, 92, Immaculate Conception

Thomas Shawver, 76, Immaculate Conception

Erma Wappes, 89, Immaculate Conception Church

Margaret "Peg" Zehner, 94, Immaculate Conception Church

Fort Wayne

Kent Hagenbush, 70, St. Joseph – Hessen Cassel

Mary Carrier, 95, St. Therese

Dolores "Dolly" Szymanski, 87, St. Vincent de Paul

Granger

John Voor, 64, Saint Pius X

Mishawaka

Mary Moser, 91, Queen of Peace

Dean Winter, 83, Queen of Peace

New Haven

Arthur J. "Art" Johnson, 98, St. John the Baptist

South Bend

Michael Coleman, 77, Holy Cross

Sophie DeCook, 98, St. John the Baptist

Warsaw

Lucia Alvarez, 16 months, Sacred Heart

Desmond Conlan, 91, Sacred Heart

Send obituaries to obituaries@diocesefwsb.org.



MASS & STATIONS

FOR THE RETURN OF ADULT CHILDREN TO THE FAITH

Thursday, March 12

Christ the King Church, South Bend

7:00pm Mass | 7:40pm Stations

ablazemission.org/return

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

Sorin Fellows Program Integrates Faith, Academics

BY EILEEN BOND

In 2014, the University of Notre Dame created a unique way to allow students to incorporate their faith lives and their academic pursuits – a key principle upon which Holy Cross Father Edward Sorin founded the university in the mid-1800s. Father Sorin said education should cultivate a person's spirituality as well as shape them academically.

"We took that as the inspiration for the Sorin Fellows Program," said Margaret McManaway, senior associate director of the university's de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture, which sponsors the program. McManaway told Today's Catholic that Father Sorin's idea of "integral education" is key to forming "a person not just intellectually but spiritually, socially in their future vocations."

The Sorin Fellows Program was created through the de Nicola Center to create an opportunity for students who want to integrate those areas of their life, McManaway said.

"We thought this student formation program would be a fitting tribute to his legacy. It gives them the opportunity to engage both their intellect and their spiritual lives, and then to make lifelong friends along the way," McManaway said.

According to the de Nicola Center website, the Sorin Fellows Program is a community of undergraduate, graduate, and professional students at Notre Dame, Saint Mary's College, and Holy Cross College "inspired by the richness of the Catholic moral and intellectual tradition and committed to pursuing truly integral development in the context of their collegiate experience and in the discernment of their vocations."

"Through this student formation program, Sorin Fellows are ... provided opportunities to encounter role models and befriend mentors who exhibit virtues of integral formation, consider enduring and contemporary issues through the lens of the Catholic moral and intellectual tradition, nourish their interior life and appreciation for the spiritual heritage of the Catholic Church, and discern and cultivate their gifts and talents through grant funding and internships. ... By actively participating in and contributing to the life of the de Nicola Center, Sorin Fellows also play a



Photos provided by David Younger

Members of the de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture at Notre Dame, including Sorin Fellows, pose for a photo in St. Peter's Square during a 2022 pilgrimage.

crucial role in amplifying Notre Dame's witness to human dignity, authentic human freedom, and the common good in the global public square."

In its early stages, the fellowship had just over a dozen students. Today, the Sorin Fellows Program has grown to include more than 700 fellows, two-thirds of whom are undergraduate students. The program has also seen dozens of its students be accepted to the seminary and religious orders, she said.

"We're really proud of all of our students who step out so boldly into their future careers after Notre Dame," McManaway said.

David Younger, student formation program manager at the de Nicola Center, told Today's Catholic that the Sorin Fellows Program "exists to help students not just receive a Catholic education but also integral formation in a Catholic tradition through our extensive academic, spiritual, and social programs offering students the opportunity to experience the richness of the Catholic intellectual and moral tradition as it pertains to their chosen field of study."

Younger has served the de Nicola Center since December of 2021 by developing and implementing the programming for the fellowship. He says the program works in dual part to help students nurture their faith-life while in college but, beyond that, to help them understand contemporary Church topics and teachings.

Tess Barrett, a senior at Notre Dame, is a Sorin Fellow studying in the school's Program of Liberal Studies. She joined the

fellowship after hearing from her older sister how it transformed her college experience. Now, she says, "Some of my closest friends are Sorin Fellows, and I have learned so much about Catholicism and what it truly means to be a force for good in the world."

Barrett told Today's Catholic that the best part of the program is the people. "It has benefited me immensely, allowing me to grow closer to God and to meet wonderful people that have shaped my college experience."

She said the connections she has made are not just with other student fellows but also with faculty fellows and professors. The program offers fellows

an opportunity to socialize off campus, including dinners at the homes of faculty members. Barrett said these interactions help students see faithful Catholicism modeled outside of the classroom. "It has allowed me to go even deeper into questions about my Catholic faith and identity," Barrett said.

Younger concurred, saying that it's important for students to see "that our faith can actually lead us all 'to the heights' in

our study, work, and relationships," Younger said, quoting the famous line from St. Pier Giorgio Frassati.

Notre Dame alum Will Grannis told Today's Catholic that "it would be very hard to overstate the impact that the program had on my life." Grannis, a 2025 graduate who majored in math and theology with a minor in constitutional studies, credits the program for his marriage, several of his closest friends, some of his fondest college memories, but especially his well-formed faith. He said joining the fellowship played a role in his decision to add a theology major during the fall of his freshman year. "I know that one of my mother's most frequent prayers has been, is, and will be for her children to cherish and be active in our Catholicism. At least for one of her children, the de Nicola Center has been an answer to her prayers."

In 2022, Barrett and Grannis traveled to Rome as part of a pilgrimage through the de Nicola Center. According to Grannis, he was most excited to "see many of the roots of the Western Tradition," and he credits the trip for helping shape his perspective on the Catholic faith. He said he "began seeing the faith not just as a system of true propositions that naturally impose duties but also as a complete way of life."

For Barrett, seeing St. Peter's Basilica was the most illuminating part of the pilgrimage. "There is nothing that can compare to the grandeur and wonder of actually being in the church," she said. "The sheer size is astonishing."

The de Nicola Center also sponsored a discernment trip to the Norbertine St. Michael's Abbey in San Diego during Grannis' sophomore year; he also received the opportunity to go on a pilgrimage to England the following year. He said it

was during his time in England that he and his now-wife, Maddie, discerned they wanted to marry.

Senior Sorin Fellow Michael Urban is studying theology and said the fellowship has been "the greatest blessing of my time at Notre Dame." He hadn't heard about the program until arriving on campus his freshman year. But now, he said, the program has made him better in all aspects of his life, including being a better man of faith, student, and friend. Last year, he also traveled on a pilgrimage to Rome with other fellows and called it an "unforgettable experience" that "is one of the many unique opportunities for Sorin Fellows to enhance their Notre Dame education."

All three of the fellows with whom Today's Catholic spoke agreed that the best part of the program for them has been the relationships it has brought about.

"The community of students fostered through the events and programming of the de Nicola Center is undeniably my favorite part of being a Sorin Fellow," Urban said. "Being a Sorin Fellow has allowed me to join a community of friends and peers who share a desire to grow not just as students but as people."

Younger said that in all of the opportunities the program provides for its fellows, faith is at the center of the Sorin Fellows Program.

"There is no part of our lives that faith does not touch in some form," he said. The principle behind the program is being able to not only defend but to also grow in one's faith while pursuing a college education and beyond.

Through the program, Younger said, "Students receive the opportunity to meet faculty members who share their common faith, consider and learn about contemporary topics impacting the Church and the faithful today, and find support for their own academic pursuits as they move through college."

In the future, the de Nicola Center hopes to grow the program even more, including more students and programming to attract a larger audience of fellows. After only 12 years, the Sorin Fellows Program has shown the sheer impact it can have on the Notre Dame community as a whole and on each fellow.

"There is no part of our lives that faith does not touch in some form."

FATHER EDWARD SORIN



During the 2022 pilgrimage, the group poses inside the Colosseum in Rome.