

TODAY'S

# CATHOLIC

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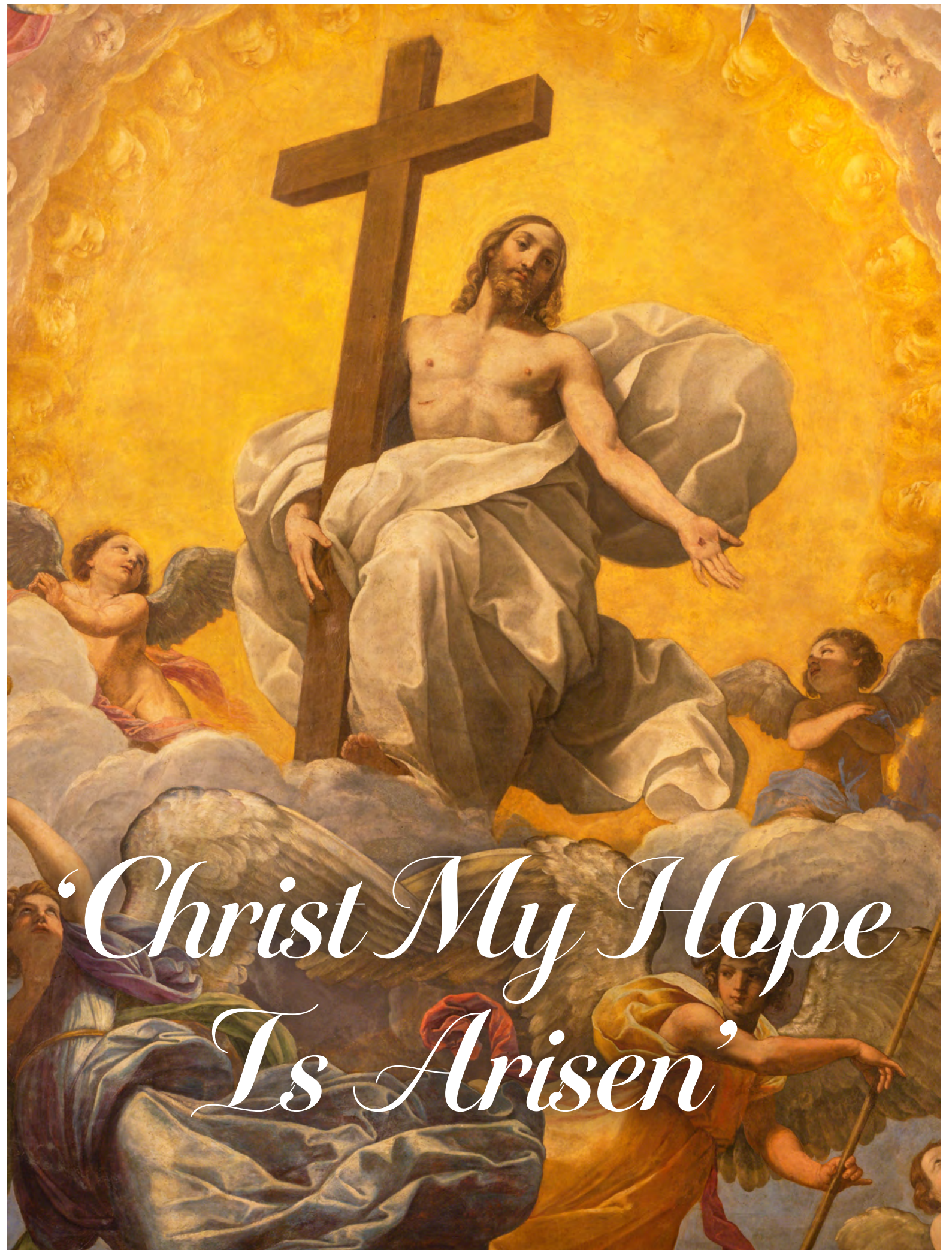
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*'Christ My Hope  
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TODAY'S  
CATHOLIC

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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

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Lisa Kochanowski

Bishop Rhoades gives his homily on March 24, the feast of St. Oscar Romero, during Mass at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart at the University of Notre Dame.

## 'St. Oscar Romero Has Much to Teach Us'

Bishop Rhoades Preaches at Notre Dame on the Feast Day of the Slain Salvadoran Archbishop

BY BISHOP KEVIN C. RHOADES

*Bishop Rhoades delivered this homily for the Tuesday of Fifth Week of Lent, March 24, at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart at the University of Notre Dame.*

This evening brings together two important expressions of the Church's mission here at Notre Dame. For the past 38 years, Notre Dame has honored St. Oscar Romero and continues to explore his legacy, teaching, and prophetic work during these Romero Days. Today is St. Oscar Romero's feast day, the day of his martyrdom 46 years ago. At the same time, the Notre Dame Law School and its Exoneration Justice Clinic is observing its second-annual Death Penalty Abolition Week. I am very grateful that the Law School, so deeply committed to the dignity and sanctity of human life, recognizes with the Church that taking human life, even as a punishment for a terrible crime, contributes to a culture of death. It denies the offender the opportunity for rehabilitation, atonement, and reconciliation. And it is flawed, as the Exoneration Justice Clinic has shown, due to the risk of executing innocent people. Thank you for exemplifying the Church's commitment to reformative justice rather than

retributive violence. Celebrating this Mass on the feast of St. Oscar Romero is also meaningful during this Death Penalty Abolition Week since he was such a staunch opponent of the state-sanctioned killings and executions carried out by government-backed death squads and the military in El Salvador.

Jesus said to the Pharisees in today's Gospel, "I am going away and you will look for me, but you will die in your sins." He then explained why: "For if you do not believe that I AM, you will die in your sins." Jesus was using the divine name "I am," the name God revealed to Moses at the burning bush when He said, "I am who am." Our Lord then went on to explain to the Pharisees that He was sent by the Father and that He says and does only what the Father taught Him. Jesus explained that He always does what is pleasing to the Father. Now this discussion with the Pharisees continues past today's Gospel for another 28 verses of John Chapter 8, which ends with the Pharisees and their followers picking up rocks to throw at Jesus. They rejected Jesus, His teachings, and His actions. They felt threatened and insulted by Him. They considered Him guilty of blasphemy. Their hearts were hardened to the Good News of Jesus because of their own self-righteousness

### Romero Days 2026: Paths of Violence and Nonviolence

Dozens of participants from around the globe participated in the Romero Days 2026 conference under the theme, "Paths of Violence and Nonviolence." The conference, held at the University of Notre Dame, was presented by the Kellogg Institute for International Studies' section on Latin America/North America Church Concerns (LANACC).

"Our conference brings together scholars and practitioners to reflect upon the life and preaching of St. Oscar Romero and how that witness continues to speak into our world today," shared Todd Walatka, director of the LANACC program and a teaching professor in the Department of Theology. "Romero lived in times very similar to our own, marked by polarization, violence, and a profound insensitivity to human life and dignity. He is a saintly witness who challenges us to see, judge, and act today in a way that is faithful to the Gospel. Our central goals of the conference are to continue to build a community around the figure of Romero and advance concrete research on Romero's prophetic account of peace, violence, and nonviolence."

According to Walatka, the focus of the conference is both historical and contemporary. It investigates how St. Romero understood the nature of true peace – the peace that Jesus proclaims and gives. The conference included attendees from higher education institutions from across the country as well as a large group from El Salvador.

and their desire for status. They were offended by Jesus pointing out their hypocrisy. They wanted Him killed.

I'm sure Archbishop Oscar Romero, a disciple steeped in God's word, meditated on today's Gospel, but I couldn't find it among his many homilies. In my own meditation while preparing this homily, I could not help thinking about

St. Oscar Romero's desire always to be faithful to God's word in his preaching of the Gospel. In doing so, he also encountered criticism, anger, and rejection. His enemies considered him dangerous and a threat to them, like the Pharisees considered Jesus. Like Jesus, Monseñor Romero trusted in the Father

ROMERO, page 7

# Father James Stoyle, Priest Who Answered Late Vocation, Dies at 81

BY SCOTT WARDEN

Father James F. Stoyle, a priest of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend who answered a late but enduring call to the priesthood after a successful career in the secular world, died on Wednesday, March 25, as the result of an auto accident in rural Kendallville. He was 81.

Father Stoyle, who retired from active ministry in 2019, was remembered as a devoted pastor, teacher, and spiritual father who combined intellectual depth, pastoral care, and a deep love for the liturgy in his service to the Church.

Visitation was scheduled to be held on Wednesday, April 1, from 2 to 7 p.m. at Young Family Funeral Home in Kendallville. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated on Monday, April 6, at 11 a.m. at Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Kendallville. Burial will follow at St. Mary's Catholic Cemetery in Avilla.

The youngest child of David and Catherine (Lamb) Stoyle, Father Stoyle was born on October 6, 1944, in Pittsburgh. He first sensed a call to the priesthood as a child, influenced by his parents' strong Catholic faith, the Sisters of Charity who taught him, and the example of priests in his parish.

He began formation at St. Meinrad Seminary in southern Indiana, but as he approached ordination, he stepped away, uncertain whether he was ready to make a lifelong commitment. What began as a short pause turned into more than two decades. During those years, he built a successful career in the secular world, teaching English and history, working in business management, and eventually serving as a corporate executive and consultant. By all appearances, his life had taken a different path.

But the call to the priesthood never fully left him.

After relocating to South Bend and attending St. Matthew Cathedral, Father Stoyle met Bishop Joseph R. Crowley, auxiliary bishop of Fort Wayne-South Bend, who became a spiritual mentor and challenged him to reconsider the vocation he had once set aside. More than 20 years after leaving seminary, he responded.

At age 42, he entered Pope St. John XXIII National Seminary in Weston, Massachusetts, a seminary dedicated to older vocations. He was ordained to the



Father James F. Stoyle

diaconate on January 12, 1991, at St. Matthew Cathedral in South Bend by Bishop Crowley, and to the priesthood on November 16, 1991, by Bishop John M. D'Arcy. He was 47.

Father Stoyle was appointed associate pastor of St. Thomas the Apostle in Elkhart on December 11, 1991, and later served as administrator and pastor of St. Jude Parish in South Bend. He served as pastor of St. Monica Parish in Mishawaka from August 6, 2002, until he was appointed associate pastor at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Wayne on December 1, 2004. Father Stoyle was pastor of Immaculate Conception Parish in Kendallville from October 7, 2009, until his retirement from active ministry in 2019.

Across those assignments, Father Stoyle was known for both pastoral care and practical leadership. He oversaw significant improvements to parish buildings, strengthened school communities, and worked to enhance the beauty of worship spaces, particularly during his years in Kendallville.

Yet for many, his greatest impact came not through projects but through personal encounter.

"Our family was blessed in many ways by Father Jim," Jack and Tammy Rhodes told Today's Catholic. "He baptized our grandchildren. He anointed our parents. He also brought our son-in-law into the Catholic faith. He was a great inspiration, putting his faith into action in everyday life. We will forever cherish his friendship."

Parishioners consistently described a priest who combined deep knowledge with humility, humor, and attentiveness to others.

"Father Jim had been a very dear friend ever since he was as-

signed to Immaculate Conception in Kendallville," said Ruth Durbin. "He had a sense of humor, and he was a wealth of knowledge. He made me think about how I was leading my life and brought me closer to the Lord by his faith and prayers. He gave me peace and soothed my soul."

Durbin recalled that even in ordinary moments – over meals, conversations, or visits – Father Stoyle offered guidance that was both practical and deeply rooted in faith.

For others, that guidance proved transformative.

"He is the reason I am a better Catholic today," Betty Ritchie told Today's Catholic. "On one of our first talks, he asked me, 'What religion are you?' I responded, 'Catholic,' and he said, 'But are you?' From that point on, he really drew me into my Catholic faith and how to live it."

Ritchie said Father Stoyle became part of her family, sharing holidays and offering steady counsel, especially during difficult times.

"I could be totally honest with him and he never judged me," she said. "He just guided me to do the right thing."

His patient and gentle approach also led others into the Church.

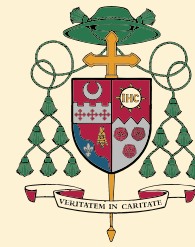
"It was Father Jim's kind, ever-patient, and humble spirit that ultimately led me to the faith," Mackenzie Ritchie said. "He spent countless hours answering my questions about Catholicism, never pressuring me to join the Church, but gently inviting me into deeper conversations about our Lord and His Church."

That invitation eventually led her to become Catholic.

"I was blessed to have him as my first confessor and to have him administer my confirmation and first Communion," she said. "Through him, we truly saw Christ and felt His deep and abiding love."

Father Stoyle's spirituality was marked by a quiet, consistent gratitude. Each morning, he would begin the day with the words *Deo gratias* – "Thanks be to God" – embracing whatever the day might bring.

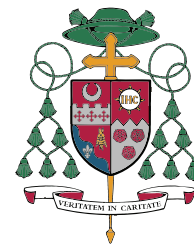
For Father Stoyle, whose "yes" came after years of discernment and a life lived along another path, that same trust defined a priesthood that, for so many, made the presence of Christ tangible and real.



PUBLIC SCHEDULE OF  
BISHOP KEVIN C. RHOADES

*Veritatem In Caritate*  
(Truth in Charity)

- ◆ **Tuesday, April 7, at 11:30 a.m.** – "You Can Lend A Hand" Luncheon, The Grand Wayne Center, Fort Wayne
- ◆ **Wednesday, April 8, at 7 p.m.** – Confirmation Mass, Immaculate Conception Church, Auburn
- ◆ **Thursday, April 9, at 8:15 a.m.** – Mass and Pastoral Visit, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School, Fort Wayne
- ◆ **Friday, April 10, at 9:30 a.m.** – Mass and Pastoral Visit, Bishop Dwenger High School, Fort Wayne
- ◆ **Friday, April 10, at 6:30 p.m.** – Confirmation Mass, St. John the Baptist Church, New Haven
- ◆ **Saturday, April 11, at 10 a.m.** – Confirmation Mass, St. Vincent de Paul Church, Fort Wayne
- ◆ **Sunday, April 12, at 2 p.m.** – Confirmation Mass, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church, Fort Wayne



## Priest Assignment

*The Most Reverend Kevin C. Rhoades, Bishop of Fort Wayne-South Bend, has made the following assignment of priests, effective April 14, 2026:*

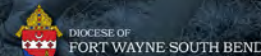
- ◆ **Reverend Robert Garrow**, to Parochial Vicar, Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception Parish, Fort Wayne, effective April 14, 2026.

## April is Child Abuse

## Awareness Month

Our diocese follows the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People to ensure safe environments in every parish and school through training, background checks and accountability.

*Protecting children is everyone's responsibility.*



diocesefwsb.org/prevent-child-abuse



Vatican Media/Provided by the University of Notre Dame

Holy Cross Father Daniel Groody meets Pope Leo XIV in this undated photo. On Monday, March 30, Pope Leo appointed Father Groody to the Vatican's Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development.

# Father Daniel Groody Appointed to Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development

BY CARRIE GATES

Pope Leo XIV has appointed Holy Cross Father Daniel Groody, the vice president and associate provost for undergraduate education and professor of theology and global affairs at the University of Notre Dame, as a member of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, the Vatican announced on Monday, March 30.

Established by the late Pope Francis in 2016, the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development supports the Church's worldwide efforts in the areas of human dignity and human rights, economic justice, care for creation, migration and displacement, as well as peace, conflict, and humanitarian crises.

As a dicastery member, Father Groody will contribute to the body's ongoing discernment process that will help orient the Church's mission and priorities. He will continue in his roles at Notre Dame while serving the dicastery.

"I am truly honored and humbled by Pope Leo's appointment," Father Groody said. "My vocation is to serve, together with my colleagues at Notre Dame and around the world. The work of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development is vital to informing the Church's response to the world's most vulnerable people and the most pressing global challenges of our time."

While numerous Notre Dame faculty members have served the Vatican as consultants to dicasteries and have been named to pontifical academies and commissions, Father Groody's appointment is a distinct honor, noted Holy Cross Father Robert A. Dowd, president of Notre Dame.

"To be called upon by the Holy See to serve in this capacity is a testament to Father Groody's deep commitment to leadership in service of the most vulnerable among us," Father Dowd said. "This appointment is also an affirmation of Notre Dame's ongoing contributions to Catholic social thought, to integral

ecology, and to forming leaders dedicated to the common good. I am profoundly grateful for Father Groody's dedication to the university and to the Church, and I am confident that his leadership will be a tremendous blessing as he helps to guide the Church in these areas."

The most notable precedent in Notre Dame history is the appointment of then-President Father Theodore M. Hesburgh, CSC, as a member of the Pontifical Council for Culture by Pope St. John Paul II in 1983.

"Father Groody's appointment honors not only his faithful service at the University of Notre Dame, but also his ongoing commitment to integral ecology and the promotion of the dignity of immigrants," Holy Cross Brother Paul Bednarczyk, Superior General of the Congregation of Holy Cross, said in a statement released by the congregation. "I am pleased that the dicastery has recognized this by providing him the opportunity to share his gifts and talents with the universal Church."

Father Groody's academic and pastoral work has focused in part on migration, theology, refugees, and human displacement – areas that are directly relevant to the mandate of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development. An internationally recognized expert on migration, Father Groody is also an award-winning author, teacher, and documentary film producer. He has written four books and numerous articles and has edited or co-edited five books. His works have been translated into nine languages.

Father Groody's most recent book, "A Theology of Migration: The Bodies of Refugees and the Body of Christ," includes a letter written by Pope Francis to Father Groody that serves as the foreword to the book. Pope Francis wrote: "I read it with great care, and I feel moved by the beauty, the tenderness, the pain, and the commitment that comes forth from each one of its pages. I see the work of the shepherd involved and immersed in the healing and restoring of fundamental rights of communities so distant

yet so close to each other: Syria, Rwanda, Mexico, Lampedusa. All of them are images and voices of realities that, in your narrative, express the need for the Church's commitment to migrants and refugees: a Church called to extend a hand, to embrace and to welcome the weak, the invisible, and the discarded of the world."

This announcement follows Father Groody's appointment under Pope Francis in 2025 to the General Council of the *Laudato Si'* Higher Education Center in Castel Gandolfo, which is now known as Borgo *Laudato Si'*.

In that role, Father Groody helps shape the vision, direction and formation of the center, as well as advising on initiatives and global partnerships. He also plays an essential role in Notre Dame's recently announced partnership with the Vatican's *Laudato Si'* Center to establish a Global Alliance dedicated to integral ecology and global sustainability.

*Carrie Gates is the associate director of media relations at the University of Notre Dame.*

# 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.

## 'Spirit Knight' Brings Marian Community Together

BY MCKENNA ROUSSEVE

At Marian High School in Mishawaka, school spirit is a vital part of the community's culture. From cheering in student sections as part of the "Knight Brigade" to decorating halls during spirit weeks, Marian's students are all-in when it comes to supporting their school.

Although many aspects of Marian's school spirit activities are similar to those of other schools, Marian has a unique event that sets it apart. "Spirit Knight," as it is called, is what it sounds like: a night for students to get together to display their sense of school spirit. The extra-curricular event takes place in the spring each year and is a competition between a blue team and a white team (Marian's school colors). The blue team is made up of students with last names beginning with the letters A-K, and the white team consists of students with last names beginning with L-Z. The teams compete in sports, arts, spirit, and dance events throughout the school year and at the culminating event in March to eventually determine a winner on Spirit Knight.

Spirit Knight came about because Marian's strategic plan in 2017 included goals for increasing overall school spirit and community. Trish Keilman and her sister, Kelly Keenan, who currently works at Marian, attended Conwell-Egan Catholic High School in Philadelphia. Their alma mater has a Spirit Night event that dates back to the 1980s, and it inspired the idea for Marian's Spirit Knight. So, Spirit Knight came to be, and the Marian Family has benefited immensely.

Each year, a different theme is chosen. Previous themes have included novels, movies, and board games. This year, the theme is occupations. In order to help the theme to come to life, students and faculty dress up in accordance with the theme and decorate the school and hallways. Artistic students have the opportunity to create 20-by-20 murals to represent the performance that their team will showcase on Spirit Knight. Al-



Photos provided by Marian High School



though sports and arts don't always align, Spirit Knight brings both together in an activity for everyone, showing Marian's inclusivity.

To many new students, Spirit Knight is a big surprise and an exciting event to learn about. Students have mentioned that Spirit Knight is a very special part of Marian and helps to bring students together in a unique way. Between the student captains, parent volunteers, alumni support, and faculty participation, the Marian community is committed to the event.

Keilman noted that "it is hard to describe Spirit Knight briefly! It touches our students, our faculty and staff, our alumni, our feeder schools, and our community very differently but with a common theme of inclusivity, involvement, collaboration, team-

work, and friendly competition." Keilman explained that Spirit Knight is so special and unique that no other school around has anything like it. Therefore, incoming high school students in our Mishawaka-South Bend community look forward to joining the positive culture and school spirit that Marian's Spirit Knight helps to facilitate.

As a new student to Marian, I am extremely excited to participate in my first Spirit Knight after hearing so many wonderful stories from my peers and teachers. Learning about Spirit Knight has helped me to discover the beautiful, inclusive community that Marian High School has established. Spirit Knight truly is a "knight" to remember! '

*McKenna Rousseve is a sophomore at Marian High School.*



# NEWS BRIEFS

## Archbishop Sheen to Be Beatified September 24 in St. Louis

VATICAN CITY (OSV News) – Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen will be beatified on September 24, the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints announced on Wednesday, March 25. The beatification will take place in St. Louis, with Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, pro-prefect for the Dicastery for Evangelization, presiding. In a statement, Bishop Louis Tylka of Peoria, Illinois, said the beatification will take place at 2 p.m. CT at The Dome at America's Center in St. Louis. On February 9, the Diocese of Peoria had announced that the Vatican had given the green light for the beatification of Archbishop Sheen to move forward. "With anticipation of a great number of people wanting to participate, we chose this location because of availability, being indoors, and the close proximity to the Diocese of Peoria," Bishop Tylka said. He added that a "number of events in Peoria" will be held "to celebrate this wonderful occasion." "This is a moment of immense grace for the Church, especially for us in the Diocese of Peoria, where Archbishop Sheen was born, ordained, and first served as a priest," the bishop said. Msgr. Roger Landry, national director of the Pontifical Mission Societies USA, received the news of the beatification date with "indescribable joy." Archbishop Sheen led the Pontifical Mission Societies USA from 1950 to 1966.

## Holy Week Liturgies Allowed at Holy Sites After Leaders Barred on Palm Sunday

JERUSALEM (OSV News) – The Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem said an agreement with Israeli authorities will allow Holy Week and Easter liturgies at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, after Catholic leaders were initially barred on Palm Sunday. In a March 30 statement, Church officials said access is now secured for clergy, though wartime limits on public gatherings remain, with celebrations livestreamed worldwide. The dispute followed a March 29 incident in which Israeli police blocked Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa and Father Francesco Ielpo, drawing global backlash. Israel's president, Isaac Herzog, expressed regret, citing security concerns tied to missile threats. World leaders, including Emmanuel Macron and Pedro Sánchez, condemned the move as a violation of religious freedom. Israeli officials later reversed course, while Pizzaballa described the episode as a misunderstanding, urging respect for both safety and the right to worship. Cardinal Pizzaballa sought to

## POPE LEO CALLS FOR PEACE ON PALM SUNDAY



OSV News photo/Jose Cabezas, Reuters

Worshippers hold palm fronds during the Palm Sunday procession outside El Calvario Chapel in Nahuizalco, El Salvador, on Sunday, March 29. In his first Palm Sunday homily, Pope Leo XIV delivered a strong message of peace, presenting Jesus as the "King of Peace" who rejects violence and stands with all who suffer. "Brothers and sisters, this is our God: Jesus, King of Peace, who rejects war, whom no one can use to justify war," the pope said, adding, "He does not listen to the prayers of those who wage war, but rejects them, saying: 'Even though you make many prayers, I will not listen: your hands are full of blood' (Is 1:15)." Preaching in St. Peter's Square, the pope described Christ as a victim of unjust violence who never took up arms and who embraces all human suffering on the cross. "Christ, King of Peace, cries out again from his cross: God is love! Have mercy! Lay down your weapons! Remember that you are brothers and sisters," Pope Leo said.

ease tensions in the aftermath of the incident. In an interview with TV2000, the television network owned by the Italian bishops' conference, the Latin patriarch said the incident was the result of a "misunderstanding." "There were no clashes; everything was done very politely. I don't want to force things; we want to use this situation to better clarify in the coming days what to do, respecting everyone's safety but also respecting the right to prayer," he said.

## Pope Leo Urges Monaco to Defend Life, Serve Poor

MONACO (OSV News) – Pope Leo XIV used his first visit to Monaco on Saturday, March 28, to challenge the wealthy principality to center its life on the poor and the protection of human life, warning that the Last Judgment "places the poor at its center." He added, "Within your community, many people hold positions of consider-

able influence in the economic and financial spheres," the pope said from the Prince's Palace, adding that the Kingdom of God "shakes up the unjust configurations of power." Hosted by Monaco's Prince Albert II and Princess Charlene, the pope became the first in modern history to visit Monaco, arriving by helicopter for a quick 13-hour trip to the microstate – his first international journey of 2026. Entrusting the nation with "protecting every human life," he urged Catholics to defend life "from conception until natural death" and resist secularism rooted in wealth and individualism. At the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Monaco-Ville, he called the faithful to "proclaim the Gospel of life, hope, and love."

## Cardinal Roche Says Liturgy Meant to Promote Unity

VATICAN CITY (OSV News) – Cardinal Arthur Roche is urging Catholics to see liturgical debates

through the lens of unity, not personal preference. In a March 17 interview with OSV News at the Vatican, the prefect of the Dicastery for Divine Worship said the Mass is a communal act rooted in tradition, not something shaped by individual taste. His remarks follow renewed discussion over a document he shared with cardinals defending post-Vatican II reforms. Cardinal Roche emphasized that the Eucharist is "received" not reinvented, echoing St. Paul's teachings. Liturgical abuses are not unique to the post-Second Vatican Council Mass but have existed throughout the Church's history, going back to the time of "St. Paul in Corinth," the cardinal said, adding that they are "always caused by lack of formation or a deep misunderstanding." He acknowledged the appeal of the Latin Mass, citing its silence and reverence, but said those qualities should also mark the modern liturgy. Ultimately, Cardinal Roche warned that

treating the liturgy as something to control risks losing sight of God and undermining Church unity.

## Bishops Protest Mass Deportations in El Paso

EL PASO, Texas (OSV News) – On Tuesday, March 24, to commemorate the feast day of the martyr St. Oscar Romero, hundreds of people joined in a march and vigil calling for an end to mass deportations and mass detention led by El Paso Bishop Mark J. Seitz and other Catholic bishops, clergy, and organizations in El Paso. The region is home to Camp East Montana, one of the largest mass detention centers in the U.S. Bishop Seitz, who in March released a pastoral letter on mass deportations and detentions, led the march along with a number of fellow bishops, including Bishop Brendan J. Cahill of Victoria, Texas, chair of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Migration. "We are coming together to pray and to show our community's concern. We hope it moves our leaders to think, maybe we've gone too far," Bishop Seitz said in remarks reported by The Rio Grande Catholic, the El Paso Diocese's news outlet. As a part of the commemoration of the feast of St. Oscar Romero, a first-class relic of a piece of a blood stained cloth from the martyr's assassination day was on display during the march.

## Vatican Affirms Anglican Heritage in Church

ROME (OSV News) – The Vatican's Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith has released a document describing the "Anglican heritage" of the Catholic Church's personal ordinariates as a permanent reality that makes a "distinctive contribution" to the Church's evangelizing mission. Published on the dicastery's website on Thursday, March 26, the document stressed that the Anglican patrimony of the ordinariates founded under Pope Benedict XVI's 2009 apostolic constitution *Anglicanorum Coetibus* is "a living reality" that "looks to the future in the transmission of the faith to future generations." The document followed a March 1-3 meeting between the bishops leading the Catholic Church's personal ordinariates and the head of the dicastery, Cardinal Victor Manuel Fernández. Bishop Steven J. Lopes of the Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter, who attended the meeting, told OSV News the Vatican document "affirms that there is a distinctive way that the faith was lived and celebrated and articulated in an English context, and that distinctive way is still valid and, in fact, fruitful for the evangelizing mission of the Church today."

**ROMERO, from page 2**

and sought only to do what was pleasing to Him. He was a man of deep prayer, formed by the Scriptures and the social doctrine of the Church, faithful to the Gospel and the teachings of the Church, even though some within the Church rejected him as well, accusing him of being too political. Many falsely accused Archbishop Romero of being a Marxist or Communist.

Despite threats to his life, Monseñor Romero persevered with courage to preach the truth of the Gospel, to promote and defend the rights of the poor and oppressed Salvadoran people. He was always a faithful servant of God and the Church, but his preaching became bolder and his service truly heroic just a few weeks after becoming archbishop of San Salvador when he saw the body of his murdered friend, Father Rutilio Grande. I believe the Holy Spirit filled him with the gift of courage to a heroic degree as he became a tireless and fearless prophet, carrying on the mission of Jesus by becoming “the voice of the voiceless” in El Salvador, defending the poor, and denouncing injustice, even at the risk of his life. He preached against violence and oppression, and he embodied a life of a disciple of Jesus in his loving solidarity with the poor and vulnerable.

As a board member of Catholic Relief

Services, I went on a trip to El Salvador in 2020, shortly before the COVID pandemic. We visited many of the sites of CRS development and peacebuilding projects and programs, including a program in a large, overcrowded prison housing many MS-13 gang members. Several shared with me about their experience of the CRS rehabilitation program in the prison. One young man said to me, “Monseñor, aunque estoy en la prisión, me siento más libre que nunca en mi vida” (“Bishop, even though I am in prison, I feel freer than ever before in my life”). Then he told me that in his rehabilitation – I would also call it his “conversion” – he came to reject violence and embrace the Gospel by reading Archbishop Romero’s homilies and learning about his life. This young man’s life has radically changed. He now

prays and receives the sacraments. He feels very close to St. Oscar Romero and asks him to intercede for him and his fellow inmates. While in El Salvador, I saw the people’s fervent devotion to Archbishop Romero everywhere I went. He continues to give hope to the people who still suffer the wounds of violence and poverty. He gives hope and inspires all of us and people around the world, both Christians and non-Christians, to pursue justice and peace.

St. Oscar Romero has much to teach us in the United States amid the challenges we face today. He is an example for us of truly embracing Catholic social doctrine and putting it into practice. How often we can be tempted to do what is popularly pleasing, what is pleasing to our culture, to the reigning government, to the Democratic party, to the Republican party, or whomever, rather than what is pleasing to God. Or at a university, to be pleasing to a secularist academic establishment and its ideologies. Our faith is not centered on an ideology – it is centered on a Person, Jesus Christ, and on His Kingdom. St. Oscar was not a communist nor was he a capitalist. His master was not Karl Marx nor was it Adam Smith. His Master was

the Lord Jesus, and his mission was to serve His Kingdom. Jesus said to the Pharisees in today’s Gospel, “You belong to this world, but I do not belong to this world.” Jesus

inaugurated the Kingdom of heaven on earth. He proclaimed that Kingdom and manifested that Kingdom in His works. He definitively established it on the cross. As the liturgy says on the feast of Christ the King, it is “an eternal and universal kingdom: a kingdom of truth and life, of holiness and grace, of justice, love, and peace.” Archbishop Romero served that Kingdom in his efforts toward justice and peace. He recognized that the Kingdom of God is a reality that is both “already here” in Christ and “yet to come” in its eternal fullness. He emphasized that the Church’s mission is to point out what reflects this Kingdom in history and what does not. That is what we, the Church in the United States, at this moment of our history, are called to do.

We are called to stand up for human life and dignity, even



Lisa Kochanowski

**Bishop Rhoades celebrates Mass at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart at the University of Notre Dame on Tuesday, March 24.**

when it is unpopular to do so. For Archbishop Romero and his people, doing so carried the risk of death. For us, it carries the risk of criticism and angry opposition. St. Oscar defended the sanctity of life. He condemned the killing of the unborn through abortion and the killing, torture, and persecution of those who worked with the poor. He condemned the violence perpetrated by both sides in the nation and tried to mediate peace. He condemned the social injustices that led to terrible poverty, including structural inequality, wealth disparity, and land dispossession. He embraced with all his energy the Church’s preferential option for the poor. We are called to do the same.

As you know, in our nation today, the Church continues its decades-long efforts to defend the lives of unborn children, to advocate for economic justice and for comprehensive immigration reform. More recently, we have had to defend our freedom to serve migrants. Despite severe funding cuts by our government, we continue to serve refugees and to advocate for those who seek to escape extreme poverty, violence, and persecution. As you probably know, this past November, the bishops of the United States expressed our strong opposition to the indiscriminate mass deportation of immigrants in our country and have called for an end to dehumanizing rhetoric and violence, whether directed at immigrants or at law enforce-

### Death Penalty Abolition Week

The Notre Dame Exoneration Justice Clinic at the University of Notre Dame hosted the second-annual Death Penalty Abolition Week on campus in mid-March. Co-sponsored by the Institute for Social Concerns and the Klau Institute for Civil and Human Rights, the week focused on daily presentations with guest speakers. Some shared firsthand accounts of their experiences on death row while others discussed advocacy and reform, with all speakers dedicated to ending the death penalty.

“I thought that the Notre Dame, being a Catholic institution that values the sacredness of life and human dignity, would be the best and appropriate venue for such a forum,” noted Jimmy Gurulé, director of the Notre Dame Law School’s Exoneration Justice Clinic.

During the week, guests listed to State Representative Robert Morris and legislative efforts to repeal the death penalty in Indiana, death row exoneree Elwood Jones and his attorney, Erin Barnhart, and former death row inmate from Alabama Anthony Ray Hinton.

“The death penalty serves no legitimate social purpose, and further, as Catholics it violates fundamental principles of our Catholic doctrine, including the sacredness of human life and human dignity,” said Gurulé, who founded the EJC in 2020.

ment. And we continue our efforts to end the death penalty. We are involved in all these efforts here in our diocese. And I am so very grateful that you here at Notre Dame are doing the same.

We now prepare to go to the altar of the Lord for the celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice. As we do so, I invite you to contemplate these last words from Archbishop Romero’s homily spoken 46 years ago today. He was speaking about the Mass and the bread and wine becoming the body and

blood of the Lord. He said, “May this immolated body and this flesh sacrificed for humankind also nourish us so that we can give our bodies and our blood in suffering and pain, as Christ did, not for ourselves but to bring justice and peace to our people.” After saying these words, Archbishop Romero went to the altar for the Liturgy of the Eucharist and a sniper’s bullet pierced his heart. His Eucharistic life reached its climax in his martyrdom.

St. Oscar Romero, bishop and martyr, pray for us!

# The Truth About How Early Christians Celebrated Easter

BY JAMES L. PAPANDREA

(OSV News) – Like Christmas and other Catholic holy days, Easter is often misunderstood and mis-celebrated. Either its origins are said to be based on pagan holidays (a myth we will bust), or we treat it as a day to binge after a season of fasting. So, to fully embrace Easter, let's look at how the early Christians understood and celebrated the day of Christ's resurrection.

What was Easter like in the early Church? Well, to begin with, they didn't call it "Easter" – that word would be meaningless to them. The early Christians believed that Jesus' passion and resurrection were the central part of the whole story of God's saving activity in the world. These events were not seen as a single, isolated moment in history but part of the great trajectory of God's providential interventions.

More specifically, the passion and resurrection of Jesus were understood to be a continuation and fulfillment of the events of the Passover and the Exodus. And not coincidentally, the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus happened at the time of the festival of Passover, so when the early Christians referred to the annual commemoration of Jesus' passion and the celebration of his resurrection, they simply called it Passover.

It's just like the way that Pentecost continues to be named after a Hebrew festival, even though it is given new meaning in the Church as the celebration of the gift of the Holy Spirit.

And so, in the early Church, the feast day of the Resurrection of the Lord was simply called Passover, or some translation of that word, as it still is to this day in most languages of the world. This is where we get the word "paschal" in the Paschal Mystery. That just means, "the Passover Mystery."



Unsplash

## Dispelling a Myth

So, what about the English word "Easter"? Where did that come from? Near as we can figure, it comes from an Old German word for "dawn," as in, facing toward the dawn – facing east.

The word "Easter" is not derived from a pagan fertility gods or anything like that. It used to be popular to say that Christianity had borrowed holidays from paganism, supposedly as a way to make it easier for people to transition from paganism into Christianity, and the two most famous examples of that were said to be Christmas and Easter.

The myth goes like this: The dates for Christmas and Easter were originally pagan festivals, perhaps the winter solstice and spring equinox, or maybe Roman festivals such as Saturnalia and Lupercalia. Then, the name for the one that comes in the spring (Easter) suppos-

edly came from one of the pagan deities – a fertility goddess who represented "new life" after winter is over.

But when one actually studies the early Church, it's very easy to see that all of this is nonsense. The early Christians would be horrified for anyone to think they had borrowed from paganism, and the apologetic documents from the early Church prove this point in how critical they were of paganism.

As far as the dates go, the date for Christmas is exactly nine months after the feast of the Annunciation (the conception of Jesus), and although there was a lot of debate over the date of Easter in the early Church – a debate we don't need to go into here – the debate itself proves that the date was not based on anything other than the date of Passover. The question was not when to celebrate the Resurrection but how to calculate the precise date relative to Passover.

In any case, nothing pagan to see here.

## Where Does 'Easter' Come From?

So, what about the English word "Easter"? Near as we can figure, it comes from an Old German word for "dawn," as in, facing toward the dawn – facing east. This is a bit of an oversimplification, but think of the way we can talk about a storm that's

heading in the northeastern direction, and call it a "nor'easter."

By the same logic, the day we face the dawn in anticipation of our own resurrection is called "easter." At least that's how it comes into English, translated from Old German. But it helps to remember that "Easter" is only a word used in English. Most other languages still call it something that is a version of the word for Passover. For example, in Italian, it's Pasqua.

Just as the Eucharist was never just a "remembering" of the passion of Christ, the Pasch was never just an "anniversary celebration" of His resurrection. The celebration of the Pasch every spring was a way to relive the events of that week in a way that brings them back around so that we can participate in them – just like the celebration of the Passover brought back the events of the Exodus for faithful Jews.

"Past history made present mystery," as they say.

## Celebrating Passover

In Hebrew theology, a recurrence of the Passover happens in providential ways at certain significant times throughout history. In the Rabbinic commentaries on the Torah, there is a poetic expansion on the Exodus that speaks of not one but four Passovers – and all of them were said to take place on the same date in

the Hebrew calendar: the 14th day of the month of Nisan, the same day as the Passover at the time of the Exodus. This poem on the Passover is called "The Poem of the Four Nights."

The first Passover "night" is the creation of the universe, and in Hebrew thought there is a specific date given for creation – also the 14th day of Nisan. This concept of tracing God's saving acts in history all the way back to creation is why we start with Genesis when we read the whole story of salvation from the Scriptures during the Easter Vigil.

The celebration of the Pasch every spring was a way to relive the events of that week in a way that brings them back around so that we can participate in them – just like the celebration of the Passover brought back the events of the Exodus for faithful Jews.

The second Passover night is the binding of Isaac, when Abraham was tested by God's command to sacrifice his son (cf. Gn 22). The Church Fathers all saw this event as a foreshadowing of the passion of Christ.

Just as a ram caught in the thorns became the substitute for the son of Abraham, so Jesus was the Lamb in the crown of thorns who became the substitution for all of Abraham's children – both his literal descendants and his spiritual children. And yes, the Hebrew scholars believed that

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CNS photo/Nancy Wiehenc

this event also took place on the 14th day of Nisan.

The third Passover night was exactly the one you'd think – the one associated with the Exodus, the main event remembered in the ongoing Jewish tradition of the Passover, which was always celebrated on the 14th day of Nisan.

Then the fourth Passover night was to be in the future, from the perspective of the Hebrews; this would be the messianic banquet at the “Day of the Lord.” Of course, they didn't expect that the “Day of the Lord” would actually be two “days”: a first advent of the Messiah and a later Second Coming, at which time the final revelation of the Kingdom of God would take place.

We live in the time between these two “days.” So, we as Christians actually have five Passovers. The hope of the messianic banquet was partly fulfilled at the Last Supper, when Jesus instituted the Sacrament of the Eucharist. But then He said He would not drink from that cup again until the final consummation at the wedding banquet of the Lamb when the Kingdom of God is fully revealed after the final resurrection. (Jesus hinted at this in His parable of the wedding banquet in Matthew 22.)

**‘Don't Fall Back’**

There was also a certain way in which the early Christians treated Resurrection Day like the beginning of a new year, in the same sense that we might make New Year's resolutions to improve ourselves and our habits. So, the early Christians used Lent, and then the Pasch, to solidify ways in which they wanted to take their spiritual lives to the next level.

In a beautiful Paschal sermon Pope St. Leo the Great preached in the fifth century, he encouraged the people to use the season to make real changes in their lives and, after Lent, not go back to their old ways. So, it could be said that a homily for Resurrection

Day was a real call to conversion, for as St. Leo said, no one who is proud, or greedy, or who denies the reality of Christ's divinity and His bodily resurrection can properly celebrate His Resurrection Day. Here is an excerpt from St. Leo's sermon (I've paraphrased it a bit to make it easier to understand in English):

“I want everyone to remember that you are a new creation in Christ, and in all seriousness, understand what this means – that by identifying with Jesus Christ in your baptism you have been adopted by God the Father. Therefore, do not let anything that God makes new in you slide back into the old ways. This is what Jesus meant when He said that no one who puts his hand to the plow looks backward – to do the work of plowing you need to keep your eyes on the row ahead of you.

“Don't fall back into the old version of you, no matter how hard it is, or how weak you think you are – if you think you're weak or not healthy enough, remember that being strong and healthy means following Jesus through death into resurrection. You did this in your baptism, back when it was easier.

“Now you need to keep following in the path of resurrection that Jesus set for you. Then no matter how slippery the path of life is, you won't slide into the quicksand, but your feet will stay on solid ground. Keep all this in mind, my beloved, not only for this Paschal season but all year round and all your life, for the sake of your sanctification.”

**The Whole Life of Christ**

So, on the one hand, the Pasch is not just one day, or even the anniversary of one day; it is a part of the recurring cycle of God's past providential intervention in history and the seasonal rhythm of our present participation in it.

On the other hand, it was also not just one feast day, as in “Easter Sunday.” For the early Christians, it was the whole Triduum.

Technically, the Triduum is from sundown on Holy Thursday to sundown on Resurrection Sunday. But in the early Church, not all Christians reckoned the day in the Jewish way, beginning at sundown, and so it wasn't even limited to three days. For them, the Pasch extended from the betrayal of Jesus on Wednesday, through the Last Supper and Jesus' unjust condemnation and all that He suffered up through His crucifixion, all the way to the end of Resurrection Day. That whole time period was considered a single “holiday/holy day” in which Christians participated in Christ's passion and resurrection.

In fact, the big picture includes much more than Holy Week. For the Church Fathers, salvation was not just about the Crucifixion or even just about the cross and the empty tomb. It was the whole of the incarnation and life of Christ, beginning with His conception at the Annunciation.

And notice that we don't usually wear little empty tombs around our necks or make the “sign of the empty tomb.” The Sign of the Cross is the sign that encompasses every aspect of the incarnation – Christ's life, as much as His death, and of course His resurrection.

Methodius, in a Paschal homily from the early fourth century, wrote that the cross is both a trophy of victory and a ladder to heaven. And this is why we make the Sign of the Cross on our bodies.

Back then, Christians made the Sign of the Cross on their foreheads, and the Church fathers taught that the forehead of a person was like the lintel of the doorway to his life – in other words, just as the sign in blood on the door lintels at the Exodus saved the children of Israel, making the Sign of the Cross on the “lintel” of our bodies is a sign of what saves us – But, again, what saves us is not only the death of Jesus but His whole life.

So, the Resurrection was never disconnected from the Passion, and the Passion was never disconnected from the Incarnation. And this sign – just like the ashes we received at the beginning of Lent, which were in the shape of the cross – is a witness to the world that we “proclaim the death of the Lord until He comes” (1 Cor 11:26

*James L. Papandrea, PhD., is the author and professor of “Church History and Historical Theology” on the YouTube channel “The Original Church.”*

**“Christ, King of Peace, cries out again from his cross: God is love! Have mercy! Lay down your weapons! Remember that you are brothers are sisters.”**

POPE LEO XIV, PALM SUNDAY, MARCH 29, 2026

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# Voices Unite in Faith, Music at St. Cecilia Festival

BY TIM JOHNSON

Voices from across diocesan schools rose in harmony on Monday, March 23, at Bishop Dwenger High School in Fort Wayne, where the St. Cecilia Choral Festival brought together students for a day of music, collaboration, and shared faith.

Students from Bishop Dwenger and Bishop Luers high schools, Chesterton Academy of St. Scholastica, St. Vincent de Paul School, and St. Charles Borromeo School spent the day in rehearsal, working with guest clinicians and their own directors before presenting an evening concert for family and friends.

For many, the experience was about more than preparing music.

"I hope they're gaining an appreciation for faith and how we can apply that in art," said guest clinician Tavis Schlicker, who worked with the combined high school choir. "How can I stand on that foundation of faith and then perform in the world? I hope they're learning to connect with others in a positive way."

Schlicker, who has more than two decades of experience directing choirs, said bringing students from multiple schools together creates both a fuller sound and a deeper sense of community.

"There's a neat energy that comes from collaborating and lifting each other up," he said. "It's an awesome opportunity that they wouldn't get as fully in their own programs."

Throughout the day, students moved between sectional rehearsals and full ensemble practice, refining harmonies and



Tavis Schlicker directs the high school choir during the St. Cecilia Choral Festival, which was held at Bishop Dwenger High School on Monday, March 23.

Provided by Bishop Dwenger High School

preparing a mix of sacred and contemporary selections. The festival also included a performance by the PFW University Singers, offering students a model of advanced choral performance.

For younger students, the experience of working with a new director and a larger group was especially impactful.

"They get a different perspective," said Analiese Cornelio, a music teacher from St. Charles Borromeo School in Fort Wayne who assisted with the middle school choir. "We might only have 30 minutes in a nor-

mal class, but here they can see how much they improve from the beginning of the day to the end. And above all, they're using their gifts to praise God."

The festival also reflects a broader emphasis on the arts within Catholic education, where music is seen as an essential part of forming the whole person.

"If you think about it, King David was a musician," said Vanessa Proulx, a music teacher from St. Vincent de Paul School in Fort Wayne. "We're able to express our faith through music. Our students need to know the songs of our faith – they're part of our roots."

That formation extends beyond performance.

"We expect them to sing at Mass and be engaged," St. Charles Borromeo music teacher Analiese Cornelio added. "Music education helps them understand and participate more fully."

For middle school students, the day also offered a chance to grow both musically and personally.

"There's a lot of building trust and community," said Allison McQueen, the clinician who led the festival's junior choir. "At the beginning of the day, they're unsure, but by the end, they're confident and excited to sing."

"We might only have 30 minutes in a normal class, but here they can see how much they improve from the beginning of the day to the end. And above all, they're using their gifts to praise God."

ANALIESE CORNELIO

McQueen said the experience helps students develop not only their voices but also their focus and perseverance.

"It's a long day," she said. "They're building stamina – not just musically but mentally – and learning they can do hard things and end up better than when they started."

For students, the day offered both musical growth and a sense of connection.

"It's really surprising," said Bishop Luers student Elizabeth Stachofsky, describing the combined sound. "You come from your own school, and then all the voices come together, and the sound is so much bigger.

That first time we sang together, it gave me chills."

"It's really cool when all of the parts lock in," said Bishop Dwenger junior Natalia Kleinrichert. "It's kind of shocking how well everything comes together."

Organized this year by Bishop Dwenger choir director Teresa Stachofsky, the festival continues a tradition of collaboration between diocesan schools that began with a similar honor band program.

About 117 students in grades five through 12 participated this year, with plans to continue expanding the event in the future. Next year, the St. Cecilia Choral Festival will be held at Bishop Luers High School and coordinated by music director Kris Andorfer.

At its heart, Schlicker said, choral music offers something unique.

"There's a vulnerability in singing together," he said. "You're stepping outside yourself to create something bigger. Where words fail, music begins."

For the students who gathered at Bishop Dwenger, that shared experience of music, faith, and community may be the most lasting note of all.



Tim Johnson

Students from St. Vincent de Paul School in Fort Wayne sing during rehearsals.

# Diocese Announces Leadership Transition for Local Pontifical Mission Societies

BY TODAY'S CATHOLIC

The Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend will mark a transition in its missionary outreach leadership at the end of March, as Kay Schneider retires after 17 years as director of the Pontifical Mission Societies and Meg Distler prepares to assume the role April 1.

The change comes after decades of service by Schneider, whose ministry in Catholic education and parish life preceded her work with the mission office. Appointed director in 2008 by Bishop John M. D'Arcy, Schneider first became involved in 2003 as coordinator of the Holy Childhood Association.

The Pontifical Mission Societies, under the direction of the Holy Father, support the Church's missionary activity worldwide by fostering prayer, promoting missionary awareness, and providing material assistance to mission territories.

In her role, Schneider helped coordinate the diocese's participation in the Church's worldwide missionary efforts, particularly through the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. A central part of that work included organizing the Missionary Cooperative Program, which connects parishes with visiting missionaries from around the world.

Each year, Schneider reviewed hundreds of requests from missionaries seeking to visit parishes. Working with diocesan leadership, she helped prioritize those appeals and match them with local communities, ensuring parishioners could hear firsthand about the needs of the universal Church.

She also supported diocesan participation in World Mission

Sunday each October, helping foster awareness of the Church's global mission and encouraging both prayer and financial support.

Reflecting on her years of service, Schneider said: "It has been extremely exciting and humbling for me to communicate with bishops, priests, and sisters from all over the world. It has been a blessing to work with so many wonderful people in our diocese over these many years."

Schneider's broader ministry in the diocese spans decades. She served as a teacher at St. Charles Borromeo School, later as principal at St. Henry School, and for 27 years as director of religious education at St. Joseph Parish in Roanoke

and St. Catherine Parish in Nix Settlement.

Her successor, Meg Distler, brings extensive experience in Catholic leadership and philanthropy. Distler recently retired as executive director of the St. Joseph Community Health Foundation, where she spent 30 years in ministry with the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ, supporting initiatives for vulnerable populations,

including pregnant women, infants, and immigrants.

Distler also serves on several diocesan and Catholic boards, including the Catholic Community Foundation and the diocesan finance council, and is a parishioner at St. Gaspar del Bufalo Catholic Church in Rome City.

She said her own faith journey and experience within the diocese helped inspire her to take on the new role.

"I have been blessed to experience a peace in my life in large part because I have been able to grow my relationship with God through our diocese,

which is abundantly rich with Catholic resources," Distler said.

"We have many opportunities to meet God on many different fronts with our parishes, religious communities, Catholic education system, retreat centers, shrines, and our clergy and active lay ministry." Distler said the Pontifical Mission Societies are operated by the pope as a gateway for the faithful to help missionar-



Meg Distler

ies establish "these types of resources globally through prayer and financial support."

She hopes to expand opportunities for young people to engage in missionary life. She pointed to recent partici-

pation by local Catholic school students in the Missionary Childhood Association, where children created World Mission rosaries representing the five continents. "I hope we can ex-

pand upon that opportunity for more children to participate," she said.

Regarding the transition in local leadership of the Pontifical Mission Societies, Father Mark Gurtner, vicar general of the diocese, said: "It has been such a joy for me as vicar general to work with Kay all these years in her role as diocesan director of the Pontifical Mission Societies. I wish her the fullness of God's blessing in her retirement. It is also a joy for me to welcome Meg Disler as the new director. I have had the honor of working with Meg on various things and am well familiar with her expertise and her zeal for the mission of the Church."



"It has been a blessing to work with so many wonderful people in our diocese over these many years."

KAY SCHNEIDER

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# Looking Forward to the Resurrection of the Dead



## HUMOR IN THE MIX

KEN HALLENIUS

At nearly every Sunday Mass and on solemnities throughout the year, we pray the Nicene Creed, a summary of key tenets of the Catholic faith. A quick back-of-the-envelope calculation gives me the conservative estimate that I have professed the creed around 2,500 times since I first sounded out the words in second grade. And that number doesn't include the simpler and earlier version called the Apostles' Creed, prayed most often as part of the Rosary. I can't even begin to guess how many times I've prayed that one on my beads over the years.

In these relatively brief summaries, we name some of the highest truths that we believe, especially those surrounding the Blessed Trinity. Neither of the creeds is exhaustive; they both mention baptism, for example, but don't discuss the Eucharist, which the Second Vatican Council called "the source and summit" of our Catholic faith. Of course,

it makes practical sense that not everything we believe in would be explained in detail every time we come together to pray. Even the Catechism of the Catholic Church is only a summary of our beliefs, and that runs more than 800 pages of densely printed text.

As my old Latin teacher told me a million times, "Repetition is the mother of learning." Consequently, the truths that the Church recites together week after week are the truths that we are invited to reflect upon most deeply. At the top of the so-called "hierarchy of truths" is God Himself. Both the Nicene and Apostles' creeds are structured around understanding the Blessed Trinity.

The creeds invite us to reflect upon what we mean when we say that God is one, in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God the Father created the heavens and the earth. God the Son, through whom all things were made, took human flesh and suffered, died, and rose from the dead. God the Holy Spirit is equally God with the Father and the Son and is the Lord and giver of life.

The Blessed Trinity is the highest and most important truth of our faith. It is also the

most difficult to comprehend, because it's unlike anything we can experience directly through our senses or understand by human reason. How can something be both three and one? Every attempt to explain the Trinity falls infinitely short of reality. St. Thomas Aquinas taught that no matter how detailed our explanation might be, the difference is infinitely greater.

But God Himself, in His mercy, bridged that gap. We could never come to know the truth about God's inner life without God telling us about Himself. Through the prophets, and most importantly through His own incarnation in the person of Jesus Christ, God revealed Himself to us in order that He might draw us to Himself.

Week after week as we recite the creed, we repeat that which we have come to know about the Blessed Trinity – to inspire deeper reflection on God's self-revelation and to draw us deeper into the mystery of God.

There are other truths we pray in the creed, beginning with those about the Church being one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. We profess the power of the Sacrament of Baptism to forgive

sins. And we say that we "look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come."

In the Easter season, it is this last part of the creed that is particularly fresh in my mind, because we have just experienced its full reality. At the Easter Vigil, the high point of our entire liturgical year, we rejoiced as our newest brothers and sisters were received into the Church through baptism and profession of faith, becoming one with us in Christ Jesus. They were washed of their sins in the baptismal waters and sealed with the Holy Spirit through anointing with the sacred chrism. We then celebrated our full communion in Christ by sharing in the Eucharistic sacrifice.

St. Paul's letter to the Romans, proclaimed at the Easter Vigil, assures us that baptism has real power to save because it configures us to Christ Jesus. "We were indeed buried with Him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life."

Throughout the Easter Season, we hear the Gospel accounts of Jesus' appearances to the dis-

ciples after His resurrection, how it took the disciples some time to comprehend what they were seeing with their own eyes. Eventually, through the power of the Holy Spirit, the disciples were transformed from men cowering behind locked doors in an upper room to apostles sent to the ends of the earth to baptize and proclaim the forgiveness of sins.

And we are the heirs to that proclamation of the Gospel. When we proclaim in the creed that "we look forward to the resurrection of the body and the life of the world to come," we affirm the truth that we who have through baptism been buried with Christ will, like He was on that first Easter Sunday, also be raised from the dead to a new and glorious life.

Let us live today and every day in the assurance that we can experience even now the newness of life that is our inheritance as disciples of the Lord Jesus. That is something worth repeating, over and over.

He is risen! Happy Easter!  
Alleluia!

**Ken Hallenius** and his wife, Julie, are parishioners at St. Joseph Catholic Church.

# Accepting that Christ Rose from the Dead Is the Greatest Act of Faith



## THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

MONSIGNOR OWEN F. CAMPION

Today the Church celebrates the greatest day of its year, Easter, the feast of the Resurrection of the Lord.

These readings are proclaimed at Masses during the day on Easter itself. On Holy Saturday, the day preceding Easter, the Church will have celebrated the Easter Vigil, surely one of its most dramatic and expressive liturgical moments.

The first reading on Easter Sunday is from the Acts of the Apostles. It gives us a glimpse into life in the early Christian community in Jerusalem and into the lives of the 11 surviving apostles after the resurrection and ascension of Jesus.

It is apparent that the words of Jesus, the risen Lord, were fresh in the minds of the apostles and the other members

of the community. Strong also was the wish to follow the Lord's instructions and example.

In what today is called evangelization, the apostles were committed to making the mercy of God in Jesus known.

Peter is the spokesman for all the apostles. Indeed, throughout Acts, Peter appears as head of the apostles and of the community in general.

For its second reading, the Church gives us a passage from the Epistle to the Colossians. According to this epistle, Christians also have been raised to new life. Their new life is in the resurrected, living Christ. As Christ is in heaven, so the thoughts of Christians must be on heaven.

The Resurrection Narrative from John's Gospel is the last reading. Mary of Magdala was at the tomb, but she found it empty. Upset, fearing that the Lord's body had been stolen, she rushed to inform Peter. Reaching Peter, she anxiously said that the Lord's body had been taken away.

"The disciple whom Jesus loved," traditionally thought to have been the apostle John but never actually identified as such in the Gospel, and Peter then hurried to the tomb themselves. The disciple arrived first, but he waited for Peter, another indication of Peter's status.

Peter entered the tomb, saw that it was empty, but evidently did not realize that Jesus had risen, although the Gospel does not say this. It does say that the disciple understood what had occurred.

### Reflection

In 1943, Americans wearily and anxiously were coping with the effects upon their lives, tormented by World War II. American Catholics found a moment of relief when a motion picture, "The Song of Bernadette," was released.

Fictional, but based on history, it recalled the appearances by the Blessed Mother to St. Bernadette in Lourdes, France.

Not everyone accepted as fact the story of the apparitions.

At the beginning of the movie, a statement appeared on the screen, saying, "For those who do not believe, no explanation (of the apparitions) is possible. For those who believe, no explanation is needed."

These few words capsulized the meaning, and the value, of faith, a gift to an individual heart from Almighty God. Easter commemorates the Lord's resurrection from death. Accepting as fact the Resurrection is the greatest act of faith. Rising from the dead confirms Christ's identity as God and the wonder of the Lord's mission as Savior of the world. Praise be Jesus Christ!

Fortunate is anyone who believes. Pope Leo XIV recently noted the benefits of faith in a believer's life. Faith lifts the veils that cover reality and pinpoint the essentials. In a poor person, believers see not just an unlucky person but a treasure, a beloved child of God. In human decisions, believers see not just coincidences but opportunities to assert the mercy and justice

revealed by Jesus. In hardships, believers see not misfortune but the purpose and reality of life and of future glory, and even the inspiration to provide earthly relief.

### READINGS

**Sunday:** Acts 10:34a, 37-43; Psalms 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23; Colossians 3:1-4; John 20:1-9

**Monday:** Acts 2:14, 22-33; Psalms 16:1-2a, 5, 7-8, 9-10, 11; Matthew 28:8-15

**Tuesday:** Acts 2:36-41; Psalms 33:4-5, 18-19, 20, 22; John 20:11-18

**Wednesday:** Acts 3:1-10; Psalms 105:1-2, 3-4, 6-7, 8-9; Luke 24:13-35

**Thursday:** Acts 3:11-26; Psalms 8:2ab, 5, 6-7, 8-9; Luke 24:35-48

**Friday:** Acts 4:1-12; Psalms 118:1-2, 4, 22-24, 25-27a; John 21:1-14

**Saturday:** Acts 4:13-21; Psalms 118:1, 14-15, 16-18, 19-21; Mark 16:9-15

# 'Joy as a Daily Discipline': Leaning into Easter



**TWENTY  
SOMETHING**

CHRISTINA CAPECCHI

Easter gets the short end of the stick.

That's what author Laura Kelly Fanucci concluded. Any Catholic can tell you what the 40 days of Lent entail, rattling off the terms: praying, fasting, and almsgiving.

But ask about the 50 days of Easter and many get stuck on an egg hunt and "Alleluia."

Then what?  
"Why aren't we living Easter more deliberately?" Fanucci found herself asking.

The 45-year-old Minnesota mother explores this question in her new book, "Living Easter," published by Ave Maria Press. "I set it up as a creative, theological challenge: How would you think about sustaining the practice of a whole season of Easter?"

The book illuminates the Church's most consequential liturgical season, gathering every Scripture story of the Resurrection into daily entries with Fanucci's reflections and action items. They're all tucked into a beautiful, hand-sized hardcover.

"Living Easter celebrates joy itself as our Resurrection practice," Fanucci writes in the introduction. "Taking up joy as a daily discipline teaches us about feasting as a companion practice to fasting: an intentional sacred act that draws us closer to God."

That doesn't mean being cheerful for 50 consecutive days, Fanucci is quick to clarify. "It's OK if you're not feeling very Easter-y, if things aren't looking

like bunnies and chocolate," she told me. "Easter is for all of us – especially those who are suffering or lost or grieving. That's exactly the kind of people that the first Easter came for."

Fanucci has plenty of first-hand experience.

Three years ago, she received a horrifying diagnosis: triple negative breast cancer. A decade ago, she lost twin girls hours after their birth.

"Even in their dying, I could feel something of the life they were being born into or were going to hold onto," said Fanucci, who is now cancer free and a mom of five boys. "I came to a

really deep understanding of the reality of the Resurrection. God does impossible things. He makes a way where there seems to be none. In small ways and big ways, resurrection is at the heart of my faith."

Every page of the book is colored by her medical journey.

"Dying and rising are woven into creation. Surviving cancer helped me see that is part of what it means to be human," said Fanucci, who lives in St. Michael, Minnesota, and belongs to the Church of St. Joseph the Worker in Maple Grove. "God's work of resurrection is always going on in the world."

That conviction anchors Fanucci when war dominates the headlines and immigration raids sever her community.

Creating this book meant spending time with the saints who witnessed Jesus' resurrection – Mary Magdalene, Thomas, Peter, and Mary. They provided a companionship that Fanucci never could have anticipated.

She pairs her profound insights with simple action items for each day of Easter: pick flowers, bake bread, sing, take a walk, bless with holy water, call a friend, share a story about God.

Faith-based writing has always animated Fanucci, who has written more than a dozen books and houses her work at laurakellyfanucci.com. Lately

she's felt compelled to cast a wider net of readership.

"Increasingly, I have such a yearning to write for those who don't feel certain of their faith, who maybe don't feel included in the Church," she said. "The most meaningful

**"Dying and rising are woven into creation. Surviving cancer helped me see that is part of what it means to be human. God's work of resurrection is always going on in the world."**

**LAURA KELLY FANUCCI**

feedback I get is when folks say, 'I stopped going to Mass decades ago, but I really like what you're saying, and it's made me think maybe I believe this, too.'"

She's clear on her goal. "It's a dream I have to help people strengthen their imagination to see how God is at work around us, so we don't file away resurrection as an idea or a historical event. This isn't the end. There is hope."

**Christina Capecchi** is a freelance writer from Grey Cloud Island, Minnesota.

## SCRIPTURE SEARCH®

Gospel for April 5, 2026  
Matthew 28:1-10

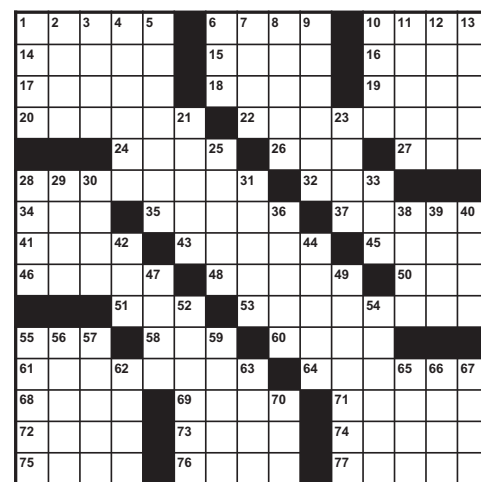
Following is a word search based on the Gospel reading for the Solemnity of Easter, Cycle A: The angel at the tomb. The words can be found in all directions in the puzzle.

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| THE WEEK GREAT BACK WHITE AFRAID NOT HERE HE LAY | MAGDALENE AN ANGEL APPEARANCE SNOW JESUS BEEN RAISED TELL | TOMB ROLLED CLOTHING DEAD MEN CRUCIFIED PLACE DISCIPLES |
|--|---|---|

### ANGELIC APPEARANCE

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

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- 68 "What'll \_\_\_?"  
69 Crack  
71 Worship  
72 "O Mary! We crown \_\_\_ with blossoms today"  
73 Is not (slang)  
74 Inward feeling  
75 That woman's  
76 Youths  
77 Trimm  
**DOWN**  
1 What we are forbidden to do by the fifth commandment  
2 Melville work  
3 Jump  
4 Expel  
5 Catch in  
6 More, to Pedro  
7 Continuous dull pain  
8 Lariat  
9 Catholic author of *How the Irish Saved Civilization*

**ACROSS**

- 1 St. Maximilian  
6 Artist Chagall  
10 Seed containers  
14 "That is..."  
15 Suffix (zool.)  
16 Opera highlight  
17 Bank transactions  
18 A sovereign  
19 Bits of thread  
20 Moving along easily  
22 Cause of a disease  
24 "You are the \_\_\_ of the earth" (Mt 5:13)  
26 \_\_\_ Souls' Day  
27 Neither's partner  
28 Champignon  
32 The \_\_\_ of Moses  
34 Wife of St. Joachim  
35 Made a mistake  
37 Judas' blood money bought it (Mt 27:6-8)  
41 Disturbance  
43 New Haven student  
45 Musical group  
46 Second century pope  
48 Tropical plant used in cosmetics  
50 Obtained  
51 Catholic comedian DeLuise  
53 Headset  
55 Aliens, briefly  
58 Number of the commandment that forbids adultery  
60 One of the three in 1 Cor 13:13  
61 Bishops head these  
64 Required  
10 Chalice covering  
11 Hunter slain by Artemis  
12 Wild dog of Australia  
13 Hybrid creature of myth  
21 "\_\_\_ be to the Father..."  
23 Nordic Saint  
25 Another name for 32A  
28 Sunday service  
29 "...a sorrow \_\_\_ death" (Sir 37:2)  
30 Hissy fit  
31 Confused hand-to-hand fight  
33 Intelligence  
36 Daughter of Jacob  
38 "Tantum \_\_\_"  
39 Proverbs says the righteous are as bold as this animal  
40 Express excessive love (with "on")  
42 Liturgical color  
44 Bankrupt energy giant  
47 Peruvian saint  
49 Pacify  
52 Prayer book  
54 Listened to  
55 St. \_\_\_ Stein  
56 Donate a portion of money to church  
57 Not drunk  
59 City in Ohio  
62 Gentleman's grades  
63 Quartz grains  
65 Ding finish  
66 Scottish Gaelic  
67 "...that I have sinned exceedingly in thought, word and \_\_\_"  
70 A TD is worth six

Answers on page 15.



**SAINT OF THE WEEK**  
**GEMMA GALGANI**  
**Feast Day: April 11**

Gemma lost both her parents by age 19, and poor health prevented her from joining the Passionist Sisters in her native Tuscany. Following an apparition, she appears to be cured of tuberculosis of the spine, but the disease killed her. For a time, Gemma's body had borne the stigmata and wounds like scourging, though some observers thought her hysterical or possessed by the devil. However, 230 extant letters to her spiritual director and confessor reveal a pious, humble soul, willing to suffer for Christ. St. Gemma died on April 11, 1903, and was canonized on May 2, 1940, by Pope Pius XII.

# St. John the Evangelist Concludes Eucharistic Consecration with Procession in Goshen

BY DENISE FEDOROW

St. John the Evangelist Parish in Goshen recently concluded a 33-day Eucharistic consecration and celebrated with a Eucharistic procession.

Father Brian Florin, pastor at St. John, felt called to hold this parish-wide consecration, stating at a Lenten talk that with all the uncertainty, fear, and negativity in the world right now, he felt what was needed was a Eucharistic revival.

Using the Spanish and English versions of Matthew Kelly's book "33 Days to Eucharistic Glory" as a guide, parishioners read a few pages of the book each day on their own or listened to Father Florin's talks on the daily readings. There were four weeks of Lenten talks that were based on aspects of the book, and the parish held a 40 Hour Eucharistic adoration, concluding on Sunday, March 22, the day of the consecration.

During the homily that day, Father Florin spoke about the consecration saying, "Just like all the saints before us, today we say through our conse-

cration, 'Jesus we trust, we surrender, we believe that you are Lord.' I believe through this consecration Jesus wants to bring the dead to life - in ourselves and in our parish." Father Florin added that "the Eucharist is the sacrament of unity. We've been drawn together these last 33 days together through this consecration, and during our 40 Hours of adoration, we've come together as one community," he said.

"Some say the Catholic faith is dying," he said. "We are bringing in a record number of people into our parish during the Easter Vigil -40-50 people. Some say young people don't care; we have a Church that's alive with young people. We have 60 confirmation students out there preparing altars today. We have countless numbers of young people who are alive in the faith. We take Our Lord out to the streets as a sign of our trust, surrender, and belief. The Eucharist is not just for us Catholics; it's for everyone to come to know, trust, and believe that Jesus is truly present. We need to share our joy in our consecration."



Photos by Denise Fedorow

Members of the St. John the Evangelist Parish community process with the Blessed Sacrament on Sunday, March 22.



Deacon Christian Nieves, left, and Father Brian Florin pause for prayer during the Eucharistic procession in Goshen.



Deacon Christian Nieves stands before the Blessed Sacrament before praying a prayer for Eucharistic consecration at St. John the Evangelist Church in Goshen.



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# 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](http://todayscatholic.org/event). To feature your event and gain more exposure, call us at (260) 399-1449 to learn about space options.

**SATURDAY, APRIL 4  
Easter Food Blessing  
9 a.m.**

**FORT WAYNE** – All are invited to take part in a traditional Easter food blessing on Holy Saturday at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, 1105 Calhoun St. All are encouraged to bring a basket of foods to be served on Easter for a special blessing. The blessing of Easter food baskets is a long-standing Catholic tradition, particularly in Poland and other parts of central and Eastern Europe. Through prayer and blessing, we ask God to sanctify the food we will share in celebrating the joy of the Christ's resurrection.

**MONDAY, APRIL 6  
Dyngus Day Party  
12 – 6 p.m.**

**SOUTH BEND** – Doors open at Hedwig Memorial Center, 331 S. Scott St., at 12 p.m. with live music beginning at 1 p.m. Dyngus food and cash bar will be available with a \$5 cover charge.



**DYNGUS DAY**

**TUESDAY, APRIL 7 (Huntington)  
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8 (Fort Wayne)  
Evangelizing with St. Mary Magdelene  
6:30 – 9 p.m.**

Join us on Tuesday, April 7, at St. Mary's Assumption Hall, 903 N. Jefferson St., in Huntington, or on Wednesday, April 8, at the St. Charles Borromeo Hession Center, 4916 Trier Rd., in Fort Wayne, as author and Consecrated Woman of Regnum Christi Jennifer Ristine shares her journey of being called by Christ. The Rosary will be prayed at 6:30 p.m. with a conference to follow. Hear her insights on St. Mary Magdelene and how she missioned with this saint.

**REST IN PEACE**

**Fort Wayne**

Charles A. Momper, 96, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

Helen Matera, 95, St. Therese

Linda Anderson, 62, St. Vincent de Paul

**Huntington**

Mark Charles Bickel I, 75, St. Mary/SS. Peter and Paul

**Mishawaka**

Mary Beth Lies, 77, Queen of Peace

**South Bend**

Rebecca Jean Baju, 78, Christ the King

James Shaw, 82, Sacred Heart of Jesus

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



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# The Triumph of Palm Sunday Points to Christ's Victory on the Cross, Bishop Rhoades Says

BY TODAY'S CATHOLIC

**B**ishop Rhoades opened Holy Week at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception on Sunday, March 29, by inviting the faithful to look beyond the outward triumph of Palm Sunday to the deeper victory of Christ's cross.

Preaching on Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord, Bishop Rhoades reflected on the dual character of the liturgy, which recounts both Jesus' entry into Jerusalem and His Passion. The crowds who welcomed Jesus with palms and cries of "hosanna" recognized Him as king, he said, but did not yet understand the kind of kingship He would reveal.

"Jesus' entry into Jerusalem was triumphant," Bishop Rhoades explained, but "only in a very limited sense." Christ's true victory came not amid cheers but on Good Friday, "when His love was victorious over sin" and He "reigns as king from the wood of the cross."

Bishop Rhoades noted the striking contrast between Palm Sunday and Good Friday, when some of the same voices that cried "hosanna" may have later shouted, "crucify him."

Yet it is precisely through Christ's sacrificial love that salvation is accomplished. Echoing the Church's liturgy, Bishop Rhoades pointed to Christ's saving work made present at every Mass: "Save us, Savior of the world, for by your cross and resurrection, you have set us free."

Turning to the faithful, Bishop Rhoades urged Catholics to enter deeply into Holy Week by contemplating "the mysterious wisdom of the cross." Far from a sign of defeat, the cross is "the victory of God's love," revealing the self-giving love of the Father and the Son.

He encouraged believers to respond not only with gratitude but with action: to remain in Christ's love, to love one another, and to take up their own crosses in daily life. In doing so, he said, they participate in Christ's ongoing work of redemption.

Concluding, Bishop Rhoades invited the faithful to take part in the sacred Paschal Triduum and entrusted them to the intercession of the Blessed Mother, praying that all may draw closer to Christ as the Church celebrates "the greatest mysteries" of salvation.



Photos by Josh Schipper

**Bishop Rhoades offers a blessing to the faithful outside of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Wayne on Palm Sunday, March 29.**



**People process with palms in hand on Palm Sunday in Fort Wayne.**



**Deacon Noah Isch reads from the ambo during Palm Sunday Mass.**