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“The Church desires to hear from all its members, in all walks of life.”

– Sarah Scarbrough



Spreading the Fire of God's Love

Prayer, Openness to the Holy Spirit Shape Participants' Discernment for First Diocesan Synod in 100 Years

BY TIM JOHNSON

“I was like, ‘Lord, are you sure?’”

When Maria Solis opened the letter inviting her to serve as a delegate for the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend's upcoming diocesan synod, the 23-year-old missionary volunteer initially thought the envelope contained tax paperwork.

Instead, the letter asked Solis — a young adult active in ministry, evangelization and missionary work — to participate in one of the most significant diocesan events in the past 100 years.

Her reaction was one shared, in different ways, by many delegates selected for the synod: surprise, humility, prayer and a sense of spiritual responsibility.

Across the diocese, delegates preparing for the 2026 synod de-

scribe the process not as political representation or organizational leadership but as a call to listen prayerfully to the Holy Spirit and to one another.

Spreading the Fire of God's Love

The diocesan synod — the first in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend in 100 years — will gather clergy, religious and lay faithful from throughout northern Indiana for prayer, discernment and consultation centered on the life and mission of the Church. The theme of the synod is “Spreading the Fire of God's Love.”

According to diocesan synod materials, delegates are not meant to function like elected representatives advocating for constituencies or agendas. Instead, they are

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Formed for the Faith: Seminarians Find a Home at Saint Meinrad

BY SCOTT WARDEN

Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology sits in the rolling hills of southern Indiana, and most mornings a group of young men from the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend gather with their classmates to chant morning prayer before they head off to class.

For Michael Hickey, a seminarian from St. John the Baptist Parish in Fort Wayne, the rhythm has become central to his formation.

“A typical day at Saint Meinrad, for me, begins with two things: coffee and prayer,” he said. “Put them together and you

get ‘coffice’ — praying the divine office with a cup of coffee.”

After morning prayer comes class, then Mass, then lunch, afternoon classes and free time before vespers at 5 p.m. This structure, Hickey told Today's Catholic, “gives rise to a consistent prayer schedule, which helps orient my day for work and prayer. This is the ancient Benedictine tradition of ora et labora (‘pray and work’).”

Hickey said seminary life has been different than he expected.

“What has surprised me the most about seminary life is how normal it is,” he said. “I had this

SAINT MEINRAD, page 9



Saint Meinrad Archabbey and Seminary

Seminarians follow a Eucharistic procession at Saint Meinrad in southern Indiana.



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To donate to the annual Pentecost Collection, which supports the education of our diocesan seminarians, visit diocesefwsb.org/give or scan the QR code.

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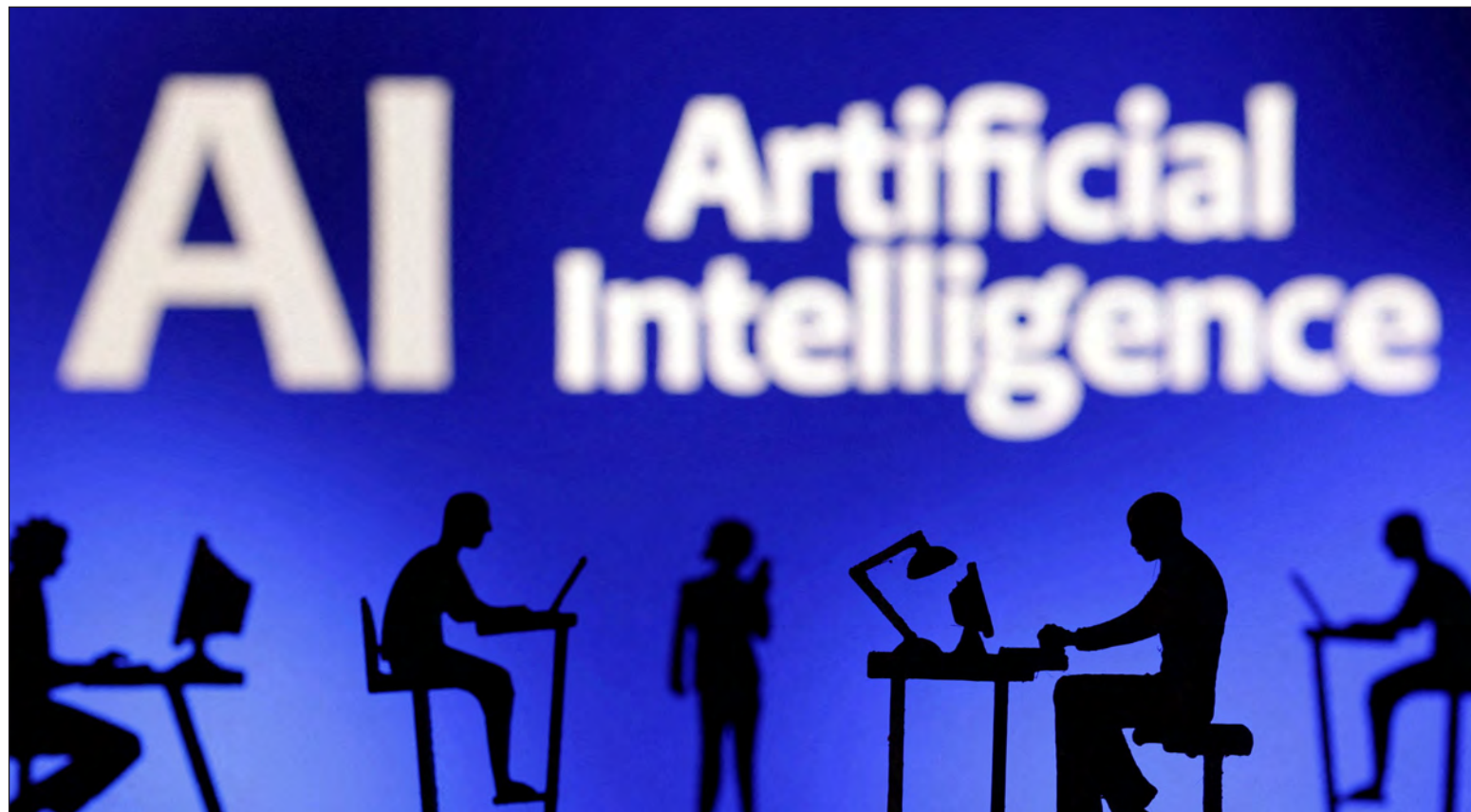
The
Diocese of
Fort Wayne-South Bend

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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OSV News photo/Dado Ruvic, Reuters

Human figures with computers and smartphones are seen in front of the words “artificial intelligence” and “AI” in this illustration taken February 19, 2024. Pope Leo XIV's first encyclical, *Magnifica Humanitas* (“Magnificent Humanity”), will be published on Monday, May 25, addressing artificial intelligence and the protection of human dignity, the Vatican announced on Monday, May 18.

Pope Leo XIV to Publish Encyclical on AI on May 25

BY COURTNEY MARES

VATICAN CITY (OSV News) — Pope Leo XIV's first encyclical, *Magnifica Humanitas*, will be published on Monday, May 25, addressing artificial intelligence and the protection of human dignity, Vatican officials announced on Monday, May 18.

The encyclical, the title of which is Latin for “Magnificent Humanity,” was signed by the pope on Friday, May 15, the 135th anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*, Pope Leo XIII's foundational 1891 social encyclical on labor and capital written during the first Industrial Revolution.

In an unprecedented first, Pope Leo XIV will be present in person at the Vatican news conference to mark the publication of the social encyclical, along with a tech founder from one of the world's fastest growing AI companies.

Christopher Olah, co-founder of the artificial intelligence company Anthropic, which developed the AI large language model (LLM) named Claude, will speak on a panel presenting the document at the Vatican's Synod Hall on May 25 at 11:30 a.m. local time.

Also joining the panel will be Anna Rowlands, a British theologian specializing in Catholic social teaching who helped organize the Synod of Bishops on synodality, and Léocadie

Lushombo, a professor of theological ethics at the Jesuit School of Theology at Santa Clara University. Cardinal Víctor Manuel Fernández, prefect of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, and Cardinal Michael Czerny, prefect of the Dicastery for Integral Human Development, will also take part in the news conference. Pope Leo XIV and Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Vatican Secretary of State, will give speeches at the end of the news conference.

Pope Leo XIV has expressed interest in the issue of artificial intelligence and the dignity of work since the first week of his pontificate, telling the College of Cardinals days after his election in May of 2025 that he took his papal name partly in honor of Pope Leo XIII, whose landmark encyclical *Rerum Novarum* has shaped the Church's social teaching for more than a century.

“In our own day, the Church offers to everyone the treasury of her social teaching in response to another industrial revolution and to developments in the field of artificial intelligence that pose new challenges for the defense of human dignity, justice and labor,” Pope Leo XIV said two days after his election.

The first American pope and a former mathematics major, Pope Leo has returned to the subject of AI again and again in speeches, messages and interviews in his first year, leading *Time* mag-

More Coverage Online

Full coverage of the release of *Magnifica Humanitas* won't appear in the May 31 issue of Today's Catholic, which was scheduled to go to press on Friday, May 22. Upon the May 25 publication of Pope Leo's first encyclical, Today's Catholic will have full coverage online at TodaysCatholic.org.

azine to include him on its 2025 list of the world's most influential people in artificial intelligence, with the magazine describing him as a spiritual counterweight to Silicon Valley.

Pope Leo has addressed the issue of AI in venues ranging from a sports stadium packed with teenagers, whom he told to use AI “in such a way that if it disappeared tomorrow, you would still know how to think,” to a gathering of legislators from 68 countries, where he insisted that artificial intelligence is a tool meant to serve human beings, not replace them. The pope has also warned priests not to use chatbots to write their homilies and expressed concern for AI's potential effect on children's “intellectual and neurological development.”

The pope's 2026 message for the 60th World Day of Social Communications, published in

January, has been his most robust document to date on AI and protecting human dignity. In the papal message, he underlined that “our faces and voices are unique, distinctive features of every person” that reveal “a person's own unrepeatable identity” and that by “simulating human voices and faces, wisdom and knowledge, consciousness and responsibility, empathy and friendship,” AI systems “encroach upon the deepest level of communication, that of human relationships.”

Pope Leo also warned that AI systems “have increasingly taken control of the production of texts, music and videos,” putting “much of the human creative industry at risk of being dismantled and replaced with the label ‘Powered by AI,’ turning people into passive consumers of unthought thoughts and anonymous products without ownership or love.”

“The ability to access vast amounts of data and information should not be confused with the ability to derive meaning and value from it. The latter requires a willingness to confront the mystery and core questions of our existence,” Pope Leo said in a December speech to participants in an AI conference.

“It will therefore be essential to teach young people to use these tools with their own intelligence, ensuring that they open themselves to the search for truth.”



University of Notre Dame

Bishop Rhoades poses with students from the University of Notre Dame's Master of Divinity program at the chapel at Moreau Seminary following a Mass of blessing and sending on Thursday, May 7, in South Bend.

M.Div. Program Connects Students with Real-World Ministry

BY PAULA LENT

After arriving in South Bend before beginning the University of Notre Dame's Master of Divinity (M.Div.) program, Donny Robbins began to experience God calling him toward pro-life ministry. Through the local Catholic young adult community, he learned about a Voices for Life outreach event, then fortuitously ran into Melanie Lyon, the organization's executive director and co-founder, when she was speaking at a diocesan Theology on Tap event. Her witness to being merciful in the face of persecution while ministering at an abortion clinic inspired Robbins to begin volunteering, and he discerned that God was calling him to stay with VFL for his first-year ministry placement.

"I especially admire that Donny, as a first-year student, was able to suggest VFL as a new placement opportunity, demonstrating the program's respect for student ideas and passions," Lyon told Today's Catholic. "This ministry placement requirement of the M.Div. program is a testament to Notre Dame's commitment to our wider community."

Robbins' experience is but one of many that occur annually through the partnership between the M.Div. program and the broader South Bend community. Notre Dame's program is notable for its holistic formation approach, integrating intellectual, pastoral, human and

spiritual formative dimensions within a community environment. Ministry placements are a key component of this, allowing students to combine their classroom learning with practical ministry experience while becoming part of the local community. These placements connect students with a variety of organizations, including Our Lady of the Road, St. Margaret's House, hospitals, schools and parishes.

"It's wonderful to [receive] academic training, especially at such a prestigious university, where you have just the top-notch theologians forming you and teaching you," said Becky Ruvalcaba, an alum of the M.Div. program and its director of pastoral formation. "But then to have top-notch formators actually guiding you and reflecting with you on the world of ministry — experts who are in the thick of it — for me, it makes it even more real; it makes it richer formation."

Recent graduate Logan Edwards told Today's Catholic that as an undergrad, he knew he loved studying theology, "yet I also knew that simply knowing a lot of theology wouldn't necessarily equip me to serve the People of God," he said. "Knowing that the Notre Dame M.Div. is based explicitly on 'Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord' [the document on lay ecclesial ministry from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops] and that it would form me not only

intellectually but personally, spiritually and pastorally made it the right place for me."

M.Div. students, who form cohorts composed of lay ministers, religious brothers and sisters, and seminarians, complete between six to 10 hours of weekly service at a ministerial site during each of the program's three years. They choose sites based on their interests, experiences and abilities, as well as ministerial areas for growth and the year's pastoral theme — ministry of presence (first year), articulation of the Faith (second), or ministerial leadership and authority (third year).

For Congregation of Holy Cross seminarian Eric Washkewicz, each placement drew upon his naval experiences while also honing his ministerial skills. He became an assistant university ROTC chaplain for his first placement as a way to discern military chaplaincy post-ordination while growing in a ministry of presence.

"I went to the Naval Academy for my undergrad, so working with cadets again was a really meaningful experience because I was able to give back from a perspective of 'I've been in your shoes,'" he told Today's Catholic.

Washkewicz embraced the second-year theme of articulating the Faith through Notre Dame's OCIA program.

"I had zero experience with OCIA," he recalled. But once



PUBLIC SCHEDULE OF
BISHOP KEVIN C. RHOADES
Veritatem In Caritate
(Truth in Charity)

- ◆ **Tuesday, May 26, at 10 a.m.** – Blessing, Heritage and Research Center, Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame
- ◆ **Thursday, May 28, at 7 p.m.** – Baccalaureate Mass for Marian High School, St. Matthew Cathedral, South Bend
- ◆ **Friday, May 29, at 7 p.m.** – Baccalaureate Mass for St. Joseph High School, St. Pius X Church, Granger
- ◆ **Sunday, May 31, at 11 a.m.** – Adult Confirmation Mass, St. Matthew Cathedral, South Bend



Correction

Due to an editor's error, the name of Marian High School's co-salutatorian, John Matthew Harrer Loesch, was incorrect in the May 17 issue. We regret the error.



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SYNOD, from page 1

called to serve as “personal witness and prayerful participation” on behalf of the communities from which they come.

The synod will include delegates selected from parishes throughout the diocese, as well as clergy, deacons, members of religious communities and representatives from Catholic colleges and universities. Pastors submitted names of potential delegates, with final selections made to reflect the diversity of the diocesan Church.

Delegates are expected to participate in formation and spiritual preparation leading up to the synod gatherings, including prayer, parish consultation, sacramental preparation and a delegate training and commissioning event scheduled for June 14 at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Wayne.

The synod gatherings themselves will take place October 31-November 1 in South Bend and November 20-21 in Fort Wayne.

‘My Heart Is Very Much a Missionary’

For Solis, the synod is less about meetings and logistics and more about missionary discipleship.

Solis, a parishioner at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in Fort Wayne, who grew up at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church, has spent much of her young adult life involved in diocesan ministry. She served as a Totus Tuus missionary throughout college and recently discerned a new calling with Vagabond Missions, a Catholic missionary organization serving inner-city communities.

“My heart is very much a missionary,” Solis told Today’s Catholic.

That missionary spirit shaped both her discernment and her understanding of the synod itself.

“I think every delegate has a specific role, and they were picked for a reason,” she said.

Solis acknowledged that she initially questioned why she had been chosen.

“I was like, ‘Lord, are you sure they want me on there?’” she said. “I’m sure you have somebody out there who is more qualified for this.” She added, “I am a 23-year-old who knows nothing about synods but [who] very much loves the Lord.”

After prayer and conversations with trusted mentors and priests, she felt peace about



accepting the invitation.

“I’m just making sure I’m open-hearted and open-minded to what the Lord wants,” she said.

At her parish, Solis participated in prayer and preparation connected to the synod, including Holy Hours, reflection and discernment exercises encouraged by parish leadership.

Ultimately, she hopes the synod becomes an opportunity for evangelization and renewal rooted in God’s love.

Reflecting on the image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, she said she hopes the synod helps “set the world on fire” with God’s love.

“My hopes for our diocese are that we’re able to respond to the question: Where are we taking His heart, and who are we giving it to?” Solis said.

“It’s been 100 years since we’ve had a synod,” she said. “The fact that we’re having another one — it’s like our diocese is meant to seek people.”

‘The Synod Begins and Ends with Prayer’

For Ryan Norden, a student at the University of Notre Dame and member of the diocesan pastoral council, the invitation to participate also came as a surprise.

“I was genuinely surprised to open my dorm mailbox and see a letter from the diocese,” said Norden, whose home parish is St. Mary of the Assumption Catholic Church in Avilla. “Even more surprising was that the

bishop wanted me to be a delegate for the synod.”

Norden said his experience at Notre Dame and his involvement in diocesan leadership have helped him appreciate the importance of including younger voices in the life of the Church.

“In this role, I not only represent my home parish,” he said, “but I also strive to provide Bishop Rhoades meaningful insights into the world of youth and young adult ministry within the Fort Wayne-South Bend diocese.”

Norden praised Bishop Rhoades for prioritizing ministry to young people through initiatives such as Theology on Tap, SEEK conferences, Steubenville youth conferences, the National Catholic Youth Conference and World Youth Day pilgrimages.

“It brings me great joy to see that even at the highest levels of our local Church, young people’s thoughts, worries, ideas and joys are welcomed and encouraged throughout the synodal process,” Norden said.

He added that the Church must actively invite young people into meaningful leadership.

“Bishop Rhoades recognizes that in order for young people to take responsibility for their Church, they must first be given responsibility by it,” he said.

Much of Norden’s preparation for the synod has centered on prayer and discernment.

During the spring semester, he took a course at Notre Dame focused on discernment and the spiritual traditions of St. Ignatius

of Loyola.

“The synodal method first and foremost requires prayer,” Norden said. “Nothing should be said or discussed without initially asking the Holy Spirit to guide the conversation and our hearts.”

Like other delegates, Norden emphasized that the synod is not about debate or advancing agendas.

“I see my role as one of humble prayer, quiet listening and thoughtful input,” he said. “The synod begins and ends with prayer, not with any single individual.”

He said he hopes the synod encourages Catholics throughout the diocese to take greater ownership of the Church’s mission within their own parishes and communities.

“It would be a missed opportunity if the synod simply produced a list of actions for the diocese to execute,” Norden said, “rather than identifying ways that we, as individuals, can take ownership and promote the Church’s mission in our own parishes right now.”

‘The Church Desires to Hear from All Its Members’

Among those also preparing prayerfully for the synod is Sarah Scarbrough of St. Matthew Cathedral in South Bend, a wife, mother and longtime youth ministry leader.

“I was surprised, to be honest,” Scarbrough said of her invitation to participate as a delegate. “As a mother to six young children, I must admit that I did not initially consider myself a typical choice for this role.”

Scarbrough and her husband have led high school youth ministry at

St. Matthew Cathedral for 12 years, helping accompany teenagers in their faith lives while remaining deeply involved in parish life.

“Perhaps that is one point of a synod,” she said. “The Church desires to hear from all its members, in all walks of life.”

Preparation for the synod, she noted, involves both practical and spiritual dimensions.

“In big family life, there are certainly some practical plans to be put in place,” she said, referring to organizing life at home while attending synod events.

“But spiritually, I have been sitting in prayer in order to ask the Lord for His words, His heart and His vision for the synod.”

Scarbrough said guidance from Bishop Rhoades helped her better understand the role of a delegate.

“A delegate’s job is less like one of a state representative and more of an individual being docile to the prompting of the Holy Spirit,” she said.

That understanding, she said, transformed the invitation from something intimidating into something spiritually approachable.

“A humble, prayerful role felt like something I could accept,” she said.

Scarbrough hopes the synod strengthens attentiveness to God’s voice throughout the diocese.

“If we are not hearing God, it does not mean He is not speaking,” she said. “It is our job to be attentive to Him.”

Serving as a ‘Conduit for the Holy Spirit’

For John Christensen, the synod builds naturally upon conversations already taking place within parish life.

Christensen serves on the parish pastoral council and stewardship committee at St. Vincent de Paul in Fort Wayne and has been a parishioner there since 1993. His children received their sacraments at the parish and attended St. Vincent de Paul Catholic School, where his wife, Jane, serves as office manager.

At St. Vincent de Paul, parish leaders hosted 10 separate synodal sessions to encourage participation from parishioners

of varying ages and backgrounds.

“It was a great extension of the conversation,” Christensen told Today’s Catholic, “and affirming to the council that we are looking at the same things the parishioners care about.”

Christensen said his biggest lesson from the parish listening sessions was simple: trust the process.

“My preparation is really about putting my attitudes and opinions to the side in order to enter the conversation with an open and fresh perspective,” he said.

“It’s been 100 years since we’ve had a synod. The fact that we’re having another one — it’s like our diocese is meant to seek people.”

MARIA SOLIS

He emphasized that delegates are not called to push parish agendas.

"I take the directions very seriously that I am not 'representing' my parish's agenda per se," Christensen said. "I am but one of many individuals that can possibly serve as a conduit for the Holy Spirit during this deliberate, prayerful experience."

For Christensen, the synod also offers an important witness to a polarized society.

"I love that Bishop Rhoades prioritized asking questions, self-reflection and community dialogue within the context of listening and prayer," he said. "We can all learn from this example in all aspects of our lives."

An Opportunity to 'Listen to One Another More Deeply'

For Lara Schreck, executive director of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in Fort Wayne, the synod is deeply connected to the Church's mission of serving those most in need. Schreck said serving at the synod is both humbling and meaningful.

"I feel honored to take part in this important discernment process," she said, "and I hope to contribute in a way that helps our diocesan community advance the mission of Christ."

Through her ministry with the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Schreck works alongside volunteers from 23 parish communities serving individuals and families experiencing poverty and hardship.

"These Vincentians and the people we serve have profoundly shaped my Catholic faith and spiritual journey," she said. "I pray that I can give those most vulnerable a voice through my personal witness to their experiences."

Like the other delegates, Schreck described prayer and listening as essential to the process.

"I have been praying for the guidance of the Holy Spirit as I prepare to listen, learn and discern alongside others in our diocese at the synod," she said.

Her hope, she added, is that the synod helps deepen unity and strengthen the Church's ability to share God's love throughout the diocese.

"My hope is that this synod will bring together a wide range of voices and perspectives in a spirit of prayer and unity," Schreck said. "I pray it becomes an opportunity for people across the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend to listen to one another more deeply."

DELEGATES FOR SYNOD 2026

Bishop (1): Most Rev. Kevin Rhoades

Vicar General (1): Father Mark Gurtner

Episcopal Vicar (1): Father Matthew Coonan

Judicial Vicar (1): Father Francis Chukwuma

Presbyteral Council (12): Father Osman Ramos, FM; Father Terrence Coonan; Father Craig Borchard; Father Thomas Shoemaker, Father Logan Parrish; Father Christopher Lapp; Father Jonathan Norton; Father Ryan PietroCarlo, CSC; Father Benjamin Landrigan; Father Arthur Ssembajja; Father David Violi; Father Michael Heintz

Vicars Forane: Father Michael Heintz, Father Jacob Runyon, Father Jonathan Norton, Father Mark Hellinger, Father Glenn Kohrman, Father Thomas Shoemaker

Elected Vicariate Presbyters (6): Father Augustine Onuoh-A; Father Andrew Budzinski-B; Father J. Steele-C; Father Royce Gregerson-D; Father Michael Ammer-E; Father Jay Horning-F

Other Presbyters (3): Father Daniel Niezer; Father Jim Fenstermaker, CSC; Father Daniel Scheidt

Deacons (3): Deacon James Summers, Deacon Marco Castillo, Deacon Harry Verhiley

Religious Institutes/Societies of Apostolic Life (6): Sister Jenny Howard, SP; Sister Mary Tiernan, CSC; Sister Shirley Bell, PHJC; Sister Gianna Marie Webber, OSF; Father David Smith, CSC; Brother Christopher Torrijas, CSC

Colleges (4): Dr. Dianne Barlas, VP Mission (HCC); Sister Maria Gemma Salyer, OSF (USF); Margaret Gower, VP Mission (SMC); Jenny Martin, dCEC (ND)

Lay Diocesan Leaders (16): Mary Glowaski, Dan Florin, Mackenzie Ritchie, David Mangel, Joseph Ryan, Ana Maria Lewis, Edwin Capuyan, Adrian Jimenez, Jeff Boetticher, Alex Giltner, Sister M. Eugenia Gomez, Jocelyn Rouch, John Kennedy (Saint Joseph High School), Jason Schiffli (Bishop Dwenger High School), Mark Freund (Marian High School), Seth Coffing (Bishop Luers High School)

Other as Appointed by Bishop (26): Meg Distler, Lara Schreck, Tom Kostielney, Ryan Norden, Susan Carozza, Lisa Marino, Carlos Leiva, Mphasa Mwanza, Zac Coyle, Michael Heinlein, Jyotsna Mascarenhas, Maria Consuelo Solis, Angel Gutierrez, Caleb Perkins, Timothy Arnold, The Dang, Lisa Everett, James Pratt, Don Stelluto, Sean Allen, Emmanuel Pean, Allison Beyer, Katie Schindler, Kate Dolezal, John Barnett, Francis Thang Suan Thawn

Non-Catholic Observers (4): Rev. Spencer Mielke, Pastor Chris Norman, Pastor Tom Ahlersmeyer, Dr. Gerry McKenny, Pastor Tony Opliger

Parish Delegates (80)

Blessed Sacrament, Albion: Susan Curtis

St. Patrick, Arcola: Raylene Rospond

Immaculate Conception, Auburn: Sarah Speer

St. Mary of the Assumption, Avilla: Michelle Myers

St. Louis Besancon, New Haven: Vickie Lortie

St. Joseph, Bluffton: Abraham Herr

St. Dominic, Bremen: Brooklynn Rethlake

St. Mary of the Annunciation, Bristol: Joan Buchanan

St. John Bosco, Churubusco: Jennifer Stresemann

St. Paul Chapel, Angola: Holly Leucuta

St. Anthony of Padua, Angola: Jessica Jones

St. Mary of the Lake, Culver: Beth Schmiedlin

St. Paul of the Cross, Columbia City: Sandy Kohut

St. Mary of the Assumption, Decatur: Larry Braun

Immaculate Conception, Ege: Katelyn Shambaugh

St. Thomas the Apostle, Elkhart: Grace Deaton

St. Vincent de Paul, Elkhart: Oliver Diaz

Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Fort Wayne: Elizabeth Alonzo

Our Lady of Good Hope, Fort Wayne: Mateo Nicholson

Most Precious Blood, Fort Wayne: Melissa Wheeler

Queen of Angels, Fort Wayne: Sheila Gillett

Sacred Heart, Fort Wayne: Bridget Devens

St. Charles Borromeo, Fort Wayne: Paige Huston

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Fort Wayne: Amella Shade

St. Henry, Fort Wayne: Alicia Guzmán

St. John the Baptist, Fort Wayne: Anne Therese Stephens

St. Joseph, Fort Wayne: Tom Tsuleff

St. Jude, Fort Wayne: Kathleen Jones

St. Mary Mother of God, Fort Wayne: Krista Stockman

St. Patrick, Fort Wayne: Deacon Victor Sandoval

St. Peter, Fort Wayne: Barbara Braley

St. Therese, Fort Wayne: Keith Brown

St. Vincent de Paul, Fort Wayne: John Christensen

St. Joseph, Garrett: Paul Rivera

St. Mary of the Presentation, Geneva: Nancy Subler

St. John the Evangelist, Goshen: Ricardo Ávila

St. Pius X, Granger: Kathryn Olson

St. Joseph-Hessen Cassel, Fort Wayne: Matthew Wyss

Immaculate Conception, Kendallville: Mike Pasquali

St. Joseph, LaGrange: Nathan Stroup

Sacred Heart of Jesus, Lakeville: Phil Hamilton

St. Patrick, Ligonier: Alicia Carillo

Queen of Peace, Mishawaka: Michael P. Nate

St. Bavo, Mishawaka: Diane DeBlock

St. Joseph, Mishawaka: Eli Hamilton

St. Monica, Mishawaka: Douglas Erla

St. Rose of Lima, Monroeville: Michelle Cadoret

St. Stanislaus Kostka, New Carlisle: John Barrett

St. John the Baptist, New Haven: Pat Beuchel

St. Catherine of Alexandria, Nix Settlement, Columbia City: Carol Greulich

St. Robert Bellarmine, North Manchester: Julie Accetta

Basilica of the Sacred Heart, Notre Dame: Alicia Nagy

St. Francis Xavier, Pierceton: Constance Penninger

St. Michael, Plymouth: Andrew Schmalzried

St. Joseph, Roanoke: Deb Osterholt

St. Gaspar del Bufalo, Rome City: Theresa Luebke

Christ the King, South Bend: Geoffroy Honnon

Corpus Christi, South Bend: David Niswonger

Holy Cross, South Bend: Theresa Scott

Holy Family, South Bend: David Schena

Our Lady of Hungary, South Bend: Blanca Gomez

St. Anthony de Padua, South Bend: Kim Barreto Loaiza

St. Augustine, South Bend: Annie Tardy

St. John the Baptist, South Bend: Stacie Alvarado

St. Joseph, South Bend: Todd Walatka

St. Jude, South Bend: Jen Coury

St. Matthew Cathedral, South Bend: Sarah Scarbrough

St. Stanislaus Bishop and Martyr, South Bend: Clifford Anderson

St. Therese, Little Flower, South Bend: Curt Phillips

St. Martin de Porres, Syracuse: Oscar Hernandez

St. Bernard, Wabash: Amy Davis

St. Patrick, Walkerton: Andrew Minnick

Our Lady of Guadalupe, Warsaw: Susana Valencia

Sacred Heart, Warsaw: Lorenzo Lopez

St. Michael the Archangel, Waterloo: Dr. Tom Mason

St. Aloysius, Yoder: Brian Frecker

SS. Casimir and Adalbert, South Bend: Becky Ruvalcaba

St. Patrick-St. Hedwig, South Bend: Robert Barber

St. Mary & SS. Peter and Paul, Huntington: Deacon Roger Dinius

Church of Our Lady of Loretto, Notre Dame: Felicia O'Brien

NEWS BRIEFS

Consecration to Sacred Heart Affirms 'Our Reliance on God'

WASHINGTON, D.C. (OSV News) — As the United States prepares to mark its 250th anniversary, the nation's Catholic bishops are planning a historic spiritual gesture aimed at a country facing deep political division and uncertainty. On June 11, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops will formally dedicate the United States to the Sacred Heart of Jesus — the first national consecration of its kind in American history. The decision was approved during the bishops' fall plenary assembly in Baltimore last November. Church leaders described the move as a meaningful way to commemorate the nation's semiquincentennial and reflect on the unlikely rise of the world's first large-scale self-governing republic in the modern era. The consecration comes at a moment of heightened political tension across the country, giving the ceremony added symbolic weight. Supporters say the act is intended as both a prayer for national healing and a reminder of the country's spiritual foundations. "Our reliance on God — really was the foundation that our Founding Fathers placed this nation on," said Archbishop Alexander K. Sample of Portland, Oregon, who chairs the USCCB Committee for Religious Liberty. The USCCB encourages family, parish and diocesan consecrations and offers numerous resources at usccb.org.

Minnesota Archbishop Encourages Families to 'Take Heart' in Pastoral Letter

ST. PAUL, Minnesota (OSV News) — Marking 10 years since his installation as archbishop of St. Paul and Minneapolis on May 13, 2016, Archbishop Bernard A. Hebda is renewing his focus on Catholic family life and vocations by releasing a new pastoral letter aimed at parents and families. The letter, titled "Only One Thing Is Necessary," draws from the Gospel of Luke, where Jesus tells Martha that amid anxiety and distraction, "There is need of only one thing." Archbishop Hebda writes that Jesus Himself is "that one true thing" capable of uniting families in this life and the next. In a May 4 video about the letter, the archbishop said many parents in the archdiocese deeply desire to lead their children to Jesus. He encouraged families to "take heart," including the words of St. John Paul II in his letter: "The future of humanity passes by way of the family."

FAITHFUL GATHER FOR PRAYER AHEAD OF AMERICA'S 250 BIRTHDAY



OSV News photo/Seth Herald, Reuters

People pray during a worship service on the day of "Rededicate 250: A National Jubilee of Prayer, Praise and Thanksgiving" at the National Mall in Washington, D.C., on Sunday, May 17. At the prayer rally in the nation's capital, Bishop Robert Barron of Winona-Rochester, Minnesota, said that as the nation prepares to celebrate its 250th birthday, it should reflect on how the American understanding of equality is grounded in the belief that all people are equally children of God. The event was organized by Freedom 250, a public-private partnership with the White House to mark America 250.

Supreme Court Allows Mail Order Distribution of Mifepristone

WASHINGTON, D.C. (OSV News) — The U.S. Supreme Court on Thursday, May 14, blocked an appeals court ruling that sought to pause a federal policy permitting mifepristone, sometimes called the abortion pill, to be dispensed through the mail. The ruling effectively leaves in place a Food and Drug Administration policy issued by the Biden administration that permitted mifepristone to be distributed by mail. The Trump administration has thus far left that regulation in place, prompting frustration from pro-life groups, and has sought to block state challenges to mifepristone, such as Louisiana's. A lower court previously granted the Trump administration's request to pause Louisiana's lawsuit challenging the FDA's ap-

proval of mifepristone pending the FDA's promised safety review of that drug, indicating the state could continue its challenge after that review. However, the status and timeline of the FDA's review are still unclear.

Vatican Creates Interdicasterial Commission on AI

VATICAN (Vatican News) — Pope Leo XIV has approved the creation of an Interdicasterial Commission on Artificial Intelligence, according to a rescript dated Tuesday, May 12, and released by the Vatican on May 16. The document was signed by Cardinal Michael Czerny, prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development. The pope approved the new body in response to the rapid growth of artificial intelligence and concerns about its impact on humanity. The rescript said he

considered "the development in recent decades of the phenomenon of Artificial Intelligence and the most recent accelerations in its widespread use" along with "the Church's concern for the dignity of every human person." The commission will include representatives from seven Vatican institutions, including the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, the Dicastery for Culture and Education and the Pontifical Academy for Life. During its first year, the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development will coordinate the group's work, which will help oversee collaboration, policies and projects related to artificial intelligence within the Holy See while promoting "dialogue, communion, and participation." Artificial intelligence has remained a recurring theme in Pope Leo XIV's pontificate. Days after his election, he said

the Church seeks to respond "to another industrial revolution and to developments in the field of artificial intelligence that pose new challenges for the defense of human dignity, justice and labor."

Pope Leo to Visit France

VATICAN CITY (Vatican News) — Pope Leo XIV is scheduled to make an apostolic journey to France from September 25-28 according to a May 16 announcement from Matteo Bruni, the director of the Holy See Press Office. The visit will be the first time a pope has traveled to France on an official papal state visit since Pope Benedict XVI's 2008 journey to Paris and Lourdes. The May 16 announcement noted Pope Leo will visit the headquarters of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). On May 6, the French bishops' conference had announced a September visit was anticipated and suggested Pope Leo would travel to Paris and to the Marian Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes. "Leo XIV is coming to France: It is a great joy, but also a great responsibility!" said Cardinal Jean-Marie Aveline in a May 16 news release.

Pope Leo XIV Thanks Catholic Extension for Supporting Poor U.S. Dioceses

VATICAN CITY (OSV News) — Pope Leo XIV encouraged Catholic Extension Society in its mission of supporting poor and remote Catholic communities across the United States, telling the group on Monday, May 18, that "love for our neighbor is tangible proof of the authenticity of our love for God." Meeting members of the organization's board at the Vatican, the pope thanked them for serving underserved dioceses and immigrant families in the United States and abroad. "The early Church bears witness to the fact that wherever there is a true faith community, Christian charity inspires its members to alleviate the suffering of others and tend to those in need, especially the poor," the pope said. He said the missionary spirit that inspired founder Father Francis Clement Kelley in 1905 "is still needed today." Pope Leo also highlighted the society's outreach in Cuba and Puerto Rico and encouraged continued pastoral care for disadvantaged people and immigrants, saying, "It is imperative that our brothers and sisters experience the warmth of a community which is marked by the presence of Christ."

A Place to Belong

How the Clubhouse Model Is Transforming Mental Health Support in Fort Wayne and South Bend Through a Focus on Community, Human Dignity

BY ELYSE MALDONADO

At Clubhouse of St. Joseph County, adults living with mental illness are not defined by diagnoses or limitations. Instead, they are welcomed as members of a community rooted in dignity, purpose and belonging.

Founded through the vision of Lisa Anderson, Clubhouse of St. Joseph County, located in South Bend, offers a distinct approach to mental health support, one that prioritizes relationships over rigid structures and strengths over symptoms.

For Anderson, the mission is deeply personal.

"My husband and I have been blessed with two beautiful sons," she told *Today's Catholic*. "I consider being a wife and mother the two greatest joys of my life."

Her life was shaken when one of her sons was diagnosed with a serious mental illness in high school.

"It changed everything — for him, for all of us," she said.

As Anderson searched for ways to support her son, she found that many existing services, though helpful, felt limited.

"There are wonderful services in town," she said, "but they're often very clinical."

Her son struggled to connect with group-based programs.

"He said, 'Why would I want to sit for hours talking about what's wrong with me?'"

The experience brought not only confusion but also isolation.

"Our focus became searching for answers: How did this happen? Can he be healed? How do we cope?" she said. "And on top of everything, there was this sense that it should be kept private. There was so much shame."

Those early years, she recalled, were "lonely and confusing." Yet in the midst of that struggle, she encountered something that would change the course of her family's story: the international Clubhouse

model.

"I realized this was something different," she said. "A place where people are valued for who they are, not their illness."

'It's About Living Life Together'

At its core, Clubhouse of St. Joseph County is not simply a program for members; it is a community built by them. Each day begins with a planning meeting where members and staff work side by side to organize everything from meals to daily operations. Tasks such as cooking, answering phones and maintaining the space may seem ordinary, but they carry deeper meaning.

"It's not us telling people what to do," Anderson explained. "Members help run everything. They make decisions. They take ownership."

Participation is entirely voluntary, and members engage at their own pace and discretion. The model is grounded in flexibility and trust, meeting people where they are and supporting them as they move forward.

"No one talks about their diagnosis here," Anderson said. "It's about living life together."

Anderson's faith informed her desire to create this community in South Bend to help others. "It seemed to me like the type of community Jesus would create," she said.

Clubhouse of St. Joseph County is part of a broader international network. Through Clubhouse International, hundreds of clubhouses operate worldwide, including several across Indiana, which collaborate regularly to support one another.

'Our Intervention Is Community'

In Fort Wayne, the Carriage House, which also follows the Clubhouse International model, has served members for nearly three decades. Tom Weir, associate director of the Carriage House, describes the model as both simple and transformative.

"Our intervention is community," Weir told *Today's*



Provided by Clubhouse of St. Joseph County

Members of the Clubhouse of St. Joseph County pose for a photo near the entrance of their location in South Bend.

Catholic. "People come because they want to. They choose what they do. That sense of ownership is everything."

Weir points to two defining principles of the Clubhouse model: radical welcome and meaningful contribution.

"Before anything else, people experience acceptance," he said. "Then they begin to rediscover their gifts by contributing to the community."

Research on this model consistently shows strong outcomes, including improved well-being, increased employment and reduced reliance on costly services.

At the Clubhouse of St. Joseph County and the Carriage House, those outcomes are reflected in everyday lives. Some members pursue education, others find stability, friendship and a renewed sense

of purpose. Others move on.

"There's no single path," Anderson said. "Some people may return to work or school. Others find meaning in simply being part of a community that values them."

'To See Each Person as a Child of God'

For Anderson, her Catholic faith is inseparable from her work.

"I've always felt called to live my faith in a concrete way — to see each person as a child of God," she said.

That same spirit draws the program's volunteers, including Aldo Tagliabue, a University of Notre Dame professor who regularly serves at the Clubhouse of St. Joseph County alongside a group of friends and colleagues. Each month, they help host gatherings at the

Clubhouse of St. Joseph County, usually karaoke and Pictionary, that foster connection and joy.

But the experience, he said, goes far deeper than service.

"When you go there, you encounter people who are completely themselves," Tagliabue told *Today's Catholic*. "They share their struggles, their hopes, their desire to be loved."

These encounters have reshaped his understanding of both his faith and daily life.

"It helps me rediscover what it means to be human," he said. "To see the other as a gift."

'Led Us to Something Beautiful'

As both the Clubhouse of St. Joseph County and the Carriage House continue to grow, their leaders told *Today's Catholic* that their greatest needs are sustainable funding and broader awareness.

"We don't want to grow just for the sake of growing," Anderson said. "But we know there are more people who could benefit from this kind of community."

At its heart, the mission remains simple but urgent: to ensure that no one faces mental illness alone, and in a culture where mental illness is often misunderstood or hidden, these organizations offer a different vision rooted in encounter, dignity and community.

"What began as one of the hardest parts of our family's story," Anderson said, "has also led us to something beautiful."

For those who enter a clubhouse, it becomes more than a program. It becomes a home — and a reminder that no one is alone.



An exterior view of the Carriage House in Fort Wayne, which follows the Clubhouse International model for serving those with mental illness.

Bishop Rhoades Blesses New Women's Care Center in Fort Wayne



Photos by Oh Snap Maddie Marie Photography
Bishop Rhoades laughs with leaders of Women's Care Center during the dedication ceremony in Fort Wayne on Thursday, May 14.



Bishop Rhoades uses holy water to bless the new location of Women's Care Center in downtown Fort Wayne.

POSITION AVAILABLE PART-TIME COMPUTER TECHNICIAN ST. ELIZABETH ANN SETON CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic School is seeking a part-time Computer Technician. This position will troubleshoot and manage a network of approximately 350 Window PCs, 450 Chromebooks and 100 iPads all networked through a HP backbone. It would also include summer hours preparing computers for the new school year, which could possibly include tasks such as re-imaging, cleaning, software installation, inventory update, and distribution.

Applicants must be working towards an Associate or Bachelor of Science degree in Computers or equivalent of 2+ years' experience delivering end user support, experience troubleshooting end-user hardware, software, and networks; A+ certification desirable.

For more information or to apply, visit diocesefwsb.org/careers



The new site of Women's Care Center is located at 624 W. Wayne Street in downtown Fort Wayne.



REGISTRATION DEADLINE IS MAY 30 REGISTER TODAY!

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton SUMMER WRITING CAMP

Give your child the chance to build confidence, spark creativity, and have FUN with writing this summer!

JUNE 15-16

Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic School
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Session Times:

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Grades 3-5: 10:30 AM-12:30 PM

Grades 6-8: 1:30-3:30 PM

- Creative writing activities
- Engaging writing prompts
- Supportive and encouraging environment

Registration fee: \$50 per child/per session
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton students 1/2 price



Photos provided by Saint Meinrad Archabbey and Seminary

Seminarian Michael Hickey, right, processes out of Mass at Archabbey Church at Saint Meinrad.

SAINT MEINRAD, from page 1

thinking when I was a kid about how perfect and holy seminarians were, thinking that they all walked around in silence all day mumbling their prayers to oneself. In reality, we are human just like you. We have our hobbies, we like to hang out, we like to spend time with one another.”

Hickey, who recently completed his third-year configuration stage, is one of five men from the diocese currently studying at Saint Meinrad. His classmates from the diocese include Stanley Amuchaka and Mason Bailey, who each recently finished the first-year configuration stage, as well as Michael Florin and D'Angelo Marazita, who completed their first-year discipleship stage. Three other diocesan seminarians are studying at Bishop Simon Bruté Seminary in Indianapolis — Thomas Bundy, Johnpaul Adizuo and Joseph Hill.

Saint Meinrad became the diocese's primary seminary partner in recent years, and Father Jonathan Norton, director of seminarians and the pastor of Sacred Heart Parish in Warsaw, said the fit has been a good one.

“I have been impressed with the formation team at Saint Meinrad,” Father Norton said. “They know our men very well and work to help them develop their talents and improve upon their opportunities for growth.”

Bailey, from Most Precious Blood Parish in Fort Wayne, said formation at Saint Meinrad goes well beyond the classroom.

“One of the goals of priestly formation is to become a bridge, not an obstacle, between God and man,” he said. “This necessarily involves the breaking down of walls around the heart so that the Holy Spirit can work in and

through the priest.”

Bailey's path to seminary began during a confession in his sophomore year of college, when he received Psalm 51 as his penance. “Simply put, the psalmist's words became my words to God in a profound way,” he said. Through the guidance of priests, professors and friends, he applied to seminary two years later. Many of his college friends are now married with children, well into their careers. While seminary life can be challenging at times, he said, “I know that I am where God wants me to be.”

Hickey traces his own calling to watching the priest at the altar during the diocesan all-school Masses as a boy. In high school, he joined his parish's Melchizedek Project, a group for young men discerning the priesthood. “Discernment really revolved around surrounding myself with priests who were great role models, altar serving and then participating in the sacraments,” he said.

Father Norton said the diocese looks for those same qualities in a prospective seminarian, summing it up with a saying: “If you will be a good father, then you will be a good Father.” He added that the young man should serve his parish and maintain a regular prayer life, and he should understand “that this is not based on how talented or gifted he may be but rather a genuine calling from God.”

The urgency of that call is on full display this spring. On June 6, five men will be ordained to the priesthood at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Wayne: Deacon Patrick Ernst, Deacon Greenan Sullivan, Deacon Noah Isch, Deacon Samuel Martinez, and Deacon Johnathon Hickey — Michael's twin brother.

Their formation — and that of the eight others currently in seminary — is not without cost.

Seminary formation spans six or more years, and the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend meets much of that expense through the annual Pentecost Collection, taken up in parishes each spring.

Father Norton is direct about what that support means. “These men make a sacrifice by entering seminary,” he said. “We should make a sacrifice to cover the cost of their formation.”

Bailey put it another way, saying that he would want those considering gifts to the Pentecost Collection “to know the stories of those who are discerning the priesthood in our diocese right now,” he said.

“I thought I was going to teach economics at a Catholic high school somewhere. Michael Hickey thought he was going to have a career in law enforcement, protecting and serving his community. D'Angelo Marazita, after studying engineering at the University of Michigan, thought he was going to be an astronaut, embarking on a bold adventure and solving puzzles that nobody else could. Placing our lives in God's hands, He transformed our thoughts and desires. Now, we are going to teach the Faith at our parishes, in our schools, OCIA or Sunday school programs. Now, we are going to serve our parishioners through administering the sacraments, and we are going to protect them from spiritual harm. Now, we are going to engage in one of the greatest adventures possible, giving our entire lives to Christ and the Church in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. Who wouldn't want to support that?”

To support the education of our diocesan seminarians through the annual Pentecost Collection, go to diocesefwsb.org/give.

Scott Warden is editor-in-chief of Today's Catholic.



Mason Bailey, a seminarian for the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, prays during Mass at Saint Meinrad.



Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend seminarian Stanley Amuchaka walks out of Archabbey Church during graduation. Amuchaka recently graduated with his master's degree in theology at Saint Meinrad on Saturday, May 9.



Seminarian Michael Florin celebrates after graduating with his master's degree in Catholic philosophical studies at Saint Meinrad on Saturday, May 9.



An exterior view of Saint Meinrad Archabbey and Seminary in southern Indiana.

Join us in welcoming two providers to our team!

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Father Brian Carpenter poses with Dr. Marco Clark, president of Holy Cross College, during the annual staff luncheon. Holy Cross College

St. Stanislaus Kostka Pastor Honored for Teaching Excellence

BY MATTHEW PALMER

Father Brian Carpenter, pastor of St. Stanislaus Kostka Parish in New Carlisle and an adjunct professor of theology at Holy Cross College, was recognized on Thursday, May 14, with Holy Cross College's Excellence in Education in Teaching Award for adjunct faculty.

Presented during the college's annual faculty and staff luncheon, the award recognizes Father Carpenter's impact on students through theology instruction, mentorship and formation.

In nomination materials shared during the presentation, Father Carpenter was praised for challenging "students' critical thinking skills while ensuring that they are

prepared for real ethical situations that may test their morals and spirits." Another nominator wrote that Father Carpenter "offers a perspective on living the right life and allows students to become a force for good."

For Father Carpenter, the recognition was humbling.

"To hear about the positive impact you have on people is really wonderful," Father Carpenter said.

Father Carpenter pointed to mentors throughout his own formation as influences on his vocation.

"So many people mentored me who were teachers," Father Carpenter said. "I had an uncle who was a Holy Cross priest. To see myself now in the lives of students, and to think about the priests who

taught me, it's a really powerful and humbling thing."

Ordained in 2009, Father Carpenter served in parishes in the Diocese of Rochester. He later served as an assistant professor of systematic theology and as a spiritual director while completing his doctoral studies. Father Carpenter began ministry in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend in 2022 and was incardinated into the diocese in August of 2025.

Today, Father Carpenter balances parish ministry with a demanding teaching schedule, instructing six theology courses this past academic year while serving parishioners at St. Stanislaus Kostka.

"Mornings tend to be parish work. Afternoons are teaching," Father Carpenter said. "Both of them energize me in different ways."

That connection between parish and classroom often overlaps.

"One of the things I've noticed is students are really engaged," Father Carpenter said. "They want Christ and meaning."

Walking alongside students during formative years remains among the most rewarding parts of his ministry.

"As they grow into who they are as a child of God, that's what motivates me," Father Carpenter said. "Certainly, having the support of the parish, the students, administration and Bishop Rhoades is so encouraging."

Matthew Palmer is the associate vice president for integrated marketing and communications at Holy Cross College.

Muncie Catholic Job Opening

St. Mary Parish Music Director & Music Teacher St. Michael Catholic School

The music director will coordinate the music ministry program for St. Mary Parish and direct the St. Michael Catholic School K-8 music education curriculum.

The ideal candidate must be a Catholic in good standing, hold a B.A. in Music or have equivalent professional experience, and should be proficient in piano, organ, and vocal/choral music. For a complete list of job duties and qualifications, please visit munciecatholic.com/employment.

Interested candidates should send a letter of interest and resume to Jason Hart at jhart@parish.dol-in.org.

WE ARE HIRING!

St. Mary Mother of God Part-time Maintenance and Grounds

Part time Position open for MAINTENANCE AND GROUNDS at St. Mary Mother of God Catholic Church located in downtown Fort Wayne. Position is 20-25 hours per week, a Valid driver's license is required; oversee the maintenance of church complex and grounds; set up church social hall and provide a security presence for scheduled events and Sunday Mass; be on-call for building emergencies; and perform janitorial duties as assigned.

IF INTERESTED, APPLY ONLINE AT DIOCESEFWSB.ORG/CAREERS

WE ARE HIRING!

St. Mary Mother of God Part-time Parish Accountant/Bookkeeper

The parish accountant/bookkeeper is to oversee all financial aspects of St. Mary Mother of God parish and ministries (payroll, bills, and deposits), thank all contributors, manage safe environment program within the parish, end of month and end of year reports, including all data entry, among other duties. This position will work in cooperation with Pastor. Position is 25 hours per week.

IF INTERESTED, APPLY ONLINE AT DIOCESEFWSB.ORG/CAREERS

MINISTRY, from page 3

again, his naval experience helped him. "As eager as I was to jump in, I had to encourage them to walk with and not lead by the hand or push from the back," he said of how he guided sponsors in accompanying their candidates. "I picked [that approach] up in the Navy as a division officer. As an officer in charge of different divisions, I realized that if I tried to do my men's work for them, then why were they there?" This translated to OCIA, where he recognized, "It's on God's time. It's God who's doing the work," he said.

Stretching himself again, Washkewicz took a leadership role helping with marriage preparation at Christ the King Parish in South Bend during his final placement, because he "felt that if my identity as a priest is deeply rooted in the sacraments, I would need an intentional way of sitting down with marriage prep."

While working with couples, he found himself drawing upon a skill he had used in his previous placements — namely, "just sitting and receiving someone's story." Washkewicz also introduced theological nuance. "The real thing I focused on was leading with covenant and what it means to be married in the Church," he said. "I wanted to hear their stories — how they met, why they were engaged, how the proposal happened. I wanted them to be excited to tell their own story and then to offer them an invitation to see that God is at work in that story, too, and that God is drawing them farther along in that story."

Rising third-year student Chika Anyanwu entered with a



Provided by Logan Edwards
Logan Edwards, a recent Master of Divinity graduate, center, poses with his wife, Rianna, and Holy Cross Father David Murray.

wealth of experiences, which included work with NET ministries, LifeTeen, Notre Dame Vision and the National Eucharistic Congress. An internationally known public speaker, she felt a need for what the M.Div. provides.

"When it comes to looking at my pastoral ministry and theological studies, they shouldn't be separate; they're integral," Anyanwu said. "It's integrating both of them to work together in support of one another, and being holistic in that way helps form me as a better disciple."

Through their Field Education class, students reflect communally on the work they're doing and those they're serving.

"Each semester, every student constructs a case study based on their field placement or other ministerial experience," Edwards said. "While observing proper confidentiality, they articulate the narrative. Then, they analyze the scenario through different lenses and lead a discussion with their cohort — not to derive straight answers or get told they did

something wrong but to grow as ministers together."

Of this experience of being Church, Washkewicz said, "It's important to understand the perspective of people who are going to be going back out and doing ministry maybe beyond the walls of a parish or beyond the uniform of a collar. ... I would actually say it's necessary for somebody who's going to be in [ordained] ministry to work alongside laypeople during their formation."

Ministry site supervisors also play an important role, providing mentorship and space for reflection during their biweekly meetings with students.

"I think that the best thing about supervisors is they always understand that I am here for formation," Washkewicz said. "They always kept formation at the forefront because they want to ensure that — whether lay or [with the Congregation of Holy Cross], whoever is undergoing supervision — they can be better prepared as ministers to serve the Church in the future."

Ruvalcaba echoed this, saying: "They're an extension of our program. We cannot do what we're doing here in the M.Div. program without them. Their practical theology, experiences and reflection with our students is critical."

As Voice's Outreach Associate, Robbins spent five hours a week doing door-to-door outreach and sidewalk advocacy. Knocking on doors to initiate pro-life conversations with strangers, he learned to have meaningful conversations with a wide variety of people who hold different opinions.

"One of the most important lessons that I learned was prioritizing the person over the conversation," Robbins told Today's Catholic. "It's so important to be listening to the other person and pastorally caring for them, because if you're not doing that, then you can't have a fruitful conversation. It's a foundational skill to ministry that I think all lay ministers are going to have in their ministry jobs."

Robbins also related the experience to St. Paul's example of tailored messaging, saying: "It's shown me where I need to grow in ministry. ... You might know what to say, but the pastoral [involves discerning] how you actually say that. ... I see this door-to-door experience as very helpful in the art of conversation and to help me talk about Jesus with people."

Another vital takeaway: "Doing pastoral ministry isn't just about the skills; you need to have a relationship with Jesus,"

Robbins said.

Washkewicz agreed, saying: "The best thing that the Field Ed. classes do is they encourage us to reflect theologically on ministry, because it can be very easy to assume that ministry can become just a job or can become a substitute for prayer. ... We need time with prayer. ... It's sort of like an ebb and flow where we work in the world in ministry and then we're drawn back to prayer. We need to be refreshed, and then we are ready to go, and we are put back out with zeal."

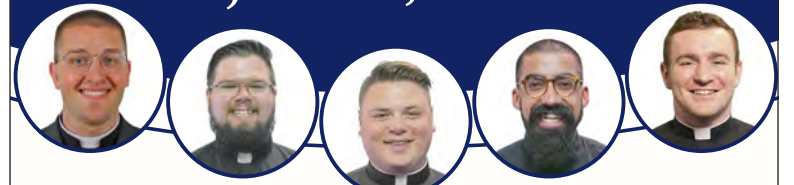
This truth was underscored during the annual Mass of Blessing and Sending for graduating M.Div. students, held on Thursday, May 7, at Moreau Seminary and Scholasticate and officiated by Bishop Rhoades.

Drawing from the Gospel reading that followed Jesus' analogy of the vine and branches, Bishop Rhoades said: "There's nothing more important in our life than this: remaining in Christ's love. This is not something abstract and theoretical. ... I can't think of any better exhortation to you than the exhortation of Jesus Himself to remain in His love in whatever path you follow with your M.Div. degree. I hope and pray that you will be witnesses and missionaries of joy, the joy that is the fruit of your friendship with the Lord, your closeness to Him. This will require you to persevere in your prayer so that your relationship with the Lord grows closer."



Donny Robbins, a recent graduate of the Master of Divinity program at the University of Notre Dame, prays during an event for the pro-life outreach group Voices for Life.

TWO WEEKS UNTIL ORDINATIONS
JUNE 6, 2026



Pray for our ordinandi:

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REV. MR. JOHNATHON HICKEY
REV. MR. NOAH ISCH
REV. MR. SAMUEL MARTINEZ
REV. MR. GREENAN SULLIVAN

Holy Cross College's First Fulbright Scholar Discusses Catholic Education, Vocation and Hard Work



GUEST COMMENTARY

CHARLES CAMOSY

Jelani Cotton is a trailblazer in more ways than one as a first-generation college student at Holy Cross College in South Bend, an entrepreneur and the college's first Fulbright Scholar. He spoke recently with OSV News' Charles Camosy about how he has been formed for this prestigious international exchange program through Catholic education, hard work and a supportive community.

Charles Camosy: Congratulations on being Holy Cross College's first Fulbright scholar! What an honor. How are you feeling about all of this?

Jelani Cotton: My initial feeling was disbelief because it was a very strenuous application process that I completed in a short amount of time compared

to other applicants who had months of preparation with institutional support that Holy Cross did not yet have since I am the first applicant.

Shortly after, I felt a sense of gratitude to God. Teaching English in Spain has been something I dreamed about for years, and to see my vision turn into a reality is very humbling. I have worked very hard throughout my college journey to get to this point.

I have felt burned out and hopeless many times due to a busy schedule and workload, but God continues to open doors for me and show me that I am following the path that He has intended for me. I am extremely proud of myself for having the ambition to apply to this prestigious program and the determination to follow through with the process despite the challenges and doubt.

Being the first student in Holy Cross College history to be a Fulbright Scholar confirms that everything is paying off, and I am meant to be a pioneer who inspires others. I am a first-



Jelani Cotton

generation college student, so it has been difficult to navigate this journey, but I am proud to pave the way for myself and the younger generation in my family, college and community. I am grateful for the support of Holy Cross College throughout this process and overall academic journey.

I am confident I will succeed in this next step in life because of my ability to adapt and the kind heart I continue to lead with. God has a purpose for me, and I will continue to fulfill that. Overall, this honor reflects the support, mentorship and community that have poured

into me through my time at Holy Cross College and the years prior.

Camosy: Where will you be headed and what will you be doing there?

Cotton: In September, I will be traveling to Asturias, Spain, to live there for a full academic year. During my time there, I will serve as an English teaching assistant working across two schools.

I am excited to foster a classroom environment built on trust and encouragement, where my students feel seen, supported and confident. This role also requires a great deal of initiative and responsibility as I will engage in the school and local community, working on projects and activities to enhance the formation of my students. Beyond the classroom, I look forward to traveling throughout Spain and immersing myself in new environments to deepen my cultural and global perspective.

Camosy: Can you say

something about your personal journey that led you to choose a Catholic education at Holy Cross College?

Cotton: I was drawn to Holy Cross College because of its commitment to forming the whole person, not just focusing on developing their students intellectually but shaping both the mind and heart.

As a Christian, I value an environment where faith, service and personal growth are at the core. When I toured the college during my senior year of high school, I saw a small, faith-driven community that deeply cares about their students and classes that have an emphasis on contributing to the common good. I saw that Holy Cross was unlike other colleges and universities. I loved the close relations between students and faculty, portraying a community where everyone was welcomed, seen and belonged.

They educate students to become global citizens with the competency to see and the

CAMOSY, page 13

On Pentecost, We Celebrate Our Unity as the Body of Christ



THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

MONSIGNOR OWEN F. CAMPION

Pentecost, the feast celebrated this weekend, is the greatest day of the Church's year, save for Easter and Christmas. It is interesting in this sense. It is the only ancient Jewish feast still observed by the Church.

In the beginning, Christians almost invariably were of Jewish origins. Quite early in Christian history, the apostles themselves took the Gospels far and wide. As a result of these missionary efforts, many came into the Church who were not of Jewish background.

When the Church was born, a series of political upheavals was causing great stress in traditional Judaism.

All these developments meant that the attention that once would have been paid to Jewish feasts, just as the Lord observed these feasts, faded and eventually

ended altogether. Pentecost is the lone exception.

For Jews, Pentecost celebrates the divine joining of them as a people. In this act of God, more than just ethnic or genetic unity was achieved. They were unified as a people in their mission to be true to God and to profess God before all the nations.

Christians see Pentecost as their holy day, recalling the moment when God the Holy Spirit vivified the apostles. Receiving strength and power from the Holy Spirit, the apostles then went forward to proclaim salvation in Christ to the entire world.

They formed the Church founded by Jesus. They took the Church and the Gospel to the world. The Church grew, always as a community.

The first reading recalls this process. The apostles continued the Lord's work. Through them, the Lord lived anew.

For the second reading, the Church presents a passage from First Corinthians. Absolute faith in Christ — as God and as Savior — is key. Without the grace

that accompanies this absolute commitment, and indeed enables faith, humans are confused and liable to fatal misstep.

St. John's Gospel is the source of the last reading, a Resurrection Narrative. The risen Lord appears before the apostles. As God, possessing the Holy Spirit, Jesus gives the apostles the power to forgive sins — extraordinary because only God can forgive sins.

Reflection

For weeks, the Church rejoiced in the Resurrection, excitedly proclaiming that Jesus is Lord and that Jesus lives!

As this season has progressed, the Church, through the readings at Mass, has also called us to realize what effect the Resurrection has upon us and upon human history. The salvation achieved by Christ on Calvary will never end. It is for all time and for all people. Mercy and justice will reign supreme.

How will this be accomplished? It will be accomplished by the Lord's disciples in every consecutive age.

Bound together by completely free and uncompromised individual decisions to follow Christ, true Christians are united in the Church. They share their identity with Christ and the grace of the Spirit. As Acts reveals, they are part of the community still gathered around the apostles, under the leadership of Peter, and still looking to the apostles for guidance and direction. Thus, in the Church, salvation and hope live, and Jesus lives.

Practically speaking, Christians, however zealous, cannot be ships passing each other silently in the night. They bear together the mission to bring God's mercy and wisdom to the world as Christians. They belong to and are one in the Church. They need one another.

At this feast, the Church's lesson therefore is very contemporary, very immediate and very personal. We all belong, as did the first Christians, to an apostolic Church, a community created by God to bring divine mercy to weary and wandering humans.

This feast invites us into the

very framework of holiness and witness formed by Jesus. None of us is alone in faith. We share a common bond with Christ. We share in the mission of Christ.

READINGS

Sunday: Acts 2:1-11; Psalms 104:1, 24, 29-30, 31, 34; 1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13; John 20:19-23

Monday: Genesis 3:9-15, 20 or Acts 1:12-14; Psalms 87:1-2, 3 and 5, 6-7; John 19:25-34

Tuesday: 1 Peter 1:10-16; Psalms 98:1, 2-3ab, 3cd-4; Mark 10:28-31

Wednesday: 1 Peter 1:18-25; Psalms 147:12-13, 14-15, 19-20; Mark 10:32-45

Thursday: 1 Peter 2:2-5, 9-12; Psalms 100:2, 3, 4, 5; Mark 10:46-52

Friday: 1 Peter 4:7-13; Psalms 96:10, 11-12, 13; Mark 11:11-26

Saturday: Jude 17, 20b-25; Psalms 63:2, 3-4, 5-6; Mark 11:27-33

Young Men Are Struggling to Find Purpose and Vocation

GUEST COMMENTARY

VICENTE DEL REAL

Across the United States, a quiet yet present crisis is unfolding among young men. Researchers increasingly describe a phenomenon known as the “delayed launch” of adulthood. Many young men are taking longer to enter stable work, form families and establish a clear sense of direction in life.

The issue is not limited to economics. It is deeply connected to questions of self-search, vocation and what may be understood as a crisis of purpose. In previous generations, the transition into adulthood was often marked by clear expectations. Young men were expected to work, provide, make sacrifices, contribute to their communities and eventually form families of their own. These were responsibilities not always accomplished with ease, but they provided a framework for growth and maturity.

Today, that framework has changed. According to labor data, male participation in the workforce has steadily declined over the past several decades. In 1970, roughly 80 percent of American men participated in the labor force. By recent estimates, that number has dropped closer to 69 percent. Among younger men, especially those without college degrees, the decline has been even more pronounced.

However, this crisis is not simply about employment; it is a deeper crisis of social participation. A crisis was also brought to our attention in 2023 by the U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy, who issued a warning describing the rise of “an epidemic of loneliness and isolation.” More recently, attention has increasingly turned toward men, with some researchers and commentators identifying what has been termed a “male loneliness epidemic.”

Importantly, this form of loneliness extends beyond romantic relationships and reflects broader social disconnection. To this point, traditional milestones of adulthood such as marriage, stable employment and civic participation are happening later or not at all for many.

A World of Virtual Victories

One of the most visible cultural shifts affecting young

men is the rise of immersive digital entertainment. Video games now occupy a significant portion of leisure time for many young men. Research from the National Bureau of Economic Research found that young men dramatically increased the amount of time spent playing video games over the past two decades, often replacing hours that previous generations might have spent working or developing other ideas, responsibilities and abilities.

Yet the appeal of video games is not difficult to understand. They offer something the real world increasingly struggles to provide: clear goals, meaningful challenges and visible progress — all within a framework of very few consequences for failure and highly competitive, entertaining environments.

Within these digital worlds, athletes or those who lead athletic teams can become heroes, warriors and other significant figures who are noticeably admirable. They can defeat enemies, lead teams, build empires and master difficult challenges. Their efforts are rewarded, their identity affirmed and their progress recognized.

These all can be good things. The problem? This is only within a virtual world. But when the person disconnects from the video game, the contrast with real life can be stark.

Many young men feel that in the real world, they are none of those things. They may not feel needed, not feel capable, not feel invited into any meaningful mission. This presents a real opportunity for the Church to present young men with a real opportunity for community, mission and vocation.

The Deeper Hunger

The deeper issue facing young men today is not simply technology or entertainment. It is the absence of spaces where they can feel invited to flourish, serve and mature. Without clear pathways into meaningful responsibility, young men often drift.

Some turn to digital worlds where the experience of achievement is easier to obtain. Others struggle quietly with isolation, anxiety and a lack of direction. But beneath these struggles lies something deeper: a desire for mission.

Young men do not simply want comfort or entertainment. They

want a challenge. They want to build something meaningful. They want to know that their lives matter to others. However, this process requires maturity, and maturity requires sacrifice. This can be a scary process for many. Yet this deeper hunger in a young man's formation opens possibilities for growth that are both demanding and deeply rewarding — growth rooted in human formation, supported by places and spaces of accountability and strengthened by the other pillars of formation.

In these environments, young men begin to develop discipline, responsibility and a clearer sense of purpose. They learn to order their desires, to persevere through difficulty and to commit themselves to something greater than comfort or self-interest.

A Call to Accompany Young Men

Emerging research highlights a decline in close social bonds among men, with increasing numbers reporting that they lack close friendships or feel deeply unknown by others. A 2023 report by Equimundo, for example, found that many men resonate with the statement “no one really knows me well,” particularly among younger generations.

This growing sense of isolation stands in sharp contrast to the Church's longstanding understanding of the human person as inherently relational and purpose driven. Within this view, young men flourish not in isolation but when they are invited into lives of meaning — called to serve, to lead, to sacrifice and to help build communities grounded in love and responsibility.

This means that families, parishes and ministries cannot simply criticize young men for drifting. They must accompany them, challenge them and invite them into meaningful participation in the life of the Church and society.

When young men come to recognize that they are genuinely needed and they are entrusted with responsibility and supported by a community that believes

Vicente Del Real is the founder and CEO of Iskali, a Catholic nonprofit dedicated to forming and empowering young Latino leaders. He writes for OSV News from Chicago, where he leads Iskali's mission of faith, service and community. This column was written in collaboration with Maria De Leon-Sanchez.

SCRIPTURE SEARCH®

Gospel for May 24, 2026

Romans 8: 22-27 / John 7: 37-39

Following is a word search based on the Second and Gospel readings for the Vigil Mass for the Solemnity of Pentecost, Cycle A. The words can be found in all directions in the puzzle.

THE LAST	JESUS	DRINK
SCRIPTURE	RIVERS	EVENING
FIRST	WEEK	DOORS
LOCKED	PEACE	SHOWED
HIS HANDS	HIS SIDE	REJOICED
THE LORD	AS THE FATHER	SENT ME
I SEND YOU	BREATHED	FORGIVEN

IN JESUS' PRESENCE

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

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CAMOSY, from page 12

courage to act. Holy Cross stands very close to their four pillars: citizen, leader, disciple and scholar. ...

I saw that Holy Cross' values aligned with mine: to treat everyone as God intended, as we would treat our brothers and sisters. This resonates with me deeply because I want to be a force for good and a voice for the voiceless, and Holy Cross College has definitely strengthened this.

Camosy: How did a Catholic education — one at Holy Cross College, specifically — help shape our journey toward winning this prestigious award?

Cotton: My experience at Holy Cross College shaped my journey toward the Fulbright by challenging me to think beyond my own success, achievements and desires — to have a focus on my vocation.

I have been pushed to reflect on who I am and who I want to become in accordance with the purpose that God has for me. In the classroom, we don't solely focus on learning, but the why. Through my courses and professors, I aspire to be a servant leader who puts others

before myself.

Going to Spain, although I am excited to explore more of God's beautiful creation and travel, that's not it — I am taking my “why” into account. I want to have a greater understanding of Spanish culture, help advance knowledge, inspire my students, represent my country, make lasting connections and set an example for those who follow behind me to know that there are no limits to their success.

Holy Cross encourages service, and through this, I was consistently encouraged to engage with my community and consider the broader impact of my decisions. Whether mentoring students or contributing to research on poverty, I began to see my work as a way to serve others, not just build a resume. That mindset carried directly into my Fulbright application.

This is not just an academic opportunity but a chance to represent something greater than myself. Holy Cross gave me both the confidence and the moral foundation to pursue that path with intention.

Charles Camosy teaches moral theology and bioethics at The Catholic University of America in Washington. He writes for OSV News.

Bishop Blesses Renovated Spaces at St. Gaspar del Bufalo

BY TODAY'S CATHOLIC



Photos by Scott Warden

For more than nine months, the Catholic community in Rome City has been worshipping not at St. Gaspar del Bufalo, their parish church, but half a mile south on Highway 9 at the Our Lady, Patroness of America Center, which welcomed the faithful with open arms while St. Gaspar was under construction.

On Tuesday, May 12, Father Louis Fowoyo, pastor of St. Gaspar del Bufalo, welcomed his flock back for the first time since last August during a Mass and ceremony to bless the parish's newly expanded narthex, confessional and parish hall.

After blessing the new spaces with holy water, Bishop Rhoades celebrated Mass for dozens of the faithful. He thanked Father Fowoyo for his leadership and the community for their generosity in funding the approximately \$2.5 million project, which doubled the size of the narthex and more than doubled the space of the parish hall. Assisting at Mass were Father Osman Ramos, former pastor of St. Gaspar del Bufalo, Father Dave Voors, pastor at nearby St. Mary of the Assumption in Avilla, and Deacon Ray Krouse. Deacon Noah Isch served as master of ceremonies.

Following Mass, Bishop Rhoades joined the community for dinner in the newly renovated and expanded parish hall.

While the majority of the construction project has been completed, workers are still putting the finishing touches on the narthex, the confessional and the choir loft. Father Fowoyo thanked those in attendance for their generosity and patience.



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University of Notre Dame Celebrates Class of 2026



Matt Cashore/University of Notre Dame

Graduates sing the Alma Mater at the University of Notre Dame 2026 commencement ceremony in Notre Dame Stadium on Sunday, May 17.



Michael Caterina/University of Notre Dame

Bishop Rhoades smiles during the Commencement Mass at Purcell Pavilion on Saturday, May 16.

REST IN PEACE

Fort Wayne

George Dykhuizen, 83,
St. Vincent de Paul

New Haven

Patrick Furniss, 70,
St. John the Baptist

South Bend

Beth Bokhart, 57,
Christ the King

Ricardo Abrajan Tlahuel, 53,
SS. Casimir and Adalbert

Gerald Shidaker, 83,
SS. Casimir and Adalbert

Wabash

Chien Van Doan, 75,
St. Bernard

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Matt Cashore/University of Notre Dame

Notre Dame President Robert A. Dowd places the Laetare Medal on Timothy Shriver during the commencement ceremony in Notre Dame Stadium on Sunday, May 17.



Michael Caterina/University of Notre Dame

Students visit the Grotto at Notre Dame during Senior Week.



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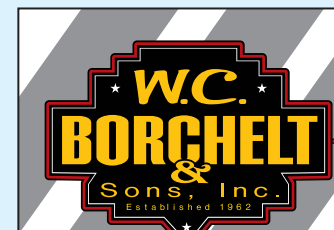
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St. Vincent de Paul School Marks Feast of Our Lady of Fatima

BY TODAY'S CATHOLIC

On Wednesday, May 13, nearly 800 students from St. Vincent de Paul Catholic School in Fort Wayne, along with dozens of teachers, administrators and support staff, filled the parish church as they welcomed Bishop Rhoades to help lead them in praying the Rosary to celebrate the feast of Our Lady of Fatima.

After praying the opening prayers from the ambo near the altar, Bishop Rhoades stepped aside as students took turns leading the Glorious Mysteries.

One of those students, Ella Strzelecki, presented Bishop Rhoades with a wooden wall hanging on which she engraved an image of the exterior of the parish's perpetual

adoration chapel, the Oratory of St. Mary Magdalene, along with a quote from Revelation 21:5, "Behold, I make all things new."

Following the Rosary, Bishop Rhoades gave the students a short catechesis about the feast of Our Lady of Fatima, telling students about the three shepherd children to whom the Blessed Virgin appeared in Fatima, Portugal, in 1917.

To close out his visit, Bishop Rhoades answered questions from more than a dozen eager students, who asked about his confirmation name, how he became a bishop, what his daily schedule is like, which virtue he could be better about practicing, and his favorite prayer, which, he fittingly said, is the holy Rosary.



Photos by Scott Warden

Students at St. Vincent de Paul School in Fort Wayne pray the Rosary on the feast of Our Lady of Fatima on Wednesday, May 13.



Students look on as Bishop Rhoades answers questions at St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church.



A student leads a decade of the Rosary from the ambo at St. Vincent de Paul in Fort Wayne.



Bishop Rhoades thanks the community at St. Vincent de Paul for inviting him to come and pray the Rosary.



Student Ella Strzelecki presented Bishop Rhoades with a wall hanging she made in which she engraved an image of the parish's Oratory of St. Mary Magdalene.