



The combination of these two photos captures the essence of the July 20 eucharistic procession in Indianapolis, during which more than 50,000 Catholics from across the country gathered to adore Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament—the defining moment of the National Eucharistic Congress in the city. (Top photo by Natalie Hoefler, bottom photo by Bob Roller, OSV News)

John 'Jack' Fink, 'icon of the Catholic press' and *The Criterion*, dies at 92

Criterion staff report

Criterion editor emeritus John F. (Jack) Fink died on July 17 in Indianapolis. He was 92.

A visitation will be held at Leppert Mortuary, 740 E. 86th St., in Indianapolis, from 2-6 p.m. on July 28. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 11:30 a.m. on July 29 at St. Luke the Evangelist Church, 7575 Holliday Dr. East, in Indianapolis. Fink will be interred in a crypt in the mausoleum at Our Lady of Peace Cemetery in Indianapolis with his first wife, Marie.

Born on Dec. 17, 1931, in Fort Wayne, Ind., John F. Fink grew up in Huntington, Ind. After studying journalism and graduating from the University of Notre Dame in 1953, he served as a lieutenant in the Air Force for two years.

In 1956, he joined the staff of Our Sunday Visitor, a national Catholic publishing company in Huntington, which had been founded by his uncle, Archbishop John F. Noll in 1912.

Fink served in editorial and business capacities at Our Sunday Visitor, including as president and publisher, until he accepted the position of editor of *The Criterion*, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, in 1984. He served as its editor until he retired in 1996.

Fink was active in the Catholic Press Association (CPA) of the United States and Canada, serving as its president from 1973-1975. He also was president of the International Federation of Catholic Press Associations from 1980-1986. In 1981, the CPA gave him its highest award, the St. Francis de Sales Award, for "outstanding contributions to Catholic journalism."

"Jack was an icon in the Catholic press who served the local, national and international Church faithfully for decades.

Even after he 'retired' from *The Criterion* in 1996, his byline remained a staple in our archdiocesan newspaper as he continued to write a weekly column and pen editorials for us for more than two decades," noted Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, the newspaper's publisher.

"We are grateful to Jack for his witness, writing and tireless service that benefitted so many of our readers. Eternal rest grant unto Jack, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him. May his soul, and all the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace."

Criterion editor Mike Krokos noted Fink's service to the Catholic press started in high school and continued after college for more than 70 years.

"It was something Jack was very proud of, his longevity at Our Sunday Visitor and *The Criterion*," Krokos said. "I, like so many who work for the Church, admired his longtime commitment to the universal Church. Jack was passionate about using his gifts to evangelize people of faith around the world." Fink enjoyed travel and visited 72 countries for pleasure or business and all 50 states that comprise the U.S.

Fink's legacy with *The Criterion* will continue for years to come. In 2014, through the archdiocesan Catholic Community Foundation, he created the John F. Fink-*Criterion* Endowment Fund to benefit the continuing education of *The Criterion* staff.

"The time was right," said Fink at the time, after he had a unique opportunity in 2013 to donate an IRA distribution without being taxed for the income.

"I'm very much aware of the need for training people so they can make a good contribution to tell the story of the Church," added Fink. "I thought that would be where I should put the money."

While at Our Sunday Visitor, Fink founded the OSV Foundation as a charitable foundation. He was a member of the board of Foundations and Donors Interested in Catholic Activities from 1977-1984, a board member of the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate from 1978-



John F. Fink



Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

August 1-13, 2024

August 1 – 10 a.m.
Leadership Team meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

August 11 – 2 p.m.
Confirmation Mass for youths of Annunciation Parish, Brazil; St. Paul the Apostle Parish, Greencastle; and St. Benedict, St. Joseph University, St. Margaret Mary and St. Patrick parishes, Terre Haute, at St. Patrick Church

August 11 – 5 p.m.
St. Lawrence Day celebration for permanent deacons at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, Indianapolis

August 12 – noon
Seminarian convocation at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House

August 12 – 5:30 p.m.
Annual cookout for priests and seminarians at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House

August 13 – 10:30 a.m.
Priest Personnel Board meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center

August 13 – 6:30 p.m.
Mental Health and Addiction Ministry Healing Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis

1985, a board member of the International Catholic Organizations Center from 1979-1985, and a member of the communications committee of the U.S. Catholic Conference from 1981-1984.

In Huntington, he was a member of the board and executive committee of the First National Bank, 1965-1985; member of the board of trustees of Huntington College, 1978-1981; president of the Chamber of Commerce in 1966 and 1967; chairman of the United Fund Drive in 1963; president of the United Way, 1973-1974; board member of the YMCA, 1966-1978; and board member of the Huntington Medical Memorial Fund, 1978-1984. The Huntington Chamber of Commerce gave him its highest civic award, Chief of the Flint Springs Tribe, in 1971. He was named Rotarian of the Year in 1980.

Fink served as president of the Indianapolis Serra Club. In 1994, the Notre Dame Club of Indianapolis gave him its award of the year. He was a Knight of the Holy Sepulchre and a Knight of Malta.

He wrote 48 monthly "Focus on Faith" columns for *The Indianapolis Star* beginning in 1998 until 2002. The *Star* also published 86 of his book reviews. He also contributed 38 book reviews to the Catholic magazine *St. Anthony Messenger*.

Fink was the author of 17 published religious books, including several books on the saints, the doctors of the Church, and the history of the Church, among others. He also edited *The Mission and Future of the Catholic Press*, a collaborative effort with several of his colleagues.

He was a member of St. Luke the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis, where he served in various capacities. He also volunteered in the Office of the Catholic Chaplain at I.U. Health Methodist Hospital for about 14 years.

He was married for 55 years to Marie (Waldron) Fink, who died in 2010. In 2012, he married Connie Winchester, who survives. He is also survived by seven children: Barbara and Regina Fink; Therese (Steven) Meyerhoff; David, John, Robert and Stephen Fink; 11 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren. He is also survived by two sisters, Ann Eckert and Carol Fitzgerald; two brothers, Tom and William Fink; and numerous nieces and nephews. In addition to his parents, he is predeceased by his brother James Fink.

Memorial gifts may be sent to Saint Meinrad Seminary, saintmeinrad.edu, or the Serra Club of Indianapolis, www.serraindy.org. †

Celebration of the Eucharist shows the impact of Christ's presence

"I'm just amazed at how beautifully things seem to be cohering. And I'm thinking more just about the spirituality of the event, which I and I think the bishops were hoping to see. There's a great sense of coming together as a Church, sort of directing ourselves toward the mystery of the Lord's presence amongst us and in us, especially through the Eucharist. I've just been very moved by that."

—Bishop Daniel E. Flores of Brownsville, Texas, in the Indiana Convention Center on July 18

It was nearly three years in the making, and we have no doubt that the Holy Spirit was present among those who attended the National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis on July 17-21.

Bishop Daniel E. Flores' statement poignantly captures how the 50,000 who attended this life-changing gathering united as pilgrims of faith. They departed on July 21, reminded at the closing Mass by Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle that "a eucharistic people is a missionary and evangelizing people."

This week's issue of *The Criterion* focuses on the congress as our staff spent all five days reporting on sessions, attending workshops and Masses, and taking part in a eucharistic procession that filled the streets of downtown Indianapolis on July 20.

We hope you enjoy this commemorative issue, and we pray that it will assist you in living out your faith more deeply with Christ in the Eucharist.

—Mike Krokos, editor

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As 50,000 people join in a eucharistic procession — ‘perhaps the largest in our country in decades’— questions of the heart are answered

By John Shaughnessy

For anyone whose life has been blessed by a great love, at least two questions must be considered:

How do I show the depth of my love and appreciation for this wondrous gift?

And how do I let the world know how much this person means to me?

On the sun-kissed afternoon of July 20, more than 50,000 Catholics from across the country answered these questions of the heart by sharing their reverence, awe and love for Jesus Christ and his life-changing and world-changing gift of the Eucharist during an emotionally charged eucharistic procession through the streets of downtown Indianapolis.

Priests, religious sisters, bishops, seminarians, older people, young adults, teens, children, Asians, Blacks, Hispanics and whites came together as one family of faith, smiling, crying, rejoicing, praying, singing, processing and falling to their knees while universally standing up for and embracing the one who sacrificed his life to redeem the world.

Walking one mile from the Indiana Convention Center to the Indiana War Memorial, tens of thousands of people jammed the streets, leading and following the float that carried the Blessed Sacrament in a gleaming, gold monstrance, while thousands of others packed the sidewalks of downtown.

The procession marked the defining moment of the 10th National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis, the first in the United States since before America entered into World War II.

And if you needed just one description to capture the essence of the event, it came in the words of Patricia Butler of Belleville, Ill. As she sat along the route of the procession nearly three hours before it began, she said, “It’s worth it to show the world that Jesus is alive and he’s here with us. The Eucharist is not a symbol. It’s really the living body and blood of Christ.”

‘It’s in Christ that we heal’

The procession began with Archbishop Charles C. Thompson carrying the monstrance holding the Blessed Sacrament from the convention center to a float where he handed it to Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens, chairman of the board of the National Eucharistic Congress, Inc.

Holding the Blessed Sacrament for that part of the procession, the Indianapolis archbishop kept his focus on the congress’ overall goal of bringing the Eucharist “out into the world.”

“We want to give a witness to Christ-centered faith and Christ-centered lives,” Archbishop Thompson said. “We want to bring him to the world because he is the source of all hope. He is the source of all salvation. He is the way to salvation. With so much woundedness and brokenness and polarization, this is what heals. It’s in Christ that we heal, that we are reconciled, that we are united. Not in ourselves, but in him.

“As apostolic nuncio Cardinal Pierre said the first night of the congress, we have to go out of our comfort zones and be willing to listen to the Holy Spirit and go out to those in need. Not just those who agree with us, but those who may disagree with us. It’s Christ that we take to others. We’re just the instruments.”

‘I like how there are so many people here just for God’

Near the front of the procession, 8-year-old Clarise Kohles walked with a group of girls and boys who received their first Communion this year. Wearing her white Communion dress and veil, the little girl from Texas tossed white and red rose petals on the downtown streets, paving the way for the Blessed Sacrament as she walked with her dad, Bradley Kohles.

“We went to Italy last year, and she fell in love with St. Clare and Italy in general, and she’s been on fire ever since,” her dad said.

Passing by the crowds of people taking video and photos of the first Communicants, Clarise said, “I like how there are so many people here just for God.”

‘Christ is here in our midst today’

At the southwest corner of Meridian and Washington streets, Holly and Richard Maes of Green Bay, Wis., waited in their wheelchair and electric scooter respectively, determined to join in the procession once the float with the Eucharist passed. Married 44 years, Richard has struggled with multiple sclerosis for about 30 years while Holly had to have her left leg amputated, the result of being hit by a drunk driver when she was 19.

“With both of us having health problems, to spend days with the Lord with so many people is invigorating,” Holly said. “I was a convert to the faith. I always felt something was missing in my youth, and I found it in the Catholic Church in the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. And Christ is here in our midst today.”

Richard added, “There’s a reason why we get the Eucharist every day. It gives me spiritual nourishment. And just being around so many Catholics has re-charged me. I’m ready to go back home and share everything we’ve heard here.”

Yet not before the float with the Eucharist passed and they rode down the access ramp at the corner and joined in the procession.

A dream fulfilled

As 15-year-old Brenner Jasper walked in the eucharistic procession with the 20 or so other youths from his parish—St. Francis Borgia in Washington, Mo.—he wanted to share the experience with more than his friends.

“I want to walk with Jesus because my entire life revolves around my faith,” Brenner said.

‘Everything I receive today, I want to bring back to my family’

Maria Cortez felt Christ’s love as she sat on the edge of Monument Circle when the Blessed Sacrament reached her.

“This is very important for me because I want to have an encounter with Jesus, with the Lord,” said Cortez, who came to the congress with her husband Avelino, both members of St. Isaac Jogues Parish in Niles, Ill. “I want to have a one-on-one relationship with Jesus so I can be filled with his knowledge, his strength. When you are filled with his love, you are able to share that with others.”

A mother and grandmother, Cortez added, “Everything I receive today, I want to bring back to my family and people at work and everyone else I encounter.”

‘The Eucharist means everything’

Chris Wilhelm never expected to drive the huge white pickup that pulled the float carrying the Blessed Sacrament from the convention center to the Indiana War Memorial. But when his son, Joseph, who was originally asked to drive the float, had his flight cancelled and he couldn’t make it to Indianapolis in time, he asked Chris to fill in for him.

“It’s an honor that they’ve put that kind of trust in me to drive the Eucharist through town,” Chris said. “The Eucharist means everything. It’s just a way of continuing to have God in your life.”

The power of the Holy Spirit

In the park facing the northside of the war memorial, Mary Huber joined the crowds that came for eucharistic adoration at the end of the journey of the Blessed Sacrament.

“It’s beautiful, absolutely beautiful. It’s nice to be among so many like-minded people who are gathering together to honor the Lord,” said Huber, a member of St. John Paul II Parish in Miamisburg, Ohio. “The



People of all ages and backgrounds packed the sidewalks of downtown Indianapolis on July 20 to watch a eucharistic procession honoring Christ in the Blessed Sacrament weave from the Indiana Convention Center to the Indiana War Memorial. (Submitted photo by Andrew Motyka)

pilgrimage, the planning, the organization and the commitment from the city to make this happen show that the Holy Spirit is very much alive.”

‘We thank you, Jesus’

During eucharistic adoration at the Indiana War Memorial, Bishop Cozzens focused on the love that Christ has for all people—and the desire of the procession participants to show their love for him.

“Thank you, Jesus, for accompanying us every step,” he said. “Thank you for walking with us, each of us, in every dark moment and every light one. We thank you, Jesus, that you are always with us and that you are always here for us in the Blessed Sacrament.

“Jesus, we know the procession we made today is a signal, a sign of our earthly pilgrimage. And it is not over. And this procession—perhaps the largest in our country in decades—it was still too small. Millions of people in our own cities, our own dioceses, don’t yet know you.

“We know that you want all people, all nations, to join in this procession. We know you want all people to follow you. And Jesus, we will walk with them.”

Looking back on the procession and the first four days of the congress, Bishop Cozzens thanked God and asked for his continuing love and guidance.

“Jesus, we have experienced in these days together just a small taste of heaven. Show us, Lord, who we are. Let us be your body in the world. Fill us with your Holy Spirit. Empower us to witness to you, to your love, to your goodness. Make us your missionaries to every corner of our land.”

It was all part of a day to remember.

All part of trying to show just how much it means to be blessed by the great gift of Christ’s love. †





Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, *Publisher*
Mike Krokos, *Editor*

John F. Fink, *Editor Emeritus*

Editorial



Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, pro-prefect of the Dicastery for Evangelization's Section for First Evangelization and New Particular Churches, raises the host on July 21 during the final Mass of the National Eucharistic Congress at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis. (OSV News photo/Bob Roller)

Now, with a renewed focus on the Eucharist, our mission begins

"A Eucharistic people is a missionary and evangelizing people. ... Go, go, go. ... Let us proclaim Jesus joyfully and zealously for the life of the world!"

Those words offered by papal envoy Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle during a homily at the closing Mass of the National Eucharistic Congress on July 21 at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis punctuated a five-day renewal of faith.

But the message—offered to more than 50,000 Catholics at the liturgy—was meant for all Catholics across the U.S. who were invited to go forth and proclaim the Gospel anew to all they encounter on their pilgrimage of faith. And each of us would do well to take those words to heart and embrace the charge to go out on mission.

Cardinal Tagle, who serves the Holy See as the pro-prefect of the Section for the First Evangelization and New Particular Churches of the Dicastery for Evangelization, told Massgoers that "conversion to the Eucharist" was the message Pope Francis wanted to share at the Congress.

The Holy Father, he continued, "Prays, as we all do, that the Congress may bear much fruit for the renewal of the Church and of society in the United States of America."

If last week was any indication, what was possibly the largest gathering of Catholics for worship in the history of the state of Indiana offered a good start and represented a great public witness to the power of Jesus Christ to touch and change lives.

In his homily, Cardinal Tagle said that renewal will occur if people become eucharistic missionaries, connecting "eucharistic conversion" with "missionary conversion."

Reflecting on how God sent his Son into the world, the cardinal said Jesus came "as a life-giving gift" who gave his "flesh for the life of the world."

"Jesus' description of his being sent by the Father is always connected to the gift of his flesh for others," he noted, "being sent and being a gift."

"The Eucharist is a privileged moment to experience Jesus' mission as a gift of himself," Cardinal Tagle added.

We, too, have gifts to share with others and must not be afraid to go out

on mission to show how the Eucharist—the greatest gift of the Catholic faith—has transformed our lives. We must not walk away from our eucharistic Lord or lack confidence in proclaiming how Christ is integral to our lives. And we must have the courage to proclaim that truth to everyone we encounter—the poor, the sick, the homeless, the migrant, the refugee—everyone. We must joyfully let Christ's light shine in us.

"When pessimism takes over, we see only darkness, failures, problems, things to complain about," Cardinal Tagle said. "We do not see gifts in persons and events. And those who do not see gifts in themselves and in others, they will not give gifts; they will not go on a mission."

"Go and share Jesus' shepherd's caress to the lost, confused and weak," he continued, referencing St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians. "Go and share Jesus' gift of reconciliation and peace to those who are divided."

In closing, Cardinal Tagle reminded his audience "a eucharistic people is a missionary and evangelizing people."

Our charge now, is to "go, go, go" out and joyfully share how the Eucharist transforms lives.

It will not be easy, but let us pray that we each find the courage to develop a new sense of mission that allows us to recommit ourselves to the Lord Jesus and his good news—a recommitment to encouraging our brothers and sisters to join us on our missionary journey and call to discipleship.

Seminarian Austin Thomas of the Archdiocese of Atlanta may have said it best when he reminded his fellow pilgrims that the Congress was only the beginning.

"This is just the start, this isn't the finish line. When we go back to our home parishes, that is where the real mission begins," he said. "It's very easy to worship with all of these people, but it's your relationship with the Lord, it's the encounter you had here ... Now you bring it back home ... and continue to fall deeply in love with the Lord."

Please, Holy Spirit, guide us as we enter this time of eucharistic missionary conversion. Let us rely on your grace and move forward in faith, hope and love.

—Mike Krokos

Be Our Guest/Gretchen R. Crowe

Christ at the center in Indianapolis

There has not been an OSV News without the 10th National Eucharistic Congress. From our inception in 2022,



we knew that this event would be a hallmark for the Catholic Church in the United States and for our coverage in July 2024. We planned, we wrote, we interviewed. We spoke to young people who sacrificed

months of their lives to walk thousands of miles—and we walked ourselves, as did many of you, in the pilgrimages where monstrances were carried across 27 states and 65 dioceses.

But we never imagined, or at least I never imagined, what would happen here in Indianapolis from July 17-21. The 10th National Eucharistic Congress was an utter success, and the Church in the United States is already stronger for it.

And that's not to say that there weren't problems. Registrants had to wait in long lines on July 17 to check in. Congress merchandise probably shouldn't have been hawked in the months before the event, and at such high prices. Behind-the-scenes logistics have generous room for improvement. And it most assuredly was a costly event—both to put on and to attend.

But, at the end of a long, tiring, exhilarating, life-changing week, those challenges seem like a vague footnote. Organizers made sure that Jesus Christ in the Eucharist—body, blood, soul and divinity—stood firmly at the center of these days. And when that happens, everything else is white noise.

The first revival night set the tone. Before any speakers took the stage, Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens of Crookston, Minn., the tireless champion of the congress for the past three years, carried the Eucharist into Indianapolis' Lucas Oil Stadium in an enormous golden monstrance. Hundreds of spotlights trained on it, and, for at least 10 full minutes, tens of thousands of people knelt in adoration of our God and king in the cavernous venue.

"Lord, we wanted to give you the first words of our National Eucharistic Congress," Bishop Cozzens prayed.

And it paid off, big time. Because when Christ is at the center, grace abounds. So much grace.

The National Eucharistic Congress headlined a lot of speakers and talent—including some pretty big names like Bishop Robert E. Barron, Gloria Purvis, Father Mike Schmitz and Matt Maher. But, when we asked participants what they will remember most from the week, the answer unanimously was time spent with the Eucharist, specifically in quiet adoration.

Opportunities for quiet prayer were ample, not just in the nightly revival sessions, but also perpetually at the beautiful St. John the Evangelist Church right across the street from the Indiana Convention Center. Perpetual adoration was also happening, it turns out, behind the scenes in the stadium with that big monstrance. There, women religious

prayed nonstop throughout the event in the presence of Jesus for the congress and its attendees.

Multiple daily Masses in the mornings and the afternoons also offered opportunities for worship and prayer, with the capstone being the triumphant Sunday morning Mass. So many priests and bishops concelebrated the Mass that the opening procession lasted 25 minutes. My 2-year-old was not impressed, but I was, and I wasn't alone. Video cameras held aloft throughout the stadium denoted the event's unique nature.

There was so much more. The enormous expo hall was the place for all things Catholic, including a showcase of a mural that is being created to hang in St. John the Evangelist to commemorate the congress; games for kids; a stage for musicians; booths for vocations; and ministries and apostolates of all shapes and sizes. I met the creators behind the Lego Mass kit my kids love, touched a rock from the Lourdes grotto in France and danced like a goofball to a Josh Blakesley cover of "I Thank God." The Eucharistic Village outside St. John's offered a big white tent for respite from the July sun (though the weather all week was undeniably stunning), and it became a place where people could gather for food, drink and conversation.

Daily impact sessions and themes offered segments of congress participants—from families to people working in ministry to priests—a consistent journey from beginning to end, when they were sent forth into the Year of Mission, which has now officially begun.

But perhaps the most moving event took place on Saturday afternoon, as thousands upon thousands of Catholics poured into the streets of downtown Indianapolis for a public profession of faith in the form of a final congress-related eucharistic procession of 2024. Singing, dancing and prayer accompanied the Blessed Sacrament as it—as he—traveled on a float covered in flowers, and pulled by a white pick-up truck, in the company of Bishop Cozzens and Archbishop Charles C. Thompson of Indianapolis.

These have been long days—long days for congress attendees, long days for the organizers, long days for the media members, long days for the security officers keeping us safe, long days for staff of the big event venues.

Yet as the Catholic takeover—for there is really no other word for it—of downtown Indianapolis concludes, I can't help but wish the long days might go on longer.

But this longing isn't for the big banners proclaiming revival that hung outside the Indiana Convention Center, or for the crowds of fellow smiling, joyful Catholics, or for more inspiring talks. It is a longing for Christ himself, present in the Eucharist—what the Church teaches is a foretaste of heaven. This truth was evident in Indianapolis in July 2024—and I'd wager its fruits will be evident in the Catholic Church in the United States for many years to come.

(Gretchen R. Crowe is the editor-in-chief of OSV News.) †

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The editors reserve the right to select the letters that will be published and to edit

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Christ the Cornerstone

We are invited to do amazing things in Jesus' name

Just five days ago, we joyfully concluded the 10th National Eucharistic Congress held in the United States—this year in Indianapolis, the Crossroads of America. What a marvelous experience it was!

Thousands of pilgrims from all over our country and beyond shared their love and devotion for Christ's incomparable gift of himself to his disciples—and to the whole world—in the ordinary bread and wine miraculously transformed into the Lord's body and blood.

Thank God for the Eucharistic Congress and for all who prepared for it and took part in it. The Church in central and southern Indiana was truly blessed to serve as the host for this sacred event, and we acknowledge our responsibility to "carry it forward" as we continue to celebrate the holy Eucharist as the source and summit of everything we do.

The Gospel reading for the 17th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Jn 6:1-15) recalls the miracle that Jesus worked when he fed an estimated 5,000 hungry people. According to St. John:

The Jewish feast of Passover was

near. When Jesus raised his eyes and saw that a large crowd was coming to him, he said to Philip, "Where can we buy enough food for them to eat?" He said this to test him, because he himself knew what he was going to do. Philip answered him, "Two hundred days' wages worth of food would not be enough for each of them to have a little." One of his disciples, Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, said to him, "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish; but what good are these for so many?" Jesus said, "Have the people recline." Now there was a great deal of grass in that place. So the men reclined, about five thousand in number. Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed them to those who were reclining, and also as much of the fish as they wanted. When they had had their fill, he said to his disciples, "Gather the fragments left over, so that nothing will be wasted." So they collected them, and filled twelve wicker baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves that had been more than they could eat. When the people saw the sign he had done, they said, "This is truly the Prophet, the one who

is to come into the world." (Jn 6:4-14)

The "sign" that Jesus worked more than 2,000 years ago continues today. Every time we receive the eucharistic bread and wine, our hungry hearts are filled with God's gift of life. Jesus takes the little that we have to offer (symbolized by the five barley loaves and the two fish) and transforms us into missionary disciples.

Empowered by the grace of this sacrament, we are sent out into the world to accomplish unimaginable things. We are called to be women and men of peace in a world where violence and aggression are everywhere. We are invited to bring hope and encouragement to people who are in doubt and despair. And we are challenged to provide food for our sisters and brothers who are hungry, shelter for the homeless and healing to all who suffer from any illness of the mind, body or soul.

By the power of God's grace, we can do amazing things. Problems that the world tells us are insurmountable can be resolved through simple acts of goodness and kindness. The darkness of sin and evil can be dispelled if only we can shine the light of Christ that is

illuminated in our minds and hearts by our reception of holy Communion. And our famished souls' longing for true joy can be satisfied by our devout adoration of the incarnate word of God present to us in the Blessed Sacrament.

As missionary disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ, we can do amazing things, but only if we practice the same kind of humility that was his.

At the conclusion of the miracle of the loaves and fish, Jesus did not seek the adulation or praise that were his due. In fact, as St. John tells us, "Since Jesus knew that they were going to come and carry him off to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain alone" (Jn 6:15).

Those of us who were privileged to participate in the National Eucharistic Congress last week know that we have been invited, and challenged, to do amazing things in Jesus' name.

May the grace that we receive through our frequent reception of Christ's body and blood, embolden us—in all humility—to work miracles of faith, hope and love in our personal lives, our families and communities, and in the world at large. †



Cristo, la piedra angular

Estamos invitados a hacer cosas asombrosas en el nombre de Jesús

Hace apenas cinco días concluimos con alegría el 10.º Congreso Eucarístico Nacional celebrado este año en Indianápolis, la encrucijada de Estados Unidos. ¡Y fue una experiencia verdaderamente maravillosa!

Miles de peregrinos de todo nuestro país y más allá compartieron su amor y devoción por el incomparable regalo que Cristo hizo de sí mismo a sus discípulos—y al mundo entero—en el pan y el vino ordinarios que se transforman milagrosamente en el Cuerpo y la Sangre del Señor.

Gracias a Dios por el Congreso Eucarístico y por todos los que intervinieron en los preparativos y participaron en él. Fue una verdadera bendición para la Iglesia del centro y el sur de Indiana haber sido anfitriona de este sagrado acontecimiento, y reconozcamos nuestra responsabilidad de continuar con la labor iniciada aquí mientras seguimos celebrando la sagrada Eucaristía como fuente y cumbre de todo lo que hacemos.

La lectura del Evangelio del decimoséptimo domingo del tiempo ordinario (Jn 6:1-15) recuerda el milagro que obró Jesús cuando alimentó a unas 5,000 personas hambrientas. Según san Juan:

Y estaba cerca la pascua, la fiesta de los judíos. Cuando alzó Jesús los ojos, y vio que había venido a él gran multitud, dijo a Felipe: ¿De dónde compraremos pan para que coman estos? Pero esto decía para probarle; porque él sabía lo que había de hacer. Felipe le respondió: Doscientos denarios de pan no bastarían para que cada uno de ellos tomase un poco. Uno de sus discípulos, Andrés, hermano de Simón Pedro, le dijo: Aquí está un muchacho, que tiene cinco panes de cebada y dos pececillos; mas ¿qué es esto para tantos? Entonces Jesús dijo: Haced recostar la gente. Y había mucha hierba en aquel lugar; y se recostaron como en número de cinco mil varones. Y tomó Jesús aquellos panes, y habiendo dado gracias, los repartió entre los discípulos, y los discípulos entre los que estaban recostados; asimismo de los peces, cuanto querían. Y cuando se hubieron saciado, dijo a sus discípulos: Recoged los pedazos que sobraron, para que no se pierda nada. Recogieron, pues, y llenaron doce cestas de pedazos, que de los cinco panes de cebada sobraron a los que habían comido. Aquellos hombres entonces, viendo la señal que Jesús había hecho, dijeron: Este verdaderamente es el profeta que había de venir al mundo» (Jn 6:4-14).

La "señal" que Jesús obró hace más de 2,000 años persiste hasta el día de hoy. Cada vez que recibimos el pan y el vino eucarísticos, nuestros corazones hambrientos se llenan del don de vida de Dios. Jesús toma lo poco que tenemos para ofrecer (simbolizado por los cinco panes de cebada y los dos peces) y nos transforma en discípulos misioneros.

Empoderados por la gracia de este sacramento, somos enviados al mundo para realizar cosas inimaginables. Estamos llamados a ser mujeres y hombres de paz en un mundo en el que la violencia y la agresión están por todas partes; se nos invita a llevar esperanza y aliento a las personas que están sumidas en la duda y la desesperación, y tenemos el reto de proporcionar alimentos a nuestros hermanos y hermanas que pasan hambre, refugio a los sin techo y curación a todos los que sufren alguna enfermedad de la mente, el cuerpo o el alma.

Por el poder de la gracia de Dios, podemos hacer cosas asombrosas. Los problemas que el mundo nos dice que son insuperables pueden resolverse con simples actos de bondad y amabilidad. Las tinieblas del pecado y del mal pueden disiparse con solo hacer brillar la luz de Cristo que se ilumina en

nuestras mentes y corazones al recibir la sagrada Comunión. Y el anhelo de verdadera alegría de nuestras almas hambrientas puede satisfacerse con nuestra devota adoración del Verbo de Dios encarnado, presente ante nosotros en el Santísimo Sacramento.

Como discípulos misioneros de nuestro Señor Jesucristo, podemos hacer cosas asombrosas, pero únicamente si practicamos el mismo tipo de humildad que él nos demostró.

Al concluir el milagro de los panes y los peces, Jesús no buscó adulación ni alabanza que le habrían correspondido. De hecho, como nos dice san Juan, "Pero entendiendo Jesús que iban a venir para apoderarse de él y hacerle rey, volvió a retirarse al monte él solo" (Jn 6:15).

Los que tuvimos el privilegio de participar en el Congreso Eucarístico Nacional la semana pasada sabemos que se nos ha invitado—desafiado—a hacer cosas asombrosas en nombre de Jesús.

Que la gracia que recibimos al comulgar con el Cuerpo y la Sangre de Cristo, nos arme de valor con humildad para obrar milagros de fe, esperanza y amor en nuestras vidas personales, en nuestras familias y comunidades, y en el mundo en general. †

July 29-August 1

St. Monica Parish, 6131 N. Michigan Road, Indianapolis. **Encounter Summer Intensive: A Four-Night Experience of the Encounter School of Ministry**, 6-9 p.m., \$75, \$35 for clergy, religious, seminarians, \$40 for parish/ministry professionals and college students, \$25 per individual day. Information: 317-795-4912, indianapolis@encounterschool.org, encounterschool.org/Indianapolis.

August 1-3

Holy Spirit Parish, 7243 E. 10th St., Indianapolis. **76th Annual Holy Spirit Festival**, Thurs. 6-11 p.m., Fri. 6 p.m.-midnight, Sat. 1 p.m.-midnight, live music, rides, shish kabobs, tacos, pizza, hamburgers, hot dogs, fruit smoothies, desserts, lemon shake-up, seltzers, beer and wine, bingo, Monte Carlo, silent auction, \$20 tickets for \$7,500 raffle, parking shuttle available at 7140 E. Washington St., free wrist bands provided to parishioners after Masses, non-parishioner admission \$10 in food tickets, children younger than 12 free, minors under 18 must be accompanied by an adult. Information: holyspiritfestival.org, 317-353-9404.

August 2

Women's Care Center,

4901 W. 86th St., Indianapolis. **First Friday Mass**, 5 p.m., optional tour of center to follow. Information: 317-829-6800, womenscarecenter.org.

Our Lady of the Greenwood Church, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. **First Friday bilingual celebration of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus**, Mass 6 p.m. followed by adoration until 9 p.m., sacrament of reconciliation available. Information: 317-750-7309, msross1@hotmail.com.

St. John Paul II Church, 2253 St. Joe Road W., Sellersburg. **First Friday Devotion**, 11:40 a.m., litany, consecration to the Sacred Heart, Divine Mercy Chaplet followed by noon Mass. Information: 812-246-2512.

August 3

St. John Paul II Church, 2253 St. Joe Road W., Sellersburg. **First Saturday Devotion**, 8 a.m., rosary, litany, consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, confession 8-8:30 a.m. followed by 8:30 a.m. Mass. Information: 812-246-2512.

Our Lady of Lourdes Parish parking lot, 5333 E. Washington St., Indianapolis. **St. Vincent de Paul Stuff A Truck**, 9-11 a.m., accepting clothing, household goods and linens (all in closed bags), furniture, bicycles, bicycle

helmets and locks, backpacks. List of items most needed: cutt.ly/ItemsNeeded. Information: dsweney@svidpindy.org.

St. Monica Parish, 6131 N. Michigan Rd., Indianapolis. **Philippine Fiesta**, noon-7 p.m., *Santacruz* parade 4 p.m., Mass at 5 p.m., hosted by archdiocesan Philippine Ministry and Barangay Club of Indiana, food, games, free admission. Information: mariasolito@yahoo.com.

August 4

St. Boniface Parish, 11715 E. County Road 1550 N., Fulda. **Summer Picnic**, 9:30 a.m.-2 p.m. CT., fried chicken and roast beef dinners, Fulda's famous soup, games, live music, handmade quilts, bingo, themed baskets, organ concert, family fun center, free admission. Information: sbatholic.church/summer-picnic, 812-357-5533, info@myparishfamily.church.

August 7

McGowan Hall, 1305 N. Delaware St., Indianapolis. **Theology on Tap**, 6-9 p.m., Diocese of Springfield, Ill., high school theology teacher Sean Hussey and his wife Paige Hussey presenting, for ages 18-39, includes presentation, full bar, food trucks and socializing, free admission. Information: 317-592-4006, emastronicola@archindy.org.

August 9-10

Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ Parish, 7225 Southeastern Ave., Indianapolis. **Augustavaganza**, 4 p.m.-midnight, raffles, festival food tent, children's games, church tours, baby crawling race, bingo, beer/wine tent, Monte Carlo, carnival rides, live music/entertainment, catered dinners in air-conditioned gym, Silly Safari, free admission. Information: 317-357-1200, tmartin@nativityindy.org, nativityindy.org/augustravaganza.

August 10-11

All Saints Parish, Decatur County, St. Paul Campus, 9788 N. Dearborn Road, Guilford. **Summer Picnic**, Sat. 5 p.m.-midnight, Sun. 11 a.m.-9 p.m.; Sat. pork-loin dinner, live music, lunch stand, beer garden, kiddie land, raffles; Sun. chicken dinner served beginning at 11 a.m., free admission. Information: 812-576-4302.

St. Mary Parish, 2500 St. Mary Dr., Lanesville. **Beer and Brats Night and Parish Picnic**, Sat. 6:30-10:30 p.m., beer and brats; Sun. 10 a.m.-3 p.m.; fried chicken or ham dinner, dine-in or carry-out; both days: bingo, capital prize raffles, linen booth, online auction at harrittgroup.com, food prices TBA, free admission. Information: 812-952-2853, elizabeth.johnson@catholic-community.org.

August 11

St. Monica Parish, 6131 N. Michigan Road, Indianapolis. **Mass in French / Messe en français**, 5 p.m. / 18h, coordinated by ACFADI (*Apostolat des Catholiques Francophones de l'Archidiocèse d'Indianapolis*), second Sunday of each month / *le deuxième dimanche de chaque mois*. Information: acfadi2014@gmail.com, rvermett@iu.edu.

August 12

Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish, Madonna Hall, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. **Confraternity of Christian Mothers**, 6 p.m. Mass followed by meeting, for all Catholic women whether a parent or not, free. Information: 217-638-7433, paulabeechler@gmail.com.

August 13

Church of the Immaculate Conception, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Taizé Prayer at the Woods**, 7-8 p.m., silent and spoken prayers, simple music, silence, virtual option available. Information: Taize.SistersofProvidence.org, 812-535-2952.

August 15

Our Lady of Peace Cemetery and Mausoleum, 9001 Haverstick Road, Indianapolis. **Mass**, 2 p.m.

Information: 317-574-8898, catholiccemeteries.cc.

The District Theater, 627 Massachusetts Ave., Indianapolis. **Spamalot Young@Part**, 8-9 p.m., authorized youth version of original Broadway musical, appropriate for all ages, \$16 students and children, \$22 adults. Information, tickets: agapetheatercompany.com, 317-450-5171, info@agapetheatercompany.com.

August 16

Northside Events and Social Club, 2100 E. 71st St., Indianapolis. **Catholic Business Exchange**, Biblical scholar, author and storyteller Sandra Hartlieb presenting "Unlocking the Mysteries of Biblical Happiness," rosary 6:35 a.m., Mass 7 a.m., buffet breakfast and program following, \$18 members, \$24 non-members. Register by 4 p.m. on Aug. 13. Information, registration: cutt.ly/CBE-Reg.

August 16-17

St. Thomas Aquinas Parish, 4625 N. Kenwood Ave., Indianapolis. **SausageFest**, 5:30 p.m.-midnight, Kincaid's sausages, Sun King beer, sides from Illinois Street Food Emporium, Byrne's pizza, live music, wine, snack shack, kids' zone, teen zone with DJ, free admission. Information 317-253-1461, churchinfo@staindy.org. †

Retreats and Programs

For a complete list of retreats as reported to The Criterion, log on to www.archindy.org/retreats.

August 9

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **A Day of Quiet Renewal**, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., \$20, \$80 with spiritual direction. Information, registration: 812-933-6437, oldenburgfranciscancenter.org.

August 11

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **Coffee Talks—Calamity Jane: Legend of the West**, 10:45 a.m.-noon, Oldenburg Associate April Boyle presenting, online option available, freewill donation. Information, registration: 812-933-6437, center@oldenburgosf.com, oldenburgfranciscancenter.org.

August 15

Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis. **A Day with Mary**, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Judy Ribar facilitating, \$50, includes Mass and lunch. Information, registration: offmgr@mounstfrancis.org, 812-923-8817, mounstfrancis.org/a-day-with-mary.

August 19

You are Not Alone Series: The Healing Journey Forward with Suicide Loss (virtual via Zoom), 6:30-8 p.m., last of three independent sessions, Father James Farrell presenting, geared toward adults, however teens 15 and older may attend with parent or guardian, free, registration required. Information, registration: lcoons@archindy.org, 317-545-7681.

August 23-25

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Discipleship According to the Gospel of Mark**, Benedictine Father Eugene Hensell presenting, \$300 single, \$425 double. Registration: 812-357-6611, saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis. **Women's Weekend of Peace**, Fri. 7 p.m.-Sun. noon, \$250, includes accommodations, meals and materials, limited to six participants. Information, registration: offmgr@mounstfrancis.org, 812-923-8817, tinyurl.com/msfwomenwknd24.

August 29

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Day of Silence**, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., \$45, includes room, lunch, Mass and use of common areas and grounds, overnight stay available for additional \$32, dinner additional \$11. Registration: archindy.org/fatima-events, 317-545-7681, lcoons@archindy.org.

September 4

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **Contemplative Prayer**, 2-3:30 p.m., Franciscan Sister Olga Wittekind presenting, freewill donation. Information, registration: 812-933-6437, center@oldenburgosf.com, oldenburgfranciscancenter.org.

September 6

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **A Day of Quiet Renewal**, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., \$20, \$80 with spiritual direction. Information, registration: 812-933-6437, oldenburgfranciscancenter.org.

September 7

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **Love Is the Only Answer**, 9:30-11:30 a.m., musician and chaplain Bill Tonis presenting, \$30, \$45 with CEUs. Information, registration: 812-933-6437, center@oldenburgosf.com, oldenburgfranciscancenter.org.

September 8

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **Coffee Talks—Embracing Compassion: A Journey into the Heart of Humanity**, 10:45 a.m.-noon, Jesuit Father Ed Kinerk presenting, online option available, freewill donation. Information, registration: 812-933-6437, center@oldenburgosf.com, oldenburgfranciscancenter.org.

September 13-15

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Letting Holy Leisure Be Our Way**, for ages 20-40, Benedictine Father Simon Herrmann presenting, \$300 single, \$425 double. Registration: 812-357-6611, saintmeinrad.org/retreats. †

Wedding Anniversaries

BILL AND ROSEMARY (ANNARINO) LOGAN, members of St. Mark the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis, celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on June 27.

The couple was married in St. Mary Church in Indianapolis on June 27, 1964.

They have five children: Ann Marie Bowling, Mary Davey, Regina Sermersheim, Natalie Underwood and Aaron Logan.

The couple also has 15 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. †



RAPHAEL AND MARY (WERNER) MERKEL, members of St. Maurice Parish in Napoleon, will celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary on Aug. 8.

The couple was married in Holy Family Church in Oldenburg on Aug. 8, 1964.

They have six children: Annette Cortes, Rachele Diaz, Beth Simon, Victoria Wagner, Denise Zill and Gregory Merkel.

The couple also has 17 grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. †



JAMES AND IRENE (SCHEELE) TEBBE, members of St. Mary Parish in Greensburg, celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on June 20.

The couple was married in Holy Family Church in Oldenburg on June 20, 1964.

They have eight children: Donna Lysaght, Marilyn Redelman, Beth Schwing, John, Kenny, Mark, Matt and Paul Tebbe.

The couple also has 22 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. †



JOHN AND BEVERLY (WELCH) HANSBERRY, members of St. Pius X Parish in Indianapolis, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on July 6.

The couple was married in the chapel at Richards-Gebaur Air Force Base in Kansas City, Mo. (U.S. Archdiocese for the Military Services), on July 6, 1974.

They have three children: Jessica McInerney, Lauren Young and Gregory Hansberry.

The couple also has six grandchildren. †



Announcements for couples celebrating 50, 55, 60, 65, 70 or more years of marriage are accepted. Go to cutt.ly/anniversaries or call 317-236-1585.

Grateful archbishop keeps prayerful focus during eucharistic procession

By Sean Gallagher

As more than 50,000 Catholics from across the country took part in a eucharistic procession through downtown Indianapolis on July 20, Archbishop Charles C. Thompson kept his focus on the Blessed Sacrament in a large brass monstrance.

“I thought that was the best witness I could give at that moment,” he said in an interview with *The Criterion* a day after the congress concluded. “While I know there were thousands and thousands of people around me, my focus was on Christ. My focus was the presence of Jesus in the Eucharist.”

“It was an incredible moment with all the different religious, priests, seminarians and bishops, and with the streets lined with 50,000-plus people. But it was all about the Eucharist. It was all about Jesus Christ. It was all about being eucharistic-centered, Christ-centered.”

Yet Archbishop Thompson wasn’t oblivious to the people along the procession route. He just was taking them to prayer.

“There were all these people,” he said. “How many were carrying great wounds? How many had left great struggles at home? How many were struggling with employment? How many were struggling with illness, with disease? How many were struggling with addiction? How many of these people were having marital problems? How many of these people had a child who may be dying?”

“All of those people were here with a spirit of great gratitude. But there’s a woundedness, there’s brokenness among us. So, I was lifting them up in prayer.”

Archbishop Thompson said his prayers inspired by the National Eucharistic Congress will continue for months and even years as he discerns the fruits that the event will bear in the archdiocese and in the broader Church.

“We have to process this,” he said. “I think the fruits are going to bear out over time—weeks, months, years, maybe decades. It’s going to take time to process and really reflect on what this means for us. What will we do with this? How will it impact us?”

Still, Archbishop Thompson described some general lines of thought for consideration in the future.

“How does this connect to the larger Church, to the call to synodality, to the call to be missionary disciples? How does it connect to the call to be good stewards, to the call to the concerns of “*Laudato Si*,” and the environment?”

“How does this connect to the call to immigrants, the call to transform our culture, our politics, our economics—to be more Christ-centered rather than focusing on the polarization, personalities and egos that tend to divide us rather than unite us.”



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson and Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens of Crookston, Minn., chairman of the board of the National Eucharistic Congress, Inc., kneel before the Blessed Sacrament being towed during a eucharistic procession of the National Eucharistic Congress in downtown Indianapolis on July 20. (OSV News photo/Bob Roller)

Archbishop Thompson also shared his gratitude for the tremendous work that countless priests, seminarians, religious and lay Catholics across the archdiocese did to help make the National Eucharistic Congress a success.

“Our local people are so good at doing national events,” he said. “I can’t tell you how many bishops, priests and the people who were visiting just kept going on about how beautiful Indianapolis is. They just never knew how incredible of a city it is, how connected things are, how friendly people are, and how helpful they are.”

“Everybody keeps telling me how much this local Church is going to benefit from the fruits of this congress. Well, the [NEC] benefited from the great fruits of our people, of our local Church.”

“I’m very proud of our people. I’m very grateful. But I’m not surprised, because our people do these things very, very well. There’s a great hospitable spirit and a great Christ-centered spirit among our people to want to serve and be attentive to those who join us and come here.” †

In an oasis of welcome, a volunteer embraces a gift that moves her to tears

By John Shaughnessy

For five sunny days and long dark nights, the grounds of St. John the Evangelist Church in downtown Indianapolis served as an oasis of welcome and rejuvenation for many of the 50,000 people who came for the National Eucharistic Congress.

If you needed a beer, wine or coffee, you could sip your beverage beneath a large tent that provided soothing shade.



The Eucharistic Village on the grounds of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis served as an oasis of welcome and rejuvenation for many of the 50,000 people who came to the National Eucharistic Congress on July 17-21.

(Photo by John Shaughnessy)

If something to eat or a cool ice cream treat called to you, volunteers from the parish served a variety of choices in an area right across the street from the entrance to the Indiana Convention Center—one of the main venues of the congress, along with Lucas Oil Stadium.

Yet the best and most spiritually refreshing welcome that the parish provided occurred within the church where eucharistic adoration was available 24 hours a day during the congress.

During the afternoon of July 18 and at other times in the congress, every pew in the church was filled with people who came to silently praise and to draw strength from Christ in the Blessed Sacrament.

Priests, religious sisters, older people, young adults, teens, children, Blacks, whites, Latinos, Asians—all knelt, prayed and shared their hearts with God in a moment that showed the Church in all its diversity, in all its wondrous connection.

At the entrance of the church on that afternoon of July 18, Dr. Michelle Lucia greeted people or thanked them for coming. As one of the many volunteers who made the Eucharistic Village and perpetual adoration on the parish grounds so welcoming, she was also one of the volunteers who was moved by the constant flow of people coming to adore Christ in the Eucharist.

“It’s definitely beautiful—all these people coming to Jesus, and Jesus waiting for them in the Eucharist,” said Lucia, a member of the parish who was married to her husband John there in 2016. “We’re doing three-hour

shifts, and it’s been a constant flow of people coming in. It brings tears to my eyes.”

Lucia knows the power of eucharistic adoration, having experienced it constantly throughout her life. It’s why she chose to volunteer at the church during the congress.

“I just feel a calling to this because I feel like anytime that I’ve ever come to the Eucharist, Jesus is there waiting for me,” said Lucia, a mom and a specialist in internal medicine at Ascension St. Vincent Indianapolis. “When I’m struggling, I feel him calling me. And when I come here, I just feel completely changed.”

“He softens my heart if I’m angry about something. If I’m sad about something, I can feel his love. I always go away in a better state. My soul feels like it’s in a better state.”

She recalled one particular moment when she felt the presence of God profoundly.

“When I didn’t pass one of my tests for medical school, there was a priest in the adoration chapel who came and sat right next to me,” she said. “I felt a mystical experience of him hugging me even though he didn’t touch me, and I feel like that was Jesus hugging me.”

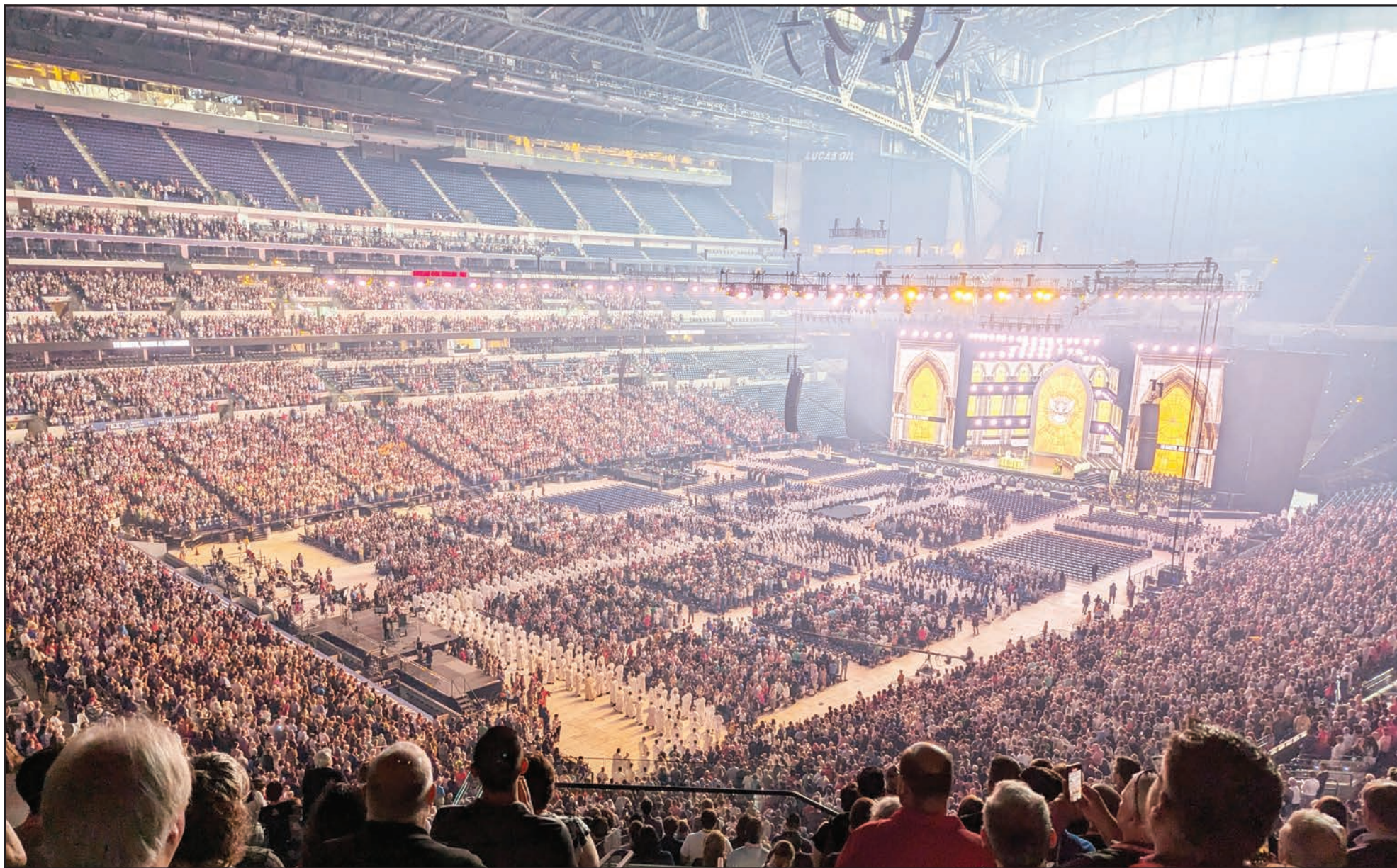
Now, she is in her 16th year as a doctor, striving to provide healing for people struggling with their physical health. At the same time, she stays focused on the healing that Christ offers people in their struggles.

“There’s nothing Jesus can’t do. And he waits for us in the Eucharist and adoration.” †



Dr. Michelle Lucia





Seminarians, deacons and priests process on July 21 into Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis for the closing Mass of the 10th National Eucharistic Congress. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

Historic congress ends with invitation to share Christ in the Eucharist with others

By Sean Gallagher

They came to Indianapolis drawn by Christ's gift of himself in the Eucharist. And they were sent out to share that gift with others.

More than 50,000 Catholics from across the country gathered in Indianapolis for the historic 10th National Eucharistic Congress. At the end of its closing Mass on July 21 in Lucas Oil Stadium, Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens of Crookston, Minn., who led the organizing of the congress, spoke to those attending.

"My brothers and sisters, in just a few moments, the 10th National Eucharistic Congress will be over," he said in remarks after Communion. "And so, go! Don't stay. Go. Go and tell others about the gift you have received."



A priest distributes Communion to a worshipper on July 21 during the closing Mass of the National Eucharistic Congress at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis. A large number of bishops and priests concelebrated the Mass. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

Bishop Cozzens also shared that the leaders of the National Eucharistic Congress are planning to have another eucharistic congress in 2033 in celebration of the 2,000th anniversary of Christ's death and resurrection that brought redemption to the world.

"Yet, as this event has been unfolding, we've actually been discerning. How many people think we should do one sooner than nine years from now?" Bishop Cozzens asked, with the giant congregation erupting in cheers. "We'll keep discerning and let you know."

In the near term, Bishop Cozzens announced that another National Eucharistic Pilgrimage with one route will take place next year, starting in Indianapolis and ending in Los Angeles on June 22, 2025, *Corpus Christi* Sunday.

'Will you stay with Jesus?' 'Yes!'

In addition to more than 45,000 lay Catholics, present at the Mass were also some 150 bishops, 1,000 priests, 500 deacons, 500 seminarians and 900 men and women religious.

With so many taking part, the opening and closing processions for the Mass took more than 20 minutes each. Distribution of Communion by 220 priests and about 170 deacons to the more than 50,000 in the stadium took about 30 minutes.

The Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra accompanied a choir made up largely of Catholic vocalists from the across the archdiocese in leading the congregation in song during the liturgy.

Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, Pope Francis' special envoy to the congress, was the principal celebrant of the Mass.

The Filipino pro-prefect of the Section for the First Evangelization and New Particular Churches of the Vatican's Dicastery for Evangelization, which helps lead the Church in missionary lands, shared the pope's "fatherly, paternal blessings" and told the congregation that "the Holy Father prays, as we all do, that the congress may bear much fruit for the renewal of the Church and of the society in the United States of America."

At the start of his homily, Cardinal Tagle greeted congress attendees in 11 languages. He then reflected on "the link between eucharistic conversion and missionary conversion," in light of Christ's description of himself as the bread of life in John 6, explaining that Christ was sent by the Father to give of himself for the life of the world.

"The presence of Jesus in the Eucharist is a gift and the fulfillment of his mission," Cardinal Tagle said. "This is my body given up for you. My blood for you. Always for you. For all. Never for me. For you. For all."

In Jesus, mission and gift of self meet. The Eucharist is a privileged moment to experience Jesus' mission as a gift of himself."

Too often in the life of faith, he continued, people fail to give of themselves to others when they stop recognizing gifts in themselves and the people and world around them.

"Those who do not see gifts in themselves and in others will not give gifts," Cardinal Tagle said. "They will not go on a mission."

Recalling that some of Christ's disciples, shocked by his teaching about himself as the bread of life, stopped following him, Cardinal Tagle invited his listeners to meditate on "rather painful questions about this mysterious rejection of Jesus by his disciples."

"Is it possible that we, his disciples, contribute also to the departure of others from Jesus," he asked. "Why do some people leave Jesus when he is giving the most precious gift of eternal life? Why do some ... turn away from the gift of Jesus in the Eucharist?"

Returning to John 6, Cardinal Tagle reflected on how Christ asked the 12 Apostles if they would also leave him, with St. Peter saying "Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (Jn 6:68).

"So, I ask you, dear brothers and sisters, will you stay with Jesus?" Cardinal Tagle asked the congregation, who responded with a loud, "Yes!"

In reply, he said, "Those who choose to stay with Jesus will be sent by Jesus. The gift of his presence and love for us will be our gift to people. We should not keep Jesus to ourselves. That is not discipleship. That is selfishness. The gift we have received we should give as a gift."

Closing his homily, Cardinal Tagle said that "a eucharistic people is a missionary and evangelizing people."

"What you have heard, touched and tasted, you must share with others," he said. "We have received the gift of Jesus. Let us go to proclaim Jesus zealously and joyfully for the life of the world."

(For more photos from the closing Mass of the National Eucharistic Congress and for more coverage of the congress, visit www.CriterionOnline.com.) †



Congress shows off the Church's broad variety of ordained, religious vocations

By Sean Gallagher

Walk through the halls of the Indiana Convention Center, in Lucas Oil Stadium or the nearby downtown streets of Indianapolis from July 17-21 during the National Eucharistic Congress and you were sure to see a wide variety of clerical attire and religious habits.

Priests and seminarians were among the crowds, sometimes in black shirts with a Roman collar, at other times in cassocks. Men and women religious showed off a great spectrum of colors and styles, from the white habits of Dominicans to the black habits of Benedictines and nearly every other color in between.

Nearly 10% of all congress attendees were bishops, priests, deacons, seminarians or religious, with some 200 bishops, 1,300 priests, 650 deacons, 700 seminarians and 1,200 men and women religious.

The statistics confirmed ordained and religious vocations represented a big part of the National Eucharistic Congress, but with events like the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) being held in Indianapolis every other year, experiencing such an emphasis on vocations at large Catholic events has become a regular part of the formation of archdiocesan seminarians.

"It gives them a chance to see and to serve the larger Church beyond our archdiocese and to recognize that we are part of something bigger within the universal Catholic Church," said Father Eric Augenstein, archdiocesan director of seminarians. "Because we host these events, our seminarians are able to experience firsthand the interaction between the local Church and the universal Church. Other dioceses probably don't have the opportunities for that."

'This is about the Lord'

Archdiocesan seminarians sometimes had high profile roles at the congress.

Tens of thousands of people saw them leading hundreds of bishops, priests, deacons and religious in a eucharistic procession on the streets of Indianapolis and in processions at liturgies in Lucas Oil Stadium.

Seminarian Casey Deal was one of those seminarians. He has worked for much of his summer to prepare for liturgies at the congress.

But some of that work was hidden and menial—like polishing brass candlesticks to be used during congress Masses and in adoration.

Whether other people see his work or not doesn't matter to Deal.

"This is about the Lord," said Deal, a member of St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Bloomington. "This eucharistic congress is to glorify him in the Eucharist. So, if I'm shining this up to glorify him more, then that, in and of itself, is fine."

The NCYC held in 2023 in Indianapolis was the second national youth gathering that Deal assisted at as a seminarian, although the first one since he became a candidate for holy orders. Because of that, he wore clerical attire.

"I loved it," he said. "People look at you differently. I enjoyed the fact that people saw Christ because they saw the collar. They saw someone who might bring them closer to Christ, as I'm trying to get closer to Christ as well."

Transitional Deacon Liam Hosty, an archdiocesan seminarian, assisted at the altar at the closing Mass of the congress on July 21 in Lucas Oil Stadium. In his eight years of priestly formation, he's worked at a number of large Catholic events and knows well how they contribute to his formation for ordained ministry.

"It's been preparing me to one day help people encounter Christ in the Eucharist as a priest," Deacon Hosty said. "We've been set apart so we can serve the people. It's not a magnet to say, 'Hey, look at me.' But during the conferences, people will come to me and ask questions about where things are happening, or ask for prayer. They'll talk about their vocation. Wearing clerics sparks conversations with people."

'A beautiful witness for the whole Church'

Benedictine Sister Jeana Visel, a member of Monastery Immaculate Conception in Ferdinand, Ind., in the Evansville, Ind., Diocese was present at the congress, representing Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad, where she serves as dean for its school of theology programs.

Wearing a black Benedictine veil, Sister Jeana said events like the congress provide many ways for women to meet women religious that might be hard otherwise.

"When I was discerning, I didn't know any nuns," said Sister Jeana, who entered religious life in 2003. "I didn't have any opportunities to meet any nuns."

"So, if there are people who are discerning, they get



Women religious, wearing a variety of habits, take part in a eucharistic procession on July 20 in downtown Indianapolis during the National Eucharistic Congress. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

to see that nuns exist and plant the seed of an idea. And it's an opportunity for them to meet and talk with lots of sisters from lots of orders and begin conversations and contacts. Then they can visit and continue that discernment."

Sister Mary Maximilian Ruskamp and Sister John Marion Feldner attended the congress from Lincoln, Neb., where they are members of the School Sisters of Christ the King, a community founded in 1976.

Wearing a distinctive light blue and white habit, they assisted congress attendees who visited St. John the Evangelist Church, which served as a perpetual adoration chapel adjacent to the convention center during the congress.

"It's been a beautiful witness for the whole Church to see the blessing of religious life, to see that it is very much still alive and a part of the Church, even though we may be more hidden sometimes," said Sister Mary Maximilian. "To see so many religious gathered in such diversity shows the wealth and the beauty of the Church."

"So many of us have fears," said Sister John Marion. "But when we encounter Jesus, then he faces our fears and that helps us to open ourselves to him. Us being here witnesses to how Jesus has been able to reign over us and to conquer our fears so that we can allow him to love us even more deeply."

"The witness of so many sisters who are here has the beauty of showing that in so many ways. Each sister has a unique relation with Jesus as her bridegroom. For each one of us to show that in a different way is really beautiful."

'These people need a shepherd'

Gabriel Sappington and Weston Warner, two college seminarians for the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph in Missouri also assisted at St. John during the congress.

They receive priestly formation at Conception Seminary College in Conception, Mo., in the rural northwest corner of the "Show me State."

Late in the afternoon of July 17, the opening day of the congress, they were amazed to see 1,000 people fill St. John to pray Evening Prayer before the Blessed Sacrament exposed on the altar.

"Whenever you see so many people, there's a feeling in your heart like, 'These people need a shepherd,'" said Sappington, who will be a fourth-year seminarian at Conception in the fall. "When you're there with all those people, I don't know what it is, but it has an impact on you. I've had multiple conversations, and I could see people's faith in them. It was tangible. Faith is a gift. For God to show me faith in someone else, it increases my own."

Warner was similarly moved by seeing so many people showing such love for Christ in the Eucharist.

"You get to come to events like this where there's a huge flock," said Warner, about to enter his third year of formation at Conception. "Some day, I'm going to have a flock—it won't be this big—and it'll be my job to get [Jesus] on the altar to them. That's inspiring."



Transitional Deacon Liam Hosty of Indianapolis swings a censer toward pilgrims on July 21 during the closing Mass of the National Eucharistic Congress at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis. (OSV News photo/Bob Roller)

'True happiness is living with Christ'

Bishop Daniel E. Flores of Brownsville, Texas, spoke to *The Criterion* during the congress about how Catholics called to lay vocations and Catholics called to ordained or religious vocations assist each other in their particular calling.

"There's always a mutual sort of edification of vocations ... in the Church," he said. "One of the great blessings of this kind of event is that people get to know each other a little better. They get to see how big the Church is. You make contacts. There's no substitute for talking to people. Vocations do that."

Elias Franco-Bravo was glad to meet so many seminarians, priests and religious at the congress. It wasn't a new experience for the 16-year-old Catholic from Riverside, Ill. It happened for him at NCYC in Indianapolis last November.

"It helps me go toward my vocation," said Elias. "I've been discerning for a few years now. For me, the priests and the religious who are here make such a big impact on my life and on my discernment. It shows me that true happiness is living with Christ."

(For more information on archdiocesan seminarians and a vocation to the priesthood in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, visit www.HearGodsCall.com.) †



Encountering Christ in the Eucharist leads to encountering him in others, says papal nuncio

By Natalie Hoefler

Four days into the National Eucharistic Congress, 10-year-old Samuel Sargeant still cites a moment during the opening night of the Congress on July 17 as his favorite.

“It was when all the lights came down on the monstrance” in Lucas Oil Stadium, said the young Catholic from Vandalia, Ohio.

Prior to that moment, the tens of thousands present in the stadium knelt as a beam of light followed a massive, gleaming monstrance with the Blessed Sacrament, carried by Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens of Crookston, Minn., as he processed with it toward an altar at the center of the arena floor.

After placing the monstrance with the Blessed Sacrament on the altar, he knelt before it.

Then came Samuel’s favorite moment: In unison, lights around the dimly lit arena trained their beams on the Blessed Sacrament.

There they remained as Bishop Cozzens prayed aloud for Christ’s blessing on the Congress, a renewal in hearts for love of Jesus’ true presence in the Eucharist, and the grace for the faithful to become missionary disciples of Christ’s love in the world.

It was a powerful and fitting start to the congress held in Indianapolis, the first national congress in 83 years.

Minutes before that poignant moment, Archbishop Charles C. Thompson welcomed those present in a recorded video message.

“We are immensely blessed to have the 10th National Eucharistic Congress unfolding on Hoosier soil,” he said. “I also welcome those who are joining us virtually, as well as Cardinal [Christophe] Pierre and Cardinal [Luis A.] Tagle, who represent the closeness of our Holy Father, Pope Francis.

“I pray that God will move all our hearts through this monumental opportunity to encounter Christ and his Church.”

After Benediction, U.S. apostolic nuncio Cardinal Pierre explored the topic of what a eucharistic revival is.

“We know that such revival, while it is always accompanied by sacramental devotion, must extend beyond devotional practices as well,” he said. “When we are truly revived by the Eucharist, then our encounter with Christ’s real presence in the sacrament opens us to an encounter with him in the rest of our life. This means seeing him everywhere we go. It means meeting him in the interactions we have with others,” like family and friends.

It also means encountering Christ “with people from whom we would rather consider ourselves divided,”



Lights in Lucas Oil Stadium focus on the Blessed Sacrament in a monstrance on an altar on July 17 during the first evening revival session of the National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis. (Photos by Natalie Hoefler)

said Cardinal Pierre. “This might include people from a different economic class or race, people who challenge our way of thinking, people whose perspective is informed by experiences that differ greatly from our own.”

Encountering Christ begins with a relationship with him, the cardinal said. That relationship is developed in adoration.

“The Latin word for adoration is *adoratio*, mouth-to-mouth contact, a kiss, an embrace, and hence, ultimately, love,” he explained.

The relationship built with Christ in adoration “spills over in our daily life, our life of relating to others, our way of seeing others,” Cardinal Pierre continued. “When we are truly revived, transformed by the Eucharist, we do not remain the same as we were. We begin to see differently. We see with the eyes of Christ.”

Those eyes of Christ behold each of us with love, said Sister of Life Bethany Madonna, the evening’s second speaker.

“When you love someone, you prove it,” she said. “God proves his love for us in a thousand ways,” especially through his death on the cross for our salvation and by giving himself—body, blood, soul and divinity—to us in the Eucharist, she continued.

“Simply to be, to exist, is to be loved. ... God loved you and willed you into being. You are totally unique, unrepeatable, irreplaceable. ... Our worth is not in what we do. It’s not in money or talents or education or status. We’re lovable because we *are*.” †



Sister of Life Bethany Madonna speaks on July 17 in Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis during the first evening revival session of the National Eucharistic Congress. On each of the four evenings of the congress, there was a special slate of speakers and worship.



An image of United States papal nuncio Cardinal Christophe Pierre is projected on a large screen as he speaks on July 17 in Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis during the first evening revival session of the National Eucharistic Congress.



An emotional evening with Mother Olga and Father Schmitz leads to a challenge and a scene that touched souls

By John Shaughnessy

Powerful emotions flowed through Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis on the night of July 18, befitting the evening's theme of "The Greatest Love Story."

Mother Olga of the Sacred Heart regaled the 50,000 people at the National Eucharistic Congress with touching stories of "eucharistic miracles," including the heartwarming and heartbreaking story of a mother and her daughter.

And Father Mike Schmitz, who has helped millions of Catholics reach a deeper understanding of their faith through his "The Bible in a Year" podcast, showed his mastery of Scripture, while also leaving a lasting impression with a startling challenge for everyone.

Both received standing ovations from the audience. Still, the most moving part of the night came at the end when nearly everyone in the stadium fell to their knees.

The lights in the stadium all focused on an altar, beaming on a gold monstrance that glowed as it contained the Blessed Sacrament. In a setting where sports teams and rock stars have been cheered at decibel-challenging levels, the reverence and awe that filled the stadium in that silent moment was far more powerful in its own way.

And later, when the 50,000 people poured their hearts into singing "Holy God, We Praise Thy Name" together, there was a sense of being part of a moment that touched the soul.

The stories of eucharistic miracles that Mother Olga shared also left an emotional mark. She told the audience about two small children who defied the odds to live, crediting their continuing lives to their consumption of and exposure to the Eucharist respectively. Yet her most moving story may have been of a mother and her small daughter.

In her outreach to people in hospitals, Mother Olga met a woman who was in the last stages of her battle with cancer. As they talked, the woman shared that she was a mother of two. She also told Mother Olga that she had always dreamed of watching her daughter, who was then 6, walk down the aisle of a church on her wedding day—and that she knew she wouldn't live to see that dream become a reality.

After listening to the woman, Mother Olga set into motion a plan to give her a different version of her dream.

She approached the Archdiocese of Boston for permission to allow the woman's 6-year-old daughter to receive her first Communion early. When the archdiocese approved the plan, Mother Olga asked the mother for her wedding veil, part of which Mother Olga turned into a veil that fit the girl. Then she asked hospital officials for a leave for the mother, so she could attend Mass on Easter morning.

On that morning, the mother walked her daughter down the aisle toward her first Communion, toward the embrace of Jesus.

It was a moment touched by tears, pure joy, peace and love.

Several days later, the mother died.

Mother Olga told the audience, "In your own journey, in the journeys of your loved ones, whatever emptiness



Iraqi-born Mother Olga of the Sacred Heart, founder of the Daughters of Mary of Nazareth, speaks during the second revival night of the National Eucharistic Congress on July 18 at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis. (OSV News photo/Bob Roller)

you have, go to the foot of the cross, go to Jesus, for he alone can fill every emptiness, every void in our lives.

"Our Lord is truly present, and he's here in our midst, wherever you go."

Father Schmitz followed Mother Olga, connecting the threads between scriptural passages involving Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac, John the Baptist's first encounter with Jesus, and the ultimate gift of Christ's sacrifice on the cross as the lamb of God.

"That action redeemed the world," Father Schmitz told the crowd, which cheered in response.

They applauded again when he said that every time the Eucharist is celebrated in the Mass, "you get to be a part of the redemption of humanity. And every time that happens, the Father is glorified, the world is restored, the world is renewed."

His sobering challenge to the 50,000 people also left a lasting mark.

It began when he said, "Sometimes our problem is ignorance, and what we need is knowledge. The road to knowledge is truth. And sometimes our problem is indifference. Sometimes, it's 'I don't know.' Too often, it's 'I don't care.'"

"Too often, us Catholics, we say we have the Real Presence. But our hearts are far from him. We know. We just don't care.

"If the remedy for ignorance is to get knowledge, and the road to knowledge is truth, the remedy for indifference is love. And the road to love is repentance."

He then focused on the National Eucharistic Revival.

"If this is going to be a real revival, here's the reality. In the history of Christianity, you can never have a revival without repentance.

"What I need to do is, I need to repent."

He then challenged people to look at their love of God and see if it still burns deeply.

"This is the question for every one of us to just ask: If I've lost my love for the Lord, my first love, my first fire, what are the fire extinguishers in my life?" he asked. "Sometimes, the



A woman prays on July 18 during the second revival night of the National Eucharistic Congress at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis. (OSV News photo/Bob Roller)

fire extinguishers are big, big sins. But most often, it's those small things that we settle for. It's those small things that don't snuff out our flame right away. It's kind of like putting a cup over a little fire. It gets lower and lower, smaller and smaller.

"Here's the invitation for all of us. Identify what are the fire extinguishers in your life. The Lord is present among us. I don't need more knowledge. I need more love.

"Let us pray tonight to 'give me that love.' The road to love is repentance. I have to identify those fire extinguishers. I have to repent because I need love. So God, help me to love."

Moments later, Father Schmitz left the stage, and the Eucharist was processed into the stadium.

Nearly everyone fell to their knees before Christ, a movement of reverence—and repentance. †



Father Mike Schmitz, director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry for the Diocese of Duluth, Minn., as well as the chaplain for the Newman Center at the University of Minnesota-Duluth, speaks on July 18 during the second revival night of the National Eucharistic Congress at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis. (OSV News photo/Bob Roller)



Congress holds special revival night of eucharistic adoration for healing hearts

INDIANAPOLIS (OSV News)—For the tens of thousands of participants at the National Eucharistic Congress' third night of revival, Sister Josephine Garrett gave them a message loud and clear.

"This was not the finish line," Sister Josephine said at Lucas Oil Stadium on July 19, referring to the four National Eucharistic Pilgrimage routes that converged there in Indianapolis for the July 17-21 congress.

"This is the starting line."

A member of the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth and host of the "Hope Stories" podcast, Sister Josephine and other speakers that night invited congress-goers to enter into their brokenness and let Jesus personally heal their hearts.

Sister Josephine said that when it's time to leave "together from here, we're gonna make sure that we stand up on the two legs of this eucharistic revival" to leave as one body.

The first leg, she said, is devotion to Jesus in the Eucharist and the holy Mass, and growing in that devotion and reverence.

The second leg "we don't always like," she said—and that's repentance.

"Tonight, I am begging you on behalf of Jesus Christ: Healing begins with repentance," Sister Josephine said, urging everyone to repent "in joy and confidence."

"Do not be dismayed. Do not despair. Do not become overwhelmed. Do not get lost in yourself but lost in him," she said. "We can be people who repent with joy. What a contradiction—we are broken but hopeful. We are a broken, repentant pilgrim people ... journeying together to the Father as one covenant community, and that means we need each other."

"Every member of the body of Christ is necessary," she said, adding, "We are all going to be broken pilgrims until we reach the end."

Sister Josephine had the same message for everyone in the audience—bishops, priests, men and women religious, and single people of any age: "Repent in hope and joy."

She urged bishops to remember their love of the priesthood that brought them to where they are today; she asked priests to "stay rooted in your call"; and she reminded consecrated men and women that "our ministerial works must flow" from private and communal prayer. Single people, she said, "you do not cease to exist as a gift in the Church. ... If any of your hearts are marked by worry, fear, uncertainty—I pray that is cast out in Jesus' name."

Following Sister Josephine's talk, Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Sister Miriam James Heidland led the multitude in prayer. With tears, her voice breaking with emotion, she pleaded with them to pray and ask Jesus personally for healing.

"Could you just let him come, and bring him those places, and transform your heart just to make you free?" she asked. "Because that's how our lives are transformed: It's through the coming of the bridegroom—and he is here."

As she walked off the main stage, a spotlight shone on the opposite side of the stadium, where Benedictine Father Boniface Hicks, a monk of St. Vincent Archabbey



Pilgrims cheer as Dave and Lauren Moore and others perform on July 19 during the third revival night of the National Eucharistic Congress at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis. (OSV News photo/Bob Roller)

in Latrobe, Pa., was holding the Eucharist in a golden monstrance that shimmered as the spotlights tracked its progress through the crowded floor.

After processing down the stadium's central aisle, and then placing the monstrance on the altar, the priest knelt before the Eucharist.

"Jesus, we come before you, that you might heal our hearts, that you might meet us right where we are," he prayed.

"Each of us have places in our hearts and in our histories that have been hurting for a long time," said Father Boniface. "There is a sacred place in each of us where we can be alone with you, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The most powerful healing can begin by bringing those places into relationship with the one who loves us infinitely: you, Jesus."

Father Boniface, an experienced retreat-master, led attendees through a series of prayers of repentance and renunciation, with the congregation repeating phrases of love for Jesus, and asking for his healing of each one's sin, hurt and brokenness.

After those prayers, the monstrance was lifted from its stand on the altar, and Father Boniface wrapped his golden vestment around its base. As he slowly processed through the stadium's main floor, people bowed and crossed themselves as Jesus in the Eucharist passed in their midst. Some wept, others reached their arms toward the Eucharist and parents held babies in their arms or helped their young ones kneel quietly with their eyes fixed on the Blessed Sacrament.

"Jesus, I trust in you," the musicians sang.

When Father Boniface returned to the altar, he led Benediction, ending with the final prayer: "May the heart of Jesus, in the Most Blessed Sacrament, be praised, adored and loved with grateful affection, at every moment, in all the tabernacles of the world, even to the end of time. Amen."

The revival evening also featured moving testimonies of healing, including that of Paula Umana, a former tennis player who was ranked first in Central America and later became quadriplegic after the birth of her fifth child due to a nervous system disorder.

One day, when her son asked her if she would ever walk, she told the boy to ask Jesus. Charles, her son, ran to the cross they had at home and told him: "Hey Jesus, can my mom walk?"

In 2018, through an intercession Umana attributes to the Blessed Mother, she learned about some leg devices that could help her walk, which she calls a miracle. When she returned home after learning to walk with those devices, Charles—then 3 and a half years old—ran back to the cross to thank Jesus.

The message she wanted the audience to remember was to "run to Jesus when you feel anxious. Run to Jesus in adoration, in the Eucharist. Run to Jesus when you need healing. Run to Jesus when you feel hurt."



Costa Rica native Paula Umana, a tennis coach, motivational speaker and author of *40 Gifts of Hope*, gestures to the crowd alongside her son after speaking on July 19 during the third revival night of the National Eucharistic Congress at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis. (OSV News photo/Bob Roller)

Charles came to the stage and stood next to his mom amid loud applause and said, lifting a tennis ball, "When it seems impossible, run to Jesus."

Congress-goers emerging from the nightly revival told OSV News they felt deeply moved by the experience.

Matthew Almaguer, who was attending the Congress with his wife Brenda and their three children from Overland Park, Kan., said that following the procession his family "felt the Lord move in our hearts."

Rose Johnson, a member of St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Bloomington, said she was grateful for Father Boniface's meditation praying to Jesus for specific kinds of healing.

"There were so many things that came to mind that I would have had trouble bringing to mind in the right way," Johnson said. "But then, as he was having us repeat the Jesus prayers, it was just very freeing."

Her teenage daughter Ellie agreed: "I try to think of these parts of my heart, but it's really hard to do with the struggles of everyday life." She said the prayers "brought back memories that I've kind of either pushed away or forgotten," and so the experience "was really relieving."

Following the revival night of healing, lines for confession back at the adjacent Indiana Convention Center were long and winding. Across the street, St. John the Evangelist Church, the perpetual adoration chapel during the congress, was packed with people kneeling and adoring Jesus in the Eucharist. †



Sister Josephine Garrett, a member of the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth and host of a podcast titled "Hope Stories," speaks on July 19 during the third revival night of the National Eucharistic Congress at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis. (OSV News photo/Bob Roller)



Final revival night energizes thousands at eucharistic congress to be 'alive again' in Christ

INDIANAPOLIS (OSV News)—From the first moments of the final nighttime revival session at Lucas Oil Stadium on July 20, an electricity coursed through the air with an intensity surpassing all the prior events of the National Eucharistic Congress.

Grammy-nominated Catholic recording artist Matt Maher led the crowd—estimated at greater than 50,000—in making a joyful noise on the fourth day of a conference where Catholics had been learning how to love Jesus better—and how to let him love them better. The same crowd had arrived at the stadium energized by the most public witness of faith in the United States in decades outside of papal visits, after walking a mile-long eucharistic procession throughout the streets of downtown Indianapolis.

That evening, a prolonged standing ovation greeted Tim Glemkowski, CEO of the National Eucharistic Congress Inc., as he took the main stage.

“If you went through all the effort that it took to get here to Indianapolis, I’m convinced that it was because the Lord called you and appointed you to be here personally,” he said. “He’s after your heart and my heart. ... He’s come for you. He’s come for you because he loves you.”

Throughout the night, speakers were greeted with standing ovations and cheers.

Fans of the popular TV series “The Chosen” had a surreal experience as Jonathan Roumie, beloved for his portrayal of Jesus in the show, read from a portion of the Gospel of St. John that had not been included in the series.

“Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you,” he read in the way he voices Jesus in the show. “Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day” (Jn 6:47-49).

After reading the passage, he thanked those gathered for sharing that “very intimate moment in Scripture that I personally have so longed to see.”

Roumie gave his reflections in a striking shirt—one he reportedly designed himself—featuring the famous quote, “If it’s a symbol, to hell with it,” from Catholic author Flannery O’Connor, who gave that response after someone referred to the Eucharist as merely a symbol.

The audience could not see the back of Roumie’s shirt, which quoted John 6:53, with key words in bold: “AMEN, AMEN, I say to you, unless you EAT the flesh of the Son of Man and DRINK his blood, you do not have LIFE within you.”

He shared with the crowd that he had spent the last week filming the Last Supper scene for “The Chosen.” The prospect of such a portrayal, he said, had caused him a lot of anxiety. “As a Catholic, I understand the weight,” he said, of depicting the institution of the Eucharist that night.

“I understand the reality of what it is we believe and what that host represents,” and “who that actually is now that we are about to receive,” he said, adding that receiving the Eucharist and going to daily Mass have changed his own life.

“The Eucharist for me is healing,” he said. “The Eucharist for me is peace. The Eucharist for me is my grounding. The Eucharist for me is his heart within me.”

As many speakers have done during the congress, Catholic author and podcaster Gloria Purvis began by sharing a Eucharistic encounter she had. As a 12-year-old Black girl at her Catholic school in Charleston, S.C., she found herself in front of the monstrance with the eucharistic Jesus exposed. She recalled feeling “completely consumed in flames,” but it did not hurt. And she was changed. She informed her parents that she would become Catholic.

“There is that unity in the Spirit because God spoke it,” she said.

Purvis listed some signs of unity in the Church: the unity in celebrating the liturgy as a community, the unity in the pope’s leadership, the unity as one family of God (Church militant, Church suffering and Church triumphant), and the example of the martyrs.

She also spoke about signs of disunity in the Church: rejection of the pope, preferring idols of temporal power (such as putting political party allegiance ahead of allegiance to Jesus Christ), and the sin of racism.

She also suggested sacrifice, prayer, fasting and almsgiving as a balm for the wounds of disunity that mark the body of Christ.

“Let our witness to whom we say we love penetrate all that we do and say—and all that we are willing to undertake for the glorification of the Lord and the growth of his Church,” Purvis said.

In the final congress keynote, Bishop Robert E. Barron of Winona-Rochester, Minn., and founder of the Catholic media apostolate Word on Fire, urged the audience to leave the stadium with “the light of Christ” to change society. It’s the job of the laity to bring the light of Christ to the secular world, he said.

Bishop Barron quoted St. Catherine of Siena’s words: “Be who God meant you to be and you will set the world on fire.”

“God tells us who we should be, how we should live—everything else is a footnote,” Bishop Barron said. “The biggest problem today in our culture is the culture of self-invention: ‘I decide who I am, I decide me and my life, I decide what it’s all about—even my gender I’ll decide.’”

Obedience is one of the evangelical counsels, along with poverty and chastity, lived by men and women in religious orders, but the bishop urged the laity to heed them all in their state of life, too.

“We have over the centuries consistently obeyed” Jesus’ command “to do this in remembrance of me,” Bishop Barron said, and “despite our failures,” we believe that Jesus is “not simply a wisdom figure, but rather God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God. ...



Attendees of the National Eucharistic Congress rejoice during a performance on July 20 by Catholic recording artist Matt Maher at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)



Catholic actor Jonathan Roumie, who plays Jesus in “The Chosen,” the series on the life of Christ, addresses some 50,000 attendees of the National Eucharistic Congress on July 20 in Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)



Catholic author and podcaster Gloria Purvis gives a keynote address on July 20 at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis during the National Eucharistic Congress. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)



Bishop Robert E. Barron of the Diocese of Winona-Rochester in Minnesota gives a keynote address on July 20 in Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis during the National Eucharistic Congress. (OSV News photo/Bob Roller)

That’s the basic theology of the Church, the theology of the Real Presence. That’s why we’re here.”

Bishop Barron said that “we don’t pay enough attention to” other commands from Jesus.

Regarding chastity, he said the Church’s teaching is not puritanical, but is about living one’s sexual life in “a morally and spiritually responsible way” and bringing “the whole of one’s sexuality under the aegis of love.”

“If beginning tonight 70 million Catholics decided to live according to chastity, [then] abortion, sex abuse, the objectification of men and women, hookup culture—all of that would be undermined,” he said.

Bishop Barron said that when so much of the world is chasing after wealth, pleasure, power and honor, poverty helps us be detached from these things to “live in Christ.” As a guide to live out poverty, he pointed to Pope Leo XIII’s teaching: “When the demands of necessity and propriety have been met, it is a duty to give to the poor out of that which remains.”

Eucharistic adoration powerfully ended the night, with Bishop David L. Toups of Beaumont, Texas, who after processing with the Eucharist to the central altar on the stadium floor, knelt for 40 minutes before the Eucharistic Lord in the monstrance blessed by Pope Francis, with stretches of silence that flowed into worship songs from Maher and fellow musician Sarah Kroger.

People knelt, stood and sat during adoration, many with hands raised in praise. During the final period of quiet, a woman’s spontaneous song carried over the main floor, while a group elsewhere in the stadium sang a hymn.

After benediction, Bishop Toups processed with the Eucharist out of the stadium, and Maher launched into “Alive Again.”

“I’m alive, I’m alive because he lives,” Maher sang, his voice reverberating throughout the stadium. “Amen, Amen! Let my song join the one that never ends!” †



A Time of Joy, a Taste of Heaven, a People United in Christ



Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens of Crookston, Minn., chairman of the board of the National Eucharistic Congress, Inc., kneels in prayer before a monstrance during eucharistic adoration on July 17 during the opening revival night of the 10th National Eucharistic Congress at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis. (OSV News photo/Bob Roller)



Attendees of the National Eucharistic Congress gather in the American Legion Mall in downtown Indianapolis on July 20 in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament held by a monstrance on an altar on the city's Indiana War Memorial. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)



Women in traditional African attire offer songs of praise during the eucharistic procession in downtown Indianapolis on July 20. (Photo by Mike Krokos)



As they participate in the eucharistic procession in downtown Indianapolis on July 20, Carmelite sisters from Alhambra, Calif., smile at people lining the procession route. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)



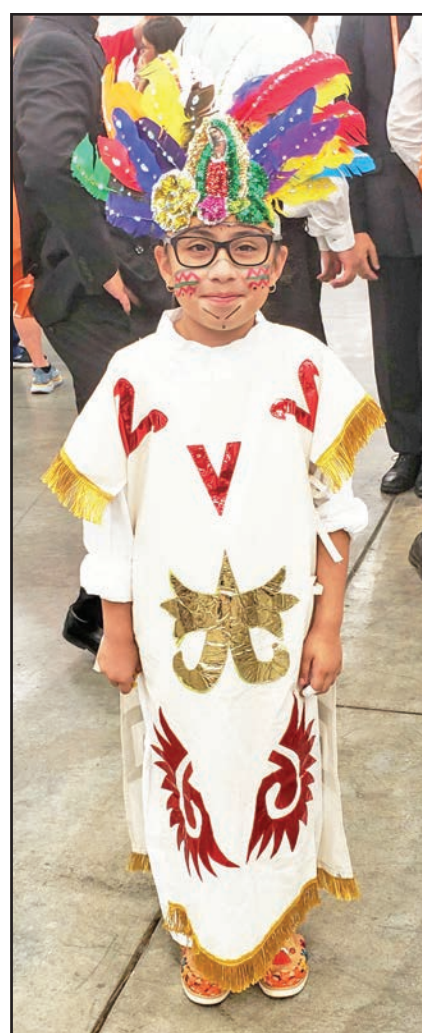
Archbishop Charles C. Thompson carries a monstrance holding the Blessed Sacrament at the start of a eucharistic procession on July 20 in downtown Indianapolis. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)



A float carrying the Blessed Sacrament in a monstrance travels down Meridian Street in Indianapolis during a eucharistic procession on July 20. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)



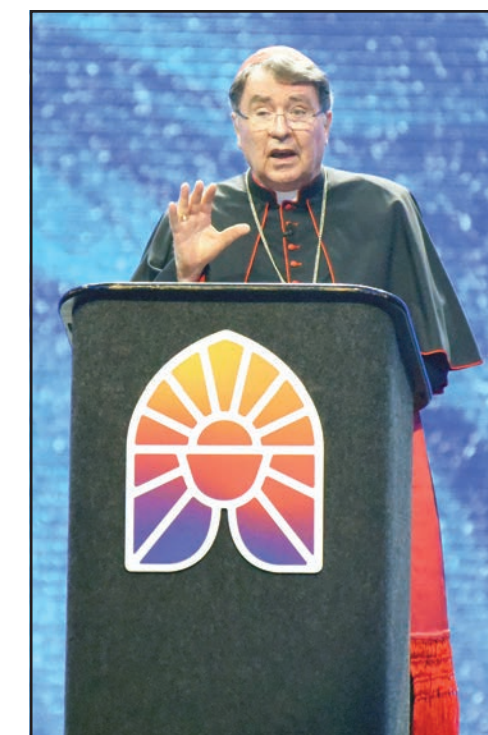
Seminarians stand in prayer after processing into Lucas Oil Stadium on July 21 for the closing Mass of the National Eucharistic Congress. (Photo by Mike Krokos)



Amaya Gomez of Good Shepherd Parish in Indianapolis poses in the costume she wore when she joined a group performing the Danza Azteca Guadalupe on July 18 in the exhibit hall of the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)



Congress attendees post prayer intentions to a wall in the exhibition hall of the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis during the National Eucharistic Congress. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)



Cardinal Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the U.S., gives a keynote address at the National Eucharistic Congress on July 17 at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)



A National Eucharistic Congress attendee raises his hands in prayer on July 17 during eucharistic adoration in Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)



A huge banner near the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis during the National Eucharistic Congress on July 17-21 proclaims the congress' theme of revival. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

Cardinal Tagle celebrates Filipino Mass at cathedral during Congress

By Sean Gallagher

Some 800 Filipino Catholics from across the U.S. gathered on July 18 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis for a Mass during the 10th National Eucharistic Congress.

Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, pro-prefect of the Section for the First Evangelization and New Particular Churches of the Vatican's Dicastery for Evangelization, was the principal celebrant of the liturgy. A native of the Philippines, he was formerly the archbishop of Manila.

Six bishops, including Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, concelebrated the Mass, along with some 40 priests.

The bilingual liturgy featured prayers, Scripture readings and songs in both Tagalog, the principal native language in the Philippines, and in English.

In his homily, Cardinal Tagle reflected on Christ's words in the Gospel for the day: "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light" (Mt 11:28-30).

He noted that yokes used in agriculture bring "more efficiency" to the work of farm animals.

"They are able to do much more than when left alone," Cardinal Tagle said.

However, he also noted that the image of a yoke can be a "sign of oppression" both from "occupying forces" and from "religious leaders, the scribes, the Pharisees, who imposed on the people heavy burdens."

In contrast, Cardinal Tagle said, "the yoke of Jesus is the law of love. Love God above all, with all your might, and love your neighbor as you love yourself. Love, yes, is a burden, but it is a burden that gives energy."

Calling on mothers in the congregation, he said to them that "I'm sure when you see your son or daughter sick, taking care of him or her is a burden that is light, because it comes from love."

Inspiring much laughter, Cardinal Tagle went on to ask, "Do you say the same thing when your husband is sick? ... That's a heavy burden."

Reflecting on these burdens of love in family life, Cardinal Tagle said that they are "the burden of Jesus."

"Even the cross, the heavy cross, for him is light," he said. "He carries it out of love for the Father and love for all, even for enemies. Love towards enemies then is a burden that gives life."

At the end of his homily, Cardinal Tagle called Filipinos in the United States to "be a burden that is light."



Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, a native of the Philippines, smiles while processing out of SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis on July 18 after celebrating a Mass for Filipino Catholics from across the U.S. who came to the National Eucharistic Congress. (Photos by Sean Gallagher)

"Please contribute to the faith life, the ministries, the animation of the communities to which we belong," he said. "Let it not be said that the Filipino community is a heavy burden."

Cardinal Tagle thanked the many priests taking part in the Mass and noted the bishops present who were born in the Philippines and who now help lead the Church in the U.S., including Archbishop-designate Ryan Pagan Jimenez of Aguana in Guam, a U.S. territory.

At the end of the Mass, Cardinal Tagle noted that this was his first visit to Indianapolis, but promised to return on one condition—"if one of your sons, born here, enters the seminary and is ordained a priest."

After acknowledging the responding applause, Cardinal Tagle noted that vocations to religious life and ordained ministry can be a "sign of the maturity of the faith of migrant communities."

Adel Balhon, a member of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish in Indianapolis who was born in the Philippines, attended the liturgy.

"I was reminded of how devoutly Catholic the country of my childhood is," she said. "It was an exciting experience to see so many Filipinos at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral and to celebrate a special holy Mass with Cardinal Tagle and Filipino bishops and priests. I felt



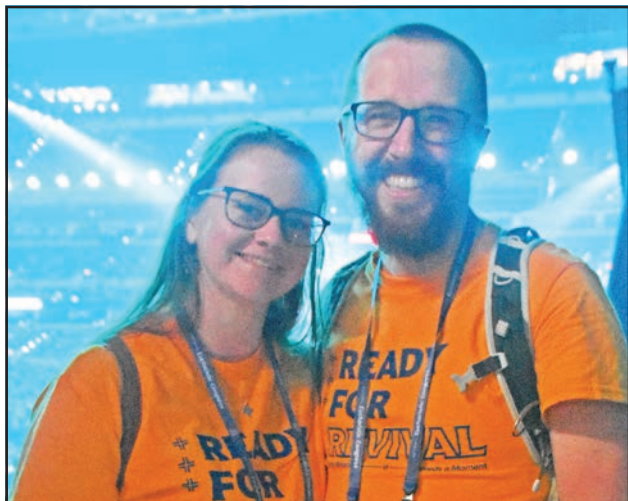
Maria Lourdes and Michael Padilla, both born in the Philippines and now members of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis, kneel in prayer on July 18 during a Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral. Filipino Catholics from across the U.S. attending the National Eucharistic Congress took part in the Mass.

such grace and inspiration from the number of Filipinos from across the country who accepted the invitation to join this great event." †

Newlyweds volunteer at National Eucharistic Congress as 'co-workers in the vineyard'

By Natalie Hoefler

Shaughn and Claire Phillips did not register to attend the National Eucharistic Congress on July 17-21 in Indianapolis. There simply wasn't enough time as they



Newlyweds Claire and Shaughn Phillips, members of St. Joan of Arc Parish in Indianapolis, pose in Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis on July 17 after the first revival session of the National Eucharistic Congress. The couple volunteered for the entirety of the July 17-21 gathering, including the day before and the day after the congress. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)

planned for their June 22 wedding at St. Joan of Arc Church in Indianapolis.

Yet here they were, signed up for the entirety of congress—donning the yellow T-shirts of volunteers.

"We knew we wouldn't be able to register [for the event], so we decided why not serve?" said Claire.

That call to serve is a value shared by the newlyweds. Claire is coordinator of religious education at St. Joan of Arc, where the couple are members. Shaughn is director of campus ministry for Brebeuf Jesuit, a college preparatory high school in Indianapolis.

The Phillips were spotted holding hands, walking through Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis on July 17 at the end of the congress' first evening revival session.

"We were able to catch the tail end of it" after a long, 12-hour shift helping people check in, he said.

The five-day National Eucharistic Congress—the first in 83 years—had only just begun. But already the couple were impressed by the experience.

"What's struck me is the diversity of the body of Christ, yet the unity that still remains," said Shaughn. "Just being able to hear different people's life stories, to get different encounters in very small ways was very beautiful. I love the line from [the musical] *Les Miserables*: 'To love another is to see the face of God.'"

Claire was moved by "a line that kept coming up at registration, people saying it felt like a big family reunion," she said.

Her husband agreed.

"It really is a family reunion," said Shaughn. He saw a bishop who was a pastor at a parish in the Archdiocese of

Washington, D.C. in 2008 that Shaughn's parish partnered with to attend World Youth Day in Sydney, Australia.

"That is why I'm serving the Church now, was going to that World Youth Day with [the priest who is now] Bishop [Mark E.] Brennan from the Diocese of Wheeling, West Virginia."

Whether a familiar face or that of a stranger, Claire commented that "just being able to see everyone in one place has been really beautiful."

She recalled a particular group she "had the privilege of checking in"—about 40 Missionaries of Charity sisters.

"Their volunteer said the sisters never come to things like this," said Claire. "This is huge for them to be here."

"So, the thought occurred to me while the bishops were standing during praise and worship [at the first evening's revival session] was, 'They don't get to see this side of the Church very often.' At NCYC [National Catholic Youth Conference], teens, youth ministers and parish priests get to come and see this. But to see all of the religious here and seeing how vibrant the Church is in this moment—it's beautiful to see everyone coming together."

The couple confirmed that the volunteer experience was not their honeymoon—that time was spent at a place in Ohio "sort of like Brown County" in Indiana, Shaughn said.

But volunteering for the entire National Eucharistic Congress was an experience the couple was glad to share.

"We're co-workers in the vineyard," said Shaughn. "We thought we might as well be here to support other people in seeking Christ." †



A surprising story of friendship shapes the heart of Archbishop Thompson's message to youths

By John Shaughnessy

The touching story of friendship wasn't originally part of the homily that Archbishop Charles C. Thompson planned to share with the young people at the National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis, but he ultimately felt compelled to tell it.

He shared the story as he celebrated Mass for the youths on the morning of July 20 in a packed hall at the Indiana Convention Center.

"It's a story about two young guys," the archbishop noted, recalling a story he read years ago about two boys he called Peter and Paul.

"Peter was in junior high school. He was walking home one day carrying an armful of books, and a couple of bullies started beating him up, knocking his books out of his hands," the archbishop began. "Paul saw Peter trying to get his books together while the bullies ran off. Paul helped Peter gather his books, took some of them and asked him where he lived. Paul said, 'I don't live far from there.' And so they walked together.

"The next day, Peter came out, carrying an armful of books again, and there was Paul waiting for him again, ready to help him carry his books home so he didn't get picked on. And a third day and a fourth day. And eventually Peter stopped bringing all his books home. And over time, Peter and Paul became best friends. Paul was a very popular guy so that really helped Peter."

Fast forward to their time together in high school where Peter blossomed, becoming a great athlete, prom king and the valedictorian of their class while Paul's popularity faded in comparison.

"On the day of graduation, as Peter stood up to give his valedictorian speech, he decided to share with everyone about his friendship with Paul," Archbishop Thompson continued. "He recounted how they met and how that friendship developed. And he confessed something that day that he had never even told Paul.

"He said, 'That day I was carrying my books home because my life at home was far from perfect. I was lonely, I was depressed, I was despairing. I had nobody in my life. I was carrying my books home because I was going to end it all. When Paul stopped and helped me carry my books, I just couldn't do it that first night. The next day when I got picked on at school again, I thought I'd take my books home and do it this time. And there was Paul waiting.'"

The archbishop noted, "Peter said he couldn't do it that night—and the next day and the next day until he stopped carrying his books home. He started having hope."

The archbishop paused briefly before he added, "He was telling Paul that day for the first time how he had saved his life."

As silence filled the hall, Archbishop Thompson continued, "We don't know the wounds that people carry.

We see someone on the outside and the deepest wounds often are in the inside.

"We don't know the lives we touch, but every time we pick up a book, help someone carry a book, offer a smile, sit with a sick friend, say hello to a stranger—we never know the difference we're making. We never know how God is using us. The smallest of gestures can make the greatest difference."

Archbishop Thompson then transitioned his homily to the tremendous difference that the Blessed Mother made and continues to make, starting with her willing "yes" to be the mother of Jesus.

The archbishop told the youths to embrace Mary as a role model.

"Our National Eucharistic Revival and Congress provide a unique opportunity of drawing ever closer to Jesus through Mary, predicated upon our openness to saying yes and being willing to remain with the Lord, like the Blessed Virgin Mary," the archbishop said.

Stressing a need for people of all ages to seek an encounter with Christ, Archbishop Thompson added, "An encounter with Christ is unlike any other, for it involves an encounter with God. Such an encounter is therefore transforming—and should be every time we gather at Mass and adoration, and every time we encounter him in each other."

The archbishop said that these transforming encounters lead us to understanding the importance of the Eucharist in our lives as "the real presence of Jesus, as made available to us through his passion, his death and his resurrection."

Concluding his homily, the archbishop encouraged the youths to "go forth with a single focus of being Christ-centered."

"It makes all the difference in our lives, our souls, our Church and our world," he told them. "With the Blessed Virgin Mary, mother of the Church, we look to him as the way, the truth and the life—our hope and our salvation."

Near the end of the Mass, Archbishop Thompson shared a compliment and a challenge with the youths.



After celebrating a Mass on the morning of July 20 for youths at the National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis, Archbishop Charles C. Thompson greeted, blessed and smiled for photos with people for more than 30 minutes in a hallway of the Indiana Convention Center, taking his time with each group and person. Here, he poses for a photo with Maria Otte and her dad, Karl Otte, members of St. Simon the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson of Indianapolis signs the T-shirts of young people following the final Youth Mass of the National Eucharistic Congress on July 20. (OSV News photo/Gretchen R. Crowe)

"You're the young Church now, and we need your energy. We need your gifts now. Whether you realize it or not, you give incredible witness to one another and to me and my brothers. And I'm so grateful." †

From the worst pick-up lines to the best relationship ever

By John Shaughnessy

The teenagers roared with laughter as Paul Kim shared some of the worst pick-up lines that he used as a youth—ones that he cautioned the boys in the audience to never use unless they wanted "to be single for a long time as I was."

"Pickup line number one," he said as he smiled at the youths in a packed hall of the Indiana Convention



During his presentation to hundreds of teenagers at the National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis on July 18, Paul Kim used some of his worst pick-up lines to lead youths to a closer relationship with Christ. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

Center in Indianapolis on July 18 during the National Eucharistic Congress. "Hi, I was reading the Bible and the Book of Numbers, and I couldn't find your number, can I have it?"

As the crowd laughed, Kim continued, "We're Catholics. You want to pray the rosary together? I want to be your joyful mystery for the next five decades."

The crowd hooted and Kim shared one more, "Let me introduce myself. My name's Peace. Can I be with you?"

"Like I said, you're going to stay single for a long time, bro," he beamed.

Now married and the father of six children, Kim has also seen his life change in dramatic ways concerning his Catholic faith.

In his younger years, he rebelled against his parents and the teachings of Christ, focusing on a life marked by seeking pleasure. Now, he follows a path that has taken him to all 50 states, helping people find a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ.

"I talk a lot to people on the plane when I'm traveling," he said. "We'll get to talking and they'll say, 'I was Catholic. But I'm no longer. Since I've progressed to a higher state of being, I don't need organized religion in my life.' And I go, 'Oh, we're very disorganized, you can come back. You're welcome every time.'"

As the crowd laughed again, Kim turned serious, noting there are a lot of reasons people have left religion, "but it all boils down to one reason: They never knew who Jesus was. They knew things about Jesus, but they didn't know Jesus in their heart."

Then he challenged the youths, "Do you know things

about Jesus, or do you actually know Jesus? Because there really is a difference."

Kim shared that he began to develop a relationship with Jesus through the influence of the Blessed Mother when he started praying the rosary.

"She has this powerful influence. It's very simple and humble, but she always leads us closer to Christ," Kim said. "In my own life, weird things started happening. I remember I was praying outside by myself, outside my college dorm. I started smelling roses out of nowhere. There was no rose bush, there was no cute girl with rose hair conditioner. I did not do drugs. And it dawned on me, 'Roses, rosary. The mother of God likes roses. She's here.' I'm like, 'I'm a bad Catholic. Why are you visiting me?'"

"She didn't say anything, but without saying anything, this was the message, 'My son is real. My son Jesus Christ is real. Everything he has accomplished for you is real. Continue on this path.'

"I started praying. And honestly, the mother of God led me straight to Christ."

Then Kim shared the message he hopes will stay with the youths.

"It turns out, brothers and sisters, that we all are hardwired for a relationship with Jesus Christ," he said.

"Even if you are successful, even if you are handsome and beautiful, even if you have all the followers in the world, you will still be empty and not know why unless you have a relationship with Jesus Christ and the Church he found." †



Ministry helps congress attendees 'encounter the face of the poor' in Indy

By Natalie Hoefler

It was a sunny, mild day in Indianapolis on July 18. Sally sat quietly on a bench along North Meridian Street watching as people walked by. They didn't speak to her, and she didn't speak to them.

As Blake Brouillette, Megan Ferguson and Russ Hoffman stopped on the sidewalk in front of Sally, her dog protectively barked.

"Wow, that's some guard dog you've got," said Brouillette.

Then Sally came to life, engaging in a 20-minute conversation animated by her lively arm gestures and heartfelt laughter.

The encounter was part of an opportunity made possible by the Denver-based ministry Christ in the City, that seeks to meet the needs of the homeless for human connection. The ministry was present at the National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis on July 17-21, offering "street walk" opportunities for attendees to bring Christ's love to the city's homeless.

"You can never know the impact of one encounter," Brouillette, Christ in the City's managing director, told Ferguson and Hoffman. "So, even if we don't do anything, *per se*, being with someone like [Sally, a pseudonym used for privacy] and showing them a moment of relationship—just a smile and a laugh together—might have changed their whole day."

'Hobbies, occupations, places, endearment'

As the participants were split into small groups each with a Christ in the City staff member or missionary, some ground rules were explained: stay together; offer your first name before asking theirs so as not to seem aggressive; don't offer money, and if asked for money say, "We don't carry any" or "We're not here for that."

As for how to engage with the homeless, "We're going to talk a lot about just normal human things," Brouillette explained. "The acronym we like to use is HOPE: hobbies, occupations, places and endearment.

"So, questions like what are your hobbies? What have you been up to? What are you filling your time with? What places have you been? A lot of the poor have been all over."

Discussing questions of endearment takes more time and trust, said Brouillette, such as with the homeless missionaries have been able to build relationships with in the ministry's base towns of Denver and Philadelphia.

"We probably won't get to it today," he admitted. "But everyone loves someone. So, who are those people in their life they've loved? How are their relationships with them?" As for religion, the topic is fine if the person brings it up.

"We have no problem talking about it," said Brouillette. "But it's one where many of our brothers

and sisters have become jaded or wounded. We want to make sure we're showing them Christ."

Finally, street walk missions should involve no less than two people, preferably a mix of men and women.

A group of men could seem threatening, he explained, while the presence of a woman "immediately makes the group more motherly and tender." However, a group of all women could be vulnerable to men who "tend to be a little more aggressive or inappropriate."

A refusal, mental illness and fist-bumps

With the rules established, the groups headed out to meet those whom Christ in the City missionaries call "friends."

Ferguson, a young woman from the Diocese of Rockville Centre in New York, Hoffman, who lives in the Archdiocese of Denver, and Brouillette first approached a man reclining under an umbrella. He gently turned them

away with a small shake of his head—a friend's absolute prerogative, Brouillette said, especially given the rejection they themselves so often experience.

Next came Sally, the polar opposite of the group's first encounter. She shared about where she was from, about her family and her experiences, about her relationship with her sister and what brought her to Indianapolis.

After 20 minutes with Sally, the group encountered a man lying on a sidewalk next to a building with a view of a fountain, his head resting on a shirt-covered shoe.

"Hi, there," Brouillette said, squatting in front of the man. "That looks like a good spot with a nice view. My name is Blake. What's your name?"

The man answered, then Brouillette continued in polite conversation with him, with questions and comments interspersed by Ferguson and Hoffman.

Most of the man's responses were realistic. Then his comments became less rational, a sign of a potential mental health issue.

After wishing the man a good day, the trio walked on a bit before Brouillette offered an observation.

"Many of our friends do struggle with mental health and addiction, but especially the chronically homeless," he said.

The Christ in the City missionaries receive training from mental health counselors on how best to engage with those with mental illness.



Russ Hoffman, left, Blake Brouillette of Christ in the City and Megan Ferguson speak with a homeless woman in Indianapolis on July 18. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)

"But in general, the big thing is just acknowledging that for many of them, [their illness] is their reality," said Brouillette. "So, not necessarily affirming what they say, but just being with them in that emotion is the greatest thing we can do."

As they made their way back to the convention center, the group stopped to talk with a man leaning on a crutch, one foot wrapped in an ACE bandage.

The conversation progressed from his injury, to his desire to find a place to stay for the night to clean and rest his foot, to his aversion to encountering addicts at shelters. "I try to avoid them because I'm five months clean," he said.

Brouillette honed in on those words.

"Congratulations, man! That's fantastic!" he said, his face beaming with sincere enthusiasm as he offered the man a fist-bump.

Before the group moved on, Brouillette asked if the man would like them to pray with him for healing for his foot. He graciously agreed. Farewell fist-bumps were shared all around.

'The poverty of loneliness'

In a short debriefing before concluding the street walk, Brouillette shared with Ferguson and Hoffman the motive driving Christ in the City's mission.

See **MINISTRY**, page 23

A time of joy and sorrow makes a youth's bond to God and the Eucharist stronger

By John Shaughnessy

It has been less than a year since 17-year-old Margeaux Stewart lost one of the people she could always count on, someone who shaped her life and her faith.

So when she was asked to stand before an audience and share her testimony in the exhibit hall of the Indiana Convention Center during the National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis on July 19, her thoughts quickly turned to her late grandfather, Dan Stewart.

"He meant a lot to me, and so did our relationship," said Margeaux, a member of St. Joseph Parish in Corydon. "My grandfather was the one to tell you the truth no matter what, but he would be there for you no matter what as well. He was the person I could always go to when I had questions about the career path I wanted to pursue after high school and college because he did great things in that industry and had almost all the answers you could ever want."

Still, his biggest impact on her came from the way he shared his faith.

"I remember one conversation we had. He said, 'Margeaux, I know I might not seem like this type of person, but look.' And he pulled out prayer cards from his shirt pocket and told me he takes them everywhere, every day. He was a businessman that had a love for team roping—a rodeo event—but also a very deep love for God."

Margeaux had to turn to her faith in a deeper way

when her grandfather died in August of 2023.

"This experience moved me closer to God because after his passing I was asked to read the first reading at Mass," she recalled. "At this time, I was so frustrated and questioning why my grandfather had to leave so early but then I read the reading—Ecclesiastes 3:1-8."

The reading begins with, "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven" (Ecc 3:1). It also includes this note, "A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance" (Ecc 3:4).

"It showed me how God is in all moments, the good and the bad—and that even the not-so-good moments will help us flourish in life," Margeaux said.

That knowledge made her want to give her testimony during the congress as part of the Preach Challenge program at Marian University in Indianapolis, a program designed to prepare young people "to have the confidence and skills to share their witness with others."

During the congress, Margeaux continued to feel the presence of her grandfather and the presence of God in the Eucharist.

"The Eucharist is extremely important in my life," she said. "It reminds me that it is God right there that you see, and also who you receive at Communion. I just think how cool it is to know we have a good, good God."

"My hopes are to just continue my love for our Lord Jesus Christ and grow even deeper into my love for the Eucharist." †



Margeaux Stewart smiles as she shares one of her many adventures with her grandfather, Dan Stewart, who helped her grow in her Catholic faith. She shared her testimony in an exhibit hall during the National Eucharistic Congress. (Submitted photo)





Ed and Joanne Portzer of the Diocese of Youngstown, Ohio, came to Indianapolis for the National Eucharistic Congress wanting their 3-year-old son Daniel “to see so many people loving Jesus.” (Photo by John Shaughnessy)



Parishioners from the Diocese of Sacramento, Calif., pose for a group photo outside the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis, one of the main venues for the National Eucharistic Congress. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

‘A witness to the world’: Young adult hopes the congress will be a turning point for her generation

By John Shaughnessy

Nineteen-year-old Kathryn Tiplick shared her excitement about being part of the National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis on July 17-21, hoping it will be a turning point for her generation of young adults.

“It is so important for me to be able to attend the National Eucharistic Congress because it is a witness to the world that I believe the Eucharist is the central and most beautiful part of our Catholic faith,” said Tiplick, a 2024 graduate of St. Theodore Guérin High School in Noblesville, Ind., in the Lafayette Diocese, who will begin attending Saint Mary’s College in Notre Dame, Ind., in August.

“When looking around at a daily Mass or even through my own experience of attending a Catholic high school, it is so prevalent that young people today are struggling to believe in the true presence of Jesus in the Eucharist,” said Tiplick, a member of Our Lady of Mount Carmel

Parish in Carmel, Ind., in the Lafayette Diocese.

“I pray that by attending the National Eucharistic Congress, it will inspire other young people to discover the beauty and gift of Christ, fully present in the Eucharist—through the witness of so many Catholics coming together from across the nation.”

Leela Mattathil came to Indianapolis as part of a group of about 300 people from the Diocese of Sacramento, Calif., including 25 people from her Good Shepherd Parish.

“This is the first eucharistic congress since before World War II!” she said with overwhelming joy. “We are proclaiming to the whole universe the real presence of the Eucharist!”

Ed and Joanne Portzer came to the congress from the Diocese of Youngstown, Ohio, with their 3-year-old son Daniel.

“I wanted him to see so many people loving Jesus,” explained Joanne, sharing one of the two main reasons

the couple traveled from their home in Ashtabula for the congress.

“We see a need for a greater love for Jesus and the Eucharist in America,” she said. “This is the answer Jesus would have. It’s an invitation from Jesus to know him. This is an opportunity to spread it not only to other Catholics but to other people in our communities. The bishops are giving us an opportunity to deepen our faith and go out in the world to let people know who Jesus is.”

Showing that commitment to the nation was also a major part of the congress for 17-year-old Margeaux Stewart.

“It is important to me because it just shows how God is making an impact in all of our lives and that he is doing great things not only in our lives as individuals but also in our country and our world,” said Margeaux, a member of St. Joseph Parish in Corydon. “It’s a way of showing he is with us no matter what.” †

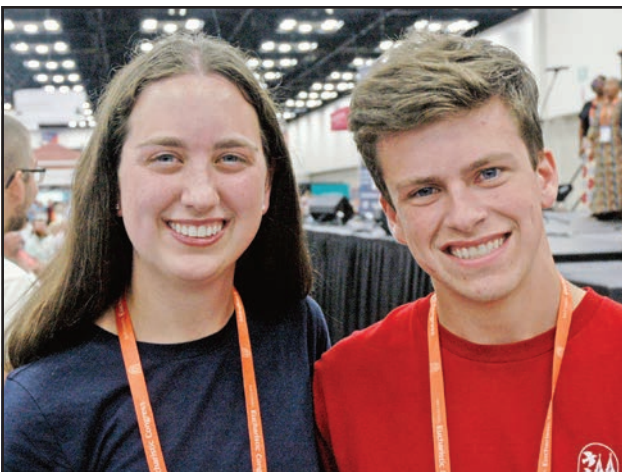
The wondrous story of how two children and a collection of stuffed animals led a young adult to embrace her faith

By John Shaughnessy

A smile touched with joyous wonder and laughter was the natural reaction as 19-year-old Kathryn Tiplick shared her story during the National Eucharistic Congress about how two small children’s love of “playing” the Mass with their stuffed animals led to a young adult becoming a Catholic.

Tiplick was in the first grade at the time, and her brother John was in the second grade when they set up for Mass in the driveway of their family’s home in central Indiana.

“My grandma had made miniature priest vestments for John and a mini Dominican sister’s habit for me,” recalled Tiplick, a member of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish in Carmel, Ind., in the Lafayette Diocese.



Siblings Kathryn and John Tiplick share a smile at the National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis on July 18 after she shared her story of how they—and a group of stuffed animals—combined as children to lead a young adult to the Catholic Church. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

“We had a unique congregation of daily Massgoers as our congregation always consisted of about 40 stuffed animals: pandas, monkeys, polar bears, kangaroos, elephants, a blue chimpanzee and even Winnie the Pooh.

“One day, we saw our adult neighbor, Amy, outside, so we invited her to play Mass with us in the driveway and asked her to be the lector. As a first grader, I thought everyone was Catholic, but unbeknownst to John and me, she was not. Amy was about 33 years old and sat in a pre-school sized chair next to the stuffed animals in the middle of our driveway.

“When it was time for Communion, I often wonder what went through Amy’s mind. John presented the stuffed bunny on her right and the elephant on her left with a vanilla wafer and a sip from a tiny metal chalice that appeared to contain fruit punch, but was actually warm water with red food coloring. After Mass, we introduced her to adoration and Benediction, where we knelt on the pavement facing a miniature, gold metal monstrance with a ‘consecrated’ vanilla wafer host in the center.

“We later found out Amy had been raised with no faith. She had recently married her husband, a cradle Catholic. After attending ‘our Mass’ she told us she wanted to learn more about the Catholic Church and was interested in becoming Catholic.

“Two years passed, and Amy had still not made a move towards entering the Church. So the night before the RCIA [Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults] class at our parish was to begin, 10-year-old John called Amy on the phone asking if she was planning to attend the next day. And she did! The following Easter Vigil, Amy was baptized and entered the Church!”

It’s a story of evangelizing at any age, but during her talk before an audience in the Indiana Convention Center, Tiplick insisted it wasn’t just the work of two children. She credits her parents for providing the supplies they needed to play Mass—and their grandmother for making their religious costumes.

“And even Amy, who followed her curiosity to play with us,” Tiplick said. “In all of these people, the Holy Spirit was alive and at work in Amy’s journey.”

That’s the way God works in people’s lives when they open their hearts to him, she said.

“God is calling each of us to use the people and situations in the ordinary moments of our own lives to be a witness of Christ. We all have a role to play in introducing those around us to Jesus. If we remain open to his will and allow him to use us as his instruments, God works miracles through the most seemingly ordinary people. We just have to avoid stepping in the way of God’s plan.”

Tiplick’s own journey to draw closer to God has continued through her young life—through her years at her parish school and through her four years at St. Theodore Guérin High School in Noblesville, Ind., in the Lafayette Diocese, where she participated in sports, liturgical music and other activities.

“Fostering a daily prayer life coupled with daily Mass and adoration has truly sustained me during my time in high school,” said Tiplick, who will attend Saint Mary’s College in Notre Dame, Ind., in August. “I look forward to exploring new opportunities that will continue to deepen my love for our eucharistic Lord as I begin a new chapter of life as a college student.”

Her embrace of Mass and eucharistic adoration as a child not only led someone older to a relationship with Christ, it has also led her to an even deeper commitment as a young adult.

“This practice keeps Jesus at the center of my life by making daily prayer a priority,” she said. “To me, time with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is a foretaste of what I imagine heaven will be like. It is my hour away from the noise and cares of the outside world, where I can escape to receive a glimpse of the beauty of eternity.” †



People wait in long lines to venerate relics of saints at congress

By Sean Gallagher

The line to enter the relic chapel at the National Eucharistic Congress snaked a long way through the Indiana Convention Center while the event took place from July 17-21.

Congress attendees seeking to venerate the relics of several saints at times stood in line for an hour, two or more.

Yet it was all worth it for Anthony Trujillo of Albuquerque, N.M., even though he walks with a cane and experiences pain due to chronic arthritis and the ongoing physical effects of a head-on collision driving a motorcycle he suffered decades ago.

Because of his health challenges, Trujillo knows personally the power of prayer.

“Relics are very special,” he said. “When I saw that there were relics here, I had to come to see them and pray to the saints. Maybe they’ll help me with my body, too. It’s very meaningful for me. That’s why I stood in this line with this pain.”

Saints and blesseds whose relics were available for veneration in the chapel included the four patron saints of the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage: the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Juan Diego, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton and St. Junipero Serra. The relic of Mary featured in the chapel was part of her veil.

Joyce Ricke, a member of St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Decatur County, was especially looking forward to venerating Mary’s veil.

“It’s as close as I will ever get to her on this Earth,” she said. “I feel like in my heart I will receive graces by being in the presence of the veil that she wore herself.”

Kneelers were set before each of the relics for prayer. People venerating them were allowed to place items such as rosaries or prayer cards, against the reliquaries that held the relics, thus making them into what are known as third-class relics.

Other saints whose relics were on display included St. Pascal Baylon, a 16th-century Spanish Franciscan who is the patron saint of eucharistic congresses, and a saint and soon-to-be-saint who showed a great love of the Eucharist during their lives: St. Manuel Gonzalez and Blessed Carlo Acutis.

Blessed Carlo, whose future canonization has been approved by Pope Francis, is known as the first millennial saint.

An Italian, he died of leukemia at 15 in 2006. He showed great faith from a young age and was

unafraid to encourage it in his friends and even his parents. Blessed Carlo also had such a deep love for the Eucharist that he developed a website that documents eucharistic miracles from around the world and is known for saying, “The Eucharist is the highway to heaven.”

Mariana Noch, 17, of Pinckney, Mich., spoke while waiting in line of how she appreciates Blessed Carlo and wants to be more like him.

“I liked the way he would bring friends to adoration,” she said. “He loved the Eucharist and also loved his friends. He would show them his love for the Eucharist.”

Mariana’s brother Kolbe, 21, shared her admiration for Blessed Carlo.

“He had no fear of what people thought or any of the anxieties that you normally see,” Kolbe said. “I want to embrace other people [like he did]. Sometimes, I want to talk to everyone. I want to bring them to Jesus. But then there are times when I wonder if they’re going to think I’m weird.”

St. Manuel, a Spanish bishop who died in 1940, is known as the “bishop of the abandoned tabernacle,” because of an experience he had as a newly ordained priest.

He was assigned to preach a mission at a parish where parishioners had largely walked away from their faith, even to the point where there were cobwebs on the parish church’s tabernacle.

This made St. Manuel realize the sadness of Christ when he is abandoned by his people and led him to encourage a deep eucharistic spirituality in others for the rest of his life. This included him founding in Spain an order of religious sisters dedicated to this work, the Eucharistic Missionaries of Nazareth.

Sister Monica Mariel Yuan Cordiviola and other members of the order accompanied relics of St. Manuel to the congress. Among them were first-class relics (parts of his bones) and possessions of his, known as second-



Anthony Trujillo of Albuquerque, N.M., places a rosary against a reliquary holding part of the pericardium of Blessed Carlo Acutis on July 19 during the National Eucharistic Congress at the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

class relics, that included a chasuble and zucchetto (a bishop’s skull cap).

She was overwhelmed by seeing the number of people making their way to the relic chapel.

“I have no words,” Sister Monica said. “We are so excited and so happy. For us, it’s like a miracle. It’s a gift that shows us that St. Manuel wants to be here with the Catholics of the United States.”

She noted that the spirituality of St. Manuel and her order were in harmony with that of the three-year National Eucharistic Revival promoted by the U.S. bishops.

“Many people might think that the Eucharistic Missionaries might be all day praying in perpetual adoration,” she said. “And that’s OK. We pray. But our charism is not only to pray. It’s also to ‘eucharisticize’ [the world]. It’s a word that St. Manuel invented and means to announce that Christ is before us in the Eucharist.”

“That’s what the bishops in the U.S. are saying. The bishops of the United States in the last year of the eucharistic revival want every Catholic to become eucharistic missionaries.” †

Service project reminds congress-goers to care for neighbors ‘like Jesus did’

By Natalie Hoefler

As 10-year-old Annabel Cougroun packed the pre-made meals in a large box at the end of an assembly line, she admitted she had never gone hungry. But she considered what that might feel like for someone who had.

“Like their stomachs must be hurting and it doesn’t feel good,” she said.

But helping such people “feels good,” a lesson Annabel learned on July 18 while helping package meals for the Million Meal Movement as a service project during the National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis.

The Indiana-based organization provides volunteer-packed meals to food banks and food pantries throughout the state.

“It’s going well,” said Molly Adams, sales account executive for Million Meals Movement. “Our goal is 360,000 meals in 12 hours over the course of two days, and we’re getting a steady flow of people and families and kids.”

The volunteers worked in assembly lines in a section of the congress’ exhibit hall in the Indiana Convention Center. Some mixed ingredients, others poured them into packets, some sealed the packets and others, like Annabel, placed the meals in boxes.

The project connects “in a multitude of ways” with the congress’ desire to inspire others to show Christ’s love to the world, said Adams.

“It’s about giving,” she said. “Giving to the homeless, giving to your neighbors

like Jesus did, and making sure that your neighbors have what they need to fulfill their life.

“Food is one of those areas that people surprisingly don’t know that their neighbors are lacking or that they may be suffering from silently. So that little bit that we can do to help them can make a big difference.”

It’s a lesson Annabel’s mother, Lori Arnold, wants to reinforce in her children.

“I’m always looking for opportunities to teach them to give back and be philanthropic,” said Arnold, who worships at St. Alphonsus Liguori Parish in Zionsville, Ind., in the Lafayette Diocese.

“This was just a great opportunity to teach them how to be of service.”

At another table, Jordan Myers was sealing the filled packages being handed to him at a steady pace.

“I thought it would be a good experience of serving our community and those in need,” said the member of St. Therese of the Child Jesus (Little Flower) Parish in



Annabel Cougroun, right, places meal packets in a box as her grandmother Patty Arnold, left, and mother Lori Arnold seal the packages on July 18 as part of a service project in the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis during the National Eucharistic Congress. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)

Indianapolis. “It seems like it’s a lot of work, so it’s great to see everyone here working together to help a single cause.”

A lot of work for Myers, perhaps. But from Annabel’s point of view, “This is very fun!” †



Families share their faith with their children at the National Eucharistic Congress

By Natalie Hoefler

They came *en masse* to the National Eucharistic Congress. They could be seen pushing strollers, pulling wagons, hauling diaper bags, calming crying children and herding kids who try to stray.

But they were also seen playing, laughing, singing and dancing silly moves to upbeat songs.

And they were seen in holy moments, praying together in adoration, kneeling as the Blessed Sacrament in a monstrance passed by, standing in line to receive the Eucharist.

They were the domestic Church, families forming their children in the Catholic faith and witnessing to the world about God's love.

The congress' website notes that "fostering a love of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist within our homes will have a profound impact on how we love others outside of our homes. ... Eucharistic revival happens at the grassroots level, and the domestic Church is an essential part of this movement."

That sentiment was a lived experience for families *The Criterion* spoke with during the congress on July 17-21.

'Formative for our family'

"We were a little apprehensive in the beginning to bring our small children," three boys ages 4, 3 and 1, admitted Sarah McCroskey of the Diocese of Wichita, Kan. "But we just felt God was calling us to be here at this time, and we know that if we're strong in our faith, we can pass it on to our children."

The McCroskeys were moved by their children's reactions during the evening revival session on July 17.

"When they were processing [into Lucas Oil Stadium] with the monstrance, the boys were able to stand on chairs and see it," said Sarah. "Seeing their expressions of, like, a big 'Wow!' was just so beautiful."

Sarah and Andrew French of the Diocese of Richmond, Va., said they "made sacrifices to be here" with their three children ages 8 and younger.



Children who received their first Eucharist this year walked with one or more of their parents at the front of the eucharistic procession in downtown Indianapolis on July 20. (Photos by Natalie Hoefler)

Those sacrifices were driven by hope.

"My hope is that our kids see the beauty of the whole Church," said Sarah. "Not just the little slice of the Church that we experience at home, which is beautiful, but just how big the Catholic Church is.

"I hope that by coming here, we set an example that plants those seeds for how important following Jesus is." "We're hoping this experience will be formative for our family," Andrew added.

His comment produced a formative moment when 8-year-old Catherine looked up at her father and asked what the word "formative" meant.

Placing a hand atop his daughter's head, Andrew explained, "It helps shape us into the family God wants us to be."

'It almost feels like we're in heaven'

Families were provided with abundant opportunities to laugh, learn and live the faith.

Many participated in the Cultivate (Family) Impact sessions. Each of the three sessions began with songs to engage children and parents alike, and participants were invited on the stage for entertaining competitions like a family quiz show and "What's in Mom's Bag?"

A moment of prayer followed to calm the energy level. Then well-known speakers addressed the families, like John Paul II Healing Center founder and *Be Healed* author Bob Schuchts and Joyful Ever After marriage ministry founders Damon and Melanie Owens.

But the hands-down favorite speaker of the children interviewed by *The Criterion* was Father Leo Patalinghug. He used his overgrown-kid antics and martial arts expertise to teach families about the saving power of Christ.

"I thought his talk was good for adults, but it was also great for kids because it was funny," said 12-year-old Olivia Eickholt of the Diocese of Toledo, Ohio. "He had a great way of bringing what can happen in real life into the faith."

After engaging with his 7- and 10-year-old daughters in the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd experience, Deacon Michael Parker reflected on the importance of the congress to families.

"I take my role seriously in being a husband and a father to lead my family to heaven," said the permanent deacon of the Diocese of Baton Rouge, La. "Just being here with our Lord, adoring him, worshipping together with 50,000 people—it almost feels like we're in heaven."

'Holy families' will change the culture

Children receiving their first Eucharist this year motivated several of the parents



Matt and Jacinta Eickholt of the Diocese of Toledo, Ohio, smile with their four children in the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis on July 19 during the National Eucharistic Congress.



Kids play a game before the keynote address of the Cultivate (Family) Impact Session in the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis on July 20 during the National Eucharistic Congress.



Andrew and Sara French of the Diocese of Richmond, Va., pose with their children in the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis on July 19 during the National Eucharistic Congress. Catherine, left, made her first Communion this year and walked with other first communicants during the eucharistic procession in downtown Indianapolis on July 20.

interviewed to bring their families to the congress. Some registered those children to walk in their first Communion attire at the front of the eucharistic procession in downtown Indianapolis on July 20.

"Probably the most powerful part for me was just walking along at the front of the procession with my son [Dominic] and the rest of the first communicants, and seeing the streets full of 50,000 people just waiting to see Jesus," said Benjamin Sargent from the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. "It wasn't for a rock concert or sports event. Everybody was here just for one thing, and that was to see Jesus."

Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Sister Maria Gemma (formerly Ashley) Barnett was inspired by seeing so many families at the National Eucharistic Congress. Prior to entering religious life in 2018, she served as youth minister at St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Bloomington from 2012-2018.

"It's really inspiring that families want to be here, and they want to recommit to Jesus and recommit to prayer," said Sister Maria Gemma. "That's what people need to see out in public, too. If we have holy families, we'll have a totally different culture." †



Growing in faith is at the heart of pilgrim's hopes after Congress

By Mike Krokos

Nine-year-old Colton McDonnell recently experienced his "best day ever."

He, his mother, and his three siblings were among the 50,000 faithful who participated in the National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis.

The holy hour that began the opening night on July 17 in Lucas Oil Stadium was especially impactful for Colton "because we got to see Jesus in the monstrance, and we got to be in adoration."

"That [adoration] was powerful," added his mother Meghan, who with her children are members of the twin parishes of St. Joseph in Monroeville, Ohio, and St. Alphonsus in Peru, Ohio, both in the Diocese of Toledo.

"This is the culture that I want my kids immersed in, and I want to teach them that there *are* people who live the way we want to live ... along the lines of the values



Jill Spale and her daughter Harper pose in the exhibit hall in the Indiana Convention Center on July 19. (Photo by Mike Krokos)

I'm trying to instill in them because the pull of our culture is so strong," said Meghan.

They and 11-year-old Maura, 7-year-old Owen, and 3-year-old Evan were all smiles as they spent time walking through the exhibit hall in the Indiana Convention Center during a break on July 18.

"I want each of my kids to have a personal experience with the Lord," said Meghan as she reflected on her hopes for the congress, "to grow in our faith, and to bring it home, to be on mission to bring Jesus to others ... to radiate that love and joy that we're experiencing here."

'People here wanting to see Jesus'

Jill Spale had no trouble convincing her 12-year-old daughter Harper to attend the congress.

In fact, the soon-to-be eighth grader was happy that faith was at the center of their mother/daughter trip.

"I wanted to come because I thought it was really incredible there would be so many people here wanting to see Jesus," said Harper, the oldest of four children.

Her mother agreed.

"It's just incredible to see this amount of people wanting to get closer to God," said Jill, a resident of Columbus, Neb., in the Archdiocese of Omaha. "There isn't any harmful person here. You bump into someone, they're friendly. The speakers, the music, just everything, ... it's a great revival or refresh for our faith on our journey as mother and daughter."

Jill added she hoped she and Harper would leave the congress with a stronger faith and "go home and bring it to our family."

'I want to get a bonfire going'

A 17-hour bus ride did nothing to deter the enthusiasm of youths from the Diocese of Rapid City, S.D.

High school students Nora Hoffman, Cheyenne Hendrickson, Adeline Lyons and Brenna Martian were among a group of 57 who journeyed to Indianapolis to take part in the congress.



The McDonnell family—Owen, left, Meghan, Evan, Maura and Colton—are all smiles as they enjoy their time at the National Eucharistic Congress on July 18. (Photo by Mike Krokos)

As she reflected on the second day of her pilgrimage of faith, Nora said, "I'm getting pretty close to Jesus, and ... there's a spark, and I want to get a bonfire going."

Cheyenne hoped to develop "a stronger connection with God, [have] more trust, and leaning on him more to help guide me where he wants me to go."

Like her peers, Brenna said "growing my faith" will be a priority.

"This [congress] has really helped me connect with God," she said, adding "that was the goal: to get to know him better." †



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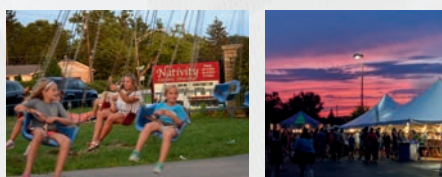
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Dominican friars play bluegrass music to joyfully share faith at National Eucharistic Congress

By Sean Gallagher

Music was a big part of the National Eucharistic Congress from July 17-21 in Indianapolis—in large general sessions in Lucas Oil Stadium, at liturgies and on stages in a large exhibition hall in the Indiana Convention Center and on Georgia Street next to St. John the Evangelist Church.

And as the word “catholic” is rooted in the Greek word for “universal,” it’s not surprising the music played at the congress had tremendous variety: Gregorian chant, Renaissance polyphony, classical music and a broad spectrum of more contemporary styles.

That includes bluegrass music deeply rooted in Catholic theology played by The Hillbilly Thomists.

A group of Dominican friars from the order’s St. Joseph Province based in Washington, D.C., they have several members. Only three played at the congress.

Wearing the order’s distinctive habit of a white tunic and scapular, along with a black leather belt, they played guitar, fiddle and drums, including a washboard for one song.

Dominican Father Justin Bolger played guitar and added vocals to the songs. His full-time ministry outside of playing in the band is serving as chaplain of Brown University in Providence, R.I.

He and his fellow Dominicans have a broad taste in music, recording albums of chant and other sacred music in addition to bluegrass songs, which he noted “is kind of based on themes from Scripture.”

Father Justin also noted that this genre is just enjoyable to play.

“We have fun together doing it,” he said. “It’s part of our fraternity. Music is fraternal. It brings people together, especially this kind of music. It’s front-porch music. Just us jamming.”

The word “Thomists” in the band’s name describes people who study the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas, a medieval Dominican theologian and philosopher.

The overall title of the band was drawn from a letter written by 20th-century fiction writer Flannery O’Connor, whom Father Justin described as the band’s “unofficial patron saint.”

Born in Georgia in 1925, O’Connor wrote novels and short stories that take place in the South. While having deep theological themes, they are also marked by dark humor and violence.

O’Connor, a devout Catholic who died of lupus in 1964, noted in a letter that many who read her novel *Wise Blood* “think that I’m a hillbilly nihilist, whereas I’m a hillbilly Thomist.”

Father Justin said that many of the band’s songs follow the faith and life of O’Connor, who wrote that “all human nature vigorously resists grace because grace changes us and the change is painful.”

“It plays out in our lyrics, exploring narratives of broken lives and how grace is still there,” Father Justin said.

That was heard in “Holy Ghost Power,” the finale of the band’s concert in the congress’ exhibition hall on July 19.

The song is told in the voice of a man who’s had a broken relationship and finds contemporary culture absurd, but who had discovered meaning in Christ, who is described in its refrain:

“He makes a rich man poor. He makes a weak man strong. No more going wrong just to get along. I felt the force of the truth when they pierced his side. I saw the war eagle dive and I could not hide. Just when I faced the capital hour, that’s when I found the Holy Ghost power.”

Because many of the hundreds of people who crowded around the stage for the concert were enthusiastic fans of the band, the group stopped singing when it reached the final line of the refrain, allowing the crowd to add their voice to the performance.

One of them was Carlie Seely-Hacker of Tulsa, Okla., who attended the concert with her infant son John.

“Their songs are super fun,” she said. “But the content is really rich. I feel like I hear something new every time I listen to them. They’re so joyful.”

“And I was amazed at the crowd. Everyone knew the choruses and were singing along, filling in lines.”

The songs also got some people out of their seats, with



The Hillbilly Thomists play a concert on July 19 during the National Eucharistic Congress at the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis. Pictured are drummer Dominican Father Joseph Hagan, left, and guitarist Dominican Father Justin Bolger. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

lines of girls off to one side of the stage having fun doing a line dance.

The Hillbilly Thomists aren’t just popular with a Catholic crowd, though. Their self-titled debut album in 2017 reached #3 on the Billboard bluegrass chart while their third album, “Holy Ghost Power,” recorded in 2022, reached #5.

Father Justin was happy to play at the congress.

“It’s awesome,” he said. “I love the focus on the Eucharist. It simplifies things. This is what brings us together. It’s the sacrament of Communion, union with one another. People are very joyful here. They’re very prayerful. And then we have our fans.”

(To learn more about The Hillbilly Thomists, visit www.hillbillythomists.com. To watch a video clip from the band’s concert at the National Eucharistic Congress, view this article at www.CriterionOnline.com.) †

‘It means everything to me’: The power of the Eucharist draws people closer to Christ

By John Shaughnessy

Bob Willoughby has the kind of smile and sense of humor that draws people in easily—which is evident when he laughed and said that he didn’t want his photo taken, but that “you can find my picture on the wall of the post office.”

Yet his face changed from mirth and mischief to reverence and a touch of awe when he was asked about the impact of the Eucharist in his life.

“It may take a while for me to explain,” he said as he stood near the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis, one of the main venues for the National Eucharistic Congress which drew 50,000 Catholics from across the country for the event from July 17-21. “It means everything to me. The Church is built around the Eucharist. If we don’t have the Eucharist, we don’t have the Church. That’s how important it is.”

A moment later, his daughter Ambrosia—a young adult—showed that same combination of awe and reverence as she noted, “The Eucharist allows me to know that when Jesus says he remains with me always,

that’s the truth. It doesn’t matter where I go or what I go through, he’s in every part of my being when I receive him. That’s what the Eucharist means for my life.”

Standing next to Ambrosia, her friend Alison Vigland said, “For me, it’s just the beauty of it. I’m a big hiker. I like outdoor stuff, but when I see a monstrance with the Eucharist in it during adoration, that is just the most beautiful thing I’ve ever seen. Ever. I’m getting to be that close to Jesus.”

That shared devotion to the Eucharist led the three of them—plus Bob’s wife and Ambrosia’s mother, Santiaga—to travel from the Diocese of Dallas to join in the five-day event.

John and Leigh Becker showed similar awe about the power of the Eucharist and eucharistic adoration in their lives. John even became choked up with emotion when he talked about how the influence of his wife of 38 years has brought him into a deeper relationship with Christ.

“She was my anchor who brought me closer to my faith,” he said.

So has his dedication to eucharistic adoration.

“I learned that making it a part of my life was important,”

said John, a member of St. Thomas More Parish near Iowa City, Iowa, with his wife. “It just makes Jesus accessible in a way that I think many non-Catholics and non-Christians don’t realize. In times of difficulties, and sometimes in jubilation, it’s nice to know you can be that close to him.”

The desire to draw even closer to Jesus led the parents of four and the grandparents of five to come to Indianapolis for the congress.

“My faith is important to me and so is deepening my faith,” Leigh said. “The more I learn, the more I want to learn and just grow in that deeper relationship with Jesus. I’ve always known him, and I’ve always depended on him, but I may not have been in awe of him enough. I want to unite my heart more to him and be like him more to all those around me.”

She found a similar spirit among the people who attended the congress.

“It’s amazing,” she said. “Especially in our culture right now, we can be made to feel that what we believe isn’t right. Or we’re kind of alone. Everybody is, ‘You do you.’ To be surrounded by all these people who believe the same thing is amazing and empowering. It gives you peace.” †

MINISTRY

continued from page 18

“When Mother Teresa came to the United States in the 1980s, she had a quote,” he said. “It was about how the greatest disease in the West, to sum it up, is the poverty of loneliness. So, when we go to the streets, our goal is encounter.”

“Because so many of the poor have been degraded so many times, they struggle with their own sense of dignity. So we go to be with them, the model of Mother Teresa where she is just with the poor, seeing the face of Christ in them, seeing goodness in them. ... When we go

to the streets, we go to encounter those who are forgotten.”

The experience was educational for Hoffman.

“I encounter a lot of homeless people in Denver, and I only have a certain amount of time to talk to them because I’m at a stoplight,” he said.

“I was interested to see what [Christ in the City missionaries] actually talked about and what their approach was. This gave me a good idea. I’m not sure it’s for me, but it was a good experience and I’m glad I got to do it.”

The experience was not entirely new for Ferguson, who once participated in a weeklong mission with Christ in the City.

“I was really grateful just for the opportunity today to encounter those living on the streets and just listen,” she said. “My hope was to show them who Christ is by my presence. But also, I just wanted the opportunity to be touched by them.”

Sally provided that opportunity. “She just had that joyful spirit about her,” Ferguson said, smiling as she recalled the encounter. “She seemed like a very caring person. It was just beautiful to see how she is able to love and thank God in the midst of living on the streets.”

Ferguson hopes to find an opportunity to volunteer in homeless street ministry when she returns home.

“I think sometimes we focus on providing for their material needs,” she said. “But I hope there’s a way that I can also provide for their spiritual needs, for their need for friendship.”

Her desire reflects Brouillette’s final comments during the debriefing.

“Remember, the greatest gift we can give [the homeless] is not a one-night stay in a hotel,” he said. “It’s not solving all their problems or solving all their needs.”

“The poor are not a problem to be fixed, but persons to be encountered, making sure they know that they’re loved.” †



Sculptures at congress ‘crystallize a moment,’ touching hearts and souls

By Natalie Hoefler

Pedro Madera Cuevas crouched low and angled his camera up. The object of the shot: a 22-foot sculpture of Christ on a cross perched atop the world, streams



A 22-foot sculpture of Christ on a cross atop the world with blood from his wounds streaming into a chalice and a bowl filled with the Eucharist stands outside St. John the Evangelist Church across from the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis. The piece was created by Catholic sculptor Timothy Schmalz for the National Eucharistic Congress on July 17-21.

of blood flowing from his wounds down to a chalice and a bowl filled with the Eucharist.

“It reminds me a lot about his divine mercy,” said the young adult Catholic of the Archdiocese of Seattle. “His whole body is there, and he’s pouring out his blood for the whole world. It reminds me of how much he has given to all of us, like his whole life for the world.”

The sculpture is one of two pieces created by internationally-renowned Catholic sculptor Timothy Schmalz for the National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis on July 17-21. It was placed near St. John the Evangelist Church in Indianapolis across from the Indiana Convention Center, where the majority of the gathering was held.

Schmalz’s faith-based pieces can be found around the world, from the Vatican to Spain to Africa, the Dominican Republic, Canada and more. Several pieces grace locations in the United States, including two outside of St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities in New Albany.

The piece admired by Madera Cuevas is titled “This is My Body.”

“I love to have titles that are meaningful to the saint or to the Scripture” depicted in his work, he explained. “In this case, ‘This is My Body’ is taken from Christ’s words at the Last Supper.”

The second piece, called “Be Welcoming,” is located near the entry doors of St. John—where it will permanently remain as a gift to the parish.



Kimberlie Petrulius, right, takes a photo as her daughter Josephine Petrulius engages with a sculpture called “Be Welcoming” outside St. John the Evangelist Church in Indianapolis on July 18. The two members of the Diocese of Richmond, Va., admired the piece, one of two created by Catholic sculptor Timothy Schmalz for the National Eucharistic Congress. (Photos by Natalie Hoefler)

It’s an interactive sculpture inviting individuals to rest on a bench with a unique figure.

“On one side it’s a pilgrim,” Schmalz explained. “On the other side it transforms into an angel, where the hood of the pilgrim becomes the angel’s hair and the pilgrim’s backpack is actually the back side of the angel’s wings. It’s a sculpture that you have to experience. Isn’t that cool?”

Josephine Petrulius thought so. “It makes me think of ‘don’t judge a book by its cover,’” said the young woman, a member of the Diocese of Richmond, Va. “On the outside you see the pilgrim. On the inside you see the angel. You don’t know what’s on the inside of someone.”

The presence of the pieces at the congress is the result of an invitation that came last December.

“I was invited to come to the National Eucharistic Congress, and then things just exploded with great ideas,” Schmalz said.

“I think artwork can crystallize a moment, and that’s what I think the two pieces that I have outside [the church] truly have done—one with the idea of the pilgrim, and the other with spirituality.”

More ideas have come to the Catholic sculptor. In the congress’ exhibit hall in the convention center, where the majority of the congress’ daily events took place, Schmalz publicly worked on the model of a new sculpture of Blessed—soon to be Saint—Carlo Acutis. The young man, who died in 2006 at the age of 15, was known for his devotion to the Eucharist



In the exhibit hall of the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis on July 17, internationally known Catholic sculptor Timothy Schmalz—who created two special pieces for the National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis on July 17-21—works on a model for a sculpture he is creating of Blessed Carlo Acutis.

and creating a website of eucharistic miracles.

“I started researching, and I thought, ‘This is a perfect, perfect person to celebrate here,’” said Schmalz. “With his love for the Eucharist and him soon to be named a saint, the timing was perfect.” †

Marriage ANNOUNCEMENTS

Be a part of our Fall Marriage Edition

August 23 issue of *The Criterion*

Couples who are planning to be married between Aug. 9, 2024, and Jan. 31, 2025, in a marriage that is recognized as a valid sacramental or valid natural marriage, or couples who were wed between Jan. 31 and Aug. 9, 2024, in such a recognized marriage and did not have their engagement announcement in *The Criterion* are invited to submit the information for the upcoming Aug. 23 Fall Marriage Edition.

Announcements can be submitted by mail using the form below or electronically at www.archindy.org/engagements.

E-mailed photos

Photos should be saved in jpg format and be at least 500 kb. Color photos are preferred. We recommend sending a photo where the couple’s faces are close to each other. Please send the photo as an attachment to the e-mail: alewis@archindy.org. Subject line: Spring Marriage (Last name). In the e-mail, please include the information in the form located below.

If it is not possible to e-mail a photo, a photo can be mailed with the bottom form. Please no photocopies or laser prints. To have the photo returned, please include a return addressed envelope with a postage stamp on it.

Deadline

All announcements and photos must be received by 5 p.m. on Aug. 9.

— Use this form to furnish information by mail —

Clip and mail to: BRIDES, *The Criterion*, ATTN: Ann Lewis, 1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367. To submit information online go to: www.archindy.org/engagements. *Deadline with photos:* Tuesday, Aug. 9, at 5 p.m.

Please print or type:

| | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|
| Name of Bride (first, middle, last) | | Daytime Phone | |
| Mailing Address | City | State | Zip Code |
| Name of Bride’s Parents (first, last) | | | |
| City | | State | |
| Name of Bridegroom (first, middle, last) | | | |
| Name of Bridegroom’s Parents (first, last) | | | |
| City | | State | |
| Wedding Date | Church | City | State |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Photo Enclosed | <input type="checkbox"/> Return photo | | <input type="checkbox"/> No Picture |
| Signature of person furnishing information | | Relationship | Daytime Phone |

76th Annual Holy Spirit Festival August 1,2,3 - 2024



You’re invited to join us at the 76th annual Holy Spirit Festival, one of the oldest Catholic festivals in Indianapolis!

We’re known for our wide variety of delicious food, which includes our famous shish kabobs, Indiana tenderloins, mouthwatering hamburgers, bratwursts, hot dogs, flavorful tacos and nachos, pizza with a secret decades-old recipe, fruit smoothies, popcorn, elephant ears, desserts, and much more! Wine, popular seltzers, beer, soft drinks, lemon shake-ups, and other drinks are available.

We have a Merry-go-Round and exciting midway rides, fun games sponsored by Holy Spirit, and memories to last a lifetime. For the adults, there’s Monte Carlo, blackjack, Texas Poker, bingo, and more. There will be a silent auction with items to bid on and a Grand Raffle for \$7,500, with tickets for \$20. License 001303.

You can enjoy your time outdoors in our famous Rose Garden while listening to great live music. The Festival supports a parish of over 2,500 families and a school of 400 students on the Eastside of Indianapolis, so you’ll be supporting a great cause while having a wonderful time!

Website - HolySpiritFestival.org Facebook - [HolySpiritFestival1](https://www.facebook.com/HolySpiritFestival1)
7243 East 10th Street, Indianapolis, IN 46219

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, July 28, 2024

- 2 Kings 4:42-44
- Ephesians 4:1-6
- John 6:1-15

The Second Book of Kings is the source for the first reading for Mass this weekend. Originally, First and Second Kings composed one volume, but at one point in the editing of the Scriptures, this one volume was divided into two parts.



As the title suggests, these books have to do

with the kings of Israel, but the stories in First and Second Kings almost always have a religious significance, since the Hebrew Scriptures always had as their purpose the conveyance to the people of religious truths and values. Religion was the most important aspect of life, so living by religious standards, as given by God, was crucial.

Prophets are prominently mentioned. After all, they spoke for God to the people.

Therefore, in this weekend's reading, the central figure is not a king, but the prophet Elisha. The message is twofold. God, the almighty Creator, gives to humans control over nature to the extent that they can govern nature, which is for the use and well-being of humans.

The other part of the message is that God provides for humanity. His gift is a supernatural gift, bringing life when no other source of life is forthcoming.

For its second reading, the Church presents a passage from St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians. It was a moving appeal to the Christians of Ephesus to bear with each other, be patient with each other and love each other because the faithful compose one body. One Spirit gives them life and strength. Disciples of Christ are not a collection of individuals, ships passing silently in the night. They are united in a great and holy unity.

The passage also warned, realistically, that adversity often awaits faithful believers.

St. John's Gospel supplies the last reading. It is one of the best known and loved sections of the New Testament. It is the story of the multiplication of the loaves and fish.

Important in this reading is the fact that Jesus can supply all things. The Apostles and the crowd were helpless. Without the Lord, they would hunger and even starve. They were desperate.

Not only did they have no food, but they also had no funds with which to buy food. Earthly assets were worthless. They failed to supply the need.

By contrast, Jesus supplied for the people. He first gave thanks over the sparse food at hand. It is an obvious reference to the Eucharist. Indeed, in Greek, "eucharistia" means "giving thanks."

As a sidebar, Philip did not understand that Jesus was asking him for a testimony of Philip's own faith. Despite being an Apostle, Philip could not understand everything. Every person is limited in their ability to perceive.

Reflection

St. Paul in his Letter to the Ephesians indicates clearly that the Christians in Ephesus at times were at odds with each other. They were under stress. The Roman culture looked upon Christianity as ridiculous and as a threat to the good order of the empire.

Obviously, the Christian teachings of one supreme God, a divinity of love, was beyond and contrary to the Roman notion of things.

Ephesus was more than a great city and seaport. Its famous temple, dedicated to Diana, the goddess of the moon, was the destination of many pagan pilgrimages. Many Ephesians were fervent in their paganism.

It was for Christians an unwelcoming place. So it is with us alive today, even without the particulars of the struggle

between Roman culture and Christianity.

The Gospel faces many opponents. Calling us to strong faith, the Church reminds us that we need God. Even if we are true believers, as was Philip, we cannot see everything. We cannot survive on our own.

The wonder and the consolation are

that God provides, feeding us in the Eucharist.

The Criterion will not have an issue next week due to its summer schedule. The reflection of Msgr. Owen Campion for Sunday, August 4, will be posted at www.archdindy.org/campion. †

Daily Readings

Monday, July 29

SS. Mary, Martha and Lazarus
Jeremiah 13:1-11
(Response) *Deuteronomy 32:18-19, 20, 21*
John 11:19-27
or *Luke 10:38-42*

Tuesday, July 30

St. Peter Chrysologus, bishop and doctor of the Church
Jeremiah 14:17-22
Psalms 79:8-9, 11, 13
Matthew 13:36-43

Wednesday, July 31

St. Ignatius Loyola, priest
Jeremiah 15:10, 16-21
Psalms 59:2-4, 10-11, 17-18
Matthew 13:44-46

Thursday, August 1

St. Alphonsus Liguori, bishop and doctor of the Church
Jeremiah 18:1-6
Psalms 146:1-6
Matthew 13:47-53

Friday, August 2

St. Eusebius of Vercelli, bishop
St. Peter Julian Eymard, priest
Jeremiah 26:1-9
Psalms 69:5, 8-10, 14
Matthew 13:54-58

Saturday, August 3

Jeremiah 26:11-16, 24
Psalms 69:15-16, 30-31, 33-34
Matthew 14:1-12

Sunday, August 4

Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Exodus 16:2-4, 12-15
Psalms 78:3-4, 23-25, 54
Ephesians 4:17, 20-24
John 6:24-35

Monday, August 5

The Dedication of the Basilica of St. Mary Major
Jeremiah 28:1-17
Psalms 119:29, 43, 79-80, 95, 102
Matthew 14:13-21

Tuesday, August 6

The Transfiguration of the Lord
Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14
Psalms 97:1-2, 5-6, 9
2 Peter 1:16-19
Mark 9:2-10

Wednesday, August 7

St. Sixtus II, pope, and companions, martyrs
St. Cajetan, priest
Jeremiah 31:1-7
(Response) *Jeremiah 31:10-13*
Matthew 15:21-28

Thursday, August 8

St. Dominic, priest
Jeremiah 31:31-34
Psalms 51:12-15, 18-19
Matthew 16:13-23

Friday, August 9

St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, virgin and martyr
Nahum 2:1, 3; 3:1-3, 6-7
(Response) *Deuteronomy 32:35c-36b, 39abcd, 41*
Matthew 16:24-28

Saturday, August 10

St. Lawrence, deacon and martyr
2 Corinthians 9:6-10
Psalms 112:1-2, 5-9
John 12:24-26

Sunday, August 11

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
1 Kings 19:4-8
Psalms 34:2-9
Ephesians 4:30-5:2
John 6:41-51

Question Corner/Jenna Marie Cooper

Confessionals in the United States are required to include a screen

Q Is a parish required to provide a screen and kneeler in a confessional? Our pastor moved our confessional from a room with screen and kneeler to a family room that does not have a screen



or kneeler. So, our parishioners no longer have the option to use a screen and kneeler. Our second graders will be receiving their first confession soon and were taught that they would have the option to confess behind a screen.

Our pastor seems reluctant to offer this option. Is he required to offer this option? (Location withheld)

A Yes, parishes are required to have a confessional that includes some sort of screen.

The *Code of Canon Law* gives us some clear directives regarding the structure of the confessional. Specifically, canon 964, paragraph 2 tells us: "The conference of bishops is to establish norms regarding the confessional; it is to take care, however,

that there are always confessionals with a fixed grate between the penitent and the confessor in an open place so that the faithful who wish to can use them freely."

Breaking down this section of canon 964, the local bishops' conference, such as the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), can make their own local proper law regarding some aspects of how confessionals are set up within their own territory. As in other cases where a bishops' conference is empowered to establish their own norms, this is to ensure that local cultural expectations and pastoral needs are appropriately taken into account.

Still, this canon makes a point to note that in churches there must always be "confessionals with a fixed grate between the penitent and the confessor." Since this is spelled out in the Church's universal law, it is not an option for local bishops' conferences to opt out of this directive.

Very strictly speaking, a "fixed grate" denotes a barrier, but not necessarily a screen. However, since the possibility of anonymous confessions is a very well-established practice, in most

cases the canonical "fixed grate" will be a screen or at least some other system of preserving anonymity (such as an opaque curtain behind metal latticework).

Looking at the USCCB's local laws or "complementary norms" on the confessional, we read: "Provision must be made in each church or oratory for a sufficient number of places for sacramental confessions which are clearly visible, truly accessible, and which provide a fixed grille between the penitent and the confessor. Provision should also be made for penitents who wish to confess face-to-face."

Therefore, in the United States at least, face-to-face confession without a screen is a legitimate option. But these local norms on the confessional echo the universal law in that they still require and presume that confessionals in churches will have a screen.

On a related note, canon 964, paragraph 3 goes on to state that "confessions are not to be heard outside a confessional without a just cause." In canon law, a "just cause" is a relatively low bar to meet. Essentially, a canonical "just cause" is

basically the same as a "good reason."

While the Church expects confessions to be heard in a designated confessional under ordinary circumstances, there are times when it would be permissible to celebrate the sacrament someplace else. For example, a priest would be more than justified in hearing a hospitalized patient's confession at his or her bedside. And since in the United States priests are directed to make provisions for those who wish to confess face-to-face, this might be interpreted as a "just cause" for hearing a confession outside of a traditional confessional.

In your own situation, it might be worth having a respectful conversation with your pastor. It may be that he would hear confessions in a traditional confessional if this was requested. And if it makes you feel more comfortable, you are always free to confess at a parish other than your own.

(Jenna Marie Cooper, who holds a licentiate in canon law, is a consecrated virgin and a canonist whose column appears weekly at OSV News. Send your questions to CatholicQA@osv.com.) †

Journey of the Heart/Jennifer Burger

Eucharist provides a powerful 'summit' experience in our lives of faith

The mountains have always called me. For as long as I can remember, every summer we would vacation at a dude ranch in Estes Park, Colo.



My fondest memories of these trips were the hikes with my dad up Twin Sisters Peak. These hikes were special times with my dad and ones that also offered "refuge" for me as a young girl living an atypical childhood. On the trail, I could "be normal," grounded, and have some sense of direction.

But it was upon reaching the top that I felt most welcome and "free." I could see the possibilities beyond my existence and dare to dream. I don't know how many times we reached the summit of Twin Sisters, but each time I felt more connected to this mountain, and it eventually became a part of me.

As an adult, my longings, not yet named, kept bringing me back to these memories and I couldn't wait to return with my own family to this place of deep connection for me.

I have indeed returned to Estes Park and this mountain several times with my own family, and the most recent trip was earlier this month. I always feel a spark of emotion when I see Twin Sisters in the distance and the

longing is rekindled. So, when the day finally arrived for our planned hike, I was eager with anticipation.

The hike itself was physically demanding for me, and I was keenly aware of my weaknesses. But at no time was there any thought about not making it to the top.

As the rocky summit came into sight, my energy was renewed. We made our way up the large boulders to the summit where we could sit and enjoy our packed lunches. The view was spectacular! There was not a cloud in the sky, and you could see forever—the surrounding peaks and ranges far to the west and north, and the distant plains to the east and south. Sharing this with my family made it extra special.

As in previous visits to the summit, I was overcome with emotion. Although it came as a bit of a surprise to me that this mountain would still elicit such a response, I welcomed it. It felt like coming home to myself, and I savored the moment. It felt so sacred.

As I descended the mountain, I reflected on the overall "summit experience"—not just of that day, but the sum total of all such experiences, and my relationship to this mountain.

These thoughts have lingered with me since. It is the personal connection that has made that experience so "sacred" and that elicits such an emotional response for

me. There is only one other place where I experience the same feeling, and that is in the Eucharist—the ultimate "summit experience!"

For me, the experience is enriched by a personal relationship with Christ that is conscious and growing. It is walking with him, setting foot on the trail that encompasses all that I am—my past, my weaknesses, my hopes and my dreams—and directing my will toward him as best I can. He offers refuge and gives me rest along the way. At the summit, I am welcome. I find my home in him and he in me.

The Eucharist is more than a mountaintop experience of brief euphoria; it is eternal. With unparalleled views and access to the kingdom of God on Earth and in heaven, we share and celebrate our nourishment—the banquet—with those who make the way with us.

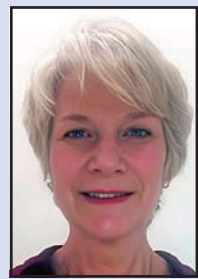
The Eucharist calls each of us. Let us make the ascent and savor the summit experience together and give thanks for this most precious and eternal gift!

(Jennifer Burger is program manager at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House in Indianapolis and a member of St. Simon the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis. She is also a spiritual director.) †

Worship and Evangelization Outreach/Teresa Venatta

Spiritual direction provides intimacy and a safe space to be vulnerable

When praying for guidance in what to write about regarding the ministry of spiritual direction, I needed to look no further than the topic of our recent Archdiocese of Indianapolis spiritual directors' gatherings.



We, as spiritual directors, have been reflecting on how vulnerability is key to spiritual growth, as both spiritual director and directee.

Vulnerability is defined as a state of openness to the possibility of being physically or emotionally wounded. Culturally, strength and resilience are highly valued characteristics, so the concept of vulnerability can be misunderstood as a lack of courage or endurance. It can even seem counterintuitive to embrace vulnerability since it can feel risky and fragile.

However, in a recent Sunday reading, St. Paul reminds us in his Second Letter to the Corinthians that the Lord told him, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor 12:9). This led St. Paul to the paradoxical awareness that, "for when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor 12:10).

St. Paul's invitation was to acknowledge that vulnerability is part of our human condition. The call then becomes to look for God's grace and strength within our human fragility. This involves a courageous openness to risk, disappointments and failures as we navigate our Christian walk. C.S. Lewis stated, "To love at all is to be vulnerable."

So, in this increasingly complex and challenging world, where can we go to find a safe and sacred place to rest and connect with this graced vulnerable side of ourselves? This is a side of ourselves that God already knows and loves, but may be partially hidden from our internal awareness.

Spiritual direction can be just that safe space to explore our wounds and struggles without fear of judgment. It has even been said that spiritual direction thrives on vulnerability.

Spiritual direction is an ongoing relationship between a formed spiritual director

and a directee who is seeking deeper intimacy with God. The fact is, there is no true intimacy without vulnerability.

The spiritual director is an attentive listener providing a safe space for the directee to connect their inner and outer experiences and wounds with our loving God.

'Spiritual directors are not problem solvers. They prayerfully set aside their own self-interests and agendas for the sake of the directee's relationship with God by paying attention to what has been happening in the directee's life.'

In this ministry, the spiritual director's role is to be fully present and to listen to both the directee and to God. This loving focus on the directee can open the door to deeper self-awareness and healing. This vulnerable sharing of the most intimate parts of our hearts can be the gateway to encounter God's mercy.

Spiritual directors are not problem solvers. They prayerfully set aside their own self-interests and agendas for the sake of the directee's relationship with God by paying attention to what has been happening in the directee's life.

In affirming God's presence and love, words are secondary in the spiritual director's role as a trusted loving listener. There is a mutual vulnerability in the spiritual direction relationship. The spiritual director should prayerfully attempt to lead the directee to greater vulnerability through sensitive listening and encouragement. The spiritual director's vulnerability is in their ongoing awareness of Christ's presence.

Sometimes this can feel like helplessness for the spiritual director as they defer to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The most graced gift of spiritual direction can be this mutuality of vulnerability.

Both director and directee are beloved by God, both are loved sinners, both are on a unique journey to God, and both are hearts in search of intimacy and wholeness in the midst of their human fragility.

If your heart is longing to take this "risk," reach out!

(Teresa Venatta is the discernment companion for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. She can be reached at spiritualdirection@archindy.org.) †

Guest Column/Lauretta Brown

Every Catholic is called to be a participant in Church's eucharistic mission

The average Catholic in the pew hearing the term "eucharistic missionary" might think this is a special role in the Church, performed by well-trained holy people in some far-flung region. And yet, every Catholic is called to be a Eucharistic missionary.



The faithful's everyday call to a eucharistic encounter that ultimately leads to the life of a eucharistic missionary is the topic of the book *For the Life of the World: Invited to Eucharistic Mission*. The work is co-authored by Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens of Crookston, Minn., who

has been leading the U.S. bishops' three-year National Eucharistic Revival, and Tim Glemkowski, the outgoing CEO of the National Eucharistic Congress, Inc.

A fruit of the bishops' eucharistic revival efforts, the work outlines the foundation of a eucharistic life that the faithful are called to participate in, and also concrete ways to embrace that call.

The book offers a poignant re-emphasis on the need to encounter Jesus Christ as a living person in the Eucharist, drawing from Scripture and the saints. In one letter from Mother Teresa of Calcutta to her sisters, she asks, "Do you really know the living Jesus—not from books, but

from being with him in your heart? Have you heard the loving words he speaks to you? Ask for the grace, he is longing simply to give it. Until you can hear Jesus in the silence of your own heart, you will not be able to hear him saying 'I thirst' in the hearts of the poor."

An understanding of one's identity in the Eucharist follows this personal encounter with Jesus. Quoting the Second Vatican Council, the authors note that "the other sacraments, as well as with every ministry of the Church and every work of the apostolate, are tied together with the Eucharist and are directed toward it."

A portion of the book is dedicated to understanding how to live in communion with one another, centered around the Eucharist. This means loving, serving and forgiving others as well as joining in the sacrificial aspect of the Eucharist by offering our trials and sufferings in union with the sacrifice of the Mass.

According to the great Carmelite spiritual writer Father Wilfrid Stinissen, "A great deal would happen in our lives if every time we celebrated the Eucharist we would place on the paten something of our own, something that we know is directed wrongly and therefore blocks us. ... We imagine all too often that we must offer beautiful things to God. But the beautiful does not need to be offered to God. It is already in God's sphere. It is the evil, that which has not yet found

its right place, that must be lifted up and placed there, where it belongs, in God's radiance."

As the faithful draw closer to Jesus in the Eucharist, we are sent out on a mission to spread his message to others. The two are linked, the authors emphasize, writing, "the Eucharist is the heart of the Church's mission, its source and summit. And mission is not an accidental quality, but essential to the reception of Jesus in the Eucharist. In every Mass, Jesus himself goes on mission, rushing down to the altar, to accomplish some definite purpose. Therefore, the final step in becoming a eucharistic missionary is to make his purpose in becoming the bread of life ours."

As the authors highlight inspiring words of the saints and point out ways to be eucharistic missionaries in our everyday lives, they also acknowledge the climate of division in our world today.

"We believe that the Eucharist is the answer to the problems of our world," they write, "because the eucharist contains the entire spiritual wealth of the Church: Christ himself." They ask the Lord to "form us in the eucharistic life that he himself lived, so that we might give ourselves, too, for the life of the world."

(Lauretta Brown is culture editor for OSV News. Follow her on X [formerly Twitter] @LaurettaBrown6.) †

Priests and penitents find peace in God's mercy in confession at congress

By Sean Gallagher

Father Joseph Moriarty is used to hearing confessions at events where large numbers of Catholics gather.

The National Catholic Youth Conference has drawn as many as 20,000 Catholic teens and chaperones to Indianapolis every other year for more than a decade. He's also heard confessions many times at the National March for Life in Washington.

And as a missionary of mercy appointed by Pope Francis during the Year of Mercy in 2016—an appointment that was extended indefinitely after the special jubilee year—Father Moriarty sees the sacrament of penance as a central part of his priestly life and ministry.

Sometimes at large events, he and dozens of other priests might be available at the same time and in the same room for the sacrament of penance for several hours, with a steady flow of penitents coming through.

It can be hard for Father Moriarty. "You're completely emotionally exhausted," he said, before quickly adding, "but there's no other place I would desire to be in that moment because it is the work of God's salvation."

"When I surrender that, I become an instrument *in persona Christi*. It's not about me. It's about what God does through me. And it's happening throughout the entire room."

Carrie Matadobra experienced what happened in a large ballroom in the Indiana Convention Center in

Indianapolis that was turned into a confession area when she took part in the sacrament of reconciliation on July 17, the first day of the National Eucharistic Congress.

"I could really feel God's peace in there," said Matadobra, who, with her husband and two children, are members of St. Edward Parish in Shelton, Wash.

She thought going to confession on the first day of the congress was a good way to prepare herself for the blessings that were to come.

"God is faithful and just in forgiving us of our sins," Matadobra said. "He cleanses us of all unrighteousness. In order to have a receptive ear, we need to be cleansed of our sins and everything in this world that separates us from him. It's a good way to start off the congress. God is faithful."

Like Father Moriarty, Paulist Father Bruce Nieli of Austin, Texas, is a missionary of mercy who has heard confession at many large Catholic events, including several World Youth Days.

Hearing confessions for several hours at a time in places around the world with a long and steady stream of penitents has made one message clear to Father Nieli.

"It shows me the hunger that people have all over the world for inner peace, for assurance of forgiveness, for affirmation and for just getting on with life," he said. "It's a universal desire for inner reconciliation and peace."

David Mueller, a member of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Cape Girardeau, Mo., experienced that hunger himself when he went to the confession room on July 19.

"There's a yearning to answer to your conscience," he said. "When people actually take the time to examine it, ... they see it as the core of their being. They want to make themselves better, in a sense."

The universality of that hunger was on display at the congress as priests were available to hear confessions in several languages.

Sister Maria Fatima Nunes, a member of the Dominican Sister of Mary Mother of the Eucharist, assisted in the confession room during the congress.

But given how large the convention center is, she knew that there were probably many people who wanted to experience God's mercy in the sacrament, but didn't know where to go for it.

So, Sister Maria Fatima quickly made a sign that read, "Confession? Ask me where to go" and walked through the center's cavernous hallways and exhibit halls.

"Confession is my absolute favorite sacrament," she said. "I love the sacrament of confession."

That might be surprising coming from a member of a religious order dedicated to Mary Mother of the Eucharist.

But Sister Maria Fatima knows from personal experience that the sacrament of reconciliation "leads us to be open to receive the graces of the Eucharist."

"I've had beautiful encounters with God's mercy in the



Father Joseph Moriarty gives absolution on July 17 in the sacrament of penance to a penitent attending the National Eucharistic Congress at the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

tribunal of mercy [confession]. One of my greatest joys is, as a teacher and sister, to encourage people to go to confession and to lay it all at the feet of Jesus.

"I personally know how hard it can be to bring the big stuff before the Lord. So, I love to encourage people not to be afraid to do that."

While priests do many things at events like the eucharistic congress—from concelebrating Masses and distributing Communion, to sometimes giving presentations or leading parish or school groups, Father Moriarty said all these pale in comparison to what they do in the sacrament of penance.

"I would dare say that this is the single most important thing a priest can do at those events," he said, "because he is preparing God's people to receive the Eucharist." †



Sister Maria Fatima Nunes, a member of the Dominican Sister of Mary Mother of the Eucharist, walks around the Indiana Convention Center on July 19 with a sign offering congress-goers directions to receive the sacrament of reconciliation. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

Classified Directory

Employment

Youth and Young Adult Coordinator

St. Pius X Catholic Church and School in Indianapolis IN, is currently seeking a full-time Youth & Young Adult Coordinator, to facilitate the evangelization, formation, and discipleship of Middle School, High School Students and Young Adults in our parish. The Coordinator of Youth & Young Adult Ministry provides leadership in the design, implementation, and evaluation of ministry programs for youth and young adults within the parish community. The ideal candidate will be able to work independently and demonstrate flexibility, creativity, and responsibility.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Host weekly middle, and high school youth and young adult group sessions, fostering a welcoming and engaging environment for guiding students and young adults through their journey of faith and/or preparation for sacraments. Plan and organize youth and young adult retreats, missions, and social outings to teach youth and adults about the Catholic faith and service through interactive and relevant lessons. Co-lead confirmation classes and preparation through completion of the program.

Coordinating Young Family Activities (such as park meetups), Coordinating Marriage Enrichment, Coordinating MOM's group, Women's nights.

For Immediate Consideration, Send applications or inquiries to:
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Pilgrims from the Diocese of Nashville, Tenn., cheer as they wait for the eucharistic procession of the National Eucharistic Congress to begin in downtown Indianapolis on July 20. (OSV News photo/Bob Roller)

Participants reflect on the congress, the procession and the road ahead

By Mike Krokos and Sean Gallagher

Like thousands of others, Tina Zimmerman was eager to take part in the eucharistic procession on July 20.

“I can’t wait to see this many faithful Catholics worshipping the Eucharist, walking down the streets of Indianapolis. It will be amazing!”

A member of St. Louis de Montfort Parish in Fishers, Ind., in the Lafayette Diocese, Zimmerman and her husband John planned to join a group from their parish. Tina said the energy that has been evident during the National Eucharistic Congress is something she hopes will continue.

“If we can harness this energy and take it forth from when we leave this revival and take it back to our parishes, ... gosh, we can change the nation. I think if this many people stay on fire, and just love the Lord and one another ... I think we can take the world by storm.”

A day later, that is what Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens of Crookston, Minn., who led the organizing of the congress, invited attendees to do after Communion at



Tina Zimmerman



Maddox, left, Fraser, Markham, Lindsay and Hannah Hay of Colleyville, Texas, enjoy a performance by Catholic recording artist Matt Maher on July 20 in Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis during the National Eucharistic Congress. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

the closing Mass on July 21 in Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis.

He announced that the congress was launching a “Walk with One” initiative in which Catholics are invited to commit to reach out to another person to bring him or her closer to Christ and the Church.

“What would happen if each of you thought of one person you know who is currently away from the faith and you decided to pray for them, to befriend them and then to invite them to take one more step closer to Jesus and his Church,” Bishop Cozzens asked. “What would happen if 70 million Catholics did that?”

“And so, my question for you is, will you do it? Will you do it?”

Lindsay Hay, her husband Fraser and their two sons and daughter who travelled from their home in Colleyville, Texas, to attend the congress, were moved in spending time with tens of thousands of Catholics in Indianapolis to accept that invitation.

Lindsay noted that “the congress has deepened our love of Jesus in the Eucharist. It has helped open our eyes to his presence with us and in others, for we each are tabernacles of Jesus. It has helped ignite our faith and challenge us to be more intentional disciples.

“We each hope to walk with one by sharing the gift we receive of Jesus in the Eucharist with others.”

While participating in adoration in Lucas Oil Stadium on the first three nights of the congress, Zimmerman said “the reverence and the presence of the Holy Spirit” have been evident.

“You know that everybody in the stadium is feeling it,” she said, “giving honor and glory to God as you see them processing with Jesus present in the Eucharist. It just warms my heart. I think God must be pouring out his blessings upon people who have come and sacrificed to praise and honor him.”

‘I want to portray to others that Jesus is real’

Sporting a “Team Cozzens” T-shirt, Lisa Roberts of the Diocese of Crookston, Minn., offered words of praise for Bishop Cozzens before the procession.

“He’s a wonderful bishop, very instrumental in making this happen,” she said of Bishop Cozzens, chairman of the National Eucharistic Congress Inc., who has also played a pivotal role in the three-year National Eucharistic Revival.

About 200 pilgrims from the Crookston Diocese made the journey to Indianapolis, including 60 youths.

Roberts was looking forward to the procession “because I want to portray to others that Jesus is real, that we believe that Jesus is present in the Eucharist, and we want to share his love with others,” she said.

Reflecting on the first three days of the Congress, Roberts said she will leave with new goals for her life: “to repent, to draw closer to Jesus, to share the faith with others, to love others and embrace them as children of God.”

‘The magnitude of the Eucharist’

Frank Richardson of St. Ignatius Parish in Baltimore said he was amazed at the congress of “the magnitude of the Eucharist and all the people gathered, the clergy and the laity from everywhere. It was overwhelming to see a whole town made Catholic.”

Alina Miller, 21, of Clarksville, Tenn., attended the congress with members of her family and other young adults from her parish. She described the event as “heaven on steroids.”

“The Eucharist is Jesus,” she said. “That’s the closest we’re going to get to heaven until we are in heaven. It was very good and a lot to take in. I think I’m going to process this for many years to come.”

‘Process with the Lord on the streets of America’

Despite wearing clerics in an afternoon that got warmer by the minute, Atlanta archdiocesan seminarian Austin Thomas beamed as he waited to participate in the eucharistic procession.

“All of the Atlanta seminarians will be processing with all of the pilgrims from Atlanta,” which numbered about 500, explained Thomas, who is in formation at Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans.

The seminarian believed the procession would offer a powerful witness of faith.

He added the congress is only the beginning.

“This is just the start, this isn’t the finish line. When we go back to our home parishes, that is where the real mission begins,” he said. “It’s very easy to worship with all of these people, but it’s your relationship with the Lord, it’s the encounter you had here ... now you bring it back home ... and continue to fall deeply in love with the Lord.” †

