



2023 Vocations Awareness Supplement

Photo illustration by Sean Gallagher

Every vocation starts with Christ in the Eucharist

By Father Michael Keucher

In so many stories, the Gospels recount what priests and religious like to call “vocation stories.” They tell us about men and women chosen by Jesus for a special type of service.



Fr. Michael Keucher

No vocation story is quite the same, but they always start with Jesus. He finds who he wants and then issues a call.

Many examples come to mind from the Scriptures. Jesus summons Matthew out of his counting house. He invites James and John and a host of others out of their fishing boats. He tells Mary Magdalene to spread the news of his resurrection.

Each vocation story starts with Jesus calling and the recipient answering.

One of the biggest mistakes we can make is to think of Jesus simply as a historical figure. He is the God-man who lived in the past. He worked miracles, taught people and called them to service—all in the past.

Why is this a mistake? Because Jesus is alive in the most holy Eucharist! Jesus Christ has all the same powers in the Eucharist that he had when he walked

the Earth 2,000 years ago. He is still working miracles, healing and teaching, and yes, he is still calling men and women to serve him by laying down their lives.

In tabernacles and monstrances around the world, and laid on altars simple and fancy, there is the living Jesus. Alive in the Eucharist, Jesus is still calling men and women to sing God’s praises and lead all humanity to his kingdom.

Because each vocation starts with Jesus, each vocation necessarily starts with the Eucharist.

Looking for a way to know your vocation? Go to the Eucharist, the living Jesus!

Trying to grow and mature in your vocation and find the strength you need to persevere in it? Go to the Eucharist, the living Jesus!

Trying to find a way to call on Jesus, the master of the harvest, to increase the number of laborers for his harvest? Go to the Eucharist, the living Jesus!

There is no more beautiful sight than a burning sanctuary lamp flickering in the nearest Catholic church. For as long as that light flickers, Jesus is there calling men and women for special service from our parishes and families.

Not only does every vocation start with the Eucharist, but every vocation matures with the Eucharist, is held together by the Eucharist and reaches

its fulfillment in the Eucharist—because the Eucharist is the living Jesus!

As you read this year’s Vocations Awareness Supplement, pray for our priests who bring the body, blood, soul and divinity of Jesus to our altars and into our souls. Pray for our seminarians in formation who hunger for the day of their first Masses. Pray for our deacons who serve humbly at the altar and from the altar. Pray for our religious men and women vowed to the eucharistic Lord, for whom the Eucharist is their portion and cup.

And pray, too, for those in every vocation and those searching for their vocation. Jesus in the Eucharist is the way.

Get ready to meet people who have fallen deeply in love with the eucharistic Lord and who have been summoned by him to lay down their lives for the Eucharist. May their love of Jesus inspire us all to a deeper love of the Living Bread.

(Father Michael Keucher is director of vocations for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, dean of the Batesville Deanery and pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Shelbyville and St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Shelby County. Contact him at mkeucher@archindy.org.) †



New postulant finds a spiritual home with the Sisters of Providence, page 5B.



Benedictine monks live a ‘eucharistic life’ that is ‘immersed in God’, page 9B.



Sister Evangeline follows her heart to embrace a lifelong dance with Jesus, page 4B.



Seminarians Isaac Siefker, left, Samuel Hansen and Casey Deal stand on Oct. 11 by the tabernacle in the St. Theodore Guérin Chapel at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad. (Photo courtesy of Saint Meinrad Archabbey)

Seminarians' love of the Eucharist draws them closer to the priesthood

By Sean Gallagher

ST. MEINRAD—The Church in the U.S. is in the middle of its three-year National Eucharistic Revival.

Its mission is to renew the relationship of Catholics across the country with Christ in the Eucharist with the hope that it will then spur them to more effectively proclaim the Gospel in their everyday lives.

Four seminarians for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis recently shared with *The Criterion* how their love for Christ in the Eucharist has grown in three stages of their lives: while growing up, in discerning a possible priestly vocation and while in seminary.

They are seminarians Casey Deal, Samuel Hansen and Isaac Siefker, who are enrolled at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad, and seminarian Randall Schneider, who is in his final year of formation at Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary in Indianapolis.

'You look at him and he looks at you'

For Schneider, his family's move to southeastern Indiana when he was about 15 was the point where he started to grow in his love for Christ in the Eucharist.

The move closer to All Saints Parish

in Dearborn County—where they were already members—led his parents to commit to praying weekly for an hour before the Blessed Sacrament in the faith community's perpetual adoration chapel.



Randall Schneider

Schneider often went with his mother for her hour of prayer. Spending time in silence before the Blessed Sacrament opened him to the mystery of Christ's presence.

"My senses failed me when I tried to understand our Lord's presence in the Blessed Sacrament," said Schneider. "I began to pray and intentionally look at the Eucharist and to see Jesus there. ... You look at him and he looks at you.

"You begin to understand that he's there and wants to be there. He wants to be there with you. That really drew me. Without even knowing it, I was being catechized by adoration."

The seeds of his vocations were being planted as well.

"My vocation really blossomed under the sun of adoration," Schneider said.

As a home-schooled high school student, he spoke about the priesthood with Father Jonathan Meyer, who serves

in All Saints Parish and the other three parishes in Dearborn County. After graduating from high school, Schneider became an archdiocesan seminarian and has been in formation at Bishop Bruté for three years.

Hansen's love for the Eucharist grew as a student at St. Roch School and Roncalli High School, both in Indianapolis, where he was influenced by "a lot of people who practiced what they preached."

That started with his father, Joseph Hansen, who was St. Roch's principal when he was a student there. It also included his fourth-grade teacher Dick Gallamore and St. Roch's pastor at the time, now-retired Father James Wilmoth.

"He was my Catholic Superman when I was young," Hansen recalled.

At Roncalli, Hansen was impressed by his English teacher Philip Milroy, who went out of his way to kneel during all-school Masses celebrated in the school gym.

"With the gym filled up, there was no room to kneel," Hansen recalled. "But I remember Mr. Milroy. He'd always sit on the edge of a row in the bleachers and kneel on the stairs during the consecration of the Eucharist. I thought then that it was incredible that he did that. He showed a profound reverence."

It was during high school that Hansen

started praying a holy hour, often in the perpetual adoration chapel of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood.

This practice was strengthened when he became a student at Wabash College in Crawfordsville, Ind., and he saw Catholic peers praying before the tabernacle in the school's Newman Center.

"That started to rub off on me," Hansen said. "I started to see the character of these guys. I realized that, if I wanted to be the man who I was created to be, I needed to give time to the Eucharist."

His thoughts about the possibility of a call to the priesthood, which had been on his mind in high school, then crystallized enough that, after two years at Wabash, he became an archdiocesan seminarian and transferred to Bishop Bruté.

The Eucharist as the 'core component' of discernment

Casey Deal grew up in Bloomington as a member of St. Charles Borromeo Parish. Attending public schools there, he credits the parish's catechists and pastors for helping him grow in his love for the Eucharist.

This love started to take off as a young adult when Father Thomas

See SEMINARIANS, page 8B

Vocations Awareness Supplement highlights the priesthood, diaconate and consecrated life

This issue of *The Criterion* features our annual supplement that highlights vocations in the Church to the priesthood, diaconate and consecrated life.

It is ordinarily published during the U.S. bishops' annual Vocations Awareness Week, which this year is on Nov. 5-11.

From the beginning, the Church has recognized that marriage is also a vocation, a pathway to holiness, to which God calls people. *The Criterion* publishes two marriage supplements annually, usually in February and July.

In addition, the Archdiocese of Indianapolis has three offices which

promote vocations. For information on the Office of Marriage and Family Life, visit www.archindy.org/marriageandfamily. For information on the diaconate, go to www.archindy.org/deacon. For information on the priesthood and consecrated life, visit www.archindy.org/vocations. †

Vow of stability helps Benedictine sisters be rooted in prayer and mutual support

By Sean Gallagher

BEECH GROVE—What vows do religious in the Catholic Church profess? Poverty, chastity and obedience? That might be the most common answer.

But it wouldn't be entirely accurate.

For some 1,500 years, Benedictine men and women have professed vows of obedience, stability and conversion to the monastic way of life. The last vow includes poverty and chastity but encompasses more aspects of life than just them.

But what about stability? What is it? In that vow, Benedictines promise to be tied to their particular monastic community for the rest of their lives.

That's what links the 45 members of Our Lady of Grace Monastery to their monastic community in Beech Grove, which was founded in 1955 by Monastery Immaculate Conception in Ferdinand, Ind., in the Evansville Diocese, and became an independent community in 1961.

Three members of Our Lady of Grace recently spoke with *The Criterion* about what the vow of stability means to them.

Benedictine Sister Nicolette Etienne, who teaches middle school religion at nearby Holy Name of Jesus School, sees stability as "a solid, rooted tree."

"To be really rooted and secure allows me to live all the other vows," Sister Nicolette said. "When you're really secure, confident and sturdy, the winds can blow, but you're safe, because you're secure."

"Everything else flows from my feeling strong, safe, secure and rooted in my love for Christ and my Benedictine sisters. That makes me strong to be able to go out and build God's kingdom."

Benedictine Sister Sheila Marie Fitzpatrick, a member of the archdiocesan Creation Care Commission, understandably views stability as the rich soil Jesus spoke of in the parable of the sower that yields 100 fold (Mt13:1-23; Mk 4:1-20; Lk 8:4-15).

"Rich soil doesn't happen overnight," Sister Sheila Marie said. "When you think of how nutrients are put in soil, it takes season after season, year after year in the cycles of life. Vegetation dies. It creates new compost and builds layer after layer after layer."

"When we make our monastic vows, we make them for life. So, we keep renewing them in ourselves every day. It's our sense of stability that allows us to do that."

Benedictine Sister Susan Nicole Reuber, her community's director of development, offers a relational image of the vow of stability: "staying at the table."

"Even when things are tough and hard, stability asks us to stay in the conversation," Sister Susan Nicole said. "Even if [other people] have an opinion different from mine, I stay in the conversation."

"It's that 'I' becoming 'we.' That's very important in community life. ... If I stay at the table and listen to the rest of the sisters, then maybe I can have a conversion and understand more why we're not choosing my particular opinion."

The vow of stability for Benedictines grew out of St. Benedict's experience of the great instability of society in late fifth-century Italy when the western part of the Roman Empire was collapsing.

Sister Sheila Marie thinks many people in society today, perhaps especially young adults, similarly seek a stability amid the often-roiling changes in contemporary culture.



Benedictine Sister Susan Nicole Reuber, left, Benedictine Sister Heather Jean Foltz and Benedictine Sister Rocio Moreno pray Evening Prayer on Oct. 16 in the chapel of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

"Our culture in the United States is one that thrives on change," she said. "Our advertisements focus on what is newer and better. To move from job to job now is seen as moving up. You don't stay in one place."

"[But] that doesn't get to the deep longing for belonging. It doesn't allow people to truly belong. I think there's a real longing for that."

Sister Susan Nicole, who was a young adult teacher at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis before joining Our Lady of Grace in 2012, has firsthand experience of this.

"I was doing lots of things at Roncalli and at St. Jude [Parish]," she said. "But there was still something missing. It was a tie to something bigger, to a community, to be with other women who believed in the same things that I believed in, being part of a group that saw gifts in me that I didn't see in myself."

"I think that's what young adults long for. They want to be known and to belong."

The Benedictine sisters of Our Lady of Grace don't just belong to their monastic community. They also value the connection they have with the city of Beech Grove in which they're located.

Its history is largely rooted in the early 20th-century development of the town as a railroad center. The days of the Beech Grove community finding its lifeblood in the large rail yard along Emerson Avenue, though, have long since passed.

"Beech Grove has survived the changes that have happened in its history," said Sister Sheila Marie. "And it's still able to maintain a small-town sense. It's a tight-knit community. It's a real blessing to have that. We hope that we're holding down our part of it on the north side [of Beech Grove]."

Sister Susan Nicole recently spoke with Beech Grove leaders about the place of Our Lady of Grace in the wider community.

"All of them said that, even if a Beech Grove community member isn't Catholic and doesn't know about the sisters, they still know that 1402 Southern Avenue is a special holy place," said Sister Susan Nicole,



This aerial photo shows Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove. The community of Benedictine sisters who live there profess a vow of stability that links them to the monastic community for life. (Submitted photo)

referencing the monastery's street address. "People know who the sisters are and the stability that we've brought to the community."

One aspect of the life of the Benedictine sisters at 1402 Southern Avenue in Beech Grove that Sister Nicolette, Sister Sheila Marie and Sister Susan Nicole emphasized as the prime expression of their stability is their daily life of prayer.

St. Benedict in his *Rule for Monasteries* said that "nothing is to be preferred to the work of God," which, for him, meant monastic communities gathering several times a day to pray the Liturgy of the Hours.

"Our monastic life is centered around common prayer and community life," Sister Nicolette said. "That's what gives us the strength to go out to build the kingdom of God."

Sister Susan Nicole sees the vow of stability beautifully illustrated in the fidelity of Benedictine Sister Mary Carol Messmer, 100, and a founding member of Our Lady of Grace, to the community's life of prayer.

"She still is at prayer every single morning, noon and evening," Sister Susan Nicole said. "She may be in a

wheelchair or behind a walker, but she's there."

Sister Susan Nicole said that, while stability drew her to Our Lady of Grace, it was prayer in the midst of stability that has kept her there.

"When I do occasionally have a time where I can't be at Morning Prayer or Evening Prayer, my day feels off," she said. "It just feels like something is missing, a great big piece of my life."

"Some mornings, I wish I could just sleep until 10 and not have an alarm clock. But then I need to be there with my sisters. I need to be praying for them. They're praying for me, even if I don't feel like being there."

For Sister Nicolette, being part of a community of women religious gathering faithfully for prayer every day is at the heart of who she is before God.

"Life isn't always easy," she said. "We're a group of women who are all different and have different idiosyncrasies. But our common goal is seeking God. It's why I'm here. To be able to seek God with another person is easier to do than doing it by yourself."

(For more information about Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove, visit www.benedictine.com.) †

Sister Evangeline follows her heart to embrace a lifelong dance with Jesus

By John Shaughnessy

When she talks about her relationship with Jesus, Franciscan Sister M. Evangeline Rutherford shares a thought that is uplifting and unusual.

"I used to go swing dancing in high school and college, and I like to think of my relationship with Jesus as a dance," she says. "I have to trust that he will lead me. I am freest when I let him be in total control of where we are going and what we are doing."

The joy and commitment that are at the heart of that response pervade every part of life for this 33-year-old woman, a member of the Perpetual Adoration Franciscans, based in Mishawaka, Ind.

Those qualities shine through as she recalls her time as a member of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis, when she was part of the ministry there that helps feed the homeless downtown.

"I was the Tuesday 'sandwich maker.' They handed out bologna-and-cheese sandwiches and peanut butter-and-jelly sandwiches to the homeless in the area," she says. "It was refreshing to be able to do some regular volunteering as an adult."

The joy and commitment are also there when she describes her current role at Franciscan Health Lafayette. Her ministry includes working in the lab and interviewing patients about their stay in the Lafayette hospital, which is run by the Perpetual Adoration Franciscans.

"I have a survey to fill out, but often the conversation becomes more personal," she notes. "It is a privilege to be able to listen to people share their stories about their families, careers, health struggles and their faith lives. I have often had the privilege of praying with patients and their families. I have also gotten to know many of our staff members."

"There have been many beautiful moments talking with patients. They have thanked me for coming and have said that they feel so much better now that someone has listened to their story. People naturally feel safe talking to a sister, and many people really open up to me. I sometimes marvel at that privilege. I know it is so much larger than just myself."

That last sentence also captures her path to becoming a religious sister, starting with the influence that her parents—George and Linda—had on her, the younger of their two children.

'God wants us to try to be the best version of ourselves'

"I have been blessed to share the faith journey with my parents," says Sister Evangeline, who grew up in Michigan. "I was able to experience many formative moments during my high school years with my dad. He was involved with youth ministry. We attended a Catholic youth camp together and went to several Franciscan University of Steubenville Youth Conferences together."

"My parents always encouraged me to do my best, but they did not demand perfection. I feel like my parents really helped me to understand that God wants us to try to be the best version of ourselves, and he is there to forgive us when we repent and call upon his mercy."

'I like to think of my relationship with Jesus as a dance. I have to trust that he will lead me.'

'Let your discernment flow from prayer. The Lord often reveals his will one step at a time.'

—Franciscan Sister
M. Evangeline Rutherford



Father Rick Nagel, pastor of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis, shares a moment of joy with Franciscan Sister M. Evangeline Rutherford after she professed her perpetual vows on Aug. 2 as a member of the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration, based in Mishawaka, Ind.. Sister Evangeline is a former member of St. John and felt supported by Father Nagel in her path to becoming a religious sister. (Submitted photo)

We can learn and strive to do better."

It was during one of the youth conferences at Franciscan University—in the summer after her high school graduation—that she first thought about being a religious sister.

"At the end of the weekend conference, they invite up any young men and women who are thinking about religious life or the priesthood to come forward for a blessing," she recalls. "I remember thinking, 'Why not you?' I did not go up for the blessing, but the question stuck, and I could never let it go."

Her eventual answer to that question took another step forward during her college years at Michigan State University, a time when, she says, "I grew to know Jesus more and more and came to know that this is how he made my heart."

She also became aware of the Franciscan sisters during her senior year in college, thanks to the influence of another young woman who felt called to religious life.

The woman, who later became Sister Mary Augustine, dropped out of her doctoral program to pursue a master's degree that prepared her to enter the Franciscan community.

"I lived in a women's discernment house at the time," Sister Evangeline recalls. "We had Saturday morning Mass and formation nights, so I got to know her through that. I went to her entrance ceremony in 2013 and met the sisters."

'A bright light among her peers'

Her connection with the Franciscan sisters continued when she moved to

Indianapolis in 2014 to take a job in the laboratory at Franciscan Health Indianapolis. Looking for a parish with a strong young adult faith community, she found hers at St. John the Evangelist, led by its pastor, Father Rick Nagel.

"I did not know anyone, and it was a place to start to get to know people," says Sister Evangeline, who also became involved in the activities of IndyCatholic, an outreach of the archdiocese's Office of Young Adult & College Campus Ministry.

"I am inspired by what has happened at St. John's with Father Rick's leadership. Adoration was just beginning when I was there. We had a holy hour on Thursday evenings. I went to confession several times during those holy hours, and Father Rick had great fatherly advice for me. I felt supported to continue in my discernment."

Father Nagel remembers her time at St. John with joy.

"She was always a bright light among her peers and gave hope to the parishioners that the young Church is alive and well," he says. "Her steadfast faith, attention to prayer and intentional discernment of God's plan for her life served as a fruitful example for others in the community."

When Sister Evangeline professed her perpetual vows this August as a member of the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration, Father Nagel made sure he was there in the chapel of St. Francis Convent in the northern Indiana community of Mishawaka.

"It was a great joy for me as a spiritual father," he says. "I was deeply moved by the joy of both Sister Evangeline and her community of sisters who welcomed her into the family of faith. During the reception, after her perpetual vows, Sister Evangeline was so present to each person who greeted her. I was moved by the time she took with us all and made each person feel as if they had an important role in her formation and life."

For Sister Evangeline, that day and her choice were a natural extension of her love of Christ and her deep appreciation for St. Francis.

'Jesus wants you to fully become who he created you to be'

"I was always drawn to St. Francis," she says. "He simply wanted to preach and live the Gospel. Our charism of perpetual adoration fits so well with Franciscan spirituality. We want to spend time with the Lord, to entrust the cares of the world to him, and to go out and preach the good news through our witness and in our words."

"I remember hearing about our community and thinking that I could spend the rest of my life reflecting on the beauty and the mystery of the Eucharist. I have been able to give my total commitment to the person of Jesus. He is now my spouse forever."

In many ways, her dance with Jesus has just begun. In other ways, she has always been moving toward his embrace of her life. It's a relationship that she hopes other young women will consider as a religious sister.

"Let your discernment flow from prayer," she advises. "The Lord often reveals his will one step at a time. So, ask the Lord, 'What are you calling me to do at this point in my life?' It might be as simple as going to adoration for an hour every week or attending weekday Mass."

"Seize the graced moments. If you are inspired to go talk to a sister or a priest or go on a discernment retreat, do it."

Most of all, she says, turn to Jesus, trusting he will lead you to where he wants you to be.

"Do not be afraid!" she says. "Jesus wants you to fully become who he created you to be. He knows your heart."

(For more information on the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration in Mishawaka, Ind., visit ssfpa.org.) †



New postulant finds a spiritual home with the Sisters of Providence

By Jason Moon
Special to *The Criterion*

ST. MARY-OF-THE-WOODS—"I knew when I came here for a month's stay in 2022, and I didn't want to leave Providence Hall."

Stephanie Rivas finally felt like she was home at St. Mary-of-the-Woods in western Indiana when she came to visit with the Sisters of Providence.



Stephanie Rivas

After four years of investigating religious life, Stephanie found herself in front of the entrance to historic Providence Hall on Sunday, Sept. 9, 2023. She knocked on the door and was greeted by Providence Sister Dawn Tomaszewski, the sisters' General Superior. She stepped through the doors and was welcomed as the congregation's newest postulant.

Stephanie, 36, has visited with the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods since 2020. At that time, she stayed at a hermitage because Providence Hall at the motherhouse was closed due to COVID-19. However, during her stay in 2020, she met with Providence Sister Barbara Bluntzer who is from Stephanie's hometown of Corpus Christi, Texas.

Stephanie's discernment began in 2019 as she investigated many other religious communities. But after meeting with Sisters of Providence

vocations director Providence Sister Joni Luna, she felt God nudging her closer and closer to the congregation founded in 1840 in western Indiana by Mother Theodore Guérin, Indiana's first saint.

"I always came back here," Stephanie said. "Sister Joni always reached out to me. It started in 2020 through social media."

Stephanie has a bachelor's degree in management from Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio. She later earned a master's degree in early childhood development at Texas A&M University-San Antonio.

After completing her graduate education, Stephanie started teaching at a reservation in South Dakota, but COVID-19 reared its ugly head and she began to feel something might need to change.

"I wasn't expecting to not be with students," she said. "So, I used that time to teach and discern."

Following her teaching stint in South Dakota, Stephanie found herself compelled to volunteer to aid woman in crisis pregnancies with the Vitae Corps program in Chicago. During her stay there, she met with many members of the Sisters of Providence who lived in Northlake, Ill., and began furthered her discernment process with Providence Sister Teresina Grasso.

"I had to know who I was as a person," Stephanie said. "I was learning myself and the history of religious life. I wrestled with it."

Even though she continued to visit with other congregations, Stephanie always felt her heart drawn back

to the Sisters of Providence and all of the natural beauty of the motherhouse campus at St. Mary-of-the-Woods.

"I like the quiet pace, and I connected with nature," she said. "I like to be in nature. Something moved me, that at-home feeling. It was probably very subtle, the at-home feeling, to me in little ways. But the quiet felt loud."

After her stay in 2022, Stephanie went home to Texas and taught at a charter school before coming back for a come-and-see retreat in October of that year.

"I started the process at that time," she said. "I applied and only three Sisters of Providence knew. I kept everything quiet. It was hard, but all of my experiences have led me to this point."

The congregation's director of postulants, Providence Sister Editha Ben, will help coordinate Stephanie's new schedule and ministry.

During her postulancy, Stephanie will take part in various ministries within the community while continuing her discernment and initial formation in religious life.



Stephanie Rivas knocks on the entrance door of Providence Hall on Sept. 9, prior to being welcomed by the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods in western Indiana as the congregation's most recent postulant. (Submitted photo)

After approximately 10 months in the postulancy, Stephanie will be eligible to enter into the first year of the novitiate. At that point, she will receive the title of sister.

(Jason Moon is the communications director for the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. For more information on the community of women religious in western Indiana, visit spsmw.org.) †

PRAY for VOCATIONS
2023-2024

Eucharistic Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us!

2023-2024 Seminarians & Religious in Formation Prayer Card

Please pray for the following individuals and intentions on the corresponding day of the month.

1. Pope Francis
2. Archbishop Charles C. Thompson
3. Deacon Anthony Armbruster
4. Deacon Samuel Rosko
5. Deacon Bobby Vogel
6. Thomas Day
7. Liam Hosty
8. Aaron Noll
9. Isaac Siefker / Sr. Emily Tekolste, SP
10. Kristofer Garlitch / Sr. Maria Gemma Barnett, SOLT
11. Samuel Hansen/ Sr. Mary Lily among Thorns McCann, SSVM
12. Timothy Khuishing / Sr. Evelyn Lobo, SSpS
13. Khaing Thu / Sr. Mary Peter Ruschke, OSF
14. Lance Tony / Sr. Mary Amata Naville, OSF
15. Casey Deal / Maureen Pisani
16. Randy Schneider / Sr. Israel Mercy Magnificat, S.V.
17. Nathan Thompson / Sr. Maria Guadalupe Figueroa, RSM
18. Emiliano Enriquez De Alva / Sr. Magdalene Marie Schafer
19. Aidan Hauersperger / Sr. Mary Paul Callahan, FSGM
20. Seth Hickey / Sr. Stephanie Pahren
21. Alexander Lindberg / Sr. Katelyn Noll
22. Robert McKay / Br. Alberic Henry, OCSO
23. Noah Sherman / Br. Benjamin Sasin, CSC
24. Levi Wojtalik / Josh Amodeo
25. Aidan Smith / Br. Taylor Fulkerson, SJ
26. Jack Adams / Br. Ben Jensen, SJ
27. Maximilian Egan / Abraham Hudepohl
28. Lucas LaRosa / Nathan Huynh
29. Todd Seiler/ William Rees
30. Antonio Harbert / Joshua Russell
31. For Vocations to the Priesthood and Consecrated Life

For information on the Seminarians and Religious in Formation from the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, visit www.HearGodsCall.com





New deacon aspirants come from varied backgrounds

In August, 17 men from across central and southern Indiana began formation as the archdiocese's fifth class of deacon aspirants.

During the next four years, they will participate in the four dimensions of deacon formation: human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral.

In that time, they will meet as a group for classes or on retreat one weekend a month for 11 months

each year. Additionally, they will participate in various ministries of charity in parishes to which they will be assigned as well as other places outside of parishes such as jails, hospitals and nursing homes.

Leading the men in their formation will be Deacon Kerry Blandford, archdiocesan director of deacon formation.

The new class of deacon aspirants range in age from

40 to 72. They have been married as few as 10 years and as many as 41 years.

All continue to work at careers in the secular world in a wide range of fields including technology, engineering, education, social work, firefighting and carpentry.

The 17 aspirants come from 14 archdiocesan parishes that are located in eight of its 11 deaneries. †



James Barker

Age: 53
Wife: Julie
Children: 4
Parish: St. Joseph, Shelbyville
Occupation: Software account executive



Anthony Basso

Age: 45
Wife: Courtney
Children: 2
Parish: St. Malachy, Brownsburg
Occupation: Theology teacher at Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School in Indianapolis



Donald Burgener

Age: 55
Wife: Yolanda
Children: 3
Parish: St. Rose of Lima, Franklin
Occupation: Retail store assistant manager



Michael Crossey

Age: 58
Wife: Tricia
Children: 5
Parish: Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary, Indianapolis
Occupation: Strategic and financial management



Richard Gallamore

Age: 72
Unmarried
Parish: St. Mary, Indianapolis
Occupation: Teacher at St. Roch School in Indianapolis



Patrick Hoekstra

Age: 42
Wife: Jennifer
Children: 3
Parish: St. Malachy, Brownsburg
Occupation: Licensed clinical social worker, program manager for mental health staff for U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs



Rodrick Hughes

Age: 50
Wife: Julie
Children: 6
Parish: St. Pius X, Indianapolis
Occupation: Vice president of transformation for a technology company



Bryan Korff

Age: 63
Wife: Teresa
Children: 4
Parish: St. Michael, Greenfield
Occupation: Software developer



Peter Mejeski

Age: 62
Wife: Angela
Children: 4
Parish: St. Thomas More, Mooresville
Occupation: Insurance agent



Kevin Murphy

Age: 40
Wife: Jessica
Children: 1
Parish: St. Joseph University, Terre Haute
Occupation: Firefighter, emergency medical technician



Richard Rader

Age: 61
Wife: Andrea
Children: 4
Parish: St. Malachy, Brownsburg
Occupation: Certified public accountant



Miguel Angel Perez Salazar Carillo

Age: 52
Wife: Fernande Denise Drieux Parra
Children: 2
Parish: St. Bartholomew, Columbus
Occupation: Computer systems analyst



Christopher Rito

Age: 56
Wife: Melinda
Children: 5
Parish: SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi, Greenwood
Occupation: Research scientist



Edward Spahr

Age: 47
Wife: Susan
Children: 3
Parish: Immaculate Heart of Mary, Indianapolis
Occupation: Engineer



Augustin Torres-Lozano

Age: 52
Wife: Angelica Guadalupe Martinez Arce
Children: 3
Parish: St. Bartholomew, Columbus
Occupation: Project manager



Jayson Waterman

Age: 53
Wife: Karen
Children: 5
Parish: St. Gabriel, Connerville
Occupation: Forester for Indiana Department of Natural Resources



Bryan Wulf

Age: 58
Wife: Patricia
Children: 2
Parish: Good Shepherd, Indianapolis
Occupation: Carpenter



Oldenburg Franciscans discover vocations at a later age

By Sean Gallagher

OLDENBURG—Franciscans have always done things a bit differently. It's in their history. In the story of their founder, St. Francis of Assisi himself.

As the son of a rich cloth merchant in early 13th-century Italy, Francis had the destiny of raising his family's glory to greater heights by becoming a chivalrous knight. It was a dream he fully embraced.

But that dream turned into a nightmare when, in a battle against neighboring Perugia, he was taken as a prisoner of war. While in captivity, Francis experienced a conversion and threw away his dreams of knightly glory.

But he went further, turning his back on his family's material riches to become "the poor man of Assisi." Although he has been beloved for centuries since by Catholics and non-Catholics alike, Francis' vocational choice shocked the townspeople of Assisi at the time. That's not what the son of a rich cloth merchant was supposed to do.

Today, members of the community of Franciscan sisters in Oldenburg are following in their founders' footsteps. Some of them have walked away from wealth like Francis did.

But four of them have broken the mold of vocational discernment in another way by embracing a call to religious life at an older age—when they were in their 40s or 50s.

Their newest postulant, Maureen Pisani, is 55. A native of Malta and a naturalized U.S. citizen, Pisani moved to Oldenburg earlier this year after selling a comfortable home in Santa Fe, N.M., and giving away many of her possessions to friends.

A successful hypnotherapist, Pisani had been driven to succeed, describing herself as a "typical type A personality."

"I would set a goal, strive to achieve it and then go on to the next," she said.

After earning a doctorate in her field in 2021, however, she was no longer satisfied making plans for the future.

"There was absolutely nothing inside," she recalled. "Every time I thought of what was next, I would get this question, 'So, are you going to say 'Yes' to me now?'"

"It stopped me in my tracks. Every step I took, it was, 'Is this because Maureen wants it? Or is it because God is asking?'"

Once she opened herself to a possible religious vocation, Pisani embraced it much like she had driven herself to succeed in worldly pursuits. After meeting Franciscan Sister Kathleen Branham, the Oldenburg Franciscans' vocations director, she visited the motherhouse in May 2022.

"I fell in love with the community," Pisani said. "The sisters are tremendous."

Among those sisters, she met three women who, like herself, joined the community at an older age.

One of them is the vocations director. Sister Kathleen joined the Oldenburg Franciscans when she was 43, walking away from a successful career in the transportation industry, selling a big home, a lake house and a boat.

"All of my friends and family were saying I was crazy for giving everything up that I had worked my life for," she said. "That's when I was realizing that St. Francis was about living the vow of poverty and that everything was a gift given by God.

"Once I gained that insight, I realized that it was very easy to give up [my possessions] because they were only gifts given to



Maureen Pisani, left, Franciscan Sister Kathleen Branham, Franciscan Sister Janette Marie Pruitt and Franciscan Sister Susan Marie Pliess pose by a statue of St. Francis of Assisi on Oct. 4, the feast of St. Francis, on the grounds of the Oldenburg Franciscan sisters in Oldenburg. Pisani is a postulant for the religious community. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

me by God to begin with to enjoy. Now it was time for me to pass them on to others."

While embracing a life of poverty after living a life of wealth as an adult was relatively easy for Sister Kathleen, living the vow of obedience was more of a challenge.

"I am a very independent woman," she said. "The vow of obedience—I'm not going to lie—has been kind of tough for me off and on through my 23 years of religious life.

"But once I got it ingrained that it's not about me, but it's about we and what's the common good of all of us, then I learned to let go of my independence and learned to become interdependent."

Franciscan Sister Susan Marie Pliess, who oversees Pisani's formation in the community, had already given up a career as an engineer long before becoming a Franciscan. Raised as a Catholic, she became an evangelical Christian as a young adult. That led her to serve as a missionary in China.

Eventually making her way back to the U.S. and the Catholic Church, Sister Susan Marie ultimately discerned in her 50s that God was calling her to religious life.

Coming to religious life after living an independent adult life for decades made some parts of her transition easier.

"You've been through lots in your life already," Sister Susan Marie said. "You've had lots of challenges. Things are not as traumatic and dramatic. You can put your nose to the grindstone and get through the formation period seemingly at times just because of your life experience.

"That might be harder for a young person who's maybe just starting to make their way."

But, like Sister Kathleen, embracing the will of the community was challenging for Sister Susan Marie after being so used to following her own will



Spires dot the skyline of Oldenburg, a historic village in southeastern Indiana that was founded by German immigrants in 1837. The spires are on the buildings and churches of the Sisters of St. Francis' motherhouse and Holy Family Parish. (File photo by Sean Gallagher)

alone for so many years.

"I had more freedom to act, especially in the area of social justice that you can't necessarily do when you're part of a community," she said. "Your voice is now the voice of the community and not your own voice as an individual Catholic."

When Franciscan Sister Janette Marie Pruitt entered the Oldenburg community in 2000, she was 51, a mother and grandmother.

Raised in Bay St. Louis, Miss., she had a desire as a child to become a religious sister, but saw racial barriers to that dream.

"Being an African-American, no one invited us to be sisters," she said. "We were not allowed to be sisters in my time."

She eventually married and was divorced, raising her children as a single mother. After her children were living on their own and she had received a declaration of nullity (annulment)

regarding her previous marriage, the possibility of religious life re-emerged in her life.

"God handled me with a long-handled spoon," Sister Janette Marie said.

Entering religious life at a later age has helped her be open to new possibilities, said Sister Janette Marie, who now makes Mass vestments.

"I'm still discovering what God has for me to do next," she said. "There's always something evolving."

In her work in promoting vocations for her community, Sister Kathleen is seeing a growing interest among middle-aged adults in religious life.

"God calls people at different times in life, not just when you're young," she said. "The Franciscan way of life is open to all of God's people. It's a radical availability. Age really doesn't have anything to do with it."

(For more information on the Franciscan Sisters of Oldenburg, visit oldenburgfranciscans.org.) †



SEMINARIANS

continued from page 2B

Kovatch became St. Charles' pastor.

Deal recalled being impressed by the love Father Kovatch showed for the Eucharist in the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday. It's a liturgy that especially celebrates Christ's gift of himself in the Eucharist and his institution of the priesthood. A eucharistic procession often happens after the Mass.

"You could just see the love that he had for the Eucharist," Deal said. "To see him love Jesus so much—the impact of those Holy Thursday Masses when he took [the Blessed Sacrament] out of the church—it was so moving for me. Jesus' presence in the Blessed Sacrament is really felt in those times."

During that time, Father Kovatch also made eucharistic adoration more widely available at St. Charles. Deal was attracted to praying before the Blessed Sacrament and began to discern God calling him to consider the priesthood.

"There was a draw to want to be with Jesus in that unique way that a priest has," he said. "That God calls normal men to confect his presence through words of the priest is incredible. It's something that I want to do and somehow I think that God might be calling me to do."

Isaac Siefker felt a call to the priesthood at a much younger age.

"The Eucharist was the core component to my discernment," said Siefker. "As long ago as I can remember, I've always said that I wanted to be a priest when I grew up. And it started with a basic love of the Eucharist."

He felt that when he was 6, before he had received his first Communion, when he saw his older brother serve at Mass at St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Bedford and had an urge to be in the sanctuary with him.

Father Richard Eldred, St. Vincent's pastor at the time, knew of his desire.

"One day, he came out of the sacristy and said to me, 'Do you want to serve?'" Siefker recalled. "I remember being so excited. I zoomed back into the sacristy. I loved so much being that close to the altar."

Like Schneider, Siefker's love of the Eucharist was also planted in him by the witness of his parents praying before the Blessed Sacrament, which they did at



Seminarian Randall Schneider kneels on Oct. 25 before the tabernacle in the chapel of Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary in Indianapolis.

(Submitted photo)

St. Vincent's perpetual adoration chapel.

"We were a big homeschool family," he said. "We were very busy. And yet the Eucharist was something that they made time for. It was a priority. That alone spoke volumes."

His love of the liturgy grew when his family moved and became members of St. John the Apostle Parish in Bloomington and came to know the Franciscans of the Immaculate, who minister at the nearby Our Lady of the Redeemer Retreat Center.

After high school, Siefker took time to discern where God might be calling him. Two weeks that he spent with the Knights of the Eucharist, a community of Franciscan brothers ministering at the time at the Shrine of the Blessed

Sacrament in Hanceville, Ala., proved crucial for him.

"That was when I really got the strength I needed to enter seminary," Siefker recalled. "It had been something I was afraid of. I was able to sit before the Blessed Sacrament and tell our Lord, 'I'm afraid to do this. ... But if you're going to ask me to do it, I know you'll give me the strength and I'll give it a shot.'"

'I dream about it every day'

Mass is celebrated daily at both Bishop Bruté and at Saint Meinrad. And the Blessed Sacrament is exposed for adoration most days of the week at both seminaries.

Thus, the Eucharist is a central part of the priestly formation that archdiocesan seminarians experience.

"It's a privilege that I get to go to Mass every day," Deal said. "I have chapels readily available to me where I can pop in and say hi to Jesus in a real way. I don't want to take this for granted."

Since Schneider is involved in liturgical music at Bishop Bruté, he often finds himself praying at the back of its chapel, where its organ is. Seeing his fellow seminarians in front of him praying before the Blessed Sacrament moves him.

"It's so inspiring," he said. "Every time that I get distracted, I see one of them and their gaze redirects me back to the Eucharist. That's really been powerful for me."

As Siefker has progressed in his priestly formation, his daily life has become more complex. He takes a full load of

classes at Saint Meinrad, has a parish assignment, holds down a work-study job and volunteers for the seminary's Project Warm in which seminarians help provide firewood for people living in poverty in the area.

Yet, in the midst of being pulled in so many directions, Siefker feels a greater draw toward prayer before the Eucharist.

"It's so tempting to put eucharistic adoration on the back burner," he said. "But then I realize you have to make your time with the Eucharist your priority. Then, somehow, everything else will get done."

Keeping the Eucharist at the heart of a busy daily schedule is good training for Siefker for what it will be like for him as a parish priest, something he's yearning to be.

"Maybe I'm ahead of myself, but I dream about it every day," he said.

And those dreams are all centered on leading his future parishioners to a greater love for the Eucharist.

"If I can just get them to love the Eucharist, everything else will come along."

Hansen gets a taste of what serving as a priest can be like when he serves as an extraordinary minister of holy Communion at St. Roch, where he's still a parishioner.

"Each of the people that I'm giving our Lord in the Eucharist to are being affected differently," Hansen said. "How are these people's lives being transformed by the Eucharist? That's something I won't know until I get to heaven."

When envisioning himself as a priest, Hansen thinks about a photo of retired Father Paul Landwerlen, the archdiocese's oldest priest, praying in 2022 on his 94th birthday before the Blessed Sacrament in the perpetual adoration chapel of St. Joseph Parish in Shelbyville.

"That's what I want," Hansen said. "I want to be the 94-year-old priest that can just kneel before the Eucharist, seeing that this is what made my life great."

(To learn more about a vocation to the priesthood in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, visit HearGodsCall.com.) †



Seminarian Casey Deal kneels in prayer during an Aug. 14 Mass at the St. Joseph Retreat and Conference Center in Tipton County in the Lafayette, Ind., Diocese. The liturgy took place during the annual seminarian convocation. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)



Benedictine monks live a ‘eucharistic life’ that is ‘immersed in God’

By Br. Zachary Wilberding, O.S.B.

Special to *The Criterion*

All you who are thirsty, come to the water! You who have no money, come, buy grain and eat. Come, buy grain without money, wine and milk without cost! (Is 55:1).

For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I have life because of the Father, so also the one who feeds on me will have life because of me (Jn 6:55-57).

The above Scripture quotations remind us that God’s love is expressed in a desire to feed his people. God feeds us through his word in Scripture and through his body and blood in the holy Eucharist.

Catholics in the U.S. have been taking part in the National Eucharistic Revival since *Corpus Christi* Sunday of 2022. Sponsored by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, the renewal will culminate in the National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis in July 2024.

The revival addresses, affirms and celebrates a critical truth: the Eucharist is the source and summit of our faith because it is the body and blood of Jesus Christ, the living Word of God and the root of our faith. The bishops have given us an opportunity to reflect on this gift and proclaim it to others.

The Eucharist is all about presence. When we gather together for the Eucharist, we are present to Jesus as the assembled people of God. And because he said that he is present when two or three are gathered in his name, Jesus is present in the assembly.

During the liturgy of the word, Jesus is present in the Scriptures proclaimed. And in the liturgy of the Eucharist, he becomes present to us under the forms of bread and wine.

In receiving holy Communion we receive Jesus—body and blood, soul and divinity. To reflect on this is to realize that when we participate in the Mass, it is like standing in the midst of a tsunami of God’s grace. The communion of Eucharist then is communion with one another, with the word of God and with the body and blood of Jesus.

The English word Eucharist is based on the Greek word *eucharistia*, which means thanksgiving. Since the body and blood of Christ presented in the sacrament of the Eucharist is the greatest possible gift, thanksgiving is the foremost response.

At Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad in southern Indiana, there is a direct path between the Archabbey Church of Our Lady of Einsiedeln and the monastery dining room, which the monks call their refectory.

This feature is intentional and is meant to remind us that, in both places, we gather in an assembly for nourishment. Neither at the table of the Eucharist nor at the dining table do we eat in isolation. We eat as a community. We are in communion.

For Benedictine monks, the meal of physical nourishment will always be a reminder of the meal of spiritual nourishment.



Benedictine Archabbot Kurt Stasiak prays the eucharistic prayer during a Jan. 25 Mass at the Archabbey Church of Our Lady of Einsiedeln in St. Meinrad. The monks of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad live a life of giving thanks to God, especially in the Eucharist. (Photo courtesy of Saint Meinrad Archabbey)

Several times a day, we listen to God’s word in Scripture in the Liturgy of the Hours, as well as privately. And so, we are in communion with Christ, present in the words of Scripture. Through reflection and meditation, we deepen our relationship with him.

Like the eucharistic liturgy, the life of a monk is very much about presence and communion. Our daily lives are punctuated by times for gathering for prayer, meals, work and recreation. We are present to one another in all of these activities, and Christ is present in our brothers.

Living in community means that we serve one another. In serving one another, we serve Christ who taught us to wash each other’s feet. Benedictine Sister Joan Chittister once remarked that you can’t wash someone else’s feet if you live in isolation. Life lived in community is a life of communion.

Fed by the body and blood of Christ received at Mass, we meet and serve Christ in our brothers in the community.

In his *Rule for Monasteries*, St. Benedict counsels monks and nuns to always be ready to welcome guests as Christ. Hospitality offered to guests is another way of being present to Christ, of meeting Christ and serving him. It is a form of communion.

The core value of Benedictine monastic life is to seek God. This desire to seek God is already a gift of God’s grace. We seek God because God is seeking us and putting the desire for himself in our hearts. We desire to grow in relationship with God, to enter into communion with him.



Benedictine Father Thomas Gricoski proclaims a reading during an Aug. 15, 2022, Mass in the Archabbey Church of Our Lady of Einsiedeln in St. Meinrad. (Photo courtesy of Saint Meinrad Archabbey)

Therefore, we make ourselves present to God by being present to his word through reading and reflection, by publicly praying with the psalms and other Scriptures in church, by celebrating together the Eucharist at Mass.

Furthermore, we are present to Christ in one another in the community. We serve him in our relationships with one another.

This is a life immersed in God. It is a life of joy and gratitude, but it is also a life of trials and crosses.

But they do not overwhelm us. Jesus said that his followers would have to experience them. They lead us to resurrection and fullness of life in God’s kingdom.

At the end of several of our times of prayer, we say “Thanks be to God.” Thanks for this eucharistic way of life.

(Benedictine Brother Zachary Wilberding is vocations director of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad. For more information on the monastic community there, visit saintmeinrad.org.) †

‘Like the eucharistic liturgy, the life of a monk is very much about presence and communion.’

‘The core value of Benedictine monastic life is to seek God. ... We desire to grow in relationship with God, to enter communion with him.’



—Benedictine Brother Zachary Wilberding





ARCHDIOCESE OF INDIANAPOLIS

2023-2024 Seminararians



VOCATIONAL SYNTHESIS STAGE



Deacon Anthony Armbruster '24
Saint Meinrad Seminary
St. Malachy, Brownsburg



Deacon Sam Rosko '24
Saint Meinrad Seminary
Holy Rosary, Indianapolis



Deacon Bobby Vogel '24
Saint Meinrad Seminary
St. Joseph, Jennings County

CONFIGURATION STAGE



Thomas Day '25
Saint Meinrad Seminary
Holy Rosary, Indianapolis



Casey Deal '27
Saint Meinrad Seminary
St. Charles Borromeo, Bloomington



Kristofer Garlitch '26
Saint Meinrad Seminary
St. Mary, North Vernon



Samuel Hansen '26
Saint Meinrad Seminary
St. Roch, Indianapolis



Liam Hosty '25
Mount St. Mary's Seminary
St. Barnabas, Indianapolis



Timothy Khuishing '26
Pastoral Internship
St. Mark the Evangelist, Indianapolis



Aaron Noll '25
Saint Meinrad Seminary
St. Bartholomew, Columbus



Isaac Siefker '25
Saint Meinrad Seminary
St. John the Apostle, Bloomington



Khaing Thu '26
Saint Meinrad Seminary
St. Mark the Evangelist, Indianapolis

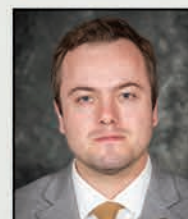


Lance Tony '26
Saint Meinrad Seminary
St. Simon the Apostle, Indianapolis
**Co-sponsor with the Diocese of Palayamkottai*

DISCIPLESHIP STAGE



Emiliano Enriquez De Alva '29
Bishop Simon Bruté Seminary
St. Ambrose, Seymour



Aidan Hauersperger '29
Saint Meinrad Seminary
St. Joseph, Jennings County



Seth Hickey '29
Saint Meinrad Seminary
Mary Queen of Peace, Danville



Alexander Lindberg '29
Bishop Simon Bruté Seminary
St. Joseph, Jennings County



Robert McKay '29
Bishop Simon Bruté Seminary
St. Ann, Indianapolis



Randy Schneider '28
Bishop Simon Bruté Seminary
All Saints, Dearborn County



Noah Sherman '29
Bishop Simon Bruté Seminary
St. Mary, North Vernon



Aidan Smith '30
Bishop Simon Bruté Seminary
St. Bartholomew, Columbus

PROPAEDEUTIC STAGE



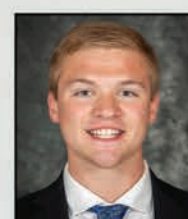
Jack Adams '30
Saint Meinrad Seminary
St. Malachy, Brownsburg



Maximilian Egan '30
Bishop Simon Bruté Seminary
Holy Rosary, Indianapolis



Antonio Harbert '31
Bishop Simon Bruté Seminary
St. Joseph, Shelbyville



Abraham Hudepohl '31
Bishop Simon Bruté Seminary
St. Nicholas, Ripley County



Nathan Thompson '28
Bishop Simon Bruté Seminary
St. Ann, Jennings County



Levi Wojtalik '29
Bishop Simon Bruté Seminary
Holy Rosary, Indianapolis



Nathan Huynh '31
Bishop Simon Bruté Seminary
Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany



Lucas LaRosa '30
Saint Meinrad Seminary
St. Mark the Evangelist, Indianapolis



William Rees '31
Bishop Simon Bruté Seminary
St. Nicholas, Ripley County



Joshua Russell '31
Bishop Simon Bruté Seminary
Holy Family, New Albany



Todd Seiler '30
Saint Meinrad Seminary
St. Mary, Aurora



vocations@archindy.org
HearGodsCall.com
(317) 236-1490





RELIGIOUS IN FORMATION

2023-2024



Sr. Teresa Kang, SP
Sisters of Providence,
Saint Mary-of-the-Woods
Temporary professed



Sr. Emily Tekolste, SP
Sisters of Providence,
Saint Mary-of-the-Woods
St. Anthony, Indianapolis
Temporary professed



Sr. Jessica Vitente, SP
Sisters of Providence,
Saint Mary-of-the-Woods
Temporary professed



Sr. Leslie Dao
Sisters of Providence,
Saint Mary-of-the-Woods
Novice



Stephanie Marie Rivas
Sisters of Providence,
Saint Mary-of-the-Woods
Postulant



**Sr. Mary Lily Among
Thorns McCann, SSVM**
Servants of the Lord and the
Virgin of Matara
All Saints, Dearborn County
Temporary professed



Sr. Evelyn Lobo, SSps
Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters,
St. Monica, Indianapolis
Temporary professed



**Sr. Mary Amata
Naville, OSF**
Sisters of St. Francis of
Perpetual Adoration,
St. Mary, Navilleton
Temporary professed



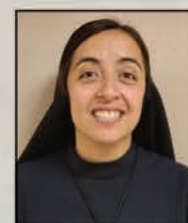
**Sr. Mary Peter
Ruschke, OSF**
Sisters of St. Francis of
Perpetual Adoration,
Batesville
Temporary professed



**Sr. Israel Mercy
Magnificat**
Sisters of Life
Novice



Maureen Pisani
The Sisters of
St. Francis, Oldenburg
St. Vincent de Paul/
St. Joseph, Shelbyville
Postulant



**Sr. Maria Guadalupe
Figueroa, RSM**
Religious Sisters of Mercy
St. Anthony, Indianapolis
Temporary professed



**Sr. Magdalene Marie
Schafer**
Daughters of the Holy Mary
of Sacred Heart of Jesus
St. Lawrence, Indianapolis
Temporary professed



**Sr. Mary Paul
Callahan, FSGM**
Sisters of St. Francis of
the Martyr St. George
St. Joseph University
Temporary professed



Sr. Stephanie Pahren
Missionaries of Charity
St. Michael, Brookville
Postulant



**Sr. Maria Gemma
Barnett, SOLT**
Society of Our Lady of the
Most Holy Trinity
St. Charles Borromeo,
Bloomington
Temporary professed



Sr. Katelyn Noll
Nashville Dominican Sisters
of St. Cecilia
Our Lady of Perpetual Help,
New Albany
Postulant



Br. Alberic Henry, OCSO
Abbey of Gethsemani
Our Lady of the Greenwood,
Greenwood
Temporary professed



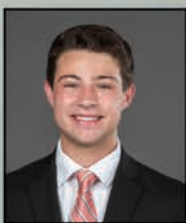
Br. Gregory Morris, OSB
Saint Meinrad Archabbey
St. Meinrad, IN
Temporary professed



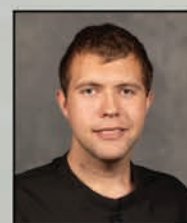
**Br. Jude
Romero-Olivas, OSB**
Saint Meinrad Archabbey
St. Meinrad, IN
Temporary professed



Benjamin Sasin, C.S.C.
Congregation of Holy Cross,
United States Province of
Priests and Brothers
St. John the Evangelist,
Indianapolis
Temporary professed



Josh Amodeo
Congregation of Holy Cross,
United States Province of
Priests and Brothers
SS. Francis and Clare,
Greenwood
Postulant



Patrick Allbright
Saint Meinrad Archabbey
St. Meinrad, IN
Novice



Andrew Levering
Saint Meinrad Archabbey
St. Meinrad, IN
Novice



Taylor Fulkerson, SJ
Society of Jesus-
Midwest Jesuits
St. Mary, Lanesville
Theology



Ben Jansen, SJ
Society of Jesus-
Midwest Jesuits
SS. Francis and Clare,
Greenwood
Philosophy Studies

RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

Sisters of St. Benedict
Beech Grove | benedictine.com

**Congregation of the Sisters of
Third Order of St. Francis**
Oldenburg | oldenburgfranciscans.org

Sisters of Providence
Saint Mary-of-the-Woods | spsmw.org

**Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual
Adoration**
Mishawaka | ssfpa.org

Discalced Carmelite Nuns
Terre Haute | heartsawake.org

Order of St. Benedict
Saint Meinrad Archabbey |
saintmeinrad.org

Franciscans of the Immaculate
maryschildren.com

Dominican Friars Central Province
domcentral.org

Conventual Franciscan Friars
franciscansusa.org

Little Sisters of the Poor
littlesistersofthepoor.org

Missionaries of Charity
motherteresa.org

Society of Jesus Midwest Province
jesuitsmidwest.org

**Order of Friars Minor St. Louis
Providence**
thefriars.org

**Order of Friars Minor Cincinnati
Providence of St. John the Baptist**
franciscan.org



New role brings full-circle moments in Father Brockmeier's vocational story

By Natalie Hoefler

In an article published just weeks before his June 25, 2016, ordination, then-transitional Deacon James Brockmeier expressed to *The Criterion* his desire for his priestly vocation.

"I just think Christ is so much closer to our lives than people think sometimes," he said in the article. "I want to help them see that closeness."

Since being appointed as director of the archdiocesan Office of Worship this summer, Father Brockmeier is in a unique position to fulfill his desire.

"I get to focus on helping parishes in the archdiocese, and the archdiocese as a whole, reflect on our worship, and to help serve as we worship the Lord well," he says.

"And I'm still blessed to be a parish priest as rector of the Cathedral [of SS. Peter and Paul in Indianapolis] and a chaplain at Butler University," Father Brockmeier adds.

In this article, he shares more about his new role—and how those duties bring him full circle in his vocational journey.

It's that 'encounter with Christ'

One of those full-circle moments involves the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC).

Father Brockmeier's first experience with NCYC was in Atlanta, Ga., in 2005, when he was 14. Looking back, he calls the event "really great."

His second NCYC experience had a much more profound impact on him as a transitional deacon less than a year away from his priestly ordination.

At that NCYC in 2015, he was honored to proclaim the Gospel to 26,000 youths during the conference's closing Mass in Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis.

"In the midst of this huge celebration of the Eucharist, Jesus is giving himself to us for the whole Church," Father Brockmeier said in the 2016 article. "But he's also calling each person to receive the Eucharist and be close to him."

"It was my prayer that [the NCYC participants] could feel that kind of closeness to the Church—that the Church is huge and they're part of it."

Now, as director of the Office of Worship, Father Brockmeier will play a much larger role for the closing NCYC liturgy in Lucas Oil Stadium on Nov. 18. (This year's NCYC gathering takes place in Indianapolis on Nov. 16-18).

"I've been [at NCYC] as a participant, as a transitional deacon, and now [in this new role] I get to coordinate the closing Mass," he notes.

"People come away from the whole conference as a beautiful experience."

"But many people point to worshipping at Mass with thousands of other youths—all worshipping the Lord, all in prayer together—as the highlight. It's that experience of not being alone and the encounter with Christ that they have."

"I'm excited about facilitating that experience for so many people."

Father Brockmeier will have a similar experience in January. For the first time, the Mass prior to the Indiana March for Life will take place in the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis, due to the high number of participants expected from dioceses throughout the state.

But the largest Mass he will play a role in assisting will come during next year's National Eucharistic Congress on July 17-21 in Indianapolis.

Since planning for the nationwide event has



Father James Brockmeier, chaplain to the Catholic students of Butler University in Indianapolis, speaks with Butler student Stephanie Gonzalez on Oct. 25 on Butler's campus. (Submitted photo)

been going on for some time, Father Patrick Beidelman (Father Brockmeier's predecessor in the Office of Worship) is coordinating its liturgies and eucharistic procession. Father Brockmeier says he is "really excited" about assisting him.

'That's a really great part of my week'

Another full-circle aspect in his new role harkens back to a moment of awe in *Sainte-Chapelle* ("Holy Chapel") in Paris, one stop on a pilgrimage Father Brockmeier took as a seminarian.

He was struck by the chapel's stunning stained-glass windows—15 of them, each about 50 feet tall, portraying 1,113 scenes from the Bible.

"The theology of the space is that the light of Christ reaches us in the Scriptures," then-transitional Deacon Brockmeier explained in the 2016 article before his ordination. "We sit in the midst of the word of God, and God's light shines through these stories."

"It really communicated the beauty of the word of God. And it's inspiring to look at the potential of the Church to create a place in the world where the light of the Gospel can shine. We're called to create this beautiful thing in the world."

Illuminating the Gospels through liturgy and worship is Father Brockmeier's mission in his new role.

"The Office of Worship serves the parishes of the archdiocese in the way that we worship as the people of God, as the Church," he explains.

That service comes in many forms. The office fields questions from parishes regarding the celebration of the Mass and other sacraments. It also coordinates preparations with parishes when the archbishop comes to celebrate Mass.

"I'm also more involved in the bigger liturgies that happen at the cathedral—ordinations, the chrism Mass, Rites of Election," Father Brockmeier says. "There are a lot of moving parts in those Masses."

He particularly enjoys educating Catholics about the liturgy.

"Sometimes I'll be invited by parishes to come and give presentations

about the Mass," he said. "And I'm preparing right now for a day of formation for our permanent deacons about their role in the liturgy."

Then there's the blessing of his continued role as a parish priest. He's rector of SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, and also serves as chaplain to the Catholic students at Butler University in Indianapolis.

"My role there is very similar to a parish priest, but on a college campus," Father Brockmeier explains.

Each Sunday, he celebrates Mass and enjoys dinner with the students, and offers Mass and adoration on Wednesdays.

"Every Wednesday, I also spend a couple hours in the afternoon out on campus making confessions available," says Father Brockmeier. "I just have a bench in the middle of campus where I sit, and I send something out to all the Catholic students signed up on our text list and say, 'Hey, I'm out in the middle of campus. I'm available to talk or hear confessions. Come stop by.'"

"That's a really great part of my week, for sure."

'The most important thing we do as Catholics'

Heading the Office of Worship in the midst of the National Eucharistic Revival is inspiring for Father Brockmeier, both in his new role and in his vocation as a priest.

"Especially at this time, we're reflecting on the Eucharist and the celebration of the Eucharist being at the



Father James Brockmeier prays part of the eucharistic prayer as a concelebrant during a Sept. 28 Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral. At right is Father Eric Augenstein, another concelebrant. Father Brockmeier serves as rector of the cathedral and director of the archdiocesan Office of Worship. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)

heart of the Christian life, the source and summit of the Christian life," he says.

"I've been trying to keep that focus at the heart of my work, that our worship of God and the Eucharist is the most important thing that we do as Catholics, and all the little details that are a part of my work all go to serving our worship as the Archdiocese of Indianapolis."

And they go toward fulfilling his vocational desire to "help people see the closeness" of Christ.

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