

**The**

# Criterion

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## Bruised, Hurting and Dirty

This week, we begin a new monthly column on mission work by George Kane, page 12.

CriterionOnline.com

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## Archbishop Tobin invites faithful to take part in synod consultation

CNS and Criterion staff report

Pope Francis will meet with representative bishops from around the world on Oct. 4-25 in the XIV Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops to discuss the topic: "The Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and Contemporary World." Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin is inviting the faithful of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis to take part in a consultation to help the bishops prepare for this synod.



Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin

The upcoming synod continues the work begun by bishops who met with the Holy Father in October 2014. A document containing background information, reflections and questions for the synod later this year can be found by going to [www.archindy.org/synod](http://www.archindy.org/synod). The questionnaire must be returned to the archdiocese by March 5.

Archbishop Tobin said the questionnaire is designed to invite a broad consultation among every component of the Church, including lay people, clergy and religious, academic institutions, lay movements and other ecclesial associations. The questionnaire is lengthy, and not everyone will be able to answer all of the questions.

Pope Francis formally approved the delegates to October's synod on the family elected by 28 bishops' conferences, including the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops; other conferences have yet to elect their delegates or have done so only recently. The pope approved the U.S. bishops' election of: Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Ky., conference president; Archbishop Charles J. Chaput of Philadelphia, host of the World Meeting of

See SYNOD, page 8

## 'The best teacher I ever had'



With two of her grandchildren by her side, Carole Finnell stands near a portrait of Cardinal Joseph E. Ritter, the man who changed her life and the course of Catholic education in the archdiocese by ordering the integration of Catholic schools in the late 1930s and early 1940s. She poses here in the library at Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School in Indianapolis with Brooke and Andrew Finnell, both students at the school. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

## Student who integrated Catholic schools says faith in Jesus guided her through tumultuous time

By John Shaughnessy

The story's defining moment occurs when a little girl finds herself locked inside a school cloakroom, afraid of what will happen next.

It's also a story about the unflinching dream of a bishop, a deep belief in angels, and the growing faith of a child during a contentious, history-making period for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis—and the United States.

As the person who lived that story, 78-year-old Carole Finnell warns that it has its share of dark, troubling moments that people may not want to hear about or read.

Still, it's her honest view of everything she faced and endured back

then—back when she was an 8-year-old student entering a new school for her, an elementary school that was part of Bishop Joseph E. Ritter's plan to integrate the Catholic schools in the archdiocese in the late 1930s and early 1940s.

### An emotionally-charged time of change

Finnell's story of heartbreak, hope and faith has its roots in 1937, 17 years before *Brown v. Board of Education*, the landmark 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision which held that racial segregation of children in public schools was unconstitutional.

In 1937, Bishop Ritter contacted Father Bernard Strange of St. Rita Parish in Indianapolis—then a predominantly black parish—and shared his desire to have children from the parish attend a Catholic

high school, according to information in the archives of the archdiocese.

On the first day of school in 1937, five black girls arrived at St. John Academy in Indianapolis and were welcomed by the Sisters of Providence who taught there—a welcome that wasn't universally shared.

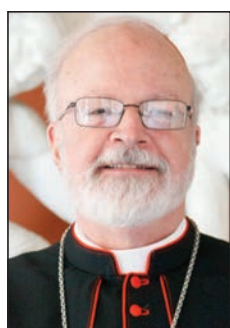
"After the girls left school on registration day, I sat at the telephone all afternoon and evening to receive a succession of calls of protest," wrote Providence Sister Mary Joan Kirchner in recalling her time as principal of St. John Academy when the integration occurred.

"Not one person identified himself or herself. I refused to discuss the matter on the phone, but told each caller that

See FAITH, page 16

## Accountability is key concern for pope's child protection commission, says pontifical commission

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Bishops who do not comply with the child protection norms adopted by their bishops' conferences and approved by the Vatican must face real consequences, said Cardinal Sean P. O'Malley of Boston, president of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors.



Cardinal Sean P. O'Malley

The commission, he said, "is very, very concerned about this whole area of [bishops'] accountability," and has a working group drawing up recommendations for Pope Francis.

The proposed new norms, the cardinal told reporters at the Vatican on Feb. 7, "would allow the Church to respond in an expeditious way when a bishop has not fulfilled his obligations.

"We think we have come up with some very practical recommendations that would help to remedy the situation that is such a source of anxiety to everybody" on the pontifical commission, he said. The recommendations will be presented to Pope Francis.

The cardinal and members of the commission, which includes survivors of clerical sex abuse, spoke to reporters at the end of their Feb. 6-8 meeting at the Vatican.

Peter Saunders, a survivor and commission member, said, "Bishop accountability is most definitely something that is a concern and central to some of

the work that is going to be carried out by the commission."

Saunders, who is from London, said he knows the Vatican and the Church at large "operate in a slightly different time dimension" where the definition of "quick" may be months or years. "I get that," Saunders said, "but when it comes to time, children only get one stab at childhood.

"It is not disputed that there have been far too many cover-ups, there have been far too many clergy protected, moved from place to place—this has got to be consigned to history very quickly," he said.

Jesuit Father Hans Zollner, a psychologist and member of the commission, said, "as far as we know," the number of bishops who have not followed

See ACCOUNTABILITY, page 10



# FAITH

continued from page 1

if he/she would come to the academy, I would be glad to explain the whole matter. No one accepted my invitation.”

Protests came from other directions, too.

“One pastor came to me several weeks after the opening of school and criticized me for taking black girls,” Sister Mary Joan wrote, adding that the pastor told her that “no one would want to come” from his parish to the school. “I told him that I believed God was more powerful than the people of Indianapolis and that I trusted Him to take care of St. John’s.

“While parents and some alumnae objected to the integration, most of the students were most cooperative and life moved smoothly during the remainder of the year. The following spring or summer, Bishop Ritter informed the other two academies that they *must* accept black girls.”

Sister Mary Joan noted that she and her fellow Providence teachers at the school “did a lot of praying” about what would happen with enrollment in 1938. Their prayers were answered.

“In the fall of 1938, we had 85 freshmen, the largest freshmen class in the city!” she noted. “In 1937, the class numbered in the forties, including the five black girls.”

In the midst of this emotionally-charged atmosphere, Bishop Ritter continued his integration efforts in Catholic schools—efforts that led the Klu Klux Klan to protest outside SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis.

During that time, 8-year-old Carole Finnell (then Ferguson) and her older brother Ronald were thrust into the center of the storm.

## Hardness of hearts, hope in humanity

Finnell started her education at St. Rita School, part of a parish whose mission was to evangelize the black community. As part of that mission, a bus traveled through the

city to bring children to the all-black school at St. Rita’s. Finnell and her brother rode that bus.

“I loved my first-grade teacher, Sister Mary Carmel, and whatever she said was golden to me,” Finnell recalls. “Sister continued as my teacher in second grade, and she continued to be wonderful in my opinion. I felt valued and loved in her classroom. I had no hint of what was to come.”

As Finnell prepared for third grade, she and her brother became central figures in Bishop Ritter’s decision to integrate Catholic elementary schools. Under the bishop’s direction, Father Strange chose the two children to attend an all-white school, and their mother agreed.

Her third-grade year became an education in more ways than usual for her. She learned the hardness of hearts of some people who couldn’t look beyond the color of a person’s skin. She also learned about the humanity of people from those who befriended her. Most of all, she learned that she could always trust in God. But all of those lessons were hard-earned.

“My teacher disliked me from the day she set eyes on me,” she recalls. “She was an elderly nun who had taught at the school for years.”

When Finnell struggled in math early in the year, her teacher said she was going to demote her. Finnell says her teacher also told her classmates not to play with her at recess.

“I was only lonely for a short time because Judy and Ruth ignored her orders and befriended me,” she recalls.

As the year continued and “sister found more ways to show her displeasure with me,” Finnell longed for the feeling of value and love she experienced with Sister Mary Carmel. It came in a moment that still sears her mind and her heart.

## ‘I prayed as hard as I knew how’

“Our third-grade class went to Mass each morning before class,” she recalls. “The church was located near our classroom. The cloakroom was in the back



Carole Finnell shares a story and a smile with her grandchildren, Brooke and Andrew Finnell, at Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School in Indianapolis, the school named in honor of the man who integrated Catholic schools in the archdiocese. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

of the classroom, and while I was hanging up my coat, Sister marched the class out and shut the door.

“I tried to open it. Upon realizing it was locked, I was filled with fear for I knew that when she returned, I would be in for another one of her painful, degrading punishments. I knelt by the door and cried out to Jesus. I prayed as hard as I knew how, asking Jesus to save me. I heard a soft rustle near the door and a click. I turned the knob, and the door opened.

“Looking up and down the hall, I saw no one. All was quiet and still. I was sure that Jesus had sent an angel to release me. I ran to Mass. My teacher never mentioned anything about my tardy arrival.”

More trials awaited her, including an incident when a member of the parish showed up at the school and told her and her brother that he was picking them up at their mother’s request. Finnell recalls how the man drove them around in his car as he threatened them and told them they shouldn’t return to the school. In response, Bishop Ritter made his own threat—to close the school and the parish.

“In physique, he was a man of small stature, but he was big in heart,” Finnell says about then-Bishop Ritter. “He was determined to integrate the Catholic schools. When there was trouble, he threatened to close down the school and the church. People were nice to us then.”

Finnell says that some parishioners rallied around her, her brother and their mother. As the crisis eventually faded, she and her brother finished the year at the school.

In the years that followed, the faith of Ronald and Carole endured and grew stronger. He became a Jesuit priest, serving the Catholic faith until his death in 2002. She has shared her faith with her five

children, her seven grandchildren and her three great-grandchildren.

In a nice, fitting touch, her granddaughter Alexis Finnell was the valedictorian of the Class of 2014 at Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School in Indianapolis. Her grandson, Andrew Finnell, and her granddaughter, Brooke Finnell, both attend the archdiocesan school named for the man who changed the course of Catholic education in the archdiocese.

“She’s the matriarch of the family. She holds everything together,” Andrew says about his grandmother. “She’s been a great influence on me.”

Brooke nods and adds, “She’s always been present in my life. She’s always proud of you no matter what you do. She finds something positive even in a negative situation.”

That quality shines through as the longtime member of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Indianapolis recalls the education that she and her brother received as they were part of history in the archdiocese.

“My brother finished with straight A’s,” she says. “And I finished with straight J’s—Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus. He was the best teacher I ever had.

“Jesus taught me that he is faithful, and I can trust him. He taught me that when you or someone else does something wrong, you won’t get away with it. He taught me to forgive my trespassers as he forgives me.

“I learned that I can be strong and endure difficulty. I learned to pray, and I learned that he can open doors that appear impenetrable. The lessons learned that year have sustained me throughout life.”

That experience has also led to another lasting belief about Jesus for Finnell.

“I still believe his angel freed me from that classroom.” †



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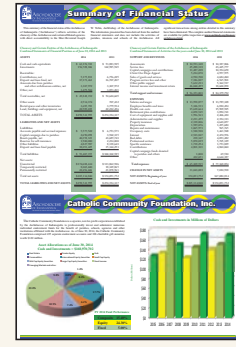




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## State of the archdiocese

Read the 2013-14 Accountability Report, pages 15-17.

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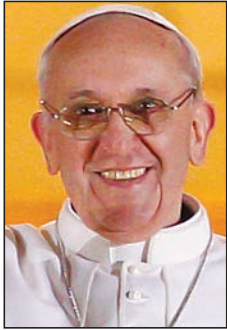
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## Pope says Year of Mercy will be time to heal, to help, to forgive

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Mercy is what makes God perfect and all-powerful, Pope Francis said in his document officially proclaiming the 2015-16 extraordinary Holy Year of Mercy.

“If God limited himself to only justice, he would cease to be God, and would instead be like human beings who ask merely that the law be respected,”



Pope Francis

the pope wrote in “*Misericordiae Vultus*,” (“The Face of Mercy”), which is the “bull of indiction” calling a Holy Year to begin on Dec. 8.

Standing in front of the Holy Door of St. Peter’s Basilica on April 11, Pope Francis handed copies of the document to the archpriests of the major basilicas of Rome and to Vatican officials representing Catholics around the world.

Portions of the 9,300-word proclamation were read aloud before Pope Francis and his aides processed into St. Peter’s Basilica to celebrate the first vespers of Divine Mercy Sunday.

In his homily at vespers, the pope said he proclaimed the Year of Mercy because “it is the favorable time to heal wounds, a time not to be weary of meeting all those who are waiting to see and touch with their hands the signs of the closeness of God, a time to offer everyone the way of forgiveness and reconciliation.”

The boundless nature of God’s mercy—his willingness always to forgive anything—has been a constant subject of Pope Francis’ preaching, and is explained in detail in the document, which outlines some of the specific projects the pope has in mind for the year.

The Old Testament stories of how God repeatedly offered mercy to his unfaithful people and the New Testament stories of

See MERCY, page 20

## ‘A Love So Strong’



Jennifer Trapuzzano snuggles with her daughter Cecilia in the bedroom where Cecilia sleeps in a crib beneath a crucifix and a photo of her parents. Cecilia was born on April 25, 2014—24 days after her father Nathan Trapuzzano was shot and killed during a robbery as he took a walk through their Indianapolis neighborhood. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

## A year after her husband’s tragic death, Jennifer Trapuzzano leans on faith and unexpected friendship

By John Shaughnessy

For a long time, she had dreaded the first anniversary of the death of the love of her life.

On the day before that anniversary, all the heartbreak overwhelmed Jennifer Trapuzzano once again as she thought of her husband Nathan.

Just a year before—on March 31, 2014—the couple had been looking forward to their first wedding anniversary, the birth of their first child, and Nathan’s 25th birthday.

Then, a day later, Nathan was shot and killed during a robbery as he took a morning walk through their Indianapolis neighborhood.

So much of the past year has been a heart-wrenching blur of thoughts and

emotions for Jennifer—thoughts and emotions she has occasionally shared in her blog called, “A Love So Strong.” On March 31, 2015, those emotions poured from her again as she wrote another entry that included this thought:

*I can still feel him. I can see him when I close my eyes, feel his love and warmth. It doesn’t feel possible that he has been gone for one year. That in less than 24 hours I will no longer be able to say “last year Nate and I were doing this together...”*

*I have a voicemail from him on March 31st last year. I have listened to it over and over and over again. His voice sounds so familiar still, like it was yesterday. I miss him. I miss everything about him. In so many ways, it feels like he has only been gone for 10 seconds. And yet it feels like 100 years.*

Shortly after those words appeared online, Jennifer received a text message of support from a woman who knows that same pain, a woman who has become one of her closest friends.

“I sent Jennifer a text telling her I was praying for her and offering up my heartache for her,” says Cristina Buerkle, who is also a young Catholic widow. “I wanted to let her know that she wasn’t in that pain alone, that we are in this together.”

### Touches of hope and humanity

As Jennifer’s recent blog entry shows, the loss of Nathan still haunts her heart and her soul.

At the same time, the past year for her has been marked by touches of help,

See FAITH, page 12

## Sisters of Providence keep ties to history, extend Mother Theodore’s mission of faith



(Editor’s note: The Church’s Year of Consecrated Life began in late November, and will conclude on Feb. 2, 2016. During that time, The Criterion will publish a series of articles featuring the life and history of each of the religious communities based in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. This is the first article in that series.)

By Sean Gallagher

ST. MARY-OF-THE-WOODS—Oct. 15, 2006, was a bright sunny Sunday

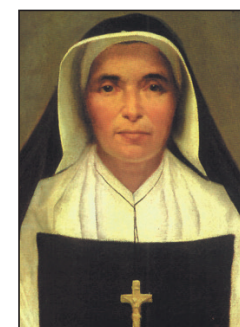
in Rome. Tens of thousands of Catholics gathered in St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican for a Mass in which Pope Benedict XVI declared four men and women saints.

One of them was Mother Theodore Guérin, the foundress of the oldest religious community in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods.

The canonization Mass was celebrated at the geographic heart of the Church. But much of the life of faith that led to Mother Theodore’s growth in holiness took place on the margins of the Church—both literally and figuratively.

She was truly in mission territory on the American frontier when she and five religious sisters arrived from France in 1840 in a vast wilderness in western Indiana to begin their life and ministry in the fledgling Diocese of Vincennes.

They soon founded a school on the grounds of their motherhouse at St. Mary-of-the-Woods, and then spread



St. Theodora Guérin

across the state to teach in parish schools, often populated by the children of immigrant Catholics.

Mother Theodore and her sisters also cared for orphans, and operated a pharmacy which dispensed medicine

free of charge to the poor.

The congregation continued to grow and spread after Mother Theodore’s death

See SISTERS, page 2



# FAITH

continued from page 1

humanity and hope—and even small steps toward healing.

The 26-year-old member of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish in Indianapolis has known the help and the humanity of her friends, her family and the Catholic community.

She feels hope and a living connection to Nathan every time she holds and looks into the eyes of her daughter Cecilia, who will celebrate her first birthday on April 25.

She continues to strive toward the promise of a future as she works to earn a master's degree to become a physician's assistant—a goal she is scheduled to complete in November, a goal that will help her fulfill her longtime dream of helping people in need.

Then there are the small steps she has made toward healing emotionally, including her unexpected, close friendship with Cristina Buerkle and the support group they have started for young Catholic widows.

## A heartbreaking connection

In truth, the friendship between Jennifer and Cristina started from a shared heartbreak that both of them desperately wish they could have been spared.

They both knew the joy of finding the right person to marry.

They both felt blessed in being married to someone who shared their deep Catholic faith.

They both knew the excitement of becoming pregnant with their first child during the first year of their marriage, and sharing that anticipation with their husbands.

They also both experienced the tremendous shock and devastation of having their husband's lives—and all those blessings—end suddenly before their first wedding anniversary.

Just 27, James Buerkle died unexpectedly of an enlarged heart condition on Nov. 22, 2013, just five months after he and Cristina were married. He passed away in his sleep, next to Cristina.

So Cristina was struggling with her own grief and heartache when a friend told her about the details of Nathan's death, and suggested that Cristina should reach out to Jennifer.

Two weeks later, Cristina did. In

mid-April of 2014, she sat down in her Florida home and wrapped a special gift that she sent to a young widow in Indiana that she had never met.

## 'We are in this together'

Cristina's present to Jennifer was modeled after a gift she had made for her son—after James had died and she was still pregnant with their son, who would be named James Paul and be called "JP."

"There's a kids' board book version of *Heaven is for Real*," Cristina says. "I was just 12 weeks pregnant when James passed away, and I just want JP to get to know his dad as much as possible. I'm sure James is in heaven, and I printed

pictures of my husband and pasted them throughout the book. I read the book to JP at night."

She made a similar version of the book for Cecilia, using baby shower photos of Nathan and Jennifer from their Facebook page. Jennifer was touched when she received the book in the mail.

"She included a message, telling me her story and that we were in this together," Jennifer recalls. "It touched me. I had other people reach out to me, and I appreciated that, but with Cristina, it was even deeper from the beginning because of our Catholic faith, and being able to talk about things, and because there were so many similarities between us.

"There aren't that many newlyweds who are pregnant who lose their husbands, and who are also deep in their Catholic faith. I think we both gave each other the inspiration we needed. I was newer to widowhood than she was, but I

also had my baby before she did. When she was getting ready to deliver her son, I was able to tell her, 'You will get through this. I've gotten through this.'"

Jennifer also came to visit her new friend for the first time during a difficult period in Cristina's life.

## 'She's my sister now'

"She came to visit in November which was a hard time for me, with James' birthday and the first anniversary of his death," says Cristina, a member of St. Luke Parish in Palm Springs, Fla. "By then, we had gotten to know each other through e-mails back and forth.

"It was good to meet each other and hug each other. We stayed up late one night talking about things that were on our hearts. We talked about James and Nate, our marriages, our struggles and what we've been missing. We talked

continue on next page



While sharing time together in Florida in November 2014, Cristina Buerkle and her son James pose with Jennifer Trapuzzano and her daughter Cecilia. Cristina and Jennifer have become close friends after the tragic deaths of their husbands. (Photo courtesy of Melissa Ashley Photography)

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about how we don't want to grieve forever. We want our children to see us happy and strong and faithful."

During that visit, Jennifer arranged for a surprise for Cristina. She contacted a Florida photographer to do a sunrise photo shoot with the two of them and their children. When photographer Melissa Ashley learned their stories, she did the photo session free of charge.

"It was just fun to smile and laugh and take pictures," Cristina recalls. "Later in the evening, we had a little bit of a happy hour."

The two friends met again in Florida in March, this time during an emotionally difficult period for Jennifer. When she turned 26 on March 17, it was her first birthday since Nathan's death. She missed having him by her side. There was also the approaching anniversary that she dreaded.

"Cristina was there on my birthday so that was nice," Jennifer says. "Our friendship has been a stronger gift than I first realized. When I first met her, I knew we had this connection, but I didn't know how important it would be. She's my sister now. Our lives are so interwoven. She's one of the few people who can really understand what I'm going through."

Jennifer takes a deep breath and adds, "There are times when I just feel like I'm going crazy. I can call her up and tell her what's going on, and she'll say, 'I'm going through the exact same thing' or 'I've been there.' And I don't feel so crazy anymore."

"When you lose your spouse, you lose a part of yourself. I'm learning how to live in this new life, but half of me is gone. So finding someone else who has an equal understanding, and sharing that grief, it's just helpful."

That understanding led Jennifer and Cristina to form a Facebook page called the St. Paula's Young Catholic Widow Group, in honor of the patron saint of widows.

"There are 15 of us," says Cristina, during a phone conversation from her home in Florida. "It's nice to have that sisterhood with women who have been in our shoes and have our faith in common."

Jennifer notes, "Because we felt that need between each other, we knew that after your husband dies, you can pray for them and also ask them for their prayers. That's just a different, special relationship that we as Catholics believe in."

"It's nice to have other women who believe in that perspective, who are using their faith rather than turning away from it—like I had found in a lot of secular groups. I needed someone to support me. My faith was my rock, but I was also shaken. So it's nice to have people around me who could demonstrate that it could still be a rock."

#### The bond between a dad and a daughter

As Jennifer talks, she sits at a table in the home of her parents, Ann and Karl Swihart. Behind her, on the wall, is a sign that was given to her by her mother's family, a sign that notes, "Because someone we love is in heaven, there's a little bit of heaven in our home."

On Jennifer's lap, Cecilia smiles, squirms and laughs as she eats a snack. Holding their daughter, Jennifer naturally thinks of Nathan—her connections to him, and his connections to the child who has his eyes and his temperament.

"She looks like Nate, which helps. She has her own mind. She's a stubborn girl. She's free-spirited. She gets that from Nate, too," she says with a laugh. "He was stubborn. He didn't change his mind easily. He was humble, too."

Jennifer pulls Cecilia toward her as she adds, "She is what keeps me going. I don't know, without her, if I would have had the motivation to finish school or just get out of bed in the morning, especially in the beginning. But to provide a future for her motivates me to get up every morning and get going. There are still days when I want to stay in bed, but she wakes up talking. And I just want to see her and see what she is doing. I don't want to miss a



Jennifer and Nathan Trapuzzano are all smiles on their wedding day on May 11, 2013. (Submitted photo)

moment of it."

One moment that stands out to Jennifer occurred during a recent Sunday Mass when Cecilia repeatedly said, "Da Da."

"I don't know if it's a coincidence, but I like to think she's talking to her dad. I want her to know that he loves her and he's watching over her. I want her to know just how good of a man he was. One of the things that upsets me the most is she's not going to have that father role model that little girls need, that's so important—and that role model of how a husband should treat his wife."

"Nate was a wonderful husband, and he would have been a wonderful dad, too. I want her to know those characteristics about him—and how important his faith was to him. I want her to grow up being just as faith-filled."

Nathan's faith has also helped Jennifer in the past year.

#### Prayers for help

"I didn't even have the energy to pray in the beginning," she says. "It was difficult. But I never doubted God. I feel like, if anything, it's brought me closer because I know where Nate is. I know where he strived to go. And I don't want to turn away from him."

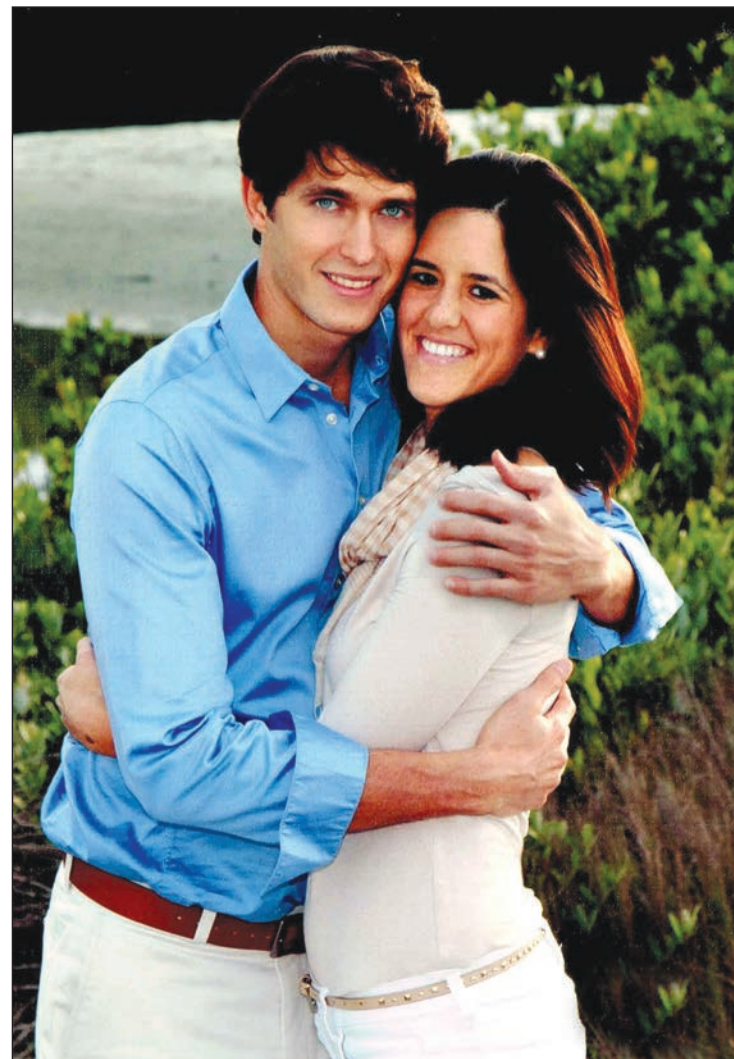
"It almost makes my faith in Jesus stronger now. I never felt it was lacking before, but the emotions I get whenever I think of seeing Nate again in heaven are so real that I think I feel just 10 times better about meeting Jesus—and that's not something I ever really felt. So it almost gives a more realistic view on that love that God has for us—and what that can mean. I'm still working on that."

As she does, she calls upon Nathan to intercede for her. She admits that her reasons for those requests aren't always faith-directed.

"Sometimes, I'm selfish and ask Nate to help Cecilia sleep through the night so I can get a good night's sleep," she says with a smile. "I feel like that's his shift sometimes."

She pauses before adding, "I actually have stories of people who have asked Nate to intercede for them as well. And they've seen results."

"A mom was struggling in labor, and it looked like they would have to do a C-section. She started asking saints for their prayers, and she also thought of Nate and asked if he could help her. It was the one last chance to get the baby out, and she was able to. After that, the nurses were calling him 'miracle baby.' She didn't know why. The nurses told her



James and Cristina Buerkle are the picture of happiness in this 2013 photo. James died unexpectedly of an enlarged heart condition five months after they were married. (Submitted photo)

he had two knots in his cord and almost didn't survive. The mom said she thinks the prayers to Nate helped him survive."

Jennifer shares another story, this one from a woman who has had several previous miscarriages.

"She said her husband had written a letter to Nate and asked him for his intercession to help them have a child. And she's 20 weeks pregnant now."

#### A reminder of faith and love

Easter Sunday of this year—April 5—marked the first anniversary of Nathan's funeral. That connection made an impact on Jennifer.

"I think it's kind of beautiful that the day we buried Nate last year is Easter Sunday this year," she says. "In some ways, it's like I've had my year to adjust to my new life and to grieve. It's been a year of grief and sorrow. My goal for the second year is to take charge of my life and treat it like a new year."

On the morning of March 31, the day before the first anniversary of Nathan's death, Jennifer gave herself time to grieve. It was also a time that helped her take another step toward healing. Acknowledging how much she missed him, she filled part of the time by reading through the letters that Nathan had written her through the years.

In her blog entry from that day, Jennifer offered this thought about reading the letters: "How blessed I am that he should leave such a lasting memory of his love for me! It is not without coincidence that I opened the following letter first; for even after death he always knows the right thing to say."

She then shared this letter—dated March 25, 2013—from Nathan:

*Dear Jen,*  
*This morning I found out that an old classmate of mine has died. I was never very close to him, but we did become friends in middle school when we were both into skateboarding and football.*

*As these kinds of things are wont to do, the news made me think of my own life and death. One of my biggest fears is not dying so much as it is leaving my loved ones uncertain, be it about my affections for them, things I may have said to or about them, or even the state of my own soul.*

*When I die, I want my friends and family—and you especially—to know that I left this world in God's friendship and so await you in heaven for when your own time should come.*

*And as I thought about this, it struck*

*me that the only way to pass on such assurance (to myself not least of all) is to love radically at every moment. For death does not pre-announce itself, not for most people at least. What a terrible thing it would be to die after an argument with you or after sinning against God! To die unreconciled is surely the worst thing that can happen to anyone.*

*I must continue drinking from the source of love Himself if I am to become a flowing spring to others. Please pray that God will teach me how to love like Him. I love you.*

*Love, Nate*

After sharing Nathan's letter, Jennifer finished her blog entry with a message that was part a reminder for herself, and part a reminder for everyone else who read it:

"Let us all remember to have faith and love like Nate." †

## Fundraisers to benefit foundation that supports children who have lost a parent

The family of Nathan Trapuzzano has established The Nathan Trapuzzano Memorial Foundation to honor the life of the 24-year old newlywed father-to-be who was murdered on April 1, 2014, near his home in Indianapolis.

The foundation's purpose is to provide financial relief and support to children who have lost a parent.

Two fundraisers in May in central Indiana will benefit the new foundation.

The second annual Trapuzzano Benefit Ride will begin at 10 a.m. on May 16 at Heavy's Bar & Grill in Camby with kickstands up at noon.

On May 17, NateWalk is scheduled to start at 1 p.m. at Edna Balz Lacy Park in Indianapolis. Activities will include a memorial walk, auction, 50/50 raffle, food, vendors, live music and games.

Online registration and donation forms are available at [www.thenathanfoundation.org/get-involved.html](http://www.thenathanfoundation.org/get-involved.html). †

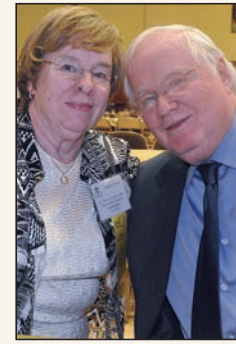




**The**

# Criterion

Serving the Church in Central and Southern Indiana Since 1960



## 'Tapestry of love'

Couples lauded at Golden Wedding Jubilee Mass, page 10.

CriterionOnline.com

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# Trusting God's guidance

## Holy Spirit, faith lead family of five during 17-month ocean adventure

By John Shaughnessy

Marc Konesco keeps pushing himself to live outside his comfort zone, believing that's "where the magic happens" in life.

Yet as he and his wife Jen and their three children—all under 10 at the time—were in the midst of their 17-month ocean journey by boat, Marc experienced a moment that made him feel *too uncomfortable*.

"We were at a remote island—a two-day trip from civilization," recalls Marc, a 1993 graduate of Cathedral High School in Indianapolis. "I couldn't start the engine, and our water maker on the boat stopped working. So here we are, in a remote place, with no engine and no water.

"I said a prayer, 'Lord, I'm hurting.' Then I ended up getting on the radio, asking for help. The radio could reach up to 60 miles, but I didn't think anyone was around. I was very anxious."

Less than five minutes later, a small boat with two men aboard appeared around a curve of the island, heading toward the Konescos' boat.

"They were brothers," Marc says. "The one brother installed water makers for a living, and the second brother owned a shop where they worked on engines. They were like two angels that came out of the air. After about four hours of working on the boat, we were ready to go."

He pauses before adding, "It shows you how God works."

See SPIRIT, page 8



During their 17-month ocean journey, Jen and Marc Konesco pose for a photo with their children, Camden, left, Maria and Joellen. The Catholic family sold their Indianapolis-area home to live their dream. (Submitted photo)

## Iraqi archbishop reflects on persecution of Christians during visit

By Sean Gallagher

Chaldean Catholic Archbishop Bashar Warda of Irbil in northern Iraq pauses and places his face in his hands when asked how his faith has been challenged and spurred on in the crisis that he has helped manage over the past year.



Archbishop Bashar Warda

In the summer of 2014, Islamic State militants conquered the nearby city of Mosul, with its large and historic Christian community. Later, they took a series of historic Christian villages in the Plain of Nineveh north of Mosul.

The Christians of Mosul and the villages were told to convert to Islam, pay a religious tax, die or leave with nothing.

Some 125,000 Christians, including three bishops, 50 priests and 90 religious sisters, chose the last option. Many of them flooded Irbil to the east as refugees.

Archbishop Warda spoke about his experiences of caring for the suffering faithful, his gratitude for the support that Catholics across America and around the world have given to the Church in Iraq, and his hopes for its future in an interview with *The Criterion* when he visited Indianapolis recently.

Earlier in the month, he took part in the 133rd Supreme Convention of the Knights of Columbus in Philadelphia on Aug. 4-6. The Knights of Columbus has contributed much to support persecuted Christians in Iraq. He came to Indiana to visit Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin. Both were previously Redemptorist priests before being chosen to serve as bishops. During his visit, he also was a concelebrant at the archdiocese's annual Golden Wedding Jubilee Mass on Aug. 23 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. (See related story on page 10.)

See WARDA, page 2

## New Orleans Archdiocese: Forever changed by Hurricane Katrina

(Editor's note: This story originally appeared in the Aug. 23 edition of *The National Catholic Register*, a publication of the *Eternal Word Television Network*.)

NEW ORLEANS (CNS)—They are calling it "Kat 10"—Hurricane Katrina plus 10 years—which carries with it the double meaning of an ominous meteorological warning.

How could a Category 5 storm that engulfed the entire Gulf of Mexico, but dropped in intensity to a Category 3 just before landfall on Aug. 29, 2005—burying one of the world's most iconic cities in a flood of biblical proportions—become the watershed moment in New Orleans' nearly 300-year history?

See KATRINA, page 3



Houses in New Orleans are seen under water on Sept. 5, 2005, after Hurricane Katrina swept through Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. More than a decade after the storm, New Orleans continues to rebuild. (CNS photo/Allen Fredrickson, Reuters)





In a father-son moment, Marc Konesco helps Camden hold up the fish that he caught and later shared as the centerpiece of a meal for fellow fishermen and their families. (Submitted photos)



Camden and Joellen Konesco helped their parents plot their family's course for adventure and service during the 17 months they sailed in the Bahamas and volunteered at an orphanage in Costa Rica.



The Konesco children take time for their studies during their 17-month ocean journey. Their mom, Jen, homeschooled Camden, Joellen and Maria during the trip.



Members of the Konesco family and their "adopted" family at an orphanage in Costa Rica work together to prepare a meal for everyone to enjoy together.



Jen Konesco flashes a huge smile during a peaceful moment with her son Camden aboard the family boat which they named Adagio, a musical term for slowing the tempo down.



Maria and Joellen Konesco are all smiles as they take a ride down a hill with a girl from an orphanage in Costa Rica. The Konesco family volunteered at the orphanage for six months in 2014.

## SPIRIT

continued from page 1

Sharing that story makes Marc smile. It also takes him back to the time he wrote 15 goals for the "adventure-service journey" that would eventually lead his family to a stronger faith, a deeper connection with each other, and a commitment to serve at an orphanage in Costa Rica for six months.

The first goal on that list notes: "To have the Lord lead us and focus on his will for the rest of our life, fully trusting that his hand is leading this journey."

### The adventure begins

The Konesco family made their journey from January 2014 to May 2015, sailing the Atlantic Ocean south from Florida and all around the Bahamas.

Yet the dream of this trip began even before Jen and Marc were married in 1999. In fact, their engagement was a time of three significant beginnings in their lives. They prepared for their marriage. Jen also entered the Catholic Church with Marc serving as her sponsor. And the couple wrote down their dream of someday leaving their jobs and spending a couple of years on an "adventure-service journey."

Fourteen years later—in 2013—they steered their dream toward reality when they bought a boat they named Adagio.

"It's a musical term to slow the tempo down," Marc explains. "We wanted to slow our lifestyle down."

It was just the beginning of the adventure.

They put their Indianapolis-area home up for sale in July of 2013, and sold it nine days later. They gave away or sold 80 percent of their possessions. Jen and Marc also took turns getting weeks of extensive training in sailing on the ocean while they alternated taking care of their children.

And when the family moved to Florida in January of 2014, they spent several weeks in port, doing practice sails, working on safety drills and getting used to living together in much smaller quarters—making the transition from their 4,000-square-foot home to their 350-square-foot boat.

In late February of 2014, they left the safe harbor of their lives and set sail toward the Bahamas with their three children—then-8-year-old Joellen, 7-year-old Camden and 2-year-old Maria.

Aboard the ship were four months of provisions, including diapers, batteries, pasta and canned goods. Jen had also packed all the materials she needed to homeschool the children. Still, Marc and Jen were hoping to give their children an education that extended far beyond school lessons.

### A meeting with an unusual crew

One of the 15 goals for the journey was "to appreciate nature and particularly the ocean to the fullest." That goal was met quickly as the family sailed into the Bahamas in March, a month when they normally experienced the tail end of another brutal Midwestern winter. Instead, they soaked in the sunshine, the blue skies and the crystal clear, turquoise water.

And when they docked at a marina

in Bimini and were greeted by a dock master who said, "Ya, mon, take any spot you want," they took the first step toward achieving another goal—"to meet a variety of different people."

Before long, they met a woman from France—a paraplegic—who was sailing through the Bahamas with a friend. After Mass one day, they befriended the priest who celebrated it—a priest from Poland who was marking the 50th anniversary of his ordination.

They also met the unusual crew of a boat named "Beacon Won."

"It was full of high school kids, parents and the crew," wrote Jen in the family's blog, "Love at First Sail," about the group that was volunteering during spring break at an HIV/AIDS camp in the Bahamas.

"They invited our family to join them. The plan was to just spend time with the residents, praying and singing with them. Here in the Bahamas, there is still the stigma with those with AIDS, and many families turn their backs on a family member that has AIDS. A former leper colony has been transformed into a HIV/AIDS camp run by a couple from the U.S. It just so happened there were five extra seats in one of the vans. God always works it out, doesn't he?"

The next day, they met the camp's residents, some of whom were bedridden while others were in wheelchairs. The family joined the volunteer group in singing with the residents and listening to their stories.

The experience led Jen to write, "It was a reminder from God that no matter where you go, even in the midst of paradise, there are people who need help and need to know there are people who care."

That belief also guided the family as they beached their sailboat for six months to volunteer at an orphanage in Costa Rica. The Konescos moved to that mountainous Central American country during the hurricane season—from July through December of 2014.

### 'Just go to share God's love'

"We weren't sure how the Lord would use us at the orphanage," says Marc, who has previously served on the board of the archdiocese's Mother Theodore Catholic Academies in Indianapolis, and taught religious education at his family's former parish—St. John Vianney, in Fishers, Ind., in the Lafayette Diocese.

"We went to the orphanage five days a week," recalls Marc, who is 40. "We cleaned, cooked and organized. We taught English, we taught science, and we played. We tried to follow the best advice someone gave us, 'Don't go to try to do something. Just go to share God's love.'"

The family did that and more, according to Cherie McCullah, the director of the

Residencia de Vida orphanage.

Marc used his extensive business background to help with the orphanage's financial concerns. He also coordinated the effort to move the orphanage from one site to a new one.

"They came over and fixed meals for us on my days to cook, and made it a fun activity for the kids," McCullah says. "They had swimming parties for us. They bought vegetables for us at the farmers' market. Marc drove me places so I didn't have to drive all the time. The kids loved when their whole family came over because it was going to be a fun time."

She recalls one joy-filled moment that involved a water fight between Marc and the children at the orphanage.

"The kids got squirt guns for Christmas and couldn't wait for Marc to come over that day so they could get him wet. I warned him beforehand so he could have some extra clothes. When he drove up, the water fight started and everyone had a blast. He actually snuck up and got a couple of guns the kids had laying there, waiting for him to come. He got a few of them wet first. The kids laughed and laughed about Marc getting them first."

The Konescos have left a lasting impact on McCullah and the children at the orphanage.

"They are a part of our family here, and we miss them all the time," she says. "We have an artist that will eventually come and paint a mural for us. It is going to be a beach scene, and the kids asked me to have her paint Marc, Jen and the kids' boat in the middle. So that's exactly what we are going to do. They made a lasting impression on all of us by truly caring about us in every way."

### A prayer of thanks

The journey also left its lasting marks on Jen, Marc and their children as they returned to the sea from February to May of this year.

Now 10, Joellen especially grew in "the depth and understanding of her faith in a pretty remarkable way," says her father, who set the goal of wanting their children to learn to love their Catholic faith during the trip.

Now 9, Camden developed a passion for fishing that led to him hooking a 65-pounder that he decided to share as the main part of a meal with other fishers and their families.

And Maria, now 4, developed an early understanding of Spanish, learning the language as the family volunteered at the orphanage.

As their journey neared its end this year, Jen used the family's blog to share one of the main lessons she has learned.

"We have realized that we don't need as much as we used to think we did," noted

Jen, who also turned 40 on the trip. "Living on a boat forces you to live with less. The goal once we are on land in a home is to collect less stuff."

She then offered a thank you. "God has blessed us through this journey, and we thank him for keeping us safe and somewhat sane—living on a boat can drive you truly insane at times."

"Every night before we fall asleep, Marc and I pray together. We pray for safe travels and health. We also thank God every night for allowing us to experience this beautiful world he has created."

### Trusting God's guidance

Shortly after their ocean journey ended in late May, the family returned to Indianapolis in June to visit with relatives and friends. During that time, Marc and Jen became godparents for their niece, Molly Hanrahan. Then they moved into their new home in Asheville, N.C., close to the ocean and the mountains they've come to love.

Marc has started a coaching company there that he has named TACK.

"Tack is a sailing term," he says. "When you tack a sailboat, you change course." Marc realizes that not everyone wants to leave their lives behind for a 17-month ocean journey. He also knows that everyone doesn't have the savings to make such a drastic change. (When Marc and Jen both worked, they set aside one income to save for the trip.) Yet he also believes that many people have their own special dreams.

"I'm focusing on helping people—professionally and personally—define, plan and achieve God's dreams for their lives," he says. "It's important because I see a lot of people living day-to-day without thinking about their dreams and what they want to accomplish."

"The biggest obstacle for people is that they aren't intentional about their dreams. And they're unsure they can live their dreams. Every time we've taken our family outside the comfort zone, it's been good for us."

Marc sees the impact that following their dream has had on his family.

"It's brought a close family even closer, and it's showed our kids and Jen and me the power of dreams and prayers. The trust level between Jen and I went even deeper, and our confidence level went even deeper. For two years, we weren't more than 15 feet away from each other. We had 15 feet to figure it out."

"And we had a lot more fun with our kids. In Indy, we used to do a lot of structured activities together. On the trip, the kids became a lot more creative. They'd find scraps of wood on the beach and they'd make a fort. I became involved with them and saw their inspiration. And they saw that their mom and dad didn't know

everything on the boat. We had to learn as well, and we learned together."

The journey also led them closer to God.

"Looking back, I see God's hand leading us to the people, places and events he wanted us to experience," Marc says. "He allowed the Holy Spirit to guide us."

"We've experienced God's power and grace so many times. After this trip, we are a lot more free and confident in trusting God's guidance for where we are going." †

## Family's goals capture spirit of dream trip

When Marc and Jen Konesco started their dream of having their family of five sail the ocean for 17 months, Marc wrote 15 goals for their "adventure-service journey."

1. To have the Lord lead us and focus on his will for the rest of our life, fully trusting that his hand is leading the journey.
2. To find clarity on how to provide for my family [after] the trip and my next career path.
3. To just be.
4. Carefree timelessness with our family.
5. Allow our kids to see things outside the "bubble" of suburbia.
6. To serve others by directly serving or inspiring others to pursue their dreams.
7. To have and live a sense of adventure with our family.
8. To become seasoned sailors and to be comfortable in sailing our boat anywhere in the Caribbean.
9. To form deep personal relationships with our kids and to have a minimum of three-times-a-week of one-on-one time with each.
10. To teach our kids what Jen and I think they ought to be taught.
11. To catechize the Catholic faith to our kids and have them be inspired to love their faith.
12. We want ourselves and our kids to live outside our comfort zones and live life to the fullest.
13. To appreciate nature and particularly the ocean to its fullest.
14. To meet a variety of people.
15. To achieve a dream, and to teach our kids to dream big and pursue those dreams. †

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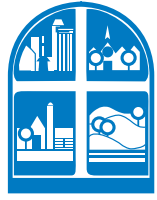
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The

# Criterion

Serving the Church in Central and Southern Indiana Since 1960



## Martha and Mary

Young women receive Benedictine sisters' awards for hearts of prayer, service, page 7.

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## Supreme Court will hear appeals in Catholic, other groups' mandate cases

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The U.S. Supreme Court justices said on Nov. 6 they will hear seven pending appeals in lawsuits brought by several Catholic and other faith-based entities against the Obama administration's contraceptive, abortifacient and sterilization mandate.

The court will hear appeals from groups in Colorado, Maryland, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Texas and the District of Columbia.

Among the plaintiffs are the Little Sisters of the Poor, the Archdiocese of Washington, the Pittsburgh and Erie, Pa., dioceses, Priests for Life, Southern Nazarene University and Texas Baptist University.

Under the federal Affordable Care Act, most employers, including religious ones, are required to cover employees' artificial birth control, sterilization and abortifacients, even if employers are morally opposed to such coverage.

In all the cases to be argued before the high court in March, appellate courts in various jurisdictions sided with the Obama administration. The rulings said the religious entities' freedom of religion was not burdened by having to comply with the mandate as they have argued, because the federal government has in place an accommodation for a third party to provide the contested coverage.

But the religious groups object to that notification, saying they still would be complicit in supporting practices they oppose. While their appeals worked their way to the high court, the government has

not been able to force the groups to comply with the mandate or face daily fines for noncompliance.

"Charitable ministries across the nation simply want to provide life-affirming health care for their employees, without fear of massive government penalties,"

See MANDATE, page 2



Archbishop William E. Lori



## From near death to new life

Leo Stenz, left, and Ennis Adams work together to help homeless people in Indianapolis transform their lives. On Oct. 31, the friends posed for a photo, taking a break from their efforts for the Beggars for the Poor ministry, which provides a meal, clothing and socialization for 200 homeless people every Saturday morning in downtown Indianapolis. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

## Unlikely friendship changes lives of men who work together to help the homeless

By John Shaughnessy

Leo Stenz uses an unusual word as he shares the story of his friendship with Ennis Adams: "Haunting."

In fact, there is not much that is usual about the close bond between Stenz and Adams—especially the way their relationship began.

As the president of Stenz Construction Company, Stenz has been a longtime, quiet force in the redevelopment of downtown Indianapolis, adding signature stamps on the city with his company's work on The Madame Walker Theatre, The Glove Factory and the Indiana Repertory Theatre.

Beyond buildings, Stenz has also worked to transform the lives of people who live on the streets downtown. A member of St. Luke the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis, Stenz has long helped to coordinate the efforts of Beggars for the Poor, a volunteer ministry that provides clothing and a meal for about 200 homeless people every Saturday morning.

It was there 15 years ago that Stenz and Adams met. Recalling his life back then, Adams describes it as "a life of drinking, using drugs, being incarcerated, living on the streets, and being close to death." Then he joyfully adds, "God rescued me and helped turn my life around. God came to me through the care and help of another person, my good friend, Leo."

So this is a story of friendship, transformation and faith—a story of two men dealing with their own haunting moments who now work together to help people change their lives.

### 'He was the kingpin of the group'

Just after nine o'clock on a recent Saturday morning, Stenz and Adams both work the crowd that has lined up in the parking lot of Roberts Park United Methodist Church in downtown Indianapolis. It's where the Beggars for the Poor ministry sets up every week, and it's where the homeless often turn to talk with Stenz and Adams.

In Adams, they see a tall, athletic

See FRIENDSHIP, page 8

## Faith, spirituality provide vital healing role in mental health crises for individuals and families

BALTIMORE (CNS)—From the American Psychiatric Association (APA) to the average Catholic in the pew, awareness is growing that the faith community has a role to play in helping those with mental illness and their families.

"Because religion and spirituality often play a vital role in healing, people experiencing mental health concerns often turn first to a faith leader," the APA said in a 28-page guide for faith leaders published earlier this year.



Deacon Tom Lambert

"From a public-health perspective, faith community leaders

are gatekeepers or 'first responders' when individuals and families face mental health or substance use problems," the guide added. "In that role they can help dispel misunderstandings, reduce stigma associated with mental illness and treatment, and facilitate access to treatment for those in need."

The National Institute of Mental Health and Substance Abuse estimates that 19 percent of all adult Americans—or one in five people—experience some form of mental illness in a given year. That means at least one in four families is affected by mental illness in some way.

The guide was prepared by a 16-member working group of the APA's Mental Health and Faith Community Partnership Steering Committee, which included Sister Nancy Kehoe, a Religious of the Sacred Heart who teaches

psychology at Harvard Medical School, and Jesuit Father Patrick Howell of the Institute for Catholic Thought and Culture at Seattle University.

Deacon Tom Lambert, who chairs the National Catholic Partnership on Disability's Council on Mental Illness and the Archdiocese of Chicago's Commission on Mental Illness, also serves on the APA steering committee.

He sees some progress in raising awareness about mental illness, but "it is painfully slow and people's lives are at risk."

"In the 30 years I've been involved in this, we are making progress, but are we where we should be? No, we've got a long, long way to go," Deacon Lambert told Catholic News Service in a telephone interview from Chicago.

See HEALING, page 8



# FRIENDSHIP

continued from page 1

figure who once struggled with the same demons they face on the streets and in their lives. As they talk to him, they seem to want to make sure he's still doing well—viewing his transformation as a sign of hope for them.

In Stenz, they see a slim, silver-haired figure with a shy, welcoming smile who asks their names, tries to get them to share their stories, and encourages them to change their lives.

Adams remembers his early days of meeting Stenz.

“Leo always brought a different kind of flavor,” Adams recalls. “He brought fun and laughter to whatever he was doing. He brought a little conversation, asking about what was going on with us, what was going on in our families. I looked forward to seeing him. He'd talk to me about stopping drinking and hanging out.

“His sincerity was always there. I always noticed he had something good to say about the worst ones. The worst of the worst were the ones he navigated to.”

Stenz made a point of keeping his focus on Adams during those times.

“Clearly, he was the kingpin of the group,” Stenz says. “I saw how the others respected him. I saw they listened to Ennis.”

At the time, Stenz didn't know the full details of Adams' life that led him to end up living on the streets.

He didn't know that Adams was arrested as a teenager for burglary and spent 5 1/2 years in a juvenile correctional facility. He also didn't know that after Adams' release from prison that Adams married his high school sweetheart and they had three children.

“During this time, I was working, helping take care of the kids, and going to church, but I was living a double life,” Adams recalls. “I always found time to hang out on the streets and do drugs on a daily basis. I tried to make it all work together—my job, taking care of the kids, going to church and doing drugs, but something had to give. It eventually caught up to me, and I found myself back in prison and separated from my family.

“When I got out, it was even worse than before. I went right back to the streets. And although I worked a lot, I never had any permanent job. I lived in the streets, drank alcohol and did drugs regularly—and got farther and farther away from my family. This became my way of life, and the years kept going by.”

While those choices and decisions haunted Adams, Stenz had his own haunting time in life.

## A 'haunting' connection

Right before Stenz started volunteering for Beggars for the Poor about 28 years ago, he felt there was something missing in his life. He thought he was too focused on himself.

“I was looking for some way to get out of my own problems of my little world,” he recalls. “My secretary at the time, Sandy Knox, had started to volunteer for

Beggars for the Poor, working out of the back of a truck.

“I have a heart for males who are broken down, and don't know how to get back on their feet. I tried to reach out of myself, and it was contagious. When these guys know your name and you know their names, there's a connection. There's a word that St. Ignatius uses to describe that connection—'haunting.' You know them, they know you, and you know they're living down by the river. It keeps you on focus to do everything you can for them.”

Part of that effort for Stenz includes offering the men work at his construction sites—sometimes for a day, sometimes for longer.

“I always felt it would be good to get these guys in the routine of a job,” he says. “Eighty percent of the time, you're wrong.”

It's a success rate that has sometimes led some of Stenz' staff to raise their eyebrows in a look that suggests, “You really want to try this again, boss?”

Stenz keeps trying.

“We give a lot of people a shot. We gave Ennis a shot.”

## From near death to new life

At first, Adams wasn't willing or ready to take advantage of that shot. He had made steps to change his life by entering an alcohol program at the Salvation Army, but his full commitment wasn't there until he came “close to death.”

“Leo offered to help me, but I wasn't ready to share with him because I wasn't being honest with myself,” Adams recalls. “I wanted to work a program, go to church and continue drinking all at the same time, but it didn't work. I ended up in the hospital, very sick.

“Finally, I decided that this was it. I got out of the hospital and began working my program with honesty and sincerity. Leo was right there to help me.”

Stenz started Adams as a day laborer for his company. And every day, Adams stopped by Stenz's office to thank him for the work and the support.

“Over the years, I saw how Leo kept helping people,” Adams says. “They would let him down, and he would still keep helping them. I reached the point where I didn't want to let him down. Then I wanted to get back to my family.”

Stenz's willingness to keep giving people chances stems from his embrace of Matthew 18:22, the passage in which Peter asks Jesus how many times he should forgive someone. Christ's answer of “70 times 7” has now become a shared motto between Stenz and Adams.

“Where I felt God was moving me was to encourage people like Ennis. I said, ‘Ennis, you have all the right stuff. You have to keep going.’” Stenz says. “I was trying to be a friend. That's how you have to be with these guys. You don't know where God is leading them, but you see they have worth.”

Other staff members at the construction company also began to see Adam's worth as an employee and a person.

“Everyone could see that Ennis was excited about his job. I could see the switch had flipped with Ennis, and my



Ennis Adams talks with Lynda Knable, a member of St. Jude Parish in Indianapolis who is the co-coordinator of the Beggars for the Poor Ministry, which provides a meal, clothing and socialization for 200 homeless people every Saturday morning in Indianapolis. Adams, who once lived on the streets, serves as an inspiration for homeless people to recover their lives. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

wife particularly saw it,” Stenz says.

Adams has been a permanent, full-time employee of the company for the past seven years. During that time, he has never missed a day of work. He cleans and takes care of the office, the parking structure and the condo area of the company's downtown complex. And every work morning, he is at the entrance of the building, greeting his fellow employees with a smile and words of encouragement.

“It's just going the extra mile,” Adams says. “I got that from Leo.”

The blessings run both ways.

## 'God is working through me'

“There's a bond of friendship,” Stenz says. “We have a lot in common. We love sports. We play basketball together. We're able to discuss things. I use him as my street professional. I say, ‘What about this guy?’ Ennis has taken on a role that says, ‘Hey, I've made it, and you can make it, too.’ He's following God's prompting.”

That prompting has led Adams to be there with the Beggars for the Poor ministry every Saturday morning.

“The guys say, ‘We just want to see you.’” Adams says. “I look forward to going down there. Most of the guys just need to be talked to and inspired. I try to encourage them to lead a spiritual life, to reach out to others.”

He's also involved in another effort with Stenz to transform the lives of homeless people.

Since the spring of 2014, Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House in Indianapolis has been the site of a retreat program for homeless people. During these twice-a-year, overnight retreats, the Ignatian Spirituality Project (ISP) uses a faith-based approach in helping the homeless turn around their lives. Stenz is one of the leaders of the men's retreat while Adams went to the first one as a participant.

“The retreat strengthened me in so many ways,” Adams says. “I felt God's presence and peace, and it helped me to continue in my sobriety. I decided I wanted more of that feeling so I decided to become a witness for future retreats.

“Since I've been involved with ISP, I've gotten much closer to God than I've ever been because I spend more time with him. I look forward to telling people where I was and where I am now. By telling my story, I feel as if God is working through me to help them.”

It's a story of renewal.

“I live in my own home. I have a job that I love, I am a member of the ISP team, and I have many friends,” Adams says. “Best of all, I have a great relationship with all three of my children. And for the icing on the cake, all three of them are college graduates. I couldn't be prouder.”

It's also the story of two men who have transformed each other's life.

“At this point in our friendship, it's a spiritual friendship,” Stenz says. “We can share our faith. We talk about it. That doesn't happen with everybody. We don't hold anything back. He knows my downside, and I know his downside.

“To me, it's exciting to see someone pull himself up through the grace of God and a lot of perseverance—which Ennis has. And for those who aren't where he is, it's still seeing the face of Christ in them. It encourages me that you can't write the person off. It keeps me balanced and keeps me going.”

For Adams, it's all a matter of continuing to strive forward, knowing he has a friend on his side.

“I've learned how to get up after falling down. Part of getting up is helping others so they don't make the same mistakes. I learned that from Leo. And I'm grateful to God for letting me be this way.

“God has just put this desire in my heart to be a better person.” †

# HEALING

continued from page 1

He would like to see some kind of document from the U.S. bishops on mental illness.

“We are the only major religion in the United States that does not have a statement on mental illness,” Deacon Lambert said. “It doesn't have to be a major pastoral letter, just a statement acknowledging what our people are going through.”

At the urging of the National Advisory Council, the U.S. bishops' Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development has taken up the mental health issue, inviting Deacon Lambert and other experts to address the committee. But no document is currently in the works for consideration by the full body of bishops.

The deacon praised the work of Mental Health First Aid at the parish level and in other community settings. The program is doing “a wonderful job in raising awareness” of mental illness and the resources available for those affected, he said.

“The idea is to equip mainly laypeople in communities to be able to recognize and then offer some kind of care for people struggling with mental health issues,” said Barbara Mosser, a faith community nurse at St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Colorado Springs, Colo., and a certified Mental Health First Aid instructor.

When Mosser first brought the idea of Mental Health First Aid to her parish, it was shortly after the suicide death of comedian Robin Williams in 2014. Speaking at each of the weekend Masses, she told parishioners to “look around you, down the pew, across the aisle” and they would see several people affected by

mental illness.

“Right here in our faith community, we have a built-in support system,” Mosser told CNS. She also hopes the training serves to reduce some of the stigma of mental illness. “People who need help need to be able to say so openly,” she said.

The international program was founded in 2001 in Australia and came to the United States in 2008. The eight-hour program includes interactive exercises designed to put participants in the shoes of those with mental illness.

In groups of three, for example, one person will converse with another person while the third person whispers into the ear of the first person, mimicking the experience of a schizophrenic person.

The Mental Health First Aid Act of 2015, a bipartisan bill now pending before the House, would provide federal grants to train more people in the program. A similar bill is awaiting action in the

Senate and also has received bipartisan sponsorship.

That is just one of the bills before Congress dealing with mental health. The Mental Health Reform Act, the Comprehensive Justice and Mental Health Act, the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act, the Mental Health Awareness and Improvement Act and the Mental Health and Safe Communities Act each take different approaches to the problem.

Deacon Lambert, whose daughter has a mental illness, said progress needs to be made not only in terms of public awareness but in restoring many state services that have been cut during lean budgetary times.

“The awareness is increasing but the services are still lacking,” he said. “It is extremely difficult to go through this alone. But people need to know that they have the support of the Church.” †