



Catechetical Sunday: 'Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope'

By **NICHOLAS SOELLNER**
Associate Director of the Office of Catechesis

A publication I recently read shared the following observation:

"A further consideration is a general lack of interest on the part of the children and youth in religion. They are taken up with other things and are attracted by games and exercises of physical culture, or by worldly shows where not infrequently moral discipline is relaxed; and thus led away, even on feast-days, the result is failure to attend the parish catechetical instruction. Thereupon forgetfulness and neglect of the things of God . . . take root in early childhood and grow worse with the years."

As uncanny as this description is to our modern situation, it may sur-

prise you that this quote comes from a document written in 1935! Ninety years ago, Pope Pius XI's "On Better Care for Catechetical Teaching" addressed a situation many Catholics in the U.S. are still concerned about today. For those who imagine the pre-Vatican II era of the church akin to halcyon days, with the Baltimore Catechism in wide circulation and the traditional Latin Mass as the liturgical norm, here is evidence that even in a time when society was generally more Christian than it is now, there remained a grave concern for the future of the youth in our Church.

The annual celebration of Catechetical Sunday exists precisely for this reason. To call to mind a renewed sense of vigilance for our mission to hand on the faith taught

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Pope Leo canonizes two young saints, the first of his pontificate

By **CAROL GLATZ**
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The greatest risk in life is to waste it by not seeking to follow God's plan, Pope Leo XIV said, proclaiming two new saints — two young laymen of the 20th and 21st centuries.

"Sts. Pier Giorgio Frassati and Carlo Acutis are an invitation to all of us, especially young peo-

ple, not to squander our lives, but to direct them upward and make them masterpieces," the pope said Sept. 7.

"The simple but winning formula of their holiness," he said, is accessible to everyone at any time. "They encourage us with their words: 'Not I, but God,' as Carlo used to say.

And Pier Giorgio: 'If you have God at the center of all your actions, then you will reach the end.'"

Before canonizing the first saints of his pontificate, Pope Leo greeted the more than 80,000 faithful who had gath-

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OSV News photo/Matteo Minnella, Reuters
A nun holds a picture of Carlo Acutis and Pier Giorgio Frassati on the day Pope Leo XIV leads the canonization Mass of Blessed Carlo Acutis, a British-born Italian boy who will become the first millennial to be made a Catholic saint, and Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican, Sept. 7.



Donations total \$3,300 during ninth annual Hunger Bowl game

By **JOHN ROHLF**
The Message assistant editor

A total of \$3,300 was collected for the St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry during the Friday Knights Hunger Bowl clash between Mater Dei and Reitz Memorial High Schools.

Mark Hackert, co-chair for the ninth annual Friday Knights Hunger Bowl, confirmed they collected \$3,300 at the gate and at half-time during Friday night's game at Enlow Field in Evansville. As of Sept. 14, just under \$33,000 had been raised for the food pantry through this initiative. See **HUNGER**, page 7



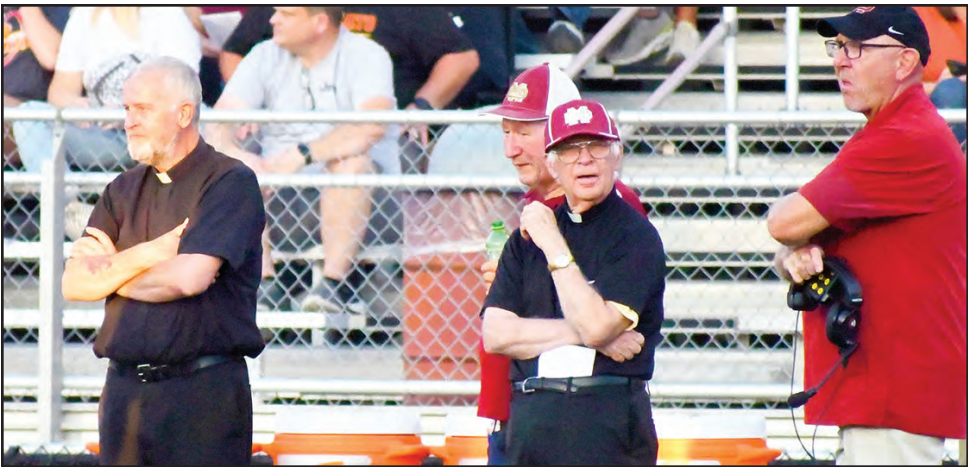
The Message photos by John Rohlif
Above, Donations are collected at the gates during the Friday Knights Hunger Bowl matchup between Mater Dei and Reitz Memorial. Reitz Memorial wide receiver De'Andre Fellows, at left, carries the ball during the Sept. 12 game.



Running back Caden Thacker fights through the tackle attempt of Reitz Memorial's Jack Brackett.



Mater Dei wide receiver Colton Salee, left, is tackled by Reitz Memorial line-backer Grayson Carter during the Friday Knights Hunger Bowl clash.



Father Jerry Pratt, pastor of Resurrection Parish in Evansville, left, and Father Lowell Will, senior priest of the diocese, second from right, look on from the Mater Dei sideline.



Quarterback Tate Mallory scans the field before throwing a pass.



The Friday Knights Hunger Bowl trophy is stationed by the gates before the start of the game.

Hunger

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Every donation benefits the area St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry.

St. Vincent de Paul Evansville Executive Director Ashley Newell said the funds raised from the Hunger Bowl initiative “is absolutely crucial for us.”

“We are feeding over 100 families a day,” Newell said. “That’s not individuals, that’s families with an average family size of four people per household. And we provide four days of food and hygiene products per person per household every 30 days. So this is quite literally make or break for us in being able to continue to serve the community and to serve the four counties that we operate in.”

Over the first eight years of the Hunger Bowl, over \$130,000 was raised through the area Catholic grade schools and high schools; the 10 area Knights of Columbus councils; and donations at the football game and from the community. Each school and Knights of Columbus council determines how they raise funds.

About nine years ago, Friday Knights Hunger Bowl Co-Chair John Sandwell brought the idea to his Knights of Columbus council after reading about a similar initiative done at an all Catholic schools rivalry game in Florida. He said after receiving the support of his council, other Knights of Columbus councils and Mater Dei and Reitz Memorial High

Schools, they set a goal of \$3,000 for the first year. He noted nine years later, donations exceeded \$30,000.

“It’s fun,” Sandwell said. “We’re at a football game having fun. And I know he (Hackert) does the same thing, you see somebody come through that you know, and you start busting their chops and say, ‘don’t put the wallet away. Come on, let’s go.’ It’s a win-win, win-win I think.”

Sandwell noted the schools also get involved with collecting money at the game, with cheerleaders from both Mater Dei and Reitz Memorial collecting donations in the stands during halftime.

“They feel a part of it and they’re glad to do it,” Sandwell said.

Newell said the funds raised this year are especially needed. They lost a major supplier who was providing the food pantry \$120,000 through in-kind grocery donations. The food pantry was impacted by the Avian flu, leading to shell egg donations being down until 2026, she said.

Hackert said they are “very humbled” by everyone’s support of this cause. He also stressed the importance of needing to listen to new ideas, noting Sandwell’s idea could have easily been shot down by his council or by the high schools.

“This is at the core of our Catholic faith,” Hackert said. “Catholic men were called by Christ to be outward signs of what we believe. We happen to have the faith, but it’s through our works that we’re called to do. It calls us very

directly to feed the poor. And it’s such a natural fit for everybody to help out St. Vincent de Paul and be able to provide that for them.”

Reitz Memorial 28, Mater Dei 21 (OT)

Reitz Memorial recovered an onside kick and scored two touchdowns in the final 56 seconds of regulation to earn a 28-21 comeback win in overtime at the Friday Knight Hunger Bowl Sept. 12.

Reitz Memorial (4-0) overcame a 21-7 deficit late in the fourth quarter to earn a home win over Mater Dei (2-2) in a battle of the two Evansville diocesan high schools.

Quarterback Luke Brown threw a pair of touchdown passes in the final minute. Maxx Anslinger hauled in a shovel pass and scored to put Reitz Memorial within one score. After the Tigers secured an onside kick, they drove down the field and scored with eight seconds remaining on Luke Dockery’s second touchdown reception of the game.

In overtime, Dylon Kendrick scored on a 10-yard rushing touchdown on the first play of overtime. On the Wildcats’ possession, the Memorial defense stopped Caden Thacker on 4th and goal from the 1-yard line.

After going into halftime 7-7, Mater Dei scored once in each the third and fourth quarters to take a late 21-7 lead in regulation. Quarterback Tate Mallory scored on a pair of 1-yard rushing touchdowns in the second half to give the Wildcats the two-score lead.

Reitz Memorial opened the scoring in the game on Brown’s first touchdown pass to Dockery. Mater Dei answered late in the half on Caden Thacker’s 4-yard touchdown run.

Reitz Memorial was scheduled to host Evansville Harrison Sept. 19. Mater Dei hosted Jasper.



A total of \$3,300 was raised during the Friday Knights Hunger Bowl.



Quarterback Luke Brown, left, listens to his coach before the start of a second quarter drive.