The Message

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Catechetical Sunday 2026:

'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me . . . to bring good news to the poor'

By NICHOLAS SOELLNER
Associate Director of the Office of Catechesis

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me . . . to bring good news to the poor" (Luke 4:18; cf. Isaiah 61:1).

The news, whether reported on television, YouTube or social media, has perhaps never been so divisive, at least in recent cultural memory. It's not only the content of the stories, but the manner in which they are shared. Even if unconsciously, we listen to news, asking, "Who's this message for?" We place internal filters in our minds as a way to identify information that's truly relevant to us and to keep the "background noise" at bay. Although this can be a good and natural thing, we often over apply that filter and can miss out on messages that were, in fact, meant for us. Unfortunately, this "tuning out" also often follows us into church. How many homilies have we heard and then forgotten before we even got home? I'm no exception; the number of truly memorable homilies that I would say were impactful, if not life-changing, still pales in comparison to the number I've quickly forgotten. This filter also tends to follow us into our time when we engage with the Bible. How many times do we read or hear the words of Jesus and think, "Oh, that message isn't for me. That's for those people."? Let me assure you, this year's Catechetical Sunday scripture passage is definitely for you.

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor." I want to include the passages that follow as well, because they are essential to understanding what this "good news" is. "He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke 4:18-19). It isn't obvious to us in the 21st century, even when reading this story in its full context, but Jesus is doing something very significant in Nazareth here, so stay with me. By proclaiming it an "acceptable year of the Lord," he's announcing the Jubilee. Back in the book of Leviticus, Moses was commanded by God to keep every seventh year, a sabbatical, just like the seventh day, the sabbath, holy. A year of rest. And at the end of every seventh grouping of seven years, you'd have a Jubilee announced on the 50th year. As Dr. John Bergsma explains in his book "Jesus and the Jubilee," the four principal goods of a jubilee year were forgiveness, freedom, family and fullness.

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Deacon Ketzner heard call 'to take this forward'

By JOHN ROHLF
The Message assistant editor

Editor's note: *Over the past few months, we conducted interviews with the newly ordained permanent deacons shortly before or shortly after the Aug. 8 ordination. Over the next few months, we will publish stories in* ***The Message*** *in the order the interviews were conducted. We will also post video from our interviews on our Facebook and YouTube pages.*



The Message photo by Megan Erbacher

Deacon Brian Ketzner places his hands on the Book of Gospels.

By JOHN ROHLF
The Message assistant editor

Deacon Brian Ketzner said during daily time before the Eucharist in the adoration chapel, he started hearing the call that "you need to take this forward."

Deacon Ketzner is one of 16 men who were ordained to the permanent diaconate during the Rite of Ordination to the Sacred Order of Deacon Aug. 8 at St. Benedict Cathedral in Evansville. Deacon Ketzner is one of two deacons ordained in 2026 who were assigned to Precious Blood Parish in Jasper. Deacon Doug Ackerman is also assigned to Precious Blood in Jasper.

Deacon Ketzner said growing up, it was not a question of if he was going to Mass but which Mass they were attending.

"It was a heavy influence," Deacon Ketzner said. "I had an uncle that was a Franciscan priest and friends of the family that were priests as well . . . And so seeing them as normal people outside the church and recognizing they weren't something scary. It was always encouragement

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Reitz Memorial bests Mater Dei in 10th annual Hunger Bowl clash

By JOHN ROHLF
The Message assistant editor

As part of the annual Hunger Bowl game between the two Evansville Catholic High Schools, Evansville's Reitz Memorial High School remained unbeaten with a road win over Evansville's Mater Dei High School.

Reitz Memorial (4-0) earned a 52-21 win over Mater Dei (3-1) at the Reitz Bowl in Evansville. After taking a 24-14 lead into halftime, the Tigers outscored the Wildcats 28-7 in the sec-

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Diocesan schools earn high marks on IREAD assessments

By JOHN ROHLF
The Message assistant editor

For the second consecutive year, over a dozen schools earned a 100 percent pass rate on the IREAD assessment.

For the 2025-2026 school year, at least 16 Diocese of Evansville schools reached the 100 percent pass rate on the Indiana Evaluation and Determination assessment, which is given to third graders across the state. After 11 schools reached the 100 percent threshold in the 2023-2024 school year, the diocese had at least 16 schools reach the threshold the past two years, according to data avail-

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A voice of encouragement:

Seminarian profile, Jacob Schneider

By JACOB SCHNEIDER
Special to The Message

Editor's note: *This year, Diocesan seminarians focused their annual seminarian articles on the theme: "Encouraging Discernment." Our seminarians wrote about a non-ordained person from our Diocese who encouraged them to discern priesthood.*

The spring of my junior year in high school is a time that I have come to consider the most pivotal where I began more intentionally discerning seminary and priesthood, and one voice of encouragement from that time is my youth group leader, Sharon Shumate. She was the youth group leader for Unite throughout most of my time in high school, and it was a community that I valued deeply as a place to grow in the faith alongside friends and peers.

That spring, Sharon told us that they were planning on bringing a group to St. Meinrad's One Bread One Cup program, and I signed up to go along. That summer was the first time I had ever been to Meinrad, and the program gave me the time and place to think about what I was being personally called to. As I reflected on experiences with her and my peers, I also found myself pondering if I could be called here at Meinrad, in one way or another.

Sharon's invitation and encouragement to openness in the program gave me a push to more confidently discern the call of seminary and priesthood.

Home parish:
Corpus Christi Parish, Evansville

Education:
St. Meinad Seminary and School of Theology

Ordination Year:
2028



JACOB SCHNEIDER



Donations for the St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry are collected at the annual Hunger Bowl game between Evansville's Mater Dei and Reitz Memorial.

Bowl

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ond half for their fourth consecutive victory to start the season.

For the 10th year, donations were collected for the St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry during the Hunger Bowl football game. All funds collected through the initiative benefit the food pantry.

Over the past nine years, over $160,000 has been raised through efforts of the area Catholic grade and high schools, 10 area Knights of Columbus councils, 4th Degree Knights of Columbus assembly, Columbiettes auxiliary, at the football game and with donations from the community.

A recap of the 10th annual Hunger Bowl will be published in a future issue of ***The Message****.*



Father Zach Etienne, pastor of Good Shepherd Parish in Evansville; Deacon Josh Reising, president of Reitz Memorial High School; and Father Chris Forler, pastor of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Daylight, look on during the first quarter of the Hunger Bowl football game.

Reitz Memorial quarterback Luke Brown runs forward during the Hunger Bowl game. Brown finished the game with four touchdown passes.



Mater Dei running back Edwin Rainey carries the ball on Mater Dei's first offensive possession.



Reitz Memorial junior Grant Rogier is tackled by a group of Mater Dei defenders during the annual Hunger Bowl game.



The Message photos by John Rohlf

At right, **donations are collected before the annual Hunger Bowl game.**