



# The Compass IN THE Bulletin

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## Catholic school student's essay offers personal perspective on adoption

BY JEFF KUROWSKI | THE COMPASS

**ASHWAUBENON** — If Katie Polasky could speak to her birth mother, she would express her gratitude.

"I would tell her that I'm thankful that she gave me such an amazing family," said Katie, the daughter of Doug and Amy Polasky. "If I could ever see her in person, I would thank her for what she did. She gave me a life; she gave me hope and a chance."

Katie, 12, a seventh grade student at Notre Dame Middle School in De Pere, was born in Guatemala. Her birth mother, whose name is Kelita, chose adoption to find a safe place for her child. While she cannot speak to Kelita at this time, Katie did recently share her gratitude in writing.

The 2018 Culture of Life Essay Contest, sponsored by the Knights of Columbus, Wisconsin State Council, was introduced in her language arts class. The contest theme was "How has abortion negatively impacted the American economy?" Katie admits, with a smile, that she



SAM LUCERO | THE COMPASS

**Katie Polasky, a seventh grader at Notre Dame Middle School in De Pere, shared her story of adoption in an essay sponsored by the Knights of Columbus. Born in Guatemala, her adoptive parents are Doug and Amy Polasky.**

departed from the theme. Instead, she told her personal story.

In her essay, titled "It's Not Their Choice," Katie writes about how her most important life choice was made by a woman whom she doesn't remember. Abortions are illegal in Guatemala, but still happen. Katie believes that due to her birth mother's faith, abortion was

never an option.

"She was a strong Catholic," she explained about Kelita. "She was close to God and didn't want anyone to hurt me."

In her essay, Katie wrote, "I think a lot of people who choose abortion don't realize that abortion kills an actual person."

**Our full story appears in the Jan. 18 issue.**

### FRANKLY, FRANCIS



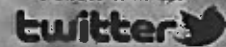
Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Continuing the catechesis on the "Lord's Prayer," today we shall begin with the observation that in the New Testament, the prayer seems to arrive at the essential, actually focusing on a single word: Abba, Father. We have heard what St. Paul writes in the Letter to the Romans: "you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of sonship. When we cry, 'Abba, Father!'" (8:15). After meeting Jesus and hearing his preaching, a Christian no longer considers God as a tyrant to be feared; he is no longer afraid but feels trust in him expand in his heart: he can speak with the Creator by calling him "Father." The expression is so important for Christians that it is often preserved intact, in its original form: "Abba."

+ Pope Francis,  
Jan. 16, 2019

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Follow Him On



## Service puts spotlight on human trafficking

BY SAM LUCERO | THE COMPASS

**ALLOUEZ** — A moment of exuberance brightened an otherwise somber evening discussion on human trafficking Jan. 11 at St. Matthew Church.

At the opening prayer of "A Light in Darkness: Hidden in

Plain Sight," which included addresses from a law enforcement officer and a trafficking survivor, the gathering of more than 125 people offered a prayer of thanksgiving for the rescue of 13-year-old Jayme Closs. The Barron County youth, who was kidnapped from her home Oct. 15

after her parents were murdered, was rescued Jan. 10 near Gordon, Wis.

Sr. Celine told the gathering that awareness of human trafficking is the first step in ending it. "You can't help get rid of it if you don't even know it's there," she said. January is Human Traffick-

ing Awareness Month, and the evening program offered ways to identify and report possible trafficking victims. Information tables greeted guests in the church's gathering space.

**Our full story appears in the Jan. 18 issue.**

# 5 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

St. Blaise

PATRICIA KASTEN | THE COMPASS

- 1 On the feast of St. Blaise (Feb. 3 in Western churches and Feb. 11 in Eastern), throats are blessed with candles.
- 2 The blessing traces to a tradition that says Blaise saved a boy from choking on a fish bone, which made Blaise a patron saint of throats.
- 3 Blaise was a bishop of Sebaste, Armenia. He was martyred by beheading under the Roman emperor, Licinius, in A.D. 316.
- 4 Before his imprisonment, Blaise had become a hermit. It was said he healed sick and wounded animals, which is why he is also a patron of animals and veterinarians.
- 5 On his way to prison, Blaise saved a poor woman's pig from a wolf. She later brought him candles in his cell, linking candles to this saint.

## Alpha: The spark we needed!

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

Over the past few months, I have been sharing updates on our efforts to build a culture of discipleship within in the Diocese of Green Bay. In this column, I want to focus on Alpha, an exciting program we have launched over the past few years aimed at helping people discover or rediscover Jesus.



### BISHOP'S CORNER

Bishop David Ricken

As I grow older, I am more aware of the ways in which the world around me has changed. This is true of the church as well. We live in a world where there is less face-to-face communication, and a world that sees less value in parish life and even the sacraments. While I could lament what we've lost, and certainly there are times I wish we could return to the "good old days," as your bishop, it is my responsibility to ensure that the church reaches people where they are. To do this, we have to utilize new methods and approaches to meet the needs of the world today. This is the task of the new evangelization that Pope Francis and his immediate predecessors have called us to embrace.

One of the specific changes I have observed is the way people grow in their faith. In decades past, people used to listen their way to faith.

But today, they are more likely to talk their way to the faith. People have deep questions about life and they are looking for meaningful answers to these questions. But they don't simply want to be told the answers, they want to understand them and consider whether those answers make sense for their lives.

This is the genius of Alpha, an 11-week course that addresses some of life's most pressing questions: "Is there more to life than this?" "Why and how should I pray?" "How can I make the most of the rest of my life?" While Alpha provides answers to some of life's difficult questions, it does so in the context of a conversation built on relationships.

Relationships are the key to a successful Alpha program because it is designed to honor people where they are and help them grow in relationship with each other while growing in relationship with Christ. This emphasis on relationship is specifically built into the structure of Alpha.

Each session begins with a meal so that the leaders and the participants can get to know each other and share life together. Sharing a meal with another person helps to break down some of the barriers that we are so good at building around ourselves. This facilitates more openness for the group as they watch that session's video and spend some time discussing what they saw and heard.

The entire column appears in our Jan. 4 issue.



## Parish SNAPSHOT

Pre-algebra students at St. Mary Catholic Middle School in Neenah use hands-on-learning math manipulatives called "Algebra Tiles" to balance equations. Catholic schools in the Diocese of Green Bay celebrated Catholic Schools Week Jan. 27 to Feb. 2.

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