



Archbishop Charles Thompson of Indianapolis prepares to make the sign of the cross with sacred chrism oil on the forehead of Marguerite Engle during a March 4 Mass at the Indiana Women's Prison chapel. Engle and Opal Williams, third from left, received the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and the Eucharist during the Mass. (CNS/John Shaughnessy, The Criterion)



by Dan Morris-Young

[View Author Profile](#)

[**Join the Conversation**](#)

April 4, 2018



Olivia Oyster, an eighth-grader at St. Mary School in Delaware, Ohio, holds letters of support to birth mothers of adopted children that she and her classmates wrote. (CNS/courtesy St. Mary School)

Acting on a recurring dream, an eighth-grader at [St. Mary School](#) in Delaware, Ohio, launched a letter-writing outreach of praise and support for women who have placed their children for adoption. Olivia Oyster and classmates [wrote more than 50 letters](#), which were photocopied and forwarded by the nonprofit [BraveLove](#) to some 260 mothers across the country who had allowed adoption of their newborns.

Olivia's message read:

"Dear Birthmother, I want to begin by expressing my absolute gratitude for you and your brave decision. Adoption is a topic that is very close to my heart, because my little sister was adopted. You are so brave, and selfless. I am praying for you! -- Olivia."

Of the many replies received by BraveLove, one stated:

"As a birth mom, I received one of these letters. Honestly, it came at the perfect time. On the 15th my birth son will be one, and it's been a struggle for me. But when this letter came in the mail, it was so wonderful and just made my whole week! Truly appreciated it. Thank you!!!!"

The prison ministry team at [St. Mary Parish](#) in Aberdeen, Washington, can always use more volunteers, but that does not diminish the importance of its work, according to its leader, Lori Maki. She and three other parishioners make the 20-mile drive twice weekly to direct Bible study and Communion services at [Stafford Creek Corrections Center](#), where more than 1,900 men are serving sentences, [reports Northwest Catholic](#) magazine.

In December, Seattle Auxiliary Bishop Daniel Mueggenborg and St. Mary pastor Fr. Victorraj Anasdas accompanied the volunteers and celebrated a Mass marking the feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

[During a Mass at another prison setting](#) several states away on March 4, Indianapolis Archbishop [Charles Thompson](#) shared the message of Pope Francis to incarcerated in Bolivia: "When Jesus becomes part of our lives, we can no longer remain imprisoned by our past."

The message had particularly personal meaning for inmates Opal Williams and Marguerite Engle who were baptized and received both [first Communion and confirmation](#) during the liturgy at [Indiana Women's Prison](#). The two new members of the church and their sponsors — Ann Tully of St. Matthew the Apostle Parish (Engle's sponsor) and Andrea Wolsifer of St. Anthony Parish (Williams' sponsor) — spoke with the archdiocesan newspaper, [The Criterion](#).

[Life has been upended](#) for the Felix Garcia Family of Calhoun, Georgia. Garcia, 51, who fled to the U.S. from violence in Guatemala in 1991, was detained for

deportation in January by U.S. immigration officials during a routine check-in. His daughter, Belsy Garcia Manrique, a 27-year-old medical student, has been trying to stave off his deportation with help from organizations including the [Ignatian Solidarity Network](#), but she faces potential deportation as well if protections of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program are not renewed in some form by U.S. lawmakers.



Belsy Garcia Manrique poses for a photo with her father, Felix Garcia, after graduating in 2013 from Mercer University in Macon, Georgia. Catholic groups are helping the 27-year-old medical student battle against her father's deportation. (CNS/courtesy Belsy Garcia Manrique)

There seems no shortage of demand for [Joleen Hunkins' skills](#) as an interpreter for the deaf and hard of hearing within the Catholic community. A member of [Sts. Edward and Isidore Parish](#) in Flintville, Wisconsin, with her husband, Rich, the mother of four grown children regularly interprets at Sunday Mass for the deaf community at [St. John the Evangelist Parish](#), Green Bay, and recently worked with two deaf young women in St. John's Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults.



Joleen Hunkins, center, an interpreter for the deaf and hard of hearing at St. John the Evangelist Parish in Green Bay, Wis., serves as catechist for Chai Yang, left, and Alexandrind Snyder. Hunkins is helping Yang and Snyder, who are deaf, prepare for the sacraments of initiation at the Easter Vigil. (CNS/Sam Lucero, The Compass)

[Dan Morris-Young is NCR's West Coast correspondent. His email is dmyoung@ncronline.org.]

We can send you an email alert every time [The Field Hospital](#) is posted. Go to this page and follow directions: [Email alert sign-up](#).

Advertisement

This story appears in the **The Field Hospital** feature series. [View the full series](#).