

Cross Indiana

CrossIndiana.com

423 Miles in 15 Days Crossing Indiana... Literally!

By Paul Staso, Ultra-endurance Athlete

It was in 2016 when I announced my retirement from adventure running across states and countries. Now, I believe God is calling me back to the road to do another crossing – but this time, literally.

I am pleased to announce that **beginning August 25, 2026, I will begin a 423-mile solo running journey which will literally be a route of a cross over the entire state of Indiana.** This self-supported endeavor will require 15 days on the road, averaging 28 miles per day while pushing all of my gear, food and water in the same support stroller I used when I ran alone across the United States, Germany, Alaska, Montana, and the Mojave Desert. The stroller is nicknamed "B.O.B." – which is an acronym for *Beast of Burden* since it weighs 65 pounds when fully loaded (*a beast*) and I must push it every step (*a burden*).



How did you get this idea?

In 2021, I awoke from my sleep in the middle of the night and had an image in my mind of a cross over the state of Indiana. I shared this with my wife and my pastor; however, I simply could not understand why I had this vision. It has been in the back of my mind for several years. It didn't make sense to me until I began to pray intentionally about some struggles my home parish was beginning to experience – seemingly bringing some Catholic parishioners to their knees and in need of encouragement to rise again. After consistent prayer, I felt God calling me to step out, literally, and prepare to run a cross route over the state of Indiana – primarily aimed at being an encouragement. It has been 20 years since I ran across America, and 15 years since my last journey run. I'll be 61 years of age while crossing Indiana.

Why a cross route?



Fully understanding the cross route required time. I decided I needed to look at a pedestrian route on Google Maps in the form of a cross over the state of Indiana. When I plotted such a route, the crossroads (*or intersection*) of the cross ended up being in Peru, Indiana – my hometown, which includes Saint Charles Borromeo Catholic Church. That's the parish my family attends and it is the only Catholic Church in Miami County. I am the Director of Faith Formation (*religious education*) at St. Charles Church, and my wife is also a parish employee. **Indiana's motto is "The Crossroads of America" and when you place a pedestrian cross (†) route over Indiana, the intersection of the crossed lines is at my home parish, St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church – which has been in existence for nearly 160 years.** Based on all of this, if Indiana is "The Crossroads of America," then St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church can be said to be at the "cross"-roads of Indiana! That was further confirmation to me that I'm meant to journey this 423-mile cross route.

Will you journey along the cross route as a diocesan employee or as a parishioner?

I want to make it clear that my running this cross route will NOT be in my capacity as Director of Faith Formation for St. Charles Church within the Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana. **I will be doing this solo crossing as a parishioner. All costs associated with the endeavor will come out of my own pocket and I will use my accrued vacation time to accomplish the journey.**

How will you cover the 423-mile cross route solo and self-supported?

As many know, I've run thousands of miles completely alone across states and countries (*NO support crew or pilot vehicle*) using a jogging stroller that carries my gear, food and water. Since completing my last adventure run in 2011 at the age of 46 (*which was 506 miles solo across the Mojave Desert in 17 days*), the stroller has been stored in my attic. I've pushed that stroller 3,260 miles coast-to-coast across the United States; 500 miles through Alaska; 500 miles across Germany; 620 miles across Montana; and all the way across the Mojave Desert (*Arizona, Nevada and California*). Now, after 14 years, I'm dusting off the stroller and preparing for a crossing unlike any I've done before. Pope Francis shared a prayer intention in 2023 which I believe goes to the heart of what I'm aiming to do. He said:



*"Sometimes I think that we should put a sign on the door of parishes that says, "Free admission." Parishes should be close-knit communities, without bureaucracy, people-centered — a place where the gift of the sacraments can be found. They have to become once again schools of service and generosity, with their doors always open to those who are excluded. And to those included. To all. Parishes are not a club for the few, which give a certain kind of social belonging. Please, **LET US BE DARING**. Let us all rethink the style of our parochial communities. Let us pray that parishes, placing communion – communion of people, ecclesial communion – at the center, may increasingly become communities of faith and fraternity."*

Will your body be able to endure since you'll be 61 years of age when you "cross" Indiana?

Yes, I believe it will. I've kept myself in good shape over the years and my physical exams show that I am fit. I don't take any medications, I don't smoke, I don't drink alcohol, and I have no health or physical limitations. I've been running distances beyond that of the marathon (26.2 miles) since 1985. One thing that I can say – *based on decades of experience* – is that conquering the marathon distance (*or more*) on a daily basis is much more of a mental and spiritual feat than it is a physical one.

What are some details concerning the route you'll run and walk to "cross" Indiana?



The total distance will be 423 miles, and my aim is to run/walk those miles in 15 days on the road. That means I will average 28 miles per day (*or slightly more than a marathon per day*). Eight of the 16 days will require 30 or more miles per day, with three of the days requiring me to log 37 miles daily. I'm approaching this journey unlike others I've done in the past. For this crossing of Indiana, I'll be doing four separate pilgrimages to form the width and length of the cross over Indiana. Each of the four journeys will begin at a different border of the state and each will end at St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church in Peru, Indiana.

"Cross Indiana" will be done as follows:

Journey 1:

Illinois Border to St. Charles (*west to east*)

Tuesday (8/25/26) – Transport to Illinois Border in Morning

| Day: | Start Point | Finish Point | Lodging | Distance |
|---------------------|-----------------|----------------------|----------------|----------|
| Tuesday (8/25/26) | Illinois Border | Remington, IN | Super 8 | 21 miles |
| Wednesday (8/26/26) | Remington, IN | Monticello, IN | Monticello Inn | 19 miles |
| Thursday (8/27/26) | Monticello, IN | Logansport, IN | Quality Inn | 23 miles |
| Friday (8/28/26) | Logansport, IN | Saint Charles Parish | Home | 16 miles |

Distance: 79 miles

Journey 2:

Ohio Border to St. Charles (*east to west*)

Saturday (8/29/26) – Transport to Ohio Border (overnight at Express Inn & Suites, Decatur, IN)

| Day: | Start Point | Finish Point | Lodging | Distance |
|--|-------------|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| Sunday (8/30/26) | Ohio Border | Warren, IN | Comfort Inn | 35 miles |
| Monday (8/31/26) | Warren, IN | Saint Charles Parish | Home | 37 miles |
| Tuesday (9/1/26) Day off the road, time at church office, and transport to Michigan border | | | | |

Distance: 72 miles

Journey 3:

Michigan Border to St. Charles (*north to south*)

Tuesday (9/1/26) – Transport to Michigan Border (overnight at Tru by Hilton just north of Elkhart, IN)

| Day: | Start Point | Finish Point | Lodging | Distance |
|--------------------|-----------------|--------------------|----------------|----------|
| Wednesday (9/2/26) | Michigan Border | Nappanee, IN | Shamrock Motel | 23 miles |
| Thursday (9/3/26) | Nappanee, IN | Rochester, IN | Super 8 | 37 miles |
| Friday (9/4/26) | Rochester, IN | St. Charles Parish | Home | 23 miles |

Distance: 83 miles

Journey 4:

Kentucky Border to St. Charles (*south to north*)

Saturday (9/5/26) – Transport to Kentucky Border (spending Sat/Sun evenings at Radisson Hotel)

Sunday (9/6/26) – Prep Day (starting 9/7/26 at the Falls of the Ohio State Park – Indiana/Kentucky border)

| Day: | Start Point | Finish Point | Lodging | Distance |
|--|------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------|
| Monday (9/7/26) <small>LABOR DAY</small> | Kentucky Border | Scottsburg, IN | Holiday Inn Express | 30 miles |
| Tuesday (9/8/26) | Scottsburg, IN | Seymour, IN | Days Inn | 22 miles |
| Wednesday (9/9/26) | Seymour, IN | Franklin, IN | Hilltop Inn | 34 miles |
| Thursday (9/10/26) | Franklin, IN | Indianapolis, IN | Fairfield Inn | 30 miles |
| Friday (9/11/26) | Indianapolis, IN | Tipton, IN | East Street Inn | 37 miles |
| Saturday (9/12/26) | Tipton, IN | Saint Charles Parish | Home | 36 miles |

Distance: 189 miles

Why are you planning to complete the journey on the day of the St. Charles parish bazaar?

The crossing of Indiana will finish on September 12, 2026 – the day of the annual parish bazaar at St. Charles Church – an event involving the entire community. I believe this will be a good time to celebrate together all that God has done in and through our parish, and what He continues to do. I'm hoping that parishioners from our pastorate will come together that day to enjoy time together at an annual event which focuses on community and unity. I personally invite all Catholics and non-Catholics from Miami County and surrounding areas, including priests, deacons, and the bishop of the Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana, to join us for this special day. My final day of the journey will consist of 36 miles (*one of the biggest mileage days of the trek*), and I anticipate an arrival time at St. Charles Church around 4:00 PM on September 12, 2026.



Will people be able to track your progress live online as you cross Indiana?

Yes! I will be using a SPOT Satellite Tracker which will update my position via an online map every few minutes. More details about that will be released in the near future. I'm asking people to bookmark **CrossIndiana.com** – which will be the website address I'll use for the journey. I'll also be posting photos and videos to social media from the road each day as I cross Indiana. Those will be at **www.instagram.com/paulstaso** and at **www.facebook.com/runnerstaso**.

How can people be a part of *Cross Indiana*?

I will be contacting Catholic schools in Indiana and inviting physical education teachers to have their students pace along with me as teams while I cross (†) the state of Indiana – **asking those children to pray for priestly vocations**. Teachers can contact me via **paul@crossindiana.com** for information, or can learn details at **<https://crossindiana.com/for-teachers>**. Also, between August 25 and September 12, 2026, **people may send prayer intentions** to that e-mail address and I will receive those while crossing Indiana – praying those intentions as I stride on Indiana's roadways. Further, prayers for my purpose in doing this journey, and for my safety, will be greatly appreciated. I'm aiming to have t-shirts available for purchase by those who wish to support and promote the *Cross Indiana* trek. T-shirts will be available at cost, and *I won't profit in any way from sales*. Details to come!



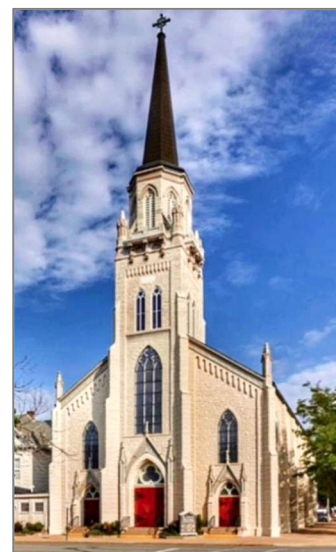
Will there be media coverage of *Cross Indiana*?



What I've learned through years of running across states and countries is that media outlets (*newspaper, television, radio*) tend to be made aware of my journeys by people who contact their offices and tell them that some guy is running down the edge of a highway pushing a jogging stroller – and sometimes they call the police to check and make sure I don't have a child in the stroller! As a result, there are moments when a media vehicle (*or police officer*) rolls up and questions start to fly. However, I'm open to any media interviews that any news outlet wants to do – particularly Catholic news sources. Again, I can be reached at paul@crossindiana.com.

What do you want to share about St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church?

For nearly 160 years, St. Charles Church in Peru, Indiana has served the people of Northcentral Indiana. Currently, **St. Charles Church has 343 registered households, and 705 registered individuals**. St. Charles parish is one of two in a pastorate – the two parishes being 17 miles apart and in two different towns in two different counties (*Logansport in Cass County and Peru in Miami County*). The pastorate has two priests. The parish in Logansport offers 5 weekday Masses and 4 weekend Masses (*1 on Saturday and 3 on Sunday*) – for a total of 9 Masses weekly, while in July 2025 the Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana reduced St. Charles' Masses to only 2 during the week and only 1 on the weekend (*Sunday*) – for a total of 3 Masses weekly (*which is only one-third of the Masses currently offered at the parish in Logansport*). The reason for St. Charles losing many Masses, as reported to parishioners by the diocese, was due to a shortage of priests and declining attendance. However, it should be noted that the parish in Logansport only has ONE Saturday Mass (*at 4:30 PM*) while St. Charles parish has none.



Prior to the Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana discontinuing the Saturday Vigil Mass in July 2025, St. Charles parish had an average of 122 people attending the Saturday Mass during the 3 months leading up to the discontinuation – according to parish records. Many parishioners have expressed that they want the Saturday Vigil Mass returned, particularly the elderly (*who constitute a large percentage of parishioners at St. Charles*). The parishioners of St. Charles Church truly care about one another, about their Catholic faith, and about their fellow man! Those who go to St. Charles Church step into a place of friendly, faith-filled believers who want to grow closer in their relationship with Jesus. Simply stated, **I believe it was God's plan to place St. Charles Church at the "cross"-roads of Indiana. My desire is to see the Saturday Vigil Mass returned to the parishioners of St. Charles Church — which is just one of my 7 reasons for crossing Indiana.**

What do you hope to achieve through this crossing of Indiana?



We all encounter crossroads in our lives and sometimes we wander in the wrong direction. Sometimes we fall... and when we do, we have to place trust in God and get back up. This 15-day journey is a physical and visible invitation to walk through the doors of St. Charles Church at the "cross"-roads of Indiana. In 2013, Pope Francis said, *"I invite everyone to be **BOLD and CREATIVE** in this task of rethinking the goals, structures, style and methods of evangelization in their respective communities"* (*Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 33). I believe that those words apply as much today as they did 12 years ago. In my opinion, the "Cross Indiana" endeavor will be an example of bold and creative evangelization. **I am praying that God will use the 15-day journey for the following 7 goals:**

- To have **youth in Catholic schools pace along with me virtually**, as school teams, while praying for priestly vocations. The journey will be 423 miles in 15 days (*13 of which will be school days*).
- To bring to the hearts and minds of those who it connects with the need to **use the gifts and talents that they have been given** to bring glory and honor to God.
- It would be a blessing if this trek can cause some people to stop for a moment and **think about their own spiritual life** and what steps they can take to place God at the crossroads of their heart – and that if they've fallen, they can put their faith in God and His grace to rise up again.
- **To ask all Catholics to pray regularly for priestly vocations**, especially in Indiana. For example, the Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana currently has 59 priests, but projections estimate that this number will decrease to 48 by 2030 and to 38 by 2033
- I'm also praying that more people will come to my home parish in Peru, Indiana, to encounter our Lord in a very special way and to **consider joining the community at St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church (at the "cross"-roads of Indiana)**.
- To encourage parents who have children in grades kindergarten through 12th grade to have their children **attend the religious education program of St. Charles Church**, which is held Sunday mornings for grades K-6 from 10:30—11:45 AM, and Sunday evenings for grades 7-12 (*youth group*) from 6:05—7:30 PM. The program takes a break from mid-May through mid-August.
- Finally, in May 2025, the parishioners of St. Charles Church in Peru, Indiana, were notified by the Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana that their Saturday Vigil Mass was being discontinued due to a lack of priests and declining attendance. Its pastorate has 2 parishes and 2 priests. Also, the average weekly number of Saturday Vigil Mass attendees for the 3 months leading up to the discontinuation was 122. **As I journey, I will pray that the diocesan bishop will reinstate the Saturday Mass.**

Words from a prayer of St. Charles Borromeo



St. Charles Borromeo – the Saint whose name is connected to my home parish in Peru, Indiana – prayed, *"Almighty God... I am simply Your instrument for bringing others to the knowledge of the wonderful things You have done for all Your creatures. Help me to be faithful to this task that You have entrusted to me."* I will keep those words in my mind and heart as I do this journey – that I am God's instrument and need to be faithful.

Follow St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church on social media!

You can keep up with the happenings at St. Charles Church via:

- www.instagram.com/stcharles.parish.peru
- www.facebook.com/stcharlesperu

The Road Already Traveled

Go to <https://paulstaso.blogspot.com> to access Paul's running photos.

- **United States in 2006** (*3,260 miles solo in 108 days at age 41*)
- **Montana in 2008** (*620 miles solo in 20 days at age 43*)
- **Alaska in 2009** (*500 miles solo in 18 days at age 44*)
- **Germany in 2010** (*500 miles solo in 21 days at age 45*)
- **The Mojave Desert in 2011** (*506 miles solo in 17 days at age 46*)



Also, visit Paul's YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/user/pacetrekk to view adventure run videos.