

- 3 **Seminarians return**
Spanish immersion experience
- 3 **Upcoming Candlelight Mass**
- 3 **Correction**
- 6 **'Be Witnesses'**
- 7 **Knights of Columbus**
Clergy dinner
- 12 **'We Choose Life'**

Deanery Pastoral Council seeks to establish Diocesan Pastoral Council, forming 'regular contact' with diocesan laity

Maura Baker
Staff Writer

The Diocese of Covington's Deanery Pastoral Council (DPC) met for its first meeting of the fiscal year, August 19, in Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Covington. While this orientation session familiarized the deans and representatives from the diocese's five deaneries with the council's guidelines — it also introduced the council to what will be the newly instated Diocesan Pastoral Council this year.

Initially, the DPC played a vital role in the diocese's planning process, meeting four times a year working up to that process, said Bishop John Iffert as he joined the meeting via video conference. "That necessarily has to change," he said, "because we have taken on a broader model of planning that includes more voice."

This past year, with the With One Heart campaign well underway, hundreds of people across the diocese, including laity, have contributed to the process of developing a pastoral plan — leading to this need for change within the DPC, because the planning process is "happening differently," said Bishop Iffert.

Bishop Iffert mentioned at last year's DPC orientation, he "needed more regular contact with a group of lay people from around the diocese, and then needed (the DPC's) input and wisdom."

The proposed solution was to build on the current DPC structure, allowing them to operate similarly as in the past, and to draw lay representatives from among the DPC to serve on a secondary Diocesan Parish Council. Like the DPC, the much smaller Diocesan Parish Council will meet four times a year — with consultation between the two as well as Bishop Iffert to ensure that there's a "group of folks that I can regularly consult," said Bishop Iffert, with matters relating to diocesan planning.

The first Diocesan Parish Council meeting is set to start with its first meeting in September. Two people (as well as two alternates) will be chosen from each Deanery to serve on the council.



(above) Bishop John Iffert video conferences with the Deanery Pastoral Council at the orientation meeting, August 19.

(below) Members of the Deanery Pastoral Council onlook as a member stands to introduce himself to the rest of the council.



Baker photos

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Bishop's Schedule	3
Commentary	4
People and Events	9
Shopper's Guide	15
VIRTUS	15
Classifieds	16
News Briefs	19

Missed an edition? Current and back issues of the *Messenger* are available online at covdio.org/messenger.



Ferguson photo
Donna Ferguson at the Chapel of Calvary, Fatima, Portugal during World Youth Day.

World Youth Day pilgrims return filled with joy

Laura Keener
Editor

The return home to the Diocese of Covington wasn't a straight flight for many of the pilgrims that attended World Youth Day, Aug. 1-6, in Lisbon. Delays and missed connections found them spending time in Paris, France and Chicago, Ill. While they were expected to return home Monday, Aug. 7, for some they didn't arrive home until Wednesday, Aug. 8. Despite the sacrifices, the trip is fondly remembered for its many spiritual encounters, including being at Mass celebrated by Pope Francis.

"WYD is an event unlike anything else. It is not a vacation so you will be challenged, but it is worth it to see so many Catholics in one place," said Donna Ferguson, parishioner, Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, Burlington. "WYD is an event for everyone that is excited about their faith. Our Holy Father has a great love and belief in the young people in the world and I think that is the draw for everyone."

"The worldwide church is alive," said Emily Scheper, St. Henry Parish, Elsmere. "Seeing so many people united in faith is inspiring."

Isaak A. Isaak, co-director for the diocesan Office of Catechesis and Evangelization, travelled with the pilgrims and experienced the travel delays. He has attended many World Youth Days.

"You know, when you think about the joy, you don't even feel tired. The tiredness disappears," Mr. Isaak said about overcoming the sacrifices of WYD.

Mr. Isaak said that he had a profound spiritual experience leading up to
(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

the Stations of the Cross on Friday. The area he was in was extremely crowded, hot and dusty and he began to be filled with anxiety as he struggled to breathe. When Pope Francis arrived and the Stations began, all of his anxieties ended.

“I was still being pressed by people. I was still hot, but everything was gone, disappeared,” Mr. Isaak said. “The fears disappeared. The pain I had on my chest disappeared. I felt like this is a real experience of the Holy Spirit; a real experience of Jesus. It’s priceless.”

Mr. Isaak said he was truly inspired watching how the young adults from the diocese truly embraced the spiritual experience of World Youth Day.

“These young people and the motivation that I received from these young people. They were really into Adoration and receiving the Eucharist every day, they didn’t want to miss it. Something was happening,” he said. “The whole week we were just into everything our Catholic faith can offer for us — confession, spiritual direction — especially these young people. When I was watching them, that really was building up my faith, just looking at what they were doing and how I was immersed in listening and going through this amazing experience.”

Mr. Isaak said a very special moment for him and all the pilgrims was having Bishop John Iffert celebrate a private Mass for them in the chapel at Fatima.

“The feeling of the presence of the Holy Spirit was always there for us,” he said.

Bishop Iffert travelled separately. This was his first World Youth Day and much of the time he was with his brother bishops.

“There were 670 bishops, I was told, there at World Youth Day,” said Bishop Iffert. That’s over 10 percent of the world’s bishops “who had gathered to support the young Church, to say that young people matter to the Church and that’s a lovely thing,” he said.

The few times he spent with the pilgrims were among the most meaningful for Bishop Iffert. On Wednesday, Bishop Iffert and the diocesan pilgrims spent the day together in Fatima, visiting the homes of the visionaries and the Fatima shrine and celebrating Mass in the chapel of the apparition.

“Just to spend that day with them, to have that encounter with this event in the life of the Church, this place where Mary, the Blessed Mother, made herself known. Sitting with them at meals and to talk with them about their hopes for the Church, what they are most proud of about being Catholic and those kinds of things — that was wonderful,” said Bishop Iffert. “Being able to pray with them was a highlight for me.”

Another highlight for Bishop Iffert was the Stations of the Cross, particularly the interaction — the outpouring of Christ’s love — Pope Francis showed to the young people who shared a personal witness during the stations.

“The text of the station that was read was clearly taken from letters and from voices of young people from around the world and the concerns that they face and fears of what they think they might have lost during the COVID pandemic, the fears of facing climate change and environmental degradation, their concerns for their future; the anxiety that in many parts of the world is a plague for young people,” said Bishop Iffert. “It really focused on these issues of young people and the fears of their lives and put them in communication with the Stations and what Jesus was experiencing.”

About every third station a video of a personal witness talk from a young person who had had a significant struggle — with addiction or with mental health or parents’ divorce or another significant struggle in their life — would be played on the big screens. After the video, the person who gave the witness was shown sitting among the crowd, with everyone cheering and encouraging them.

“Their witness, just putting themselves out there and how Jesus had affected them and accompanied them and helped them through that and how that had brought them closer to Christ and then also closer His Church ... that was beautifully touching,” Bishop Iffert said.

At the end of the Stations, Pope Francis invited those young people who had given a witness up to the stage. “As they all started to come in close to the Pope, he reached out and, really just like a grandfather, put his hand alongside that young person’s face and drew them in close for a hug — just so beautiful and so touching,” he said.

Bishop Iffert praised the City of Lisbon and the organ-

izers of World Youth Day for their years of planning that allowed for a truly spiritual experience for the Church’s youth. The logistics of hosting two million people for a

week is a daunting task. For everyone “there are still sacrifices to be made and to be offered but it was a joy. It was just a real joy,” he said.



Isaak photo

(above) Isaak A. Isaak takes a selfie at Eduardo VII Park with a sea of humanity from all corners of the globe in the background.

Fortner photo

(left) The pilgrims from the Diocese of Covington pose for a group photo at World Youth Day, Lisbon.

CNS photo/Vatican Media

(below) Pope Francis watches as young people take the cross to begin the World Youth Day Stations of the Cross service at Eduardo VII Park in Lisbon, Portugal, Aug. 4, 2023.



Seminarians grow in love and understanding of Spanish culture

Laura Keener
Editor

With the increase of Spanish-speaking Catholics migrating their way to the Diocese of Covington, the need for Bishop John Iffert to provide for their pastoral care increases as well. This reality became apparent as Bishop Iffert has come to know the people and parishes of the diocese.

As a way to begin to fill this need, and with an eye to the future, this summer Bishop Iffert arranged a Spanish immersion experience for seminarians Hank Bischoff, Joshua Heskamp and Michael Schulte, so that they can

come to know better the language and culture of Spanish-speaking parishioners.

Mr. Heskamp spent two months at Assumption Seminary in San Antonio, Texas. Assumption Seminary is a bi-lingual seminary whose mission is “to enable Christ-centered men to grow and develop as collaborative and culturally sensitive pastoral leaders committed to the Gospel,” according to its website.

“They teach both English and Spanish. So, there is a group of people there learning English and a group learning Spanish and there are people from all over the world that come to learn those languages there,” said Mr.

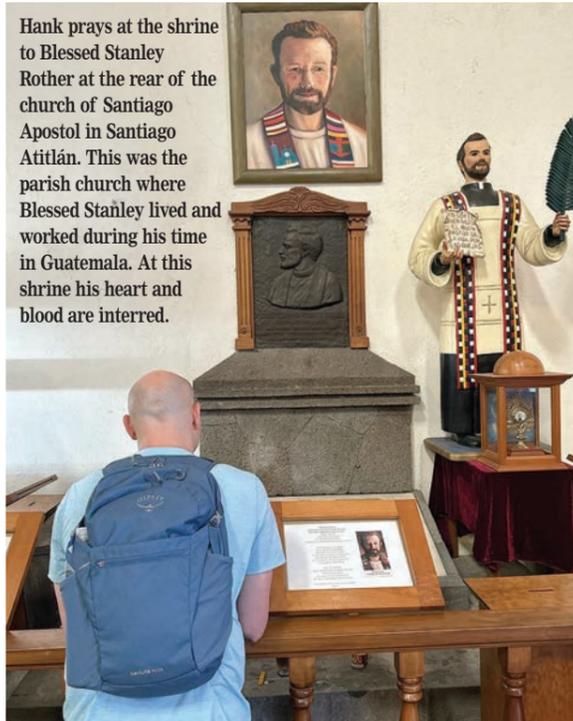
Heskamp.

The *Messenger* caught up with the three seminarians, Aug. 16, who recently returned to the Diocese of Covington from their summer experience and two weeks before they were to leave for seminary studies at St. Vincent Seminary, Latrobe, to continue their priestly formation. All three were excited to share their experience and were grateful to Bishop Iffert and the people of the diocese for having been given this opportunity.

(Continued on page 13)



Hank and Michael aboard a taxi boat called a “lancha” on Lake Atitlán, crossing the lake from where they were staying to Santiago Atitlán, Blessed Stanley Rother’s city, to visit his church and shrine and to visit with local families who are friends of a friend.



Hank prays at the shrine to Blessed Stanley Rother at the rear of the church of Santiago Apostol in Santiago Atitlán. This was the parish church where Blessed Stanley lived and worked during his time in Guatemala. At this shrine his heart and blood are interred.



Michael carries a sack filled with beans, corn, and other foods to be taken to a poor family known to our friends in the city. After this photo was taken they brought the food personally and visited the family.



Hank and Michael pose with Manuel and Ana Luisa, their host family before they leave for the airport on the last day.



Bishop's Schedule

- Aug. 26**
New president Installation, Notre Dame Academy, Park Hills, 10 a.m.
- Aug. 27**
Mass, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, 10 a.m.
Catholic Charities Cassba, Drees Pavilion, Covington, 3 p.m.
- Aug. 29**
Advisory Council meeting, 9:30 a.m.
Be Concerned visit, Covington, 2 p.m.
- Aug. 31**
Mass, Knights of the Holy Sepulcher, Mary, Seat of Wisdom Chapel, Thomas More University, Crestview Hills, with dinner to follow, 5 p.m.
- Sept. 1**
New school year opening Mass, Villa Madonna Academy, Villa Hills, 10 a.m.
- Sept. 2**
Vigil Mass, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, 4:30 p.m.
- Sept. 4**
Curia Offices Closed — Labor Day Holiday
- Sept. 5**
Advisory Council meeting, 9:30 a.m.
Priest Continuing Education and Formation meeting, 1:30 p.m.

Candlelight Masses

- Held first Fridays, September through May. Confessions at 6 p.m., Mass at 7 p.m. and young adult social at 8 p.m.
- Sept. 1, St. Joseph Parish, Camp Spring
 - Oct. 6, Divine Mercy Parish, Bellevue
 - Nov. 3, St. Patrick Parish, Maysville
 - Dec. 1, St. Joseph Parish, Crescent Springs
 - Jan. 5, St. Agnes Parish, Ft. Wright
 - Feb. 2, St. Joseph Parish, Cold Spring
 - March 1, Sts. Boniface and James Parish, Ludlow
 - April 5, All Saints Parish, Walton
 - May 3, St. Pius Parish, Edgewood

Missing attribute

In Benedictine Sister Colleen Winston’s column in the August 18 edition of the *Messenger*, a book title was missing its attribute. The poem written by Yehuda Amichai (1924-2000) entitled “The Place Where We Are Right,” is from “Poetry of Presence,” © 2017 & ed. Phyllis Cole-Dai & Ruby R. Wilson. Grayson Books, W. Hartford, CT.2017; reprinted from “The Selected Poetry of Yehuda Amichai,” translated & © 1986,1996, 2013 by Chana Bloch & Stephen. The *Messenger* apologizes for the omission.



Call for testimonials

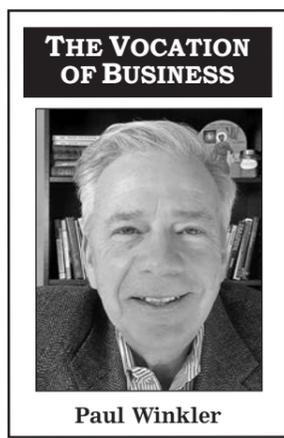
The Society of St. Vincent de Paul Northern Kentucky is celebrating 100 years of service to the people of the Diocese of Covington.

To share your story on how the Society has impacted you and/or your family, e-mail messenger@covdio.org with the subject line: Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

Your story may be featured in the upcoming *Messenger* supplement highlighting the Society’s centennial. The deadline for submissions is Sept. 14.

How to make work a continual prayer in the age of distraction

In today's fast-paced and media driven world, where information bombards us from various sources such as TV, computers, cell phones and billboards, it is amazing to realize that the average person processes as much as 74



THE VOCATION OF BUSINESS

Paul Winkler

GB of information every day. This data overload, equivalent to watching 16 movies, continues to increase by approximately 5 percent each year. Sabine Heim and Andreas Keil, authors of the article "Too Much Information, Too Little Time" highlight this phenomenon.

For perspective, just 500 years ago (the 1500's), a highly educated person would consume approximately 74 GB of information in their entire lifetime.

This information would come from books, stories, attending plays, concerts, public executions — a form of entertainment but perhaps not for the highly educated — and other experiences of everyday life. Nowadays, entertainment platforms such as Netflix and Amazon provide us with an ever-increasing ocean of all types of content, good and bad, all at our fingertips without even leaving the couch.

Two thousand years ago, St. Paul implored us in 1 Thessalonians 5:17 to "pray constantly." Now I'm pretty sure things were not a bed of roses for those living during his day. It must have seemed as crazy then as it does today to be told to "pray constantly" when you are being hunted down by a government that was persecuting the early Christians for their beliefs. St. Paul also wrote in 1

Corinthians 10:31, "So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."

As a kid I thought that these passages of St. Paul's were impossible for anyone to attain! How on earth can anyone be expected to pray constantly, especially a kid, who, looking back now as an adult, may have had just a bit of attention deficit disorder. Yet, there it was in the Bible, in plain black and white, to pray constantly and do all to the glory of God.

It was hard enough to do this back then, and today, in the 21st century, the high volume of demands of our faith, family and our work for our time means that something's certainly got to give. Of course, God usually gets the short end of the stick when it comes to one-on-one time with his created.

However, thanks be to God who designed us beautifully, the human brain possesses a remarkable tool known as the Reticular Activating System (RAS) to aid in filtering information. The RAS allows us to determine what is important and what is not, enabling us to focus on just important matters. By fine-tuning our mental gatekeeper (the RAS), we create our own unique filter to determine what enters our minds. Imagine the RAS as a filter, with tighter filters allowing less and hopefully more crucial information through, and looser filters that allow a torrent of data to occupy our thoughts which can also produce sleepless nights.

The RAS's primary function then is to filter the ocean of data that bombards us and retain only what is crucial to us individually. In reality, most of the daily barrage of data is truly garbage. A simple example of how this works is when someone decides they want to buy a specific car down to the exact make, model and color. They begin to see that exact car everywhere, making it seem as though everyone has the same excellent taste in cars. This selective attention demonstrates the RAS in action

and its ability to keep us focused on what truly matters — even when we decide a consumer product is the most important thing in the world.

So, getting back to praying constantly. We must ask ourselves: Is God important to us? If the answer is yes, then you will need to train your RAS to allow thoughts of him throughout the day into your mind. By incorporating God into our thoughts throughout the day, we create a habit of praise and gratitude, appreciating both the good that happens and also the lessons learned from challenging experiences at work.

Designing our spiritually-oriented RAS begins with developing the habit of starting and ending the day with thoughts of God.

Start the day with what St. Josemaria Escriva called the Heroic Minute. I think he called it "Heroic" because he said (paraphrasing here) to make the snooze button your enemy. When the alarm goes off, jump out of bed, get on your knees and immediately express gratitude for the upcoming day, regardless of what lies ahead.

Additionally, dedicating just a small bit of time at the end of the day for reflection, an examen, allows us to assess our actions and behaviors, identifying areas where we emulated Christ and when we fell short while resolving to improve ourselves the next day.

When we focus on what truly matters and ensure that God remains foremost in our minds throughout the workday, it makes praying constantly as natural as breathing.

Paul Winkler is the founder and president of Attollo, a Catholic business leadership development organization. He was inspired to start Attollo after working for decades in executive roles for Nabisco/Kraft. His column "The Vocation of Business" is syndicated by the Denver Catholic, the official publication of the Archdiocese of Denver.

30 years later, 'Veritatis Splendor' remains a forceful guide to living a moral life



GUEST

Matthew Dugandzic

Pope St. John Paul II promulgated "Veritatis Splendor" ("The Splendor of the Truth") on Aug. 6, 1993 — 30 years ago. I find these words hard to believe even as I write them, since this encyclical, far from losing relevance with age, seems only to grow in its importance.

It was written amidst a great deal of turmoil regarding the moral teachings of the Church and, in its upholding of traditional doctrines and,

perhaps more importantly, its shedding further light thereon, it provided guidance and direction for the moral theologians who, like me, came of age in its wake. I have no doubt that it will, like *Rerum Novarum*, be included among those encyclicals that so profoundly influenced Catholic thought that it will be impossible to understand Catholic moral theology without having read it. It will be essential reading, furthermore, not only for those who want to understand contemporary moral theology but for those who want to avoid the mistakes of the past.

These mistakes emerged in the flurry of theological activity that followed the Second Vatican Council, which closed in 1965 and led the various sub-disciplines of

Catholic theology to reevaluate their approaches to understanding the truths of revelation. This reevaluation was not all bad — far from it — and it bore much fruit that has since remained with the Church. In the field of moral theology, for example, this era witnessed a recovery of the understanding that moral theology is ultimately about happiness, not rules. The reason why we follow rules is that we want to be happy, not because a ruler-toting sister told us to. But some of the theological exuberance of this time period led many to accept ideas that were at odds with the perennial teachings of the Church. "Veritatis Splendor" was written, in part, to combat two of them: fundamental option theory and proportionalism.

Fundamental option theory is based on the idea that every person has a basic commitment or trajectory — that is, he or she has opted in a fundamental way to God or to something else. This, as far as it goes, is true, and Pope John Paul II says as much. The problem emerges when proponents of fundamental option theory try to distinguish the fundamental option from concrete actions. Think, for example, of a person who says, "Well, I am not the best Catholic; I don't go to church every Sunday, but I am basically a good person." This is a colloquial expression of the idea behind fundamental option theory: A person can be, fundamentally, good or bad, regardless of the particular actions that they perform, since they have decided, deep down, that they love God — even if they do not do everything, as Catholics, or as human beings following the natural law, they are supposed to.

John Paul II argues that this idea is not only contrary to Church teaching, but it also does not make sense on a

rational level.

Regarding Church teaching: If fundamental option theory were true, then it would destroy the notion of mortal sin, which, in one single act, removes a person from the state of grace and destroys the charity that was in their heart. And this, of course, is not just a matter of doctrine — it also makes sense. When we act, we act in accord with our beliefs and commitments, such that our actions sometimes reveal that we believe or are committed to something other than what we say we are.

A man, for example, who cheats on his wife, is showing with his actions that he does not love her as much as he says he does. Likewise, it is impossible to say that one is a good Catholic while casually ignoring the moral teachings of the Church.

Proportionalism was a school of thought that called the traditional category of "intrinsic evil" into question. It is no secret that Catholics like rules. Not only do we have a lot of them, we have different kinds of them.

Some admit of exceptions — for example, you must go to church on Sunday, unless you are sick. Other rules do not admit exceptions: You must never commit adultery, no matter how noble your intentions.

Intrinsically evil actions fall into this second category. This term describes actions that are evil in themselves — that is, evil because of the kind of action that they are. Such actions, which never admit of exceptions, include things such as murder, fornication and blasphemy.

It is not hard to recognize or define such actions; everyone knows what murder is, and proof of this is that

(Continued on page 17)

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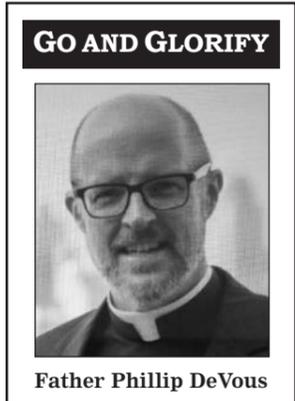
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But who do you say that I Am?

The readings for the twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time — Cycle A — are: Isaiah 22:19-23; Romans 11:33-36 and Matthew 16:13-20.

“Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” This fundamental question Jesus poses to the disciples is not just as a personal query into the local gossip but is a graced moment of Divine Revelation to the whole Church.

The answer that Peter will give to Christ on behalf of the disciples, in both a personal and representative manner will form the deposit of faith handed down to those



GO AND GLORIFY

Father Phillip DeVous

who believe, such that it will “cause the minds of the faithful to unite in a single purpose ... so that our hearts may be fixed on that place where true gladness is found ...” (Collect)

To this probing question Peter gives the definitive answer: “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

This question and its answer form the foundation of the most basic pas-

toral activity of the Church, which is to raise the question of God and of his Christ to the world. And to give an answer to that question, reminding the world that God exists. This question-and-answer dialectic is an ever more essential, fundamental task of the Church’s core pastoral mission, especially as the western world finds itself in a post-Christian moment.

In this post-Christian moment, we are not simply dealing with a situation where knowledge of Jesus Christ is no longer “common knowledge” and a cultural norm. Nor are we dealing with a situation where it is simply the case that many people no longer have a personal faith in Jesus or no longer practice the faith. I think something fundamental has changed and we must reckon with it.

The situation of postmodern man is that he cannot conceive that he is anyway separated from God. That is because the question and the reality of God has been nullified. God is simply a non-question and non-reality for an ever-larger number of people.

This age of nullification is a total paradigm shift in the consciousness of the western world. The consequence is that we now live within a formative cultural, economic, personal, political, and social milieu that is fundamentally anti-theistic-atheistic in a radical way — right down to the very pre-conscious assumptions of every aspect of contemporary life and living.

Further, we should note that to the extent the question of God has not been completely nullified the process of nullification still proceeds in the culture and even in the lives of believers. Why?

Well, I think we must confront a hard truth: Modern man, breathing in the air of the nullification of God has edged toward idolatry — the worship of a false “remainder god” that is largely an emotional projection coterminous with himself and his vague spiritual aspirations. What that “remainder god” is NOT is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Because of this, Peter’s confession of faith must become not just our answer, but our mission.

As the philosopher and theologian, David L. Schindler, has noted, it is the mission of the Church to “keep the world awake to God,” showing that “God and the love of God revealed in Christ through the Church must make a difference to everything, to every entity and every act, including every human ... act, all the time. Nothing in the cosmos is or can be indifferent to God or indeed love, ultimately to the love of God as revealed in Jesus Christ through the Church.”

It is in this age of God’s nullification with its prevailing assumptions about Jesus Christ’s irrelevance beyond some kind of pious personal hobby, that we are called to make a confession of faith and undertake a mission to reawaken the world around us to God. To show how God and the love of God do make a difference to everything,

(Continued on page 17)

Real Presence

Jesus left us with a wonderful gift of the Eucharist which sustains us on our faith journey and through all of life’s joys and sorrows. We speak of the presence of the



MUSINGS

Sister Fidelis Tracy, C.D.P.

body of Christ in the consecrated elements of the bread and wine as the “Real Presence.”

I had a wonderful teacher for a class on liturgy who had a profound respect for the Eucharist. He noted that our emphasis on the elements of bread and wine as the “Real Presence” could easily make us minimize the other ways that Jesus is present or think of them as “not real.” He insisted that we consider the real presence of Jesus in the

consecrated bread and wine, in the Word, and in the community.

I prepare for the Mass by using a number of resources to reflect on the Scripture readings of the day. This practice has enriched my experience of the presence of Christ in the Word and made me more attentive to the homily. I am touched by God’s presence in the Scriptures which are the real presence of the body of Christ for me. This realization does not detract from the great gift of Jesus’ presence in the bread and wine. Jesus is really present in the Eucharistic bread and wine and in the Word.

As we gather, we are called to experience that Jesus is really present in the gathering. The community in which I worship is replete with diversity — age, economic status, gender. Several members are physically or mentally challenged. I am grateful for one challenged member of this body who regularly calls me to reverence the gathering as the Real Presence. John sits with his family in the pew near me. Yes, we do habitually sit in the same places. Is that a Catholic thing?

John clearly cherishes his membership in the gathered community. He vociferously joins in all the prayers the community proclaims together. Sometimes he is a

sentence ahead of the congregation and sometimes a sentence behind, but he always participates with vigor.

This young man has a habit of turning away from the altar and facing the back of the church. His parents then lovingly place a gentle hand on his shoulder and he turns to face the front of church, at least for a while. I have often thought about John looking toward the back and finally realized that he is not merely gazing at the exit but is catching the eyes of some people and trying to make personal contact. He seems to need that eye contact to be aware of the community nature of the gathering.

Is he more aware than I am that this gathering is the real presence of Jesus? While I appropriately face the altar, in terms of community I am only seeing the backs of heads. This is clearly not enough for John. I admire his desire to be connected with the community and aware of the real presence of Jesus in this gathering.

Crying babies, wiggly children, people who sing off key (that would be me), coughing neighbors need not be distractions. They remind us of the Body of Christ, of our participation in the beauty and brokenness of this body. We receive the Body but we also are the Body of Christ, called to go forth into the rest of our day, week, year aware that we are to be Eucharistic presence for our friends, family, co-workers, neighbors.

I would not encourage facing away from the action on the altar, but I am grateful for how John reminds me not to forget that Jesus is really present in the gathered community.

Jesus is also present in my family, coworkers, religious community and even in the gathering I meet when I shop in the local grocery store. Every community I encounter is the Body of Christ. The gift of the incarnation, God’s sharing in our flesh and blood, our very nature, raises all of us to a dignity that is beyond imaging.

At the close of the Eucharistic liturgy we are sent to be what we have received. We are always a Eucharistic community, not just on Sunday or when we are at Mass. Perhaps, when I enter my home, my workplace or the grocery store I should hear the Spirit whispering in my ear, “Take off your shoes. You are standing on holy ground.”

Divine Providence Sister Fidelis Tracy is a retired theology professor at Thomas More University, Crestview Hills, Ky

It don’t come easy: Working hard for instant gratification

How we live our lives is substantially different from how our parents and grandparents lived theirs. We no longer need to wait a



GUEST

Jaymie Stuart Wolfe

whole week for the next episode of a favorite TV show; we can watch all five seasons in a single binge. We don’t have to buy tickets or drive to a theater to see a movie; we can stream it whenever we want and pause it to make popcorn. We can listen to our music whenever we want to hear it and regardless of where we are. And if we want to shop for a new bookcase or a pair of shoes, we can

do it online and at any hour of the day or night.

Life may seem more complicated, but most of what we need to do takes less time than it used to. We bank and pay our bills online, split a restaurant check with friends, take classes, and see our lab results all on our phones. We apply for a new job and find someone to date from the comfort of our favorite chair.

The result is that every one of us has time to do more. That sounds like progress until we stop long enough to fully consider the “more” we’re so busy doing. We spend more, own more, eat more (and throw away more) than our predecessors did just one generation ago. We access

more healthcare, subscribe to more ongoing services and pay people to do things our parents did for themselves more than ever before. In all of history, no group of people has consumed as much as we do. And, as we kill ourselves to keep consuming or to meet the demands of those who do, we tell ourselves we have achieved a higher standard of living.

But there’s a catch to all this. It’s not just the world around us that’s changed; we’ve changed too. Being able to tailor our lives to fit our personal preferences places us at the center of our world and creates a whole portfolio of high, possibly unfair, expectations. We want what we want when we want it. We take in as much as possible as quickly as possible, like Pacman speeding through the maze to the next available snack, barely digesting anything as we consume, consume, consume. Even within our spiritual gleanings, valuable insights barely take hold because we take so little downtime to let anything really sink in.

Most of us stopped asking ourselves “How much is enough?” — for ourselves and of each other — a long time ago, even as we take everything, including the availability of others, for granted. We work hard — too hard — to keep feeding our insatiable appetites while forgetting that things don’t just appear out of thin air. Hidden in everything we consume is the contribution made by a living human soul. That film, book, meal, music download, contract, retreat, or homily we consume (and too often quickly forget) is a product of someone else’s real time and labor, sacrifice, creativity, and expertise.

(Continued on page 17)

Be Witnesses

*“Wake up the world!
Be witnesses of
a different way
of doing things,
of acting, of living!”*

— Pope Francis

Religious Communities in the Diocese of Covington

Benedictine Sisters of St. Walburg
Monastery www.stwalburg.org

Brothers of the Poor of St. Francis
www.brothersofthepoorofstfrancis.org

Passionist Nuns
www.erlangerpassionists.com

Sisters of Divine Providence
www.cdperkentucky.org

Sisters of Notre Dame
www.sndusa.org

Sisters of St. Joseph the Worker
www.ssjw.org

Public and Private Associations

Franciscan Daughters of Mary
www.fdomary.org

Missionaries of St. John the Baptist
www.msjb.info

Ah, how good the good God is!

Karen Kuhlman

Messenger Correspondent

The Sisters of Notre Dame are celebrating a significant milestone that expresses the Congregation's charism: a deep experience of God's goodness and provident care. Since 1963, all whom life has brought to the doorstep of St. Claire Healthcare in Morehead, Ky., have personally experienced the blessings of that charism. St. Claire's Diamond Jubilee allows us to appreciate the work of the Sisters in an area that might have remained forgotten but for that charism.

When Don Lloyd accepted the Sisters of Notre Dame's invitation to become president and CEO of St. Claire in 2019, he brought 30 years of hospital administration experience with him. He would need every bit of that experience — the hospital, founded by the Sisters in 1963, is now the largest rural hospital in Eastern Kentucky and the region's largest employer.

He was working in hospital administration in rural Placerville, California, and speaking with individuals who wanted to deliver healthcare to underserved areas. His Google searches for examples of collaborations between colleges of medicine and rural hospitals all yielded the same result: the partnership between the Sisters of Notre Dame's St. Claire Healthcare in Morehead and the University of Kentucky's College of Medicine.

Mr. Lloyd spoke with Mark Neff, the first lay president and CEO of St. Claire, to learn more about the partnership, and was impressed with the story he shared.

“Lo and behold, two weeks later, I was contacted by a recruiter with a national firm who asked if I'd ever heard of St. Claire Healthcare in Morehead, Kentucky! When I visited Morehead and learned of the dedication of those first brave sisters and saw firsthand their ministry in action, I knew it was for me. I was blessed to be called to serve, blessed to be invited.”

Mr. Lloyd said, “Whenever I meet new employees, I explain that St. Claire was built on the backs of some incredibly brave and tenacious women. There was no hospital in Morehead in the 1940s, so local healthcare professionals Dr. Louise Caudill and Nurse Susie Halbleib visited the sick and delivered babies in patients' homes. Seriously ill patients had to travel to Ashland, Lexington, or Cincinnati for treatment.”

Dr. Caudill took her plea for a proper medical facility to area residents, the Eastern Kentucky Hospital Foundation, and the Sisters of Notre Dame. The Sisters answered her plea and arrived in Morehead in 1960. They began organizing, fundraising, designing, and building Morehead's first hospital. Against all odds, the efforts of these women, from divergent backgrounds, motivated a community to come together to bring the first hospital within 60 miles vital healthcare and new opportunities for employment to Morehead, with the opening of St. Claire on July 1, 1963. Today, St. Claire HealthCare serves 11 counties in its service area and, with over 1,200 staff members, is the largest employer in the region. That includes 125 medical providers who represent more than 30 medical specialties.

Education is a core principle of the Sisters of Notre Dame. In their wisdom, the Sisters melded their passion for education and health care.

The founding of St. Claire Healthcare coincided with the founding of the University of Kentucky College of Medicine in 1963. There has been a link between the two ever since. That link has provided education opportunities that have enabled the delivery of healthcare and education to the marginalized and disenfranchised ever since.

The Sisters' passion for education has prepared many with the opportunity to become physicians, clinicians, nurses, scientists and health and stewardship providers of all sorts. The opportunity given them by the Sisters of Notre Dame, in a way, allowed these health professionals to answer their own call to minister to others in previ-

ously underserved rural areas of Kentucky.

When the first six or seven Sisters arrived in Morehead in 1960, residents had concerns about the women in strange white habits. Some wondered why they had come to Morehead, wondered what they might be doing in their small Eastern Kentucky town.

One older resident related to Mr. Lloyd the fear that some residents had about the Sisters' white habits. Most people in the region at that time thought Catholicism was an occult religion and that the Sisters' habits were their uniforms. Others feared that the Sisters were members of the Ku Klux Klan.

But those fears disappeared when, through personal experience, residents came to know the Sisters. One man's concerns were put to rest when he regained consciousness in the St. Claire emergency room. He had fallen off a roof and awoke to find a vision in



Congressman Hal Rogers (right) presents Notre Dame Sister Mary Jeanne Frances Cleves (left) with the U.S. Congressman Hal Rogers “Difference Maker Award,” May 2, 2016, at the groundbreaking of the new St. Claire Medical Pavilion, Morehead, Ky. Sister Jeanne Frances, one of the founding nurses at St. Claire Hospital, was honored for her lifetime of service to healthcare in Eastern Ky.

white hovering over him. He thought he had died, gone to heaven, and was in the presence of an angel. No! It was just Sister Jeannie in her white habit. She became Angel Sister Jeannie to him forever more. The man has never forgotten his experience and has felt profoundly obligated to support the Sisters of Notre Dame for 35 years.

The community rallied around the sisters, and today we recognize the profound influence for good the Sisters of Notre Dame have delivered to the world. St. Claire experiences 1.25 million patients across its' healthcare system annually. The Sister's other ministries extend to the St. Charles Community in Northern Kentucky and around the world to Africa and Asia. But their impact doesn't stop there. When we look at their impact on thousands of women through education, we see women who are changing our world today because of the foundational education they received from the Sisters.

When he contemplates the future, Mr. Lloyd says, “The Sisters' influence on this region of Kentucky has been so profound for 60 years; St. Claire HealthCare will be a viable ministry 60 years from now. It may look different, but we will be an active ministry responding to whatever the need is. St. Claire will continue to grow and expand its clinical services. It will find new and creative ways to expand its mission and apply its' gifts. It will reflect the ministry of those first Sisters from Germany. We will carry on that tradition and legacy. That is not a hard job to do when we receive such incredible assistance from the Sisters.”

Mr. Lloyd continued, “The Sisters offer such good guidance. We will be doing well when we emulate the work of the Sisters. You are called to do that when you see how effective they are. I am blessed to serve the ministry of Jesus Christ through the Sisters of Notre Dame. Oh, what our world could be if we could emulate the women religious. They take no credit for all that they do, but they sure have changed the world.”

For more information about consecrated life in the Diocese of Covington, contact Sister Marla Monahan at mmonahan@covdio.org or (859) 392-1569.



Knights of Columbus celebrate clergy

The Knights of Columbus, Fr. DeJaco Council, welcomed clergy, knights and seminarians for the 20th annual clergy dinner at its clubhouse in Alexandria, Aug. 17. This was the second year that the dinner was held in Alexandria, after previously being held for 18 years at the Knights of Columbus clubhouse in Ludlow. The dinners “celebrate and show support of all our clergy,” said David Ledonne, chairman, “both active and retired.”

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Guadalupe shows how faith is shared simply, with respect, pope says

Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

Our Lady of Guadalupe and other recognized Marian apparitions show clearly how evangelization does not require complicated plans and elaborate theological explanations but sharing the faith in “a language suitable for all, a language that is comprehensible, like that of Jesus,” Pope Francis said.

At Guadalupe, in fact, “Our Lady proclaims God in the most suitable language — the mother tongue” of St. Juan Diego and the Indigenous people of Mexico, the pope said Aug. 23 at his weekly general audience.

Speaking to several thousand people gathered in the air-conditioned Vatican audience hall as temperatures rose outside, the pope returned to his series of audience talks about “apostolic zeal” and “passion for evangelization.”

In each talk in the series, the pope has highlighted a “witness” or witnesses that demonstrate important aspects of sharing the Gospel with others. His focus Aug. 23 was on “inculturation,” and the “witnesses” he chose were St. Juan Diego and Our Lady of Guadalupe, who appeared to the Indigenous saint in 1531.

Christianity already was being preached in the Americas, the pope said, “but unfortunately it had also been accompanied by worldly interests. Instead of the path of inculturation, too often, the hasty approach of transplanting and imposing preconstituted models — European, for example — had been taken, lacking respect for the Indigenous peoples.”

Mary, though, appearing to Juan Diego, comes “dressed in the clothing of the native peoples, she speaks their language, she welcomes and loves the local culture,” the pope said. “Mary is mother, and under her mantle every child finds a place. In Mary, God became flesh, and through Mary, he continues to incarnate himself in the lives of peoples.”

Hearing the Gospel in one’s “mother tongue” is effective, the pope said. “Mary speaks to us, too, in our mother tongue,

that which we understand well.”

The pope used the audience as an opportunity to thank “the many mothers and grandmothers who pass the faith on to their children and grandchildren,” and he asked the people in the audience hall to give a round of applause to mothers and grandmothers.

“As Mary shows, the Gospel is communicated in simplicity,” the pope said. “Our Lady always chooses those who are simple,” whether appearing to St. Juan Diego on Tepeyac Hill in Mexico or to St. Bernadette Soubirous at Lourdes, France, or the three shepherd children in Fátima, Portugal.

All three apparitions also show that having zeal and passion for sharing the Gospel does not mean everything will go off without a hitch, the pope said. Our Lady of

Guadalupe sent Juan Diego to the local bishop to ask him to build a church on Tepeyac Hill. The bishop dismissed him twice.

“Despite zeal, the unexpected arrives, sometimes from the church itself,” the pope said.

“Don’t forget this; it’s very important: To proclaim the Gospel, it is not enough to witness to the good, but it is necessary to be able to endure evil,” the pope said. “Even today, in so many places, enculturating the Gospel and evangelizing cultures requires perseverance and patience, it requires not fearing conflict, not losing heart.”

Pope Francis told the crowd he was thinking particularly of a specific country, which he did not name, “where Christians are persecuted because they are Christians and cannot practice their religion well and in peace.”

But Mary encourages and reassures Juan Diego, telling him, “Am I not here, I who am your mother?”

“This is beautiful,” the pope said. “So many times, when we are in desolation, in sadness, in difficulty, she also says it to us, to our hearts: ‘Am I not here, I who am your mother?’”

After Our Lady of Guadalupe gave Juan Diego a sign — her image on his cloak — and the bishop approved the building of a church, the pope said, he dedicated his life to welcoming pilgrims and evangelizing them.

Today at the Mexican shrine and at Marian shrines around the world, people continue to be evangelized in a “simple and genuine” way, the pope said. “We need to go to these oases of consolation and mercy, where faith is expressed in our mother tongue, where we lay down the labors of life in Our Lady’s arms and return to life with peace in our hearts.”



(CNS photo/Vatican Media)

Pope Francis receives a framed copy of the Lord’s Prayer in the language of the Yawanawá people of Brazil at the end of his weekly general audience in the Paul VI Audience Hall at the Vatican Aug. 23, 2023.

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PEOPLE AND EVENTS

The weekly TV Mass from the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption is broadcast locally on The CW, Sundays, noon to 1 p.m. Viewers can tune-in on the following channels: antenna 12.2; Spectrum 117 or 25; Cincinnati Bell 17 or 517; and DirectTV 25.

St. Mary's Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, offers Veneration of a relic of the True Cross, on the first Friday of every month, from noon-1 p.m. Confessions are offered concurrently. The monthly veneration is held in silence and concludes with a blessing and the opportunity for the faithful to come forward to personally venerate the True Cross relic. The monthly veneration is sponsored by the Knights and Dames of the Covington-Lexington section of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem.

Notre Dame Urban Education Center, Covington, is seeking adult and high school volunteers to tutor children in grades K-9 in reading, English and math. For information, call (859) 261-4487 or e-mail Sister Maria Therese at smtherese@nduec.org. Volunteers 18 and older must be VIRTUS compliant.

The Office of Catechesis and Evangelization in collaboration with the Angelic Project invite all to attend a candlelight Mass the first Friday of every month, 7 p.m. The next is Sept. 1, St. Joseph Parish, Camp Spring. Confessions available at 6 p.m.; a social for young adults ages 18-35 follows at 8 p.m.

The Class of 1963, St. Thomas School, Ft. Thomas, is celebrating its 60-year reunion. There is a luncheon planned for Sept. 10, 2023, 1 p.m., Summit Hills Country Club, Edgewood. Contact Carol Clear Combs at: cleargirl1008@aol.com or (513) 253-9273.

Bishop John Iffert will celebrate Vespers, Sunday, Sept. 17, 2 p.m. at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, to honor couples celebrating milestone wedding anniversaries — 1st, 25th, 50th, or 60+ — in 2023.

Newport Central Catholic High School invites families up to the school hill, Sept. 3, for its 29th Family Fireworks Fest. Food, drinks, and games begin at 5 p.m. and will continue until the big blast. No cans, bottles or coolers will be permitted. Then watch the Western & Southern/WEBN Labor Day fireworks from one of the best views in Northern Kentucky. Admission is \$5; tickets can be purchased online at ncchs.com. Children age 6 and under no charge. Limited \$10 parking passes guaranteeing you parking on the hill are on sale. Select handicap space if needed. There are only 25 handicap spaces available. Contact Tessa Krebs at (859) 292-0001 ext. 528 or tkrebs@ncchs.com.

Save the date — Sept. 23, a day of recollection and exploration into the interconnectedness of the mind, body and soul at St. Joseph Heights, Park Hills, featuring speakers Msgr. William Cleves, Kathy Kramer and Jessica Muehlenkamp. This day will be one of growth and renewal. Cost is \$65, which includes the program materials, activities and a catered continental breakfast and lunch. For information e-mail holylistening24@gmail.com.

St. Joseph Church, Camp Springs, will be hosting their Oktoberfest Fish Fries, October 6, and 13, 4-7:30 p.m. Dine-in and carry-out available, more information at www.stjosephcamp-springs.org.

The Institute for Religious Liberty welcomes Stephanie Barclay, director, Notre Dame Law School Religious Liberty initiative, as the keynote speaker for its fall event, Oct. 19, 7 p.m., Steigerwald Hall in the Saints Center of Thomas More University's campus. Guest commentators include Holly Hinckley Lesan, International Center for Law & Religion Studies at Brigham Young University (BYU) Law School and Gary Greenberg, retired principal in the Cincinnati law office of Jackson Lewis P.C. and president of the Jewish Federation of Cincinnati. For information visit thomasmore.edu/religiousliberty.

DCCH Children's Home Flea Market, Ft. Mitchell, year-round, 8:30 a.m.-noon, Monday, Thursday, and Saturday; (Dec.-April, Monday, Thursday and every 3rd Saturday). Donation drop-off during Flea Market hours or at drop-off box anytime.

A faith-based support group, New Beginnings provides separated and divorced individuals the opportunity for healing and growth. In this group, participants find new understanding of themselves and their relationships and gain courage to discover new life. Registration is required. Visit <https://covdio.org/new-beginnings-2/> or call (859) 392-1500, ext.1592. The next session will be held on consecutive Tuesdays, Aug. 29 - Oct. 17, 7-8:30 p.m., Holy Trinity Elementary School, Bellevue.

2023 Parish Festivals

Holy Cross District High School, Covington, Aug. 25, 6 p.m.-midnight; Aug. 26, 5:30 p.m.-midnight

Sts. Peter and Paul July Picnic, Aug. 26, meals 2-8 p.m., picnic 2-11 p.m.; Sept. 23, Oktoberfest 6-11 p.m.

St. Augustine Parish, Augusta, Aug. 25-27

St. Cecilia Parish, Independence, Sept. 2, 5-11:30 p.m.; Sept. 3, 4-11:30 p.m.; Sept. 4, 1-10 p.m.

St. Barbara Rocktoberfest, Erlanger, Sept. 8-10

St. Patrick School, Maysville, Sept. 8, 6-10 p.m.; Sept. 9, 6-10 p.m.; Sept. 10, 11 a.m.-3 p.m.

St. Timothy Oktoberfest, Union, Sept. 15, 6-11 p.m., Sept. 16, 5:30 p.m.-12 a.m., Sept. 17 12:30-6 p.m.

St. Matthew Parish, Morning View, Sept. 17 Noon-7 p.m.

St. Agnes Parish, Ft. Wright, September 22-24

St. Benedict Parish, Covington, September 22-23

DCCH Center for Children & Families, Sept. 30, 2-10 p.m.



Serra Club supports seminarians

The Serra Club held their seminarian cookout at Freedom Park, Edgewood, Aug. 17. The event was attended by the diocese's seminarians and many of the Serra Club's members and supporters for an afternoon featuring good food and games. As part of the event, a check was presented to Father Baiju Kidaagen, pastor of the nearby St. Pius X Parish and present as a stand-in for Bishop John Iffert, along with Deacon Jim Fortner, diocesan chief operating officer, and Father Conor Kunath, vocations promoter for the Diocese of Covington. This check goes towards the Seminarian Education Fund, supporting our local seminarians in their educational and priestly formation.



CCL Family picnic Sunday Aug. 27

The Couple to Couple League (CCL) of Northern Kentucky will host a Family Picnic Sunday, Aug. 27, at the Noll Shelter in Freedom Park, Edgewood. Former students, friends or anyone interested in CCL classes are invited to stop in and share in the picnic. CCL teachers and families will gather at 3 p.m. for a short meeting. Each family is asked to bring a side dish or snack to share. A children's playground and two sand volleyball courts are adjacent to the shelter.

The Couple to Couple League teaches Natural Family Planning in the Diocese of Covington through in-person and on-line classes. For information about CCL classes, visit www.ccli.org.

Save the date for Thomas More University's fall interfaith event hosted by the Wm. T. (Bill) Robinson III '67 Institute for Religious Liberty on Oct. 19, 2023. The event begins at 7 p.m. with Stephanie Barclay as keynote speaker. Barclay directs Notre Dame University's Law School's Religious Liberty Initiative, which promotes freedom of religion or belief for all people through advocacy, student formation, and scholarship. More details to come. Visit thomasmore.edu/religiousliberty for more

information.

Retrouvaille has helped tens of thousands of couples at all stages of disillusionment or misery in their marriage. This program can help you, too. For confidential information or to register for the September 2023 program beginning Sept. 8-10, call (513) 486-6222, or visit www.HelpOurMarriage.com.

‘Visio divina’: Finding contemplative prayer and Eucharistic awe in art

Elizabeth Scalia
OSV News

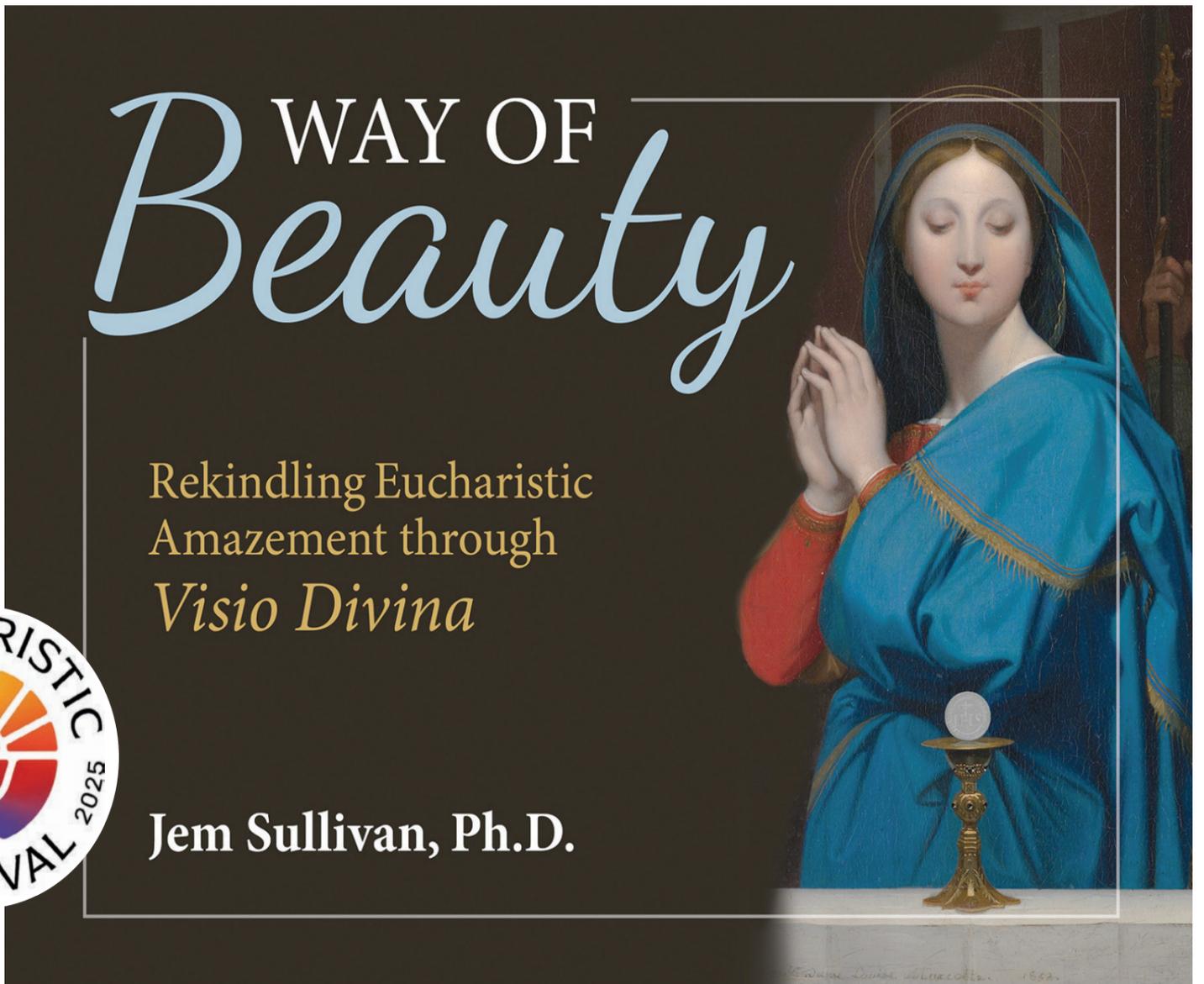
Most Catholics are at least familiar with the Benedictine practice of “lectio divina” or “holy reading” — a means of praying with Scripture or any sort of sacred reading with an ear to the promptings and nudges of the Holy Spirit. Whole books have been written about this rich form of contemplative prayer but the idea is very simple: When a particular passage strikes the reader, he or she makes a note of it, jotting down the line and the first words or impressions that arise from the reading, and then sitting with them in prayer, inviting the Holy Spirit to lead them into a deeper understanding of those impressions, or guiding their handy pens in order that instruction — sometimes very personalized learning — may follow.

It’s a safe bet that fewer Catholics are familiar with the practice of “visio divina,” or “holy seeing,” which works similarly to holy reading but engages art as a means of contemplation and more. In her new book “Way of Beauty: Rekindling Eucharistic Amazement through Visio Divina,” Benedictine oblate Jem Sullivan introduces us to the practice by using great art as a means to deepen our prayer and to further, or refresh, our appreciation of the Holy Eucharist.

Toward that end, “Way of Beauty” invites us to make a kind of visual pilgrimage toward the beating heart of Catholic teaching, which is both that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior — the defeater of death — and that he yet lives and keeps his promise to be with us “always even to the end of the age” (Matt 28:20), through the holy Eucharist.

Just as we all pray differently, and to our own level of understanding when outside of formal liturgy, we all learn differently, too. Some, like me, are poorly schooled in art history and approach the fine arts with timidity, hoping someone will help us to better grasp the work before our eyes.

Here, Sullivan’s own art studies, her teaching background as a professor of catechetics at The Catholic University of America, and her experience as a docent for the National Gallery of Art in Washington combine beautifully with her Benedictine sensibilities to guide us through 12 full-color plates of great Catholic art in hopes of



Cover of “Way of Beauty: Rekindling Eucharistic Amazement through Visio Divine” by Jim Sullivan, PhD, and published April 2023 by OSV. OSV News photo

bringing us to contemplation (and, hopefully, grateful wonderment) at so great a mystery, given so generously into our midst.

Each image is accompanied by references from Scripture and from the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and then knowledgeably discussed from both historical and spiritual perspectives by Sullivan, who includes visual details of subtle but important points made by the artists, and concludes each study with a brief, insightful prayer.

“Rekindling Eucharistic amazement” sounds like a great idea at any time, but in particular in an era, according to a Pew Research survey where less than 30 percent of all Catholics both know and accept the Church’s teaching on transubstantiation, and our noise-saturated, media-

savvy world has little struck with awe.

Such realities make Sullivan’s book not just welcome but necessary, especially as the U.S. church advances the National Eucharistic Revival, through parishes and at special gatherings, culminating in a National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis July 17-21, 2024. “Way of Beauty” will prove itself an invaluable assist in helping the American church achieve its goal of spiritual renewal and a true understanding and love for the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament.

Elizabeth Scalia is culture editor for OSV News. “Way of Beauty: Rekindling Eucharistic Amazement through Visio Divina,” Jem Sullivan, Our Sunday Visitor Publishing (2023) 83 pages, \$18.95.

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‘Miraculous’ survival of Maui Catholic church seen as sign of hope amid wildfire destruction

Patrick Downes
OSV News

HONOLULU — “For us, it’s like a miracle,” Msgr. Terrence Watanabe, the Honolulu Diocese’s vicar of Maui and Lanai, said about Maria Lanakila Catholic Church in the town of Lahaina being seemingly untouched by the fierce Maui wildfires Aug. 8-9.

The blaze burned Lahaina to the ground in the deadliest natural disaster in Hawaii’s history and the deadliest U.S. wildfire in more than a century.

“When we saw the news and saw the church steeple rise above the town, it was a great sight to see,” the priest said in an interview with the Honolulu Star-Advertiser daily newspaper Aug. 10.

There were conflicting news reports on the fate of the church — whose name translates as “Our Lady of Victory” — and its parish school, Sacred Hearts School, which had lost half of its roof to heavy winds Aug. 7. The parish’s priests, women religious and staff were safe and accounted for.

The Star-Advertiser had reported that the church had burned down, while another news source reported the church was still standing. The Star-Advertiser corrected its report Aug. 11 with a story that the church had indeed survived. Before that some photos and video footage posted on a parishioner’s Facebook page clearly showed the church was standing.

The church is a block or two from Front Street, the famous waterfront stretch of visitors’ shops and restaurants which the Lahaina fire reduced to a smoldering pile of ashes. Pictures showed charred trees across the street from the church.

Honolulu Bishop Larry Silva echoed the vicar in saying Maria Lanakila Church “was miraculously spared, as was the rectory.” He said the adjacent convent, school and hall were “burned, along with neighboring homes.”

In comments Aug. 14 to the Hawaii Catholic Herald, the diocesan newspaper, he also reported that the pastor, Father Kuriakose Nadooparambil, a priest of the Missionaries of Faith congregation, “was allowed to go in (to the church) with a police escort, and he reported that not even the flowers in the church were wilted or singed. There was only a covering of ash on the pews.”

“We thank God for this blessing! Of course the church cannot be used until the area around it is cleared and deemed suitable for passage,” Bishop Silva added.

Early Aug. 17, Maui County officials reported that at least 111 deaths from the wildfires have been confirmed, with about 38 percent of the burned area searched so far, but the death toll was expected to keep rising as crews continue to “scour the ruins.” About 1,300 people remained missing. About 11,000 others evacuated.

As many as 3,000 homes may have been destroyed. Other Maui communities affected by fires include Kihei and Kula, with more than 500 acres burned. According to research done by Moody’s Analytics, the economic cost to Maui from the wildfires could reach \$7 billion.

On Aug. 10 President Joe Biden issued a federal disaster declaration for Maui and the Big Island (Hawaii island), ordering “all available federal assets on the Islands to help with response.”

In the days since the fires, Msgr. Watanabe has been fielding hundreds of calls and emails “from all over the world.” The outpouring of concern is “overwhelming,” he told the Hawaii Catholic Herald. “It’s unbelievable.”



OSV News photo/Mike Blake, Reuters

The shells of burned cars are pictured amid the ruins of homes in the ravaged town of Lahaina, Hawaii, on the island of Maui Aug. 15, 2023. Honolulu Bishop Larry Silva is urging the faithful of the diocese to “come together and provide unwavering support” to those who have lost everything in the Maui wildfires that destroyed Lahaina and damaged other communities Aug. 8 and 9.

The church where Msgr. Watanabe is pastor, St. Anthony in Wailuku, held an ecumenical prayer service for victims the evening of Aug. 15, hosted by Bishop Silva.

“We should do what we do best — pray,” the monsignor said.

Prayer has been a watchword for Bishop Silva, too, as well as calling for the faithful to give “unwavering support” to the fire victims.

“As a community of faith, we are called to come together and provide unwavering support to those who are suffering,” he said in an Aug. 11 message to Hawaii Catholics. “It is in times like these that our collective love, faith and compassion can make a tremendous difference.”

“This is an opportunity for us to show our solidarity as a Catholic faith community and lend a helping hand to those who have lost so much,” Bishop Silva said.

“Let us also remember the power of prayer,” he said. “In our collective prayers, we ask for strength, resilience, and healing for the fire victims and their families. May we find the grace to rebuild our families, their livelihoods, and the physical structures that were lost. Let our faith guide us as we navigate the challenges ahead, knowing that with the grace of God, all things are possible.” Bishop Silva said.

The diocese’s Hawaii’s Catholic Community Foundation was established to support Hawaii’s parishes and schools. It has a dedicated webpage for donations to Maui wildfire

relief efforts: <https://tinyurl.com/MauiCatholic>. Catholic Charities Hawai’i also is collecting donations for wildfire victims at catholiccharitieshawaii.org/maui-relief.

“Many people have been offering prayers, donations, and their own time to help with this crisis. The outpouring of love and care has also been remarkable!” Bishop Silva.

The bishop flew to Maui late Aug. 12, touring the Lahaina area Aug. 13 and celebrated Mass that Sunday for 200 people about nine miles away in Kapalua at Sacred Heart, the other church that belongs to Maria Lanakila Parish.

“To arrive in Kapalua, we had to drive on the upper road above Lahaina town. At several places along the road we saw spots that were destroyed by the fire, whether homes or businesses, it was hard to tell. We could also overlook Lahaina town, which was shockingly devastated,” he said.

Lahaina holds deep cultural significance for Hawaiians as the district “was once the capital of the Hawaiian Kingdom.” The Lahaina Historic District, which encompassed downtown Lahaina, Front Street and its vicinity, was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1962.

While at the church in Kapalua, “I heard stories of people who lost one or more of their loved ones or neighbors, whose houses burned down, or who lost their livelihood,” Bishop Silva told the Hawaii Catholic Herald. “One of my

(Continued on page 15)

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Mission Statement

The Pro-Life Office of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Covington, guided by our bishop, promotes the sanctity and legal protection of human life from conception to natural death through prayer, pastoral care, public policy and education.

How to engage pro-life students: Inform, invite and involve

Faye Roch
Contributor

“Do you know what the best tool is for evangelizing the young? Another young person,” said Pope Francis at World Youth Day in 2013.

This could not be truer than in the pro-life movement. Our students from grade school to high school and college have great opportunities to change hearts and minds throughout their community in recognizing the sanctity and dignity of all life from conception to natural death. Here are a few programs offered through the diocesan Pro-Life Office.

Spiritual Adoption in our schools and parishes is a very simple way to create awareness in children, teens and even adults of the sanctity of life from conception to birth.

The Pro-Life Office has age-appropriate materials for school children in kindergarten to eighth grade and a high school and parish program where for nine months (or it can be adapted to nine weeks) participants pledge to pray for a baby throughout its development. While this baby is unknown to his or her “spiritual partner,” God knows who the child is and naming the baby is encouraged. Names help the participant focus on the fact that the prayers are being said for a real person.

Also, at the end of the spiritual adoption program participants may have a “baby shower” where items are donated to a local pregnancy care ministry.

Each school year eighth graders in our diocesan schools, homeschools and public schools are invited to participate in the annual Pro-Life Essay contest.

With the Pro-Life Essay contest, students learn about pro-life issues and write on a topic using the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Respect Life theme for the year. The goal of this essay contest is to plant a seed and inspire our students to become a voice for the voiceless, to be witnesses in living out the



Members of the Northern Kentucky University Newman Club at the March for Life with Bishop John Iffert.

What can you do? What are your talents?

- Participate in the Spiritual Adoption Program (grade school through high school).
- Participate in the Eighth-Grade Pro-Life Essay Contest.
- Attend a liturgy celebrating God’s gift of human life. The diocesan Pro-Life Mass will be held Oct. 17, at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption.
- Display pro-life posters in classrooms.
- Show a pro-life video.*
- Invite a pro-life speaker to make a classroom presentation.*
- Write to a government official about a life issue.
- Organize a fund raiser or diaper drive for a local pregnancy ministry.
- If you are a writer, contribute columns to your school or local papers.
- If you are a good public speaker, consider making the pro-life case before your classmates.
- If you are a good organizer, consider joining or organizing a pro-life group at your school or parish to help educate other people in your community.
- Organize a fund raiser for Catholic Charities or a local pregnancy care center.
- Contact the Catholic Conference of Kentucky and stay informed of any potential upcoming pro-life legislation and organize local support for it.
- Can you babysit? Offer to sit for a busy mom who can’t afford to pay for a sitter.
- Volunteer at one of several missions that serve the most vulnerable in our community and invite others to join you.

*Please contact the Diocese of Covington Pro-Life Office for resources on speakers, literature and videos.

Good News. We pray that this information is something that they will carry with them into high school and beyond.

When these students go on to high school, they can become involved in many activities and clubs. Most of our high schools in the diocese have a pro-life club and for many years the Diocese of Covington has sent hundreds of students each year to the March for Life in Washington D.C.

Through the years it has been inspiring to see the numbers of young people in attendance. Tens of thousands of young people walk through the streets to the Supreme Court Building in solidarity, proclaiming in action the Gospel of Life.

At Thomas More University and Northern Kentucky University, active pro-life clubs participate in the annual March for Life, set up white cross displays on campus and host baby shower drives for local pregnancy care ministries.

It is crucial that we continue to motivate and inspire today’s youth to become involved with pro-life issues and activities. These youngest pro-lifers are a great source of hope as we work together to turn the tide from a culture of death to a culture of life.

Faye Roch of the director of the Pro-Life Office, Diocese of Covington, Ky.

For more information about the Pro-Life Office or to be added to our e-mail newsgroups, visit us online at www.covdio.org/prolife/ or call (859) 392-1500.

Seminarians in Guatemala

(Continued from page 3)

The setting at Assumption Seminary, Mr. Heskamp said, was typical academia. Classes were held Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., and there was homework and presentations to prepare. It also offered him an opportunity to converse with native Spanish speakers. Before his time at Assumption Seminary, Mr. Heskamp said that he “was very uncomfortable speaking Spanish because I knew my Spanish was full of errors.”

Having returned from his summer experience he said, “It has made me more comfortable just approaching people and speaking Spanish with them even though I still make a lot of mistakes. I just got used to sounding like a fool, I guess, and that’s okay.”

Mr. Bischoff and Mr. Schulte were sent to Antigua, Guatemala, where they stayed in the home of Manuel and Ana Luisa and were fully immersed in the life of an active, Spanish-speaking, parishioner of San José Parish, the cathedral of Antigua. They were able to explore the historic city, which was the capital of Guatemala from 1543 to

1773 when an earthquake destroyed the city, and helped at the local mission school.

“Antigua means old in Spanish and they’ve tried to preserve the buildings and churches,” said Mr. Schulte, noting that there are many churches and ruins of churches in Antigua.

A highlight for both Mr. Schulte and Mr. Bischoff was a trip to Santiago Atitlán to visit the church and shrine of Blessed Stanley Rother. Blessed Rother was a Catholic priest from Oklahoma, who was martyred in 1981 while serving at the diocese’s mission.

“One of my favorite things was visiting all the different churches and learning about the devotions and liturgical customs of the country,” said Mr. Bischoff, noting the rich Spanish history, liturgical art, architecture and customs.

“There are many decorations, grand feast days and a very strong devotional life, especially to the Eucharist,” Mr. Bischoff said.

That devotional life spilled out of the church and into the streets as both seminarians talked about the many Eucharistic processions and parades that would routinely take place.

“They love processions, they love fireworks, they love lots of noise. There was a procession — at least one — every week,” said Mr. Schulte. “The culture was definitely different from what we’re used to, but very kind and very friendly people. It was quite a blessing to experience; a very Catholic culture.”

Mr. Bischoff said that the culture was also very family and community oriented. “You rarely saw people walking around or doing anything alone or with one or two people. Usually, it was with a family or a group of at least 10. It was very nice to see such a culture of life,” referring to the many young children running around. “The culture of life and of authentic family community was very beautiful and refreshing,” he said.

Mr. Schulte hopes that the Guatemalan people never lose that joy and faithfulness and invites the people of the diocese to join him in praying for them.

“Just pray for the Guatemalans down there and for the ones up here,” acknowledging the large and growing Guatemalan community in the Diocese of Covington. “I keep on praying for them, that they remain faithful.”



(above left) Hank and Michael next to the Guatemalan flag at the summit of the Pacaya, an active volcano in Guatemala. To celebrate the achievement they roasted marshmallows at the top.

(above) Dinner at Hank and Michael’s host family’s house with guests on the final night before traveling home. From left to right, Padre Henry, two other students, Hank, Michael, Padre Gil, and Manuel. The two priests are the parochial vicar and pastor, respectively, of the local parish of San José, (the cathedral of Antigua) and friends of the host family.

(left) Hank and Michael with the school children boarding the truck for the ride home. Edgar, who runs the school with his wife Verónica, is in the background to the left. They started it during the pandemic to offer schooling and catechism to less fortunate families in the city.



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Disabled, yes, and unwilling to die for society's easy comfort

Charlie Camosy
OSV News

Meghan Schrader is an instructor and mentor at the E4Texas (Texas Center for Disability Studies) program at the University of Texas at Austin and is on the board of the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition USA. She has a Master's degree in special education from the University of Texas at Austin and a Master's in Musicology from the University of New Hampshire. Her experience growing up with a learning disorder also inspired her to serve on the governing board of the Boston Autistic Self Advocacy Network in 2015 and to volunteer as an education advocate for disabled students in foster care. Her research exploring bioethical issues in respect to musical representations of disability in 1950s America was published by Oxford University Press in 2014. She is the recipient of the 2018-2019 Quell Foundation Fighter scholarship for people who have survived severe mental illness. Schrader agreed to chat with Charlie Camosy about what she sees as an intersectional danger zone being created between people with disabilities and euthanasia advocacy.

Charlie Camosy: Tell us a bit about your background, including your academic background, that got you interested in the interaction of disability and physician-assist-



OSV News photo/courtesy Meghan Schrader

Meghan Schrader is a University of Texas educator on ethics, independent living, fine arts and peer support, and an advocate for disabled, neurodivergent and those with special educational needs.

tions, were kicked out of special education.

It was a message to disabled young people that we were second-class citizens; it was an infliction of what disability studies scholar Paul Longmore would call a "social death" — cutting disabled people off from opportunity in order to keep prevailing social systems in place.

ed killing.

Meghan Schrader: The first reason that I so strongly oppose assisted suicide is the awareness of the systemic inequality that I imbibed growing up in the U.S. special education system. Throughout my education I was exposed to the sentiment that disabled students were an expensive burden on teachers, other students and communities. I saw very aggressive attempts by the public school system to restrict special ed students' access to academic opportunity and even the most basic academic accommodations. Before my junior year of high school in 2000, a bipartisan legislature in my state of Massachusetts lowered special education standards to save money. Students like me, who were performing well with our accommoda-

Witnessing that oppression taught me that the able-bodied, neurotypical majority tends to feel that it can have what it wants at the expense of people with disabilities. Now the "right-to-die" movement is asking to exacerbate the worst form of oppression disabled people already experience — so that they can "control" their own deaths. The thought of some oppressed disabled or terminally ill person being bullied into killing themselves fills me with righteous indignation.

What made me decide to study eugenics in my musicology research was finding Peter Singer's writings in college. I was struck by the similarity between his comparisons of disabled people to animals and the hate speech that I experienced from bullies growing up. My research was my way of answering people like that on behalf of myself and others with disabilities. I currently teach at a post-secondary program for people with intellectual disabilities at the University of Texas, where I provide lessons in ethics, independent living, the fine arts and peer support.

Canada is a key place to focus on right now if we want to see what may be

coming down the pike in this area. What's happening there?

Schrader: What's happening there right now constitutes psychological abuse and systemic violence against people with disabilities. As we know, doctors are legally allowed to suggest assisted suicide to any disabled patient that comes to them. What activists would call #DisabilityTwitter is filled with exclamations of distress by disabled Canadians who are heartbroken that their government would rather kill them than help them. I have an indigent Canadian friend with PTSD and severe chronic pain who was told to end her life with MAiD (Medical Assistance in Dying) on a suicide hotline.

She reached out to me and another Twitter user for help after that happened, and we helped talk her down from killing herself for several months. She eventually made it to a good hospital that treated her pain and mental health problems, but before that several doctors refused to treat her chronic pain, and she felt as though Canada's assisted suicide law was "a monkey on my back" urging her to die.

Camosy: What do you make of the fact that, while physical pain doesn't make the top-five reasons people request physician-assisted killing in Oregon, things like fear of loss of autonomy, fear of loss of enjoyable activities, and fear of being a burden on others do make the top five?

Schrader: Our culture is fixated on autonomy as the primary value for decision-making, but the concept of autonomy being used by assisted suicide proponents is drawn from the experiences of primarily able-bodied, upper middle class white people. In contrast, some disabled people have had to really fight to have any practical autonomy at all. The disability justice movement's conception of autonomy is similar to the idea of autonomy typically found in the Latino culture. Our understanding of autonomy tends to emphasize interdependence-autonomy with help, and autonomy experienced in relationship to the individual's interactions with her community. I think that if the mainstream culture emphasized interdependence more, some people might feel less motivated to die to avoid being a burden on others, or as a way of maintaining complete control over their own lives.

Camosy: What are the best ways faithful Catholics can resist this aspect of what Pope Francis calls our throw-away culture?

Schrader: I would encourage faithful Catholics to understand throwaway culture as being at the bottom end of a spectrum of oppression against persons with disabilities, and to work hard at addressing other disability rights concerns that fall on that spectrum. In addition to fighting against things like assisted suicide, make sure you are fighting for things like good employment and education for people with disabilities. Also, examine yourself to determine how whatever political ideology you embrace might potentially undermine the well-being of disabled people who are in danger of being "thrown away." Talk to disabled people, mentor us, and make policy decisions that put our needs first. Doing that will give disabled people the resources we need to resist the prevailing culture's efforts to throw us away.

Moreover, many disabled people have experienced trauma in their faith communities. So, make sure that you are always treating disabled people with love and respect. Some disabled people cannot enter certain places of worship because the buildings have architectural features that make them inaccessible to people with disabilities, even 33 years after the Americans with Disabilities Act. Make sure your church buildings are accessible to wheelchair users and other people with physical disabilities. Study how disability justice intersects with theology.

Advocate for your churches to include ministries focused on the needs and perspectives of people with disabilities. Keep intersectional justice in mind and listen to the voices of BIPOC and LGBT people with disabilities. Do not regard disability issues only through the lens of charity. Rather, consider how your congregations can be part of empowering people with disabilities to make choices other than assisted suicide. Do everything you can to give disabled people the tools to make decisions that will not only help us live, but to thrive.

Charlie Camosy is professor of medical humanities at the Creighton School of Medicine in Omaha, Nebraska, and moral theology fellow at St. Joseph Seminary in New York.



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'Miraculous' survival

(Continued from page 11)

friends, who often serves as my liturgical master of ceremonies when I am on Maui, told me that his uncle, uncle's wife, their daughter and their grandson all were burned to death in their car, while they were trying to escape.

"My friend and his wife opened their home to other relatives who lost their home and suspects they will be living there for a couple of years."

Bishop Silva also noted that because cell towers had burned down and the internet was down, most people "were not aware that Pope Francis had sent a letter expressing his concern, prayers, and support — even though I had published the letter on our diocesan media platforms. I read the letter to them, and they were very grateful."

The pope's prayers and support for the people of Maui were in an Aug. 10 telegram sent by Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state. On Aug. 13, after he led the recitation of the Angelus prayer, the pope again assured the people of Hawaii of his prayers.

Bishop Silva noted that Maria Lanakila's pastor and the parish school's principal "are looking into using some nearby hotel conference rooms to set up a temporary school," because one of their priorities "is to get the children back to school, so that they can continue their learning, have the support of teachers and peers, and allow time for their parents to fill out insurance forms, FEMA applications, finding new employment, etc."

The Maui blaze began the night of Aug. 8. The National Weather Service said strong winds from Hurricane Dora, passing hundreds of miles to the southwest of the

Hawaiian Islands, were partly to blame for fueling the fires.

When the fire struck, Bishop Larry Silva was taking a few vacation days in California on his way back from World Youth Day in Lisbon, Portugal. His office quickly organized a Zoom virtual rosary to pray for the victims.

"What is needed is prayer for those who have lost their homes and businesses," he said, introducing the virtual prayer session that was attended by about 300 people, "prayers for our firefighters and first responders and police, and all those you are trying to protect the community, prayer for our social service agencies, which are gearing up to help those who are most in need in this time of crisis and trial."

"And so we pray to our Blessed Mother for victory over all these tragedies," he said.

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Who do you say that I Am?

(Continued from page 5)

all the time.

The way we do this is to be attentive to the most essential task of our lives: To orient the gaze of our very existence to Jesus Christ above all things and in all things. As Father Karl Rahner noted many years ago while taking account of the challenging pastoral and spiritual situation that was emerging, “In the days ahead, you will either be a mystic (one who experienced God as real) or nothing at all.” Those days are now.

Jesus asked Peter, “who do people say that I am?” Peter answered correctly. Then, Jesus asked “but who do you say that I am?” Our answer to that question determines everything, not just for us, but for the life of the world.

Father Phillip W. De Vous is the pastor of St. Charles Borromeo Parish, Flemingsburg and St. Rose of Lima Parish, May's Lick.

30 years later

(Continued from page 4)

juries do not need a lesson in ethics before they are asked to judge whether a defendant is guilty of murder or not.

The proportionalists, however, tried to develop a novel methodology for defining actions in terms of intention. If, according to Catholic teaching, a person can ward off an attack, even if lethal force is required, as long as he intends to defend himself and not to kill the attacker, then why, the proportionalists wonder, can we not say that one person could justly kill another if he had a very good reason (say, to stop a war)? Why would such an action have to be called “murder” and not “preventing a war”?

John Paul II points out that labeling actions in such a way — in terms of what an agent intends to accomplish by them, and not in terms of what they are in themselves — leads to a position where any action could conceivably be justified somehow, which means that nothing would be absolutely forbidden. If Christians thought about this historically, then there would never have been any martyrs, since anyone faced with a difficult choice could always rationalize doing something evil for the sake of something good.

With simple and straightforward arguments such as these, John Paul II did much in “Veritatis Splendor” to get Catholic moral theology back on track by correcting these two widespread errors. But more than this — and what is perhaps the real legacy of “Veritatis Splendor” — John Paul II also explained why it is so important to uphold the teaching that certain kinds of behavior are absolutely forbidden.

The Christian life is a life lived in love and in imitation of Jesus Christ and of the love that he showed for the Church. Just as there are certain actions — such as adultery — that are incompatible with the marital love shared between a husband and wife, so there are certain actions — such as blasphemy — that are incompatible with the love that God has poured into our hearts.

In short, behind every “no,” there is a much greater “yes.” If Christians are called not to kill, it is not just because killing is bad, but more fundamentally because life is good. If Christians are called not to fornicate, it is because the good of conjugal love is too great to transgress.

This is the legacy of “Veritatis Splendor.” If the moral life is one lived in love, then its rules seem less like burdens placed upon one’s shoulders and more like guideposts that illuminate the boundaries of the straight and narrow path of holiness.

Matthew Dugandzic is the academic dean of St. Mary's Seminary and University and a permanent board member of the Sacra Doctrina Project. His column has been provided by OSV News.

It don't come easy

(Continued from page 5)

Somewhere along the way to where we have arrived, we've lost sight of the fact that our on-demand lifestyle isn't fair in what it demands of other people. None of us is entitled to someone else's labor, or their time. The overnight clerk at the 24-hour gas station and the professor we email at 10:00 p.m. the night before the term project is due don't owe us much of anything. In fact, loving our neighbors might just include not overworking them; it might mean taking a moment to consider their lives, and appreciate their work.

That's why our faith has a body of thought we call Catholic Social Teaching — 2,000 years of considering how we must treat the people with whom we live in this

remarkable era, and why. It's too easy to lose our own humanity and disregard the real lives of others' in the rat race we are so thoughtlessly running.

It's become way too easy to convince ourselves that we deserve everything we want, the moment we want it, no matter what it costs someone else.

The next time we find ourselves on the 24/7 consuming end of life, let's keep our wits about us and recognize not only the price we pay for all the instant gratifications we want and demand, but the real — and very human — cost behind it all.

Jaymie Stuart Wolfe is a Catholic convert, freelance writer and editor, musician, speaker, pet-aholic, wife and mom of eight grown children, loving life in New Orleans. Her column has been provided by OSV News.



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South Carolina Supreme Court upholds state's 6-week abortion ban

Kate Scanlon
OSV News

The South Carolina Supreme Court upheld the state's six-week abortion ban in an Aug. 23 ruling, permitting that law to go into effect.

The 4-1 ruling lifts a previous freeze on the law implemented amid a legal challenge shortly after Republican Gov. Henry McMaster signed the legislation in May.

In an opinion for the majority, Justice John Kittredge wrote that "the legislature has found that the State has a compelling interest in protecting the lives of unborn children," and that it would be "a rogue imposition of will by the judiciary for us to say that the legislature's determina-

tion is unreasonable as a matter of law."

The ruling finding the 2023 law constitutional comes just months after the same court found a similar law unconstitutional in a January ruling.

Justice John Cannon Few, who found the previous ban unconstitutional but the 2023 version constitutional, acknowledged that some might note that change, but argued he saw a difference in the legal substance of each of those pieces of legislation.

"Planned Parenthood argues the 2023 Act is no different from the 2021 Act because both ban most abortions at same point in time," Few wrote, adding, "Thus, Planned Parenthood argues simplistically, my vote should be the

same" as it was in the previous case.

Writing that he stands by his previous findings in the other case, Few argued, "Ultimately, the General Assembly did not attempt to simply re-enact the same legislation, as Planned Parenthood argues," instead amending the 2021 Act "in what appears to be a sincere attempt to comply" with the high court's ruling in the previous case.

McMaster said in a statement that the ruling "marks a historic moment in our state's history and is the culmination of years of hard work and determination by so many in our state to ensure that the sanctity of life is protected."

"With this victory, we protect the lives of countless unborn children," he added.

In a statement, Jenny Black, president and CEO of Planned Parenthood South Atlantic, which includes South Carolina, said that "this abortion ban takes away people's ability to control what happens to their bodies, forcing many South Carolinians to remain pregnant against their will."

Lisa Van Riper, president of South Carolina Citizens for Life, said in a statement that the ruling "restores protection for all human beings with a detectable heartbeat."

"By upholding the Heartbeat bill the majority of the SC Supreme Court has affirmed that the General Assembly and Governor Henry McMaster acted within their power to carry out their most basic governmental responsibility of protecting a human being's right to life," she said.

"South Carolina Citizens for Life commends the SC Carolina Supreme Court, the General Assembly, the Governor and Attorney General Alan Wilson for their work to protect the least among us from the barbaric practice of abortion on demand after the unborn child has a heartbeat," Van Riper said. "It is time for all of South Carolina to embrace life and to move to meet the needs of its mothers and children with compassionate care."

Pope asks renewed prayers for Ukraine

Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Acknowledging Ukraine's celebration of Independence Day Aug. 24, Pope Francis pleaded with thousands of visitors at his weekly general audience to keep praying for peace in the country.

Noting that Aug. 24 also is the feast of St. Bartholomew, the apostle, the pope entrusted to him "dear Ukraine, so harshly tried by the war."

But then departing from his prepared text and looking directly at the crowd in the Vatican audience hall, he said: "Brothers and sisters, let's pray for our Ukrainian brothers and sisters who are suffering so much. The war is cruel. So many children disappeared, so many people dead."

According to the Ukrainian government's "Children of War" website, 503 children had been killed as of Aug. 23 and more than 19,500 children have been forcibly taken to Russia.

"Please," the pope said, "pray. Do not forget tormented Ukraine."

Russia launched its large-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. The country had declared its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991.

In his weekly video message, Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk of Kyiv-Halych, head of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, said that while Ukrainians "give thanks to the Lord God for the precious gift of freedom," in the context of war "we are gaining a deeper understanding of the meaning of freedom, of what it entails to be free individuals, and recognizing that in order to guarantee the right of existence for the Ukrainian people, it is essential to have our own state."

"The main pillars for building this state include respect for human dignity and the preservation of freedom," the archbishop said.

"Freedom is a spiritual category. Being free is not limited only to escaping oppression or foreign domination," he said. "True freedom involves being free for something. We recognize that the highest form of freedom is manifested in love, in the act of sacrificing oneself for God and neighbor."



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NEWS BRIEFS

National/World

Under new Indiana abortion law, 9,000 unborn babies will be saved yearly

INDIANAPOLIS — Indiana's new law banning most abortions finally went into effect Aug. 21, almost a year after the American Civil Liberties Union of Indiana, Planned Parenthood and other plaintiffs filed a suit Aug. 30, 2022, charging that Indiana's new law violated the state's constitution. The Indiana Supreme Court Aug. 21 denied a July 31 request by the plaintiffs to rehear their case. The court had ruled June 30 that the law protecting the lives of most unborn children was not in violation of the state's constitution. Under the law now official in effect, an abortion is allowed up to 10 weeks gestation only in instances of rape or incest and up to 20 weeks gestation only in cases of lethal fetal anomalies, or when the mother's life is in danger from specific medical issues. The law also requires that abortions take place at a hospital or a hospital-owned surgery center, effectively closing abortion centers in the state. "This is truly an historic day," said Indiana Right to Life president and CEO Mike Fichter in a video statement released Aug. 21. "We are so thankful to the thousands upon thousands of Hoosiers who worked so hard for over 50 years to bring this day about." Right to Life Indianapolis president Marc Tuttle noted that "under the new protections in Indiana law, it's estimated that 9,000 fewer babies will be aborted per year. We all have to rejoice at 9,000 precious lives being spared."

Pakistani Catholics in U.S. call for action after churches destroyed

PHILADELPHIA — Pakistani Catholics in the U.S. are calling for international advocacy and action following a devastating Aug. 16 attack on several Christian churches in Pakistan's eastern city of Jaranwala. At least six churches, including St. Paul Catholic Church and the historic Salvation Army church, were set ablaze by armed Muslim mobs numbering as high as 7,000. Bibles and other religious items were destroyed, and hundreds of private homes belonging to Christians were looted, with attackers piling families' belongings outside and setting fire to them. "We want our political leaders to raise their voice against this violence and these injustices to minorities," Father Tariq Isaac, chaplain of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia's Pakistani Catholic community, told OSV News. "Our government here (in the U.S.) approves help to Pakistan, but never forces it to implement laws protecting minorities — to protect human rights, justice and peace in the community." The violence stemmed from accusations that two Christian men had violated Pakistan's blasphemy laws, which originated under British colonial rule and were expanded in the 1980s to specifically protect Islam, the majority religion in Pakistan, from a wide range of direct and indirect affronts. Yet the laws work to reinforce discrimination and persecution against Christians, who comprise less than 1.3% of Pakistan's population, Pakistani Catholics told OSV News. Father Boniface "Bonnie" Mendes, a retired priest living in Faisalabad, Pakistan, said there is "systemic" and "very strong prejudice" against Christians in Pakistan, making daily life "very, very uncertain, and very frightening sometimes."

Jesuits evicted from residence after Nicaragua university seized

MEXICO CITY (OSV News) — Nicaraguan officials evicted a

team of Jesuits from their home in the capital city of Managua shortly after seizing a prestigious university from the religious order — an act the Society of Jesus called a "spectacle." The Jesuits, who worked at the Central American University — known locally as UCA — prior to its confiscation Aug. 15, were notified of the eviction in the early afternoon of Aug. 19, according to a statement from the Conference of Jesuit Provincials in Latin America and the Caribbean. "After the Jesuits showed them the title, which proved the property did not belong to the university, the agents didn't accept the documentation and ordered them to vacate the house," the statement said. "This is one more spectacle in which truth, justice and respect for the inalienable rights of human beings confront measures seeking to silence the voices that rise up and support the struggle for a country where the rights of everyone, their integrity and their desire to live freely ... is respected." The six Jesuits left the home with only a few personal possessions each and headed to the residence of another Jesuit community in Managua, according to a statement from the Jesuit province in Central America. The seizure of UCA sparked outrage across the region — with Catholic leaders and organizations sending statements of solidarity. Observers accused the regime of holding a grudge against the university for its role in the 2018 protests, which called for Ortega's ouster. School officials opened the campus to wounded protesters fleeing police and paramilitaries. "It's been a critical voice in the face of Ortega's authoritarianism and ... they wanted to punish the UCA because at times they supported the victims of the Nicaraguan repression," Jesuit Father José María Tojeira, former rector of the UCA's sister school in El Salvador, told local media.

Nigerian women say Catholic hospital's free cancer screenings are saving lives

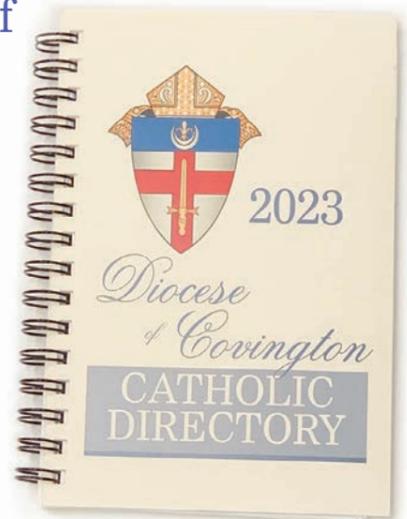
ABUJA, Nigeria — In December 2021, 56-year-old Ijeoma Njoku, a mother of 5, heard an announcement during Mass at her local church in Nigeria's capital city of Abuja, about a free breast and cervical screening at St. Vincent De Paul Hospital. The medical facility is run by Daughters of Charity in Kubwa, 12 miles from Njoku's home in Ushafa, a small village surrounded by rocks near Abuja, and their free-of-charge program had begun operations that December. "I had to participate because as a woman, you need to routinely check yourself, especially when you are above 40 years of age. But it wasn't my first time opting for a breast cancer screening," Njoku said. She had her first screening in 2017 and was not able to make it to the hospital for another one, until the sisters started a free cancer screening. Africa's growing cancer epidemic is troubling, particularly as it competes with the continent's other health-care needs. It is also a leading cause of deaths worldwide, accounting for nearly 10 million deaths in 2020, or nearly one in six deaths. According to the World Health Organization, most common cancers are breast, lung, colon and rectum and prostate cancers. So is the case in Nigeria, where breast cancer is the most common one, with more than 28,000 Nigerian women being diagnosed with breast cancer, and more than 14,000 dying from the disease in 2020. Dr. Patrick Ezie, head of clinical services at the hospital, said the project was developed by the sisters and entire medical team when they realized that a lot of women in Nigerian communities were affected with late-diagnosed breast cancers due to lack of awareness.

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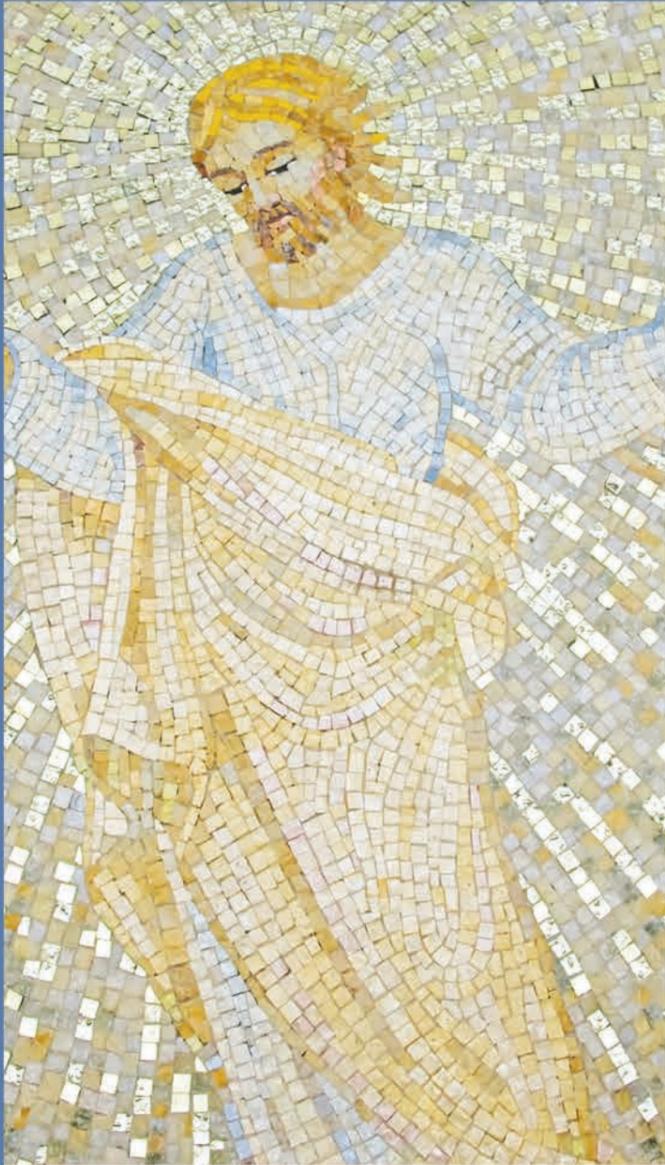
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Holy Cross Parish	156	\$25,600	\$67,260.00	\$41,660.00
Holy Redeemer Parish	10	\$2,900	\$3,250.00	\$350.00
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Mary, Queen of Heaven Parish	270	\$82,700	\$236,327.00	\$153,627.00
Mother of God Parish	183	\$57,300	\$124,760.00	\$67,460.00
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St. Augustine Parish, Augusta	78	\$16,500	\$25,265.00	\$8,765.00
St. Augustine Parish, Covington	103	\$22,200	\$49,435.00	\$27,235.00
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St. Benedict Parish	77	\$25,400	\$31,525.00	\$6,125.00
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St. Cecilia Parish	232	\$83,300	\$82,669.00	(\$631.00)
St. Charles of Borromeo Parish	33	\$10,700	\$12,735.00	\$2,035.00
St. Edward Mission, Owenton	12	\$2,100	\$3,520.00	\$1,420.00
St. Edward Parish, Cynthiana	52	\$9,000	\$25,270.00	\$16,270.00
St. Francis Xavier Parish	59	\$18,200	\$24,171.95	\$5,971.95
St. Henry Parish	258	\$67,000	\$107,426.00	\$40,426.00
St. James Mission, Minerva	11	\$4,500	\$2,550.00	(\$1,950.00)
St. James Parish, Brooksville	34	\$12,300	\$18,725.00	\$6,425.00
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St. Pius X Parish	538	\$216,900	\$322,219.22	\$105,319.22
St. Rose of Lima Parish	30	\$10,100	\$13,985.00	\$3,885.00
St. Therese Parish	194	\$28,500	\$67,130.00	\$38,630.00
St. Thomas Parish	249	\$81,500	\$111,306.58	\$29,806.58
St. Timothy Parish	332	\$163,200	\$207,175.00	\$43,975.00
St. William Parish	58	\$22,500	\$28,954.00	\$6,454.00
Sts. Boniface & James Parish	36	\$14,400	\$15,119.58	\$719.58
Sts. Peter & Paul Parish	126	\$28,200	\$59,360.00	\$31,160.00
Transfiguration Mission	5	\$2,200	\$1,410.00	(\$790.00)
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